

PROPERTY NEWS



EASTER DINNER RECIPES

THREE COURSE MEAL RECIPES PERFECT FOR THE FAMILY THIS EASTER

MARCH GARDENING
GET YOUR GARDEN SPRING
READY THIS MONTH

OSCARS WINNERS
TAKE A LOOK INTO THE
96TH ACADEMY AWARDS

GET RUNNING
CHALLENGE YOURSELF TO
RUN A MARATHON

F1 RETURNS
F1 UPDATE FOR THE START
OF THE 2024 SEASON

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With the right preparation you will be able to open the new door as the old one closes with minimal stress

After the first two months of 2024 have now passed, we have seen the build-to-rent industry begin to grow, many lenders significantly cutting their buy-to-let borrowing costs and general mortgage rates to be lower than they were in the summer of last year, we've seen the most successful ever January for mortgage searches, and we've seen house prices shoot up dramatically. All in all, this year is proving to be extremely promising for the property market, which is why it's more important than ever that prospective sellers get their homes prepared for a sale, as well as get themselves ready for re-buying.

However, selling your home and buying a new one can be a complex process. With careful planning and organisation, it can be a much smoother experience.

SELLING

Declutter and Depersonalize

Clear out clutter, overstuffed furniture, and personal belongings. Make the room feel welcoming and neutral so that potential buyers may picture themselves living there.

Enhance Curb Appeal

Initial impressions count. Cut back the bushes, apply fresh mulch, and mow the lawn to improve the curb appeal of your house. Think about giving the front door a new coat of paint, and take care of any external maintenance problems.

Neutralize Colours

Repaint walls in neutral tones in striking or customised colours. This gives consumers a blank canvas and gives rooms a sense of largeness and greater stylistic versatility.

Upgrade Lighting

Make your home's illumination better. Upgrade worn-out fixtures, clean or replace light shades, and make sure every space has adequate lighting. Places feel cosier when they have enough lighting.

Stage Rooms

Organize furniture to highlight the function of each space. To showcase your home's functioning and flow, think about hiring a

WELCOME TO THE LATEST EDITION!

As we 'spring forward' with the clocks change at the end of the month, the Easter holidays are just around the corner, so on pages 4&5 we look at some of the best holiday ideas with which you can entertain your family.

The weather can still be somewhat unpredictable this time of year, though, so on page 8 we look at some of the hottest TV coming this month, while page 9 celebrates everything BAFTAS.

On pages 6&7 we provide you with the best guide to preparing your garden during the significant month of March ahead of spring, and if gardening isn't enough for your calorie-burning goals how about going full-throttle, as we look on pages 10&11 at how marathons

can prove to be an amazing inspiration during the Easter break.

After all this exercise you'll want a reward, and with Easter knocking on our doors we have rustled up what we think is the ultimate selection of recipes on pages 12&13 to form a three course Easter-inspired meal, with a tongue-tlingling cocktail recipe to boot!

Finally, on pages 14&15 we take a look ahead to two exciting sporting events, the Formula One and the World Snooker Championships. So, grab a glass of vino, head to your favourite garden spot, and enjoy this month's magazine.

Daniel Evans
Editor

PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR SELLING, AND RE-BUYING

stager or using the furniture you already have.

Highlight Storage Space

To demonstrate plenty of storage space, tidy and arrange closets and other storage spaces. Purchasers value houses with ample storage.

Set the Right Temperature

When doing shows, keep the temperature at a comfortable level. Open the windows to bring in fresh air if the weather permits. Make sure the house is sufficiently heated throughout the winter.

Create an Inviting Atmosphere

A dish of fruit, some fresh flowers, or a scented candle are tiny yet effective ways to create a cosy and welcoming atmosphere.

BUYING

Assess Your Finances

Examine your financial status, taking into account your income, credit score, and outstanding loans. To increase your purchasing power, figure out how much you can afford to spend on a new house and think about getting pre-approved for a mortgage.

Define Your Needs and Wants

List your top priorities for the new house in clear terms. Decide on the must-haves, including the number of bedrooms and baths, the location, and any other features or facilities you'd want.

Research the Market

Keep up with the local estate agent market in the locations you are considering. Keep an eye on market trends, property values, and the availability of houses in the areas you've targeted.

Select an Estate Agent

Select a knowledgeable and seasoned estate agent to help you with the purchasing process. A qualified estate agent can help you identify the ideal house, bargain on your behalf, and offer insightful advice.

Get Pre-Approved for a Mortgage

Obtain a mortgage preapproval to bolster your credibility as a serious buyer. A pre-approval lets you know exactly how much you can afford and lets sellers know you are ready to make an offer.

Save for a Down Payment and Closing Costs

Make sure you have enough money set out for closing costs and a down payment. Making prior savings for these costs will simplify the purchasing procedure and reduce financial strain at the last minute.

Conduct Home Inspections

When you locate a possible house, arrange for in-depth inspections to evaluate its state. This stage assists you in determining any problems that might influence your choice to purchase or lower the value of the house.

Prepare for Closing

Become familiar with the closing procedure and the associated documentation. Collaborate closely with your estate agent and be ready to sign the appropriate paperwork to complete the transaction.

Plan Your Move

Make a strategy for your move that includes changing your address, hiring movers, and transferring utilities. It will go more smoothly if you are organised when moving into your new house.



FAMILY BREAK IDEAS FOR THE EASTER SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

As the Easter break approaches, families are eagerly anticipating quality time together

It's the perfect opportunity to escape the routine, create lasting memories, and celebrate the spirit of the season. Whether you prefer a beach retreat, a cultural adventure, or a nature-filled getaway, there are countless options to suit every family's interests and budget. With World Autism Awareness Day taking place on 2nd April, we have also included some autism-friendly holiday ideas for those who struggle with the disorder, to ensure everyone is happy during the Easter breaks.

BEACH BLISS

For a classic and rejuvenating family holiday, consider heading to a beach destination. The soothing sound of waves, warm sand beneath your feet, and the sun shining overhead create an idyllic setting for relaxation. Popular beach destinations include the tropical shores of Hawaii, the pristine beaches of the Caribbean, or the charming coastal towns of the Mediterranean. Engage in water sports, build sandcastles, and savour delicious seafood, making your Easter break a perfect combination of sun, sea, and family bonding.

CULTURAL EXPLORATION

Immerse your family in a rich tapestry of history and culture by choosing a destination with significant cultural landmarks. Explore the ancient ruins of Rome, visit the awe-inspiring pyramids of Egypt, or stroll through the historic streets of Kyoto. Many cultural destinations offer family-friendly activities, such as interactive museums, guided tours, and cultural performances. This Easter, combine education with enjoyment as you discover the wonders of the world together.

