

FINDING THE BEST APARTMENT FOR YOU & MOVING TIMETABLE / CHECKLIST

Introduction

Finding your perfect apartment is a process that requires time & research, so start early. We hope you choose GreenRidge on Euclid but whether you choose GreenRidge on Euclid or not, this E-book is a valuable guide.

If your moving timetable is shorter than the one in this checklist, don't panic. Just use this list as a guideline to keep you on track & adjust the weeks to match your deadline.

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Moving Tips

Packing

- Take your time packing. A little organization will save you a lot of time later.

Use plenty of boxes

- It's better to have several smaller, lighter boxes than a few cumbersome, heavy ones.

Label everything!

- Number the boxes on top & on each side
- Mark what room each box should be placed in at your new home.
- Create a list of the numbered boxes & their contents for easy inventory.
- Make sure you keep a copy of the inventory list with you.

Hire a pro

- Professional movers will make life easier.
- Your moving company also should help you with inventory.

Setting A Budget:

The rent might seem affordable - but what utilities are included? Are there additional charges for water & sewer? Who pays for heat & hot water? Is the gas or electric used by the range included? Are the appliances & lights energy efficient? The cost for these items can be significant.

Common Rule: Do Not Let Your Rent Exceed 30% Of Your Monthly Income.

At many apartment communities renters are expected to pay for (or there is an additional charge for) some utilities. If these items are not included in the rent typical costs in the Cleveland area would be:

Water & Sewer	\$35 per month per person
Gas Heat	\$80 per month (depending on outside temperature) x 8 months
Hot water	\$15 per month per person
Electricity	\$60 per month in winter (assuming gas heat add \$300 or more if electric heat), \$150 per month in summer with A/C use
Cooking Gas	\$30
Trash Removal	\$35 per month
Total	\$255 to \$415 per month

So paying for the above utilities could cost you an additional \$255 to \$415 each month, in some apartment communities.

Deciding On The Location & Type Of Apartment Community:

There are so many apartment communities to choose from - there are advantages & disadvantages to each. The following summary will help you narrow your search.

Location:

City Center:

Advantages:

Close to night life, sports venues, & cultural activities such as theaters & museums. If you work in the downtown area being close to your job could be a plus.

Disadvantages:

EXPENSIVE. Rent for a downtown apartment can often be double that of an apartment a few miles away. Generally, downtown apartments include few if any utilities & have few amenities. Lastly, PARKING CAN BE EXPENSIVE. It is not unusual for indoor parking (*if you can get it*) to be between \$150 & \$200 per month. The outdoor lots may be well over \$130 per month. Lastly, shopping for almost anything other than basic groceries will require a trip to a suburban shopping center.

Urban:

Advantages:

The affordable alternative to 'downtown', close enough to the night life, sports venues, & cultural activities that you can easily enjoy them, but without the high downtown rents. Many apartments will have balconies & include a number of utilities in the rent & rent is generally less than apartments in the suburbs. Some have many additional amenities. PARKING IS ALMOST ALWAYS FREE (generally there is a charge for indoor parking). Whether you work downtown or in the suburbs commuting is easy. As for shopping, most things can easily be found nearby & the few specialty items not found nearby are minutes away in the suburbs

Disadvantages:

If you work downtown parking will be \$130+ per month.

Suburban:

Advantages:

Most apartment communities have many amenities & generally, some

utilities are included in the rent. Very convenient for shopping, everything you would need is available nearby. Most suburban school systems are rated higher than those in urban areas.

Disadvantages:

You're in the suburbs, you have none of the benefits of downtown living & because you're in an area that's fully developed, you have none of the advantages that a rural community can offer. If you choose a two or three story 'walk up' building, getting everything from furniture to groceries up stairs can be a chore. If you work downtown you will experience Cleveland's version of a rush hour, & parking will be \$130+ per month.

Rural:

Advantages:

Peaceful. Some folks just love the country. Almost all apartment communities will consist of two & three story 'walk up' buildings. Some rural school systems are rated higher than those in urban areas.

Disadvantages:

You're out in the sticks, far from everywhere, you have none of the benefits of downtown, urban or suburban living, but it's peaceful. If you choose a two or three story 'walk up' building, getting everything from furniture to groceries up stairs can be a chore. Shopping will almost always involve a trip to the suburbs. If you work downtown or in the suburbs you will need to budget for gas & of course, you get to experience Cleveland's version of a rush hour. Downtown parking will be \$130+ per month.

Property Size & Amenities:

Larger Properties (100+ apartments):

Advantages:

The larger properties will usually have more amenities or extras, such as swimming pools & workout rooms.

Disadvantages:

Often the management style will be less personal & more bureaucratic. The leasing agent or manager may have to go up to their supervisor for authorization to resolve your problems, (this is often the case with properties owned by large companies too). Due to their size, living at a larger property can be impersonal, everyone tends to keep to themselves - some people consider this to be an advantage. A few communities try to resolve this problem by sponsoring occasional social activities.

