

HINTS AND TIPS



Reducing what you have

Falkirk
Moving
Assistance
Project

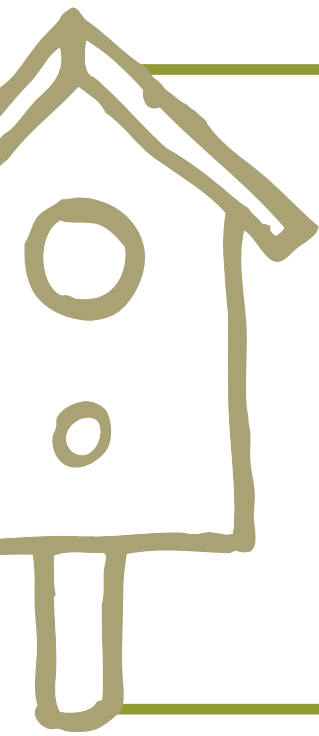
This set of hints and tips is for people who want to reduce the amount of furniture and other things they have in their homes. It could be because you are preparing to move house, or it could be to get more space in your current home. This is what we have included here:

- Why reduce what you have and why it can be hard to do.
- How to sort it out.
- What to do with the things you no longer want.

This is one of a series of hints for older people at each stage of moving house.

- Do you want to move or stay?
- Choosing the house that's right for you.
- Reducing what you have.
- Making the move.
- Supporting your relative or friend.

They all connect with each other, and it doesn't matter where you start.



We have talked to older people who live in the Falkirk and District area and who have moved house. These are the things that they said helped them. We have also produced a Directory that provides more information about the services and community groups in the area.

Our most important advice is: This is about what is right for you. If other people are worried – family, friends or staff such as GPs and care workers – you should recognise this, as they may have a point. But it is your life and your decision. There almost certainly will be a way to have the home you want and stay safe

Some general tips

- Remember that you don't need to do this on your own. There are people who will help you at every stage.
 - Think about what things are important to you. Know what your priorities are.
 - Make a list of things to ask or find out about – jot things down as you think of them.
 - Take your time. Do it in small steps. You don't need to do it all at once.
 - Sometimes it helps to have a plan and know what you are aiming for. Then you can think about each point and how that helps you achieve your plan.
- Other people don't make decisions that way. They just know when something is the right decision for them. Remember that's ok too. (But our checklists will still be useful.)

“If you are moving to a smaller house or just to a different house it is a good idea to only take with you the things that you need and are important to you. There is no point paying a removal company or getting family and friends to help you move boxes of things and furniture that you no longer need or want.”

- Check out the options.
- Gather information from different sources if you can. If they all point to something being good (or bad) it probably is.
- Ask people who have been in your situation. Find out what they did and how it has worked for them. You don't have to follow their example but it will help you work out what is right for you.
- Talk to people. Ask family and friends and other people you know.
- Get specialist advice and information, especially for legal and financial things.
- If your choices affect other people, make sure you include them in your discussions and plans. And do it early on.
- Be willing to make compromises. If you know what is important to you it is much easier to compromise on things that don't matter so much.
- Try to think of the positive and exciting aspects of a change if you can. They are usually in there somewhere, even in difficult situations.
- Sometimes worrying about making the right decision or the best decision almost stops us making any decision. When that happens, start

by making one change or decision. Getting something decided – even a small thing – can help with the rest.

- If it feels hard or upsetting, get out and get some fresh air if you can. Go away for the day, or an hour or two. Being somewhere different often gives us a fresh view on a problem.

Why reduce what you have and why it can be hard to do

Some people regularly have a 'clear out'. Other people tend to hold onto things, in case they come in useful.

Clearing out what we have can sometimes be more difficult than usual, even for people who are used to having a clear out.

- Some possessions bring back lots of memories. It can be hard letting go of the past.
- Making a big change in our lives can be very stressful and emotional, and clearing things out is part of that.

"I know I don't really use these things but I paid good money for them - I don't want to throw them out."

“I get rid of old clothes every couple of years - I don't want to hang onto things that I don't like or don't wear anymore. This clear out is just a bigger version of that.”

“I have 3 sets of wedding china - mine, my mum's and my mother-in-law's. I never use them but it still feels wrong to give them away. The young ones today don't even understand what the wedding china meant in our day.”

“There isn't going to be room in the new house for the 3 piece suite. But it was the first thing Jim and I bought for our first house. I remember the day we chose it - the shop in the High Street, what we were both wearing, everything. It's hard to let go of the memories.”

How to sort it out

- Start in plenty of time. It can take time to go through things and decide what you want to keep and what you don't need anymore.
- Take your time if you can.