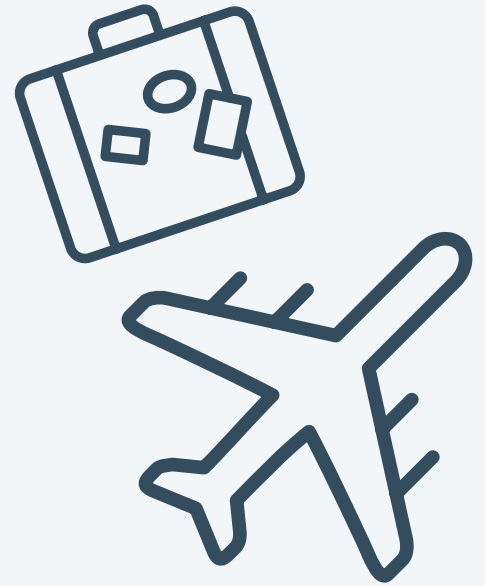
NATURE RETREAT

For families who prefer the tranquillity of nature, a retreat to the great outdoors is an ideal choice. National parks, mountains, and forests provide a serene backdrop for reconnecting with nature and each other. Consider a camping trip, a cabin retreat, or a hiking adventure. Engage in nature walks, wildlife spotting, and stargazing around a campfire. This Easter break, trade the hustle and bustle of daily life for the peaceful serenity of the natural world.



CITY ESCAPE

Choose a vibrant city destination for a blend of excitement and cultural experiences. Explore iconic landmarks, dine at diverse restaurants, and engage in family-friendly activities. Cities like New York, Paris, and Tokyo offer a plethora of entertainment options, from museums and theatres to theme parks and shopping districts. This Easter, immerse your family in the dynamic energy of a bustling city and create cherished urban memories.



breaks in between to avoid overwhelming schedules. Familiarize the individual with the daily plan in advance, providing visual aids or a schedule to ease transitions.

SENSORY-FRIENDLY ACCOMMODATIONS

Look for hotels or resorts that offer sensory-friendly accommodations. Some places provide sensory rooms, quiet areas, or options for customized lighting and bedding. Communicate specific sensory needs with the accommodation in advance.

The Easter break is a perfect opportunity for families to come together and create unforgettable memories. Whatever you choose to do, the key is to spend quality time together. Embrace the spirit of the season, celebrate the bond of family, and make this Easter break a time of joy, relaxation, and exploration. No matter which destination you choose, the experiences shared during this holiday will be cherished for years to come.

FAMILY CRUISE

Embark on a floating adventure by booking a family cruise. Cruises offer a variety of activities for all ages, including poolside fun, live entertainment, and shore excursions at different ports. With all-inclusive options, a cruise provides a hassle-free holiday experience, allowing families to focus on creating memories together. Explore exotic destinations or opt for a cruise closer to home, making the Easter break a nautical journey filled with joy.

Explore cruise options that cater to individuals with autism. Some cruise lines offer autism-friendly programs, trained staff, and sensory-friendly activities to ensure a comfortable and inclusive experience at sea.

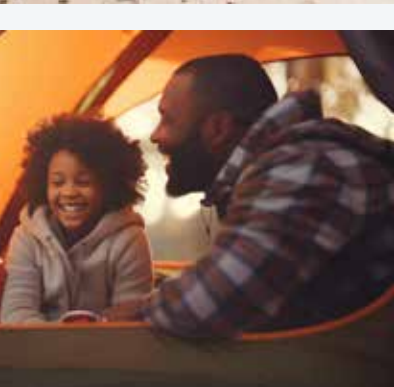
QUIET RETREATS

Opt for tranquil and secluded destinations to minimize sensory overload. Choose accommodations away from busy city centres, focusing on serene environments such as cabins in the woods, beach front cottages, or countryside retreats.

STRUCTURED ITINERARIES

Create a well-organized itinerary with predictable routines. Plan activities with

Throw pillows can also be the perfect seasoning to chairs, and can help blend the chairs into the desired décor of the room



PREPARING YOUR GARDEN FOR THE SPRING

Spring is finally here, and gardeners are excited to get their outside areas ready for a growing and blooming season as March arrives.



To ensure a thriving and vibrant garden at this time of year between winter and spring, strategic planning and a hands-on approach are necessary. To help you get the most out of your gardening efforts in March, consider the following vital gardening advice.

SOIL PREPARATION

Fertile soil is the basis of a good garden. March is the best month to evaluate and enhance the quality of the soil. Start by measuring the pH and nutrient content of the soil. Local gardening businesses have do-it-yourself test kits, or you can hire a pro to do the testing. Add organic matter to the soil, such as compost, well-rotted manure, or other soil conditioners, based on the findings. This improves aeration, improves drainage, and supplies vital nutrients for plant growth.

SEED STARTING INDOORS

March is a great time for gardeners to start seeds indoors if they are eager to get a head start on the growing season. Seed trays or pots can be used to start vegetables indoors, including tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants. Make sure you use a good seed starting mix, give it enough light, and keep the moisture levels steady. After your region's latest frost date, transplant seedlings into the garden.

WEED CONTROL

It's imperative to remove early-season weeds in March to prevent them from taking control. To stop weed development, start by pulling out any existing weeds and covering the area with a layer of mulch. Mulching maintains soil moisture and controls temperature in addition to aiding

in weed control. For optimal effects, use organic mulches such as wood chips, straw, or shredded leaves.

PLANTING COOL-SEASON VEGETABLES

March is a great time to sow cool-season veggies like lettuce, spinach, kale, and peas in areas with milder conditions. These crops can be harvested before the summer heat sets in and they do well in the early spring's milder temps. To encourage germination, prepare the soil, plant the seeds, and give the region plenty of water.

GARDEN CLEAN-UP

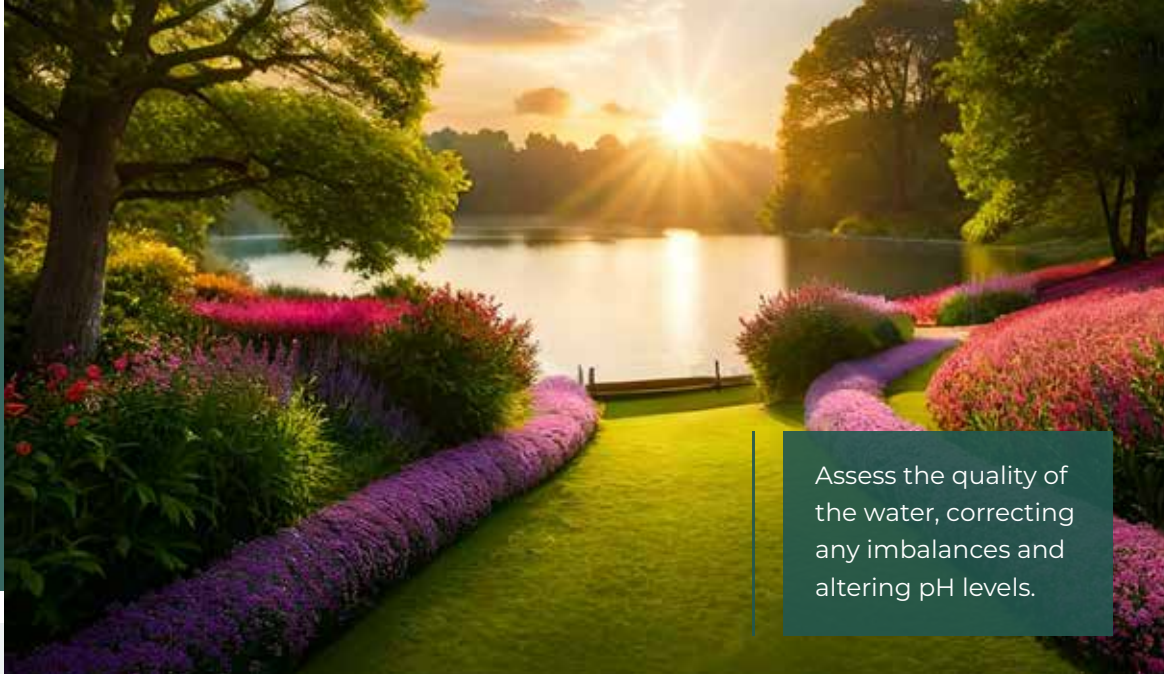
Set some time to tidy the garden before the growing season gets underway. Take out any trash, leaves that have fallen, and dead plant matter. This lowers the garden's danger of illness and pests while also enhancing its aesthetic appeal. Any sick material should not be added to your compost pile; instead, dispose of it in the garbage.

