

Retirement — A New Beginning



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Retirement planning often focuses on financial concerns because there are so many important questions to answer.... When can I afford to retire? Will I have enough to live on throughout my retirement? How can I best protect my beneficiaries?

However, there are other aspects of retirement planning that also deserve your attention — changes in activities, relationships, living arrangements, health and nutrition, and health insurance. Careful and thorough planning will help ensure that you make the right decisions to help you adjust to the various changes you will experience in the years ahead. In this section, we will look at these other changes and discuss ways that you might begin your planning today to successfully meet those challenges tomorrow.

Activities

In retirement, you may have 50+ hours of more free time each week. If you have had a career that provided a large part of the “structure” for your time, you may suddenly discover the golfing or traveling or volunteer work you had expected to do will not fill your free time. In fact, many retirees do everything they had planned to do in their first six months of retirement.

Besides consuming a great deal of your time, your job has probably brought you a certain satisfaction and met many of your emotional needs. In retirement, these needs may still be there. The result is a void that only you can decide how best to fill. To make a successful transition to retirement life, you should achieve an enjoyable balance of activities for your free time. But reaching that balance will take some experimentation and you should start thinking about the possibilities now.

Let’s begin by listing those aspects of teaching, or your present employment, you enjoy and will miss when you retire. Then list those things about your work you will not miss. The purpose of this exercise is to help you identify and select activities or a new career to replace those aspects of your present employment you have found most satisfying and will miss.

And the list of things you will not miss about work? That’s there just to make you smile!

Will Miss	Will Not Miss
e.g., Having a sense of purpose	e.g., Disruptive students
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



Will Your Activities Meet Your Needs?

Now let's look at the following list of needs many people have and add any that are important to you. Then fill in all of the activities you think might meet these needs. Be as thorough and specific as you can. When your list is complete, you should have a better idea of whether your planned activities will meet your personal needs in retirement.

Needs	Activities				
	<i>Example:</i> Joining a Theater Group				
Income					
Usefulness	✓				
Entertainment					
Sense of Accomplishment	✓				
Recognition	✓				
Intellectual Achievement					
Security					
Growth					
Belonging	✓				
Creativity	✓				
Spirituality					
New Experiences	✓				
Physical Activity					
Other					

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Here are some suggestions to help you plan activities that will not only fill the many hours of free time that you will inherit in retirement, but also provide satisfaction in meeting your needs to help you enjoy your retirement years.

◆ Attend career seminars, join professional organizations and begin networking.

◆ Don't expect to occupy retirement solely with tasks such as home repairs, cleaning out the attic, and arranging photo albums for the children. You might get all of these done during the first six months and then you come to the realization there must be something else to do to give you a sense of fulfillment or purpose.

◆ Have you ever said, "I could write a book"? Here is your opportunity. Many retirees write about their work experiences or their personal lives, or develop works of fiction or poetry.

◆ You might want to consider part-time or consulting work in education in New York State or out of state. Or perhaps you will want to try something different. Consider registering with a temporary help agency or exploring the many volunteer opportunities where you could provide badly needed services. You might be surprised to find out that your skills and experience are in great demand. If you do return to work, make sure to check with NYSTRS and the Social Security Administration to find out about earnings limitations.



◆ Is there some hobby you have always wanted to try or a skill you want to develop, but never had the time? Don't let habit stop you now. Get out of the routine and try whatever appeals to you.

◆ You are never too old to learn something new. You can go back to school to learn practical skills, get professional training or just pursue a subject

you think you would enjoy. Many schools have expanded their course offerings to include more adult-oriented subjects and welcome the enrollment of retirees.

◆ Road Scholar is a program for adults and their spouses/companions offering an opportunity to study and travel around the world, on and off campus. Road Scholar service programs are a learning and serving experience. You can volunteer in a program outside your community and discover how much you have learned and how much you have to offer. Go to roadscholar.org for more information.



