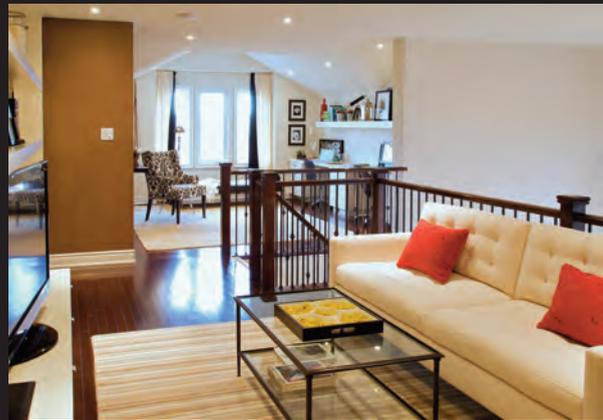




Popular bungalow-lofts offer additional living opportunities.



ARE YOU READY TO CHANGE *Your Lifestyle?*

THE HOUSE YOU ARE LIVING IN has served you well. It's a home full of wonderful memories, but its upkeep is consuming too much precious time and money. You've weighed the pros and cons of downsizing and decided to go ahead; after all your kids have moved on and your home is larger than you need. Now your biggest question is, "How and where do I begin?"

Right-sizing your lifestyle brings all sorts of new opportunities and, before you take the plunge, there are a number of things to consider. If you are looking for more freedom to enjoy your interests, family and friends in familiar surroundings, then begin your search in your present neighborhood.

Whether this will be your ultimate retirement destination or an investment in transition, it's important to set a ceiling on what you are willing to spend. Knowing the value of your present home will help narrow your focus. With a budget in mind, start by establishing your needs with a list of must-haves before you look at what's available. Then, with your list in hand, you will be ready to start your search.

If you enjoy cooking and entertaining, then consider what space and amenities your next kitchen must offer. Are some existing bedrooms seldom used? Recalling how many times you have hosted overnight visitors or grandchildren in recent years is a good benchmark for future needs.



Like many people at this stage in their lives, do you prefer to move to a one-level home? The influence of today's active baby boomers is noticeable in new home neighborhoods and adult-lifestyle communities where builders provide very attractive design options. Your choices include condominium suites and traditional bungalows with an emphasis on open-concept plans. A popular new design is the bungalow-loft, which offers a convenient main-floor master suite. In addition, the loft often includes a bedroom and full bathroom. As such, this presents a unique opportunity to create a cosy retreat by using the loft space for a den, games room, hobby room, or home office.

If considering a resale purchase, many homes can be renovated to suit. But keep in mind, the closer a home is to accommodating your must-haves, the less financially and emotionally stressful your move. A benefit of buying brand new is that often a builder will allow modifications and upgrades, resulting in a home tailored to your needs. Most new homes have a provincially backed warranty, and many are also enrolled in the Energy Star® program. Plus, you don't have to live through the mess of renovation.

As you embark on this new chapter in your life, remember, there's a world of housing options out there to explore. Enjoy the experience and investment of time – you may find your next home, just around the corner! ■

This article is one in a series that will explore the many options available to you to "Right Size Your Lifestyle"®, sponsored by award-winning new home builder, **Geranium Homes**. For information about Geranium's current communities, visit geraniumhomes.com