

ULTIMATE GUIDE FOR CHOOSING THE IDEAL LOCATION FOR A FAMILY HOME



ABSTRACT

They say that the three most important things to think about when buying are home are location, location, location. You can live with almost any imperfection in a home if you love the neighborhood and your neighbors. You can change almost everything else. But, once bought, you cannot change your home's location.

When you go house hunting, consider any potential home's proximity to your work, the charm of the neighborhood, how the home is situated on the lot, ease of access, noise from neighbors, traffic, and pets, as well as access to parks, shopping, schools, and public transportation.

INTRODUCTION

You've probably heard it countless times that location is an important consideration when it comes to buying a home. Whether you are an OFW who has been house hunting for years or someone who is relatively new to the housing market, location is probably one of the things that comes to mind when checking out different property listings.

I. Top 10 Things to Look for When You Are House Hunting

If you're thinking about buying a home, this list can help get your search off on the right foot. While the number of rooms, the condition of the kitchen, and the size of the yard are important, there are other things to think over before you make an offer. Consider these factors.

8 Questions to Consider When Buying Flooring

The Site

Beyond location, look at the site of the home. If the home is on a hill, does it have a view, a walkout basement, or lots of stairs to climb? Do neighbors' windows look directly into the home? Is the yard suitable for kids, pets, gardening, or other uses? Is access to the property safe regarding driveway elevation or stairs to the front door?

The Neighborhood

Be sure the neighborhood, and not just the house, meets your expectations. They say that you should own the smallest home in the nicest neighborhood that you can afford. You'll have a great view! Drive around on weekdays and weekends, during the day and in the evening. Are homes in the neighborhood consistent in size and features? Do the neighbors keep the yards clean and tidy, or are there old cars and trash around? Is the neighborhood safe enough for people to walk, run, or bike, and are there children playing in the yards?

The Home's Curb Appeal

Your home should reflect your lifestyle. Do you live a laid-back life? Then you might not want a formal Victorian or Tudor-style home. Something simpler and more contemporary might be in order. Look at the exterior features. A brick home is easier to maintain, unless, of course, you live in an earthquake-prone area. Ask yourself whether the roof is in good condition. Is the landscaping attractive and are the sidewalks leading to the home safe?



The Size and the Floor Plan

You may be thinking about buying your dream home. But is your dream home impractical? Do you need four bedrooms and four baths when you live alone? A large home can give you the extra space you've always wanted for a home office, crafts, or art projects, but you'll pay higher heating bills and have higher taxes.

It will take more furniture to fill it and money to decorate it. Think about how the new home space will be used and whether it will fit your lifestyle now and in the future.

The Bedrooms and Bathrooms

Decide how many bedrooms and bathrooms you need, and only look at homes that meet your criteria. It would be a shame to fall in love with a cozy, charming cottage that isn't big enough. An extra bedroom is always a plus, as it can be used for a home office, craft studio, or guest room. If you think you'll be adding more room later,

be sure to consult an architect who can advise you on space planning, lot usage, and city regulations.

The Kitchen

If the kitchen is the heart of your home, don't settle for a home with a kitchen that won't work. You can always remodel, but it's very costly. Can you replace cabinet faces and countertops? Will an inexpensive makeover be sufficient? Don't worry about appliances, as they can usually be easily replaced.

The Closets and Storage

Older homes tend to have little closets and not a lot of storage space. If you have lots of sports equipment, craft supplies, out-of-season clothes, and holiday decorations, be sure you know where all this will go in your new home. Newer homes tend to have big closets and lots of storage. You can always add storage space, but you might have to sacrifice living space in your rooms.



The Windows and Lighting

Do you love a bright sunny room or do you love privacy? Look at a home with light and sunshine in mind. Look at the locations of electrical outlets and fixtures. Will they accommodate your lighting needs? Is there recessed lighting in the kitchen, cove lighting in the family room and a lovely chandelier in the dining room? If not, you can add them later, but it's nice to have it in place when you move in.