Moving

Will you be one of the 20% of our retirees who move to another state in retirement? You probably know someone who went through much effort and expense to move, only to discover it wasn't a good choice and ended up moving back to New York. Selecting the right place to live in retirement takes time and research. A move to a retirement community in a warmer climate may provide some people with exactly what they want for retirement, while others will be more than happy to brave the frigid winters of northern climates to be close to family and friends. Being a "snowbird" and spending just the winter away in a warmer climate might be the happy medium for others. Here are some questions to consider when selecting a retirement location.

- ◆ If you plan to work in retirement, are there placement services, state employment offices, or other agencies that can help you retrain or find work suitable to your skills and plans?
- ◆ Are there indoor and outdoor recreational facilities such as swim clubs, parks, tennis courts, fitness centers, bike and walking trails, and public and private golf courses?

- Are there educational facilities offering continuing education opportunities?
- Are there a variety of cultural opportunities and facilities such as libraries and theaters?
- Will you be close to shopping areas, business districts, hospitals, public transportation, and senior centers?
- Does the housing you are considering have multiple levels with stairs to climb that might present problems if your physical capabilities change?
- Will you move into a house, or choose a condo or apartment where you don't have to worry about all the upkeep and maintenance?
- What changes in your expenses and overall cost of living might occur as a result of your move?

Failing to investigate state and local taxes could lead to some unpleasant surprises after you have made your move. Remember, your NYSTRS pension will not be subject to a New York State income tax, whether you continue to reside in New York State or move to another state. You will, however, be subject to the tax laws of the state you move to.

Since state taxes are subject to change, you should contact the tax or revenue department of the state(s) you are considering moving to for updated information. Three excellent websites that will help you in this regard are shown below:

- ◆ rpea.org
- ◆ retirementliving.com
- ◆ kiplinger.com/tools/retiree_map

Health and Nutrition

Did you hear the story of the 82-year old man who visits the doctor with a complaint that his left knee is painful and stiff? The doctor examines it and says, "Well, what do you expect? After all, it's an 82-year old knee." "Sure it is," says the patient, "but my right knee is also 82, and it's not bothering me a bit."

The 2017 Global Action Plan, developed by the World Health Organization, states there is growing consensus that the following measures can reduce the risk of cognitive decline and dementia: increasing physical activity, preventing and reducing obesity, promotion of balanced and healthy diets, cessation of tobacco use and the harmful use of alcohol, social engagement, promotion of cognitively stimulating activities and learning as well as prevention and management of diabetes, hypertension, especially in mid-life, and depression.

Aging and health are affected by many factors, including:

<i>heredity</i>	<i>attitudes</i>
<i>lifestyle</i>	<i>environment</i>
<i>personality</i>	<i>diet</i>
<i>mental health</i>	

While we can't do anything about our heredity, we can take more control over our lifestyle and make positive healthy changes. No matter what your age, you can make a difference. For example, a 65-year old who quits smoking loses most of the increased risk of heart attack after two years.

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Having a positive attitude, remaining active, having a sense of purpose, being able to change and maintaining control of your life are all components of good mental health. The ability to deal with stress (or seeking help from professional counselors and support groups when things aren't going well) will also play a large role in keeping you mentally and emotionally fit.

Devise healthy strategies now — it's never too late to start.

Here are a few strategies to get you started:

A. Be physically active.

Get off the couch, put on your walking shoes and start moving. Research shows that significant health benefits can be gained by doing moderate amounts of physical activity on most, if not all, days of the week. This includes walking briskly or raking leaves for 30 minutes.

B. Eat healthy, balanced meals and snacks.

Like physical activity, good nutrition reduces the risk of some of the leading causes of death in our country, including heart disease, certain cancers, and diabetes.

C. Keep your mind active and engaged.

Consider continuing education or free college classes. Schools like Harvard and Yale offer free online courses on a wide variety of topics. You can find more information on the websites **edx.org** or **oyc.yale.edu**.

Visit websites that give the latest information and guidelines on diet, exercise, disease and health. Two sites you could start with are the Harvard School of Public Health (**hsph.harvard.edu**) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (**cdc.gov**).

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that helps people 50 and older improve the quality of their lives. The AARP website (**aarp.org**) has a wealth of information regarding nearly all aspects of retirement. While some benefits are only available to those who choose a paid membership, many articles and resources are available to the public for free.