

A GUIDE FOR HOMEOWNERS IN MISSISSAUGA & OAKVILLE

The Right-Sized Move

How to downsize without losing your mind, your money, or your relationship with your kids.



GAIL REEVES REID

Broker | eXp Realty

gailsellshouses.com | 416-540-8681

You've been thinking about this for a while.

You remember when you got the keys to this house. You couldn't believe how much room there was. Bedrooms for the kids. A spare room for guests. A backyard big enough for the dog and the BBQ and the swing set you put together over a weekend.

That was a different life.

Now the kids' rooms aren't the kids' rooms anymore. The yard you couldn't wait to get to in spring is mostly a list of things waiting to be done. The stairs feel longer than they used to. The driveway needs sealing again. The deck needs staining again. The roof has another five years in it, maybe.

You pull into the driveway and your shoulders tighten before you've even unlocked the door.

This house, full of memories, no longer fits the life you actually want to live.

And maybe this isn't even about you. Maybe it's your mom. Or your dad. Or both. Maybe you've tried to bring it up and it didn't go well. Maybe they're ready and you're not. Maybe you're ready and they're not. Maybe nobody's ready and the situation is starting to decide for you.

Either way, you don't know where to start.

That's why I put this together.

It's not a sales pitch. It's not 87 pages of generic advice. It's the same five-step process I walk every client through, written so you can read it at your kitchen table with a coffee.

I call it The Right-Sized Move.

It's built for Mississauga and Oakville. It's built for Ontario law and the Canadian market. And it's written so either you or someone who loves you can pick it up and find exactly what they need.

Take your time with it. There's no rush. That's kind of the whole point.

— Gail

This guide works two ways.

Downsizing looks different depending on whose hands are on the wheel. Maybe it's yours. Maybe it's your parents'. Maybe it's both.

This guide is built for both of you.



The Homeowner

You've lived here for years.
You want a clear-eyed look at
your options on your terms.

READ EVERY SECTION



The Adult Child

You're helping a parent
navigate this. Read the orange
boxes in each step.

LOOK FOR THE | ICON

How to use it

There are five steps. Each one builds on the last. You don't have to do them all at once. Most of my clients spend a few months in Steps 1 and 2 before they list anything.

In every step you'll find:

- What the step is and why it comes when it does
- Questions worth sitting with before moving on
- Things you can actually do this week
- A separate orange box with notes for adult children helping a parent

The five steps



First, the questions everyone asks.

Before we get into the steps, here are the five questions I get asked most often. If you've been turning any of these over in your head, you're not alone.

Q: When is the right time to downsize?

A: Earlier than most people think. The wrong time is after a fall, after a hospital stay, after a death in the family. The right time is while you still have the energy to make a thoughtful choice. While you can enjoy the next home, not just survive in it. While the market is steady. If you're already asking the question, you're probably already in the right window.

Q: How much equity will I unlock by downsizing in Mississauga or Oakville?

A: Depends on your home, what you choose next, and what it costs to get from one to the other. A rough rule: budget 6 to 8 percent of your sale price for total transaction costs, then subtract the price of your next place. Most of my Mississauga and Oakville clients end up with somewhere between \$400,000 and \$900,000 in usable equity. Yours could be more or less. I'm happy to run the actual numbers with you.

Q: Will I owe capital gains tax when I sell my home?

A: If this has been your principal residence the whole time you've owned it, the principal residence exemption applies and you generally don't pay capital gains tax in Canada. You still have to report the sale on your tax return. If you've ever rented part of it out, or it wasn't your

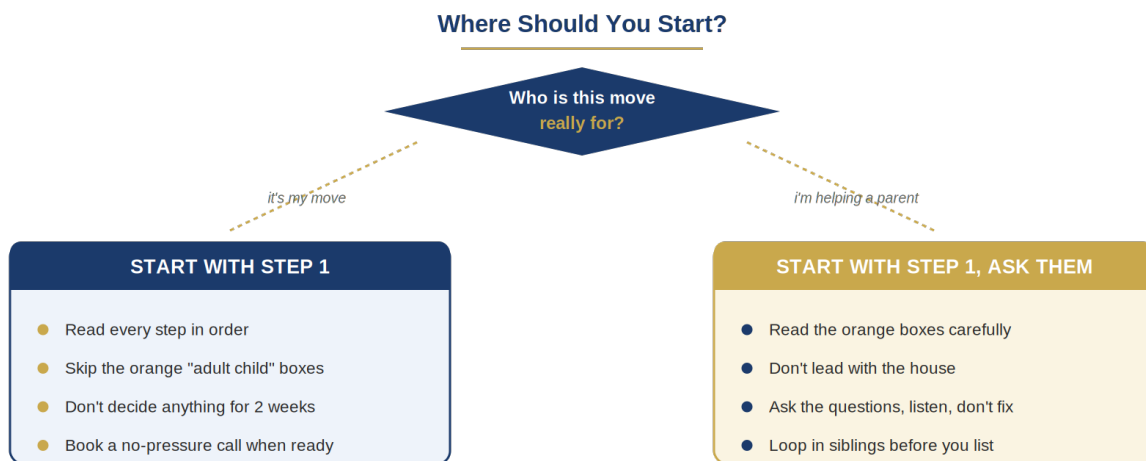
primary home for a stretch, things get more complicated. Talk to your accountant before you list.

