



Downsizing 101: The do's and don'ts

By Georgina Oldfield

If you have retired or you are looking at retiring chances are you've considered downsizing.

But like many senior citizens, you've probably accumulated a lot over the years and the idea of moving feels too overwhelming.

This reaction is all too familiar to Elderly Assist founder Janice Willis who has been helping seniors scale down for almost a decade.

Through Janice's work she has found that a lot of elderly find the process too much and don't move until they absolutely have to.

"I conduct downsizing and clutter workshops in the community and they tell me that they just don't know where to start; it's overwhelming and it's too difficult, they can't manage the stairs and the biggest problem and the biggest impediment of moving is downsizing."

But it isn't just the initial process of downsizing that is a problem, many seniors have never had to sell their property before, so they are unfamiliar with the complexities of the real estate market.

"Unlike the general population, they have lived in their homes for 30-40 years plus, so they

only downsize when they have to move, because the house is becoming too much for them to manage or the maintenance on the grounds are too big."

Janice recommends that seniors seek help from experts to ensure all boxes are ticked and everything is taken care of properly.

"They need to have neutral advice from a financial advisor or a lawyer.

"Their lawyer is one of the best places to assist them and they need to be working with their professionals, their accountant, their lawyers, people who will give them good sound advice."

Along with advice for selling, Janice also suggests that elderly should seek help for their possessions too because of the emotional attachment associated with their items.

"A lot of them collect and some of them hoard. So where to start; they often start in the worst places of their home to start - they need to start in the periphery of their homes and also, they need to give themselves plenty of time - when they need to put the house on the market is not the time to declutter, they need to be doing it as a process over a long period of time.





“They also need to be careful about what they are getting rid of, they don’t want to get rid of sentimental things or things that are very difficult to replace.

“They want to be getting rid of generic things and if they need them again it wouldn’t be difficult to replace them.”

When it comes to what elderly should look for when they are looking at where to move too, Janice’s advice is to consider what’s around them, their mobility and somewhere that is close to other people.

“It needs to be one level, close to bus stops and amenities, because they may not be able to continue driving going forward.

“**They need to have neutral advice from a financial advisor or a lawyer.**”

“They want to be part of a community, so somewhere with a gated community is good or terrace housing is quite good, because they are actually closer to their neighbours who like to be in the community and have time to say hi.

“They also want to be considering what’s ahead of them as far as their mobility is concerned.”

Helping hands

Thinking of moving into a smaller home or retirement village but daunted by the amount of work involved?

Elderly Assist understands that moving home, let alone into a new stage of your life, can be stressful – but you do not have to go it alone.

Elderly Assist take the stress out of moving by helping you downsize, declutter, pack, relocate and unpack. “We can manage the entire moving process end to end or just the bits you need help with. We will do as little or much as you need us to.

“We combine superb organisational skills with our core values of empathy, honesty and caring to help you through this time of change. We listen to your wishes, liaise with your family if possible and never ‘take over’.

“With hundreds of successful moves under our belt we are the experts in taking the stress out of moving for our older community – and we have dozens of authenticated customer testimonials to prove it. It goes without saying that we have comprehensive insurance cover for every part of the process.”



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