



NATURAL LIGHT IN YOUR HOME

BRING IN NATURAL LIGHT INTO YOUR HOME

CLOCKS GO FORWARD
MAKING THE MOST OF
THE EXTRA DAYLIGHT

POWER TO WOMEN
TWO DAYS THAT WE
CELEBRATE WOMEN

NEW FI SEASON
OUR GUIDE TO THE
NEW FI SEASON FOR 2022

ARTS AND CRAFTS
LET YOUR CREATIVNESS
FLOW WITH THESE CRAFTS

CONTENTS

COVER STORY

- 2 | **Natural Light**
How to bring natural light into your home

PROPERTY

- 10 | **March gardening guide**
we've got your garden preparation for the month ahead
- 16 | **Our latest instructions**
Take a look at a selection of our latest properties on the market
- 22 | **About us**
Get to know us a little better and see why we are your agent of choice
- 24 | **Your home move**
Your guide to help you every step of the way on your home move

LIFESTYLE

- 4 | **Concorde Anniversary**
How an aircraft revolutionised travel
- 6 | **St Paddy's Day**
We have the perfect Irish meal plan for you
- 7 | **Clock go forward**
make the most of the extra daylight
- 8 | **Power to women**
Celebrating Women this Mother's Day and International Women's Day
- 13 | **Arts and Crafts**
We have arts and crafts for the adults this month

SPORT

- 12 | **F1 season**
Our guide to the upcoming F1 Season



Bring Natural Light into your Home

When a prospective buyer views a property for the first time, one of the first things they'll be looking out for is an abundance of natural light. We are all instinctively drawn to places filled with natural light as they promote a sense of freshness and optimism. Natural light also has a measurable benefit in your home. It has been shown that regular exposure to natural light can reduce the effects of Seasonal Affective Disorder and promote productivity. A regular dose of natural light will also increase the amount of vitamin D you absorb. Vitamin D is one of the few vitamins which we cannot absorb through our food so regular exposure to sunlight is essential. Vitamin D helps to control asthma symptoms and keeps your immune system under control meaning you are less likely to pick up colds etc.

Another factor to consider is the money natural light could be saving you in your home. Natural light can produce savings as you will be less likely to turn on lights and may also use less heat and air conditioning. So, what can you do to bring natural light into your home?

WELCOME TO THE MARCH ISSUE!

Spring is in the air; the weather is improving and this month the clocks go forward. So, with so much to look forward to now the long winter is over, let's jump right in. On pages 2&3 we look at ways to make the most of the longer days with a feature about how to let more natural light into your home. Moving further afield, on pages 4&5, on its anniversary, we look at how Concorde changed travel and brought us all closer.

March is also a month where we celebrate the women in our lives, with not just one but two special days. On pages 8&9 we have a look at the history of both Mother's Day and International Women's Day, and that isn't the only special day

this month. St Patrick's Day is on the 17th, so we have some fantastic Irish recipes to get you salivating.

And if all those great features aren't enough, we also have our monthly gardening guide, perfect to get March started the right way. We also have an in-depth look at the upcoming Formula 1 season, a preview for International Book Day and a special piece all about Arts and Crafts for both children and adults.

So, sit down, grab a cuppa and enjoy this month's magazine.

Jonathan Wheatley
Editor

LET THERE BE LIGHT



COLOUR CHOICE

It's a classic move when looking to sell your home to paint the walls white or pale, neutral colours. One reason for this is to allow prospective buyers to view your home as a blank canvas upon which they can put their own stamp. Another reason is that pale colours, especially white, reflect light and can give the illusion of larger rooms. And why stop with the walls? Often, the darkest part of a room may be the flooring. If you're prepared to invest some time and money into the project, opting for pale wooden floors, laminate or carpets will dramatically lighten a room. If you have small children or pets then pale floors or carpets may not be for you, so why not brighten up a room with a light-coloured rug?

MIRRORS

Whilst the addition of mirrors into your home won't bring in more light, it will reflect the light you do have. Consider the direction light enters the room from when deciding where to place the mirrors. You could also choose metallic surfaces for furniture, such as your coffee table or select soft metallic furnishings to boost the reflective effect.

LESS IS MORE

A minimalist approach to decorating is a la mode right now which makes sense when we also consider the trend for natural light. An overly cluttered room absorbs the light which enters the room and



reduces the effect and benefits it can have. One point worth considering is whether you need heavy curtains. There are many sheer options available which will still allow light into your room. In the bedroom removing curtains will allow the sun to be your natural alarm clock. Although, if your sleep schedule doesn't quite align to the sun's early summer rises, why not consider smart blinds which you can program to open when you wish to wake up?

