



PRACTICAL TASKS



The process of emigrating can seem daunting at first, but just try to tackle the hurdles one step at a time, writes **Karen Bleakley**

For most families, emigrating involves more than collating paperwork, packing up a suitcase, saying goodbye to loved ones and jumping on a plane. Don't underestimate the stress involved in dealing with the practical tasks.

Taking your pets, facing the masses of junk you have hidden in every cupboard and selling your home are terrifying tasks. I'll let you in on a little secret: at one point I almost considered not going to Australia because I found it too daunting, and I'm sure I'm not alone.

Last year, as our visa application progressed, we made the difficult decision to re-home our dog. He was nervous of other people and we felt the experience of the flight and quarantine would be upsetting for him. I'm pleased we had him re-homed early in the emigration journey, because it has given us time to get used to living without him so when we move it won't be another thing we're missing. At the time, it was impossible to see it as a positive step as it was heartbreaking.

Taking your pet is a personal decision, based on what's best for you and your animal. It is expensive, but taking your pet can help you settle into your new lifestyle and for many people it's the right thing to do.

REDUCING OUR STUFF

Migrating is the perfect excuse to have a clear out, even if you plan to ship a container. If you have the time, car boot sales are the most obvious place to sell your things. If you want to come home with an empty boot, be sure to price things to sell and try not to buy more junk while you're there! Put anything of value on eBay, Gumtree or Facebook selling groups as people at car boot sale aren't willing to pay much for things.

We started clearing out our junk by doing car boot sales. They took about 10 hours each, allowing time to stack and unstack our car. After doing a few, we realised we could bundle things together

and sell them as 'car boot sale job lots' on eBay instead. We did job lots of CDs/DVDs, baby things and mixed lots, and although the bundles raised less than doing a real car boot sale, it took a huge amount of stress off us, saving us an early start on a Sunday, lots of time and the hassle of trying to find childcare.

IMPROVING YOUR HOME

We've spent the last eight months renovating our home. We needed the money from the house sale to fund our move to Australia, so renting it out wasn't an option. To get the best price, we decided to give it an overhaul and do those jobs we've been meaning to do for years. Attempting to do this with three under fives has been exhausting and challenging in equal measures.

We painted all of the walls with neutral shades and gave the outside of the property a facelift. We also thinned out the amount of stuff we had in the house by boxing things up for the loft, and taking down photos, to make it easier for buyers to see themselves in the house.

It went on the market, and after four days we accepted an offer of the asking price, so it looks like our effort paid off. Right now, the housing market is booming, so it's the perfect time to sell.

If you're coming up with excuses about why you can't follow your dream to move abroad, try to take a step back. There are solutions to every problem. You can sell or rent your house, you can take your pets or find them a loving new home and you can deal with that massive pile of toys that are threatening to take over your house.

Take a deep breath and tackle the hurdles one step at a time. 🇦🇺

■ **Karen is a freelance travel writer and blogger. You can read about her migration journey on her family, travel and lifestyle blog at www.talesofatwinmum.com or on Twitter @TalesofaTwinMum.**



Images (from top), the family home in Fareham, the house's 'sale agreed' sign; good times with the family's dog