

Inventory Your Personal Belongings

What Information to Include

When you create your inventory, it's good to list as many details as you can for each item. Don't worry if you're missing some info; whatever you can include will help you later on.

Here's what to aim for:

- Name, quantity, and description
- When and where it was bought
- Original price
- Estimated replacement price
- Brand, model, and serial number
- Photos

Where to Start

Doing an inventory of your whole house could take some time. If you're taking pictures of each item (always a good idea), you can make quick progress by pulling each item out, snapping the pictures, and putting the item back. Just work your way around each room, organize the photos into groups later on.

When it comes to listing the info, play it safe and focus on your most valuable possessions first. Then go back later to inventory your other things.

How to Make It Go Faster

Making an inventory is simple with [Allstate's free home-inventory software](#). With it, you can easily list all the info you'd need to file an insurance claim. You can group your stuff by rooms and categories. You can even add pictures, which will come in handy in the event of a loss. It's available for both Windows and Mac OS X.

If you're in a serious time crunch but want to document your belongings with photos, get out your video camera instead. Pan each room, closet, and drawer, pulling out items that are hard to see.

When to Update It

Life is too busy to update your inventory every time you buy or get rid of something. Instead, try updating it only when you bring home something worth more than, say, \$100. If you find yourself forgetting, set a date instead—like the 30th of every month. Not a big shopper? Just pick a regular interval, mark the next few dates on your calendar, and stick with them.