GARDEN TOOL MAINTENANCE

Gardening is more effective when tools are kept in good working order. Make a stock of the shovels, shears, and pruners that you have in your garden. As necessary, oil, sharpen, and clean them. By doing this, you can be confident that your instruments are prepared for the work at hand and stop plant diseases from spreading.

PEST MONITORING

Pests become more active when the temperature rises. Watch out for any indications of pest infestations on your plants. Early identification enables timely



Assess the quality of the water, correcting any imbalances and altering pH levels.

intervention, averting extensive harm. To control pest populations, think about employing organic techniques like companion planting or importing helpful insects.

PLAN YOUR GARDEN LAYOUT

Plan your garden layout at the early spring's slower tempo. Think about companion planting, crop rotation, and the unique requirements of certain plants. A carefully designed garden plan makes the most of available space, encourages plant health, and raises garden productivity levels overall.

WATERING PRACTICES

Even though springtime provides longer days and more warmth, soil moisture levels still need to be closely watched. Give plants regular, deep watering, especially in the event of minimal rainfall. Consider the particular water requirements of various plants and modify your watering schedule accordingly.

POND PREPARATION

First things first, clear out any winter-accumulated trash from your pond, such as leaves and twigs, in preparation for spring. To encourage fresh development, prune and remove any dead plants. Examine the pond liner for any damage and make the necessary repairs. Assess the quality of the water, correcting any imbalances and altering pH levels. Make sure there is adequate circulation by cleaning or replacing the pond's pump and filter. To accelerate the biological processes that keep water clear, introduce helpful bacteria. Return feeding the fish gradually while keeping an eye on their wellbeing. To improve the environment, think about introducing some new aquatic plants. Finally, look for any invasive species and take action. By taking these actions, you can guarantee a thriving and healthy pond come springtime.



HUNTING A KILLER

Historical thriller could be this month's TV highlight

Drama and history are a blissful partnership: the older the subject matter, the greater chance of there being less reliable, documented proof. So, writers can play fast and loose with known facts to create better story-lines and shed a different perspective on the subject matter – in short, never let facts get in the way of a story-line.

Which is what makes the new AppleTV+ mini-series **Manhunt** rather appealing. Due to premiere on March 15th, it is based on James L Swanson's respected book *Manhunt: The 12-day Chase for Lincoln's Killer*, an almost forensic examination of Abraham Lincoln's assassination and the hunt for his killer, John Wilkes Booth.

The book gives little wriggle-room for writers to jazz-up a pretty dry although incredibly significant chapter in American history. However, Apple's strong production values and first-rate cast – Tobias Menzies as Edwin Stanton who led the search for Booth (Anthony Boyle) and his aid Samuel Mudd (Matt Walsh) – could make it compulsive viewing for *True Detective* fans.

Five days later, Apple launch the eagerly-awaited **Palm Royal**, a period comedy based on the Juliet McDaniel book *Mr and Mrs American Pie*.

Starring Kristen Wiig, Laura Dern, Ricky Martin and Carol Burnett, it tells the story of Maxine Simmons (Wiig) and

her attempts to claim a place among Palm Beach's high society.

Peacock is now available to watch in the UK for Sky and NOW customers, and their expected highlight this month is **Apples Never Fall**, a mini-series based on the book by *Big Little Lies* author, Liane Moriarty. It stars Sam Neill and Annette Benning as Stan and Joy, two retirees who have sold their tennis academy and are trying to kick back when a mysterious young woman appears at their door.

And then things get weird when Joy disappears.

Peacock closed the door on **Girls5Eva** after two seasons, but Netflix have picked it up and series three hits our screens on March 14th. Meredith Scardino's musical comedy revolves around the members of a one-hit wonder girl group from the Nineties who have grown up and are trying to balance jobs and debt with married life, kids and ageing parents.

Deep down, though, they are still *Girls5Eva*.

On a more serious note, Netflix release the drama **3 Body Problem** on March 21st, an adaptation of Liu Cixin's novels by *Game of Thrones* creators David Benioff and D B Weiss and *The Terror*: Infamy showrunner Alexander Woo. It's the story of how one incident during China's Cultural Revolution leads to events that cross space and time.

Peacock is now available to watch in the UK for Sky and NOW customers



AN EXPLOSIVE TRIUMPH AT THE BAFTAS

Will Oppenheimer's BAFTAS triumph be repeated at the Oscars?

So now for the big one, the Oscars. And having swept all before it at both the Golden Globes and the BAFTAS, it is almost inconceivable that Oppenheimer will not claim the hat-trick of the big screen's biggest honours next month.

After scooping five Globes, the intense J Robert Oppenheimer biopic again dominated in London, landing seven BAFTAS, with its principal males – director Christopher Nolan, lead actor Cillian Murphy, and supporting actor Robert Downey Jr – repeating their successes. Not only did it take best film again, this time there were further accolades for best original score, cinematography and editing.

And while the bookmakers are running for cover, industry insiders are expecting Oppenheimer – which took almost £1billion at the box office – to emulate the stranglehold exerted last year by Everything Everywhere All At Once when Hollywood's glitterati gather for their big night on March 11th.

The American judging panel will no doubt push their own agendas, so expect better showings from Maestro and Killers of the Flower Moon, but it is unlikely they will dethrone "the Oppenhomies".

What will be interesting, though, is whether they will follow Britain's lead regarding the women's categories.

Emma Stone's leading actress Bafta for her role as Bella Baxter in the dark comedy Poor Things spearheaded a clutch of technical awards for the wonderfully bizarre film which included Make-up and hair, costume design, production design and special visual effects.

However, she could come under pressure from either Lily Gladstone (Killers of the Flower Moon) or Carey Mulligan (Maestro) for the Oscar, while Da'Vine Joy Randolph a worthy winner of best supporting actress BAFTA for The Holdovers may have to give way to Danielle Brooks (The Color Purple).

