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Prep your move early to stave off stress

Before you get to the nitty-gritty days of packing and relocating, creating a schedule is essential to stay on track for your ship-out date. And to ensure you don't make any money-wasting missteps.

"You want to have a good plan in place and a timeline for what needs to get done so that when the move date happens you're prepared," says Monica Friel of Chaos to Order. "Oftentimes the move comes and we're overwhelmed by not realizing how much there was to do."

Two months in advance. Start prepping now if possible. The first tasks on your list should include making a moving budget, researching moving companies, and purging your possessions.

In the next few weeks start gathering packing supplies, planning a garage sale if you're having one, and getting all your medical records from your doctor if you don't already have access. At the five weeks mark, book your movers and confirm the time and date of your move along with other details.

One month out. Time to begin boxing up nonessentials. This is also the time to notify membership programs, like the gym, and your utility services of your departure. Go ahead and set up utilities at your new home.

In the next two weeks plan how to use up your remaining food, arrange transportation for your pets and plants, and update your address with the USPS and your banks and credit cards. Of course, you also need to up the gear on your packing. Keep your valuables in a safe and separate place so you can move them yourself.

The final week. Double-check that your movers have the right time and place. Give your home a thorough final cleaning, too. The day before you leave, clear out your fridge and defrost the freezer. Then after everything has been cleared out on moving

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day, do a final sweep of the place to make sure you didn't leave anything behind.

Moving day survival kit: Must-haves for a comfortable transition

You've just arrived at your new home and are worn out from the excitement of the day. Now what? Well because you prepared a special survival kit of your essential items, you don't have to unpack yet.

Just open this one box and you're set until after you get a good night's sleep. Plus it is a safety net if your movers show up late and can tide you over until they do. Here's what you need in your bag.

- toiletries like soap, toothbrushes, and toothpaste along with toilet paper and a towel
- a comfortable change of clothing and pair of shoes
- water bottles and nonperishable snacks
- cleaning spray and a paper towel roll
- important papers like ID cards, tax and insurance documents, and moving information
- anything else you might need over the next few days such as medications and phone chargers