

How to Pack Like a Pro

1. **You can save a lot of money if** you do the bulk of the packing on your own. Limit yourself to non-fragile items such as books, linens, clothing and shoes; and replaceable items such as plates, dishes (not fine china or expensive silverware), and small kitchen appliances. These items will be cheaper to replace in case of damage as opposed to hiring workers for the extra labor. Leave the furniture, mattresses, and heavy appliances to be packed by the mover.
2. **The heavier the item,** the smaller the box it should occupy. Don't toss everything into one huge box. It will make the hauling much more difficult. A good rule of thumb is if you can't lift the box easily, it's too heavy! Keep the weight of the box under 50lbs and remember to always lift with your knees, not your back.
3. **You should never let the movers pack** your jewelry, family heirlooms, or other priceless items. Should they be lost or damaged, the insurable value will not come anywhere near the value you would place on them. Such items include jewelry, sports memorabilia, photo albums, and various hobby collections. Pack these items yourself and take them with you, either in the car or as carry-on luggage if size allows.
4. **Get the proper boxes for your items** - the right sizes and strengths. Have enough wardrobe boxes, as they'll save you ironing time later. You can pack t-shirts and jeans in suitcases and regular boxes but you don't want to pack your fine clothing such as suits or dresses in the same place. Save space by tossing in shoes at the bottom of the wardrobe box, but be reasonable. Don't let the box become too heavy or susceptible to fallout from the bottom. Purchase the padded dish boxes with dividers to protect your fine china. For your replaceable and non-fragile items, save money by using the free boxes that you can obtain from supermarkets and wrapping the items in old newspaper.
5. **Take the time to pack everything carefully.** It is important for you to buffer and separate the fragile items that you pack with old newspaper, bubble wrap, sheets, blankets, pillows and towels. Wrap each fragile item separately. Fill in empty spaces to minimize movement during transit. Pack plates and glass objects vertically, rather than flat and stacked. Purchase strong tape- not masking tape but either duct tape or the plastic and strapping tape that movers use.
6. **For the safety of your items,** movers are required to inspect each box tendered for shipment. Immediately point out to your mover each and every box that you packed yourself, especially if they're fragile or valuable. The mover will advise you on whether the boxes need to be repacked in sturdier, more appropriate boxes. They have the right to refuse to load any box they deem improperly packed. Any improperly packed boxes must be repacked either by you or the mover. All repacking services are additional costs. However, if you agree to use used boxes, they may give them to you for free. Professional moving companies use only sturdy and reinforced cartons. Although the boxes you can obtain from your neighborhood supermarket may be free, they are not nearly as strong or padded. They are more susceptible to causing damage to your valuables in transit. Keep in mind that movers are not liable for items they didn't pack.
7. **To protect themselves,** movers will not disconnect your major appliances. Before the movers arrive to pack and load, unplug and prep your refrigerator, dishwasher, stove, washer and dryer. Also prep your computer and back-up your important files.
8. **Movers will not transport** living things such as your plants or pets. If you do not wish to give them away, don't forget to prepare them for the move. They will need a "plant/pet suitcase" of their own.
9. **Movers will not transport** or allow you pack hazardous materials. These items include: paint, thinners, solvents, oils, varnishes, firearms and ammunition, bottled gas, propane, lamp oil, anything flammable, explosive or corrosive, motor fuels and oils, nail polish remover, bleach and aerosol cans. Also note that spilled sesame oil leaves a terrible stench on nearby items.
10. **Make the loading process easier** and more organized by designating a room in your home/apartment, preferably the one closest to the door, in which to place all of your boxes. Keep related boxes together since they'll end up in the same room. This will help cut on the carrying time and make the move much more efficient.