

Helpful tips for the impossible mission of moving

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It is quite possible the word "moving" translates into "mission impossible" in most other languages.

Not only are you forced to decide what to take and what to trash, but you have to move all your stuff without breaking or damaging it. And this all starts after searching, finding, and renting or buying a new place. Who said life is fair?

Well, a few of us have packed up our lives several times and can offer both well-known and secret hints to make the task less of a hassle.

First things first, clean everything out.

Some people seem to think you can throw everything in a box, haul it to your new residence and then clean it out. The trouble is, you're carrying a lot of junk with you.

If you plan on moving out of state or up several flights of stairs, you'll be saving yourself the strain of extra, unnecessary luggage.

After that, take stock.

All your suitcases, empty and clean trash cans, and plastic storage boxes have now become official moving gear. Old boxes are great to use but are some-

times difficult to find. The rule to remember is: the less stuff you throw away after setting up, the better. So pack everything into containers you have to carry anyway.

Before you begin to pack, gather all additional supplies like tape, newspapers and large, permanent-ink pens.

Tape can be used to close all of the little boxes to avoid spilling stuff as you toss it around. Old newspapers help to avoid breaking dishware and other fragile items. It's also possible to use towels and wash cloths to cushion breakables since they will probably have to be laundered after you arrive anyway.

Pens are necessary to write what is inside of boxes, and tape labels can be used to avoid marking up suitcases and garbage cans. If you're moving in the summer, however, be careful where you place the tape. It often leaves a sticky residue behind after being out in the heat.

However you decide to organize what goes in what box, try keeping stuff together. For example, if your moving the dishware in an old suitcase, stick the silverware in the side pockets that zip up.

Wherever you place shoes to be moved, stick at least a few pairs of socks to avoid looking for odds and ends at your new place. And always remember to keep an overnight bag available to hold daily equipment which will be used during moving and unpacking. This includes such things as clothes, underwear, socks, deodorant, a toothbrush and toothpaste.

Now, after you're all packed, find a friend with a pickup truck. Try not to waste money on expensive moving materials because you'll find you need it to buy extras for the new place. For instance, your old shower curtain may not fit the new shower or the walls may need to be painted.

Save money by stuffing everything into every vehicle possible and taking advantage of your friends because they too will need a favor one day. But do offer them something nice like lemonade or dinner at the end of the day.

If you are moving more than a couple blocks away, it is often necessary to find help. Do all of the searching before you get packed. Don't wait until you're walking out the door to call a mover.

After you've moved your stuff and avoided injuries and broken dishware, take a look around the new place before deciding where to put things. You may need to leave certain areas around phone jacks open.

You may also want to put expensive items away from windows. After all, no one said you were moving to Beverly Hills.

Whatever you decide, just think it through before you place things.

You'll probably notice that people, especially parents, want to give you old things they do not need and that you may. If you don't want something, you have two choices. You can accept it and quietly throw it out later, or you can tell them you don't want it. Experience recommends telling them upfront to avoid being asked where that lime-green throw rug is when they visit.

More specifics include:

■ Don't waste time packing your refrigerated items in coolers. Have a big blow-out before you move or serve it to all of your wonderful friends who help you move.

■ If you have a roommate or roommates who have left before you, general etiquette suggests

you place one phone call to let them know about anything they left behind. If you don't have their new number, contact someone who may or someone who will see them. Make every attempt to return their belongings and hold on to it for at least a week. After a week, consider it your own or junk it. Just be sure they were done moving, and don't be surprised if they ask you later where their belongings are.

■ Cleaning before you leave is a requirement in some places. At least sweep the floors, vacuum the carpets and toss out your trash. Leaving unwanted articles behind is rude unless you know someone would want it. In other words, don't leave anything that isn't nice and expensive lying around.

■ Moving is a very stressful event. Schedule plenty of time for the move, and plan well to avoid last minute hassle. Be prepared for anything. And when it's all said and done, don't forget to apologize to anyone who has been near you during the process.



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