

Caring for a Loved One's Home

A free starting guide for families facing the responsibility of a loved one's home

*You don't have to figure out where to start.
This guide will help with that.*



A free guide

Before you begin

Taking care of a loved one's home can feel like too much at once.

There are rooms full of belongings. Mail is still coming in. Family may be asking questions. You are already making difficult decisions while also trying to care for a home that still needs attention.

This guide will help you take the first steps, protect important items, and avoid rushing into decisions that are hard to undo.

Work through one section at a time. Stop when you need to. Come back when you are ready.

You do not have to finish today or in a week. You just need a clear plan.

A NOTE ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This free guide helps you get started. It shows what to protect first, what not to rush, and how to begin sorting the home with more care.

For the full step-by-step process, Erejuve offers paid guides with room-by-room checklists, family decision pages, timelines, and move-out and home closure support.

Personal Use Notice

This is for personal use by the purchaser and their immediate household only. You may print this checklist for your own use while tending to a loved one's home.

To support our work and help us continue providing these guides, we ask that you use this copy for your personal household only. Please direct others interested in a copy to our website.

Disclaimer

This checklist is not legal, financial, tax, medical, mental health, or estate planning advice. It is for general educational and organizational purposes only. For questions about wills, estates, taxes, property, inheritance, probate, safety, medical concerns, mental health, or legal authority, contact the appropriate licensed professional.

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1 THE FIRST 24–48 HOURS

When you first walk through the door, do not start sorting or making decisions. Do these things first. They protect the home, the family, and everything important inside. Before you begin, remember this: packing, sorting, and relocating are not the same job. Knowing the difference can save time, prevent repeated work, and reduce family confusion.

Stabilize the home

- Lock all doors, windows, and gate entries
- Gather every key — family, neighbors, caregivers
- Remove hidden spare keys from porches or doormats
- Write down who currently has access to the home
- Change locks if access is uncertain
- Set the thermostat — protect from heat, cold, or humidity
- Remove spoiled food from fridge, freezer, and counters
- Check for running water, leaks, or appliances left on
- Make sure pets are safe and being cared for
- Take photos of every room **before** touching anything

Notify the people who need to know today

These should not wait. Contact each one within the first 48 hours. These calls help protect the home and prevent confusion later. Many of these can be handled online, but the goal is the same: protect the home, control access, and prevent confusion later.

- Immediate family members who need to be contacted
- Executor or estate representative
- Landlord, property manager, or mortgage holder
- Homeowner's insurance company
- Utility companies
- Home security company — update access
- Post office — set up mail hold or forwarding
- A trusted neighbor who should know the home is vacant

Do not do these yet - Do not start here

The first 48 hours are for securing and photographing — not sorting. It is okay to wait before making decisions about belongings.

- Do not bring trash bags into the home yet
- Do not start donating or discarding anything
- Do not let anyone grab items without a plan
- Do not sort through clothing, papers, or drawers
- Do not throw away any mail or paperwork
- Do not make verbal promises about who gets what

The most common regret families have is moving too fast in the first few days. Slow down. Everything else can wait. Almost nothing can be undone after it is given away or discarded. The goal is to secure the home, slow the process down, and prevent important items from being lost too soon.

2 A SIMPLE WAY TO PRIORITIZE

Once the home is secure, while everything may feel significant right now, most tasks can wait and need to wait.

Use these four groups to decide what needs attention now and what can wait. This keeps you from spending your first energy on the wrong things.

The rhythm: Start with Urgent. Protect Important. Set aside Personal. Leave Later for later.

Urgent — handle first

Anything with a deadline, safety concern, or access issue. This includes bills due soon, leases, utilities, medications, vehicles, property access, pets, and anything that could cause problems if ignored.

Personal — handle with care

Photos, letters, clothing, keepsakes, handwritten notes, and items tied to memory. Do not rush these. Set them aside before you start clearing ordinary household items.