WINDOWS AND DOORS

Windows and doors are the most obvious way to allow a large amount of natural light into your home. In spaces such as bathrooms or attic conversions, consider installing skylights to welcome light into an otherwise dark space. Aluminium frames let in the most amount of light as the material is light enough for slim sightlines. Another option to consider is a gable window. Gable windows work even in the shallowest of roof pitches and welcome an abundance of light.

In terms of doors, bi-fold doors offer the much-desired inside-outside living trend and can be left open in fine weather to fully benefit from natural light and fresh air or closed to allow just the light to flood in when it's cooler.



PLANE CRAZY

How a diminutive aircraft revolutionised travel

The Earth started to shrink 53 years ago this month. On March 2nd, 1969, a tiny, pencil-slim aircraft blasted down the runway at an airfield in France and gracefully took off for its maiden flight which may have only lasted 27 minutes but changed the face of aviation forever.

The brilliant-white, rapier-like phenomenon named Concorde, was unlike anything seen before. It's iconic delta-wing design made it impossibly aerodynamic, while the

unique drooping nose was a necessary addition to aid pilot visibility during take-off and landing. It was without doubt the most identifiable man-made object in the sky.

However, it didn't achieve its primary purpose – supersonic

Fastest time on its maiden flight from Paris to Washington in 1973 and it peaked when reaching 1,350mph (twice the speed of sound)

flight – until its 45th outing but once it pierced the sound barrier, the world took notice: this streamlined bird meant business. Particularly for transatlantic traffic.

This was at a time when effective large-scale long-haul travel was in its infancy. Boeing had only just tested the gigantic and clumpy 747 when the waif-like Concorde poked its nose out of its hangar for the first time, and although the lumbering Jumbo Jet beat the joint Anglo-French game-changer into service by a few years, the allure took a knock once the new kid on the block got his feet under the table. Big may have been beautiful

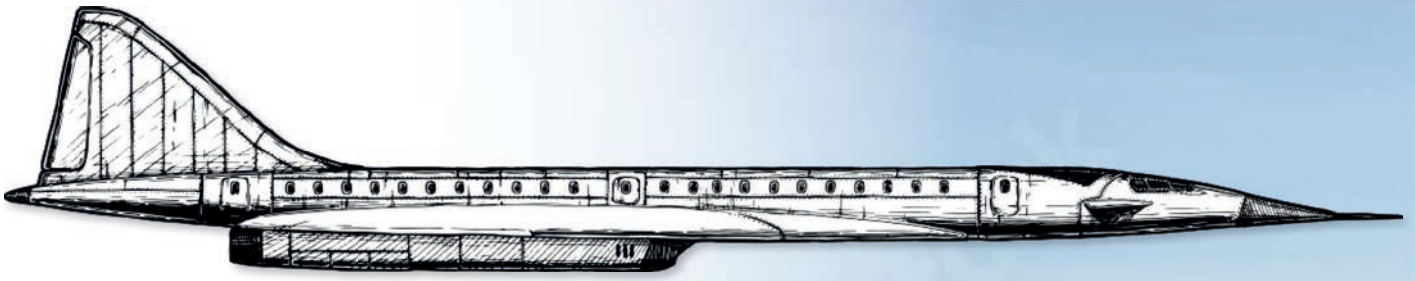
and commercially viable, but small was lightning-fast and pretty flash.

The records tumbled. Concorde almost halved the previous fastest time on its maiden flight from Paris to Washington in 1973 and it peaked when reaching 1,350mph (twice the speed of sound) on one 3,740 mile journey from London to New York in 1996. For perspective, that's around half an hour slower than it takes to get from London to York by train, while the fastest sub-sonic flight came just four years ago - an almost tortoise-like 5hrs 13min.

It's potential certainly opened the eyes of a blinkered public who had previously seen two weeks in Majorca or the Costa Blanca as an exotic getaway. By tracing Concorde's route, the places only talked of in geography or history lessons, and which provided glamorous locations on the big or small screen, suddenly became accessible.

Rival airlines responded, investing in new advanced fleets which could fly more customers faster and cheaper than ever before. America's





Mid-West, Florida, the West Coast and Mexico became dream locations instead of just dreams.

For instance, a seven-day ticket direct to San Francisco, flying economy light with Delta this month, can cost from as little as £372 and will take a few minutes more than 11 hours. Imagine that: breakfast at a well-known drinking establishment which does a good fry-up in Heathrow, and dinner at a balmy open-air fish restaurant on Fisherman's Wharf. Not that long ago you may have needed an overnight stop-over to do that.

Destinations such as Las Vegas have now become synonymous with stag or hen-dos, which is hardly surprising. Again, Delta offers five-day tickets to Sin City from £486 and the key words there are five days. Pre-Concorde only a red-eyed businessman would have undertaken such a trek in such a short time. Now it's a straightforward flight for casinos, nightlife and the Grand Canyon (if you can drag yourself away from the bright lights) and back home to check the emails ready for a return to work on Monday.

