

The Next Chapter



“I want to live in a retirement community, but I’m overwhelmed by the thought of moving.”

Making the move to a supportive retirement community: With a little planning and help from family, friends, and professionals, the anxiety of moving is quickly replaced by happy expectations.

Every year, thousands of people successfully move from their current homes into retirement communities. However, this fact may not help calm your own concerns surrounding such an important transition if you are facing it for the first time.

Again, having a better understanding of the process and where you can find people to help will do much to alleviate the stress you may be feeling.

Here, we discuss the four main stages that will take you from your current situation into your new home:

1. Making the decision to move
2. Searching for the right new home
3. Making the physical move
4. Settling into your new home and community

1. Making the decision to move.

- **Dealing with mixed emotions.** Even though you have probably moved many other times in your life, this time may seem more daunting because of the reason(s) you are moving: the death of a spouse, declining health or safety concerns, feelings of loneliness, isolation, etc. Consider that you may feel overwhelmed and pressured not just about the move itself, but because of pre-existing emotional or health issues. Give yourself permission to go through these natural feelings.
- **Deciding it’s a good move for you.** Acknowledging that you would prefer a different lifestyle helps to nurture the notion that you *want* to move because your new home will be in a more comfortable and enriching environment. Surround yourself with people who feel the same way and are supportive of your move.
- **Letting go, looking forward.** Once you truly feel that the move is beneficial to you and your loved ones, this will become a wonderful adventure rather than a daunting task. Even letting go of your family home will seem like the right thing to do.

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- **Staying in control by planning ahead.** The best way to stay in charge of your own move is to plan as far ahead as possible. That probably means starting the process today. Those who wait until changes in health require a hasty move will find fewer choices available and less time to make them.

2. Searching for the right new home.

- **Developing your criteria.** The opportunities for senior living have exploded in the last 20 years. There are probably many more housing options than you ever imagined. Before you begin looking at them, make a prioritized list of what you want and need. Be sure to include your physical, social, and financial expectations.
- **Finding people to help you.** Family and close friends may be your most valuable resources. There may also be professionals in your area who specialize in helping seniors move (be sure to ask how much they charge for their service). Reputable retirement communities will have retirement counselors who have expertise in senior-specific issues. They can offer suggestions and point you to local resources.
- **Doing the research.** With your list of criteria and helpers in tow, start gathering your information. Talk to people you meet; look in your telephone directory under “Retirement Communities;” search the Internet for local retirement options (their Web sites will tell you a lot about them); and start scheduling personal tours. Take good notes so you can fairly compare the various places.
- **Assessing your finances.** This is important to do early on so you have a general idea of what you can afford. Consult with your financial advisor(s) at this time.
- **Choosing your new home.** Discuss the move with your closest family and friends, and then listen to your own heart for the answer that is right for you. If it feels good and the math works out, then you’ve found your new home!

3. Making the physical move.

- **Family, friends, and professionals can help** you with the actual move. You certainly aren’t expected to do it all yourself! Your new community should be very instrumental in helping you plan and execute the entire process, from home to home. Ask ahead of time how they will help you.
- **Out of your current home:** If you plan to sell your current home, this stage may involve contacting a real estate agent who may recommend repairing and sprucing up your home for sale. You also will organize your personal items—giving some to family, friends, and charities—then pack and transport your furniture and other belongings to your new home.
- **Into your new home:** After your belongings have arrived, you settle in and enjoy your new home.

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4. **Settling into your new home and community.**

A move that felt totally overwhelming at the beginning is suddenly behind you, and you have plenty of time to settle in. If you moved into a retirement community—like Touchmark—with a continuum of health care services and a wide range of lifestyle choices, you may never need to move again.

By taking the time and steps to thoroughly research your options and carefully make your own choices, you now are free to move on to the next chapter of your life.

Our Mission: To enrich people's lives.
