



ARBOR TERRACE®
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The Complete Checklist for Moving to a Senior Living Community

COMPLIMENTS OF



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Whether you are already planning a move to a senior living community for yourself or a loved one, or just starting to consider your options, this guide has you covered. With peace of mind, friendly neighbors, and new opportunities on the horizon, a decision to move to a community that is focused on senior wellness shows dedication to health and wellbeing. However, as the move draws near, you may find yourself faced with a variety of emotions. In fact, you or your family might even be working through emotions about the move as well. Nerves and excitement aside, you will need to stay as organized and prepared as possible if and when you decided to make a transition for yourself or your loved one. One thing is certain: This next adventure is worth all of the packing and life changes for yourself or the older adult in your life!





INTRODUCTION

Senior living communities are active places, full of new neighbors and caring staff members who are ready to welcome you to your new home. As you prepare your possessions for the upcoming move, or as you coordinate the move for your aging loved one, it is also important to consider the implications of the transition. Heading into your move knowing what to expect will help keep you prepared for any snags along the way and will keep you emotionally and physically healthy for the move.

Remember to keep your packing pace slow and steady, when possible. Rally more family members and friends to assist you with some of the packing, organizing, and heavy lifting; many hands make light work, after all. Try to tackle one room of the home every few days or every week, giving plenty of time to make good decisions about each item. You are likelier to make hasty decisions when you feel hurried. Take breaks as needed, but stick to your timeline in order to ensure everything is done prior to the move. When you aren't packing, take time to remember why you are moving into your new home. Moving can become overwhelming, especially if you forget all of the good opportunities ahead of you. Your new home will give

you peace of mind and extra assistance, fun neighbors, and amenities that will elevate your lifestyle. If you are helping your loved one move, remember that your loved one is making an excellent decision to start this exciting chapter! Write your reasons down if you have to in order to keep them top of mind. Finally, don't discount the emotional aspect of moving out of your home. This transition, like any change in life, can make you feel a variety of feelings. You might feel worried or nervous, or you might even second-guess your decision. You will also likely feel excited and empowered as you make this healthy move. Stay the course, while being gentle with yourself and your feelings.



DISCUSSION ABOUT PREPARING EMOTIONALLY FOR THE MOVE

In order to keep yourself emotionally healthy during your move and even during the first six months of life in your new home, remember to allow yourself time to reflect on all the wonderful memories you have had in your home. Even still, take time to look forward to all the memories you will make in your new home—new friends, a vibrant lifestyle, and amenities you will love!

If you would like some additional support as you begin this transition from one beautiful home to another, consider enlisting the help of a counselor who specializes in life transitions or senior care. Your geriatrician will likely have excellent recommendations for professionals in your area. A counselor can be a vital part of your transition plan and even continue to work with you once you move into your new home. Use your time together to talk about what you are looking forward to and what you may be nervous about, what to pack and tips for staying healthy during the moving process.





Finally, give yourself time to celebrate your time in your home and neighborhood. Invite friends over to have coffee or dinner at your favorite spots. Take photos of your favorite neighborhood views. Then, invite friends or family to go with you to explore your new community! There are sure to be excellent shopping and dining options near your new home—go check them out prior to your official move. If you are coordinating the move for your loved one, feel free to take a tour around the new neighborhood yourself as well. Fortunately, having a few months to prepare for your move to your new senior living community can ease the transition. However, working at a leisurely pace is not always feasible for every situation.





WHAT TO DO IN THE CASE OF AN URGENT MOVE

In some cases, a medical emergency or other situation can make a move into a senior community a more urgent matter. This accelerated time frame can intensify the feelings of anxiety and can even cause some confusion or frustration for you and your loved one. While a fast move isn't ideal, sometimes it is the reality. If you find yourself faced with a quick move and transition, the key to success is to enlist help.

Find a family member, trusted friend, or social worker to act as a project manager for your move. Acting as a move coordinator takes responsibility off your aging loved one's plate, allowing them to focus their energy on healing or recovering from a medical emergency. First, begin to gather people who can help with the process. Trusted friends and family members are excellent choices, but sometimes these key people are not available or the task simply feels too large. In these cases, consider calling in the professionals.

Fortunately, professional movers who specialize in senior issues and senior care are available in most towns. These movers provide a more experienced approach and can move boxes and items into senior housing quickly, as well as items to donation centers.

Acting as a move coordinator takes responsibility off your aging loved one's plate, allowing them to focus their energy on healing or recovering from a medical emergency.

If your loved one arrives at the senior living community before the majority of your possessions, be sure to bring in the necessities as quickly as possible. Think important documents like Medicare cards and a driver license, comfortable clothing, a favorite book, tablet or smartphone, and a few photos to make the space look as homey as possible. Then, as more furniture and possessions arrive, you can work to put items in your new space.

