

The move-in checklist

A room-by-room guide for moving someone you love into assisted living or a retirement community, and making the new space feel like home from the very first night.

Start here. Most senior suites are 300 to 600 square feet. Before you pack anything, get a floor plan with measurements, then choose what comes along based on how your person actually spends their day.

Before you pack

Ask the community

- ☐ Floor plan with measurements, outlets and windows
- ☐ What furniture is provided, and can it be removed?
- ☐ Rules on rugs, nails, candles, heaters and cords
- ☐ Kitchenette, refrigerator or microwave?
- ☐ Closet size and any extra storage
- ☐ Move-in day: elevator, loading area and times
- ☐ Who to call on move-in day if something's missing

Where the day happens

The sitting area

- ☐ The chair they always sit in (the loved one, not the matching one)
- ☐ Side table for tea, glasses and the remote
- ☐ Reading lamp with a warm, bright bulb
- ☐ Small table and two chairs for visitors
- ☐ Radio, TV or tablet they already know how to use

Sleep well from night one

The bedroom

- ☐ Their own bed, or their own mattress topper
- ☐ Their pillows, sheets and favorite quilt
- ☐ Nightstand with a drawer
- ☐ Bedside lamp they can reach lying down
- ☐ Night light on the path to the bathroom
- ☐ Small dresser, if the closet is limited
- ☐ Glasses case, water glass, one favorite photo

Where a room becomes theirs

The walls

- ☐ More framed photos than you think you need
- ☐ A piece of art they've lived with for years
- ☐ Clock with large, clear numbers
- ☐ Calendar or whiteboard for visits
- ☐ Picture hooks or a rail, if nails aren't allowed

Everyday comfort

Clothing and essentials

- ☐ Two weeks of clothing for this season
- ☐ Store the rest with family and rotate
- ☐ Comfortable, non-slip shoes and slippers
- ☐ A warm cardigan or wrap
- ☐ Toiletries, hair dryer, small mirror
- ☐ Name labels if the community does laundry
- ☐ Medications and a current list for staff
- ☐ Phone, charger and a list of family numbers

Soft and familiar

Textiles from home

- ☐ A favorite throw or blanket
- ☐ Cushions from their old sofa or chair
- ☐ Curtains from their bedroom, if they fit
- ☐ One large, low-pile rug that grips the floor (or none)
- ☐ Towels in a color they love

The part families forget, and the part that matters most

The little things that make it home

For my grandmother Roslyn, it was three small ceramic pigs on her windowsill. Ask: what would they reach for on a hard day?

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ A favorite mug or teacup | ☐ A familiar scent: soap, lotion or sachet |
| ☐ A plant, real or very good fake | ☐ A book, cookbook or photo album to hold |
| ☐ A collection, or the best few pieces of it | ☐ Music they love, and a way to play it |
| ☐ Letters, cards or a keepsake box | ☐ Something from the garden or the kitchen |

Write it down

Their must-haves

The things they can't imagine living without, in their own words.

From my aging-in-place training

Simple safety checks

- ☐ A clear path, about 36 inches wide, from bed to bathroom to door
- ☐ No loose throw rugs or trailing cords
- ☐ Chairs with arms and a firm seat
- ☐ Lamps on both sides of the room
- ☐ Switches easy to reach from bed and door
- ☐ Everyday items between hip and shoulder height
- ☐ Night light in the bathroom

Move-in day

A first-night plan

- ☐ Set up the room before they arrive, if you can
- ☐ Bed made with their own bedding
- ☐ Lamps on, curtains hung, photos up
- ☐ Their chair by the window with a side table
- ☐ Favorite snacks and a drink within reach
- ☐ A family member stays for the first meal
- ☐ Labeled bin of the first-week essentials
- ☐ Plan a check-in after 30 days to adjust

You don't have to do this alone

I'm Alexia, founder of Rose's Room. I help families decide what comes along, then set up the new room with their own belongings so it feels like home on day one. Every project starts with a free 30-minute call.

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