



BERWICK | EMPOWERED LIVING



The Berwick Journey

Where to Begin When Considering
Independent Living

The Road to Berwick



Are you or a loved one considering a move to a senior living community? This is a big decision and it's worth taking the time to find a place that feels right for you, where you can see yourself enjoying everyday life for many years to come.

We're sensitive to the different circumstances that motivate people to consider a move to Berwick, some of which can be emotionally and logistically challenging. We're passionate about empowering people to thrive on their own terms, and we believe that by learning about each individual's lives and interests, needs and wants, we can help facilitate the transition to a Berwick community or elsewhere.

This ebook is meant to help guide you through this decision-making process, and prompt you with items to consider, so that you can make the best decision for yourself and determine your next move.

What's important to you?

Ask yourself some questions and take a moment to reflect. What has prompted you to consider moving? Every situation is unique. Perhaps you're looking to downsize, have experienced a recent change in health or no longer feel up for the day-to-day upkeep of your house. Maybe you're looking for a change, whether that's meeting more people, enjoying new experiences or learning new skills. Whatever the reason, it's valid.

Berwick residents often remark that they should have made the decision to move sooner. Read some of their stories about their unique journeys, including their tips for elegantly navigating this process. Perhaps this will help guide your own decision making.



CLIENT STORY

Joyce Hodd

The day Joyce Hodd planned to move into Independent Living at Berwick House, her husband fell out of bed and had to go to the hospital. He died four days later, and Hodd says she was grateful to have her new community at Berwick during a tumultuous time.

“I could not have been in a better place when this happened. I was surrounded by people who had ‘been there done that.’ I was totally accepted, and befriended by not just the residents but also the staff,” she says. “The staff’s care is so genuine. That really comes through.”

Hodd moved in at age 72. While she acknowledges that it’s hard to leave a home you’ve lived in for decades, she thinks most people would benefit from moving earlier.

“People are waiting too long to come in. It’s really hard to leave your homestead, and downsizing is a formidable chore. But Berwick is an absolutely stress-free environment. You don’t realize how much stress you’re under until you aren’t.”

Before making the move, she added up all of her expenses (rent, utilities, groceries, cleaning and landscaping help, etc.) and realized that living at Berwick would be a similar cost—with way more perks. She still loves the food, and even found a boyfriend.

“That’s something I hadn’t counted on. I was never going to do that again, but then along comes this guy and I can’t stop laughing with him—and he can’t stop laughing with me.”

Graham Scholes

“It’s a cruise ship at dry dock,” says acclaimed artist Graham Scholes, who moved into Berwick Royal Oak last year. “Living here gives you the time to go out and volunteer in areas you have an interest in, and you don’t have to worry about the blasted house!”

Scholes and his wife lived in a house on Lands End Road, when they noticed that home maintenance was stealing time that he could have spent in his studio. For years their children had been trying to convince the couple to move—their grandson even worked at Berwick for eight years—and they finally made the move in 2021.

“Our family was right,” Scholes says now.

Scholes uses his Berwick suite living room as an art studio, as well as the shared workshop downstairs. He’s currently working on a “parliament of owls” for Heritage Acres, where he regularly volunteers. And there are plenty of other facilities and events to enjoy when he’s not working on art.

“There’s motive to get active. We’re surrounded by beautiful walking areas, and I walk about two kilometres every day,” he says. “There’s not enough days in the week to take it all in. They do a wonderful job, truly.”

Berwick regularly brings in professional musicians and entertainers to perform in the Berwick Theatre, and Scholes also takes advantage of the Berwick Bus to go to the symphony, theatre and other events around town. The Active Living team continuously plans not just outings and events but lectures, courses, wine tastings, fitness, games, culinary demonstrations and more. Last autumn, residents celebrated Oktoberfest with a Bavarian feast and three accordion players.

“They had people dancing in the halls—as well as you can dance with a cane or a crutch!” he laughs.

TESTIMONIALS

Hear from Members of the Community

“After my husband passed away, my time was spent on house and yard maintenance. Since moving to Berwick, I have the time to do the things I enjoy. The staff is phenomenal and there is a huge variety of activities.”

– TERRY NEWTON

“Having lived by myself during Covid, and with my home needing some maintenance and repairs I wasn’t going to be taking on, after the loss of my husband I decided moving into Berwick was the best option. Now that I have been here for about 20 months it has proved to be the right fit. I have found the staff and fellow residents to be welcoming and accommodating.”

