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How To Pack Like A Pro

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If you choose to do any of the packing for yourself, you may not be sure how to get started. Welcome to Packing 101.

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Who Will be Packing?

Your first step before moving is deciding whether you'll pack for yourself, hire a professional mover, or do a bit of both. Packing yourself will take some time and energy but can be a real money saver. Hiring a professional mover, on the other hand, can save you time and effort but cost a bit more. You also have the option of hiring a professional mover, yet packing some or all of your possessions yourself can trim your costs.

Box Basics

Use new high-quality packing materials specifically designed for moving to better ensure that your items will arrive safely. Professional moving cartons come in a variety of shapes and sizes specifically suited to fit a variety of household goods. Look into barrels, for example, as they are great ways of loading a lot of odd-shaped items into one large container. Sturdy boxes in a variety of sizes can be retrieved from your local Lowe's store. Stereo equipment and electronics should be replaced in their original packaging, if possible.

Other Supplies to Consider

- Bundles of [packing paper](#) (clean, unprinted newsprint)
- [Bubble wrap](#), tissue paper or paper towels for delicate items
- [Packing peanuts](#), wadded-up newspaper, old pillows and blankets
- Rolls of PVC tape (don't use masking tape or cellophane tape)
- Tape dispenser
- Broad-tipped markers for labeling
- A [razor knife](#) or [scissors](#) for cutting cartons
- Notebook and pen or pencil for listing contents of cartons as they are packed
- Labels or stickers for identifying boxes
- Dark, water-resistant marker

Wrapping How-tos

Before packing cartons, you'll need to wrap most items to protect them from scratching and breakage. There is a variety of materials available, including bubble pack, foam peanuts and tissue; however, most professionals use bundles of clean, unprinted newsprint.

Start by placing a small stack of paper on a flat, uncluttered table or countertop. Round glasses and jars can be rolled up in two or three sheets of paper; always begin from a corner of the sheet and fold the sides in as you roll. Large or odd-shaped items require a similar technique. Place them in the center of the sheet and bring the corners together. (It may be necessary to flip the item over and wrap it again from the other side.) If in doubt, use more paper! When the corners come together, secure them with tape.

Before packing each carton, line the bottom with a few inches of wadded paper for padding. Then place large, heavy items on the bottom and lighter, more fragile items on the top. Plates, books and things of a similar shape, should be loaded vertically to utilize their own maximum structural strength. Don't overload cartons; keep them to a manageable weight. Fill in any voids and top off loaded cartons with wadded paper. Then tape cartons securely to avoid shifting while en route.

Labeling Hints

Imagine a truckload of boxes scattered around your new home. How can you tell what box goes where? By labeling them correctly, you can avoid any confusion and find exactly what you are looking for.

Use a broad, felt-tipped marker. Clearly mark each box with your name, the contents and the room it belongs in. Assign a number to every room of your new home and label boxes with the number of the room in which they belong.

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