Finally, understand that if there is any question about whether your loved one would like to keep a certain possession or not, err on the side of caution. You can bring in photos of items in question a few times a week if you would like, or you could simply wait until your loved one is feeling better.

When it comes to those decisions about possessions, it can be tricky. Even if you have months to prepare for your move, deciding what to take and what to leave behind can be difficult.





DISCUSSION ABOUT THE PROCESS OF DECIDING WHICH THINGS ARE IMPORTANT TO HANG ON TO

It is possible that your new senior living space or apartment is smaller than the home you are currently living in. If that is the case, you may need to downsize a bit. However, downsizing does not have to be something to fear. In fact, it can be liberating! It will likely feel good to streamline your home before packing things into boxes. In order to stay organized and make the most out of your downsizing, consider these tips:

- Work room by room, drawer by drawer. Resist the urge to flit from one room to another, starting a new project before completing another.
- Take photos of favorite things that you won't keep; these photographs can be made into an album that you will cherish for years to come.
- Designate categories for every item: "keep," "donate," "give to someone special," "sell," "throw away."
- Remember that things are things and not memories. You have memories forever, even if you don't have the things.



- If you aren't quite sure what to do with a certain item, put it down and sleep on it. You can begin to make poor decisions when you are feeling tired or overwhelmed.
- Do consider keeping holiday decorations, just perhaps not on such a large scale. Most senior communities encourage residents to make their apartments feel like home, and putting up a festive wreath or other items can make you feel right at home. Just remember that you will be decorating a smaller space, so it is best to not bring along the seven-foot Christmas tree, opting for a small tree instead.
- Resist the urge to keep some items in a rented storage area. You don't want to have to repeat this downsizing process with the items you shuffled to your storage unit in a few years. Bite the bullet and make the decisions now.

Just remember that you will be decorating a smaller space, so it is best to not bring along the seven-foot Christmas tree, opting for a small tree instead.



TIPS FOR CREATING A HOMEY ENVIRONMENT

Speaking of decorating for the holidays, there are other ways that you can make your new apartment or space feel like home upon move-in. Although every community is different, you can start to bring a bit of your personality to your new space by considering a few of our tips. You are only a few tricks away from feeling right at home in your new space!

Hang photos first!

While it is certainly imperative to put your furniture in the best spot, it can create a sense of welcome to hang or display some of your favorite photos upon moving in. They will provide a reminder of home, and they give new neighbors and staff members something to talk about when they greet you in your apartment.

Add a welcome sign.

Something as simple as hanging a sign to the outside of your apartment door can do wonders for feeling at home. It can also be a indication that you are eager to meet new neighbors.

Enjoy a meal.

Head on down to the dining room and enjoy a meal! Not only will you get delicious food that you didn't have to prepare, you will also be able to meet some new friends around the dining room table. It is always great to see smiling faces welcoming you to dinner. If your aging loved one seems shy about eating a meal in the dining room that first day, invite yourself to come along. You'll love meeting your loved one's new neighbors and you deserve a meal for you hard work during the move!

Dress your windows.

While most senior living communities discourage painting the walls, many still allow residents to choose their own window treatments. This freedom to express yourself can add a pop of color and style to your rooms.

Host friends.

Try to welcome friends—new and old—into your home as soon as possible after your move. You don't have to make it an elaborate affair for it to feel genuine; simply brew a pot of coffee and put some cookies on a plate.

Your new neighbors will love to come and meet you, while your old friends will love checking out your new home. You will love showing off your new space!

Unpack and explore.

Your apartment will begin to feel like home when you associate it with the place that you return to for relaxation and coziness. The best way to make your new home a safe haven is to get out and explore your new senior community. Take advantage of meals in the dining room, as well as activities. You will meet new friends, begin to navigate your new hallways, and will look forward to returning to your cozy home.



How can you be sure that you are packing the right items? Even with an organized move full of “donate,” “give,” and “sell” piles, you may still wonder if you are forgetting something.



CHECKLIST FOR THE MOVE

While personal style and situation will dictate what you or your aging loved one decide to bring along to the new apartment, there are a few categories that are somewhat universal when it comes to items to consider.

Clothing

When it comes to clothing, you may be moving into a home with a smaller closet than you currently have. Here are a few tips for deciding what clothing to bring:

- ✓ Before packing the entire wardrobe, take time to evaluate each piece. If it doesn't fit, or if it hasn't been worn for a year, don't bring it.
- ✓ Don't forget to bring along loungewear, pajamas, and a cozy robe.
- ✓ If you are moving to a senior community with a four-season climate, don't forget to pack items for each season. You might be able to store seasonal items, such as a winter coat, in a coat closet in your new apartment or a small storage area in the community.
- ✓ Go easy on shoes. It is best to bring a few pairs of comfortable shoes for daily wear, such as tennis shoes.
- ✓ If there is laundry service at the community, determine if you need to label clothing per any policy. Take care of this before the move so that you don't have to worry about it when the first laundry day comes.
- ✓ Bring pieces that you love wearing, that make you feel confident, and that are comfortable—but be sure to consider every season.

