



Planning for Your Future

How can you prepare for the kind of retirement you'll want? Whether your thoughts are of a blessed state of leisure or a glorious pursuit of personal goals or public achievement, your hopes will not be realized without planning.

Planning for a Healthy Retirement

Planning for retirement is a lifelong process. How healthy you'll be at retirement age will have much to do with the kind of life you lead during your working years.

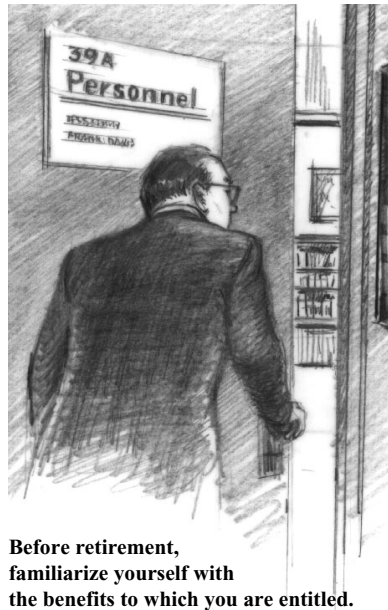
Smoking and excessive drinking take a toll on your body. The sooner you reduce or cease your smoking or drinking, the healthier you'll be.

Good exercise habits also contribute to your body's health. If you haven't already, begin a healthy program of exercise now. Begin slowly, and consult your doctor.

Keep alert by learning something new every day. Being socially active will help. A wide circle of friends of different ages is stimulating insurance against becoming isolated. Starting new hobbies, doing volunteer work and joining clubs and social groups can keep you mentally and socially sound—or may lead to a satisfying second career.

Financial planning for retirement starts long before your last day on the job. Learning to budget your earnings and expenditures should begin very early on. Social Security and pensions provide nice supplements to your savings, but won't give you the financial freedom you'll desire.

A rough rule of thumb is that your combined income from Social Security,



Before retirement, familiarize yourself with the benefits to which you are entitled.

pension and investment earnings should be equal to 75 percent of your preretirement income. Learning to take advantage of a variety of types of investments will help you build a nest egg. Before retiring, you'll want to carefully examine your health insurance coverage from work and the benefits you'll be receiving from Medicare to make sure you will be adequately covered. You'll also need an estate protection plan and a well-prepared, up-to-date will.

Questions to Ask Yourself

As you near retirement and determine how your finances are shaping up, you can think about where you'll want to live. Will you want to live near your family and current friends, or would you prefer to move to a retirement

community, possibly in a warmer climate? Are you going to keep your home, rent an apartment, purchase a condominium? Consider the alternatives and ask yourself which best suits your situation.

Once you're situated, how are you going to spend your time? Retirement means leaving a job; it doesn't mean retirement from life. Sitting in a rocking chair may appeal to you at first, but the novelty of inactivity soon wears off. Boredom is a real danger. Seeking and finding employment for your interests and energies is part of a healthy retirement.

When to Seek Help

You'll want expert help to figure how to utilize your resources wisely. Signing up for classes or workshops for people planning their retirement can be helpful.

At the very least, you'll want to visit a Social Security office to learn how your age and pre-retirement income affect your benefits. You'll want to find out when and how to apply for those benefits. An accountant can advise you on how to protect your finances against unnecessary taxation. Your company's personnel department will go over your work-related benefits with you.

If, as you approach retirement, you find yourself becoming depressed, overanxious or very frightened, you might benefit from professional individual or group counseling. Such counseling may be available as part of your company medical coverage.

Plan ahead and prepare yourself for a healthy, satisfying retirement of your own choosing. You will have earned it.

RETIREMENT