

Downsizing Without Overwhelm



Goal: Make the next move calmer, simpler, and on your timeline.
Rule: You're not "downsizing everything." You're right-sizing life.

Step 1: Get Clear Before You Touch a Box

- ☐ What is the real reason for a change? (maintenance / stairs / loneliness / cost / safety / proximity to family)
- ☐ What do you want more of? (ease / one-floor living / less upkeep / closer to people / walkability)
- ☐ What do you want less of? (stairs / yard work / clutter / repairs / long drives)
- ☐ Decide your "non-negotiables" (pick 3 max)
- ☐ One-floor living ☐ Garage ☐ Walk-in shower ☐ Pets allowed
- ☐ Guest space ☐ Near family ☐ Low HOA ☐ Quiet
- ☐ Decide your "nice-to-haves" (optional, not required): _____

Step 2: Choose a Timeline (Most People Skip This)

- ☐ Pick one
- ☐ 0-3 months ☐ 3-6 months ☐ 6-12 months ☐ 12+ months
- ☐ What would make you move sooner? (health change, home issue, finances) _____
- ☐ What would make you wait? (family timing, emotional readiness, repairs) _____

Step 3: Don't Sort Everything — Sort in Stages

Use this order. It prevents burnout. Stage A — Easy Wins (1-2 weeks)

- ☐ Trash/recycle obvious junk
- ☐ Duplicate kitchen tools & gadgets
- ☐ Old towels/linens
- ☐ Clothes that don't fit or aren't worn

Stage B — “Not Daily Use” (2-6 weeks)

- ☐ Holiday décor
- ☐ Books you won't reread
- ☐ Extra furniture (you don't sit on)
- ☐ Hobby supplies you no longer use
- ☐ Garage duplicates (tools, paint, cables)

Stage C — Memory Items (last)

- ☐ Pick one “memory bin” per person (hard limit)
- ☐ Photograph sentimental items you won't keep
- ☐ Keep the story, not the object (label photos with names/dates)

Step 4: Use the 4-Pile System (Simple, Works)

For every item, choose ONE:

- ☐ KEEP (used/needed; fits next home)
- ☐ DONATE (good condition; someone else benefits)
- ☐ SELL (worth effort; high-value items only)
- ☐ DECIDE LATER (one box only; review monthly)

Tip: If you put it in “Decide Later” twice, it becomes Donate.

Step 5: High-Impact Home Prep (Avoid Busy Work)

Do only what improves safety, cleanliness, and first impressions.

- ☐ Declutter surfaces (counters, tables, bathroom vanities)
- ☐ Improve lighting (replace bulbs; open curtains)
- ☐ Fix safety issues (handrails, loose steps, trip hazards)
- ☐ Deep clean kitchens/baths (or hire once)
- ☐ Minor repairs that buyers notice (leaky faucet, sticking door)

Skip unless strategic: major renovations, replacing everything, “perfecting” the house.

Step 6: The “Next Home” Reality Check

- ☐ Measure large furniture you must keep
- ☐ Confirm what you’re willing to give up (yard, basement, stairs, storage)
- ☐ **If considering 55+ / condo / HOA, check:**
 - ☐ Monthly fees & what they include ☐ Rules (pets, rentals, exterior changes)
 - ☐ Accessibility (stairs, elevators, parking distance)

Step 7: Get Clarity Before Decisions

A short conversation can prevent expensive mistakes.

- ☐ Ask: “What could my home realistically sell for?” (range, not hype)
- ☐ Ask: “What’s the simplest timeline for my situation?”
- ☐ Ask: “What’s worth fixing — and what’s a waste of time?”

If You're Stuck, Start Here

- ☐ Do one drawer today. That's a win.
- ☐ Set a 30-minute timer. Stop when it ends.
- ☐ Your job is progress, not perfection.



Information Only Disclaimer

This checklist is for general educational purposes only. Real estate rules, contracts, and timelines vary by situation and location. It isn't professional advice for your specific circumstances.

If you want guidance tailored to your situation, call or text Jess at 267-978-3391.



Want help mapping the next step?

No pressure. Quick questions welcome.

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