LIVING NEAR DURHAM NC

IS IT TIME TO DOWNSIZE?

A thoughtful guide to simplifying your home, protecting what matters, and planning your next chapter.

THIS IS NOT A GUIDE ABOUT GIVING THINGS UP.

It is a guide to deciding what you want more of—more ease, more freedom, more financial breathing room, or simply a home that fits the life you live now.

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A NOTE FROM KERRY

Downsizing is a life decision—not just a real estate decision.

For many homeowners, the idea begins quietly. A room goes unused. The yard feels harder to keep up. Stairs become less convenient. Travel sounds more appealing than another weekend of maintenance.

That does not automatically mean it is time to move. It simply means your home deserves an honest review: Is it still supporting the life you want, or has caring for it started to shape your life more than you would like?

I created this guide to help you think through that question without pressure. You may decide to move soon, make changes and stay, or revisit the idea next year. All three can be good answers.

PERMISSION TO TAKE YOUR TIME

You do not need to sort every closet, choose your next home, and put a sign in the yard all at once. Good downsizing decisions are usually made in stages.

What this guide will help you do

- Recognize the signs that your current home may no longer fit
- Picture the life and home you want next
- Think through costs, proceeds, timing, and practical tradeoffs
- Make sorting and preparing feel manageable
- Choose a comfortable next step—even if that step is simply gathering information

Warmly,

Kerry Johnson

RE/MAX Premier Realty

START WITH DAILY LIFE

Seven signs your home may no longer fit

1. **Much of the home is unused.** You regularly live in only a few rooms while paying to heat, cool, clean, insure, and maintain the rest.

2. **Maintenance is taking too much energy.** Repairs, landscaping, cleaning, or seasonal upkeep feel like a burden rather than a reasonable routine.

3. **The layout is becoming inconvenient.** Stairs, narrow bathrooms, laundry placement, or exterior steps make everyday tasks harder.

4. **You want more flexibility.** Travel, family time, hobbies, or spontaneous plans are often limited by the responsibilities of the property.

5. **Housing costs feel out of proportion.** Taxes, insurance, utilities, and maintenance are using money you would rather direct elsewhere.

6. **Your location no longer serves you.** You would prefer to be closer to family, health care, shopping, friends, or the activities you enjoy.

7. **You keep imagining something simpler.** The thought of a smaller, easier home brings relief more often than sadness.

ONE SIGN IS NOT A VERDICT

Look for a pattern. The strongest signal is often not the size of the house—it is the amount of time, money, or energy the house asks from you.

CONSIDER EVERY OPTION

Could the right answer be to stay?

Downsizing is only one way to make life easier. Before deciding to sell, compare moving with practical changes that could make your present home work better.

Changes that may make staying realistic

- Move daily living to one floor
- Convert a tub to a walk-in shower or add grab bars
- Hire lawn, cleaning, or handyman help
- Create a smaller, lower-maintenance yard
- Improve lighting and simplify storage
- Close off or repurpose rooms you no longer use

Questions worth asking

☐ Would these changes solve the real problem—or postpone it?

☐ What would the improvements cost, and how long do I expect to stay?

☐ Can I comfortably manage the home if my mobility or energy changes?

☐ Does this location still fit my social, medical, and family needs?

☐ Am I staying because I love the home, or because moving feels overwhelming?

A HELPFUL DISTINCTION

If the home can be adapted and you still love the location, staying may be the best choice. If the property, costs, and location all feel out of step, a move may create more lasting relief.

YOUR NEXT CHAPTER

Design the life first. Choose the home second.

It is easy to begin with square footage and bedrooms. A better starting point is the way you want an ordinary Tuesday to feel.

I would like to spend less time on...

I would like to have more time or money for...

The people and places I want nearby are...

What might fit next?

OPTION	WHAT IT MAY OFFER
Smaller single-family home	Privacy and familiarity with less space or yard.
Townhome or patio home	Lower exterior maintenance; check fees and rules.
Condo	Lock-and-leave convenience; shared building decisions.
One-level country or small-town home	Accessibility and calm, with location and upkeep to weigh.
55+ or active-adult community	Amenities and built-in community; compare fees and restrictions.
Closer to family	More connection and support; consider your own routines too.

THE FINANCIAL PICTURE

Look beyond the sale price

A smaller home is not automatically less expensive. The goal is to understand the full before-and-after picture and decide whether the move supports your priorities.

Estimate what the current home may provide

- ☐ Likely market value—not an online estimate alone
- ☐ Mortgage or home-equity balances
- ☐ Selling costs and possible repairs
- ☐ Moving, storage, donation, and estate-sale costs
- ☐ Estimated net proceeds after the sale

Compare the ongoing cost of the next home

- ☐ Purchase price or rent
- ☐ Property taxes and homeowners insurance
- ☐ HOA or community fees
- ☐ Utilities and routine maintenance
- ☐ Transportation, health-care access, and services
- ☐ Renovations, accessibility improvements, or new furnishings

BRING IN THE RIGHT PROFESSIONALS

A real estate agent can help with value and market timing. A financial or tax professional can help you understand capital-gains rules, retirement income, estate planning, and how proceeds may affect your broader plan.

