

GETTING READY TO DOWNSIZE

DEVELOP MOTIVATION AND START EARLY. *By Tovah Martin*

Living in a big Victorian house,

New Englanders Kit and Marty Sagendorf had accumulated a lifetime of furniture, collections, souvenirs, artwork, and favorite things. Downsizing to a smaller dwelling would not be easy, but they came to realize it would be necessary. Here, Kit offers some takeaways from her experience.



1. Start as soon as possible. Begin slowly, then keep going in a gradual progression. You'll develop motivation and the process will not overwhelm you. Start with items stored long-term—in barns, sheds, or off-site. (You might be surprised with what you find, whether you decide to sell or keep it.)

2. Assess your new space. Realistically, evaluate what will fit into your new house and in each room. If you are eliminating bedrooms, for example, extra beds need to go.

Get out the tape measure and make a plan for each major object. Keep ceiling heights in mind.

3. When making decisions about furniture, **consider maintenance.** Ornate furniture with carvings accumulates dust; real wicker needs to be kept dry and stored for the winter.

4. Take the opportunity to **unload longstanding projects.** If you haven't repaired that fan in 10 years, it's probably not going to happen

now. Similarly, rid yourself of longstanding framing projects never undertaken.

5. You might **bring along large rugs** rather than smaller rugs that could be a tripping hazard in the future (and are easier to replace).

6. With less wall space, **eliminate artwork.** First ask family and good friends if they want some of your favorite pieces. Find the right venues to sell or give away others.

7. Take action to **save precious memories**—perhaps in a different format. All those boxes of family photos, for example, could be scanned and saved without taking up shelf space. Outside services do this sort of thing.

8. Keep those things you love. Remember that your new home will need to be infused with character, so bring it with you. You make a "new house" into your home by filling it with your aesthetic and memories.