



As a non-profit organization, the Rice County Council on Aging advocates for, serves and empowers the aging citizens of Rice County, Kansas, providing them with the resources needed to continue living an active, healthy and independent lifestyle.

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# Grains of Rice



*Grains of Knowledge for Rice County Seniors*

## NEW MINI-VAN + UPDATED van design

by Alecia Gaines

We added a fourth van to our fleet! This expansion van is a 2019 Dodge Caravan mini-van. A welcome and much-needed addition to our transportation department. She is a beauty with her orange and blue design. You can definitely see her coming down the road.

We still have one mini-van, that is the original burgundy color. A 2013 Dodge Caravan mini-van, and next year we would like to replace it if funding allows. We would then find a new home for this one with someone who could use a handicap accessible mini-van for a reasonable price.

With her new body style, we realized that the design on the big Ford Transit vans would not translate to a mini-van no matter how hard the designer tried. So we had to make the Ford Transits fit the mini-van design. What a great idea and new design it is.

In light of the COVID-19 crisis, essential rides are the focus of our transportation. Essential services include doctor appointments, pharmacies, grocery stores, and work. It is also a requirement for transit drivers and passengers to wear face masks while in the van.

The dark blue is our dominate color on all the vans. It will keep the colors grounded and in harmony.

Pictured below are the newbies; 8354 in orange, 8802 in lime green, and 2000 in red. Take a RIDE with us soon.



# No Bull from Rocky

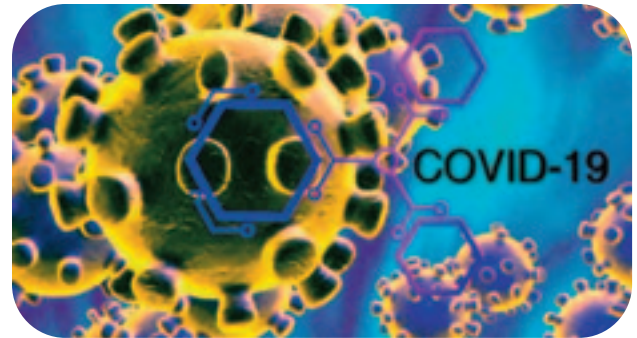
ROCKY GAINES, Board President  
Rice County Council on Aging



Here we are in the midst of the worst health crisis in 100 years, and it doesn't appear that the crisis is going to magically disappear anytime soon. Projections now point to June for the peak of the Kansas COVID-19 graph. After that, it will be a matter of more testing, data collection, and analysis. That being the case, here are some important considerations from the Kansas Department of Health & Environment.

The best way to prevent COVID-19 is to avoid being exposed to the virus. Take the following steps to minimize your risk:

- Stay home as much as possible.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water is not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Distance yourself from others when in public, especially if you are a senior or have a medical condition that puts you in a high-risk category.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth mask when in public.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with an elbow or tissue. Throw the used tissue away and immediately wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily; including phones, keyboards, doorknobs, handles and light switches – with an EPA-registered disinfectant.



## COVID-19 Fraud Schemes

Rumors and scams can easily circulate in times of crisis. Krista Engel, Fraud Manager – Program Integrity for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, said that fraud schemes are already hitting members of Medicare and Medicaid across the United States. Protect yourself and your loved ones from COVID-19 related-fraud schemes in these examples from around the world:

- **Diagnosis Testing:** Fake COVID-19 testing kits are being offered, door-to-door and online.
- **Treatment:** Unproven cures, vaccines and advice are being offered as treatments for COVID-19. These are particularly dangerous because they have the potential to do more harm than good.
- **Supplies:** Scammers are creating fake businesses, websites, social media accounts and email addresses claiming to sell medical supplies currently in high demand, such as surgical masks. Fraudsters will pocket the money and never provide the supplies.
- **Healthcare Providers:** Watch out for calls or emails pretending to be doctors or healthcare facilities that have treated a friend or relative for COVID-19. If there's a demand for payment, that's a scam.
- **Charity:** Donation solicitations from unknown individuals, groups and organizations can be common during a crisis. If you haven't had contact with them in the past, that's a red flag.

## How to Wear a Face Mask without Fogging up Your Glasses

BY JAKE ROSSEN

Of the many unintended consequences resulting from the current coronavirus pandemic, one wrinkle has emerged as a minor but irritating issue. When donning a manufactured or makeshift mask for the first time, people are finding that their glasses are beginning to fog up due to their exhaled air moving upward. Reducing the spread of germs is beneficial, but not if you're walking into telephone poles.

