

## Holiday Décor and More

The store shelves are stocked with seasonal decorations for Halloween, Thanksgiving and an assortment of winter holidays. Aisles of warm and colorful decor can be quite tempting for those of us who like to add annually to our extensive collection or shop for the discounts. However, if you are in the process of moving, selling your home, downsizing or packing, it may be important to pause for a moment before loading up your shopping cart.

According to John Buckles, President of Caring Transitions, “It is not unusual for people to make large purchases while we are in the process of decluttering their homes. Sometimes they can’t resist a big sale, sometimes people feel the need to replace what they have gotten rid of, and sometimes they just seem to get caught up in excitement of holiday shopping!”

Before you decide to take on more than a few new decorations, consider some of the following information that applies to families in transition.

### Home Staging for the Holidays

If you are selling a home in today’s market, you are probably using some form of “staging” to prepare your house for sale. The most important word to think about as you make these preparations is “neutral.” It is proven that a home that is fairly priced and properly staged, will be on the market for a shorter amount of time. [Home Staging](#) concepts employ neutral colors, furnishings and décor, to accomplish the following:

1. Allow every kind of buyer to feel comfortable when they enter and walk through a residence.
2. Help buyers focus on the home’s actual architectural and design features, not how it’s decorated.
3. Provide a feeling of warmth, space and light in the residence.

Holiday décor, even just a few pieces can be very distracting for potential buyers. Decorations are made to stand out from our everyday furnishings, so by definition, they remove the buyer’s focus from the home itself. Your home is also being marketed to a broad audience of buyers, and holiday decorations may even offend some people. The best practice for using holiday decorations when your home is on the market is that it’s not advisable to have them on display.

If you have plans to host parties or family gatherings and don’t want the house to feel too empty or bland, bring out a few favorite or easy to assemble pieces just prior to the event, or decorate with fresh greens and florals. Once the occasion is over live, arrangements can be gifted to friends or neighbors. Decorations can be removed, packed or returned to storage before the next realtor showing.

## Packing Decorations

If you are selling your home, chances are you will be in a new home before the holidays roll around again. While putting up decorations can be a lot of fun, it is also time consuming. This year your time may be better spent organizing, preserving and packing your seasonal household items.

Most households store holiday items in the same boxes or cartons year after year; in some cases, for decades. Old, deteriorating or moldy packing materials may not be the best way to protect your belongings during a move to a new home. The following steps may help you organize and pack items more safely and make them easier to find next year.

**Sort decorations into categories:** Depending on the size of your collections, this could be a pretty big project and may require the help of [downsizing experts](#), but in many cases, you can start by sorting items *by season* and then *by type* of item within the season. For example, display all your Halloween items on a table. Sort costumes into one pile, party and paper goods into another, outdoor decoration into another and so on. It may be helpful to think about where you will display the items in your next home and then and group them accordingly.

**Purge unnecessary items:** When we view all our items in one place, it helps us see what we may have too much of, what is in poor condition or what we simply have never used. Take this opportunity to donate, gift, sell or dispose of items that may be too large or otherwise inappropriate for your next home. If you know where you will be moving, keep in mind the amount of storage space, surface space and wall space you will have for decorations in your new home. This may help with your decision-making.

**Pack like items together:** As you begin to pack, keep items sorted by season and type. Clearly label each box on all sides in addition to the top of the box. This will help you locate items more quickly and easily next year.

**Pack delicate items carefully:** This truly is a great opportunity to preserve your precious heirlooms prior to a move. Use layers of paper and bubble wrap to individually wrap and protect items. Do not over pack boxes and keep heavy items toward the bottom; lighter items on top, protected by several additional layers of crumpled paper. Very fragile ornaments must be packed in smaller boxes and carefully wrapped. If you are unsure of how to best protect your items, you may choose to [hire a professional](#).

**Use stackable Storage boxes:** Whether you will store items in a closet, on a shelf or in a storage unit, using stackable plastic storage boxes that are clearly labeled will be helpful. Smaller boxes may be easier to lift and move. Be careful not to stack boxes too high and keep them accessible. Bulky, lightweight items like plastic pumpkins and wreaths may be stored in large garbage bags and clearly labeled.

## Downsizing and Selling

Once you have sorted through items, you may have identified several which you may not be able to store or no longer want. Decorations in good condition may be great gifts for family members and will give you an opportunity to see them enjoyed by someone you love. Other items may be donated to non-profit organization, which may resell them or use them to decorate hospitals churches, schools or other buildings. If you are in the process of moving to a Senior Living Community, ask the administrator if they may be able to use the decorations. This way you will still be able to see them on display each year.

Remember holiday decorations while enjoyable are not a necessity. When you are downsizing, think about the items you really need and consider your new space limitations. Overstuffing closets and shelves, even with the things you enjoy, will make your new home less comfortable. A smaller door wreath may make more sense in the future than a large one. Oversized turkey roasters, basters and jello molds may no longer be as useful as they once were. Space planning is always about the future satisfaction, not the past.

Many holiday decorations are considered collectible, so if you are not donating or gifting items, you may choose to sell them. The following [series of videos](#) have some useful information about Christmas tree decorations, their collectability and their values. [Estate Sale specialists](#) will help you plan, price, organize and conduct an event that is designed to optimize the value of your possessions, whether that value is sentimental or financial.

### **Assistance during the Holidays**

If you are staying at home this year, but are not quite up to the task of decorating due to changes in your health or mobility, family members or professional service providers can help you put up and take down your decorations, install lighting or trim the tree.

A great gift for anyone you know that may be moving over the holidays is to find someone who can provide [unpacking services](#) so moving and resettlement is less stressful. For older adults or those with young children, unpacking helps families settle into their new home within a matter of hours so they truly have time to enjoy the season.

Having one or two favorite holiday items ready for placement when unpacking a new home around the holiday is one special touch professionals may provide. Paying special attention to important details or items makes the person who is moving feel happier and more comfortable in their new home when they recognize the care that was taken with their special item(s).

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### **About Caring Transitions**

As life changes, it may become necessary to leave a familiar home and part with personal belongings in order to downsize and relocate to a smaller home or retirement community. At Caring Transitions, we help our clients understand the process, evaluate their options and make informed decisions that suit their best interests. We are committed to making each client's experience positive by minimizing stress and maximizing results.

Visit us online at [www.CaringTransitions.net](http://www.CaringTransitions.net)

Call Caring Transitions for a Consultation – (800) 647-0766

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