

Before you decide whether a sofa, bed, or wardrobe is coming with you, measure the doorway. I keep a tape measure in my car because “it will probably fit” is one of the most expensive guesses people make during a move.



Then measure the apartment, the furniture, and the full route between the two. A piece can fit inside your new home and still get stuck at the building entrance, in a hallway turn, or on the stairwell. A few careful measurements help you avoid damaged walls, rushed furniture purchases, and the cost of moving belongings that don't work in the new space.

Start With the Apartment, Not the Furniture

Get a floor plan if one is available, but verify important dimensions yourself. Floor plans can be approximate, and they rarely show every obstacle that affects furniture placement. Measure the rooms where your furniture will go before making keep, sell, or replace decisions.

Record these room measurements

- **Room length and width:** Measure wall to wall in each room. If the room is irregular, break it into simple rectangles and record each section.
- **Ceiling height:** This matters for tall wardrobes, bookcases, and bed frames that need to be lifted or tilted during assembly.
- **Doorway width and height:** Measure the clear opening, not just the door slab. Include trim if it narrows the passage.
- **Window dimensions and sill height:** Record the window width, height, and distance from the floor. This affects desks, dressers, beds, and curtains.
- **Closet dimensions:** Note the opening width, interior depth, and any shelves or rails that reduce usable space.
- **Fixed features:** Mark radiators, vents, columns, kitchen counters, built-in shelves, outlets, and other things that limit placement.

Measure the usable wall space, too. A wall may appear long enough until you account for a door that swings open, a closet door that slides, or a vent that should not be blocked. If possible, sketch each room and mark

doors, windows, and fixed features. Write down where measurements were taken so you can make sense of them later.

Measure the Route Into the Apartment

Furniture has to travel from the moving truck to its final room. Check the entire route—not just the apartment’s front door. Ask the building manager about move-in rules, service elevators, loading areas, required reservations, and any limits on elevator size or moving hours.

Measure each access point

- **Building entrance:** Record the clear doorway width and height, including any closer or raised threshold.
- **Hallways:** Measure the narrowest width and note tight corners, low ceilings, and protruding fixtures.
- **Turns and landings:** Measure the open area where movers may need to rotate a piece. A long item may fit down a hall but fail at the turn.
- **Stairs:** Note stair width, ceiling clearance, landing size, handrails, and the shape of any turn.
- **Elevator:** Measure the interior width, depth, and height, plus the door opening. Ask whether the elevator can be reserved.
- **Parking-to-entry path:** Check distance, ramps, gates, steps, and any narrow gates or walkways between the truck and the building.

Measure clear openings rather than relying on a general building listing. For a doorway, measure between the inside edges of the frame at the narrowest point. A removable door may create more room, but don’t assume it can be taken off or that the frame itself won’t remain restrictive. When in doubt, ask your mover or building manager to confirm the route before move day.

Measure Each Piece of Furniture

For every item you are considering moving, record its maximum outside dimensions: width, height, and depth. Measure at the widest or tallest points, including feet, handles, arms, and decorative trim. Keep the numbers with a photo of the item and label them clearly.

Furniture Measurements to Record What Often Gets Missed
Sofa or armchair Overall width, depth, height, and diagonal depth
Arm shape, recliner mechanism, removable legs, and whether it can be separated
Bed frame Outside length, outside width, headboard height
Frame size may be larger than the mattress; measure rails, posts, and headboard separately
Wardrobe Width, height, and wardrobe depth
Doors, handles, base trim, and whether the wardrobe can be disassembled
Desk Overall width, depth, height, and desk leg clearance
Drawer pedestals, modesty panels, cable trays, and chair space
Dining table Length, width, height, and leaf dimensions
Table legs, extension hardware, and clearance for chairs when pulled out
Dresser or bookcase Width, depth, height
Drawers or doors need room to open; tall pieces may need wall anchoring

Three measurements worth checking twice

Bed frame width: Don’t use the mattress label as a substitute for measuring the frame. A queen mattress has standard dimensions, but the frame may extend beyond it because of rails, posts, or a wide headboard. Record the frame’s outside width and length, then compare them with the room and the path in.

Wardrobe depth: Measure from the back of the wardrobe to the frontmost point, including handles or doors. Check that it leaves enough room to walk past and that doors can open without hitting a bed or dresser. A

wardrobe that fits against a wall can still make a small bedroom feel cramped.