Fortunately, there's an easy solution. A few of them, actually. According to MEL, one purported to come from the Tokyo Police Department advises mask wearers to take a facial tissue and place it behind the mask. The tissue will absorb the moisture coming from your mouth that would otherwise be getting re-routed to your glasses.

Another alternative courtesy of a paper published in the Annals of the Royal College of the American Surgeons in 2011 is to wash eyeglasses in soapy water and then dry them. Because some soapy residue will remain, it will be difficult for mist to form on the surface. (Anecdotally, applying shaving cream also seems to have a similar effect.)

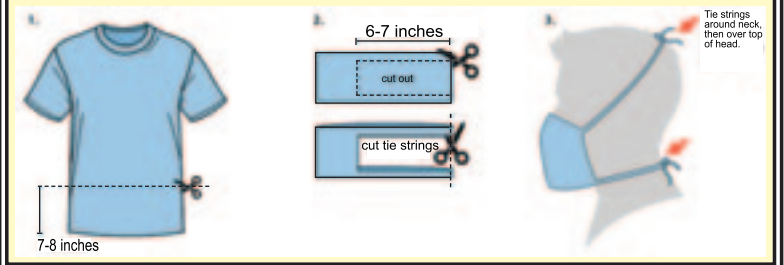
The problem of traveling exhaled air is why you'll see medical-grade masks with the metal clip around the nose. Offering a tighter fit to provide better protection, it allows less air to move up. Those masks should be left for health care professionals, but with a little DIY effort, your makeshift covering can be fog-free, too.

### HOW TO MAKE A T-SHIRT FACE MASK

If you have a T-shirt that you don't mind cutting up, then you can easily and quickly make a face mask from it. Note that you don't want to be using really old T-shirts if they have holes in them or are worn through. Ideally, your T-shirt should be 100% cotton and as opaque as possible.

To start, simply cut the bottom off your T-shirt. The height of the amount of material you need should be the length from the top of your nose to underneath your chin (around 7-8-inches). It's best to cut bigger than you think you need.

You then need to cut into your T-shirt around 6-7 inches to make the ties for your face mask. Follow the diagram below to see how to do this. Next, cut your ties so that you can retie them around your head. Adjust until you get a snug fit around your nose and chin. If you like, you can add a coffee filter or paper towel to your face mask, and secure it with a safety pin.



# Attendant Care Services

Attendant Care Services include the basic care services that will enable an individual in need of care to live in their home and carry out functions of daily living, mobility, and self-care, rather than living in a care facility. The RCCA can provide supervision and/or assistance with bathing, medications, dressing, and personal appearance under the direction of a licensed health professional.

Call for more information and/or to set up an appointment.

620.257.5153



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Please take a little time to fill out the coupon below. This helps us to use the funds we have wisely and to know whether Grains of Rice is serving the seniors of our community.

- I want to support **Grains of Rice**, enclosed is my donation.
- I wish to receive **Grains of Rice** as an email attachment. My email address is:

# How to watch Emma, Onward, and other new movies you can suddenly view at home

**The first wave of digital releases pushed due to the coronavirus are here.**

The Covid-19 coronavirus threw Hollywood into a tailspin, leading to movie theaters and productions across the country to shut down. With them, movies that had recently opened in theaters (or were hoping to premiere in the coming weeks) were left with dismal box-office results and no road forward.

Hoping to recoup costs while entertaining Americans who find themselves stuck at home, several studios (beginning with NBC Universal) announced plans to rush their films to digital release ahead of schedule. In some cases, they're releasing them digitally mere weeks after they came to theaters, instead of the customary handful of months.

The first wave of those early digital releases began on March 20, and the second followed hot on its heels on March 24. Most movies will be available on various on-demand platforms, including services like iTunes and Amazon Prime, some gaming platforms like Xbox and PlayStation, and some cable providers.

But most of them carry a higher price point than usual (about \$20 per purchase or rental) — albeit still less than going to the movies in many metropolitan areas. So if you're trying to

decide which of the newly available bounty to watch, here's a guide to the first week of these quick-turnaround digital releases.

## List of Digital Releases:

**Emma** - Anya Taylor-Joy stars in the latest movie adaptation of the Jane Austen novel about a young woman's romantic meddling.