This guide offers general planning information and is not legal, tax, or financial advice.

A GENTLER APPROACH

Sort your belongings without letting them stop you

The belongings are often more emotional than the real estate. Begin before you feel rushed, and work in short sessions that protect your energy.

Use four simple destinations

KEEP Useful, loved, and suitable for the next home.

GIVE Specific items intended for family or friends.

DONATE / SELL Good items that can serve someone else.

RELEASE Broken, expired, duplicated, or no longer meaningful.

Make it manageable

- Start with low-emotion spaces such as a linen closet or pantry
- Set a 20- or 30-minute timer and stop before you are exhausted
- Choose one drawer, shelf, or category—not an entire room
- Photograph sentimental objects before releasing them
- Give family members a clear pickup deadline
- Create one small box for items you cannot decide about yet

A USEFUL QUESTION

If I were choosing this item for the life and home I want next, would I bring it with me?

SELLING THOUGHTFULLY

Prepare the home without over-improving it

A downsizing seller rarely needs to renovate everything. The smartest preparation is based on the home, the likely buyer, current competition, and the expected return—not a generic list from the internet.

Usually worth addressing

- Safety or active maintenance issues
- Leaks, moisture, damaged flooring, or obvious defects
- Deep cleaning and odor removal
- Overgrown landscaping and a welcoming entrance
- Excess furniture that makes rooms feel smaller
- Burned-out bulbs and dark spaces

Pause before spending heavily on

- A full kitchen or bathroom renovation
- Replacing finishes simply because they are not current
- Major landscaping projects
- Repairs that a buyer may prefer to choose or negotiate

THE FIRST STEP IS A WALK-THROUGH

Before hiring contractors, ask for a room-by-room preparation plan. It can separate what truly matters from work that is unlikely to improve your result.

THERE IS MORE THAN ONE PATH

Choose a timeline that protects your peace of mind

The best sequence depends on your finances, local market conditions, and how much uncertainty feels comfortable.

1 EXPLORE	Learn the current home's likely value. Tour possible next-home options. Compare monthly costs.
2 PLAN	Choose a likely move window. Consult financial or legal professionals if needed. Begin light sorting.
3 PREPARE	Complete priority repairs and cleaning. Decide what moves, sells, goes to family, or is donated.
4 MOVE & SELL	Coordinate possession, movers, utilities, closing, and the transition into the next home.

Common sequencing choices

- Buy first, then sell: more moving flexibility, but requires financial capacity
- Sell first, then buy: clearer budget, but may require temporary housing
- Coordinate both: efficient when it works, but more moving parts
- Sell with negotiated timing: options may include a longer closing or temporary possession, when appropriate

PERSONAL WORKSHEET • PART 1

Am I ready to downsize?

Mark the answer that feels most true today. There is no passing score—this is simply a way to notice where you feel clear and where you need more information.

STATEMENT	YES	MAYBE	NO
My home requires more upkeep than I comfortably want to manage.	☐	☐	☐
I use only a portion of my current space.	☐	☐	☐
A different layout would make daily life easier.	☐	☐	☐
I can picture benefits that matter to me—not only things I would lose.	☐	☐	☐
I have a general idea of where or how I would like to live next.	☐	☐	☐
I am willing to begin sorting belongings in small stages.	☐	☐	☐
I have people or professionals I can ask for practical support.	☐	☐	☐

READ YOUR PATTERN

Mostly yes: you may be ready to explore concrete options. Mostly maybe: gather information without committing. Mostly no: staying may be right for now—or the emotional and practical pieces may need more time.

PERSONAL WORKSHEET • PART 2

My next-chapter decision page

The three things I most want from my next home are…

___

___

___

The three things I would miss most about my current home are…

___

___

___

The biggest practical question I need answered is…

___

___

The biggest emotional concern I want to honor is…

___

___

My comfortable next step

- ☐ Do nothing yet and revisit this guide on: ____________
- ☐ Ask for an informal home-value and preparation conversation
- ☐ Tour a few smaller homes to learn what feels right
- ☐ Talk with a financial, tax, estate, or legal professional
- ☐ Begin one 20-minute sorting session each week
- ☐ Create a family conversation about timing and support

A CALM NEXT STEP

You do not have to decide everything today.

A first conversation can be just that: a conversation. You can learn what your home may be worth, what buyers are responding to, which improvements matter, and what smaller-home options exist—without agreeing to list your home.

A NO-PRESSURE PLANNING VISIT CAN INCLUDE

A realistic value range • A room-by-room preparation plan • Likely selling costs and timing • A conversation about where you might go next • A written list of next steps you can complete at your own pace

How I help

I help homeowners throughout Roxboro, Person County, Durham, Hillsborough, and the surrounding communities make thoughtful real estate decisions. My approach is practical, patient, and centered on the life you are trying to create—not simply the transaction in front of us.

Whether you decide to move this season, next year, or not at all, you deserve useful information and room to make the decision that feels right.

Kerry Johnson

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SMALL TOWNS. OPEN SPACES. BETTER LIVING.