Q: Should I sell my current home before buying the next one?

A: There's no universal right answer. Sell first and you know your budget, but you might be scrambling for somewhere to live. Buy first and you know where you're going, but you're carrying two properties if your sale takes a while. The right call depends on the market the day we're sitting down to plan it. We'll figure it out together when we get there.

Q: How do I talk to my parents about downsizing without it turning into a fight?

A: Don't lead with the house. Lead with what they want their life to look like. More time with the grandkids. Less yard work. One less thing to worry about. The house is downstream of that conversation. And don't make it a one-time talk. It's a series of small ones, over weeks or months. Your goal isn't to convince them. It's to listen long enough that they can make the decision themselves. Step 1 of this guide goes deeper on this.



STEP 1 REFLECT

Before you sort a single drawer or call a single agent.

Most people start downsizing in the wrong place. The basement. The garage. That cupboard with the chipped mugs from 1987.

They start with the stuff.

That's why so many downsizing efforts stall out two weekends in. The stuff is overwhelming, and worse, it doesn't tell you anything about what you actually want next.

So we don't start there. We start with the life.

Sit with these for a week or two

You don't have to answer them today. Read them, leave them alone, come back to them. Talk them over with the person closest to you.

- What does my ideal week look like a year from now? Five years from now?
- What about my current home is making my life harder right now?
- What about my current home would I genuinely miss?
- If I freed up equity from this house, what would I actually do with it? Travel? Help the kids? A retirement cushion? Healthcare down the road?
- Where do I want to be? Same neighbourhood? Closer to family? Somewhere new?
- What kind of place feels right? Bungalow, townhouse, condo, retirement community? What does each one give me, and what does each one cost me?
- Who's part of this decision with me? And have I actually talked to them about it?

TIP **A reframe that helps**

You're not getting rid of a house. You're choosing a life. The next home should fit the life you want, not the life you've already lived.

FOR ADULT CHILDREN **If you're helping a parent through this**

Your parents need to answer these questions. Not you. The hardest part of helping a parent downsize is sitting on your hands when you can already see the answer.

Try this. Ask the questions. Listen. Write down what they say. Don't argue. Don't problem-solve in the moment. Don't fix anything. Just listen.

Most resistance to downsizing isn't really about the house. It's about feeling like the decision is being taken away. The more your parent feels heard, the more likely they are to move forward on their own.

Things you can do this week

- Write down your top three reasons for considering a move.
- Write down your top three concerns or fears about it.
- Have one conversation with the person closest to you about what you both want next.
- If parents are involved: schedule a no-pressure conversation. Coffee at the kitchen table. Not a meeting.
- Don't decide anything yet.

STEP 2 **RIGHT-SIZE**

Match the next home to the next life. Not the other way around.

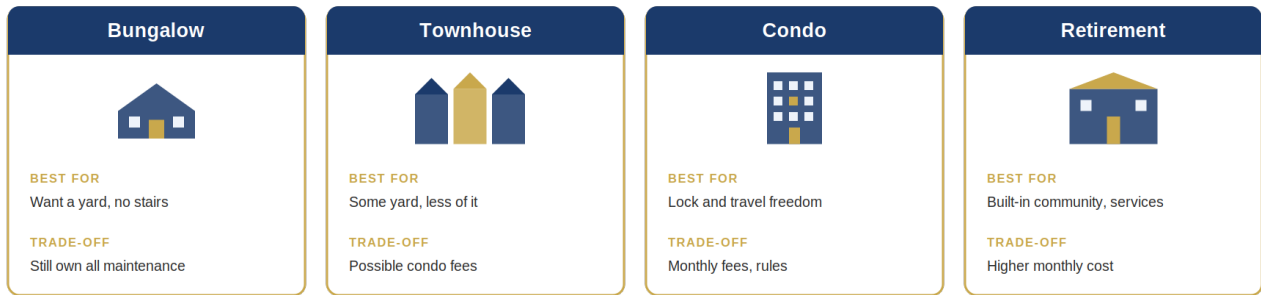
Once you know what you want your life to look like, the next home gets a lot easier to choose. This is where "somewhere smaller" turns into a specific picture you can actually walk into.

