

Downsizing Your Home

A Step-by-Step Checklist for North Atlanta Empty-Nesters

1. Clarify Your Why

The right next home looks different depending on what's driving the move.

- Reducing maintenance and upkeep
- Unlocking home equity for retirement or other goals
- Moving to single-level living proactively
- Lifestyle change — walkability, lock-and-leave convenience, proximity to amenities
- Rank these priorities so you know what to weigh most heavily

2. Get a Clear Financial Picture

Know your real numbers before you start touring smaller properties.

- Request a current CMA on your existing home — not a guess based on what you paid
- Estimate selling costs (commission, closing costs, any pre-sale repairs)
- Calculate net proceeds after selling costs are subtracted from current equity
- Set a realistic budget for your next home, including financing plans

3. Decide: Buy First or Sell First?

There's no universal right answer — it depends on your finances and the current market.

- Discuss bridge financing, HELOC, or cash reserve options with a lender if buying first
- Consider temporary housing options if selling first
- Talk through current inventory levels and rate environment with your agent

4. Define What 'Smaller' Means to You

Downsizing doesn't always mean a dramatically smaller footprint.

- Consider active adult / 55+ communities and their amenities
- Consider townhomes or condos in walkable downtown areas
- Consider a smaller single-family home on a smaller lot
- Tour a range of property types before narrowing your search

5. Sort Through Belongings Early

Starting well before your move date reduces stress considerably.

- Set a realistic timeline — start months, not weeks, before listing
- Sort items into keep, family/gift, sell, and donate categories
- Arrange for estate sale, consignment, or donation pickup as needed
- Digitize photos and important documents to reduce physical volume

6. Prepare and List Your Current Home

Once your plan is set, prepare your current home for market.

- Address any deferred maintenance identified during your CMA walkthrough
- Discuss staging strategy with your agent
- Set a listing timeline aligned with your buy/sell decision
- Coordinate closing dates between your sale and purchase, if applicable

This checklist is provided for general informational purposes only and does not constitute financial or legal advice. Mortgage financing options, tax implications, and market conditions vary by individual circumstance — consult a licensed lender, financial advisor, and/or attorney regarding your particular situation. Companion reading: "Downsizing After the Kids Leave: A North Atlanta Empty-Nester's Guide" on our blog.

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