**The Hunt** - Insanely gory but also fiendishly funny, this clever dark satire takes a familiar scenario and uses it to boldly skewer both red and blue Americans, painting both sides as equally absurd

**The Invisible Man** - Elisabeth Moss stars in a scary update on the H.G. Wells classic that trades science-fiction shivers for #MeToo horror.

**Onward** - You'll laugh. You'll cry. But first you have to cut through the noise.

**Bloodshot** - "Bloodshot" is a trash compactor of a comic-book film, but it's smart trash, an action matrix that's fun to plug into.

**Birds of Prey** - A funny, irreverent, extravagant and delightfully violent comic book film that's a blast to witness.

**The Gentlemen** - Guy Ritchie makes a very Guy Ritchie movie, this time with Matthew McConaughey, Hugh Grant and Charlie Hunnam.

**Just Mercy** - Jamie Foxx and Michael B. Jordan star in an adaptation of a memoir by the civil rights lawyer Bryan Stevenson.

**The Way Back** - Ben Affleck shows up in this atypical-for-him drama, elevating what would otherwise be a standard-issue sports film.

By Alissa Wilkinson | @alissamariealissa@vox.com | Updated Mar 24, 2020

<https://www.vox.com/culture/2020/3/20/21188408/coronavirus-streaming-movies-digital-emma-onward-invisible-man-birds-prey-way-back>

## Sterling Village Talks About Person-Centered Care

In a traditional long-term care setting, elders are expected to fit in with the routines and practices that staff feel are most appropriate. In a setting focused on providing person-centered care, services change to be more flexible to meet each elder's needs in a manner that is best for them. This involves working with elders and their families to find the best way to provide their care. At Sterling Village we take a different approach that has been recognized by the state as a top 10 provider of person-centered care.

### Benefits of person-centered care

With person-centered care elders and their families have enhanced satisfaction and an overall improved experience with a more purposeful life. They are more in control and this has a positive impact on the elder's overall health with fewer hospitalizations, less declining health and faster healing. Our staff feels confident about the care they provide which creates a more positive work environment.

### How is person-centered care different?

We love to get to know our elders as a person and recognize their individuality, that makes our care superior to other providers. We share the power of the elders health and care with them, so that they and their families are included in our holistic approach to care. Our services are accessible, flexible and easy to adapt and we are in constant communication with the elder about their care. Our staff is always there, well-trained, supportive and person-centered with our homelike environment assisting our elders every day.

### Additional Information

*Sterling Village is still accepting admissions after thoroughly screening during COVID-19.* If you have any questions or would like more information on any of the services offered at Sterling Village, call 620.278.3651 or visit [SterlingVillage.org](http://SterlingVillage.org). The community is located at 204 W. Washington Ave., Sterling, KS 67579.

## COVID-19 Fraud Schemes

continued from page 2

- **Phishing:** Scammers may pose as national, global, or even state and local health authorities. They pretend to be from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), for example, and send emails designed to trick people into downloading malware or providing personal identifying and financial information.
- **Mobile Apps:** Mobile apps are being offered that claim to track the spread of COVID-19; however, they insert malware that will compromise users' devices and personal information.
- **Investments:** Watch out for claims that products or services from publicly traded companies can prevent, detect or cure COVID-19 -- and that the stock of these companies will dramatically increase in value as a result. Often these promotions look like "research reports," make predictions of a specific "target price," and relate to microcap stocks, or low-priced stocks issued by the smallest of companies with limited publicly available information.
- **Over-inflated Prices:** Be aware that sellers may try to unlawfully use the COVID-19 pandemic to unreasonably inflate prices.
- **Insurance, Workers' Compensation & Medicaid Fraud:** Businesses and government agencies are not immune to scams. Be vigilant for offers to help apply for government assistance payments -- either for your business or your employees. This is often an attempt to obtain their personal information or to extract a bogus fee for "help" filing for the relief.
- **Economic Impact Payment (Stimulus Check):** Scammers pretend to be government officials offering fake economic impact payments (stimulus checks) in order to obtain personal identifying information, including social security and bank account numbers.

Stay safe and be well.

## MONICA RENTERIA & CARLA NULL Wishing you both the best!

All of the staff at the Rice County Council on Aging would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Monica Renteria and Carla Null who retired from our agency during March. These dedicated women have given of their time and talents to serve the senior citizens of Rice County for the past 6 plus years.

