



IS IT TIME TO DOWNSIZE?

THE children have all left home for lives of their own or you suddenly realise one day that the house you're in is simply too big for your needs. Whatever the reason, it's time to DOWNSIZE!

Once, downsizing carried a bit of a stigma, almost as if you couldn't afford the home you had so you had to go for something less. But, in today's cost-conscious, energy-efficient and finance-orientated world, many more people are downsizing for all the right reasons.

Along with finding a smaller property to live in, however, comes some unusual dilemmas – along with the usual dilemmas of how to furnish the new home and what is surplus to requirements.

Interior designer Chrissy Halton from Innerspace offers some simple advice: "When downsizing, don't try and replicate the house you had – go for a new look.

"And only take with you items that really mean something to you. Off-white walls look great with more antique furniture items, for example. Less is more!"

The advantages of moving to a smaller property can be that your bills are likely to be smaller and there will be less housework needed. The first big minus, though, is that you've probably got far too many possessions to fit into your new home.

"You can't take everything with you," says Chrissy, "so start by having a really good de-clutter so that you can really see what you have that you love. That way you can more easily make the decision about what to take – and you don't have to pay the removal company too much!"

Interior Designer Chrissy Halton



Ask your relatives and friends if they would like to have particular items that you don't want to take with you. There's a growing trend for mixing old and new furniture currently so they may be glad to be offered a piece they've coveted or that may fit in their home. Or look to sell items on ebay and start afresh in your new home with some new furniture.

The National Association of Estate Agents says that downsizing offers a chance to have "a thorough springclean and focus on exactly what you want in your new home, and what you don't."

"You may have furniture which isn't suitable for your new home, or that could do with replacing. So think ahead and make sure you have taken proper measurements of your new property so you don't struggle on moving day with items that you probably shouldn't have brought with you."

For many of us, the pull of our old home is all about the memories that we've shared as a family within those bricks and mortar. Our children may have grown up here, and every room can be associated with personal milestones or events that matter to our own family history.

"If you're worried about losing all the history behind your old home, think about using photos to show your life," adds Chrissy. "It's easy to make them into beautiful collages, and that way you can 'take' the items with you without having the real thing."

When it actually comes to chucking out much-loved – and possibly worn – furniture or other items, contact a local charity which might be glad of household goods and especially furniture in good condition. The national homeless charity Emmaus, for example, may have a local collection service for unwanted furniture, or