Smaller Properties (under 100 apartments):

Advantages:

Often the smaller properties will have a more personal, less bureaucratic management style. You are more likely to be remembered as a person, not just a number. Because they are smaller the residents are often more comfortable getting to know each other than residents of larger properties.

Disadvantages:

Fewer amenities.

Judging Apartment Size & Value for Money:

When searching for a new home to rent, it is natural to compare apartments based on the rent & size (usually expressed in square feet). However, this can be deceiving.

First we will deal with size. The actual square footage is far less important than the way the apartment is laid out. For example, if a two bedroom apartment has a 20' x 3' hallway connecting the living room to the bedrooms that's 60 square feet wasted in a hallway. To further complicate things, there is more than one method of measuring square footage, some of which can be deceptive.

The most deceptive method measures from the outside of the outside wall to the middle of any common area hallways.

The second method measures from the outside of the outside wall to the outside of the outside wall. The outside walls can easily be 12" thick. Assuming that a one bedroom apartment has an interior of size of 30'x20', this method of measurement could include 80 unusable square feet. In a typical two bedroom it would be around 124 unusable square feet. If you add space wasted in hallways, etc. a well laid out one bedroom apartment with 600 accurately measured square feet will give you more usable space than a poorly designed, inaccurately measured 740 square foot apartment.

The most honest method measures the interior space only. If the architect made good use of the available space (no long hallways etc.) this method will give you the most accurate picture of usable space & value for money.

Beware, many apartment owners will use the method that makes the apartment appear largest. So when asking about square footage it is a good idea to ask what method of measurement was used to determine the apartment size. If the leasing agent doesn't know or is unsure, it may mean that the property owner or manager doesn't want them to know or say what method was used. Don't be afraid to take 30' tape measure with you.

Recommendations & Review Sites

Take a look at on-line review sites such as www.yelp.com & www.ApartmentRatings.com, www.apartmentReviews.net they are not always representative, but they can be a good way to get a picture of how management cares for residents. Don't worry if there are no reviews, generally, a lack of reviews or lack of bad reviews indicates that the residents did not feel that there was anything to complain about.

Wants Checklist:

Create a checklist of the things that are important to you. Don't fall for the glitz, the apartment may have a giant pool & lots of amenities, but if you are unlikely to use these things ***you don't want to pay for things you'll never use.*** Additionally, if you have a pet & the property does not take pets, or there is no dishwasher, maybe it isn't the place for you. Download or print the form on the following two pages, complete the first column, then copy or print one copy for each apartment community you intend to visit. It will help you narrow your search & keep track of your impressions as you visit different apartment communities.

Property: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Leasing Agent: _____ Date Visited: _____

Location: Downtown Urban Suburban Rural

Monthly Rent: \$ _____ Any utilities included **at no extra charge?**

Heat Water & Sewer Cooking gas Wireless Internet

Must Have	Has/Yes	Item
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pets accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Cats <input type="checkbox"/> Dogs up to _____ lbs. \$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Easy freeway access
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plenty out door parking \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Indoor Parking \$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Close to shopping
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exterior appearance
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intercom controlled entry
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean attractive lobby, hallways etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pleasant leasing agent / manager

Apartment layout & size:	Yes	No	Sq. Ft
Practical layout with no long hallways or wasted space:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Central Air Conditioning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Eat-in Kitchen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sealed cooktop self-cleaning range |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Dishwasher & Disposal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Frost free fridge with extra wide shelves on the door |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ice maker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Pull-out kitchen faucet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Plenty of kitchen cabinets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Pantry for extra kitchen storage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Walk-in Closet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mirrored closet doors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | In-Suite or Central Laundry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Patio or Balcony |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Window coverings provided |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ceiling fan |

Apartment continued:

Must Have	Has/Yes	Item
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fire place
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Energy efficient lighting

General condition of apartment, carpet, appliances & likes / dislikes etc.

Common Areas & Extras:

Must Have	Has/Yes	Item
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Extra storage available
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Indoor swimming pool <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor pool
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Club house / Party / Social room
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work-out room
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tennis court(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Picnic area

Overall Impression:

The Details:

Here are some important questions to consider before filling out the application.

- How much is the application fee? \$ _____
- What is the number of occupants allowed? _____
- Do you need to have renter's insurance? If yes, it will increase your cost. **Y** **N**
- How many days in advance do you need to provide a notice to vacate? _____

Preparation

Get Ready & Give Notice

Check your current lease to see how much advance notice you must give before moving (generally 30-60 days). **Bear in mind that the 30 or 60 day notice period does not begin counting until the next day that rent is due.**

Start Sorting

Before packing everything up, purge, sell or **donate** unwanted items. Be ruthless about this. So if you have not used an item in a year ask yourself if you really need it. Set out two empty boxes; one for things to donate & one for things to toss out.