The Finishing Touches

Sometimes the simplest home looks spectacular thanks to the installed moldings, hardware, and fireplace. If these elements are important to you, look for them while house hunting or be ready to add them after you move in.

If you keep these specific elements of a home in mind, your house hunting will be more successful, and you'll likely end up with the home of your dreams.

II. The Importance Of Finding The Perfect Neighborhood



After spending several years in new home sales, I decided to go out on my own and launch a new business after I noticed a need among buyers aged 55 and over for a resource that would help them find the right active adult community for them. That signal led me to create a space, where we could offer information beyond the number of bedrooms and bathrooms in a home listing, but that gets to the core of a living space.

With the goal to help buyers make the most informed decision possible when it comes to where they settle down, we figured out that the important details are community photos, amenities and activities and reviews from actual residents.

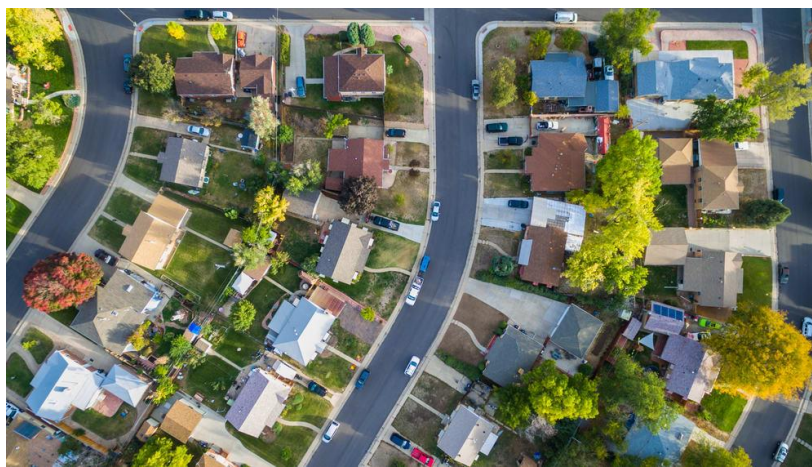
But whether you're buying your first home or your fourth, the purchase is about more than just square footage and countertop finishes. We believe that the neighborhood you live in is just as important as the home you live in, which is why we launched [Neighborhoods.com](https://www.Neighborhoods.com).

Why do we believe that factoring the neighborhood into your home search is of such paramount importance? There are plenty of smaller decisions that go into making the larger decision of buying a home — which is arguably one of the biggest decisions you'll ever make. But neighborhood-related factors will have a huge impact on your

life beyond move-in day. That's why the neighborhood you choose is just as important to scrutinize as any other detail in your home purchase.

Your Neighborhood Determines Your Lifestyle

Are you a homebody or do you prefer to spend your weekends at local street fairs and block parties? Do you drive to the grocery store or would you rather walk to local supermarkets? Are local school ratings important to you? These are just a few examples of the vital questions to answer for yourself before you sign on the dotted line. Being well-versed in the neighborhoods you're interested in and how each matches your ideal lifestyle (or doesn't) can help you narrow your search and increase your odds of locating your ideal home.



There's A Perfect Neighborhood For Everyone

While you'll often see articles rank the best neighborhoods in a particular region, the truth is that the "perfect" neighborhood differs greatly from person to person. The right neighborhood for your co-worker might not be the right neighborhood for you, which is why it's important to work with an expert real estate agent who can help guide you through the nuances of living in one neighborhood versus another.

As The Old Saying Goes, It's All About Location, Location, Location

Buying your perfect home in a neighborhood that isn't the right fit can quickly turn your dream into a nightmare. That's why it's important to do your research before buying. Keep an active eye on market trends so you can make an educated choice and avoid losing money on an eventual sale. Beyond considerations like lifestyle, buying a home is ultimately an investment. Choosing the perfect neighborhood means making sure that the investment you're making is a smart one.

At the end of the day, buying a home is all about doing your homework. Ask yourself the hard questions about not only the property, but the neighborhood as well, and you'll be on your way to making a smart purchase.