Monica started with the agency in 2009 as a Housekeeper and then transferred to our General Public Transportation in June of 2011. Monica has driven several of our clients from Rice County and back again, for a number of reasons including those taking dialysis treatments three days a week. Her retirement plans include taking care of grandchildren and spending time enjoying her hand-crafted hobbies.

Carla joined our agency in September of 2014 as a part-time Housekeeping Scheduler and then took the full-time position of Housekeeping Supervisor in June of 2015. Carla had also assisted during the annual Medicare Open Enrollment Period, by counseling Medicare beneficiaries with their Part D drug plans. Carla and husband Tim have purchased a home in Salina, (their old stomping grounds) and moved there in early April. They both have plenty to do with renovating and redecorating their new home, as well as catching up with old friends in the area.

We wish both of them many years of retirement joy as they start new chapters in their lives.

# MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

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| Angels    | Diamondbacks | Mets      | Reds     |
| Astros    | Dodgers      | Nationals | Rockies  |
| Athletics | Giants       | Orioles   | Royals   |
| Braves    | Indians      | Padres    | Tigers   |
| Brewers   | Jays         | Phillies  | Twins    |
| Cardinals | Mariners     | Pirates   | WhiteSox |
| Cubs      | Marlins      | Rays      | Yankees  |

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[www.ricecountycouncilonaging.com](http://www.ricecountycouncilonaging.com)

## Housekeeping Services

Do you need help running the vacuum?  
Is your laundry piling up?



Rice County Council on Aging has openings for housekeeping services. If you would like to schedule an appointment to talk about our services, call

620.257.5153

### RICE COUNTY Senior Centers

~~Alden~~

Township Hall  
Heidi Bolton  
785-223-1248

~~Bushon~~

T-Bird Center  
Marlin Sittner  
620-562-0332

~~Chase~~

Chase Senior Center  
Silver Ingram  
620-938-2010

~~Geneseo~~

55+ Club on Main St.  
Joyce Mullen  
824-6489

~~Little River~~

Senior Center  
Meredith Davis  
620-897-6672

~~Lyons~~

Park Place  
Darla Graff  
620-680-6150

~~Sterling~~

Silver Threads  
Trasie Bressler  
620-278-3280

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SOLUTION TO PUZZLE ON PAGE 4

D U O R P S N G E H D O D G E R S G P F  
 W R Q O O B O P B D K U S T V X N X O J  
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 T I G E R S P H I L L I E S U Q I M M R  
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 P Z E V I N O Y E V M W S E I K C O R H  
 Q O R X P S A K I M B V M Y J A F N E W

# 10 Container Garden Tips for Beginners

plants with a "mounding habits" for filling in your design. To finish your pot, you might choose plants with "trailing habits," to drape over the sides of your pot.

## 7. Sometimes Plants Die

The more plants you grow, the more plants you will kill. It's that simple. Sometimes even the most expert gardeners will kill plants. It's a fact of gardening life. The trick is to know when to give up on a plant. In a mixed container garden, it makes sense to give up rather early, so your whole container doesn't look ugly.

When a plant starts looking dreadful you have a couple of choices. Depending on the plant, you can cut it back dramatically, and hope for the best. For many plants, this is all it takes, and in a few weeks, your plant will come roaring back, happy and beautiful.

You can pull out the unhappy plant and put another plant in its place. Depending on how dead and/or precious the plant is, you can try to rehabilitate by repotting it and baby it until it rebounds or you just can't stand the look of it any longer.

If your plant is exhibiting signs of disease, take it out and re-pot it or put it in a plastic bag and throw it out.

## 8. Acclimate Your Plants

Many plants don't like abrupt changes and if you acclimate them, over a period of time to changes in light, exposure to the elements, water or temperature, they are generally happier. This is particularly important with young plants and is essential for most plants that have spent their lives in the climate of a greenhouse.

When you buy seedlings in the spring, or if you grow your own from seed, you must harden off your plants. This is a slow and tedious process, but if you don't do it, the chances of your plants thriving will be significantly reduced.

If you live in a colder climate and plan to overwinter your plants, they will need an adjustment period to get used to less light and drier air.

## 9. The More Potting Soil the Better

There are lots of people out there who will tell you to fill up your containers with all manner of junk - from packing peanuts to milk jugs. While doing this will make your container garden significantly lighter, it will also make it harder to maintain because it will dry out faster.

