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How to Pack: Tips, Tricks and Web Sites

By dan the roommate man

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You've just signed a new lease on the apartment of your dreams. As soon as the initial excitement wears off, you realize you're facing a daunting task, packing for the cross-town move. You have only 30 days and you want to make sure all of your belongings, including your big-screen television, your grandmother's china and your collection of miniature unicorns, arrive safely. Fortunately, moving experts of all sorts have compiled tips and suggestions for novice movers.

Generally, smaller items can be wrapped in newsprint, packed together in appropriate-sized moving boxes and surrounded with Styrofoam peanuts. Put heavier items (e.g., books) in smaller boxes. Dishes should be protected with bubble wrap and packed on edge, rather than stacked. Use dish towels or pot holders to cushion the bottom and sides of these boxes. Bubble wrap secured with tape can be used to protect furniture as well. Wrap it around lampshades, chair arms, table legs, bed frames and the like.

Don't use tape directly on wood or painted furniture, however, because the sticky residue can ruin the finish. Instead, wrap these items in mover's pads and tie them with rope to secure the pads. To pack a large mirror or picture, cover both sides with bubble wrap and heavy cardboard, then run masking tape around the entire object. Or use a large flat packing box.

Inexpensive clothing, towels, bed sheets, pillows, stuffed animals and other soft items can be packed in large garbage bags that are tightly tied at the top. Suits, gowns and other fine clothing should be placed in portable wardrobe boxes, which can be purchased from a moving company or packing store. These boxes are a good solution for packing drapes too.

One of the most challenging items to pack is a computer. Be sure to back up all your files before disassembling and packing your system. Pack your diskettes in a separate box that doesn't contain anything magnetic. Bundle the cables and wires, and use color coding if you're uncertain about how to reconnect them. Allow the computer to cool completely, then wrap each component in a large heavy-grade plastic bag. If you have the original boxes, by all means use them to move your equipment. Otherwise, double box each component by placing it in a small box filled with packing

peanuts. Then place each small box in a larger box also filled with peanuts. Be sure to mark all the boxes "FRAGILE."

If you need boxes and packing supplies, you might want to purchase them as part of your contract with your moving company. Otherwise, check out local supermarkets, janitorial supply stores and club warehouses. Many of these establishments will give away their empty boxes if you show up when the inventory is being unpacked. Ask friends or coworkers who've recently moved whether they'd like you to cart away and recycle their boxes. To purchase moving supplies online, try U-Haul, which will take your order electronically and deliver a complete package of boxes, bubble wrap and masking tape right to your front door. (There is a shipping charge.)

Don't forget to pack a use-right-away kit of paper plates, plastic cups, bathroom tissue, aspirin,

prescription medicines, telephone numbers and other necessities. You'll also want a personal suitcase for each person containing clothing, toiletries and other immediate-use items. Put the kit and the suitcases aside where they won't get mixed up with the boxes destined for the moving van. On moving day, take the kit and the suitcases, along with any particularly precious or valuable items, with you in your personal vehicle.

More information about packing is available on moving company and other Web sites, including Allied Van, NorthAmerica Van Lines, Move Doctor and Art of Moving. One of the best resources is MoversNet from the U.S. Postal Service. This site offers step-by-step instructions to pack everything from air conditioners and artwork to televisions and washing machines. There are even some humorous hints about how to pack a hippopotamus.

Finally, remember that some things simply shouldn't be moved with your household goods. Dispose of paint, solvents, insecticides, motor oil and other hazardous or inflammable materials before you move. Give them away to your neighbors or take advantage of a local hazardous materials drop-off event. If you suspect something might be dangerous, use your better judgment and don't pack it.

Since 1989 dan the roommate man has helped 1000's of people find roommates. Need help? Contact him at 800-487-8050 or www.roommateexpress.com

Magic For Beginners

By Preston Houer

Are you constantly amazed by disappearing acts, card tricks and other magic wonders you see on different occasions? Children's shows, magical exhibitions, trade shows, parties, and carnivals are some of the events where magicians are popular.

Because of the effect of magic on people, many would like to somehow try the basics of magic. There are a lot of online sites that offer tips on how to get started with magic. Others just content themselves with ready-made gimmicks they found at magic shops. But for those who are really serious about trying

magic, these magic-filled sites offer different services for newbie magicians. In their sites, they offer free videos that will help you become trained in simple card tricks and other vanishing acts with the use of coins, rings and other magic props.

Before starting to learn magic, you have to know the essence of magic. First, magic or magic shows should provide happiness to people. Magic ought to be truly enjoyed by people watching and by the magician performing. Second, a truly good trick should be remembered. Different methods can be tried in order to make your tricks stand out even more.

The best place to get excited about your first magic trick is in a local magic shop. Talk to the magician of the shop, if there is one, and try asking him basic questions. Then, request him to show a couple of tricks to you. Usually, magicians are very eager to help beginners.

A good magician does not mind putting in a lot of effort to learn and continuously practice his magic tricks and constantly reinvent. Good magicians don't repeat tricks to the same audience. Your audience may figure out your secret. It is not long before people notice familiar moves and can get bored quickly.

Here are some tips:

- a. Regularly practice your magic. Allot time every day for your practice.
- b. If you are trying to videotape your act, be sure that you have no mirrors around you as they change views and the audience would not see what they ought to see. And remember do not appear as though you are unsure of what you are doing because your audience might easily lose interest watching when the magician looks not confident.
- c. Ask other people to watch intently while doing your tricks, then ask for feedback.
- d. Master one trick first before learning a new one.
- e. Anywhere you go, make it a habit to bring magic props. Take some coins and a deck of cards with you so that if you have extra time, you can use it to practice the tricks.

Preston Houer has been involved with the art of illusion and sleight of hand for over 30 years. Let Preston show you how to Have Fun With Magic. Visit His Site Today!



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