

# An Inventory of Your Life

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The things you value are part of your everyday life – so much so that you might not even be able to list them if they weren't there.

That's the value of a home inventory. Making a detailed list of what you own ensures that you won't overlook anything if you have to recall what was in your house should it be lost by fire, theft or other circumstance.

Start by assembling the tools for documenting what you own and by figuring out how you will store the inventory list. The way you document what you own dictates how you'll store the information.

If you document with a notebook and with a traditional camera, you'll need to store the inventory in a physical location like a safety deposit box, with a lawyer or with a trusted family member or friend.

Consider making three copies of the inventory: one to keep at home; and one each for two trusted sources. This increases the chances that at least one record will be easily accessible when you need it. Make paper copies of documents such as warranties and receipts.

If you document your belongings digitally, you'll want to make digital duplicates, with the option of storing the files in the cloud.

- Use a digital camera to take photos.
- Scan documents.
- Have at least a couple of thumb drives on hand so you can copy the inventory for offsite storage.
- Set up a digital storage account and be sure you have documented how to access it, including the password. Decide how you'll ensure the account is maintained and paid for so the inventory doesn't evaporate in the cloud.

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## Taking inventory

It's easiest to take the inventory room by room. Set up the same system for each room so your documentation makes sense to you and to whomever must decipher it if you are not around.

Take several photos of each room, from different angles. A good way to go about this is to stand in the doorway and slowly rotate clockwise, taking overlapping frames that eventually take in the whole room.

- Open blinds and curtains and turn on the lights, even in the daytime, so your photos are well-lit and clear.
- Using sticky notes, label each item with its name so you can clearly refer to it in the documentation.
- Zero in on documentation, labels and marks that establish to whom valuable items have belonged.
- Focus on details that illustrate the unique properties of each item, such as stained glass, carving and painted trim.
- Scan or copy receipts, appraisals and other documentation about each item.
- For electronics and appliances, include warranties, receipts, repair bills and serial numbers.

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## Organize the inventory

- Include a cover sheet that explains how you organized and tagged items.
- Create a subfolder for each room.
- Group all the documentation for each item, from photos to repair bills.
- Be sure you refer to each item with the term on its sticky note label. For instance, if the label says, "blue and white pitcher" use the phrase "blue and white pitcher" on all related documents, appraisals and receipts.

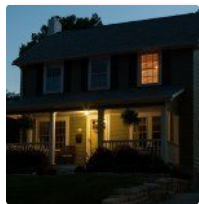
Make a printed copy of the inventory to include with your essential legal documents, even if you are storing digital copies in the cloud and with legal advisers or trusted ones. Finally, be sure your will includes access information, including passwords, to your inventory, no matter where it is stored.

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Harold · 2 months ago

I'd suggest using Evernote to organize and store your inventory.

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