And it will be interesting to see how The Zone of Interest fares across the pond. After winning Outstanding British Film, Film not in the English Language and Best Sound here, the radical drama of how camp commander Rudolph Höss created a domestic utopia outside the walls of Auschwitz goes up against the heavy-hitters in, amongst other categories, Best Film and may not get the recognition it deserves.

BAFTA WINNERS

BEST FILM
Oppenheimer

LEADING ACTOR
Cillian Murphy (Oppenheimer)

LEADING ACTRESS
Emma Stone (Poor Things)

SUPPORTING ACTOR
Robert Downey Jr (Oppenheimer)

SUPPORTING ACTRESS
Da'Vine Joy Randolph (The Holdovers)

DIRECTOR
Christopher Nolan (Oppenheimer)

EE BAFTA RISING STAR:
Mia McKenna-Bruce

OUTSTANDING BRITISH FILM:
The Zone of Interest

FILM NOT IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
The Zone of Interest

DOCUMENTARY
20 Days In Mariupol

ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY
Anatomy of a Fall

ADAPTED SCREENPLAY
American Fiction

BRITISH SHORT ANIMATION
Crab Day

BRITISH SHORT FILM
Jellyfish and Lobster

BAFTA FELLOWSHIP
Samantha Morton

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION
June Givanni

The Bath Half Marathon takes place on Sunday 17th March, acting as a warm-up to the London Marathon on Sunday 21st April



An annual road running half marathon, the Bath Half Marathon takes place normally on the second or third Sunday of every March, and this year is no different as it gets off to a flying start on Sunday 17th. The event has been held almost every year since 1982, and was first run in the year after the first London Marathon, having since remained a popular race for runners preparing for the London Marathon.

WHY RUN A MARATHON?

A marathon is a well-liked and fulfilling endurance challenge since it provides a plethora of physical, mental, and emotional advantages. A key benefit is the favourable influence on cardiovascular well-being. Training for and finishing a marathon can improve cardiovascular endurance, blood circulation, and heart health. Thus, the risk of heart disease is decreased, and the cardiovascular system as a whole is strengthened.

Running marathons is another activity that encourages weight control and assists people in reaching and maintaining a healthy body weight. A marathon requires hard training that burns a lot of calories, which helps with muscle toning and fat loss. Furthermore, the self-control

and dedication required for marathon training frequently result in better lifestyle decisions, such as a balanced diet and enough sleep.

Running a marathon has mental and emotional advantages in addition to its physical ones. Running long distances has been associated with lower stress levels and better mental health. Running produces endorphins, which naturally elevate mood and reduce anxiety and depressive symptoms. Furthermore, the mental toughness and sense of achievement gained from marathon

training can have a good effect on a number of facets of life.

There are additional advantages due to the social component of marathon running. Creating a support system and joining running

communities are common aspects of preparing for and running marathons. This encourages accountability, drive, and a sense of camaraderie—all of which can lead to improved social well-being.

Running marathons helps develop self-control, tenacity, and goal-setting abilities. Training calls for a methodical approach, persistent work, and the capacity to overcome setbacks—skills that

It's a popular race for runners preparing for the London Marathon





are transferable to other facets of life and go beyond the actual race.

To sum up, participating in a marathon provides a wide range of advantages that include social relationships, mental health, emotional stability, physical fitness, and personal growth. People who put on their running shoes and start their marathon journey not only push the boundaries of their physical capabilities but also welcome a life-changing experience that has long-lasting benefits.

GET THE KIDS INVOLVED

Running in the park with children has many advantages that go beyond improving physical fitness and give a comprehensive approach to their growth. Park runs have the following benefits when incorporated into a family routine:

Physical Health: Park runs are a great way to encourage kids to be physically active. Frequent engagement promotes general physical fitness, increases stamina, and improves cardiovascular health. Running in a park promotes an interest in outdoor activities and aids in the fight against sedentary behaviour linked to contemporary lifestyles.

Social Interaction: Park runs give kids a chance to socialise with their classmates and help them develop their social skills. Engaging in group activities such as park

runs fosters friendships, collaboration, and a sense of belonging in children. Running together creates a common experience that fosters inclusivity and support.

Good Lifestyle Habits: Getting kids involved in park runs lays the groundwork for a healthy lifestyle. It emphasises the value of regular exercise as a joyful pastime as opposed to a chore. Children who have a good attitude toward physical activity are more likely to carry these practices into adulthood, which lowers the risk of health problems associated with lifestyle choices.

Mental Health: Engaging in outdoor activities like park runs helps children's mental health. Stress reduction and improved mood have been related to exposure to open areas and nature. Exercise-induced endorphins are endogenous hormones that naturally elevate mood and support emotional and mental health.

Skill Development: A variety of physical actions, such as park runs, help children develop their motor skills, coordination, and balance. Refining these fundamental abilities involves negotiating a variety of terrain, navigating obstacles, and keeping a constant pace while running.

Family bonding: Going on family park runs is a great way to spend valuable time

Children who have a good attitude toward physical activity are more likely to carry these practices into adulthood, which lowers the risk of health problems associated with lifestyle choices



together. Engaging in a shared activity strengthens family bonds and emphasises the value of quality time spent together. The experience of finishing a run together can generate enduring memories and improve family ties.

Setting and Reaching Goals: Park runs offer a disciplined setting and reaching of goals. Children learn the importance of setting goals and the satisfaction that comes with achieving them, whether it's finishing a particular distance or beating their own personal best. This experience helps them develop goal-setting abilities that will serve them well throughout life.



Preparation time: 30mins to 1hr

Cooking time: 1 to 2hrs

Serves: 6 to 8 people

ROAST LAMB WITH RICH MADEIRA GRAVY

Depending on how big you are going with the lamb centrepiece, you could either try creamy mushroom vol-au-vents as a canape-style starter or a green pesto minestrone soup. The beauty of the vol-au-vent is that, by using larger cutters, it could be used as a main course for vegetarians, while the soup can be prepared in advance.

For the mushrooms, you need a block of puff pastry, a beaten egg, two tablespoons of butter, 14oz of chopped mushrooms, 175ml of single cream, some finely grated Parmesan, a clove of garlic, parsley, tarragon, salt and ground black pepper.

After creating six pastry cases, melt the butter and add the mushrooms, stirring while cooking for about five minutes. Add the garlic and cook for another minute before adding the cream. Stir in the Parmesan and chopped herbs, and fill the pastry cases, which should be cooked for 20 minutes.

For the soup you will need 2 tablespoons of olive oil, a fine chopped large onion, two chopped celery sticks, 1.4l of vegetable stock, two small lemons, 170g orzo, 120g frozen peas, 250g frozen spinach, 50g pesto, garlic flatbreads and 60g of Parmesan (or vegetarian) cheese.

Heat the oil and add the onion, celery and a pinch of salt and fry until soft. Add the stock with the lemon zest and juice and season. Add the orzo, cook for a further 5 minutes before adding the peas and spinach. Cook for a further five minutes before swirling in the pesto and seasoning. And heat the flat breads.