Desk leg clearance: Measure the open space between the legs or supports, as well as the height beneath the desktop. Your chair and knees need to fit comfortably. Drawer units and crossbars can make a desk's usable space much smaller than its overall width suggests.

Check Furniture Against the Route

Compare the furniture's dimensions with every doorway, hallway, stair, and elevator measurement. A piece may sometimes be tilted or rotated, so its width alone does not tell the whole story. For large or rigid items, record the diagonal measurements as well. A mover can help assess whether a particular piece can safely be angled through a tight turn.

Also check whether the furniture comes apart. Measure removable table legs, bed rails, shelves, and sofa sections separately. Take photos of how items are assembled before disassembly, and keep screws and hardware in labeled bags. Don't count on a piece being easy to dismantle unless you know how it is built.

For upholstered furniture, note whether cushions come off and whether the arms or feet are removable. For a reclining sofa, check the manufacturer's instructions: some models separate into sections, while others have mechanisms that make moving them more complicated. If a piece is valuable, fragile, or especially awkward, send its measurements and photos to the moving company in advance.



Decide: Keep, Store, Sell or Donate, or Replace

Once you have the apartment, furniture, and route measurements, make a decision for each item. Don't move something just because you already own it. Moving costs, storage fees, and the effort of working around oversized furniture can add up quickly.

Decision Good Fit When Ask Yourself Keep It fits the room and route, suits your needs, and is in good condition. Will it leave enough space to walk and use the room? Store You expect to need it later and storage is practical for its value and condition. Will storage cost less than replacing it? How long might it stay stored? Sell or donate It won't fit, is no longer useful, or costs too much to move or store. Can someone else use it, and do you have time

to arrange pickup? Replace The item is damaged, unsuitable, or a better-sized option will work well in the new home. Can you wait until after move-in to choose the right size?

Be especially cautious about buying replacement furniture before you move. Live in the apartment long enough to understand how you use it, where the natural walking paths are, and how much storage you actually need. A smaller desk or a different bed frame may be the right answer—but it is easier to choose once you have seen the room with your own belongings in place.

Think About Scale and Visual Weight

Furniture can fit on paper and still overwhelm a small room. **Scale** is how the size of an item relates to the room and the other furnishings. **Visual weight** is how large or dominant a piece appears. A tall, dark wardrobe may draw more attention than a lower, lighter-colored dresser of similar width.

In a compact apartment, consider more than floor dimensions. A high headboard can make a bedroom feel crowded even if the bed frame fits. A deep sofa may narrow the main walkway. Heavy <https://www.rentdeals.com/blog/downsizing-to-a-smaller-apartment-what-to-do-with-your-furniture/> furniture with solid bases can make a room feel fuller than pieces with visible legs or open space underneath.

- Leave clear paths between the entry, seating, kitchen, and bedroom instead of filling every open area.
- Check that cabinet doors, drawers, and chairs can open or pull out without blocking a route.
- Compare the furniture's height with the windows and ceiling so the room feels balanced.
- Use painter's tape to outline the item's footprint on the floor before moving day.
- For tall or top-heavy furniture, confirm whether it needs to be anchored to a wall.

Taping the footprint is a simple way to test whether a bed, desk, or sofa leaves enough usable room. Add space for the furniture's actual use: a chair needs room to slide out, a drawer needs room to open, and people need room to pass. Tape cannot show height or visual weight, but it quickly reveals when a layout would squeeze the walking path.

Make a Simple Measurement Sheet

Keep your records in one place so you, your movers, and anyone helping with the move can make decisions from the same information. Include the item name, measurements, access notes, and decision.

1. Measure each room and mark doors, windows, closets, and fixed features on a sketch.
2. Measure the full route from the building entrance to each room.
3. Record the outside width, height, and depth of each furniture item.
4. Note removable parts, diagonal measurements, and items that need special handling.
5. Compare the numbers, then mark each item keep, store, sell or donate, or replace.
6. Share any tight clearances or oversized items with your moving company before move day.

Taking measurements is not busywork; it is a practical way to protect your time and budget. Start with the apartment and doorway, check the entire route, and measure the furniture itself—not the size you think it is. That gives you a realistic plan for what belongs in your next home and what is better left behind.