III. 11 Common Mistakes to Avoid When Buying Your First Home



Mistake #1: Going it alone

Buying your first home is a big deal. It's a major (really major) financial transaction, and it has a big emotional component too. This is where you'll live, and love, and shelter your family! So protect yourself by working with a pro, who will help you steer clear of many of the mistakes on this list.

A buyer's agent guides you through the process of how to buy your first home, and typically, you don't pay for her services (the seller does). In some cities and states, you must be represented by a real estate lawyer; and again, you'll want and need professional help to navigate the complicated waters of negotiating a deal and financing a home purchase. These are the 15 essential questions for first-time homebuyers.



Mistake #2: Not giving yourself enough credit

You probably know that you'll need a good credit rating to secure a home loan and that you should check out what your rating is before you start talking to lenders. But many first-time homebuyers don't realize that it can be worthwhile to delay a purchase in order to boost that credit rating.

"Waiting an extra 60 days could improve your credit enough to lower your monthly payment," says Elizabeth Mendenhall, the 2018 president of the National Association of Realtors and the CEO of Re/Max Boone Realty. "Talk to a lender ahead of time and find out. It could be worth it to wait if you'll save money in the long-term," she says.

Once you do have a loan in place and a home under contract, don't celebrate too early by taking out a new car loan or charging a bunch of furniture on your credit card. Your lender will re-check your credit report just before closing, and any changes to your financial status won't be welcome.



Mistake #3: Not knowing the real cost of your purchase

When buying your first home, it's easy to compare a mortgage payment vs. your rent and think, "Yep! I'm ready to shop!" But there are hidden costs to purchasing and owning a property. "First-time homebuyers don't always factor in an increase in their expenses when they go from renting to owning," says Daniel Rodriguez, a money coach at Dr. Budgets. "If they purchase a bigger house, there are increases in heating or cooling costs.

And homes need maintenance; when you're renting, if the water heater or the furnace goes out, you don't have to pay for it; your landlord does." Rodriguez also reminds would-be homeowners to remember there are costs for cleaning, yard work, insurance, transportation (how does the new home affect your commute to work?), homeowners' association dues, and of course, property taxes. So think about your total monthly budget, not just your monthly mortgage payment, before you start your

search. Make sure you're not putting money into these 32 home upgrades that are a huge waste.



Mistake #4: Not pre-qualifying for a (realistic) loan

Before you start browsing listings and dreaming of how you'll decorate your new home, make sure you have a lender that's willing to help you make your dream come true. Checking in with a financial institution (whether it's a bank, credit union, or online lender; shop around!) will help you understand the mortgage process and your own financial situation. "Seeing a lender prior to the purchase helps you know what kind of documentation you need, what type of down payment you can expect to make," and so on, says Mendenhall.

However, you should always proceed with caution and allow yourself a financial cushion. If you spend every penny you have on your down payment and closing costs, you won't be able to cover any unexpected repairs or necessary renovations. "Stretching can be a good thing," says money coach Daniel Rodriguez. "But people often buy the maximum house they can afford, when maybe something a little less expensive would mean less day-to-day stress to make it work financially."



Mistake #5: Relying on online pics

Even if you see 50 photos of a house online, you won't get the true picture unless you physically walk through it. If you can't do that, have your realtor take a video for you, says Mendenhall. "A realtor is bound to present a true picture," she says. "It's part of our code of ethics." A good real estate agent will also advise you, when buying your first home, to visit a potential property more than once. "Go during the evening. Go in the morning. '

Get a sense of what it would be like to live in that neighborhood," Mendenhall says. Plus, photos don't tell you what the local school system is like, what amenities are nearby, what the turnover is like in the area, and so on. Visiting in person and getting background info from your agent helps you zero in on those important qualities. These are the 13 other things you can expect to pay besides a mortgage when you get a house.



Mistake #6: Acting like you're on *House Hunters*...