And while it may be tempting to think that Concorde solely offered a glorified commuter route to the business and political centres of New York and Washington, it made three trips a week to Miami from 1984 as well as the winter sunshine playground of Barbados, before running a service

However, the combined land masses of Europe and Asia stubbornly resisted the supersonic age, largely because of noise concerns, although Concorde's first commercial flight from London was to Bahrain.

to Dallas for a year. Air France's bird also went directly to Rio, Mexico and Caracas.

However, the combined land masses of Europe and Asia stubbornly resisted the supersonic age, largely because of noise concerns, although Concorde's first commercial flight from London was to Bahrain. The desert kingdom proved a refuelling stop for a time when Singapore joined the list of destinations, finally opening up a new route to the Orient which other carriers quickly exploited.

Concorde, though, was doomed to fail. It carried fewer than 130 passengers and routes were quickly pulled because they were not viable, with only New York passing the profitability test. It survived, though, as a charter plane, offering – among others – round-the-world trips that could last up to two weeks to allow for sightseeing.

The actual flight time was around 30 hours. Beat that, Phileas Fogg.



GET YOUR IRISH ON IN THE KITCHEN

St. Patrick's Day may mark the national day of Ireland, but it is one of the rare holidays that is celebrated throughout the world. Whether it's adorning the colour green all over the body, or drinking generous amounts of stout, everyone loves to get involved in some way. So this year, take advantage of the numerous Irish-inspired recipes, and design the perfect St. Patrick's Day menu.

SODA FARLS

Let's start off with the entree. A little something to whet your appetite. The name may sound fancy, but this traditional Irish soda bread is only different from a normal soda bread as a result of it being more flattened and rounded (not dissimilar in look to a potato scone).

To make four portions, mix 250g plain flour, ½ tsp salt, 1 tsp sugar and 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda in a bowl. Slowly pour 225 ml of buttermilk into the bowl, mixing all the time, until a soft, wet dough forms. Mould this dough into a circle on a floured surface, and cut into quarters. Heat a skillet or heavy-based frying pan over a low-medium heat. Add the bread and cook for 8-10 minutes on each side, and serve with butter.

IRISH STEW

And what better to dip your bread in, than a classic stew. You can use beef or lamb as your meat, as well as any vegetables that are to your liking. But the piece de resistance is Guinness!

After you've browned your meat, and added your veggies (bacon is also great for extra earthiness), add stock and one can of Guinness for the perfect Irish flavour. Then simmer for two hours to ensure that the meat is tender, before removing the lid, and continue to simmer for a final 30 minutes to allow the sauce to reduce to a gravy-like consistency.

COLCANNON

This side dish will pair perfectly, and it's extremely simple to prepare. Fry one savoy cabbage and 140g bacon, and add to 1kg of mashed potatoes. Heat 150ml double cream with 75g of butter, and when it begins to sizzle, add to the potato mix.



IRISH TIRAMISU

If oven space is against you, consider this dish for a boozy twist on this classic Italian delicacy. After whisking four egg whites, keep the yolks aside and add 100g caster sugar to them. Whisk in 500g mascarpone to the yolks, as well as 100ml Irish cream (or more if you prefer!). Then fold in the whites.

Pour 300ml strong instant coffee into a serving dish and top with your mixture. To finish, grate 25g dark chocolate over. Allow the dessert to cool in the fridge overnight, and before serving, dust with cocoa powder.



MAKING THE MOST OF THE CLOCKS GOING FORWARD

27th March marks the point where, after months of dark mornings and evenings, the clocks go forward by an hour, and the brighter seasons can officially begin. So why not take advantage of the longer days, and utilise the mornings and evenings. Here are some of the ways you can use this extended time to improve your health.

TAKE A STROLL

The warmer months are synonymous with beautiful sunrises and sunsets. So make sure you don't miss them! And more than just the beauty of early mornings and evenings, the brighter mornings means more of a chance of being able to see some of the wildlife that makes an appearance in Spring and Summer. Tree bumblebees, which only landed in the UK around a decade ago, are sure to show up in the warmer months, and Chiffchaffs are set to be the first bird-related visitor to the wildlife scene this Summer.

Aside from visual benefits, it is widely known that getting up early boosts not only your brain health, but your heart health as well. On top of this, studies suggest that earlier starts can bring about deeper sleep, due to exercising resulting in an increase in melatonin, the natural sleep hormone.

UP THE EXERCISE

If you're looking to get more active in line with the weather improving, then the warm evenings are the perfect time to go for a run. Not only are you more motivated to exercise during daylight hours, but

exercising after a day of business means that muscle strength and endurance will be greater than in the mornings. A study from SELF magazine also explains that those who choose to work out in the evenings can train up to 20% longer.

