

Dovetail

# The Moving Checklist

A calm, week-by-week guide. Print it, tape it to the fridge, cross things off as you go.

## 8 weeks out — Decide and inventory

- Confirm your move date and write it everywhere you'll see it.
- Walk through every room with your phone and photograph what you own.
- Decide: hire movers or DIY. (Movers if >1 bedroom, >100 miles, or <3 weeks lead time.)
- Set a budget. Add 15% buffer for surprises.
- Start a donate / sell / toss pile in each room.
- If you're renting, re-read your lease for move-out notice requirements.

## 6 weeks out — Book and research

- Get 3 quotes from moving companies (or reserve a truck).
- Check reviews on the BBB and Google for any company you're considering.
- Verify mover licensing (USDOT number for interstate).
- Book specialty services: piano, art crating, auto transport, storage.
- Start using up frozen food and pantry staples — don't move them.
- If you have kids: tell schools, request records transfer.

## 4 weeks out — Pack and notify

- Order boxes and packing supplies (see our box estimator at [dovetail/tools/box-estimator](#)).
- Start packing rooms you use least: guest room, storage, off-season clothes.
- Label every box: destination room + category + 'fragile' if applicable.
- Submit USPS change of address.
- Notify your bank, employer, insurance, and IRS of the new address.
- Schedule utility disconnect at the old place and connect at the new.

## 2 weeks out — Confirm and consolidate

- Confirm move date and arrival window with your movers in writing.

- Pack everything except daily-use items.
- Refill prescriptions so you have a 30-day supply.
- Transfer or cancel: gym, cleaning service, lawn care, deliveries.
- Update your driver's license address if you're moving in-state.
- Withdraw cash for tips. (\$5–\$10 per mover per hour — see [dovetail/how-much-to-tip-movers.](#))

## 1 week out — Finalize

- Pack the kitchen, leaving out one pan, one pot, paper plates, and coffee.
- Defrost the freezer 48 hours before move day.
- Pack a first-night box: sheets, towels, toiletries, phone chargers, snacks, basic tools.
- Pack a personal bag for each person: 3 days of clothes, meds, important documents.
- Print directions to the new place. Don't trust your phone alone.
- Confirm parking and elevator reservations at both ends.

## Moving day

- Eat breakfast. Hydrate. Wear closed-toe shoes.
- Walk through every room and closet with the lead mover before the truck leaves.
- Photograph the empty space (deposit insurance).
- Hand cash tips to each mover individually at the end.
- Drop off keys where agreed. Lock everything.
- At the new place: direct boxes to rooms, check the first-night box is accessible.

## The week after

- Unpack the kitchen and first-night box first. Everything else can wait.
- Inspect fragile items for damage; file claims within the mover's window (usually 9 months).
- Update car registration and driver's license if you moved states.
- Find: pharmacy, grocery store, urgent care, the nearest coffee.
- Meet at least one neighbor.
- Break down boxes and recycle (or sell on a local marketplace).

## Want this personalized to your move?

This checklist is a great starting point. But your move isn't generic — you have a specific apartment, a specific timeline, and specific things that matter to you. Dovetail builds a checklist that reflects all of that, in about 90 seconds.

Start your plan at [dovetail.app](https://dovetail.app)

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