



# SIMPLIFY YOUR SPACE

A Helpful Guide to Decluttering, Downsizing & Uncovering Some Serenity



# LET'S GET STARTED!

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Anyone who wants to declutter, downsize, and organize their space faces a daunting task: sorting and paring down their accumulated possessions, which may include treasured keepsakes and much-loved art. The good news is, we've got some practical tips that can make the process easier. As a boutique rental residence for those 62 and better, Mather Place supports new residents with tips and resources for downsizing, decluttering, and planning their move.

What follows are some of our “pro tips” to make the process manageable, from how to get started, to options for getting rid of unwanted items, to advice for staging your home and prepping for a move.

# Downsizing with Simple Steps, Less Stress

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## #1: DON'T WAIT.

Start now, don't rush, and *breathe*. If you're not in a hurry, you'll find it much less stressful to sort and downsize your home's belongings.

The process will definitely take longer than you think, so the sooner you can dive in, the better. Take it one step at a time, and take breaks throughout. Involve others, so you'll have moral support and a second opinion on some of your decisions. You might even enlist a "buddy" who also wants to downsize, so you can keep each other on track.

## #2: FOCUS ON THE POSITIVES.

This can be difficult. Letting go of belongings can be difficult ... but decluttering and downsizing are good for your mental health, your physical space, and your future. Take enough time to reminisce over items and to make careful decisions. Following the steps below can make this easier.

## #3: ERASE PAPER.

Shred it, scan it, recycle it—however you do it, reduce your paper piles! Tackle filing cabinets, photo boxes, magazine archives, even recipe cards. Warning: this will all take longer than sorting other objects.

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of your belongings!**

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#### **#4: WORK ROOM BY ROOM.**

Don't be daunted by downsizing—just take it one room (or closet) at a time. Set a reasonable goal for how long it will take you to go through each room.

#### **#5: GO EASY ON EMOTIONS.**

To ease the emotional aspect of paring down your belongings, start by going through your attic, garage, and junk drawers. There you'll find things you don't have an emotional attachment to, making it easier to let go. Next up: spare bedrooms, dining room, etc., saving the kitchen and bedroom for last.

#### **#6: USE THESE 3 CATEGORIES: KEEP, DONATE, GIFT.**

As you work through each room, use labels, boxes, or designated areas to categorize the furniture, art, and other items into three groups. Categories should include things you definitely want to keep, things to donate to charity (or recycle), and things your family members might want.

#### **#7: BE RUTHLESS.**

Be objective, and be ruthless in decluttering. Pare down kitchen items, clothing, linens, etc., to only what you need. Some experts say in a true downsizing exercise, you should keep only 1/3 to 1/2 of your belongings!

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## NO “MAYBES” ALLOWED

When sorting your things,  
stick to your three  
categories—don’t let  
a “maybe” pile sneak in.  
Each thing you consider is  
a keeper or it’s not.

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## ARE YOU STRESSED ABOUT GETTING RID OF THINGS? DON'T BE!

Some decisions should be easy, like the examples below. In these categories, keep only what you need and donate or toss the extras:

- **Linens:** sheets that don’t fit beds in your house; scratchy, old, or unused sheets and towels; mismatched pillowcases; towers of washcloths; or kitchen towels
- **Magazines** and newspapers
- **Takeout menus,** flyers, recipes
- **Clothing** that’s worn, doesn’t fit, you never liked, duplicates
- **Outdated media** you no longer use, like VHS tapes, DVDs, and CDs
- The **electronics** that go with the media above. (Especially if they’re broken!)
- Old or duplicate **office supplies/art supplies**
- **Books** and textbooks you will never refer to
- Extra sets of **dishes,** coffee mugs, cooking utensils, reusable water bottles
- **Holiday decorations**
- **Tools**

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Look for a local hazardous waste disposal facility, which may take medicines, paint and chemical containers, and even old electronics.

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Now it's time to take a look at your "donate" and "gift" categories of furniture and household items. First, get rid of the things no one will want. Do your best to recycle rather than throw in the garbage.

**#8: BE ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS.**

If you have expired/unwanted medicines—ask your drugstore to dispose of them, rather than flushing them or throwing them out. You can also look for a local hazardous waste disposal facility, which may take medicines, paint and chemical containers, and even old electronics.