CREATE A SCENIC MEAL

And as Summer approaches, a whole new way of eating becomes popular once more. Amongst the foods which are in season right now are fruits such as kiwi and apricots, and vegetables, including asparagus, purple sprouting broccoli, and spring onions - all of which are fine ingredients for a salad, and can pave the way towards a healthier diet.

It's not just the food itself though that's beneficial during this time of year. Making the most of the more pleasant weather, and eating outdoors, can lower blood pressure and heart rate. And through the increase in Vitamin D intake, due to enjoying greater levels of sunlight, this can boost your immune system. And moreover, changing your surroundings just cheers you, and the whole family up, as you look forward to Summer!



MOTHERS' DAY AND INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Women have been on a fascinating journey over the past 100 years, so it's perfectly fitting that there are at least two major days in the year which celebrate their wonderful strength and integrity

Women have been on a fascinating journey over the past 100 years, so it's perfectly fitting that there are at least two major days in the year which celebrate their wonderful strength and integrity

Taking place on 27th March this year, Mothers' Day is a day to celebrate the wonderful work your mother has dedicated her time to for the sake of ensuring you are safe, comfortable and happy. We all know the work of a mother is heroic indeed, and mothers are often considered the superheroes we never speak of, for the efforts and sacrifices a mother makes are very special.

Mothers' Day is an occasion which is celebrated in various parts of the world to express respect, honour, and love towards our mothers, and it's an event to honour the contribution of mothers, acknowledge the efforts of maternal bonds and the role of mothers in our society.

way of honouring the sacrifices mothers made for their children. After beginning her campaign to make Mothers' Day a recognized holiday in 1905, the very first Mothers' Day subsequently took place in 1907 when Jarvis held the first official service of worship at Andrews Methodist Episcopal Church in Grafton, West Virginia. Andrew's Methodist Church now holds the International Mothers' Day Shrine.



Anna Jarvis had been a peace activist who cared for wounded soldiers on both sides of the American Civil War, and created Mothers' Day Work Clubs to address public health issues. She and another peace activist and suffragette, Julia Ward Howe, had been urging for the creation of a "Mother's Day For Peace" where mothers would ask that their husbands and sons were no longer killed in wars.

In 1908, the U.S. Congress rejected a proposal to make Mothers' Day an official holiday, joking that they would also have to proclaim a "Mother-in-law's Day". However, owing to the efforts of Anna Jarvis, by 1911 all U.S. states observed the holiday, with some of them



The official Mother's Day holiday first began in the 1900s as a result of the efforts of Anna Jarvis, daughter of Ann Reeves Jarvis. Following her mother's death in 1905, Anna Jarvis conceived of Mothers' Day as a



officially recognizing Mothers' Day as a local holiday, with the first being West Virginia, Jarvis' home state, in 1910. In 1914, Woodrow Wilson signed a proclamation designating Mothers' Day, held on the second Sunday in May, as a national holiday to honour mothers.

It's an understatement to state that women haven't had it as easy as men throughout the many centuries, particularly throughout the many patriarchal years society has had men at the helm, superseding over women in many respects. Occurring on 8th March this year, International Women's Day is a time to reflect on the wonderful and inspirational progress made by women, to call for even further change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their countries and communities.

The earliest purported Women's Day observance, called "National Woman's Day" originally, was held on February 28, 1909, in New York City, organized by the Socialist Party of America at the suggestion of activist Theresa Malkiel. There have been claims that the day was commemorating a protest by women garment workers in New York on March 8, 1857, but researchers have alleged this to be a myth intended to detach International Women's Day from its socialist origin.

In August 1910, an International Socialist Women's Conference was organized ahead of the general meeting of the Socialist Second International in Copenhagen, Denmark. Inspired in part by the American socialists, German delegates Clara Zetkin, Käthe Duncker, Paula Thiede, and others proposed the establishment of an annual "Women's Day", although no date was specified. The 100 delegates, representing 17 countries, agreed with the idea as a strategy to promote equal rights, including women's suffrage.

The following year, on March 19th, 1911, the first International Women's Day was recognized by over a million people in Austria, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland. In Austria-Hungary alone, there were 300 demonstrations, with women parading on the Ringstrasse in Vienna, carrying banners honouring the martyrs of the Paris Commune. Across Europe, women demanded the right to vote and to hold public office, and protested against employment sex discrimination.

Having been celebrated for just over 100 years now, the message and power of International Women's Day remains two-fold – to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women, and also to mark a call to action for accelerating gender parity.



MARCH THE GARDENING GUIDE

With warmer weather comes a busy month in the garden

With more sun, warmth and longer daylight, March is a month of prep for the garden. All the hard work you put in now, will show in the summer months, and even beyond. Flowers, veg, herbs, trees and lawns will all need some love to ensure perfect harvests and beautiful growth and colour.