– KATE MITCHELL

“I feel that I ‘lucked out’ in moving to Berwick. I love the smaller venue, open seating in the dining room and the opportunity to make many friends. Staff are wonderful and there is an amazing variety of activities available.”

– DONNA WALSH

“During my professional life, I have lived in many different homes in three Canadian provinces, the United States, Bermuda and England. All have been outstanding in many ways, but none can compare with the welcoming warmth I experienced during my arrival at Berwick. The love expressed on that day would attract any person interested in making Berwick their retirement home.”

–TED PERCY

Consider Your Needs

If you're feeling a little unsure about the future, that's perfectly normal. Downsizing and moving is a significant change, but there are incredible resources and support services available that can make this process a little bit easier. Many Berwick residents have worked with organizations that help seniors make the decisions they need to when it comes to downsizing and selling their home. Using your family and friends as a sounding board about what you are thinking and feeling is also helpful when trying to make a big life decision.



When selling your home, here are a few expert tips from Berwick residents who have gone through this journey:

- ✓ Choose a real estate agent who will listen to your needs, get the results you expect and market your place well.
- ✓ Establish a fair asking price based on the market and recent sales in your area.
- ✓ Make simple improvements that will make your house more appealing to buyers.
- ✓ Consider a pre-sale inspection that will spot potential problems for buyers.
- ✓ Let your agent guide you through the offers so you can negotiate a fair deal.
- ✓ Remain patient during the process. You may want to inquire about moving into your retirement residence early while waiting for your house sale to complete.

Explore What's Out There

As you prepare to embark on tours of senior living residences, here are some key questions to ask yourself that will help you understand which communities would be worth considering:



Location

Do I want to live near any family members or friends? Is there a specific neighbourhood or area where I'd like to live?



Accommodations

What type of accommodations would I prefer? For example, what size suite? Would I want a balcony, walk-in closet or an en-suite bathroom? Would I prefer an apartment style accommodation or a patio home? Are views important to me?



Service Offerings

What services do I need to live well during these years? For example, dining, housekeeping, wellness programs, outings, classes, assisted living, etc.



Onsite Amenities (Interior, Exterior)

What amenity spaces do I want in my new home that support my hobbies or lifestyle? For example, will I want an art studio, pickleball court, library, garden or bistro? Are there parking spaces?



Reputation

If you're trying to decide between senior living residences, ensure you've found the right one by searching for them online. Do they have awards? How are their reviews? Ask friends, family and people in the community what they think too since word of mouth recommendations are a great indicator of quality.



Pet Friendly

Is it important for me to find a residence that is pet friendly?

Tour Communities

We also encourage everyone to tour multiple residences to ensure you've found the one that aligns most with your needs and values. If you are on a waitlist and have the opportunity to attend events or programs at a community, take advantage of that! It's a great way to connect with the people who live in each community and help determine if it's the right spot for you.

Take the community for a test drive! See what resident life is like, get a feel for the community's ambiance, taste the food and participate in some of the programs.



Here are some expert Berwick resident tips for touring:

- ✓ Attend a social function or cultural event at the community
- ✓ Visit at different times of the day, so you can experience the whole community atmosphere
- ✓ Observe how the team members interact with residents and one another
- ✓ Ask for a brochure and any other marketing material to help you complete your homework
- ✓ Talk to the residents; ask them questions about what they like and what they don't like at the community they reside in. Enjoy a meal with them if you can!
- ✓ Get a complete list of all the services offered by the community
- ✓ Find out what the monthly fees are and any additional costs

A Helpful Guide for Tours

Visiting an independent living community?

Use this checklist to keep notes, make comparisons, and get answers.

General Observations

- Overall location
- Proximity to shops, transit and medical services
- Quality of the building
- You are greeted and feel welcome
- Areas are clean
- Residents seem to enjoy the community
- Pet-friendly environment
- Is there a guest suite?
- Are you satisfied with the security systems?

Staffing

- Staff on site 24 hours a day
- Staff are polite to residents
- Staff appear well-groomed

Services

- Quality and presentation of the dining options; good variety
- Interesting on-site and off-site wellness and recreational programming and events
- Fitness classes
- Who coordinates programs? Staff or residents or both?
- Transportation services
- Housekeeping, laundry and linen services

Amenity Spaces

- Available indoor and outdoor common areas
- Variety of dining venues
- How are the recreational areas?
- Gym or fitness centre
- Theatre

Suites

- Spacious layout
- Natural lighting and window coverings
- Temperature is comfortable and controllable
- Views
- Private bathroom in suite
- Bathroom has accessibility features like handrails
- Safety features
- Are there laundry facilities in suite or shared?

