

The first steps

When it comes to moving home, there is no such thing as enough time. The sooner you start working through the following steps, the better.

1. Get quotes from 3-4 removal companies - The British Association of Removers is a good starting point. Consider if a packing service would save you time, and money, in the long run.
2. Start working through a checklist of your key contacts to let everyone know you are planning to move home. Most contracts require a minimum of a month's notice so the sooner the better.
3. If your children are moving schools, inform the existing one in writing of the final date they will be attending. Call the new school to confirm the start date. Remember, Independent schools may require a full term's notice - check your contract early on.
4. Your local council may be able to arrange the removal of large items you no longer want. This service sometimes has a small charge. Alternatively, charities such as British Heart Foundation and others have second-hand furniture stores and will collect your donations by arrangement.
5. If your pets are not accustomed to travel or are of a nervous disposition, you may wish to speak to your vet for any advice to minimise the stress. The journey teamed with unfamiliar surroundings can be distressing for some animals.
6. Start packing the items that you do not use frequently such as things from the spare room.
7. Your main focus will be on the house but don't forget the garden, garage, shed, loft, cellar and the other obscure places that are easily forgotten.
8. If you are moving far, you may want to consider storage for non-essential items which allows the removers more time to get the most important items to your new property in a timely fashion. The remainder can follow the next day.
9. It can be tempting to pack as much into a box as possible, but lots of smaller boxes are easier and safer to move about than a few heavy ones. Start collecting boxes as soon as possible. Use the internet to purchase moving boxes at a discounted rate.
10. Let your neighbours know in advance so they can expect the removal van temporarily in the area. They may even offer to park their car elsewhere to allow the van some extra room to manoeuvre. Similarly, if there are parking restrictions outside your property, you may need to make arrangements to allow the removers to set up.