March is a month to sow seeds, have a tidy and do some general maintenance to get your gardening looking good, and to ensure health and vigorous growth of flowers, vegetables, herbs, and trees. Seeds can be bought from garden nurseries, online or even from budget shops such as Poundland or B&M, and for more unusual types, online shops have you covered.

Looking after plants when they're young, is a surefire way to ensure healthy plants when they're older. Keep them warm with plenty of light and offer them support when they start to grow by using ice lolly sticks and twine. Keep them moist but not too wet and always ensure they have good drainage wherever they are.

Here is our guide to jobs to do in each part of your garden.

And while your preference may be for either ornate wrought-iron or wood garden furniture, don't skimp on the upholstery: plenty of cushions ... you need to be comfy in that recliner.

If you've chosen a particularly shady spot, there's no need to sweat as lovely, textured greenery such as box, bay or griselinia can create a charming, cool sculptured look, particularly as a backdrop for a dramatic yucca or hebe. And if you want to be really private, a screen of gently swaying bamboo lends a tropical feel, although having said that, they do best in a sunny spot.

At the end of the day, though, this is all about engaging your senses, which brings us on to a water feature. The

sound of running water adds an air of serenity and calm – sorry, leaving the outdoor tap running on to the gravel doesn't cut it – and there are some great value solar-powered fountains on the market.

But if all this talk of amour doesn't float your boat and all you want is a more productive garden, then now is the time to, quite literally, dig in.

Even if the ground is still cold, much can be done – particularly if you have a greenhouse or conservatory – to kickstart the growing season. If conditions allow and the soil is frost free, gently dig over and prepare the area you have earmarked for planting.

This will expose soil pests to cold night-time temperatures and bird predators, giving new plants a better chance to prosper and, if you have moved into a new house, will help identify whether you have inherited a light or heavy soil.

Obviously, a stodgy, clay-based soil will need longer to warm, and this will affect planting plans. But if you discover a light, sandy mixture and live in a mild part of the country you can crack on – after weeding and allowing the soil to settle – by covering the area with clear polythene, cloches or fleece to warm the ground before sowing.

Once you have decided on your crop rotation for the year, then you can sow broad beans, carrots, parsnips, early varieties of beetroot, salad onions, lettuces, radishes, spinach and summer cabbages under the covers, while seed potato tubers can be chitted in the greenhouse.

As for those who want colourful borders in the spring and summer, it's about time to start off summer bedding, such as lobelia and Busy Lizzies, in propagators, giving them a head start before they are big enough to be planted out or in hanging baskets.

THE GARDEN

Keep deadheading daffodils and other spring bulbs but leave the foliage to grow die back naturally.

Roses need pruning early in the month, to prevent diseases and encourage prolific growth and flowering.

Sow hardy annuals such as nasturtiums, opium and Californian poppies and Calendulas in their final spots.

Plant summer-flowering bulbs such as lilies, alliums, begonias and crocosmia in pots and borders.

Tidy up borders ready for the new season and mulch.

Sow native wildflower seeds in a prepared area for pollinators.

Give the lawn its first cut of the year. Don't go too low as the ground could still be wet.



THE HERB GARDEN

Sow basil, oregano, parsley, thyme, sage and other Mediterranean herbs in small pots on a warm, sunny windowsill or in the greenhouse.

Prune overwintered rosemary plants. Cut back the top third of the plant, taking care not to cut into the older woodier looking part of the plant.

Sow mint into pots, or even better use overwintered plants to take root cuttings from. Mint is very invasive, so take control by only growing in pots throughout the season.

Chervil, coriander and dill can be sown directly into soil outdoors now.

THE VEGETABLE GARDEN

If you haven't done already, plant bare-root fruit trees either directly in the garden or into pots.

Plant onions, shallots and garlic sets in rows in your vegetable border. Don't plant them too deep and remember to label them. Chit early and maincrop potatoes.

If it is a warm March you can sow certain vegetable seeds directly in a warm spot in your garden such as carrots, parsnips, lettuces, radishes, spinach, turnips and summer cauliflower.

Now is the time to sow peppers, chillies, tomatoes, cucumbers and aubergines indoors either in a warm, sunny spot or under heat lamps. Sow at least three different varieties of tomatoes and five chillies to ensure a nice mix.



WORLD BOOK DAY

UK AND IRELAND

Reading and writing still matter more than ever, and it's a commodity we should never lose as a nation



World Book Day for UK and Ireland is upon us once again, and it comes at yet another time reading has been particularly prevalent over the course of the last year, with many of us still choosing to stay indoors, warm and cosy over the winter. But this generally means much more reading, and with the rise of technology ever-increasing, it is a gift indeed to find, or rediscover, your passion for the written word.

