



TO-DO LIST FOR NEW HOME OWNERS

Moving into your new house can be a daunting task. Between unpacking, cleaning and trying to find that stray roll of toilet paper, it may feel like you have lost your mind in a sea of bubble wrap. The items listed below may feel like back burner tasks but really, they will help you sleep better at night in your new abode and make you feel like your new place is less like a new house and more like your new home.

1. Pest-proof Your New Home.

If you have access to your new place a day or so before the moving van is scheduled to arrive, take that time to get a few things done around the new homestead. You could set off a bug bomb or have the exterminator come and spray. Even if you don't see any bugs, it's likely they're there, and you don't want to have to share your new digs with pests.

2. Turn on Utilities.

If you haven't already notified the utility companies to transfer gas, water, electrical, trash and sewer into your name, you need to call.

3. Plug in Refrigerator.

Make sure all of the appliances are plugged in and working. Many people while moving out unplug a refrigerator and turn it off. If you haven't gone grocery shopping yet, you would not even know the refrigerator was not working unless you check. Check the ice dispenser is working as well. And who knows, sometimes sellers leave a surprise bottle of bubbly in the 'frig for buyers.

4. Change the Locks

You really don't know who else has keys to your home, so change the locks. That ensures you're the only person who has access. Install new deadbolts yourself for as little as \$10 per lock, or call a locksmith.

5. Inspect Your Belongings.

Once everything's off the truck, check your inventory list against what's actually been delivered. Has everything made it to the new place? This is where it helps to have both the inventory list and a floor plan filled out with what goes where. You can then walk through the house, room by room, and make sure that everything has arrived safe and sound. And speaking of boxes, be sure to open a few cartons of your most breakable items to make certain they survived the move.

6. Steam Clean Carpets.

Do this before you move your furniture in, and your new home life will be off to a fresh start. You can pay a professional carpet cleaning service or you can rent a steam cleaner for about \$30 per day and do the work yourself.

7. Wipe Out Your Cabinets.

Another no-brainer before you move in your dishes and bathroom supplies. Make sure to wipe inside and out, preferably with a non-toxic cleaner, and replace contact paper if necessary.

8. Remove Toilet Seats.

By removing your toilet seats, you will be able to really deep clean under the bolts and hinges where the 'yucks' like to hide. Your goal is to make sure your royal throne is YOU-worthy. After a thorough scrubbing, you can reinstall your existing seat or choose to shop for a new one.

9. Replace the Furnace Filter.

One of the fastest ways to create problems with a forced-air heating and cooling system is to forget to replace the filter. Locate the furnace filter and buy replacements if the previous owners didn't leave you a stash. Replace the filter (and get in the habit of doing it every month).

10. Check for Plumbing Leaks.

A home inspector should do this for you before closing, but it never hurts to double-check. Keep an eye out for dripping faucets and running toilets, and check your water heater for signs of a leak.

Here's a neat trick: Check your water meter at the beginning and end of a two-hour window in which no water is being used in your house. If the reading is different, you have a leak.

11. Check Smoke and CO Detector Dates.

It's important that you know where your smoke and CO detectors are located and that you make sure they are working. Smoke alarms may be the cheapest, easiest and most effective means for protecting your family and your home from a fire, as long as they're functioning.

12. Locate Your Home's Water Shutoff Valve.

Know where your main water shutoff valve is in case you need to shut off the water to your entire house. Almost all homes have one main shutoff valve directly before the water meter and another directly after.

13. Locate the Electrical Panel.

Find the electrical panel so you know where to shut off the power to your whole house or an individual circuit. You'll usually find the main circuit breaker panel—a gray, metal box—in a utility room, garage or basement. Behind the door is the main breaker for the entire house (usually at the top of the panel) and two rows of other breakers below it, each controlling individual circuits. If you're lucky, there will be a guide that indicates which outlets and receptacles are served by each circuit.

14. Inspect Crawlspaces and the Attic.

It's good to familiarize yourself with the farthest corners of your home. Check for leaks, bugs, mold and other issues that you should address sooner rather than later

15. If You Don't Have Keyless Entry, Hide a Key.

If you don't have keyless locks, be sure to hide a house key so you don't get locked out. Consider a location other than under the welcome mat, like in a garden hose or under a flower pot.

16. Paint Your Front Door.

Painting your front door (or freshening it up with a coat of oil if it is wood) can show your new neighbors that you have arrived on the block and are investing in your home. Every day you walk in through your newly made over door, you will feel welcomed to your new home and inspired to keep creating a space you love.

17. Choose a Signature Scent.

Make your dream home even more dreamy by filling it with your signature scent. Don't have a signature scent? Check out a candle store or the air freshener aisle to peruse the options and then use your favorite regularly in your new home.

18. Take Pictures.

Your house will most likely look far different on the day you move in than the day you leave. Make time to take pictures of it the first day. You and your family will enjoy comparing "now and then" pictures down the road.

19. Make a Homeowner's Journal.

Buy a ring binder and keep insurance papers, repair receipts and all other paperwork pertaining to the house in it. Storing all your house information in one handy place makes life easier for the homeowner and can be a sales 'plus' when selling the house later.

20. Enjoy a Family Meal.

Moving can be tiring and stressful. So, after a long day of work, take time to unwind together. There's no need to worry about a fancy, homemade meal -- especially if you haven't managed to unpack the kitchen yet. You can drive to the nearest restaurant for takeout or order something for delivery.

21. Meet the Neighbors.

It's wise to reach out and extend a friendly gesture to your neighbors as soon as possible. Establishing yourself in your neighborhood can also give you access to inside information, like who's the best plumber in the area and which roofing company to avoid.

22. Get Some Sleep.

Moving can be tiring and stressful. So, after you've spent the day schlepping furniture and unpacking boxes, you need a good night's rest. There's no need to stay up until 2 or 3 a.m. Those boxes aren't going anywhere!



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