- Have nice music on or a radio playing in the background
- Do it in stages.
- Have company - that way you can stop and chat and remember things.
- Have someone who is not so involved emotionally – a friend is sometimes better than family, for example.
- Stop and have tea or a short break as soon as you start to flag or get upset. Don't press on just because you've decided to finish a room or cupboard before you stop.

There are things you can do if you can't decide and feel there is not enough time to do it slowly.

- Ask family or friends to keep some boxes for you.
- There are storage companies where you can hire storage space for anything.

“I used a 3 boxes and a bag system. One box for things to keep, one box for things to offer to family, one box for the charity shop and the rubbish bag for things that were broken.”

“Just accept that there are some days you don’t want to clear things out. Don’t give yourself a hard time.”

“We put the old photograph albums to one side, to go through them later. If we’d started looking at them we’d never have finished.”

“I started early and had an extra box for things I couldn’t decide what to do with, didn’t want to let go or wasn’t sure about. After a few months I went back and looked at them again. I realised I hadn’t used any of it so it made it easier to pass them on to the charity shop.”

“I helped my mum by trying to make it an enjoyable way to spend an afternoon. For some things we spent time chatting and remembering things. We had cake and coffee and lots of chat.”

“We went through the more treasured things first. We both had more energy and wanted to take our time. When we got to more practical kitchen things and the odds and ends

that had been left at the back of the cupboards – we realised we’d not used some of them for years. It was much easier to get rid of them.”

“Don’t try to do it on your own.”

“My granddaughter’s boyfriend got the boxes out of the attic for me. My granddaughter came and helped me go through them. We did it once a week for several weeks. She and I had a lovely time – and what a laugh we had. She comes regularly to see me now that I’ve moved. We get on well.”

“It can feel hard leaving your home and moving somewhere new. Try and find the positive aspect about moving and changing things.”

“Think about it as an adventure – a new beginning.”

“We decided to make it fun. Instead of thinking that we’d have to get rid of some of our old big furniture, we made it fun

by having a day out with our daughter and going to look at new furniture. The new beds are much nicer than the old ones we had. We don't need wardrobes, the new house has built in ones."

"My granddaughter helped me choose some new cushions to brighten up the settee and she and her mum came and painted the kitchen and sitting room a lovely light colour. My old house had been dark. This one is much brighter."

"Think of where your old things are going and who will benefit. We gave a lot of extra furniture and furnishings to a charity that helps people who have had a hard time set up a new home. Some of my wife's clothes ended up in the dressing up box at a playgroup. Jean would have loved all of that!"



What to do with the things that you no longer want

There are a number of different ways of dealing with the things that you no longer want.

- Family – give them first choice of anything you don't want anymore.
- Friends – you might want to pass some things to friends.
- Charity shops.
- Projects that pass furniture and household stuff on to people who need them.
- Selling items – through local press, cards in shops, or internet sites such as eBay and Gumtree.

On charity shops: some will accept anything you take to them. Others specialise, for example they only take clothes and small bric-a-brac. Some will take furniture but others won't. Our advice is to contact them before you go.

"I decided what I wanted to keep. Then I asked my family if they wanted any of the things that I didn't want any more. It didn't feel as hard as I had expected."

“Remember that not everyone likes the same things so it helps if you make it really easy for them to say no without them worrying that they will hurt your feelings.”

“I gave some things as presents to my family. If they didn’t want them it didn’t matter.”

“I gave some things to charity shops – some charity shops can come and collect the big things.”

“My daughter sells things on eBay. She helped me sell some of my things that way. She did it all from her house. The money went towards some new furniture that I needed. It was fun choosing new things.”

“My son got a local auctioneer to come and look at the furniture. He took 2 items away and sold them for me. What a laugh – they are ‘in fashion’ now. I used the money to buy some new furniture.”

“We contacted the council. They came for a special uplift and took away the things that were broken or no one wanted.”

“I swapped my large furniture for smaller items at furniture recycling reuse project. They took the old furniture away and brought the new items to the new house for me.”

“I got my daughter to do the on-line selling for me. I didn’t want strangers coming to my house. She came and took the chair away to her house and ‘sold’ it from there. She made sure her husband was in her house when the people came to pick up the chair.”



Contacts and more information

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All of the Moving Assistance Hints and Tips the Directory of Services are available from the Wisdom in Practice Website <http://www.wisdominpractice.org.uk/falkirk-moving-assistance/>

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It has been developed and delivered by Outside the Box with help from the Make It Happen Forum.

The Make it Happen Forum is for people aged 50 and older to get involved and have their say in community life.

www.makeithappenforum.org.uk