The more potting soil you use, the more water retention you will have

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which will give you a much great margin for error when it comes to both watering and feeding your plants.

## 10. Garden How You Live

Here's the honest truth - container gardening is hard work. It takes time and attention, it doesn't have to be expensive, but it can be. Here's some more truth - there is no such thing as a foolproof plant or gardening system - even if you cover all your bases, some plants will thrive and some will not.

This is both the good news and the bad. All of the uncertainty and hard work makes the whole endeavor exciting, rewarding, and endlessly interesting. To have the most fun and to increase your chances of success with any kind of gardening, assess how you live before you dive in. You don't like to water? Grow succulents and other drought-resistant plants. Don't have a lot of extra cash? Make your containers out of found items or yard sale finds. If you have a formal entrance and want a tailored look choose large containers in classic shapes.

Whatever your style, there are plants that can work for you. You just have to do a little research and experimentation to find what works.

# 10 Container Garden Tips for Beginners

Written by Kerry Michaels

*Once you get the hang of container gardening you might find yourself growing more and more pots each year. Here are some of our best tips for successful container gardens.*

## 1. Don't Skimp on Drainage

While this may sound like an odd first tip, it can be a matter of life and death for your plants. When there isn't a big enough hole or holes for water to get out of your pot, your soil becomes too wet and the roots of your plants can rot which causes the plant to die.

The bad news is that many garden pots that are sold simply don't have enough drainage. You can often increase drainage, by drilling, or carving bigger holes. Sometimes it's just easier to buy a pot that does have enough drainage. The minimum size for a drainage hole is 1/2 inch for small or medium-sized pots. For larger sized, look for at least an inch in diameter.

It is a total myth that by adding gravel, pot shards, or stones to the bottom of your container garden, you will increase drainage. Some people even say you don't need drainage holes if you put these things in the bottom of your pots. Unless you are a really attentive container gardener, who can water perfectly, or you have a plant that likes wet soil (and there are some that do), you need holes in your pots -- preferably lots of them.

## 2. Evaluate Your Light

People often wildly overestimate how much sun their containers get. While you can find a great plant for almost any amount of light, you have to know how much light your container will get before you choose your plants.

To figure out how much direct light your container will get, place it where you want it and then time

how long the sun hits it. You can also use a sun calculator to determine your sunlight.

## 3. Feed Your Plants

Most potting soil has no accessible nutrients for your plants, you need to add those. The vast majority of plants will need fertilizer added to your soil, in order to thrive. You can mix in a slow release fertilizer into a potting mix. To do this, either mix up a big batch of potting soil mixed with fertilizer in a bucket or fill your pot with potting soil and then mix in the fertilizer.

Then fertilize every week or two with a liquid fertilizer, usually a fish emulsion, seaweed blend. It smells awful but really helps to give plants the nutrition they need.

Many people use Miracle-Gro, and while it will feed your plants and help them to grow if you start using it, you will have to continue because this type of synthetic fertilizer will kill the beneficial organisms that exist in the soil. So once you've used Miracle-Gro, you will have to stick to it or another synthetic fertilizer.

## 4. Make a List Before You Buy

One of the best ways to avoid plant panic, or at least minimize it, is to decide what you want before you go to the nursery and make a list. This list doesn't even have to have the exact plants, you can go online or look through plant catalogs and decide exactly what you want. Try to create a list at least with the number of pots, the sizes, and where they are going - so you can get plants that fit the pots and know if you need plants for sun or shade.

If possible, it is a great idea to bring either your pot or a picture of your pot with you. Most nurseries will have someone there who can help you out with your choices.

## 5. Plant Good Neighbors

When you are choosing plants for your container make sure that they will play well together. This means that all the plants in one pot should all require the same amount of light and moisture. If you combine plants with different needs, some of them will not thrive. If you have a plant that requires full sun, you want all the plants you choose for that pot to also require full sun. If you have a plant that likes to dry out between waterings, you don't want to put it in a pot with plants that like it wet.

To find out what a plant requires, either check the plant tag or if there isn't one, ask a salesperson.

## 6. Read & Save the Plant Tag

Plant tags are critical. They will tell you how big your plant will get, how much light, water, and food it needs and how much care it will need. The tag will also tell you if your plant is annual or perennial and if it's a perennial, what zones it will survive in.