INGREDIENTS

2kg/4lb 8oz leg of lamb, bone in
8 garlic cloves, thickly sliced
2 rosemary sprigs, leaves picked
1 lemon, zest only
2 tbsp olive oil
1 onion, cut into wedges
350ml/12fl oz Madeira
40g/1½oz unsalted butter
2 tsp cornflour
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 200C/180C Fan/Gas 6.

Make deep incisions over the lamb and stuff the garlic slices and half the rosemary leaves into the incisions. Rub the lemon zest and olive oil all over the surface of the lamb. Season with salt and pepper.

Put the onion wedges into a roasting tin, sit the lamb on top and roast for 1 hour. Pour 200ml/7fl oz of the Madeira and 300ml/½ pint water into the tin and return to the oven for 30 minutes. Remove from the oven, transfer the lamb to a warmed serving dish, and let it rest for 30 minutes.

Tip the contents of the roasting tin into a saucepan, with the remaining rosemary, Madeira and another 300ml/½ pint water. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes until slightly reduced. Strain everything through a sieve into a jug.

Melt the butter in a frying pan over a low heat. Stir in the cornflour until you have a smooth paste and cook, stirring all the time, for a minute. Slowly whisk in the strained liquid, a little at a time, until smooth. Simmer for 10 minutes over a low heat, stirring frequently, until thickened. Add any juices from the rested lamb and stir well.

Carve and serve with fresh spring vegetables.



DESSERT

Chocolate self-saucing pudding

You will need: 175g/6oz unsalted butter, at room temperature, plus extra for greasing the dish; 300g/10½oz soft light brown sugar, 3 large free-range eggs, beaten; 1 tsp vanilla extract; 175g/6oz plain flour; 40g/1¾oz cocoa powder; 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda; pinch of salt; 3tbsp milk; icing sugar for dusting; and double cream to serve.

Pre-heat the oven to 170C/150C and grease an ovenproof dish. Cream the measured butter with 225g/8oz of the soft light brown sugar until pale and light and gradually add the beaten eggs, mixing well between each addition and then add the vanilla extract and mix again.

Sift the flour, 40g/1¾oz cocoa, bicarbonate of soda and a pinch of salt into the mixture and mix. Add the milk and mix until smooth before spooning the mixture into the prepared dish.

In a small bowl mix together the remaining 75g/2½oz soft light brown sugar, 2 tablespoons of cocoa powder and 6 tablespoons hot water. Spoon this chocolatey syrup over the chocolate sponge mixture and place the dish in a large, deep roasting tin.

Boil the kettle and pour boiling water into the tin, around the dish so that the water comes halfway up the sides. Carefully slide the roasting tin into the oven on the middle shelf. Bake for about 45 minutes. Dust with icing sugar and serve immediately with double cream.

COCKTAILS... OR WINE?

Obviously, if it's a big family occasion you might want a pre-meal cocktail. While it's tempting to keep an Easter/chocolate theme going with a moreish Mini Egg Martini that takes a while to prepare, it is probably best to have something quick and refreshing such as a Limoncello Mojito.



All you need is Limoncello, white rum, a simple syrup of equal parts hot water and white granulated sugar, lime, mint leaves, and ice. Muddle the mint in the glass, add crushed ice, rum, a glug of Limoncello, the syrup and lime juice... stir and serve.

As for the wine, lamb's fat content needs serious acidity to cut through it. Most opt for a Rioja or a red Bordeaux, but a white Bordeaux (Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon blends) would also make a good pairing. However, give Greece's Assyrtiko a try – you'll know it if you have been to Santorini – as the oaked version can be quite full-bodied and acidic.



A LOOK AHEAD TO THE 2024 WORLD SNOOKER CHAMPIONSHIPS

Will Luca Brecel conquer the 'Crucible Curse' and defend his debut win the very next year?

The 2024 World Snooker Championships is a professional snooker competition scheduled to take place at Sheffield's Crucible Theatre from April 20th to May 6th. This will be the 48th consecutive year that the World Snooker Championship will be held at the venue. The World Snooker Tour hosts the last ranking tournament of the 2023-24 snooker season, which is sponsored for the second time by automotive reseller Cazoo.

Ronnie O'Sullivan will be looking to become the winner of the most World Snooker Championship tournaments when the 2024 contest kicks off next month, as his number currently stands at seven, matching that of Stephen Hendry's record of World Championship wins. Eight would mean it's another record Ronnie will dominate, just as he owns the records for almost everything else, including winning the most Masters titles, that number currently standing at eight after he won the 2024 Masters earlier in the year in January, beating Ali Carter 10-7 in the final.

Luca Brecel will be hoping to defend his title, and achieve what no player has ever accomplished before, that is to defend his debut win the very next year. In 2023, the Belgian Bullet became the first player from continental Europe to win the World Snooker Championship, defying his pre-tournament odds of 33-1. Brecel's ultra-attacking and casual style to the game helped him win the showpiece final against serial winner Selby, cementing his place in snooker history. It's called the 'Crucible Curse' that no player has ever managed it, although some have come close, namely the likes of Stephen Hendry and Mark Selby.

Speaking of whom, Selby could win the tournament for the fifth time in his career, as he's been enjoying a good season of form so far, and coming very close last year as he was runner-up at the Crucible losing to Brecel 18-15.

Other players to look out for will be Judd Trump, Neil Robertson, Shaun Murphy, Kyren Wilson, Barry Hawkins, John Higgins, Mark Williams, Mark Allen, and Ding Junhui, all of whom are playing great snooker at the moment and will be looking to make an impression in Sheffield next month, the latter two players having made that always-special maximum break at the Masters back in January, proving to the world they are strong contenders for the World title.

Luca Brecel will be hoping to defend his title, and achieve what no player has ever accomplished before, that is to defend his debut win the very next year.



FEELING BULLISH

Formula 1 roars back into action, but who can prevent another Red Bull double?

Formula One swaps one concrete desert oasis for another as the red lights go out this month for the start of this year's reshuffled 24-race world championship.

The acrid smoke from Max Verstappen's celebratory donuts have barely dissipated into the scorching Abu Dhabi air yet the circus has already trundled into Bahrain for the start of the 2024 title race.

And while Red Bull team principal Christian Horner feels last year's stranglehold will not be repeated – they won 21 of the 22-race calendar, with Verstappen taking the chequered flag an unprecedented 19 times – the rest of the grid will be pondering what

they have to do to derail the Milton Keynes-based juggernaut.

It is tempting, of course, to believe he was trying to keep a lid on expectations, but when seven-times champion Lewis Hamilton says he feels the perpetual front-runners were so far ahead they spent the second half of the season race-honing this year's car, then it would be a brave man to back Mercedes, Ferrari or McLaren from prising both constructors' and drivers' championship from Red Bull's clutches.

So, the field heads to Sakhir more in trepidation rather than expectation, and it seems the only help they will get is that the FIA and the World

Motorsport Council have devised a schedule which should cut the cost of cross-crossing the globe with a small army of personnel and equipment. By moving the Japan GP to April, Azerbaijan to September and Qatar back-to-back with Abu Dhabi, the calendar has a more regional approach to help sustainability. There will also be three Saturday races – Bahrain and Saudi Arabia because of Ramadan, and Las Vegas because, well, it's Vegas – while China returns for the first time since 2019.

