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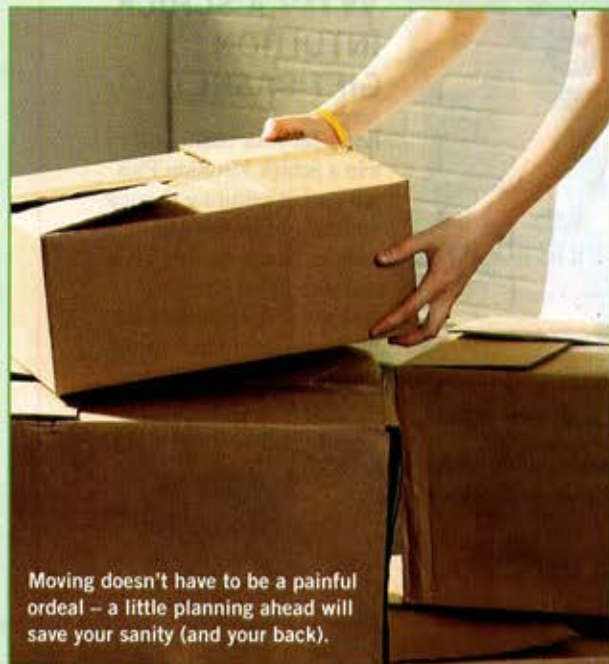
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HOW TO SAVE TO SEND YOUR KIDS TO UNIVERSITY

HOW TO ENSURE A SMOOTH MOVE

How to...

Plus side: You're moving! Downside: You're moving. We hear you: While it's exciting to be making tracks for a great new place, it can be exhausting, too. "The day of our move was one of the worst snowstorms that winter," says Jennifer Playford, who moved from Toronto to Victoria in January 2004. "There was two feet of snow, and the movers had to remove a large second-storey window to get the couch outside, where it had to be lowered from the balcony." Playford, the designer and mompreneur behind Jenny Wren Paperie stationery and illustrations, recalls trying to supervise the move while keeping her one-year-old daughter, Ava, occupied, and later lugging her stroller through snowdrifts to sign paperwork at the bank, before rushing off to catch a plane. (Their two cats had already been sent off to stay with relatives, thankfully.) Moving house will never be easy. But plan it well, and you can get it over with and, well, move on. Here's how. YUKI HAYASHI



Moving doesn't have to be a painful ordeal – a little planning ahead will save your sanity (and your back).

SLIM DOWN

"You really want to purge as much as possible pre-move," says Toronto-based Jaclyn Ray, also known as Jaclyn the Clutter Wrangler (www.clutterwrangler.com). You'll reduce your packing time, cut your moving costs and have a fresher start in your new home. Toss clothes you haven't worn in a year, seldom-used gadgets and much of the stuff you've banished to your junk closet, attic, basement or shed.

If you're making a long-distance move,

consider leaving your furniture behind. Playford packed up and hauled large IKEA pieces across Canada, only to realize they didn't complement the style of her new *circa* 1913 Arts and Crafts house. "If you're moving cross-country, just start fresh," she suggests.

Conventional wisdom dictates that you create three piles: garbage, garage sale and donations. But consider cutting the garage sale out of the equation and you'll ease your workload. Just trash or

recycle what's unusable and donate the rest. (Be prepared to deliver, or go to www.charityvillage.com to find a group that'll pick up.)

BOOK A MOVER

Once you've got most of your junk out of the way, call a professional mover, not a cut-rate Man With a Van. For about \$500 to \$800 for a local move (based on a typical three-bedroom house), you'll be dealing with experts with a vested corporate interest in keeping you happy. A consultant will do a walk-through

estimate of your home. (Damage insurance is built into the total.)

Book at least one month in advance for local moves and two months for long-distance moves, suggests Preston Trann, general manager of Premiere Van Lines' Winnipeg office. And keep your movers abreast of any changes. Decided the foosball table's coming after all? Want to make a donation stop at the Sally Ann? "Let the movers know," says Trann. "We don't want to run out of space in the van." >

An added perk of working with major movers: They can securely store your goods if there's lag time between your vacating your old home and your taking possession of your new one.

GET PACKING

Start packing as far ahead as you can stomach. That way, you'll have more time to haul home those ubiquitous liquor-store boxes and build a newspaper stash, minimizing the need to buy packing materials. Out-of-season clothing and sports equipment, your good china, books and (sigh) assorted junk you refuse to part with can be packed weeks in advance. "Leave the kitchen, bathroom and things you need from your home office or bedroom to the last couple of days," says Ray.

Finally, on moving day, pack your essentials in one box, and clearly label it "Load Last." (It'll be the first off the truck.) Baby-care items, kids' favourite toys, kitchen essentials, one set of bedding per bed, toiletries, pet food and other must-haves should go in here.

Things to take in your car: essential move-related and personal paperwork for everyone in your family, a change of clothes for everyone, a first-aid kit, your pets, your peeps.

OR HAVE SOMEONE PACK FOR YOU

Is it crazy/lazy? Not if packing interferes with a crucial project at work or if your kids need your undivided attention. Most movers have two packing rates, the first being a premium service for breakables (think bone china, home electronics) at about \$40 per carton, and a lower bulk rate (about \$30 per 100 pounds). Both rates will get you unpacking services, too.

MAKE PHONE CALLS AND FINISH PAPERWORK

Call your kids' new school a couple of months ahead of time to arrange for their records to be transferred. And if you're moving between provinces or to the U.S., ask your doctor for a referral and to forward any necessary medical records.

About four weeks ahead, arrange to disconnect services such as your phone, Internet, cable/satellite/digital TV and utilities at your old place and reconnect them at the new one. If the provider doesn't operate in your new community, sign up with new providers a week or more in advance. (Don't forget to get any security deposits back.)

Three weeks before you move, book your apartment's freight elevator and, to avoid headaches, a babysitter for the kids.

One week in advance, sign up for Canada Post's Smartmoves

mail-forwarding program (www.smartmoves.ca). For \$65 (more for out-of-province or international moves), all your mail will be sent to your new home for the next year. (Though it's still recommended to send out change-of-address cards.) While you're at the post office, ask for free change of address announcement cards; they come with an exhaustive checklist of everyone you'll need to send them to.

USE ONLINE RESOURCES

Help is just a click away. For tips on how kids can cope with the transition, and how to get them involved in the move, visit www.kidshealth.org, click on Kids Site, then search for "move." For a detailed pre-move checklist, check out www.century21.com, click on Learn, go to Moving and Relocation, and click on Moving Checklist.

What's red, white
and naturally,
deliciously light?