Round up your records

Make sure you have all your family's important records handy and/or forward them to new providers.

- School
- Bank
- Medical & Dental
- Prescriptions
- Veterinary
- Memberships
- Gym

Moving Timetable Checklist

Six to eight weeks before moving day:

- If you are hiring a moving service, research them before you hire them. Use a service such as www.123movers.com to get quotes & compare.
- Check your current apartment lease to see how much notice you need to give.
- Start gathering moving supplies & moving boxes. Use the free **Weight & Volume Calculator** at www.123movers.com to help determine how many boxes you'll need.
- Give notice to your current apartment management.

Four to five weeks before moving day:

- Begin packing your belongings, starting with the items you use less frequently. Start using up items, such as frozen food or detergent, that you will not want to move.
- If not hiring movers reserve a moving truck for your move.
- Whether you are moving in-state or in town, make arrangements for someone to watch your children & pets on moving day.
- Close any accounts you will not be transferring: savings, checking, safe deposit boxes, p.o. boxes, etc.

Two to three weeks before moving day:

- Return any library books [DVDs, etc.] & collect any items out for repair or cleaning.
- Finalize move-in details with your new apartment.
- Forward your mail; as soon as you know your new addresses, visit the post office or their web site at www.usps.com & forward your mail to your new apartment with an effective date of 3 days before moving day.
- Set up your utilities at your new apartment. If you don't know what utility companies serve the area, ask your management staff to provide their contact information. If your new apartment community does not have a preference in Internet & cable providers, contact all local Internet & cable providers before making a decision. Purchase or rent any equipment needed, such as a router, if the Internet provider does not supply such accessories.

- Cable/Satellite & Phone/Internet
- Electricity
- Water & Sewer
- Gas

The week of the move:

- Confirm appointments with cable or Internet service.
- Order new checks with your new address.
- Clean your apartment & prepare it for the check-out inspection.
- Confirm moving day details with your moving company or truck rental company.
- Withdraw any cash you will need to pay movers & get through travel to your new apartment.
- Pack **Priority Boxes** with the essentials you will need soon after you move, including:

Toilet paper, soap, paper towels & a first aid kit

One mug, plate & set of cutlery per person

Tooth brushes, toiletries, medications & personal items

Bedding & nightclothes

Clothing

Cell phone chargers

Cleaning Supplies

Make a box of cleaning supplies to keep handy if your new apartment needs cleaning

Put the priority boxes on the truck **LAST** so they will be unloaded first.

- Confirm your travel & pet/childcare plans.
- Pack a **Travel bag** with the essentials you will need during the trip, including:
bottled water, medications, snacks & supplies for infants etc.

Moving day – Leaving your old place

- Finish packing.
- Perform any last-minute cleaning so that when your current management does their inspection there will be no deductions for your failure to clean.
- Make sure to give your former management company your new address, so they know where to send your deposit.
- If you are using professional movers, confirm payment method. Some moving companies prefer to be paid in cash on the day of the move, while other companies accept checks or credit cards.
- Prepare a cooler of food & refreshments for everyone. If it's going to be a hot day, pack extra drinks!
- Look after all your living charges: that means your kids, plants, dog or cat. Have someone watch your children or pets during your move, or designate a special area of your residence where they can stay during the move so you can focus on the move, knowing that those in your care are safe & content.

- If you are moving yourself the truck should be snugly packed so items don't shift in transport.
- If you are using a moving company, give the movers any special moving/handling instructions. Review & sign any paperwork when your movers arrive. Make sure that you understand what you are signing, & ask questions if you need to.
- Trade contact information with the movers, so you can get in touch should something happen during transit.
- If you are leaving an apartment turn over your key(s).

Moving in

- Try to arrive at your new apartment at least 1 hour before your moving van.
- Check in with your apartment management & allow at least 1 hour to finalize any paperwork perform an apartment walk-through & get your apartment keys. Clarify which stairs or elevators are available for the move, & any other ground rules you're expected to follow while moving in.
- Check to make sure all your utilities are turned on:
 - Water
 - Power
 - Gas
 - Cable
 - Phone & Internet
- Have your helpers or movers place boxes & furniture directly into the correct rooms. This will save time & effort over the next week or two, as you unpack.
- If you are using a moving company, take note of items as they are unloaded, to make sure nothing was lost or damaged in transit, if so report it right away.
- Pay, thank & tip your movers.
- Unpack enough clothes to get you through the next few days & set up any furniture you will want to use that day, such as beds, chairs, etc.

The Day After Moving Day

- Moving into an apartment is a great time to think 'new & different'. Decorate not only with items you have brought with you, but also new items you buy for your space. Here's a chance to try a new decorating theme, for example.

