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A WEEKLY GUIDE TO CENTRAL ALBERTA REAL ESTATE

JANUARY 11 2019





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Learn to downsize before a move



Aging men and women often take inventory of their lives in an effort to focus on activities or lifestyle changes that can ensure happy retirements. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau shows there are some 76 million baby boomers — those people born between 1946 to 1964 — across the country. With the youngest of the boomers in their mid-50s and the majority having already reached retirement age, many boomers are trying to decide if it's time to move out of their family homes and into smaller, more manageable abodes.

Many older adults find they do not need the same amount of space as they did when they had children living at home. Retirees and those on the cusp of retirement may find that downsizing is a smart financial move that frees up more time for recreation.

However, it can be challenging to cut down on living space and then deal with figuring out how to make furniture, belongings and stored items fit in more condensed areas. Moving can be stressful even without having to cut down on prized items. Taking an inventory of belongings can help the process go smoothly.

Before moving, men and women can go room by room, making piles of items that will be kept, donated, sold, or discarded. This can be a tedious task, but it is necessary to avoid clutter in a new home.

People downsizing can attempt to sell items they do not need via newspaper classified sections or online classified sites. Appliances and furniture in excellent shape may fetch good prices. Any extra cash can be put toward buying new items that are size-appropriate for the smaller home.

Another way to clear out clutter is to sort duplicates from the stock of items. A person may no longer need multiple sets of dishes or silverware. If the move involves switching from a king-sized to a queen-sized bed, donate or trash bed linens that will no longer fit. Pay close attention to kitchen and bathroom items, which tend to accumulate over time but might not be discarded when clearing a home of clutter.

People moving from a detached home to a condominium or a townhouse may learn that homeowner's association fees cover everything from snow removal to lawn maintenance to pool upkeep. If so, it's unnecessary to bring lawn and garden supplies.

Homeowners are advised to look at the floor plan of their new dwellings and pay attention to storage space. This can make it easier to plan ahead for what may fit, what will need to be purchased new and which storage solutions may be needed. Having a plan in place can make unpacking and settling in go smoothly. The organizing company Organize Me says that homeowners should consider how cabinets and closets will be used before moving in.

Downsizing can free up time and money. When done right, downsizing can make retirement easier and create more leisure time for retirees.

Get on the fast track to being organized



Getting organized is on the mind of people throughout the year, but even more so at the end of December when individuals are making their New Year's resolutions. According to the data pulled from Google by iQuanti, 33,230,420 searches were made about "getting organized" in 2016. People are still interested in finding out ways to streamline their lives and conquer the clutter. Even though getting organized may seem like an arduous task, there are ways to get organized and do so quickly.

- **Keep a cleanup bin handy.** Put an empty basket in a central location, using it to gather stray items scattered around main living areas. Once everything has been collected, items can be returned to their rightful place.
- Make the bed. One of the easiest ways to keep a room looking neat is to make the bed each day. Store clean linens in a pillow case so the entire set is together and ready to go.

- Purge closets and cabinets. There's point allowing old, stained or damaged items to take up space. Set aside days to clear expired medication from the bathroom cabinet, discard ripped or ill-fitting clothing from the closet, or to dispose of broken toys in a nursery.
- Write things down. Tasks seem more manageable when they are written down in blackand-white and can be crossed off as completed. Writing things down also helps make the mind feel more organized.
- **Exercise** caution before buying. Don't buy more than you need; otherwise, you'll have to find space for extra items. Also, keep inventory of food and supplies in the house so you're not unwittingly buying duplicates.
- Sort mail and paperwork. Establish different categories papers so they can be sorted and discarded as needed. These may include bills, invitations, school papers, and junk mail. Reduce paper clutter by opting for digital correspondence when possible.
- Make one repair at a time. Tackle that source of stress by focusing on one repair and seeing it through to completion.
- Delegate the work.If kids want to help organize, let them. It can be a fun project for an adolescent to rearrange the pantry or offer their ideas for corralling messes.



How to organize the pantry



Since the advent of supermarkets and warehouse stores, many food shoppers have embraced buying in bulk. Buying in bulk can help shoppers save money and avoid last-minute trips to the grocery store in search of missing ingredients, but all those extra items also necessitate more careful pantry planning.

People already short on space may need to reorganize their pantries to make room for items purchased in bulk. Purging a pantry of expired items and developing an organizational strategy that works may take a little time. But once a system is in place, cooking and meal planning should become a lot easier.

1. Declutter

It's difficult to get organized if you're holding on to items you no longer use. Therefore, go through the pantry and find any expired foods and half-eaten items that have gravitated to the back of the cabinet or closet. After you go through everything, you will likely find that you have much more room than you once thought.

2. Empty the rest

Before placing items back in the pantry, take inventory of what you have. Getting them out in the open will enable you to see exactly what's there and get an idea of what you purchase the most. This will help you set up food zones or purchase containers that will fit your pantry better. If you have unspoiled foods that you are unlikely eat, donate them to a food bank. Now that the pantry is empty, take this opportunity to clean and adjust the shelves.