The tag will also tell you about your plant's "habit," which means its shape and how it will grow. This is important when considering your container design and how to arrange your plant combinations. For example, if you have a large pot you might want some plants with "upright habits," to give your design height and then some

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**In these days of increased requests for service & decreased funding, we are most grateful for each one that donates.**

Betty Hunt  
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# SENIOR FRIENDLY Guide to Downsizing

Taken in part from the article at:  
<https://www.mymove.com/moving/guides/senior-guide-downsizing/>

Most seniors know that there will come a day when they'll have to downsize, either to simplify their lifestyle, to cut costs, to be closer to grandchildren, or to address medical needs.

It's often a stressful and tolling process — both emotionally and physically. But it doesn't have to get overwhelming. Here are some tips from MYMOVE to make downsizing easier.

## TIPS TO MAKE DOWNSIZING LATER IN LIFE EASIER

### 1. Start early.

Give yourself plenty of time for this process, because it will inevitably take longer than you expect. Take your time, and don't try to sort through your entire house in one day or weekend. A couple of weeks to a month is a more realistic timeline. Take it one room at a time, and take breaks throughout.

"Go through each item one by one," says Alison Kero, CEO of ACK Organizing. "It's important to give everything your own your attention for at least a second or two. It will also help you develop a decision-making system because you're learning how to focus and then choose."

### IF YOU AREN'T RUSHED, YOU'LL FIND DOWNSIZING TO BE MUCH LESS STRESSFUL.

### 2. Start small.

You probably already have things you want to get rid of in the kitchen or garage, but avoid diving into such a big room at the very beginning. Start in an area with little emotional attachment. The laundry room or linen closet are good options.

Understand your needs. If you're moving into a two-bedroom house, four sets of sheets should be plenty. The rest can go.

"Garages/attics/basements are the hardest rooms to tackle," says Debra Blue, of Blue Moon Estate Sales. "These rooms tend to accumulate all the old hobbies, boxes, holiday decorations, and clutter. They're also known to be rather uncomfortable spaces."

### 3. Eliminate rooms you won't have in your new home.

If you're moving to an apartment or townhome, you might not have a garage or office. Nearly everything in those spaces will need to be sold, donated, tossed, or relocated to other rooms. These items might be good for consignment or garage sales; office furniture and outdoor tools are more valuable than old sofas or mattresses.

"Organize backwards," suggests Jamie Novak, author of 'Keep This Toss That.' "A common suggestion is to pick out the stuff you don't want and pack the rest. Try the opposite — pack the keepers. What's left can be shared or donated."

### 4. Get rid of duplicates.

You'll find this is especially true in your kitchen. You have two or three spatulas and ladles, a couple of stock pots, and four different sized cookie sheets. Now's the time to reduce the clutter. If you're feeling wary of handing off that second roasting pan because you use it every Christmas, consider giving it to a child or grandchild who can bring it over for the holiday and take it home when they leave.

### 5. Only make Yes or No piles — no Maybes.

When you're going through years of belongings, some things are going to tug at your heartstrings, and you'll be tempted to make a third pile of things to keep if you have space. Don't fall for it. You'll end up with a Maybe pile that's bigger than either of the other two.

Take a hard look at every item you pick up. If you use it regularly, keep it. But it's time to let something go if it's been sitting in a

closet or on a shelf for a year or more.

"If you already weren't using it, or didn't like it, why on earth would you want to pack it up and schlep it to your next house?" says Hazel Thornton, of New Mexico-based Organized for Life. "I know it sounds silly, but people do it all the time. Moving isn't cheap, either; do you really want to pay extra to move stuff you don't even want? Don't delude yourself by telling yourself you'll deal with it at your next destination. No, you won't."

### 6. Reduce collections creatively.

It can be hard to let go of a lifetime collection of porcelain dolls or snow globes from all your vacations, but they will eat up a lot of space or end up stored in a box where you'll never see them.

Instead, pick a couple to keep and take high-resolution photos of the rest, then have them made into a photo book that can sit on your coffee table or mantle. You and guests will be able to enjoy them without the clutter. There are also tech tools or websites such that will convert those boxes of photo negatives to digital.

### 7. Don't be afraid to sell things yourself.

With numerous smartphone apps, yard sales, and an abundance of consignment shops, selling your belongings has never been easier. You probably won't make a ton of money on most items, so consider how much time you want to invest.

