

MOVING IDEAS

Pack Smarter To Make Moving Easier



(NAPSA)—When making the enormous decision to move from one home to the next, many people don't realize that they have also signed up to make countless choices, big and small. Deciding on travel arrangements for you and your pets, transferring memberships, filling out IRS and post office forms, transporting your house and garden plants—the list is endless! May is National Moving Month and marks the beginning of a four-month period in which more than half of Americans relocate their homes.

With an estimated 40 million Americans moving homes last year and a comparable number expected to do the same this year, the number of people who will endure the chaos of moving is staggering. Luckily, with a little bit of preparation, packing doesn't have to be an overwhelming task. For those who would rather save the stress of last-minute packing—and can't justify hiring a moving service—the right tools and timing are essential.

"Many people procrastinate when it comes to packing before a big move because the task can seem unmanageable," says Vicki Norris, founder and president of Restoring Order, a professional organizing company, and author of "Restoring Order: Organizing Strategies to Reclaim Your Life." "But packing can be very manageable if you have an organized plan and packing strategies."

Norris says the best way to start packing is to free yourself of the things you don't use by either donating or tossing them. Norris calls this lightening-up process pruning.

"Prune your belongings down to what is useful and adds mean-

ing and value to your life," Norris advises. "Don't forget pruning the stuff in your garage and storage units." She also recommends going room by room to begin the decluttering process, combing through both living space and storage areas to eliminate broken, overgrown or abandoned items.

After pruning and before packing, assemble the proper packing tools: boxes, markers, newspaper, tissue, bubble wrap, scissors and a measuring tape. Another practical and inexpensive packing tool is Glad ForceFlex trash bags, which feature a diamond texture that stretches around objects to help prevent rips and tears, allowing you to fill up, stretch and stuff it with just about anything. Use these trash bags to contain children's toys for holiday charity drives, baby clothes to pass on to a pregnant friend, or bulky old coats taking up space in your closets. Simply label bags with a marker and masking tape to identify the contents.

Norris offers some additional strategies for smart packing:

- Develop a move plan. Sketch a simple floor plan of the destination home and identify how each room will be used. Landing your boxes in the correct room will be easier if you've taken the time to "purpose" the spaces in your future home and label boxes accordingly.

- Set a timeline. Schedule all the important dates, such as real estate transaction dates, necessary home repairs, packing dates, final cleaning and the moving truck's arrival. Your calendar will help you stay on top of your move instead of feeling overwhelmed.

- Determine what goes first. The items used least frequently can be stowed during the sale and move process to make your current

home visually lighter for showing.

- Pack according to your destination rooms, not according to where things are kept in your current home. This will result in a smoother unpacking experience.

- Use Glad ForceFlex trash bags, which stretch to handle overstuffing, to pack clothing, pillows, sleeping bags, holiday items and stuffed animals—it's a great way to conserve boxes that can be used to transport heavy or breakable items.

- Keep essential packing supplies together and within reach: boxes, marking pen, bubble wrap, newspaper, tissue, tape, scissors and a tape measure.

- Do not load more than 50 pounds per box—doing so will make the box difficult to carry and may result in the bottom falling out.

- Assign a color to each level of your new home (e.g., red for upstairs, yellow for downstairs). Label each box clearly with the appropriately colored paper so helpers can get your boxes to the right floor. Also label each box with its destination room and basic contents (e.g., Guest Room: Craft Supplies).

- Save room by using towels and blankets to pack fragile items. Glad bags can also be used as packing material inside boxes, and then used in garbage cans at your new home.

- Store medicines and other liquids in leak-proof containers, such as Glad food storage bags and GladWare containers.

For more information about Glad ForceFlex trash bags, visit www.forceflex.com.

For additional tips on moving and organizing, visit www.restoringorder.com.