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STORY OF THE MONTH

3 Ways to Have a Happy Retirement!

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Retirees Describe What Makes For A Happy Retirement!

Researchers from The American College, Eastern New Mexico University, and Texas Tech looked at financial, lifestyle and other data on 1,526 retirees to see what makes for a more satisfying retirement.

1) Spend More Money on Having Fun

It's hardly shocking that splurging on dinner at a nice restaurant will leave you feeling more warm and fuzzy inside than forking over the same sum to have your car's oil changed and the tires balanced and rotated.

But don't put the bump in satisfaction down to mere hedonism.

To the extent you have discretionary funds built into your retirement budget, don't be afraid to target them to activities that give you the biggest happiness bang for your buck.

2) Nurture Your Personal Relationships

Researchers found that when it comes to relationships, how well you and your spouse get along has the biggest impact — even larger than that of leisure spending — with retirees who described their relations with their spouse as being very or quite close likely to experience higher levels of life satisfaction than those with a poor spousal relationship. How close you feel to family and friends can also affect how much you enjoy retirement.

Relationships, not to mention physical intimacy, can play a major role in how much you enjoy life after work. So as you near and enter retirement, you'll want to be sure to evaluate your relationships with the people who matter to you and try to sustain and improve those relationships (and if possible cultivate new ones) as you age.

3) Do All You Can to Maintain Your Health

Retirees who reported they were in good, very good, or excellent health were more likely to feel satisfied with their retirement than those with poor or even fair health. What's more, health status was even more likely to lead to retirement satisfaction than good relationships or leisure spending.

Aside from enhancing your enjoyment of retirement in general, looking after your physical well-being may also help you feel more financially secure by possibly lowering the amount of money you'll have to shell out for health care, which is one of retirees' largest expenses.

[\(Source: Money Magazine\)](#)



Marriage Can Make You Better With Money

Marriage spurs some people to make smarter financial decisions, according to a survey of more than 1,000 married people by financial services firm TD Ameritrade that was released last month.

More than one in three people (37%) say that they started paying more attention to finances once they got married.

What's more, 30% said they started saving more money once they got married, and 10% say they started spending less money.

Some of this could be that generally when you get married your household income rises — which could make it easier, for example, to save more. Data from the IRS found that taxpayers who are single claim that they have an annual adjusted gross income of about \$35,000 per year, compared to married people who tend to claim between roughly \$65,000 and \$118,000 a year.

A lot of this has to do with how marriage changes our views on money. For many, it's the first time they really focus on things like saving to start a family or saving to retire together — so it spurs them to behave more responsibly with money, notes JJ Kinahan, the chief market strategist at TD Ameritrade.

Plus, you now have another person to answer to when it comes to how you deal with money. Indeed, three in 10 married people say that the single biggest financial benefit to getting married is having moral support and assistance keeping on track financially from another person.

[\(Source: Dow Jones & Company\)](#)

This is What Your Brain Does When You Have Money Woes

Most Americans are anxious about their finances, and that stress can lead to bad financial decisions.

Getting advice can alleviate stress and help you feel better about the choices you make. Worrying about your wallet can mess up your head.

Weighing whether to buy a house or a car or even how to budget for the week doesn't just take a mental toll — those decisions actually impact brain function, according to a new study by Northwestern Mutual.

Eight in 10 Americans are anxious about their finances, and that stress can lead to bad financial choices, the 2017 Brain on Finance study found.

Northwestern Mutual partnered with neuroscience research firm ThinkAlike Laboratories to

measure the electrical activity of people's brains when they are evaluating different financial scenarios.

Those who felt pressure to make a hasty financial decision were more prone to buyer's remorse, said Sam Barnett, a neuroscience researcher at ThinkAlike. That proved true across all ages, demographics and education levels, he said.

Student loan debt, in particular, is a **huge source of stress for many borrowers** — especially now, as the student loan grace period nears its end.

Half of those dealing with student loan debt said they feel anxious or depressed, according to a separate study by online lender SoFi.

A third said they have lost sleep over it and 15 percent of respondents sought out a mental health professional to help them deal with the stress of their student debt.

[\(Source: CNBC\)](#)



10 Surprising Places to Get Cheap Home Goods

There are plenty of cost-effective alternatives with wares that will help you differentiate your home — and look more chic in the process.

Below, are 10 stores to add to your shopping list, according to several interior design experts.

Arlyn Hernandez, Apartment Therapy Design Editor

RugsUSA: I have personally purchased four rugs from RugsUSA and have never been disappointed. They have an on-going 70% off promotion and usually throw in an additional 15% off around major shopping holidays.

Land of Nod: Sure, this is technically a “kids” retailer, but Land of Nod has such fantastic furniture like desks, baskets, curtains, lighting and beyond. Certainly a little pricier than your Targets and IKEAs of the world, but still within reach.