3. Downsize from bulky packaging

Bulky packages may not fit in your pantry. Invest in plastic or glass containers with lids that will keep foods visible, neat and fresh.

4. Establish food zones

Establishing food zones is a great way to organize a pantry and make meal time more efficient. Group breakfast foods together and store pastas and sauces near each other. Use a basket for baking items, including smaller spices or things like baking powder that can get lost in large cabinets. Then all you have to do is reach in and find something easily.

5. Keep a running inventory

Routinely look in the pantry to determine what you need. This prevents overspending on items you already have and also ensures your pantry won't grow cluttered with repeat items.

Organizing pantries may take a little time, but a little organization can open up a lot of space and make it easier to prepare meals each day.

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Moving Checklist

ONE MONTH BEFORE

- ✓ Make reservations for moving services and make a list of all items to be moved.
- ✓ Notify friends, relatives, creditors, etc. of your move. Begin submit-ting change of address forms to them and to your local post office.
- ✓ If you have children, be sure to request all of the necessary documents for transferring schools.
- ✓ Gather all important personal documents, medical/dental records, insurance policies, etc.
- ✓ Begin packing seldom-used items. Consider holding a garage sale for those items you won't be moving.
- ✓Arrange connect/disconnect dates with telephone and utility companies.

TWO WEEKS BEFORE

- ✓ Clear up any outstanding accounts
- ✓ Transfer checking and savings accounts to your new location.
- $lap{red}$ Return borrowed items including library books and retrieve loaned items.
- ✔ Arrange for pet travel, if necessary.
- ✓ Cancel/transfer any membership fees or prescriptions (ask your doctor for assistance).
- ✓ Dispose of flammable liquids such as spray paints, solvents, and gas in lawn mowers.
- ✓ To avoid costly deposits, request "Perfect payment Record" letters from utility companies.

ONE WEEK BEFORE

- ${\bf \hspace{0.1em}\prime}$ Clean appliances don't forget to clean the oven and defrost the refrigrator.
- ✓ Start packing clothes. Remember to prepare "arrival kits" of essential items you'll need when you get to your new home (toiletries, medicines, paper plates, etc.)

MOVING DAY!

- ✓ Double -check shelves, closets and cabinets to make sure nothing is left behind. Look through the garage, attic and basement.
- ✓ Turn off lights, close and lock windows and doors.
- ✓ Leave the keys with your realtor.
- ✓ At your new home, check the circuit breakers and pilots to make sure everything is on.

Organize and declutter room-by-room



Getting organized is a popular New Year's resolution.

Clutter can be a major source of stress that affects how individuals feel about their spaces. Psychology Today indicates messy homes and work spaces can contribute to feelings of helplessness, anxiety and overwhelming stress. Clutter bombards the mind with excessive stimuli, makes it more difficult to relax and can constantly signal to the brain that work is never done.

Tackling messes no matter where they are lurking is not a one-time project. Much like losing weight and getting healthy, clearing a home of clutter requires dedication and lifestyle changes. With these organizational tips and tricks, anyone can work through their home room-by-room and conquer clutter.

Find a place for everything

Clutter creeps up as people accumulate possessions over the years. Over time, failure to regularly go through belongings and thin the herd can lead to the accumulation of clutter. But clutter also can accumulate if people fail to find a place to put items. Racks for garages, organizational systems for closets and furniture with storage capacity, such as storage ottomans, are some storage solutions that can help people find a place for their possessions.

Utilize vertical space when possible

Getting items up and off the floor can maximize square footage in a home. Bookshelves, hanging

wall shelves, hooks, cabinetry, built-ins, and other storage solutions that rely on walls and ceilings are simple and effective storage solutions. Unused space behind cabinet or closet doors are some additional places to store belongings. Hang razors or toothbrushes on medicine cabinet walls and curling irons and other hair tools on the interior of cabinet doors in bathrooms.

Create a coding system

Home offices can be some of the more disorganized rooms in a house simply due to the volume of electronics and paperwork within them. HGTV suggests using a color-coded system for important files to keep them organized. Label important items, whether they're paper or digital files, in accordance with your system.

Put it away

When you finish using an item, return it to its storage location. This eliminates piles of belongings strewn around the house — and hunting and pecking for missing things. If you can't put it away immediately, have a few baskets on hand labeled for the different rooms in the house. Pop the items in the requisite baskets and then routinely take each basket around the house to return the items.

Investing in custom cabinetry and organizational systems also can help people organize their belongings. Tackle rooms such as the garage, basements, bedroom closets, and pantries, or those areas that tend to accumulate clutter the fastest.

Rethink your kitchen layout for better organization



Kitchens are the most popular rooms in many homes. Even though the average person spends just 68 minutes each weekday consuming food, and around 37 minutes preparing meals, the kitchen is not just a spot for food. It also is a gathering place for conversation, homework and family time.

In recognition that so much time is spent in this heart of the home, many people are embracing some of the more popular trends concerning kitchen layouts to maximize the comfort and efficiency of these rooms.

Communal zones

Unlike the days of yore when the kitchen was utilitarian, today's home floor plans make kitchens

a focal point of a home. Food preparation also is no longer a solitary task. Thanks to larger kitchen footprints and multiple zones set up for meal creation, a greater number of people can hang out in the kitchen and help with meals. You'll find multiple sinks, large islands and more counter space are key components of modern kitchen layouts.

