

IT'S TIME FOR YOUR NEXT CHAPTER...

How to Downsize Your Home & Budget Without Downsizing Your Lifestyle!

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One of the most exciting times for us is when we finally get to downsize our home so we can lower expenses, lower the maintenance, cleaning and upkeep and finally have more time and money to enjoy life!

There are several things to consider before you get close to the time you'll begin shopping for your next place. Before downsizing where you live, it's essential to prepare with a few steps to ensure a smooth transition and make informed decisions.

Here are 6 Crucial Things To Do Before Downsizing!

**Assess Current
and
Future Needs**

**Create a
Financial Plan**

**Declutter and
Organize
Possessions**

**Research Housing
and Location
Options**

**Plan for Emotional
and Practical
Adjustments**

**Plan How You Will
Utilize the Funds
You Save by
Downsizing**

1. Assess Current and Future Needs: Evaluate your current living situation and anticipate future needs. Consider factors such as family size, lifestyle preferences, health considerations, and potential changes in mobility. Determine what features of your current home are essential and what can be sacrificed or adapted in a downsized space.

2. Create a Financial Plan: Review your financial situation thoroughly to understand your budgetary constraints and goals. Consider factors such as mortgage payments, property taxes, condo fees, maintenance costs, and potential relocation expenses. Determine how much you can afford to spend on a downsized home or rental property and whether downsizing will help reduce overall expenses or provide additional financial flexibility in retirement.

3. Declutter and Organize Possessions: Before downsizing, declutter your belongings to lighten the load and simplify the moving process. Sort through items systematically, categorizing them as keep, donate, sell, or discard. Be ruthless in your decisions, prioritizing practicality and sentimental value. Consider digitizing photos and documents to save space and preserve memories.

4. Research Housing Options: Explore various housing options to find the best fit for your needs and preferences. It may help you to work with a real estate agent that understands the downsizing process and has access to pre-market properties. Consider factors such as location, size, amenities, community features, and affordability. Evaluate options such as condominiums, retirement communities, smaller homes, or rental apartments. Visit potential properties with a real estate professional and assess their suitability based on your criteria.

5. Plan for Emotional and Practical Adjustments: Downsizing can be emotionally challenging, especially if it involves leaving a long-time family home or adjusting to a smaller living space. But it's very liberating financially! Prepare yourself and your family members for the emotional aspects of downsizing by discussing concerns and expectations openly. Additionally, plan for practical adjustments such as furniture arrangement, storage solutions, and home modifications to optimize the downsized space for comfort and functionality.

6. Plan How You Will Better Utilize the Funds You Are Saving From Downsizing: Will this provide a vacation for you every year to see the world? Will you invest it into your retirement accounts? Will you go out for a nice dinner or entertainment every week? Planning for what that looks like will keep you motivated to make this happen sooner, rather than later.

By completing these six steps before considering downsizing, you can make informed decisions, minimize stress, and ensure a successful transition to a smaller, more manageable living environment.

As you transition into retirement, many find themselves seeking ways to downsize their living space and expenses without compromising their desired lifestyle. Downsizing can offer numerous benefits, including reduced maintenance, lower costs, and increased flexibility. Best of all, it may be even easier for you to travel! However, the process can seem daunting. But it's not that difficult at all. **Let's explore strategies for downsizing your home and your monthly budget while maintaining or even enhancing your quality of life.**



1. Assessing Current Lifestyle and Needs:

- Begin by evaluating current living arrangements and lifestyle preferences.
- Identify essential requirements for comfort and happiness.
- Determine what aspects of current lifestyle are non-negotiable and what can be adapted or changed.

2. Rightsizing Living Space:

- Consider the possibility of relocating to a smaller house, condo or apartment that better suits current needs.
- Evaluate available space and prioritize functionality and accessibility.
- Explore options such as condominiums, retirement communities, or smaller homes in desirable locations.
- Assess the potential for multi-purpose rooms to maximize space utilization.

3. Decluttering and Downsizing Possessions:

- Sort belongings into categories (keep, donate, sell, discard).
- Be mindful of sentimental attachment but prioritize practicality.
- Utilize resources such as professional organizers or downsizing consultants if needed.
- Aim for a minimalist approach to possessions, focusing on quality over quantity.

4. Financial Planning and Budgeting:

- Review current financial situation and retirement savings.
- Create a budget that aligns with reduced expenses in a downsized home.
- Consider factors such as property taxes, utilities, condo fees or maintenance costs.
- Explore opportunities to increase income through part-time work, freelance gigs, or rental income from downsized property (if needed or desired).