The four big choices

1. What kind of place

Most of my Mississauga and Oakville downsizers end up in one of four kinds of homes. Each one trades something for something else.

Four Common Paths in Mississauga & Oakville



Quick read on each:

- **Bungalow on a smaller lot.** If you still want a yard and a garage but can't do the stairs anymore, this is probably your spot. Catch: you still own the maintenance and the property tax bill. Bungalows in good condition in our area sell fast. Inventory is tight.
- **Townhouse or freehold townhouse.** Some yard, less of it. Some condo townhouse complexes handle the snow, the lawn, and the exterior. Read the fees and what they cover before you sign anything.
- **Condo apartment.** Lock the door and go to Florida for three months. That's the appeal. The trade is monthly fees, occasional special assessments, and someone else's rules. Port Credit, Cooksville, and Oakville's Bronte and Old Oakville areas have solid options for downsizers.
- **Retirement or adult-lifestyle community.** Built-in neighbours, optional services (meals, housekeeping, healthcare on site), and a community of people in roughly the same chapter. Costs more month to month. The lifestyle is more structured.

2. Where

Location means something different now than it did when you were buying for school zones. Walking distance to a coffee shop and proximity to a hospital probably matter more than a 20-minute commute does.

What to weigh:

- Distance to family. Especially the grandkids.
- Walking distance to groceries, pharmacy, coffee, and a doctor.
- Proximity to a hospital or major health centre.
- Transit access for the day you'd rather not drive.
- Your existing community. Neighbours. Friends. Your faith community. The people who actually show up.

3. When

Sell first, or buy first? In a balanced or seller-friendly market, selling first usually makes sense. You know your budget. You can negotiate from strength on the buy side. In a buyer-friendly market, the math can flip. We'll look at where the GTA is when we sit down to plan it.

Bridge financing is a tool worth knowing about. It's a short-term loan that covers the gap between buying your next home and closing on your current one. Your mortgage broker can tell you whether it's a fit for your situation.

4. Money

Before you list anything, get a real number. Not a Zillow estimate. Not your neighbour's guess. A real current valuation. Then take these costs out of it:

- Real estate commission (usually 4 to 5 percent of sale price, plus HST)
- Legal fees (\$1,500 to \$3,000 for a sale, more for the purchase)
- Land transfer tax on your purchase (Ontario LTT, plus Toronto LTT if applicable)
- Movers (\$2,000 to \$8,000 depending on distance and how much stuff)
- Pre-listing prep, like paint, repairs, and staging. Usually \$5,000 to \$25,000.
- Closing adjustments and overlap costs if the timing isn't perfect

That's your working number. From there, decide what the equity is for. A smaller mortgage on the next place. Helping a kid into the market. A retirement cushion. Healthcare planning. Some combination. The clearer the purpose, the better every other decision gets.

TIP Don't skip the financial advisor

A sale this size touches retirement income, tax planning, estate strategy, and gifting decisions. Loop in your accountant or financial advisor before you list. Not after.

Things you can do this step

- Visit at least three different kinds of homes in person. Even ones you don't think you want.
- Get a current market valuation of your home. I do these at no cost.
- Talk to your accountant or financial advisor about the equity question.
- Talk to a mortgage broker about pre-approval and bridge financing if either is relevant.
- Make a short list of three to five neighbourhoods that fit.

STEP 3 READY

Get the home and yourself ready for the move.

Most downsizing guides start with this step. The decluttering. The repairs. The boxes. We're putting it third for a reason.

Sorting through 30 years of belongings is hard. Doing it before you've made the bigger decisions in Steps 1 and 2 makes it harder. Now that you know where you're going and roughly when, the sorting has a point. You're not getting rid of stuff. You're packing for a destination.

Decluttering without burning out

A few things that work:

- **30 to 60 minute sessions. Then stop.** Set a timer. When it goes off, walk away even if you're on a roll. This is the rule that prevents the burnout that derails most downsizing efforts.
- **Four boxes. That's all you need.** Keep, Donate, Family, Unsure. The Unsure box matters. It's a parking spot for emotional decisions, not a way to dodge them.
- **Easy stuff first.** Linen closets. Kitchen duplicates. Bathroom cabinets. Garage shelves. Build momentum on the things you don't have feelings about. Save the photos and the heirlooms for later, when your decision-making muscle is stronger.