Furniture

For most senior living apartments, residents are given an empty space ready to be filled with their own furniture. Here are a few things to take into consideration when loading up furniture:

- ✓ Be sure to ask what items are supplied and what larger pieces you may bring in.
- ✓ Measure the new apartment and keep a floor plan handy to make decisions. There's nothing more frustrating on moving day than realizing that the king-sized bed cannot fit into the new bedroom.
- ✓ Consider selling some furniture and investing in smaller, apartment-friendlier furniture before the move. For example, a small love seat and chair might suit the new living room better than a large sectional from home.
- ✓ If you have a "must come" piece, be ready for the possibility that you may have to sacrifice something else. For example, if you cannot live without your piano, you might have to forgo bringing a lounge chair, as there simply may not be enough space.
- ✓ Consider pieces that serve more than one function. A coffee table that has storage drawers, for example, does double duty to enhance your storage.
- ✓ Speaking of storage, a well-placed shelving or drawer unit in the bathroom can do wonders. Drawers in the bathroom can give some extra space or eliminate the need for a linen closet.

Decor

Personal style doesn't have to diminish when moving into a senior living community! Here are a few tips to consider when packing up decor:

- ✓ Planning to bring along art or photos to hang on the walls? Keep your floor plan and measurements handy. This way, you won't bring too much upon move-in.
- ✓ Speaking of fall hazards, be wary of rugs. Unsecured rugs can cause you, or visitors, to slip and trip. If you must bring rugs, be sure they are skidproof and secured.
- ✓ Resist the urge to pack large pieces of art or cabinetry. In addition to furniture, these extras can make the new home seem cramped and can even become a fall hazard.
- ✓ Be realistic when packing up certain items that may only be used once per year. For example, the huge Thanksgiving serving platters will only take up cabinet space in your new home.





Personal Items

Finally, be sure to bring along items that you love. Here are a few of our tips for sorting choosing the extra special items to bring:

- ✓ Photos are great, and you should bring some. However, you may not be able to hang all the photos that you could at your old home. Pick your favorites and then slide the others into albums that you can easily store on your bookshelf.

Bring along your must-have items only if you know there isn't already something similar available. For example, consider leaving your coffeepot behind if there is a coffee service every morning right down the hall.

- ✓ Don't forget to bring a smartphone, tablet, or computer. You'll love having one or more of these to stay connected, but if you can pare down your electronics because you know there is a computer lab on campus, consider doing so.

Don't forget to bring medical necessities, including your medical information, prescriptions (as necessary), doctor information, and emergency contact information. Most of these items will be collected ahead of time, but it is wise to have them just in case.



WHAT NOT TO PACK

As you begin to finalize the packing list, remember to leave certain items behind. Fortunately, moving into a senior living community means you can leave behind certain items as your loved one steps into a new lifestyle. Here are a few things to consider leaving behind:

Cleaning supplies.

Amenities at senior living communities include regular housekeeping service. Say “so long” to deep-cleaning your own home and leave your cleaning supplies behind. Consider bringing along light supplies like bleach wipes or a dustcloth.

Oversized furniture.

Remember: Keep floor-plan measurements handy as you consider which furniture to bring. Slimmed-down, apartmentfriendly choices will keep the home feeling spacious and safe.

Your entire book, puzzle (etc.) collection.

If there is a large collection of items (books, puzzles, figurines, games, etc.), consider only bringing a few favorites. Large collections can make the new space feel cramped quickly, while bringing only favorites can be a nod to your personality and style without sacrificing the space.

Extravagant jewelry.

Jewelry is certainly an important part of your loved one’s personal story and style. However, if there is a large collection of pricey items, consider putting the majority of the items in a safety deposit box or other location outside of the new apartment.



CONCLUSION

A new apartment is waiting for you or your loved one to make it a home. Just as with any move, it might take some time to transition into this new space and new lifestyle. This new adventure is the best decision you can make to keep your aging loved one healthy and active! New memories, friends, and staff members are on the horizon!

Keep this good news in mind through the organizing, downsizing, packing and moving. Soon, you will be enjoying a cup of coffee in your new home, admiring your choices and work.

If you haven't chosen the perfect senior living community quite yet, we would love to show off our amenities, lifestyle, and residents.

You won't believe the events, meals, and opportunities we have waiting for you in our communities.

Give us a call at 770-691-0050 to set up a tour so that you can see it for yourself.





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