

EXERCISE 7: Moving checklist

Before you move

Reality check: Get or sketch a floor plan of your new home. Ideally, measure your furniture to make sure everything you want to take is going to fit. Photos of your new place can help you visualise how suited your pieces are to your new home.

Book a removalist: It's best to do this as soon as you have a date to move.

Make as many meals as you can from the ingredients you have in your pantry, fridge and freezer so there is less food to move and you are not stressed trying to keep things cold.

Packing: decide whether to pack and unpack yourself, or employ a packing service. If you want your belongings to be insured during the move, you may need to use professional packers.

If you are packing yourself, read on:

Start gathering boxes: Bunnings, your local supermarket or fruit and vegetable shop are all likely to have boxes you can have free of charge. Alternatively, you can buy boxes from your removalist or secondhand from people who have recently moved (through websites like eBay, Facebook or Gumtree).

Pack heavy things like books, plates and casserole dishes in small boxes, lighter ones like quilts, pillows and cushions in larger cartons — or use light and soft items to protect your dishes.

Label boxes with their contents, or the room they will go into. Mark fragile items in colour to stand out. Write on at least two sides of each box so you can identify what's in them when they are stacked.

Your most valuable possessions should travel with you. They are often best packed in suitcases, which are more likely to fit easily into a car.

Dismantle any furniture that comes apart and keep screws, bolts and allen keys in a safe place (a small box specially for these things with the relevant parts in labelled, individual sandwich bags) or secured to the furniture itself. This can save a lot of time and frustration later.

Services:

Arrange disconnections from your old home: phone, internet, TV, gas, electricity ... Remember to leave the power on for a few days if someone will be coming back to clean.

Shop around for new connections at your new home: phone, internet, TV, gas, electricity ...

Change of address: Advise Australia Post and other providers of your new address.

Pack a moving "survival kit": Pack everything you'll need in your first day or two at the new home: toiletries, medications, scissors, toilet paper and tools, pet requirements, snacks, kettle, tea and coffee, toaster. The last thing you need after a big day moving is to be rummaging through boxes to make a cup of tea or find your much-needed medication.

Check the arrangements for your arrival:

Timing: Are there restrictions on times you can move in and monopolise the lifts? Do you need to book in your moving time with the manager?

Keys: If you don't yet have them, when and where can you collect them? Do you need something extra, such as a swipe card or code for security gates, garage or goods lift?

Contacts: Do you — or your removalists — need to contact anyone in advance, or on arrival, e.g. a site manager?

Paperwork: Is there anything that must be finished before your move, or done on the day, e.g. condition report?

Fees: Do you have to pay anything on moving day?

Moving checklist

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Moving day

Remember, it is always a big day. By the end of it, you'll probably just be wanting a toasted sandwich or takeaway and an early night!

On moving day, you have a foot in each world. You haven't quite left the old house and you're not in the new one either. But you're responsible for both.

New home

Access: Make sure access is clear for your removalists and helpers.

Utilities: Check everything that should be connected is connected and working.

Condition: Check that the home is as you expected. Complete a condition report, if required, and take photos for your own records.

Make your bed: Re-assemble the bed, and get the mattress, with sheets and covers on as your first priority. You are really going to need it later!

Unpack: Explain where you want your belongings placed — have boxes clearly marked and help direct the unloading. Make sure your "survival kit" stays accessible. Resist temptation to begin unpacking until it's all brought in.

Let it settle: Leave your fridge standing upright for at least three hours before you switch it on, so that the coolant gas can settle after transportation.

Focus on key areas: For some people that's the kitchen, for others, the bathroom or the office. Whatever you need most, focus on getting those areas functional for the first couple of days.

Old home

Check: Make sure nothing has been left behind.

Check again: Arrange any final cleaning.