Important — make a plan

Papers, policies, account information, insurance documents, titles, keys, and family communication. These items are important, but they do not all need to be solved today. Put them in one safe place and come back to them with a clear head.

Later — lowest priority

Duplicate household items, extra furniture, general storage, donation runs, and things that do not need your first energy. These can wait until the home is stable and the important items have been protected.

3 WHAT NOT TO RUSH

Before anything is donated, sold, packed, or thrown away, **slow down**.

Important things are often found in ordinary places: coat pockets, old envelopes, books, drawers, purses, boxes, freezers, closets, and storage bins. Families often find cash, keys, documents, passwords, jewelry, photos, and small keepsakes in places that did not look important at first. The rule is simple:

*Open everything before you discard it. Check every pocket before you donate it. Read every piece of paper before you shred it. If you are unsure, set it aside.
You can always decide later. You cannot undo something once it is gone.*

Clothing and personal accessories

Check pockets, purses, wallets, bags, coat linings, jewelry boxes, and anything they carried often. Look for cash, keys, notes, cards, receipts, small keepsakes, and personal documents.

Books, paper, and mail

Important documents, handwritten notes, and financial information turn up in unexpected places throughout the home.

Containers, drawers, and storage areas

Small boxes, old tins, locked cabinets, and drawers in every room deserve a careful look before anything is cleared.

Devices and digital items

Phones, computers, and storage drives may contain photos, contacts, passwords, and account access that *cannot* be recovered once the device is gone.

This guide helps you start carefully. The paid checklist gives you the full room-by-room path so nothing gets missed.

4 YOUR FIRST-WEEK STARTING CHECKLIST

Use this checklist as you work through the home. You do not have to finish everything in a rush. Return, as needed, to check what has already been handled and what still needs attention.

Week one — secure and orient

- Home stabilized — locks, access, thermostat, utilities checked
- Key people contacted — family, estate representative, insurance, landlord, or property manager
- Photos taken of every room before sorting begins
- Mail collected and held — nothing discarded yet
- Important papers located and set aside (e.g., legal, financial, property, etc.)
- Insurance, account, and household papers gathered
- One secure area created for important items found
- Phones, computers, and tablets set aside for review
- Unrecognized keys kept — not discarded

As you continue through the home

- Time-sensitive tasks are *identified* and handled first
- Personal and sentimental items are separated before clearing
- Everything is opened and checked before discarding
- Unsure items are placed in a “Decide Later” area
- Nothing is shredded or thrown away without a second look
- One person keeping track of updates and family communication
- Family item requests are written down - no verbal agreement.
- A clear deadline set for requests and pickups
- Major decisions are written down so no one has to rely on memory
- Disputed items are held until there is a clear agreement

REMEMBER

The goal of the first week is not to clear the entire home. It is to protect, create order, make a plan, and ensure the next decision is clear. Moving carefully protects the home, the family, and the decisions still ahead.

When you're ready

This free guide helped you take the first steps. When you are ready for the full process, Erejuve's paid guides give you a complete room-by-room path, family decision tools, move-out and home closure support.

★ \$39.99 The Complete Care Bundle — Best Value

For families who want the full process in one place.

Includes the Starter Checklist, the Workbook, and the Move-Out and Home Closure Checklist. Use this bundle when you want support from the first walkthrough to the final handover — including sorting, family requests, decision pages, timelines, donation, selling, and move-out tracking. *The Move-Out and Home Closure checklist (\$14.99 value) is bundle-exclusive only.*

\$9.99 The Starter Checklist

Room-by-room action path.

The checklist includes the first 48 hours, searching the home, sorting belongings, and deciding what needs attention first. Choose this when you need a clear path before anything starts leaving the home.

\$24.99 The Workbook

Family decisions and guidance.

Covers family roles, disagreements, sentimental items, timelines, and harder conversations. Includes worksheets, trackers, and decision guides. Choose this if you need more support navigating the decisions inside the process.

All available at erejuve.com

You do not have to make every decision at once.

We are here to support you.
