

# "Help me take the stress out of moving!"

The average American moves 12 times in her lifetime! Whether you're heading across town—or across the country—our experts share the secrets to making your transition stress-free!

## 1 Plan the perfect move!



### Recycle and resell!

"Purging items you don't really need can cut your packing 50%," says expert Nancy Giehl. Just create a "catch-all" area to collect all your "maybes," then once you see how big the pile is, it'll be easier to decide what to recycle, give away or trash. "And if you can hold a garage sale—all the better!"

### Pick the right mover!

Deciding how you'll move is a lot like choosing among restaurants: "There are three different moving 'menus,'" says moving maven Jodi Velazquez. "The 'fine dining' version is full service, where the movers pack everything. The second, 'buffet style,' has you packing your boxes for the movers, which can save you 30% to 40%. And the third option is 'fast food,' where you rent a van and do everything yourself." How to choose? "If you have friends who can pitch in, and if you have lighter

items, you're likely better off renting a van." Decided on a moving company? Velazquez suggests getting in-house estimates, which are much more accurate than estimates online. Her top questions: Do you charge by weight or mileage? Are there extra costs for, say, going up flights of stairs or putting on a mattress cover? And the biggest question of all: What is your drop-off window? "If you're moving, say, two or three states away, the movers will often combine your shipment with another family's, then estimate when they'll drop off your stuff. When I first moved to New York, I was without my things for 17 days! You're much better off with a window of, say, 10 days instead of 20."

### Snag free supplies!

Instead of buying overpriced boxes, call your grocery store ahead of time and ask them to set aside extra paper towel and toilet paper boxes, says Velazquez. "They actually like giving them away, because it saves them the trouble of breaking them down." Other hot spots for boxes? "Wine and spirits stores," she says. "They have built-in dividers for wine bottles, which makes them ideal for packing glasses. And rather than buying expensive bubble wrap for delicate items, use blankets and towels—it'll save you time and money."



### "Scatter pack"!

An area rug stuffed inside a chest of drawers? Little trinkets put inside your stilettos? It's a technique Velazquez calls "scatter packing"—packing unrelated items together to take full advantage of empty space, and it can cut the number of boxes you have in half!

## 2 Melt moving stress!

### "Lose-proof" your things!

It's easy, says Velazquez: "Number each box; tape a sheet of paper with the same number to the side of the box and jot down the name of every item in it. When you're done packing, just rip off the paper, place in a folder and voilà: You've got an instant, easy-to-find-anything inventory. This way, when you want a cup of coffee at your new place, you can look in your folder and find that your favorite mug is in box 16!"

### Get help for the "little" things!

Not everything on moving day involves packing or lifting boxes,

notes Kathryn Bechen, a veteran of 14 moves. If you're uncomfortable enlisting the muscle of friends and family, ask for a little TLC instead, like taking your pets for the day when you have to keep your door propped open, or checking your mailbox after you're gone for a few days to ensure everything is forwarded. "Moving can be very emotional, and having support, even with little things, can make a big difference!"

### First night in a new home?

Pre-pack a bag with essentials you'll need right away. "Concentrate on the bathroom and the kitchen," suggests Bechen. Include things like toilet paper and towels for the bathroom; cleaning wipes and paper towels for the kitchen. "And, if you can, bring some prepared food because you won't want to cook when you get there." Also, important: Hand-carry a "VIP" kit filled with your most precious items, such as birth certificates and medications. "It'll give you peace of mind knowing you have them with you as soon as you get to your new home."



## Our expert panel



**Nancy Giehl**—coauthor of *Organize Pack Move!*—is co-owner of a downsizing and relocation company, Simple Moves, in Boulder, Colorado.



**Jodi Velazquez**—author of *Slick Move Guide: Secrets You Need to Know if You Are Moving*—shares the lessons she learned from moving five times in her blog SlickMove.net.



Home organizing expert **Kathryn Bechen** is the author of *Moving with Ease*, *Organized with Ease* and *Small Space Organizing*. Visit her at KathrynBechenINK.com.