Yard sales are usually faster, but items won't sell for as much. Consignment is a good option for high-end furniture, handbags, and other accessories; prices are reasonable, and they'll sometimes pick up heavy furniture for you.

If you aren't handy with a computer, your grandchildren can probably help. But if that all sounds like more than you care to deal with, hiring a firm to run an estate sale might be your best bet.

### 8. Consider legacy gifts early.

Is there an antique clock in your foyer that you plan to one day leave to your son? Maybe a china collection your granddaughter adores? If there are certain heirlooms or pieces you plan to leave to your family in your will, consider giving those gifts now.

This has two benefits: you'll get the items out of our way, and you'll be able to enjoy the feeling of giving those items to your loved ones now. While you're at it, find out if there are any items your children want that you don't know about — you might find an easy way to make them happy and lighten your load.

### 9. Allow some time to reminisce.

While you're cleaning and sorting, there will be some days when you want to stop emptying the kids' bedrooms and just look through the kindergarten drawings, soccer trophies, and once-prized stuffed animals. It's OK to pause and let the nostalgia take over for a bit. Cry if you need to, or move on to another room and come back. This is why you started early — just don't let it prevent you from eventually getting the job done.

"I always ask my clients how the item at hand makes them feel," says Morgan Ovens, of Haven Home in Los Angeles. "If it brings up any negative feelings, let it go. If it brings happiness of course it stays! The idea here is to only be surrounded by things you absolutely love."

### 10. Use this as a chance to bond.

Invite the kids and grandkids over for the weekend. Talk to the young ones about where you bought your favorite trinkets. Tell them about your family's heirlooms. Let them help pack, ask questions, and spend time with you. Get help posting items for sale online.

It can be one more moment your family shares together in the house you've loved — before you start making memories in your next home. Remember that it's your family that's important for the memories you cherish, not the stuff around you.

### MAKING THE MOVE AFTER YOU PACK

Now that you've downsized your belongings, how are you going to make your move?

Will you be rounding up family members to help pack and drive a moving truck? Or will you pay for a full-service moving company to pack, ship, and unpack your things? Perhaps something in-between, with a mobile storage option in which you pack a container, and then the storage company does the shipping?

For seniors, there's often another option. More companies, known as senior move managers, are popping up across the country that cater specifically to seniors moving — either to smaller homes or moving into senior living or nursing communities. They'll usually do as much or as little as you want, from packing and moving to home cleaning and estate sales.

"There are now senior move specialists in most communities," says Sara Geber, an aging transition coach with LifeEncore. "These are people trained to help at every step of the way, from selecting the new residence to downsizing, to transportation back and forth, etc. They are generally very reasonable in cost and well worth the expenditure. Most real estate brokers know of such professionals, as do estate attorneys and financial advisers."

It's important to keep these options in mind as you downsize because it might change your opinion on whether to keep or sell certain items. If you're moving everything yourself, a 300-pound china cabinet might be better suited for the consignment shop to avoid the hassle and risk of injury. If you're paying for full-service, you might be more inclined to keep it, but know that

such heavy items add onto the price tag.

You'll also want to be on the lookout for potential scammers. It's fairly rare, but there are some companies out there that will promise one attractive price for a full-service move, and then once your stuff is all packed up in the truck, they'll demand more money while holding your items hostage. Do your research and use companies that come with recommendations from family and friends.

If you're undecided about what type of move is best for you, let MYMOVE help you compare moving options.

### DEALING WITH THE EMOTIONAL TOLL OF DOWNSIZING

Most people will struggle a bit with nostalgia when they've reached a point where it's time to downsize. Geber, with LifeEncore, spoke with MYMOVE about how to make the best of this difficult time.

"Change is hard for everyone, but the older we get, the more accustomed we are to our surroundings and our 'stuff,' even if all that stuff starts to strangle us," she says.

She says a lot of these negative feelings come from both sadness and fear, which is why she recommends downsizing as early as possible when it's easier to adjust to a new environment.

Many senior living communities allow potential residents to spend a few nights on site to get an idea of what it would be like to live there. Take advantage of that if you can, Geber says.

"Looking forward to a new environment" can help ease the transition, Geber says. Focus on the positives and how much simpler life will be with fewer surfaces to dust, rooms to vacuum, or towels to wash.

Your downsize doesn't have to be stressful, sad, or scary. Stay positive and get excited about a simpler life in a new place with less clutter.