

How to move a parent without *losing* your mind.

(the whole thing, in 5 steps)



Most families start in the *attic.*

It makes sense. It's the fullest room, so it feels like the biggest win.

Six weekends later the attic is half sorted, nobody has measured anything, and the dining table that anchored forty years of holidays turns out not to fit through the new front door.

Professionals work the other direction. Here are the five steps we actually use, in the order we actually use them.

- Measure the new home before you touch the old one
- Sort with five piles, in the right order
- Handle what the movers legally can't take
- Protect the person, not just the furniture
- Plan for Houston, because Houston is different

1

Measure the new home before you touch a box in the *old one*.

Every keep-or-let-go argument in a senior move is really an argument about space. The moment you have the destination floor plan, those arguments stop being feelings and start being arithmetic.

- Get the floor plan and the room dimensions in writing
- Measure the furniture that matters, then measure the doorways, halls, and elevator
- Leave 36 to 42 inches of clear path for a walker or wheelchair
- Ask the community exactly what furniture they already provide

THE EXAMPLE PART

BEFORE

"We'll figure out what fits once we're over there."

Six weeks of sorting, then the sofa gets left on the loading ramp and someone cries in a parking lot.

AFTER

"The living room is 11 by 13. The sofa doesn't go. The two chairs do."

Decided in an afternoon, at the kitchen table, by the person whose sofa it is.

2

Five piles. And no *sixth one.*

Downsizing is the longest and most emotional part of the whole move. What keeps it moving is a fixed system, short sessions, and starting in the rooms nobody has feelings about.

Keep

Give to family

Sell

Donate

Discard

There is no "decide later." A maybe pile is just the whole job again, in a smaller room.

THE ORDER THAT WORKS

- **Guest room, linen closet, storage.** No feelings, fast wins, momentum.
- **Kitchen.** People use about 20% of what's in there. One of each utensil.
- **Living and dining.** Measure the table before anyone gets attached to it.
- **Bedroom, bath, office.** Clear the nightstand. Handle the documents deliberately.
- **Garage, then the attic.** Highest emotion goes last, once the system is trusted.

THE EXAMPLE PART

BEFORE

"Let's just start in the attic on Saturday."

AFTER

"Two hours in the linen closet. Then we stop."

3

The movers will leave a whole shelf *right where it is.*

Not because they're difficult. Because they legally can't. Anything flammable, corrosive, explosive, or toxic stays behind, and most families find that out on move-day morning.

Read the labels in week four. If it says Poison, Danger, Warning, or Caution, it needs its own plan.

Paint

Latex is fine. Lid off, stir in cat litter, and once it's solid it's trash. Oil-based is hazardous and goes to a waste facility or a PaintCare drop-off.

Medications

Original containers, hand-carried, every single one. Expired ones go to a pharmacy drop box. Never down the toilet.

Firearms

Take them yourself. Unloaded, hard-sided locked case, in the trunk, ammunition locked separately. An empty safe moves like any other furniture.

The rest

Pool chemicals, propane, pesticides, motor oil, aerosols, bleach, batteries, old fuel. Houston takes all of it free, see step five.

4

The hard part isn't the furniture. It's *the person*.

Relocation stress is real enough to be a recognized nursing diagnosis: anxiety, confusion, irritability, bad sleep, sometimes falls, usually in the first two to ten weeks. It gets worse when the move feels involuntary. It gets better when the person keeps the authority.

THE EXAMPLE PART

BEFORE

"We're going to get rid of all of this."

"You can't keep it all, Mom."

AFTER

"Which of these do you want with you?"

"Here's the wall we have. What goes on it?"

- Place the anchor items first, in the same layout as the old home
- On move day, send them elsewhere. A neighbor's kitchen, not a chair in the hallway
- Photograph an object before it goes. The memory survives without the square footage.
- When siblings stall out, bring in a neutral third party before it hardens

Sixty-three percent of adults over seventy-five say what their home is worth to them matters more than what it's worth.

5

Nobody writes moving guides for *August in Houston.*

The heat, the hurricane calendar, and a deregulated electricity market all change the plan here.

- **October to April is the window.** January and February have the lowest rates all year.
- **June through early October is storm season.** Check the flood history first.
- **If it has to be summer,** start at seven, finish the lifting before midday. Weekends cost 15 to 30 percent more.
- **Move on a Tuesday morning.** Cheaper, and you miss the Katy Freeway entirely.

WHERE THE CHEMICALS ACTUALLY GO

ESC South

11500 S. Post Oak Rd. 77035
Tue, Wed, Fri, Sat · 8am–5pm

ESC North

5614 Neches St. 77026
2nd Thursday · 9am–3pm

Free for City of Houston residents with a utility bill matching your ID. Harris County has its own facility, by appointment. Call 311 first.

TWO THINGS ONLY TEXANS HAVE TO THINK ABOUT

You pick the power company

CenterPoint owns the wires regardless. Compare on powertochoose.org and take a plain fixed rate. At 65 and over the deposit must be waived.

Register medical equipment

On oxygen, CPAP, or dialysis, the doctor files with CenterPoint Critical Care before move-in. It buys advance outage warning.

Three lists worth *taping to a fridge.*

These are the three things families forget, and the three that cost the most to fix afterward.

A Who to notify _____ 2 to 4 weeks out

Government · USPS, Social Security, Medicare, IRS, DMV, voter registration

Health · All insurance, doctors, dentist, specialists, and the pharmacy

Financial · Banks, cards, loan servicers, retirement accounts, payment apps

Utilities · Stop at the old address, start at the new one, same day

Social Security first: they can suspend payments if mail comes back undeliverable.

B Never goes on the truck _____ Your car

Medications

IDs and passports

Birth certificates

Social Security cards

Insurance policies

Closing or lease papers

Medical records

Jewelry

Cash for tips

Keys and remotes

Phone and chargers

Payment for the movers

C The first-night box _____ Last in, first out

Bedding and pillows

Pajamas and clean clothes

Toiletries and towels

Medications, first-aid kit

Glasses, hearing-aid batteries

CPAP or medical devices

Charger and a flashlight

A mug, a plate, snacks

Toilet paper

Write OPEN FIRST on it in something enormous. Make the bed before anything else gets unpacked.

Or you could just *hand us the keys.*

Everything in this guide is what we do for Houston families every week. Sorting, space planning, packing, move day, settling in, and clearing the old house.

One team, from the first hard conversation to the first night in the new home. So you can go back to being the daughter instead of the project manager.



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