

Budget Do-it-Yourself



Moving Tips

If you're one of the approximately 50 million Americans moving this year, you probably don't want to spend a fortune to get from point A to point B. With a little planning ahead, it's possible to execute a do-it-yourself move without breaking the bank.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, about 16 percent of all moves are work-related -- moving to find a new job or to be closer to a current job. Whatever your reason for moving, you don't have to pay a company to pack up your belongings and transport them to your new home. Here are some easy ways to move yourself and stay on budget:

- * If you need to rent a truck or trailer, especially if you only have a few large items that can't fit into your vehicle, check out your local big box retail hardware store. They often rent trucks and trailers by the hour at a fraction of the cost of renting from a moving company.

- * Collect free boxes from friends, family and from local grocery and liquor stores. Save old newspapers to wrap valuables in instead of purchasing expensive rolls of bubble wrap.

- * Plug in the refrigerator at your new place a day or two ahead of time. Pack frozen and perishable foods in a cooler with ice packs and unpack that food into your new fridge first. Having your food melt or go bad means an additional, and expensive, trip to the grocery store.

- * Pick up change of address forms, free of charge, from the post office. Request a free "welcome kit" from the local chamber of commerce in your new community. These kits contain valuable information and often include money saving coupons for local businesses.

- * Pack wisely and avoid filling boxes so much that they're too heavy for you to lift without help. You'll get more done with each person carrying their own box.

- * Clear a path. Before you lift a load, make sure you've got a clear path to your destination. You won't be able to see well or move obstacles out of your way once the load is in your arms.

- * Use the right tools for the job. Hand trucks can be rented inexpensively and should be used to transport multiple boxes at once or smaller items of furniture. Remember that hand trucks are not good for moving items up or down stairs and are difficult to maneuver around tight turns. For large pieces of furniture, appliances, stairs and tight spaces, try the Shoulder Dolly, an ergonomically designed, patented harness system that allows users to lift with their legs and safely pick up virtually any heavy or bulky item in the home (www.ShoulderDolly.com).

Working in two-person teams, users simply strap into the Shoulder Dolly, slip the carrying strap under the item to be lifted, and then use their leg muscles to lift the weight. By using your legs (your strongest muscles), the Shoulder Dolly significantly decreases the strain and risk of injury to your lower back, hands, biceps and forearms.

- * Don't end up in the hospital. When lifting a load, keep your back straight and bend your knees. Keep your head up and look straight ahead to ensure your back remains perpendicular to the ground. Hold the object securely and use the large, powerful leg muscles to lift the weight. Avoid twisting or turning at the waist when lifting. Turn your entire body by moving your hips first, which will force your shoulders to stay in line.