The international World Book Day annually takes place on 23rd April. This is because the Spanish writer Vicente Clavel Andrés wanted to call for a day which would recognize the life and career of one of his greatest heroes, fellow Spanish author Miguel de Cervantes, who still is widely regarded as the greatest ever writer of the Spanish language. Cervantes death date was 23rd April, which also marks many other great writers' birth and death dates, including William Shakespeare who passed away on exactly the same day as Cervantes, 23rd April 1616. The first official World Book Day was celebrated in 1995 and has been going strong ever since. The United Kingdom decided to start having its own version of World Book Day and this began in 1998, being launched

by Prime Minister Tony Blair at the time at the Globe Theatre in London. During this event, several million schoolchildren in the UK were given a special £1 World Book Day Book Token (€1.50 in Ireland) which could be redeemed against any book in any UK bookshop. A specially created WBD anthology priced at £1 (€1.50 in Ireland) was also published. Since then, World Book Day UK has followed a similar pattern, gradually growing each year to encompass more initiatives, such as Spread The Word, Quick Reads Initiative and Books for Hospitals. Every year, the number of children receiving a World Book Day Book Token has increased.

World Book Day celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2007 with the publication of 10 £1 books. Since then every child in full-time education in the UK and Ireland has been entitled to receive a £1 World Book day Book token every year.

Several million schoolchildren in the UK were given a special £1 World Book Day Book Token (€1.50 in Ireland) which could be redeemed against any book in any UK bookshop.

POLE POSITION

After last season's dramatic conclusion, the 2022 F1 season kicks off this month

Netflix's Formula 1: Drive to Survive has helped people with an F1 shaped hole in their lives since the dramatic conclusion of the 2021 season, however, this month the world's greatest drivers will once again put the pedal to the metal and thrash it out to find out who really is the greatest driver in the world.

Last year, Max Verstappen won his first ever F1 title, stopping Lewis Hamilton from equaling Michael Schumacher's record of five titles in a row. With both drivers in their prime, could we be seeing the dawn of a new iconic rivalry in the sport to compete with Niki Lauda and James Hunts great rivalry?

This season kicks off on the 20th March in Bahrain and stretches 23 races, ending on the 20th November in Abu

Dhabi. A new car has evolved for the season too. The 2022 regulations have one guiding principle which is to allow closer racing through improved aerodynamics using clever features such as wheel covers and over-wheel winglets.

In the drivers' seats, the usual comings and going have occurred. Valtteri Bottas has left Mercedes after five seasons and joined Alfa Romeo while fellow Brit George Russell has joined Hamilton at Mercedes. Ex-Red Bull driver Alex Albon replaces George Russell at a new and improved Williams team, while Red Bull have kept their driver pairing with Max Verstappen and Sergio Perez in the cockpit.

One thing is for sure, this year could see one of the most iconic seasons in F1s history...

F1 CALENDAR 2022



20th March
Bahrain - Sakhir



27th March
Saudi Arabia - Jeddah



10th April
Australia - Melbourne



24th April
Italy - Imola



8th May
USA - Miami



22nd May
Spain - Barcelona



29th May
Monaco - Monaco



12th June
Azerbaijan - Baku



19th June
Canada - Montreal



3rd July
UK - Silverstone



10th July
Austria - Spielberg



24th July
France - Le Castellet



31st July
Hungary - Budapest



28th August
Belgium - Spa



4th September
Netherlands - Zandvoort



11th September
Italy - Monza



25th September
Russia - Sochi



2nd October
Singapore - Singapore



9th October
Japan - Suzuka



23rd October
USA - Austin



30th October
Mexico - Mexico City



13th November
Brazil - Sao Paulo



20th November
Abu Dhabi - Abu Dhabi



GET YOUR CREATIVE JUICES FLOWING

Amid these trying times when adults can feel so easily overwhelmed, the need to step back from the demands at home and at work often becomes necessary. Don't feel guilty for needing some me-time. With the pandemic turning everyone's lives upside down, prioritising your mental health should be a top priority.



There are several things adults can do at home to unplug and relax the mind. Reading a book, meditating, doing yoga, listening to music, or just taking a nice stroll outside are some activities you can engage in. But if you want something that's relaxing but still mentally stimulating, doing arts and crafts have also been proven to be beneficial. Art instils pride. The knowledge that we can create, innovate, think creatively, and make something beautiful can help us feel a sense of accomplishment. This way, engaging in arts and crafts can help boost morale and confidence, which are beneficial emotions when dealing with stress and challenges. So, what have you got to lose? Try out one of the following ideas to connect to your inner crafter.

MOSAIC ORNAMENTS

If you happen to have any broken, scratched, or useless CDs, then you are in luck. Specifically, you start by breaking them apart to create a mosaic effect for just about any art project. Whether you make them to give away as gifts or to hang on your own tree, these creative ornaments are sure to sparkle!