Urban Outfitters: I’m a sucker for all things Anthropologie, but their price tags can be off-putting. Enter Urban Outfitters. Some highlights from the store include their lighting, rugs, and small furnishings like coffee tables, and accent pieces.

H&M Home: Look here first for throw pillow covers (which usually run about \$10), curtains, duvets and bath accessories. Super stylish and affordable.

T.J. Maxx online: It’s a great source for pillows, accent chairs, bar carts, and beyond.

Venus Wong, Refinery29 Lifestyle Contributing Editor

Trouva: This is one of my go-to sites for unique homewares. The online retailer pulls inventory from a network of indie boutiques and artisans based in the UK, so you’ll hardly clash with anyone else.

Uncommon Goods: Like the name suggests, Uncommon Goods is a bastion of unique home products that serve as smart solutions to common household problems, from wine tables to phone sanitizers.

Kate Arends and Stefani Ellenbecker, Wit + Delight Founder and Editorial Director

World Market – Great home goods and kitchenware at very affordable prices. If you want to insert a little bohemia into your home while saving a buck, this is a great place to start.

Canvas Home – Canvas Home offers adorable dining wear that is simple, yet sophisticated, at prices that won’t break the bank. We also love their gold cutlery.

Home Goods We love Home Goods for finding that hidden gem. They usually have everything we're looking for. We walk in and find brand names galore, great quality kitchenware, and even bedding at very low prices.

[\(Source: Money Magazine\)](#)



1 in Every 20 Americans is Now a Millionaire

In its annual report on the state of global wealth, Credit Suisse says **1.1 million new millionaires were created in the U.S. in 2017**. That brings the **total number of millionaires in the U.S.** up to approximately **15,356,000**, or about one in every 20 Americans.

The rise in the stock market is the biggest reason for the gains, which in turn were driven by both stronger underlying economic conditions and the prospect of lower taxes and deregulation, Credit Suisse reported.

“Wealth per adult has now fully recovered [from financial crisis lows], and is 30% above the 2006 level,” the bank says. “There is some uncertainty about future interest rates and stock market prospects, but otherwise the signs are mostly positive for household wealth.”

The top 10 countries for median wealth were:

1. Switzerland: \$229,000
2. Australia: \$195,400
3. Belgium: \$161,000
4. New Zealand: \$147,600
5. Japan: \$123,700
6. France: \$119,700
7. Singapore: \$108,900
8. United Kingdom: \$102,600
9. Canada: \$91,058
10. Taiwan: \$87,257

[\(Source: MSN Money\)](#)



Older Americans Want to Work -- So Why Aren't They?

Many retirees want to return to the workforce, even years after they left their last job

Roughly **two in five retirees said they would be open to going back to work** if they could find a similar job in terms of pay, responsibilities and hours worked as their last one, according to a new working paper distributed by National Bureau of Economic Research.

And yet despite this willingness to continue working, **two-thirds of older Americans go straight into full retirement**, according to a separate report released in June. At the same time, the average retirement age is rising.

What do older Americans want?

Nearly **60% of retirees** said they **would return to work if they had a more flexible schedule.**

One in five retirees would take an **hourly wage reduction of more than 20% to get a job.**

11% of people who transitioned directly to complete retirement looked for a new job.

The researchers in the report distributed by the NBER based their findings on more than 2,700 responses in an online survey of account holders by The Vanguard Group who are at least 55 years old and have at least \$10,000 in their accounts with the company.

And when they got a new job?

38% of respondents had a **“bridge job,”** a short-term job before completely retiring.

80% of those with a “bridge job” sought one out, rather than it just falling into their laps.

One-third of people who pursued a bridge job wanted less responsibility.

Some economists have argued that America is staring down a major labor shortage as more baby boomers begin to enter retirement. As of 2007, 20% of the working age population in the U.S. was 65 or older. By 2050 that percentage is expected to increase to 40%.

Meanwhile, the population of adults below retirement age has been growing at a much slower pace, creating concerns about the country’s ability to fill open jobs and to pay for retirees’ benefits.

And more older Americans are being **forced to continue working out of necessity.**

Women are 80% more likely to live in poverty past the age of 65 — which explains why today **15% of women 65 years and older are working,** up from 8.6% in 1996.

So what is keeping older Americans from finding work?

While the report’s data did not reflect the interests on behalf of employers, the researchers argue that older Americans who aren’t working are not necessarily choosing that fate.

“We conclude that older Americans’ labor force participation near and after normal retirement ages is limited more by a lack of acceptable job opportunities or low expectations about finding them ... than by unwillingness to work longer,” the researchers wrote.

[\(Source: MarketWatch\)](#)



Money Worries? --> 5 Financial Rules to Live By

1) Spend Less Than You Earn

Boosting your income could come from asking for a raise, doing overtime, taking on side gigs, or starting a new business. Spending less than you earn usually requires tracking your spending, setting a budget, and sticking to self-imposed spending limits.