**#9: DONATE WHAT YOU CAN.**

Clothing that's in good shape, kitchen utensils, even linens ... there are charitable organizations (not to mention friends and neighbors) that will welcome your unwanted items.

**#10: SEEK AN OBJECTIVE OPINION.**

This is where a buddy system comes in: if you can't decide whether to keep your best china or which dresser should go, ask a friend or family member to help you decide.



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**When selling your goods, try an auction for high-end items.**

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### **#11: GET SALES SAVVY.**

When selling your goods, try an auction for high-end items. Then look for reputable antique and secondhand dealers. Often, they can buy your wares or put you in touch with specialty dealers like booksellers. Some dealers will come to your home, take what you don't want, and even drop off the donations.

### **#12: FIND A HOME FOR FURNITURE.**

If you have heirloom furniture you'd like to pass on, don't be surprised if your family doesn't want it either. Today's tastes run toward comfort, informality, and practicality. In cases like this, you can find a good consignment shop and see if you can sell some of the pieces. For items you can't sell, consider donating to a good cause.

# MOVING? NO SWEAT!

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Get a feel for the size of your new rooms by comparing them to rooms of similar dimensions in your present home.

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Downsizing before a move? Good idea! If you are packing yourself, consider starting to pack nonessential items like your home décor items, books, and craft supplies four to six weeks in advance.

## #13: SIZE UP YOUR NEW SPACE.

Get a feel for the size of your new rooms by comparing them to rooms of similar dimensions in your present home.

## #14: PREARRANGE WITH FLOOR PLANS.

Draw plans of your new home if you don't have any, and sketch in a furniture layout. See if you need to pare down what you're keeping.

## #15: COLOR-CODE BOXES.

Once you get to the packing stage, use a color-coded system to organize all your boxes. Choose a color for each room and mark the boxes destined for that room with a coordinating color sticker.



# STAGE YOUR HOME TO SELL IT

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Your living room, kitchen, and master bedroom have the most potential for influencing buyers, so focus on those spaces.

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Staging a home leaves a lasting impression on a homebuyer's mind.

## #16: FOCUS ON KEY ROOMS.

Your living room, kitchen, and master bedroom have the most potential for influencing buyers, so focus on those spaces.

## #17: DON'T GET PERSONAL.

To help buyers imagine your home as their own, create a blank canvas. Keep your décor and style, but remove personal photos, refrigerator magnets, and toiletries on your vanity.



## #18: MAKE SURE EVERYTHING IS IN WORKING ORDER.

Do a walk-through and fix anything that indicates neglect (a burnt light bulb, broken latch on a screen door, etc.).

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**Create as much  
open space  
as possible.**

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### **#19: CHOOSE A NEUTRAL PALETTE.**

If painting or redecorating is a necessary part of your home staging, go for neutral colors like gray, white, and taupe. This helps people envision themselves living there with their belongings.

### **#20: LET THE LIGHT IN.**

Open curtains and blinds to let in as much natural light as possible, and turn on all the lights in the house for showings—even in closets and the basement. This makes a home more welcoming and attractive.

### **#21: REARRANGE THE FURNITURE.**

Create as much open space as possible. (Hopefully your downsizing has made this easier!) This makes rooms look more spacious and, again, helps buyers visualize their own furniture in the home.

*SOURCE for home staging tips: [moving.com](http://moving.com)*

**RELAX AND ENJOY SOME SERENITY IN YOUR NEWLY CLEARED SPACE.**

# MOVING TO MATHER PLACE? WE'LL HELP WITH THE HEAVY LIFTING.

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For residents preparing to move to Mather Place, we can ease stress throughout the process, from your first downsizing plans right through moving day. We'll share resources and provide knowledgeable tips. Our Move-in Support includes...

- **Downsizing** – We'll make this often-daunting task less taxing with guidance on how to start, where to sell or donate items, and how to break down the process into manageable steps.
- **Vendor Resources** – From painters and closet organizers to computer experts and movers, we can help you connect with high-quality local professionals.
- **Space Planning** – We'll talk through what you're bringing to Mather Place and help you create a plan for placing your furniture and art, so moving day runs like clockwork.
- **Moving Day** – You'll enjoy the support of our experienced move-in coordinator to help make the day go smoothly!

To learn more about our move-in services, call (847) 256.9570.