With two three-week breaks it means the season will run through to early December, an extraordinarily long time to see who gets to do the donuts in Abu Dhabi ...

There will also be three Saturday races – Bahrain and Saudi Arabia because of Ramadan, and Las Vegas because, well, it's Vegas – while China returns for the first time since 2019.

- 01  29 Feb - 2 March
BAHRAIN
- 02  7 - 9 March
SAUDI ARABIA
- 03  22 - 24 March
AUSTRALIA
- 04  5 - 7 April
JAPAN
- 05  19 - 21 April
CHINA
- 06  3 - 5 May
MIAMI
- 07  24 - 26 May
MONACO
- 08  7 - 9 June
CANADA
- 09  21 - 23 June
SPAIN

- 11  28 - 30 June
AUSTRIA
- 12  5 - 7 July
GREAT BRITAIN
- 13  19 - 21 July
HUNGARY
- 14  26 - 28 July
BELGIUM
- 15  23 - 25 August
NETHERLANDS
- 16  30 Aug - 1 Sept
ITALY
- 17  13 - 15 September
AZERBAIJAN
- 18  20 - 22 September
SINGAPORE

- 19  18 - 20 October
USA
- 20  25 - 27 October
MEXICO
- 21  1 - 3 November
BRAZIL
- 22  21 - 23 November
LAS VEGAS
- 23  29 Nov - 1 Dec
QATAR
- 24  6 - 8 December
ABU DHABI



Pollywiggle Drive, Swaffham

£425,000



Extremely well presented, spacious, detached modern four bedroom house situated on the popular Redlands estate on the outskirts of Swaffham. This fantastic property boast two reception rooms open plan kitchen/dining/ lounge area, utility, cloakroom, en-suite, garage, gardens, parking and much more...

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Swaffham - 01760 721389

Watton - 01953 883474

CALL US TODAY FOR A FREE NO OBLIGATION VALUATION

Bishy Barny Bee Gardens, Swaffham

£259,995



An extremely well presented, modern three bedroom semi-detached house situated on a popular development on the outskirts of Swaffham. This superb property offers en-suite shower room, kitchen/dining room, gardens, parking, UPVC double glazing and gas central heating. Viewing is highly recommended.

SWAFFHAM - 01760 721389 - info@longsons.co.uk

Elizabeth Drive, Swaffham

£325,000



Very well presented, modernised three/four bedroom link detached bungalow situated in the popular well serviced village of Necton. The property has much to offer and includes utility room, study/bedroom four, garage, parking, gas central heating and UPVC double glazing. Viewing highly recommended.

SWAFFHAM - 01760 721389 - info@longsons.co.uk

Sporle Road, Swaffham

£345,000



Well presented, spacious, detached four bedroom house situated in the popular market town of Swaffham. The property offers two reception rooms, utility room, cloakroom, gardens with workshop/office/gym, garage, parking, gas central heating, UPVC double glazing and solar panels. VIEWING HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!

SWAFFHAM - 01760 721389 - info@longsons.co.uk

Carmelite House, Pit Lane, Swaffham

OIRO £450,000



A rare opportunity to acquire a well presented two/three bedroom detached period property conveniently situated right in the heart of Swaffham. Oozing character throughout with some original features, the property boasts, gas central heating and absolutely delightful gardens. A MUST SEE!

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Manor Road, Griston, Thetford

£350,000



A very well presented spacious, recently updated semi-detached four bedroom house situated in the popular village of Griston. The property offers two reception rooms, recently replaced kitchen and bathroom, utility, parking for several vehicles, en-bloc garage, four bedrooms, gardens and UPVC double glazing.

WATTON - 01953 883474 - watton@longsons.co.uk

Dudley Close, Watton

Guide Price £300,000 - £325,000



An extremely well presented modern semi-detached three bedroom house situated on a popular development in the market town of Watton. This superb property benefits from conservatory, en-suite, utility along with garage, parking, gardens, gas central heating and UPVC double glazing.

WATTON - 01953 883474 - watton@longsons.co.uk

Dye Road, Watton

£365,000



Extremely well presented spacious, detached, four bedroom house situated on a popular development in Watton. The property boasts; a spacious kitchen/dining room, ground floor cloakroom, en-suite, garage, parking, gardens, gas central heating UPVC double glazing, and two years NHBC warranty remaining.

WATTON - 01953 883474 - watton@longsons.co.uk

Griston Road, Watton

£325,000



NOT TO BE MISSED! An extremely well presented three bedroom detached house situated within the popular town of Watton. The property has been extended to create an amazing family orientated ground floor space with the benefit of an en-suite shower room, gas central heating and UPVC double glazing.

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Swaffham - 01760 721389

Watton - 01953 883474

CALL US TODAY FOR A FREE NO OBLIGATION VALUATION

Richmond Road, Saham Toney, Thetford

OIEO £500,000



Substantial, very well presented, spacious detached modern five/four bedroom house situated in Saham Toney. This fantastic property offers double garage, ample parking, en-suite shower room, bathroom, utility, two/three reception rooms, gas central heating, gardens and UPVC double glazing.

WATTON - 01953 883474 - watton@longsons.co.uk

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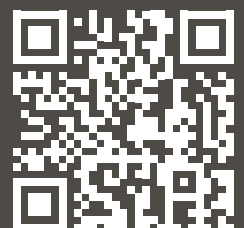
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HOW MUCH
IS MY
PROPERTY
WORTH?



Present your house for sale by de-cluttering...

Maximise your home's potential and create spacious rooms enticing potential buyers – simply by de-cluttering!

“ De-cluttering allows you to... maximise your space, emotionally prepare you to move, and will allow you to focus your buyers on what is important ”

If you are looking to sell your house, or have had your home on the market for a while now, then you probably want to get the maximum sale price in the quickest time. There are a few things you can't control – but the one thing that is in your control, is the look and feel of the interior and exterior.

While it's worth spending time fixing and cleaning your house before potential buyers come and view, it's also important to de-clutter. This creates spacious rooms and also allows you to decrease and organise your personal items before you move yourself. Of course it's understandable that you don't to want spend money, time and energy on a home you are about to leave, however, a lot of people are looking for a house in which they can move straight into. Maintaining your

property might even save you thousands of pounds; it could even reduce added expenses of living in your home whilst waiting for a sale. And it might even help avoid possible reductions in the asking price.

The main reason in which people move house tends to be because they lack space in their current home. They want a home that is spacious and in which they can grow into. If a potential viewer comes to your home and sees that there is lack of space, then this will turn them away.

De-cluttering allows you to remove any unnecessary items in an untidy or overcrowded place. It will help maximise your space, emotionally prepare you to move, and will allow you to focus your buyers on what is important.



So where should you start?

You need to create a great first impression and focus on the rooms themselves. You will notice that the first things you see in each room are personal items. Where possible you want to create the look of a

them into things you want to keep and things you want to get rid of. You may even find that you have collected a cupboard full of paper work. Get yourself organised! Don't just throw it all away, but file it and go through it thoroughly. This will also make it easier when you move.