Or, to force yourself to spend less than you earn without hassling with a budget, automate your savings and have money withdrawn directly from your paycheck before you ever see it.

2) Institute a 24-Hour Rule for Big Purchases

To stop the guilt and make sure you're getting your money's worth out of every buy, institute a waiting period of at least 24-hours before you make a big purchase. Your definition of a "big" purchase will vary depending upon your income. Around \$100 is a good number for many families.

The 24-hour waiting period gives you time to think about whether it's really worth such a big outlay — do you really need that new iPhone or is there something better you could do with all that money?

3) Get on the Same Page with Your Spouse

To ensure you're on the same page, set aside time for regular money talks. Agree on the big stuff, like how much you want to save and what your big financial goals are for the future — then find ways to work together to achieve your plans.

4) Save for a Rainy Day

If you don't have rainy day savings, you'll perpetually end up in debt when you have to put your emergencies on a credit card. This will derail repayment efforts and make saving harder.

An ideal goal is to save enough cash to cover around 3-6 months of living expenses. If that sounds insurmountable, start with saving a little money each month until you have at least \$1,000. You can grow your emergency fund over time, but at least this will cover most financial disasters without sending you reaching for your credit cards.

5) Prioritize Your Retirement Savings

Before paying for anything else other than the most-essential bills, divert a portion of your paycheck toward a workplace 401(k), an IRA, or other tax-advantaged retirement account.

Ideally, you should try to work up to saving at least 15% of your income, but start with whatever you can spare. Aggressively increase your savings — including diverting your raises to your retirement funds — until you've reached your savings goal.

[\(Source: USA Today\)](#)



Consumer Confidence Hits New 17-Year High

The Conference Board's measure of consumer confidence rose to 129.5 in November

Economists polled by Reuters expected a decline to 124

The index hit the highest mark since registering 132.6 in November 2000

Consumer optimism ripped higher in November, building on historic highs set in the previous month.

The Conference Board's measure of consumer confidence rose to 129.5, the highest mark since the index hit 132.6 in November 2000. Economists polled by Reuters anticipated a decline to 124, after October registered 126.2.

"Consumer confidence increased for a fifth consecutive month and remains at a 17-year high," Lynn Franco, Director of Economic Indicators at The Conference Board, said in a statement.

"Consumers are entering the holiday season in very high spirits and foresee the economy expanding at a healthy pace into the early months of 2018," Franco said.

The index takes into account Americans' views of current economic conditions and their expectations for the next six months. Economists pay close attention to the numbers because consumer spending accounts for about 70 percent of U.S. economic activity.

[\(Source: CNBC\)](#)

6 Habits That Will Help You Become a Better Leader, According to Someone Who Coaches CEOs

(Helen Rothberg is a professor in the school of management at Marist College. Her book *The Perfect Mix: Everything I Know About Leadership I Learned as a Bartender* is out now.)

Over the past 25 years, I've coached a mix of executives in for profit and not-for-profit companies like Kellogg's, Monsanto, SoCalGas, Newark City Government, The United Way, IBM, and AT&T.

I've been in board rooms with people fretting about decreases in market share, swirling about regulatory agencies, and agonizing about visions for a tomorrow they don't quite understand.

Along with getting paid to calm their nerves, there are a few common themes I've noticed that keep popping up that are helpful for everyone, from the C-Suite to the junior staffers.

1) Sharing is Key

Share what you know. People believe that knowledge is power so they tend to hold it close. If the people I speak to would have shared what they knew with each other, they could have come up with a similar conclusion.

2) Brilliance Resides Where You Least Expect It

People in finance, product development and legal affairs have a different understanding about the market than marketing people do.

Therefore, keeping in your insulated worlds can limit you at the workplace; find opportunities in other departments to use the breadth of what you can do.

3) Figure Out How to Innovate

Everyone at work should keep in mind that the skills, knowledge and talent that got you to where you are won't necessarily keep you there. Continue to learn and innovate products, services and self.

4) No One is Perfect, and That's a Good Thing

Getting it wrong is your greatest opportunity to getting it right the next time. Don't let conformity keep you from taking risks or judiciously speaking your mind. And, if you are wrong, learn from it and move on quickly.

5) Leave Your Desk

Engage in more at your company than just your office. Join task forces, volunteer at organizations the company supports, do something as simple as go to lunch with a coworker or boss. You never know where concerns and good ideas can be heard and travel upward.

6) Your Problem is Not What You Think It Is

The root of a problem is not always obvious. Even if there's agreement in the boardroom, such cohesion can lead to interfering with something that might not be broken while what is broken gains steam. Look deeper into a problem by talking with your peers across the organization. The extra effort can yield important findings impactful to your organization and you.

[\(Source: Money Magazine\)](#)

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