EMBROIDERY

Embroidery is a fantastic way to enjoy mindful crafting, with endless projects that are certain to aid your concentration and help you relax. A classic craft that's easily customised to suit your every idea, embroidery helps you create works of art one stitch at a time. From personalised patches for clothing and accessories to unique gifts and home decor, embroidered designs will add stunning decorative detail to anything you choose. With a few starter stitches, you'll be able to start creating stunning embroidery work. For more advanced work, take your embroidery to the next level by adding dimension with whipped (or threaded) stitches, as well as flowers and other 3D effects. Check out Hobby craft online or YouTube for tutorials on how to create basic or advanced stitches.



prioritising your mental health should be a top priority.

DÉCOUPAGE

The word découpage comes from the French verb découper, "to cut out". The découpage technique can be used to personalise almost any item in your home and the great thing is that the designs can be as simple or as complex as you like. Put simply, découpage involves cutting out pictures, gluing them to an object and then coating the pictures and the object with layers of varnish.

DECOUPAGE: THE BASIC TECHNIQUE

1. Prepare surface

Once you have selected your item to decorate, make sure the surface of it is clean and dust free as the varnish magnifies any imperfections.

2. Cut out pictures

Select your pictures and cut them out. It may be easier to cut out the pictures roughly with scissors first and then cut them out more precisely with a craft knife. If a white edge shows around the picture you have cut out, colour the edge with a crayon/pen that matches either the picture or the background on which it is to be used.

3. Arrange the pictures

Before you glue the pictures in place, ensure you are happy with the positioning. Use tweezers for placing tiny pictures.

4. Glue the pictures in place

Smooth out any wrinkles and wipe away any excess glue with a barely damp sponge.

5. Varnish the pictures.

Ensure the glue is dry before starting to varnish and leave the varnish to dry thoroughly between each coat. Anything from four to 15 coats may be needed depending on how thick the decoupage paper is and how smooth and durable a finish is required. To achieve a finely lacquered finish you will need to sand lightly after a few layers of varnish and wipe away all dust. Keep repeating this process until you are happy with the finish.

Check out craft groups in your local area to connect with fellow crafters or simply use your crafting time as 'me time'!



Kestrel Cottage, Gayton Road

£290,000



Semi-detached three bedroom character cottage situated in the Norfolk village of East Winch. Originally built circa 1852 and since extended, the property offers garage, gardens, parking, conservatory, open fireplace and UPVC double glazing. Viewing highly recommended.

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Brandon Road, Watton

£225,000



Three bedroom end terrace character cottage with flintwork frontage conveniently situated within easy reach of Watton town centre. The property boasts a kitchen/dining room, garden/utility room, freestanding garage to rear, gardens and parking. Viewing highly recommended.

Sydney Dye Court, Sporle

£219,995



Well presented, modern detached bungalow situated in the popular Norfolk village of Sporle. Built in approximately 2004 the property offers recently fitted luxury bathroom suite, parking, gardens and UPVC double glazing. Viewing is highly recommended.

Southlands, Swaffham

£270,000



CHAIN FREE!! A detached two bedroom bungalow situated on the sought after Southlands development in the market town of Swaffham. The property offers garage, parking, gardens, kitchen/dining room, gas central heating and UPVC double glazing. Viewing is highly recommended.

Westfields, Narborough

£290,000



CHAIN FREE! A detached three bedroom bungalow with two reception rooms, situated in the popular Norfolk village of Narborough. The property benefits from garage, parking, gardens, en-suite shower room and UPVC double glazing. Viewing is highly recommended.

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Giffords, Newton By Castle Acre

OIEO £500,000



Very well presented, detached four bedroom bungalow situated in a riverside location with the River Nar flowing across the bottom of the garden in Newton near Castle Acre. The property offers an en-suite shower room, kitchen/dining room, double garage and parking for several vehicles.

Braemar, Litcham Road

£230,000



CHAIN FREE! Very well presented, recently modernised semi-detached cottage situated in the popular Norfolk village of Great Dunham. Oozing character and charm the property benefits from modern bathroom and kitchen with original features a plenty, en-suite, separate garden and garage.



Oulton Close, Swaffham

£260,000



A detached three bedroom chalet style house with two reception rooms plus a conservatory situated in a popular area of Swaffham on the edge of the town. The property also benefits from well maintained gardens, garage and ample parking. Viewing is highly recommended.