Dining nooks

Kitchen designs are bringing back banquette seating in a cozy nook. This design is a practical use of space, and can fit in large and small kitchens alike. It also can give a kitchen a highend look, as built-in banquettes can highlight a bay window or seem custom-made for the space.

Banquette seating can fit a number of people comfortably and provides a sensible and casual dining spot solution.

Family table

The trend experts at Southern Living magazine indicate that formal dining and living rooms are now used infrequently. As a result, kitchens have evolved to accommodate meal prep and dining. A large family table in the center of the room brings people into the kitchen to get more involved with food, according to San Francisco designer David Kensington.

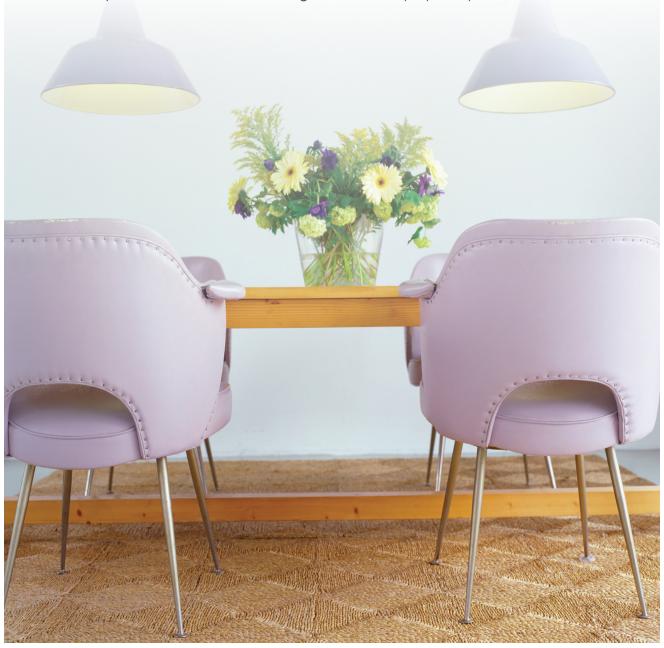
Counter culture

Taking a page out of a favorite corner diner or bar, kitchens are increasingly outfitted with a large island flanked by chic counter stools, according to the design pros at Domino. Family members can pull up a stool and grab a quick snack. It's also a great place for friends to engage in conversation while a host or hostess prepares cocktails and appetizers for an evening soirée.

Work zone

Many families like to have an area of the kitchen set up as a tech zone where kids can do their homework and even parents can do some work, such as paying bills. Setting aside an area of counter space as a small desk area can be a great idea. Such areas also help parents keep a watchful eye on children while they're surfing the internet.

Kitchens are the hub of the household, and modern design trends cater to a growing need for a multipurpose space.



12 ways to maximize vertical space



Who hasn't, at one point in their lives, lamented a lack of space and organization at home? A lifetime's worth of items have to be kept somewhere, and without the right organizational strategy, clutter can quickly take over.

The home improvement site Home Therapy says that, when square footage is limited, tapping vertical walls is the fastest way to maximize and multiply the space available. Hooks, rods, shelving, built-ins ... the sky is the limit when it comes to finding additional storage and adding a bit of personality to tight quarters. Even homes that may have adequate space can benefit from vertical solutions.

Here are some ideas to put vertical and other less-utilized areas to work for you.

1. Hang wire or plastic file organizers on the inside of kitchen cabinets to easily store cookie sheets, trays and cutting boards.

- 2. Save on counter or cabinet space with hanging spice racks. These can be hung directly on walls or on the inside of cabinet doors.
- 3. Stack all the stuff you can, including washers and dryers, beds (with storage drawers underneath) and even stacking nesting tables.
- 4. Choose furniture that is tall rather than wide. This can mean swapping out a dresser in a bedroom for an armoire or vertical chest of drawers.
- 5. Canvas bags hung on a towel bar on a wall can keep dirty clothes wrangled until it's time to wash them. This also eliminates clothes hampers on the floor.
- 6. Add a second rod or shelving to the inside of closets to create more space for clothing and other items.



7. Take kitchen cabinets all the way to the ceiling. Store lesser used items on the uppermost shelves and the items you use each on the most accessible shelves.

8. Install a shelf over the entryway to a room to utilize this seldom-used space. Shelves also can be custom cut and placed in oddly shaped areas, such as in attic rooms under the eaves or on slanted walls.

- 9. Dowels or curtain rods and some fabric can be used to fabricate slings to hold books or magazines.
- 10. Invest in some magnetic boards that

can hold keys or notes by the front door or store knives on a kitchen wall.

- 11. Install two towel bars parallel to one another on the wall of a bathroom. These can hold extra toilet tissue or rolled hand towels.
- 12. Use rope plant hangers to store potatoes or onions near prep areas. The same plant hangers can wrangle stuffed animals and small toys in kids' rooms.

Utilizing vertical areas in a home is a great way to increase storage capacity and keep rooms more organized.









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