De-personalising can also be a great way to de-clutter. Too many personal effects can be distracting to buyers. They want to see a house in which they can make their own memories rather than seeing yours. Again, personal items can be stored away. Remember

“ Where possible you want to create the look of a lifestyle that the potential buyers want ”

lifestyle that the potential buyer want. This usually has a 'show home' feel, rather than a 'lived in' feel. Minimising your things is the quickest way to do this: you want to ensure that potential buyers can do simple things, like, open any doors easily, ensuring that there are no obstacles.

So, what do we mean by clutter? There are two types: genuine clutter, and items that you want to keep but don't work for the sale of your property.

Genuine Clutter:

You need to go through the space and sort out each item, categorising

You also want to focus on little things like DVDs, books and trinkets. These items may have some small value so sell them or donate them to charity. Get rid of any old shoes and coats that are lying about in your porch or hallway. You might want to hide away the coats and shoes you do currently wear. Store them in your wardrobe, while you have viewings.

Items that you want to keep but don't work for the sale of your property:

You may want to consider putting some items in storage while you sell your home. Sometimes items are too large or even too small for some spaces and can make the room look odd. If you want to keep these particular items, then store them until you move into your new home.

that this is only a temporary way of living and hopefully it won't be for long! If you find you are keeping more things than you are throwing out, then think about whether or not it's in the right room or do you even need it now?

As previously mentioned, you can attempt to sell some of the things you have acquired over the years. Use sites like eBay, Gumtree and social networking sites to try and sell items. You may want to even hold a house sale for the remaining items that you can't sell. Failing that, why not donate to charity.

The end goal is still the same and it's important to help potential buyers envision your house as theirs. So remember, de-cluttering will make your home more spacious and entice potential buyers!

Top Tips!

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If you are throwing away paperwork, shred anything that is confidential

.....

.....

De-clutter before agents come and take photos of your property. This will help attract more potential viewers online and get that first good impression

.....

.....

Don't spend too long on certain items and don't get distracted. Keep yourself motivated and race against the clock!

.....

.....

Make it fun! Play some music or watch TV while you de-clutter

.....





Your step-by-step guide to the conveyancing process

Once a sale has been agreed and is in the hands of your solicitor, it will go through the following stages. Sometimes additional work will be needed – for example, if the property is leasehold or is yet to be registered with the Land Registry. It is also important for buyers to discuss the availability of their deposit with their solicitor early in the transaction, and we strongly recommend that you contact your solicitor regularly so that they can keep you fully up-to-date with the progress and the latest timescales.

Seller's solicitor's steps

- Obtain a copy of the Title Deeds (or office copies if the title is registered)
- Obtain a copy of the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) (if applicable)
- The seller(s) will return a completed Property Information Form and a Fixtures, Fittings and Contents Form to the solicitors
- Copies of the above documents, plus a draft contract – this is known as an 'Information Pack' – will be sent to the buyer's solicitor
- Answer the buyer's solicitor's additional enquiries (for example, specific questions about fixtures and fittings) and obtain copies of any planning consent documents
- Agree the contract and arrange for the sellers to sign it in readiness of the exchange (below)
- All parties agree completion dates and the contracts are exchanged

Between exchange and completion

- Obtain redemption figures from the mortgage lender and reply to requisitions on title
- Approve the transfer and arrange for the seller(s) and buyer(s) to sign
- Receive the agent's fee account and seek the seller's consent to settle this out of completion funds

Completion date

This is the date the ownership of the property passes from the seller to the buyer, and it follows the successful transfer of funds. It's the date that the whole process works towards.

Upon completion

- Receive completion funds and (only when this has been completed) instruct your estate agent to release the keys to buyers. Redeem mortgage and forward the financial statement. Forward any surplus funds (unless these are being used to fund an onward purchase). Ensure all outstanding bills are paid
- Forward transfer documents and deeds to the buyer's solicitors
- Forward evidence of 'discharge of mortgage' to the buyer's solicitors

Buyer's solicitor's steps

- Obtain the Information Pack, including a copy of the EPC (if applicable) from the sellers' solicitor and raise any additional queries
- Initiate any specialist searches (for example: a coal search). Submit local, environmental and water searches and a chancel check. This takes about 10 working days in total, and enquiries are then usually raised from the results
- Approve the contract when all enquiries are satisfactory and complete. (At this stage, a mortgage transfer deed will need to be signed and witnessed)
- Receive a mortgage offer and instructions from the lender and deal with any conditions set out by them. Make sure that life cover and buildings insurance is being arranged
- Request the deposit, report back to the buyer, and arrange for the contract to be signed. Place buildings insurance and life cover in force
- All parties agree completion dates and the contracts are exchanged

Between exchange and completion

- Raise 'requisitions on title' and prepare the draft transfer deed
- Report on title to mortgage lender and obtain funds for completion, including Stamp Duty (if appropriate)
- Prepare accounts, obtain signature to mortgage deed and undertake final Land Registry and Land Charges searches

Completion date

This is the date the ownership of the property passes from the seller to the buyer, and it follows the successful transfer of funds. It's the date that the whole process works towards.

Upon Completion

- Forward to the seller's solicitors the balance of funds - it is only then that they can authorise the release of the keys. Receive from the seller's solicitors, the transfer document deeds
- Stamp the Transfer Deed, register the buyer's ownership with the Land Registry and forward the deeds to the lender or client (where appropriate)

Contract - The agreement that sets out the main terms that have been agreed - for example: price, address, names, etc. Two copies are drawn up, and each party signs one in readiness for the exchange of contracts.

Deposit - The part of the purchase price (usually 10%) which the buyer pays on exchange of contracts.

Exchange of contracts - The swapping of signed contracts by the solicitors (together with the buyer's deposit). After this, the contract is binding.

Energy Performance Certificate - This contains information on energy use, energy performance, carbon dioxide emissions, and fuel bills.

Land Registry - The Government department that records who owns what land, and under what conditions.

Local Authority Search - A list of questions that are specific to the property and intended, for example, to discover if there have been any planning applications on the property, if the road to the house is maintained by the council, etc.

Mortgage Redemption Figure - The amount required to repay the outstanding capital/ interest of a mortgage.

Property information form/fixtures, fittings and contents form - Standard forms about the property that the seller answers for their solicitor (for example: what will be left behind, details of guarantees, etc.)

Title Deeds - Legal documents that prove ownership of land/buildings, and the terms on which they are owned.

Transfer of Title - The document that passes the ownership from the seller to the buyer.

Stamp Duty for buy to let investors and second home owners - An additional tax, paid by the buyer purchasing an additional property that is not their main residence. It includes buy to let landlords and those buying second homes and holiday homes. The higher rates will be 3 percentage points above the current rates of duty shown below.

Requisition on title - An enquiry relating to the completion arrangements.

Seller's Pack - This comprises a Property Information Form, a Fixtures, Fittings and Contents Form, a copy of the title deeds and the draft contract.

Stamp Duty - Currently, the Stamp Duty threshold for residential properties is £250,000. For first-time buyers you can claim a discount and won't pay Stamp Duty up to £425,000 on the purchase price and after that you will pay only 5% between £425,001 to £625,000.

