



# The Comprehensive Guide to Rightsizing in Retirement

## What is Rightsizing?

Rightsizing is the process of understanding how you live in your home, uncluttering your life, and then moving to a new space (often smaller than your previous one) in which you can fully utilize each room.

While household sizes have been shrinking over the past several decades, the square footage of homes has been increasing. Surprisingly, in the 21st century, only about 30 percent of a home's space is used 90 percent of the time. The majority of time Americans spend in their homes is in one of three rooms: the kitchen, the family room, or the bedroom.



## Downsizing vs. Rightsizing

What's the difference between downsizing and rightsizing? Downsizing often has a negative connotation attached to it, as people tend to think of downsizing and less square footage as a limitation. Rightsizing, on the other hand, is the pursuit of living big in a smaller space by creating the most out of every square foot—and making sure you actually use and enjoy the space you have.

Most often, people downsizing their home because of a change in circumstances. Rightsizing, however, is a customization of your space to your life. It implies growth and freedom; adjusting perspectives and aligning your space to suit your current life's needs.

## Benefits of Rightsizing

The benefits of rightsizing reach far beyond clearing years of clutter out of your home and life. Many Americans choose to rightsize for retirement, when they're no longer working a full-time job and have the energy to unclutter their lives. Some 55+ Americans know they want to move to a senior living community and don't want to lug 30+ years of trinkets with them. Others, who choose to stay in their home, look at retirement as a fresh start—beginning with cleaning up their home.



In addition to the benefits above, rightsizing your home and moving to a smaller space can save you money.

## Rightsizing in Retirement

Are your possessions holding you back from experiencing the best of life? If you save everything, is anything truly special? Once you decide to ditch it, will you really miss it?

With a fresh perspective about all the “stuff” in your life, you’ll find it’s easier to break through emotional roadblocks that can keep you from letting go. Start with some simple tips and approaches to reducing clutter, so you can enjoy more freedom and fun.

The key to finding the right sized home involves thinking about how you live your life and understanding how you live in your space.

### 10 Principles to Clear Clutter

#### Stop the flow of stuff coming in

One of the easiest steps in clearing clutter from your home is stop adding more to the growing piles. By holding off on bringing more in before you’ve been able to clean out, you’re helping yourself stay organized.

#### Get rid of at least one item each day

Sorting through decades of belongings in one day can be taxing, to say the least. By letting go of at least one item each day, you can continue your progress while giving yourself time to adjust.

#### Declutter the easy stuff first

Instead of working on sentimental items first, turn your organizational sights to clothes that no longer fit, books you’ll never read, and the pile of extra blankets in the corner of the attic you haven’t touched in 20 years. Uncluttering your home doesn’t have to be an uphill battle, and you can help yourself by focusing on the things you know you don’t want first.



#### Put disposal plan in place

Will you make piles for where things will go when you’re done sorting? Do you have items to give to friends and family before you take the rest to a thrift shop? Having a plan in place for what you will do with the “stuff” you no longer want helps to keep you on track when organizing.

#### Decide to not keep things out of guilt or obligation

Though birthday cards are nice to remember and you received a sweater that really isn’t your style as a gift, these aren’t good enough reasons to keep certain items. Unless the belongings enhance your quality of life in some way, get rid of things you know you’ll never use.



### Don't be afraid to let go

At first, letting go of things can be hard. However, the freedom that comes from opening your space will far outweigh the fear you once felt around letting go of some belongings.

### Stop giving material gifts – think experiences instead

The decluttering process doesn't have to stop with you. Instead of filling others' homes with things, gift loved ones experiences instead. From spending time with each other over a home-cooked dinner to a family trip

everyone will remember for years to come, experiences as an alternative to material gifts hold significant meaning and sentimental value.

### Do not over-equip your home

How many kitchen gadgets or beside tables does one really need? As you clear out your home, consider how many "extra" pieces you actually need to live.