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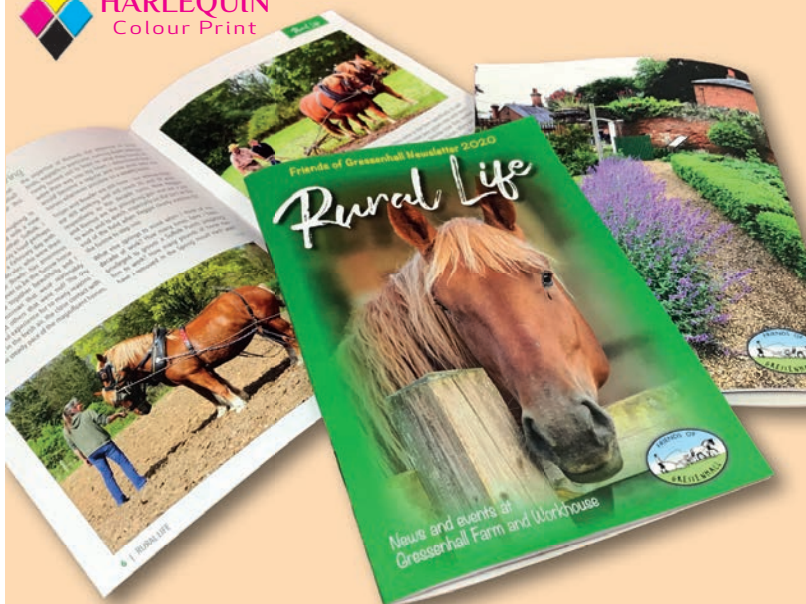
Barrows Hole Lane, Little Dunham

£395,000



NO CHAIN! A non estate detached bungalow set on a generous plot within a sought after location. The property boasts three double bedrooms, kitchen/dining room and detached garage. Viewing is highly recommended!

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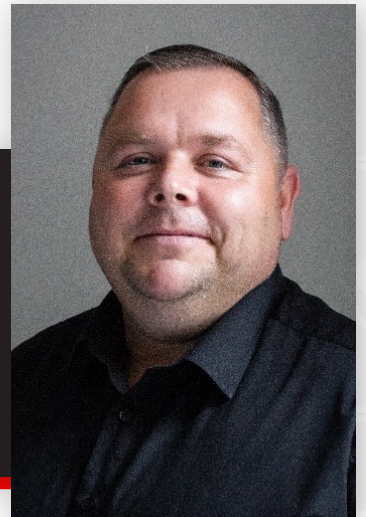


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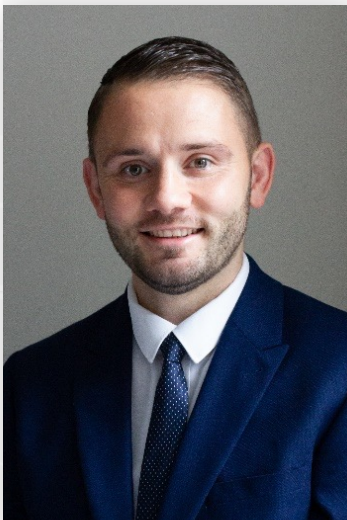
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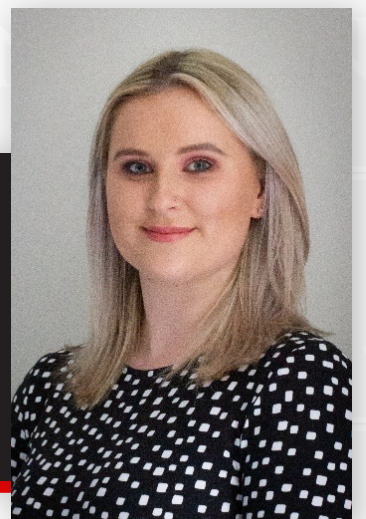
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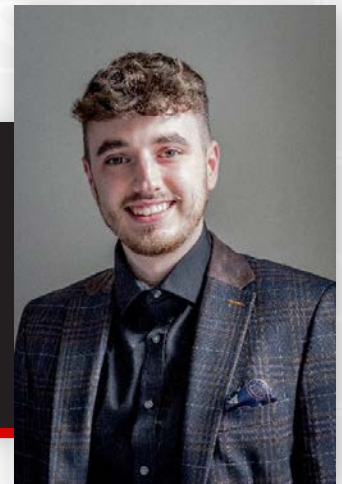
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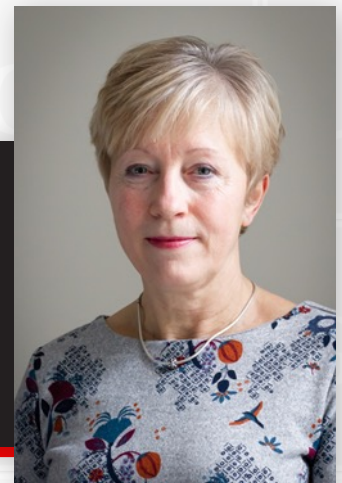
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Present your house for sale by de-cluttering...

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 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!



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 £125,000. For first-time buyers, you'll get a discount as long as the purchase price is £500,000 or less.

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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