

A MOVING DECISION: HIRING PROS OR DOING IT YOURSELF

Congratulations, you're moving! (Or thinking about it, anyway.) Whether you've just bought your first condo or are upgrading to a larger home, you basically have two choices: do it yourself or hire a mover. Here are some questions that will help you figure out your best option:

HOW MUCH DO YOU WANT TO SPEND?

Doing it yourself is cheaper than hiring pros, but the time savings can be worth using movers.

HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU HAVE?

If you're doing a DIY move, you'll have to pack, rent a truck, load it, drive it to your new place, unload, feed your helpers, return the truck, unpack – and then collapse in utter exhaustion. Movers can do it all for you with no pizza or beer required.

HOW FAR ARE YOU MOVING?

Factor in the cost of gas (Google “mileage calculator” to estimate fuel costs), and remember that truck rental companies charge more for one-way rentals.

HOW MUCH STUFF DO YOU HAVE?

If all your earthly possessions will fit into the back of a pickup truck, that's probably your best option. If you're relocating a 4-bedroom home, it gets a bit more complicated; unless you have a huge, loving family filled with strong men who own trucks, movers might be your best bet here.

Your Moving Options

A. DO IT YOURSELF

Pros

It's the cheapest alternative, especially for smaller moves.

Cons

- It may not be as cheap as you think. Be prepared to spend money on truck rental, gas, and food and drinks for your helpers.
- It's A LOT of work for everyone involved.
- Remember that free labor is never actually free. Unless it's your adoring, selfless mother carrying that sofa bed up five flights of stairs, you'll end up owing some favors.
- Your friends and family could end up breaking your belongings or hurting themselves.
- If items get broken, you (or your home insurance) will be on the hook for it.

B. HIRE MOVERS

Go for Full-Serve.

They pack it, they load it, they drive it there and unload it into your new home. All you have to do is stand by with a check or credit card ready.

Pros

- It's EASY. Someone else does all the work for you and saves you serious time, hassle and muscle strain.
- If anything gets damaged, the movers' insurance will take care of it.

Cons

- Full-service moving is by far the most expensive option.
- Having someone pack your stuff can feel invasive.
- You don't get a chance to purge your stuff. When we pack, we naturally throw away things we don't want, like old clothes, chipped dishes, those books we've been meaning to give away. If someone packs for you, all of that stuff comes with you to your new home. "After our move," recalls one homeowner with a laugh, "we unpacked half a loaf of bread and a wastebasket that still had garbage in it."

YOU PACK, THEY LOAD AND MOVE.

Pack up all your stuff in the weeks leading up to your move, then sit back and relax (or supervise) on moving day as large, capable men haul your boxes and maneuver your sofa out the door.

Pros

- No heavy lifting. Capable, experienced people take all the furniture and boxes out of your home, load it into their truck and deliver it to your new place.
- If anything gets broken, most reputable movers are insured.

Cons

- **Still a more expensive option than doing it yourself.**

YOU PACK AND LOAD, THEY DELIVER.

The moving company drops off a container in your driveway/front yard/parking lot, and you load it at your leisure. Then they take it away, drop it at your new place, where you unload it yourself.

Pros

- You have the comfort of knowing you're packing and unpacking your own belongings.
- You don't have to worry about driving a big truck.
- You can take a few days to load or unload your container – you don't have to rush to fill a truck that's only been rented for the day.
- Don't worry about tripping over boxes as you pack. Just load them into the container as soon as you pack each one. (This is a great option for people living in small spaces.)

Cons

- It's almost as much work as a do-it-yourself move.
 - You have a container on your lawn or in your parking spot for a period of time, which may annoy you or your neighbors.
- Need more information about your moving options? Your REALTOR® will be happy to offer ideas and recommend good truck rental operations and moving companies that are proven and dependable.

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