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Settling In: Pre-Move Pointers for Taking Stock

By dan the roommate man

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Despite all of the hassle moving represents, when the anxiety is gone and the dust has cleared, most of us have to admit that it's a liberating experience. It forces us to rid ourselves of the clutter accumulated in the house we're leaving. Whether or not you buy new furniture for your new residence, the motions of packing up and heading for different surroundings is a positive experience for most movers. It's an opportunity to start over.

Before you move, it's a good idea to take inventory of your belongings and consider what place they'll have — if any — in your new home. After all, when you moved into your current home, your family's needs were different. Since then, its occupants have become older, hobbies have been abandoned, tastes have changed, and now, suddenly, items you once thought you'd die without don't seem that wonderful anymore.

* Taking stock of your furniture is a good place to start; after all, if you decide to get rid of a piece or two, you can save yourself the considerable expense of moving them. In addition to your furniture, take a good look at your lamps, rugs, pillows, and other accessories — particularly the ones you've stored away for months — and decide whether they really reflect your tastes anymore. Some of them may serve little purpose other than to clutter your closets and collect dust. Rid yourself of them, while reminding yourself that everything you pack means more boxes, more packaging and labor costs, and more to unpack later.

* An effective strategy is to draw on paper the floor plan of your new home. Sketch in the designated spots for your furniture, making sure you've noted where such obstacles as fireplaces, windows, built-in shelves or desks, etc., are located. Remember where your electric outlets, telephone jacks, and television hookups are located, and make sure you've considered the direction in which your doors open. If you're looking for a more exact plan, with square footage taken into account, take a note from Better Homes and Gardens Online, which suggests using graph paper to draw your rooms to scale. Each square translates to one foot of available space.

Settling In: Pre-Move Pointers for Taking Stock

Here's where your creativity takes over: After measuring the size and shape of each major piece of your furniture, draw them on graph paper using the same one-square-per-foot scale as you did for the rooms in your new home. Then cut the shapes and arrange your miniature furniture within your various room floor plans. Once you've made a decision about what suits you and where, attach the shapes onto the page.

While this process requires a little patience and a little more creativity, planning ahead enables you to avoid either moving heavy furniture yourself, long after the movers have left; or having your movers pause upon entry into a room, shouldering a heavy load as you decide where that 300-pound dresser should be placed. (Of course, you'd be lucky to find such a tolerant mover.) You've got a plan of attack that makes your life and your movers' lives easier. You can point them in a direction and move on to the next item. The bottom line is that you're paying by the hour, and a little sketching and cutting now will save you labor costs later. Take the trouble to draw only your major pieces of furniture; your

smaller items and accessories can be placed anywhere for now, until you have time to consider the perfect spots for them.

This strategy also allows you to experiment with various arrangements that you may have considered in the past, but abandoned because it seemed like too much effort to pursue. And trying out new configurations is a consolation for not being able to purchase new furniture. Even if you've resigned yourself to a sofa that doesn't thrill you anymore, arranging your furniture in a different manner may provide you with a completely new outlook on belongings that once seemed tired. That variety, combined with a new place of residence, is bound to inspire you. And don't restrict your furnishings to the rooms in which you've traditionally placed them. For example, the chest of drawers sitting in your bedroom might look even better in your new living room. This move is your big chance to experiment — and you don't even have to move the furniture yourself.

And while you're laying out your plans on graph paper, you might want to determine the focal point of each room first — a fireplace, a large window, anything that grabs you when you first enter the room. Then arrange your furniture around that focal point. And while it's a given, it's well worth repeating that you should consider how each room is going to be used before you design its layout. For example, when you're planning your living room, if you plan to spend a lot of time entertaining there, you'll want to place chairs and/or sofas close together and provide plenty of walking room, as well.

After you've taken inventory of your current home, take stock of your home-to-be, starting with the kitchen and its appliances. With any luck, you'll have ensured that all of those kitchen appliances are in good, safe, working order long before your move. Make sure the hot water system is both working and the correct size for your family's needs. If the answer to either of those questions is no, replacing the unit will save you both considerable energy and money. Then investigate your new home's heating and cooling system, which is going to represent a predominant percentage of your monthly energy expenses. To figure out if it's running in top condition, determine the Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER) rating for your air conditioning and heating unit. The higher the SEER rating, the more efficient the system. A rating under 8 is considered relatively inefficient. Also check your ductwork to ensure that its size is appropriate and that it's clean. Finally, make sure your thermostat and controls are operating correctly.

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Home owners often forget that clothes washers and dryers eat up energy, particularly when stackable units are involved. Because users can't fill them with much clothing, they're forced to run more loads through the units, resulting in increased energy consumption and subsequent expenses. On the other hand, units that are too large may use excess water or heat. Regardless of the type of unit in your new home, make sure that the washer drains properly and that your dryer is vented out of your home.

And speaking of energy consumption, study all doors, windows, vents, and other passages to the outside for cracks. If you see any gaps or if you feel any air streams, seal them either with caulk or weather stripping. And check your windows to find out if they're double-paned and fit tightly.

Finally, if you can't paint your new home's interior prior to your move-in date, don't unpack until you do. And be sure to consider the direction of light in your home — where it hits the walls and the shadows it creates. Painting your dining room a deep shade of forest green, for example, could backfire on you if your lot is heavily treed, or if the room generally doesn't receive much sunlight. The color that seemed vibrant in the can may leave you simply depressed once it's covering the walls of an already dark room.

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Know Your Muscle Building Exercises – The Chest

By Rick Mitchell

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Every bodybuilder and weight trainer will have his or her favorite exercises for each body part. That's how it should be – as you progress through the various stages of learning you'll understand what works best for you. It is useful, however, to take stock of your progress every so often and carry out an analysis of where you are and what changes, if any, are needed to move onwards and upwards.

Part of this analysis should include an assessment of the core exercises that make up your bodybuilding training program. In this article we'll look at the chest exercises that have proven their worth to serious bodybuilders for many years. Where appropriate a series of exercises suitable for achieving pre-exhaustion will be presented. All exercises should be performed to failure with one set of six to eight reps.

1. Dumbbell flies – this exercise provides a useful means of isolating the pectorals and preserving the triceps for the subsequent exercise. The exercise should be performed as follows:

– Hold dumbbells directly overhead.

– Lower them to sides with elbows slightly bent, pulled back and to the side. Lower no further than level with the torso.

Settling In: Pre-Move Pointers for Taking Stock

– Use the pectorals to pull the weights back up to the starting position.

2. Incline bench press – you can move straight on to this exercise if you have reached an appropriate level of experience. If you perform this exercise as the second part of a pre-exhaust routine you may have to use lighter weights than normally.

– Take a shoulder width grip.

– Lower the bar to the chest with the elbows pointed to the side.

– Return to the starting position.

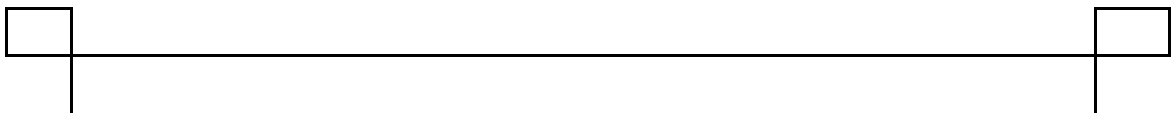
Richard Mitchell is the creator of the bodybuildingadvisor.com website that provides guidance and information to athletes at all levels of bodybuilding experience. Go to

to learn

more about the issues covered in this article.



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