

Four Ingredients for a Happy Retirement



Retirement involves major changes in your income, lifestyle, social life, and self-image. Not surprisingly, retirement can be very stressful—or blissful. Advance planning is a key ingredient for a happy retirement. A survey conducted by researchers at the University of Michigan found that 75 percent of those who had planned for retirement enjoyed it. Here are some specific ways you can make retirement less stressful and more satisfying.

Get a part-time job.

For some people, gradual retirement is easier to handle than being employed one day and unemployed the next. To smooth the transition, you may want to either work part-time at your present job for a few months or get a part-time job at another firm when you leave.

Practice living on a retirement budget before you retire.

And start saving for retirement as far ahead of time as possible. Don't expect Social Security to cover all your expenses.

Take care of yourself while you're young.

You can help to preserve your health by eating a low-fat diet, not smoking, drinking moderately (if at all), learning to manage stress, getting regular checkups, and being physically active.

Cultivate hobbies and other outside interests.

Fitness activities, community work, or academic studies can fill the void left by not having to report to work every day. To prevent boredom, consider a variety of activities—indoor and outdoor, mental and physical, group and individually oriented. And start thinking about projects you'd like to work on well before retirement, so you don't stall out when the time comes.