However, how much you pay is also dependent on whether you already own another property or if you're a non-UK resident.



Moving house?

From meter readings to removal companies, there's so much to remember when moving house. Here's our checklist of what to do and when

First of all, congratulations on your new home! The excitement has probably now kicked in but moving home can also be one of the most stressful and emotionally draining things you can do. However, careful organisation and planning can help decrease the stress and anxiety of moving. This comprehensive and essential checklist will help you do just that.

Eight weeks - Research

Ideally, you want to start packing away any non-essential items as early as possible. This includes any items stored away in the loft, garage and shed. If you are not using it, pack it. Looking into your new area is also important, try to do this around eight weeks before you move. You might need to think about transferring your children to different schools and ordering new uniforms too. At this point, ensure you are also documenting all your important information away: that includes contact details, dates, contracts and information regarding your solicitor.

Six weeks - Removal companies or do it yourself?

Now would be the perfect time to decide on a local removal company. Or if you don't have too much to move, you may want to do it yourself. You could even look into different van hire companies. At this point you've probably started packing away some bits, but if there is anything you decide not to take, then look into selling these items or donating them to charity. This will also give you an idea on the volume of items you have to move.

Four weeks - Notify utility companies

This would be a good time for you to notify utility companies and inform them about your move to switch over. This includes gas and electricity, council tax, internet, phone rental and TV. You should also consider changing any car insurance, tax, memberships, phone contracts and inform your bank about the move. Now's the time to also arrange a date to have your new house cleaned before you move



“ It will be worth packing a night bag each to help everyone settle in, which means you won't have to rummage through everything to find your toothbrush! ”

in, and start ordering any new furnishings for your new property. Start packing away more items, that being, out of season clothes, books, dvd's and even bulky items, like TV's that aren't used often.

Two weeks - Confirm all details

Confirm your move with your removal company or van hire, estate agents and schools. If possible, try to organise someone to look after your pets and children for the day of your move, as this can also be a stressful time for them too. If your removal company doesn't disassemble any furniture or sort out the un-plumbing for the washing machine, then now would be the ideal time to organise these. Remember to also cancel any local services you receive: this could be window cleaners, gardeners and newspaper deliveries. You should now also think about re-registering to vote and getting your post re-directed after your moving date. Continue packing away more furnishings, kitchen appliances and crockery that you won't be using for the next couple of weeks.

24 hours - Final check and walk round

You now have only 24 hours before you move, so double check that everything is packed away and ready for transit. It will be worth packing a night bag each to help everyone settle in, which means you won't have to rummage through everything to find your toothbrush! You may want to create an inventory of your boxes and

furniture to help you keep track of what you have and to help you ensure it doesn't go missing.

Moving day

Today is the day! You need to be ready for when your removal company comes. Ensure that you let them know if there are any fragile boxes that need extra care when handling. If you're moving yourself, then pack up your car or van and work out how many trips it may take. Before you leave, also take note of your final meter readings and send these off to your provider. Don't forget to leave your keys for the new owners!

You have arrived at your new home!

Give your removal company instructions of which boxes go in which rooms and make sure you are happy with everything that has arrived. Ensure you check for any damage before the movers leave. Read your new utility meters and send your readings of to your supplier. Taking photos of them will also ensure you have the correct reading if you need them again in the future. Unpack your essentials such as bed linen and clean towels. Don't worry about the rest, it isn't going anywhere! Order a takeaway, have a cup of tea and enjoy your first night with your family.

Right, so now you're all moved in, it's time to settle down, unpack and enjoy your new place. Remember, planning is essential to ensure your move runs stress free.

Checklist

Eight weeks

- Pack non-essential items
- Research your new area (transfer schools and order new uniform)
- Keep all important documents

Six weeks

- Decide on a local removal company
- Clear out any unwanted items
- Keep packing

Four weeks

- Notify utility companies
- Start preparation for your new house
- Keep packing

Two weeks

- Finalise all details
- Organise pet and child care
- Cancel local services
- Keep packing

24 hours

- Check every room and ensure everything is packed
- Pack a night bag so everything is to hand
- Collect your new keys
- Make sure your phone is fully charged so you can get in touch with the estate agents or removal company

Moving in

- Prepare for the arrival of the removal company and give them directions/your contact details
- Ensure everything is ready to move
- Record meter readings

On arrival

- Give removal company instructions of what goes where
- Check for any damage before they leave
- Read your new utility meters and send them off to your supplier
- Check if the previous owners have left anything behind
- Unpack essentials
- Order a takeaway and sit back and relax!



Want to treat yourself to a proper removal company for your next move or are you prepared to do it yourself

Removal company or brave it yourself?

You're excited about your new home and location but the process of packing, organising and actually moving all of your items is something no-one really ever looks forward to. Not only that but you also have to contact utility companies, maintain a job, keep your children happy and clean your entire house. You do have super powers, right?

Removal companies

Unless you live in a small property or flat, it could be worth hiring a professional removal company to help relieve some of the stress on the day. They have many skills and experience and some of the services they can provide include packing and

unpacking, dismantling and assembling furniture, loading your belongings quickly and securely, including those fragile and specialist items. They can even supply you with packing materials.

Hiring a removal company will also allow you the time to collect the keys to your new home. You also won't have to worry about the exhausting physical side of things, that being carrying boxes back and forth. Some services are great if you don't have much time to plan and get these done yourself; however these do often come at a premium and may not be suitable for those on a budget. When choosing a removal company

You also won't have to worry about the exhausting physical side of things, that being carrying boxes back and forth



its key to look at those which have good recommendations and reviews, as you need a company you can rely on. You can use comparison sites, such as comparemymove.com and reallymoving.com, to help find you the best deals.

Getting quotes

You should aim to get at least three quotes from removal companies, preferably from firms which will come out to your property rather than those who just estimate the cost over the phone, as you don't want any nasty charges later on. Plus it will give the company an accurate idea of any restricted areas in your home, if they can park a van or lorry, and how many

items you have. You should also ask for the price to be broken down so you can see just how much you are paying for when it comes to certain aspects like insurance, packing, an hourly rate, mileage and any storage costs.

Once you have found a removal company, it can be useful to send them a briefing sheet that includes information about any items which need to be specially packed, any difficult or large items, plus any carpets and curtains which need moving. Finally, it can also be helpful to send them a floor plan of the new property so they can unload efficiently.

Top tips for packing

When packing, ensure you don't overload your boxes with heavy items, as these will be difficult to lift and could cause a back injury.

Fill any empty gaps using old newspaper, clothing, socks or even tea towels. This will help secure any items when they are being moved.

Create an inventory and label all your boxes and write the contents on each box with a marker. That way you will know which room each box is to go in. And if you are super organised, you could even colour code each room!

Pack heavier boxes on the bottom. This might seem like common sense but it will ensure that any of your fragile items won't break.

Pack a survival box. These are the things that you will need first and should include paper towels, bin bags, cutlery, the kettle, some mugs, tea, coffee, milk, sugar and finally, some toilet paper!



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