The first week

- Make a list of those you still have to notify about your move, the following should help.
- The Government**
You only have a certain amount of time after you move to change the address on your driver's license. Get your other IDs updated.

The Board of Elections

Change your voter registration information so that you can vote in your new district.

Show Me The Money

Anyone to whom you give or get money should have your new address. This includes former employer(s), banks, credit card companies, your car insurance company, credit union, student loan lenders & stockbrokers.

Health & Education

Institutions & individuals that provide health & education services to you need to be informed when you move. These include medical insurance companies, doctors' offices, & any schools you or your children attend.

Begin your search for a new primary care doctor (& a veterinarian, if you have pets).

Check your mail to make sure that it is being forwarded correctly.

Map out the best commute to work. Test out a few routes against morning traffic.

Check in with your friends online & let them know about your move.

If at all possible, finish unpacking within the first month. You don't want to be stuck a year later with a box you still haven't opened!

Settling Into Your Community

Check out nearby restaurants & shops. Drive around the neighborhood so that you can familiarize yourself with local stores, schools, pharmacies & libraries. Visit local gyms or recreational facilities for various classes, & check to see what community festivals & events take place, & mark your calendar accordingly.

Getting To Know Your Neighbors

Befriending neighbors can be useful, especially in situations where you may need a helping hand. It can also help you build some great friendships.

A few tips on getting to know neighbors:

Make a small gift bag for a neighbor, such as baked cookies or brownies. This gives you the opportunity to go to your neighbor to strike up a conversation & leaves a lasting, pleasant impression.

Visit the local coffee shop or restaurant regularly. By becoming a 'regular' more people will recognize you, & with time, you will be on your way to building friendships with people in your community.

Consider getting involved with your new neighborhood & community by volunteering. This allows you to find friends within the community, who have the same interests as you.

Building relationships with your neighbors provides you with a safer community & helps you to look out for each other while creating lasting friendships.

For Those With Children

HOW TO TALK TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT MOVING: Q & A

‘Why are we moving?’ When your kids ask questions about moving, be prepared to answer them thoughtfully.

Moving with children is a lot of work for parents, but can be even tougher on kids. Fear of the unknown can bring up a lot of anxiety – & questions.

According to www.Parenthood.com, children focus on the big picture when it comes to moving. They need answers to their questions in order to feel more confident about moving to a new place.

Here are some common questions &, hopefully, wise ways to answer them to help you hold an open dialogue with your children about an upcoming move.

Why are we moving?

The best answer to this question is an honest one. Try to keep your answer simple & straightforward, like ‘your mother got a new job’ or ‘we want to live close to your grandparents. Be sure to highlight positive aspects of the move, such as exploring a new neighborhood or being able to visit grandparents for sleepovers.

If your child shares negative feelings, remain firm in your decision while asking what other questions he or she might have about the move. Discussing the situation thoroughly will help kids become more comfortable with the moving plan.

HELP MAKE MOVING EASIER FOR YOUR KIDS

Where are we moving? When?

Moving with kids needs to be an exact science – as close as you can make it. When your children ask about logistics, share as much information as you can. Time can be a difficult concept for younger children, so mark your moving date on a calendar & check off the days until moving day.

Having a stable home is important to kids, & moving can make them anxious & disruptive. Ease anxiety by showing them where their new home is on a map. Show them photos of their new home & neighborhood. If you’re moving within the same city, taken them to see where they’ll be living & going to school.

What will my new room be like? Will I have my own room?

This question is a great opportunity to get your children excited about the move. Draw or describe the layout of their new room & ask them to help you arrange their furniture or redecorate. Encourage little ones to use their imagination & draw pictures of their dream room.

What about my friends?

The intensity of this question will likely depend on the ages of your children & the distance of the move. Even if they are moving miles away, kids can keep in touch via phone or online chatting. For an across-town move, reassure children that they can visit with their friends again soon (if this is true!).

Teenagers who find themselves changing schools may have a harder time adjusting to the idea of leaving friends behind & making new ones. The teenage years are a challenging time when big changes like a move can temporarily feel like the end of the world. Share sensitive encouragement with kids who seem thrown or depressed by the idea of moving.

What will my new school be like?

One of the scariest things for children moving to a new neighborhood or city is what their school environment will be like. The thought of making new friends, meeting new teachers & learning their way around the building can be overwhelming. Be honest about the things that will be the same about the new school – lunch break, recess, lockers – & the differences – new classmates, teachers & classrooms. If possible, take them to tour the school before they actually start class. The more they can prepare, the less stressful their first day will be.

Your kids may have many more questions than these, so be prepared to answer them all thoughtfully & with a positive attitude. It might be helpful to plan a weekly family meeting where they can discuss any worries or new questions they have, as they come up. The effort you make before the move will make moving day easier for your children & more fun for your whole family!