

It's important to take time to make the right move

Pete & Shelley Aarssen - April 2026

Who doesn't enjoy a challenging game like chess, where opponents take turns trying to win based on their next strategic move.

While life is not a chess game, it does share something in common. In the game of chess, there is no time limit for a single move, instead, the players are given a set time for the entire game. The goal is to be the one to make the crucial, final move to win the game and... check mate!

In life, we also need to consider our moves. In this article, we will tackle the idea of moving to the place of residence that best suits our needs as we age. While we don't know what the future will bring, we can assume that as we age, our physical abilities will change, requiring a potential change of residence or at least some modifications to our current home.

Personally, we've lived in eight homes but our current home for 25 years. We moved a lot in those first 15 years of marriage due to job transfers.

Rural Lambton County life has been great but realistically we know it is probably not the place to age to our final years.

It has been on our minds as both of our moms made the decision to move from their homes in recent weeks. A sequence of events over this last winter, as harsh as it was, prompted their decisions and we're so proud of them for their courage. It is not easy to leave a place you've called home for decades.

Here are some practical things we've learned as we've helped them in their transition:

- we accumulate things throughout life but only a few of them have any lasting meaning.
- the time spent with our loved ones is precious and more of it can be enjoyed when there are less worries regarding safety, maintenance of a home and concerns for nutrition, sleep, and socialization.
- there are options to suit everyone's needs and professionals are available with just an online search to start the process.
- we can't do it alone. A move may require professional movers, but much of the organization of items and thinning out of our belongings is best done over time with the help of a neutral person—such as a trusted friend, family member, or a professional organizer—who can offer objective guidance and keep us on track. For example, setting aside time each week to sort through one room or category of items can make the process less overwhelming.

Moving from a long-time home is not just a physical process—it is deeply emotional. The journey of sorting through cherished belongings is hard, so it is important to approach the task gradually, allowing yourself time and space to process each step. Taking things in small doses helps manage the emotional impact and makes the transition less daunting. One of the unexpectedly joyful aspects of this process is passing treasured pieces to the younger generation. For instance, when one of the grandmas decided to give her piano to our son, it became more than just the transfer of an item. Our son recalls his grandma playing the piano at family gatherings, with his grandpa singing along to their favourite old tunes or Christmas hymns. After the piano found its new place in our son's home, a photo of him beaming with pride at the instrument brought immense joy to his grandmother. These moments of sharing family heirlooms create lasting memories that are far more valuable than the items themselves.

We all want to maintain our dignity as we age. Just as chess players use their allotted time to make thoughtful moves, we too should take the time to carefully consider our choices about where and when we'll make our final move in life. While not everyone is granted the opportunity to decide for themselves, we can still prepare for the future by making intentional plans rather than leaving these important decisions to chance or to a family member. Rather than postponing these crucial choices, let's take the initiative to plan for our future with purpose and dignity.