5. Embracing Community and Social Connections:

- Prioritize proximity to family, friends, and social activities when selecting a new location.
- Explore opportunities for community engagement and involvement.
- Consider shared living arrangements or co-housing communities for companionship and support.
- Join local clubs or organizations catering to interests and hobbies.

6. Maintaining Health and Well-being:

- Choose a location with access to healthcare facilities and services.
- Prioritize amenities that promote physical activity and wellness, such as walking trails or fitness centers. This will be increasingly important as we age.
- Invest in home modifications to enhance safety and accessibility, if necessary.
- Stay connected with healthcare providers and prioritize preventive care.

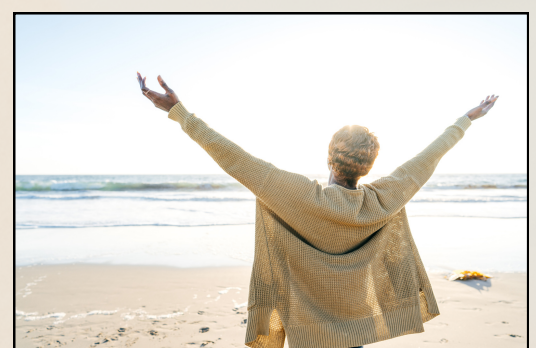
7. Adapting to Change and Flexibility:

- Embrace the process of downsizing as an opportunity for renewal and reinvention.
- Be open to new experiences and possibilities.
- Stay flexible and willing to adjust plans as needed.
- Approach downsizing with a positive mindset and focus on the benefits it brings.

Downsizing a home and financial budget doesn't mean sacrificing lifestyle quality. By carefully assessing needs, rightsizing living space, decluttering possessions, planning finances, nurturing social connections, prioritizing health, and maintaining flexibility, individuals in this demographic can successfully transition to a more manageable and fulfilling lifestyle in their retirement years. With proper planning and mindset, downsizing can lead to a newfound sense of freedom and contentment.

Since so many people are now living to a three-digit age, it's important to lower your living expenses and your weekly responsibilities as soon as possible. You want to have a reasonable but attainable budget that allows you to still enjoy the quality of life you desire.

As the real estate market continues to fluctuate, you may be considering selling your home. Whether you're downsizing, relocating, or simply ready for a change, navigating the selling process can be daunting. That's why I'm here to offer some guidance and tips to help you make the most of this endeavor.



Here are some things to consider at least a few months prior to moving.

Home Sale Preparation:

- 1. Declutter and Depersonalize:** Before listing your home, take the time to declutter and depersonalize your space. Clear out excess furniture and personal items to make your home appear more spacious and inviting to potential buyers. You can easily liquidate furniture on Facebook Marketplace or even donate it to a charity if you wish.
- 2. Market Analysis:** A trusted real estate agent will conduct a thorough market analysis to determine the optimal listing price for your home. This analysis takes into account factors such as recent sales in your area, current market trends, and the unique features of your property. And remember the possibility of **INCREASING** your current value with their recommendations.
- 3. Marketing Strategy:** Your agent will develop a comprehensive marketing strategy to attract potential buyers to your home. This may include professional photography, virtual tours, open houses, and targeted advertising campaigns to reach the widest possible audience. Having an agent that specializes in the downsizing process and is also a Target Marketing Specialist will ensure you have a smooth transition, you net as much as possible and you have access to their "Dream Team" of professionals for absolutely any trade person you may need.
- 4. Finding Your Next Place:** Remember that a lot of the best properties never make it to the open marketplace. When you are looking for a desirable condo or single-story home or even a 55+ community, you'll want to have a real estate specialist doing the heavy lifting (and marketing) to find what you are looking for. This gets you lots of additional opportunities. My **No Place Like Home** Program is designed to do just that so be sure to ask me about it when we meet.
- 5. Negotiations:** Once offers start rolling in, your agent will guide you through the negotiation process to ensure that you receive the best possible price and terms for your home. They will advocate on your behalf and help navigate any potential obstacles that may arise.
- 6. Closing Process:** Finally, your agent will assist you with the closing process, coordinating with all parties involved to ensure a smooth and successful transaction. From reviewing contracts to scheduling inspections and appraisals, they will be there every step of the way to answer your questions and address any concerns.

Working With a Trusted Real Estate Agent:

Choosing the right real estate agent is crucial to a successful home sale. Look for an agent who has experience working with clients in your demographic and who understands the unique needs and preferences of people ready to downsize for their next chapter in life.