Finances

- Monthly price breakdown is clear
- All additional fees are mentioned
- How long is the wait list and how are suites awarded? Is it first come, first served?

Getting Ready to Move

After you have decided where to move, you are now ready to start downsizing and packing. Sorting through your household is a huge job. Give yourself the time you need to stay focused on the task ahead. Berwick has relationships and connections with businesses that can help your transition. They can assist with packing, moving and unpacking all of your belongings. We'll share this information with you in advance in case you're interested in connecting with someone.

If you are moving yourself, consider these important tips from Berwick residents who have made the move before you.



Prepare Yourself

Sorting through boxes of memorabilia can be highly emotional. You will probably find yourself stopping to remember certain items, which is perfectly normal.



Focus on One Area at a Time

Choose the office, a closet or a bathroom and focus your attention on that space until you are finished. Then move onto the next room.



Sort Items

Sort items into four piles: sell, donate, recycle and throw away. Gather together boxes and bags, labelling them with each of the designated categories.



Ask for Help

Moving and downsizing can be overwhelming. The help of your family and friends can make this a bit easier, or talk to us about any of the organizations we recommend who can provide packing and downsizing services to assist you.



Best Practices for Moving

- ✓ Use solid, heavy-duty boxes or plastic cartons
- ✓ Avoid using plastic bags for packing; they can tear easily
- ✓ Label boxes with contents and room destination
- ✓ Number your boxes and prepare a master list
- ✓ Use wardrobe boxes to move clothing
- ✓ Pack books in small boxes, so the boxes aren't too heavy
- ✓ Put small boxes within larger ones, so they don't get lost
- ✓ Repack electronics in original boxes, if possible
- ✓ Pack tools and screws in a special box, so you can easily find them in your new place
- ✓ Don't pack valuable papers, such as your passport and cheque book; keep them with you

Change Your Address

Before you move, you need to let businesses know where you are going—particularly those services you use every month. Inform Canada Post of your new address several weeks before your move. You also need to contact the following places with your new address:



- ✓ Utility company (if not included)
- ✓ Cable TV and internet service
- ✓ Phone company
- ✓ Bank and financial planner
- ✓ Insurance companies (life, health, car)
- ✓ Credit card companies
- ✓ Doctor and dentist offices
- ✓ Government departments and agencies
- ✓ Charities you support

We also provide you with postcards to send to your friends and family with your new address details.

While there's a lot to consider when making a move and downsizing, it's manageable when you take it one step at a time. If you need support or have questions about making the transition to senior living, we're here to help.

Our Locations

Berwick by the Sea

Campbell River

1353 16th Avenue
Campbell River, BC V9W 0C4

Telephone: 250.850.1353
Email: berwickbythesea@berwickrc.com

Berwick Comox Valley

Comox

1700 Comox Avenue
Comox, BC V9M 4H4

Telephone: 250.339.1690
Email: berwickcomoxvalley@berwickrc.com

Berwick Qualicum Beach

Qualicum Beach

120 First Avenue West
Qualicum Beach, BC V9K 0B4

Telephone: 250.738.6200
Email: berwickqualicumbeach@berwickrc.com

Berwick Parksville

Parksville

180 Jensen Ave E
Parksville, BC V9P 0G9

Telephone: 250.468.6000
Email: berwickparksville@berwickrc.com

Berwick on the Lake

Nanaimo

3201 Ross Road
Nanaimo, BC V9T 6L9

Telephone: 250.729.7995
Email: berwickonthelake@berwickrc.com

Berwick Royal Oak

Victoria

4680 Elk Lake Drive
Victoria, BC V8Z 0B4

Telephone: 250.386.4680
Email: berwickroyaloak@berwickrc.com

Berwick House

Victoria

4062 Shelbourne Street
Victoria, BC V8N 3E6

Telephone: 250.721.4062
Email: berwickhouse@berwickrc.com

Berwick on the Park

Kamloops

60 Whiteshield Crescent South
Kamloops, BC V2E 2S9

Telephone: 250.377.7275
Email: berwickonthepark@berwickrc.com



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