### Do not declutter things that aren't yours without the owner's permission

Should you have anything borrowed in your home, don't get rid of it without asking the owner first. It saves you an awkward conversation and maybe even a trip to the store to replace whatever the item was.

### Do not waste your life on clutter

Life is meant to be lived and enjoyed vibrantly, not drowning among piles of "stuff." Clear out your home enables you to live a joyful, fulfilling life.

## Furniture That Maximizes Storage

**Nesting tables** for hobbies or entertaining.

**Large Mirrors** to expand the look of your space.

**Floating Shelves** to display cherished keepsakes or keep everyday items at hand.

**Ottomans with storage** for linens and other essentials.

**Hanging Storage** to hold your bike, sports gear or musical instrument on the wall.

**Baskets** for keys, mail, coins, and more.

**Rolling Carts** are handy ways to turn any space into a workstation.

**Decorative boxes** add color, style and storage to your space.

**Under bed storage** keeps items you need out of sight but right at hand.

**Hanging coat racks** hold everything from coats, to totes, to dog leashes.

## Organization Strategies

### Closet Organizers

Closet organizers are great tool to help you store more clothing and accessories in a finite space and access them easily.



### Follow the “In-and-Out” Rule

Harkening back to the first principle to clear clutter; you can stop the flow of “stuff” coming into your home if you get rid of something you already own for every new piece you bring in.

### Look for Hidden Space

You’d be surprised to discover the forgotten, useful space your home offers. Backs of door can hold towels, jackets, and pet leashes; the space above kitchen cabinets can store extra bowls and pans, décor, or nonperishable food; and behind your couch is a great place for a skinny end table to hold books, art, and more.

### Take advantage of storage lockers

Should you live in a building that offers storage lockers, these spaces are great for housing items you want to keep but don’t currently have room for (like seasonal décor). Willow Valley Communities offers secure, spacious areas for residents’ out-of-season items.

## The Four Pile Plan

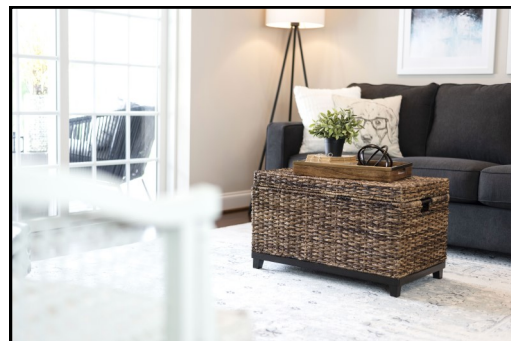
**Things you want to save:** Keepsakes which are truly meaningful to you, or items you’ll use and enjoy on a regular basis.

**Things you’re ready to donate/discard:** The pile of books you’ll never read again... the collection of t-shirts you’ll never wear again... and on it goes.

**Things you want your kids/family/friends to pick up:** Items that they will actually put to use and enjoy, as well as family heirlooms they really want to keep.

**Things you need to reevaluate:** Let’s take it from the top—and see if you can’t put these items in one of the first three piles.

Remember... if it’s in the back of the closet, under four boxes of old magazines in the guest room, or in that forgotten corner of the basement, it’s probably nothing you can’t live without.



## How Does Willow Valley Communities Help Me Rightsize?

“Rightsizing” at Willow Valley Communities is about more than a new place to live—it’s about a great new way to grow and rediscover you. You’ll be delighted to discover how simple and joyful it can be to live in a smaller space (with less stuff) at Willow Valley Communities. Our on-site Design Studio allows you to create your space exactly the way you want it with complimentary space planning service will make it easier for you to visualize the best ways to use every square foot of your new home.\* We’re here to help you find the perfect solution—with all the comfort, beauty, and convenience you deserve. Not to mention a whole world of opportunities and amenities right outside your door.

*For more information on senior living rightsizing, contact a sales counselor to register for our next Rightsizing Seminar or follow our blog for more great content.*

**WillowValleyCommunities.org | 450 Willow Valley Lakes Drive, Willow Street, PA**