... and have free reign to comment negatively on properties you're seeing. In many parts of the, we're currently in a sellers' market. That means a seller could have multiple offers on her home and get to choose who's buying. She's probably not going to pick the potential homebuyer who mocked her decorating choices or complained about minor details. Look at the process more like a job interview (where both parties are seeking information to make a smart decision) vs. a shopping spree at the mall (where you, the buyer, have total control over whether or not you spend a dime).

IV. 13 Reasons Why It's So Important That You Move To New Places During Your Life

Have you moved to a new place before? See how many of these things applied to you!

Learn More About Yourself

One of the best ways to learn more about yourself is to go to an unfamiliar place. You'll have first hand access to lots of new things, and you'll quickly figure out which of those things you like and which you don't. This knowledge will help you down the road as you can end up refining your lifestyle to be more selective for things that you truly enjoy.

You Get To Meet New People



It's not that there's anything wrong with the friends you already have, but if a group of people are all from the same place, there tends to be a certain homogeneity to the mentality of the group. Moving to a new place allows you to meet vastly different kinds of people than you might have been exposed to had you stayed put.

You'll Learn To Adapt To A New Environment

There are bound to be many things about your new city that are quite different from where you last lived. Whether it's the parking situation or the way the public transit system works or any of a number of things, getting acclimated to those changes will help keep you on your toes for whatever unforeseen circumstances lie ahead.

There's No Better Way To Build Self-Confidence

Any time you accomplish something, you're going to build self-confidence. The harder the task, the greater the personal benefit you'll reap, and picking up your entire life and moving it to a far off location is one of the most difficult things a person can do in life.

You Might Be In Need Of A Fresh Start

It's not impossible that life has gotten stagnant for you. Some times people slip into a malaise, a funk that's hard to break out of. In such cases, a new beginning in a new city can help you feel that excitement for life that you used to feel.

You've Got To Go After That Dream Job

You've had a dream of doing some particular job for years. You've studied for it, you've gotten experience relating to it, and you've been applying to every opening you can find, when one day a company calls you and tells you it's your time to shine. The only catch: you'll have to move to where the job is located. If you're truly passionate about this profession, there's absolutely no reason for you not to go. Though the moving process might be stressful, you'll be much happier in the long run.

Challenge Yourself By Leaving Your Comfort Zone



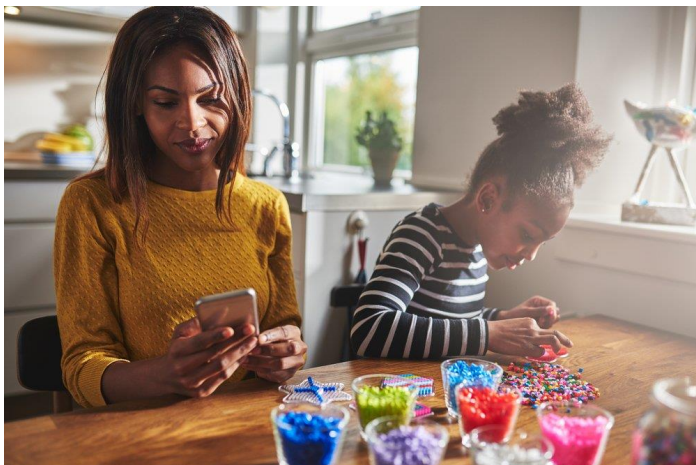
Your comfort zone is like your warm, cozy bed on a cold winter day: you don't want to leave its confines, but you know there are things out there that you have to get done to grow as a person. Moving to a new place will force you to get into a place where you're not quite as comfortable, but who knows, you might just like it.

It's The Best Way To Experience New Things



Have you ever wanted to do something, but the means to accomplish that thing were just too far away? Well, fear no longer! Moving to a new place means that you'll inherently be closer to sources of different activities, leading to many more life-enriching experiences than you would have otherwise been privy to.

Maybe You're Following Love



Does the man in your life have to move for work? If he's ok with it and you're really invested in the relationship, chase after him! Moving to a new place with a special someone is a great way to strengthen that relationship through the trials and joys being thrown into a new city can bring.

