



Paring Down

Before You Begin.....

Get organized. Have a binder for your lists, thoughts and important phone numbers.

Getting Started: Find an approach that works best for you. Here are 4 options:

1. Start with the big pieces: Furniture, rugs, art.

This method will get some big things off your list (and off your mind) but maybe not off the floor immediately. Go through each room of the house with your notebook and identify each piece as belonging to one of these four categories:

Keep, Giving Away, Selling, Donate/Trash

2. Start with a category, collection or group: Clothing, books, linens, kitchenware.

This method will be more time and labor intensive, but will remove more items from the house fairly immediately (instant gratification).

3. Start with a room: Any room

This one takes more discipline, because contents will vary, but it can be very rewarding to cross off an entire room from your list.

4. Start with a specific, small, manageable space: Single drawer or shelf

If you want to start with a project that is most likely to get accomplished, motivating you to continue down your list, this is a great place for you.

Ok, Now What?

Buy some clear trash bags, clear totes, labels and a black marker. Have a plan. Keep receptacles nearby to contain items you're removing.

If possible, have a staging area so things can be physically removed from where you're working. Then they're ready to be removed from the house.

Clear bags and totes are great so you can see what you've packed.



LifeStaging™

Identify your things as fitting into one of 4 categories:

Keeping, Giving Away, Selling, Donate/Trash

Notebook in hand, use one of the 4 approaches mentioned earlier, and identify your things as belonging to one of these categories. If you've chosen approach number 2, for example and are concentrating on just dishes, make 4 columns on your list and have all your dishes identified as ones you're keeping, ones that are going to your son, ones you're selling, or ones that are going to the women's shelter. Pack them into appropriately marked boxes. Ideally, you want trash and donations removed quickly and often from your house.

If you're giving things to family and friends, tell them to retrieve them promptly!

Tips and Suggestions

- If you can afford it, hire as much help as you can.
- Don't underestimate how helpful young kids can be.
- Don't be a hero. Know your limitations.
- Don't get rid of things that you know you will regret losing.
- Have all your music downloaded digitally so you can enjoy it without taking up space. Donate the cd's to the library.
- Have all your photos scanned and pass the originals on to someone who will cherish them. Select the ones you want to keep accessible, and create a few photo albums.

Donation Considerations:

- Habitat for Humanity: <http://habitatportlandme.org/index.php/info/Donate>
- Preble Street Resource Center: <http://www.preblestreet.org/>
- Women's Shelters: <http://www.womenshelters.org/cit/me-portland>
- Center for Grieving Children: <http://www.cgcmaine.org/>
- Portland Public Library: <http://www.portlandlibrary.com/>
- Furniture Friends <http://furniturefriendsportland.org/>

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