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Most homeowners have absolutely no idea what criteria they should be utilizing when choosing the best Realtor to sell their house. They have no pre-determined questions to be used during an interview and they have no qualifying standards to decide which agents are even qualified to sell their property correctly. Most home sellers admit that they don't know how to choose an agent.

These homeowners are hoping for "promises" from a salesperson that may or may not actually become true. As an example, many uneducated home sellers will simply interview 1 or 2 agents and go with the one that says they can sell it for the most amount of money, with the lowest commission charged. This almost ALWAYS ends in disaster. More on that later.

If you are selling your home, it's one of the most important financial decisions of your entire life. It's crucial to have a pre-determined set of questions and qualifications you can use during the interview to choose the best agent for the job. You certainly don't want to mess up something this big in your life by choosing an agent based on an inaccurate home price or a low commission. And if their sales success percentage is low on the listings that they represent, your home may not sell at all.

Below is a list of selection factors to consider as you weigh each agent against each other to ensure that your home sells correctly and sells for the highest amount of net profit with little hassle.

1. Agent should be a full-time Realtor able to dedicate their full attention to your transaction.
2. Agent should explain in advance what their client communication policy is in detail. Too many times I've heard from people who say once they signed the listing agreement they never heard from the agent again (I am always shocked by this). Make sure there is a preset communication schedule and way to contact the agent directly.
3. Agent must be able to demonstrate how they can make my home stand out above all other homes for sale in this area. There is a baseline level of marketing which pretty much all agents use, ask interviewees what they specifically do "Above and Beyond" the basics.
4. Any agent can "List" a home, not all agents can get the home SOLD. Ask interviewees what percentage of homes that they "List" make it all the way through to "Sold". This will give you a much clearer picture of their abilities.
5. Along the same vein, some agents "buy" listings by claiming they can sell the home for an inaccurately high price only to then push the sellers to make multiple price reductions until they reach the real market price. This not only gives up most of the sellers negotiation power but it also leaves the home sitting stagnant on the market. Ask interviewees what their "List Price to Sold Price" percentage is on homes they represent. This will tell you if they can really deliver on their promises.

You'll also want to be sure your agent can demonstrate an effective marketing campaign for homes they represent. You should inquire about their process and ask what kind of marketing strategies they'll use to ensure your home can sell smoothly and for TOP DOLLAR. Below is a modified marketing outline of my process I use so prospective sellers can easily see what will happen on the marketing side after listing their home with me. Note that my Targeted strategy is NOT typical and is an example of "Above and Beyond" marketing.



Once you've found the right agent, trust their expertise and guidance throughout the selling process. Communication is key, so be sure to maintain open and honest communication with your agent every step of the way. A good agent should help when it comes to connecting with any service provider you may need. Attorneys, CPA's, Auction Companies, Cleaners, Painters, Moving Companies and more. It all starts with your real estate professional.

Selling your home in the current market can be a rewarding experience with the right preparation and guidance. By following these tips and working with a trusted real estate agent, you can navigate the process with confidence and achieve a successful outcome.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rachel Ashton, a dedicated Real Estate Specialist serving the **Pasadena, La Canada, Glendale** and surrounding **Foothills Area** with a passion for helping people transition into their ideal next chapter lifestyle.

With years of experience in the real estate industry, Rachel has honed her skills to cater specifically to the unique needs of this demographic. She understands that downsizing can be a daunting task, especially after a lifetime of accumulating memories and possessions. She approaches each client with empathy, patience, and a commitment to making the process as seamless as possible.

Her extensive knowledge of the local housing market allows her to find the perfect home that meets her clients' needs, whether it's a cozy condo, a quaint bungalow, or a retirement community with a range of amenities. Her **No Place Like Home** program finds off-market opportunities just for you. Rachel takes the time to listen to her clients' desires and concerns, ensuring that they feel comfortable and confident in their decision.

Beyond just buying or selling a home, Rachel strives to create a supportive environment for her clients, offering resources and guidance every step of the way. Her **Helping Hands** program offers a wide range of services she handles for her clients such as clearing and cleaning the home, coordinating the documents required for these special sales and anything else needed to present the home at its best and ensure it's sold properly, timely, and for the highest price. She goes above and beyond to make the transition stress-free.

Rachel's dedication to her clients and her genuine desire to help them embark on this new chapter of their lives sets her apart as a real estate specialist who truly cares. Whether it's downsizing into a smaller home, relocating to a retirement community, or embracing a new lifestyle, Rachel is there to support and guide her clients every step of the way.



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