- **Get the donations out fast.** Bags sitting in the garage for two months are downsizing's enemy. Schedule the pickup the same week you fill the bag.

Four Boxes. That's All You Need.



KEEP

Use it. Love it.



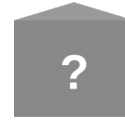
DONATE

Useful to others.



FAMILY

Pass it on with intent.



UNSURE

Decide later, not now.

What to actually fix in the home

This is where I see homeowners overspend or underspend, and both hurt the sale. The goal isn't a renovation. It's a polished version of the home you already have.

Where to Spend, Where to Skip

DO THESE

- Fresh paint**
Neutral colour, especially if walls are 15+ years old
- Deep clean**
Carpets, windows, kitchen, bathrooms
- Box up the personal stuff**
Family photos, fridge magnets, wall portraits
- Small repairs**
Squeaky doors, dripping faucets, burnt-out bulbs
- Curb appeal**
Mulch, trimmed shrubs, clean walkway
- Staging**
Real or virtual. The photos are the first impression.

SKIP THESE

- Big kitchen renos**
You almost never get back what you put in
- Big bathroom renos**
Same story. Buyers want to pick their own finishes.
- New flooring throughout**
Only if existing floors are visibly damaged
- Upgrades that match your taste**
Bold colours. Niche fixtures. Skip them.

FOR ADULT CHILDREN If you're helping a parent through this

This is the step most likely to cause friction. A lifetime of belongings has weight. What looks like junk to you might be holding decades of meaning for your mom or dad.

Don't throw anything out without explicit permission. Even the obvious stuff. Offer to take photos of items they want to remember but not keep. A photo album of "things that mattered" can release a surprising amount of physical stuff.

If items are being divided among siblings, do it before the move. Not during. Use a fair process. A round-robin draft, a written list, a professional mediator if you need one. And if your parent is overwhelmed, hire help. Senior move managers are a real profession and they're worth every dollar.

Things you can do this step

- Schedule one 30-minute decluttering session per day, three days a week.

- Pick your donation destinations and put their info on the fridge.
- Walk through the home with your agent and make a pre-listing prep list.
- Get quotes for any work that needs to happen before listing.
- Set a target listing date and work backwards from there.

STEP 4 RELOCATE

Sell smart. Buy thoughtfully. Move without losing your mind.

This is the step most people picture when they think about downsizing. The for-sale sign on the lawn. The showings. The offers. The moving truck.

Here's the secret: by the time you reach this step, the hardest work is already done. The decisions that determine whether this goes well were made in Steps 1 through 3.

Selling your home

A typical Mississauga or Oakville sale takes 30 to 60 days from listing to close, give or take where the market is.



What's actually happening at each stage:

- **Pricing strategy.** We set a number based on recent comparable sales, what's currently on the market, and your timeline. Underpriced homes leave money on the table. Overpriced homes sit and lose value as the days-on-market clock ticks.
- **Photos and prep.** This is where the investment matters most. The first impression online is what gets people through the door.
- **Listing and marketing.** Your home goes live on REALTOR.ca and MLS, plus a marketing campaign aimed at the buyers most likely to actually want it.
- **Showings and open houses.** We manage the schedule. You leave for showings. Buyers can't picture themselves in a home with the owner standing in the kitchen.
- **Offers and negotiation.** Price is one piece. Closing date, deposit, conditions, and inclusions are the other pieces. We negotiate the whole package, not just the number.
- **Conditions and closing.** Once an offer is accepted, the buyer typically has 5 to 10 days to clear conditions like financing and inspection. Then it firms up and we work toward closing.

Buying the next place

If you're buying, and not all downsizers do (some move in with family, some go into rental), the process runs in parallel. Pre-approval first. Then targeted searches in the neighbourhoods you shortlisted. Then offers. The trick is timing the two transactions so you're not homeless in between or carrying two properties longer than you have to.

FOR ADULT CHILDREN **If you're helping a parent through this**

This step has a lot of paperwork and a lot of dates. If your parent is doing this with a Power of Attorney for property in place, or you're acting as their POA, there are some specific legal pieces you need to know about.

The POA has to specifically grant authority over real estate transactions. A POA for personal care is a different document. The original or a certified copy goes to the lawyer and the listing agent.

If the homeowner has passed away, the POA is no longer valid. The home becomes part of the estate and probate may be required before sale. Probate (a Certificate of Appointment of Estate Trustee, in Ontario) can take weeks to months depending on the situation.

If any of this applies to you, talk to a real estate lawyer early. I can refer you to lawyers in the GTA who handle these all the time.