Or Maybe You're Getting Away From Love

As much as it hurts to say it, love doesn't always last. Whether it comes in the form of getting fed up with the place you're living or the fallout from the end of a relationship, there can come a time when you've just got to get out of the place you're at. It's always good to be able to recognize when that time comes.

There Could Be Health Benefits For You

If you're experiencing some kind of health issue, whether it's incredibly bad seasonal allergies or depression from continuously grey weather, the best thing for you to do

might be to move to a new place. A lot of the time mental and physical health have huge effects on one another, so if you improve one of those aspects, you're likely to also improve the other.

It'll Teach You To Trust Your Instincts



Should I go out tonight? Is this person safe to trust? When you live close to your friends, it's easy to use them as a sounding board for your concerns, and there's nothing wrong with that. However, once you're far away on your own, your friends won't be quite as up to speed on your life, and as such won't be able to give you the best assessments. Now it's up to you to make good decisions, a skill that any adult should constantly be working to hone.

You'll Never Be More Self-Reliant



Small fish, big pond! Now that you're living on your own, and in a new place to boot, there will be a period where you just don't know anyone else that well to ask favors of them. It's during this time that you'll realize just how much you can accomplish on your own, as well as develop an even larger appreciation for your friends.

V. These expert-approved moving hacks will make your move so much easier



Getting ready to move into a new home is a daunting task – and it can be tempting to throw all your stuff into the nearest box and make your future self deal with it once you’ve made it to your new place... But, a little prepping and planning will save you time, money, and a lot of peace of mind. It might be extra work up front, but it pays off in the long haul and means you’ll be free from living in boxes as soon as possible.

We took it upon ourselves to reach out to a variety of professional movers and organization experts in our network to get their best tips on how to make your move go as smoothly as possible – both for you and for your team of movers. Below, we’re laying out exactly how to plan, pack, and move all your items into your new home with as little stress as possible.

PACK FOR THE NEW HOUSE, NOT BASED ON OLD HOUSE LOCATIONS.

Brenda Prinzavalli, Organizing Strategist, Balanced Organizing Solutions, suggests thinking of how you’ll be unpacking when boxing up your items instead of throwing everything into the same box

For example, if two kids are sharing a room now, but will each have their own room then pack their items completely separate so at the new house they can land in the new space; if you had a desk space in a kitchen, but now will have an office pack all the “office” items as office and not in with the kitchen items, etc.

PACK ALL “UNKNOWN LOCATION” ITEMS TOGETHER.

'If you have an unknown location for items in a new house, pack all like items together,' Says Prinzavalli. 'Go around the house and collect those like items so they

are together, you can purge if necessary, but this way you'll have a known place for all those odd items.'

Examples include all office supplies (gathered from various junk drawers, desks, family room, etc.), candles and candle holders, batteries, towels and linens, photo frames, or cleaning supplies.

BOOK AN EARLY MORNING JOB.

According to Ryan Carrigan, Co-founder of moveBuddha, booking your movers early in the morning will pay off. 'If you're hiring a moving company, book the earliest morning time slot available,' he shares. 'The moving crew will be fresh so they'll get the job done faster and typically do a better job.'

CONSIDER PACKING AN OVERNIGHT BAG.

Carrigan suggests packing an overnight bag to save you the stress of locating all your essentials after a long day of moving. 'Put all your toiletries, medicines, and other personal items into a special box or suitcase that you take with you,' he says.

SOURCE FREE BOXES.

You really don't need to purchase those expensive branded moving boxes—it's not like you're going to reuse them any time soon. 'Free boxes from liquor stores or groceries are a great way to save some cash but make sure you only get sturdy good quality boxes,' warns Carrigan. 'Flimsy boxes won't stack well and increase the chances of damage.'

PAY ATTENTION TO WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION.

'The biggest mistake we've seen people make over the years is that they don't always consider that the box they've packed will be lifted and moved many times before they see it again,' explains Aaron Kirley, President of LugLess. 'Placing all your heavy items in one big box may seem like a good idea but even the sturdiest of boxes fail under too much pressure.'