Moving day checklist

- Hire movers (book 4 to 6 weeks ahead in peak season).
- Transfer utilities. Enbridge, Alectra or Oakville Hydro, Bell or Rogers, water.
- Set up Canada Post mail forwarding.
- Update your address everywhere. Banks, insurance, doctor, dentist, OHIP, CRA, Service Ontario.
- Tell family, friends, and any subscriptions you actually use.
- Pack an essentials box for the first night. Toiletries, medications, phone chargers, toilet paper, kettle.
- Take photos of the empty home before you hand over the keys.

STEP 5 RESETTLE***Closing day is the milestone. Not the finish line.***

Most real estate guides end at the closing. Mine kind of starts there. Because the months after the move are when downsizing actually pays off. Or doesn't.

People who move well don't stop investing in the transition once they have the keys. The first 90 days in a new home are when the new chapter actually starts.

Settling Into the Next Chapter

FIRST 30 DAYS

<p>Unpack the basics</p> <p>Kitchen. Bedroom. Bathroom. The rest waits.</p>	<p>Find the essentials</p> <p>Coffee. Groceries. Pharmacy. A walk.</p>	<p>Meet one neighbour</p> <p>Just one. The rest will follow.</p>	<p>Permission to feel weird</p> <p>Most people do for a while. That's okay.</p>
--	---	---	--

FIRST 90 DAYS

<p>One new connection</p> <p>A class. A club. A standing coffee.</p>	<p>Build a routine</p> <p>Mornings especially. Routine creates home.</p>	<p>Edit as you go</p> <p>Sell what doesn't fit. Keep what does.</p>	<p>Show up once</p> <p>Building social. Community event. Just go.</p>
---	---	--	--

A few notes on the visual above:

- Don't try to unpack everything in week one. Kitchen, bedroom, bathroom is enough to start.
- Meeting one neighbour is harder than it sounds and more important than it sounds. Just one.
- If you've moved into a condo or community, go to one social event in the first 90 days. You don't have to love it. You just have to show up.

FOR ADULT CHILDREN **If you're helping a parent through this**

Don't disappear after the move. The first three months are when isolation can creep in for a parent who's just left a long-time home. A 10-minute phone call twice a week makes a real difference.

Watch for signs that the new place isn't working. Increased anxiety. Withdrawal. Complaints about neighbours or fees that seem out of proportion. Most settling issues sort themselves out. Some don't. Catch them early.

What this actually looks like

You wake up on a Saturday and stay in bed for a minute. Not because you're tired. Because there's nothing waiting for you. No list. No chore. No fix-it project. You make coffee and sit by the window.

This place fits.

Your knees feel better at the end of the day because everything is on one floor. There's room for the grandkids to stay over without the house feeling cavernous when they leave. It's the right size. Not too much. Not too little.

You finally take the trip you've been talking about for two years. You lock the door and go. No worry about what might break while you're away. The house doesn't need you the way the old one did.

Your weekends are yours again. Brunch with friends. A drive somewhere with no agenda. An afternoon nap because you can.

This place doesn't hold decades of memories yet. But it holds something better. It holds the life you're actually ready to live.

About me



I'm Gail Reeves Reid. Broker with eXp Realty. I work with homeowners across Mississauga, Oakville, Milton, and Brampton.

Almost all of my business is downsizers. Empty nesters. And the adult children helping a parent figure out the next move.

I didn't end up here by accident. I picked this niche on purpose.

Downsizing isn't really a real estate transaction. Or it is, but the transaction is the smallest part of it. The bigger part is the family, the money, the memories, the timing, the emotional weight of leaving a place where a whole life happened. Most agents aren't built for that. They want to list the house and move to the next one.

After enough years of watching this go either really well or really badly for families, I built my practice around doing it the right way.

What it's like working with me

A few things you should know.

I'll tell you what I actually see. In the market, in your situation, in your house. Even when it's not what you want to hear. I'd rather lose a client by being honest than win one by being agreeable.

I work at your pace, not mine. Most of my downsizing clients spend somewhere between 6 and 18 months between our first conversation and listing day. That's normal. That's right. I'm not in a hurry, and I won't make you feel like you should be.

I have a vetted network. Senior move managers, estate lawyers, financial advisors, mortgage brokers, contractors, stagers, movers. The people you need at every step, already checked out by me.

If your adult children are part of this, I include them in a way that works for everyone. Not in a way that overrides your voice. The decision is still yours.

If anything in this guide hit home, or you're not sure where you fit in the process, let's have a conversation. No pressure. No pitch. No commitment. Just a clear-eyed look at where you are and what your options actually are.