Kirley suggests mixing and matching – pack heavy items along with lighter items. If it weighs more than a fifty pound checked luggage, odds are you may want to reconsider that box prior to taping it and stacking it for transport.

PACK "AS IF".

Many people don't realize that even if they are storing or moving their boxes (and not shipping them), they will still be going on a truck or van and stacked with other boxes. They will most likely move around and a perfectly stacked row of boxes in a truck is no match for an unexpected red light or traffic accident.

'Pack your box as if it could be safely dropped from 6 feet off the ground,' suggests Kirley. 'If you think you've packed those plates and glassware like a pro, you should have little concern if it gets a little combat action during its trip to your new home or storage facility.'

DON'T THROW LAST MINUTE KITCHEN OR BATHROOM ITEMS JUST ANYWHERE.

'We can't tell you how many times an entire box or piece of luggage contents has been ruined due to a half-eaten jar of jelly or bottle of olive oil that's opened up or exploded,' shares Kirley. 'It usually is not only the box or bag it was in but what was stacked beneath it on the moving truck or in the storage facility.'

While it may seem like a good idea to toss the last remaining *almost forgotten* food items in with your clothes or bedding box; Kirley urges you to avoid it when possible. Did you really screw the cap on that well last time you used it? Odds are, probably not.

'Consider giving those items away or throwing them out prior to packing up your stuff,' says Kirley. 'Is it really worth it to save that last remaining bit of olive oil in the unlikely (yet possible) event it drips into the box with your bedding and/or clothes? The answer is obviously, no.'

ALWAYS PROTECT YOUR MATTRESS.

According to Richard Dimilta, Senior Vice-President of Business Operations at Saatva, a luxury mattress and bedding company, when moving a mattress, there are a few things to do to ensure it stays in great condition during the move.

'You should cover the mattress in a high-density polyethylene mattress storage bag and make sure to wrap the mattress securely and tape the edges completely shut,' Dimilta explains. 'The bag should be form-fitted and sealed for the best protection.'

From there, Dimilta suggests putting your mattress in a protective cardboard box to prevent structural damage. Never put your mattress on top of your car, as this is unsafe and may even be illegal, depending on where you live. Instead, rent a box truck and avoid placing anything on top of the mattress, which can cause damage.

VI. Complete Packing Guide For Short Notice Move

Packing for a house move is a time-consuming and strenuous process for which you need to prepare weeks before the moving day. However, when you have to vacate a property at a few weeks' notice, you have significantly less time to wrap and box your belongings.

Tenants often move out of rental properties at short notice due to a career opportunity, rent increase, mould/pest infestation, family tragedy, safety concerns or unforeseen circumstances. Whatever the reasons, moving within weeks is never easy, and you should hire professional removalists in Sydney to manage your move partially or entirely.



If you plan to pack yourself, here is a complete guide outlining useful packing tips for a short notice move.

Discard, Donate Or Resell Unwanted Items

Reduce the packing or moving load for your hired removalists in Sydney and save time by removing everything you don't want at your new home. Get rid of trash, broken things, old items and belongings that don't serve any purpose. Besides discarding your belongings, you can declutter or downsize by donating or reselling items in good conditions.

Contact local organisations registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission to donate. Alternatively, conduct a garage sale online or office to resell unwanted things and increase your moving budget.

Pack Room-by-Room

To save time and energy while packing, you need to manage the process strategically. Therefore, start packing room by room after decluttering or downsize. Wrap and box items from areas like the guest room, garage, basement and others used less frequently first.

Pack the living room, kitchen, bathroom and bedroom last to avoid inconvenience and ensure items of these rooms are loaded last on the moving truck. It is a professional technique removalists in Sydney employ to unload things of daily use first and unpack them to make settling in the new home easier.

Know Things You Shouldn't Pack

Get in touch with your hire removalists in Sydney to get a list of things the professional don't load on the moving truck and transport. Usually, these things include dangerous items such as flammables, toxic chemicals, corrosive products, cleaners, paints, fuels, etc.



Additionally, you shouldn't pack plants, jewellery, precious items, important documents and perishable goods for the removalists to move. After getting the list:

- Make to use things you can before the move.
- Discard them responsibly.
- Give to friends.
- Take whatever actions necessary to get rid of them prior to packing.

Rent A Storage Unit

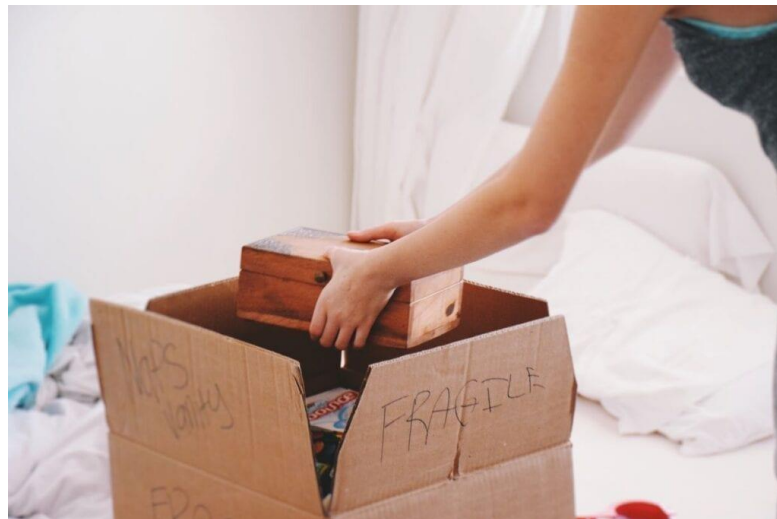
Renting a storage unit is an excellent way to move your belongings to a safe space and sort them out later. If you don't have the time to declutter and pack all your belongings, rent a storage unit near your new house then move furniture, bulky

appliances, things of sentimental value, equipment, clothes, and everything you won't need at your new home later.

This way, you can pack only essential things for speeding the packing and moving process. After the move, you can visit the storage to take things you need one by one and settle in the new home.

Keep Packing Supplies Handy

Don't make the mistake of getting supplies as you pack, as it will delay the process, and packing will take more time than necessary. Get the boxes and materials before you start the task to wrap and box everything in one go. You can arrange used boxes from local stores, wine shops, neighbours and relatives. Additionally, order supplies online before you declutter to have them on-hand when you start the packing process.



Note: If you hire professional removalists in Sydney for packing, they will bring the supplies and reduce your packing time, stress and expenses.

Get Wardrobe Boxes

Keep your clothes and other items in your wardrobes safe and secure during transportation by storing them in wardrobe boxes. It is a quick and simple method for packing and will save a lot of time and energy. Wardrobe boxes have a rod for hanging clothes, hinged doors and sections to store footwear, accessories, etc.

Even professional removalists in Sydney use them to store and move clothes, towels, bedsheets, and other items in almirahs. As per requirement, you can get small wardrobe boxes (0" x 20" x 34" to 24" x 24" x 34") or large boxes 24" x 24" x 40" to 24" x 24" x 48".

Moving at short notice is always challenging and stressful because you have to manage various tasks simultaneously. Among these tasks, packing is a major one, as it is time-consuming and tiring. To save time and energy, you should hire professional removalists in Sydney to pack and move your belongings. However, if you want to pack yourself, follow the tips shared above to complete the process without hassle or stress.

CONCLUSION

There are many things you can change and upgrade in a home. One of the only exceptions to that rule is location. It is Important for you to choose a location that not only fits your needs, but also is in a community you would feel comfortable calling home.

When beginning your home search, it might be easy to get distracted by the features of a home, but it is extremely important to take time to think about where you would like to live, before you can dive deeper into the type of home you would like to live in. Fortunately, we have put together a five-step guide to help navigate you through this very important step of your home buying journey.

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