



## Are You Really Ready to Retire?

It's easy to think that reaching retirement age will automatically usher you into a happier time of life. Maybe not—check out these considerations before you quit work.

Ah, retirement. You've been working your whole life to get here. What a relief not having to work! Well, it's not quite as simple as that. Let's talk about what you need to consider ahead of this transition.

### Look Ahead; Not Behind

We tend to think of retiring as leaving work behind. Instead, consider what you will be retiring to. Try to get specific and visualize what your days ahead will hold.

Is travel a top priority? Which countries or areas are at the top of your list? How long do you want to be on the road for each trip? In a year? Do you want to travel in an RV, camp, stay at hotels or some combination of those? You can always change your mind, but it can be helpful to start with some ideas. Take an RV on a test run by renting one for a short trip before committing to a purchase.

Will you spend more time with the grandkids? How much? Will you take Susie to dance lessons or watch the baby three days a week? Do you want to volunteer for single charity events, or become a regular volunteer where you might form friendships with others? [continued on page 2...](#)

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Find out what all those letters mean and set yourself up for success

## WHAT CREDENTIALS SHOULD YOUR FINANCIAL ADVISOR HOLD?

### And what the heck do all those letters mean?

You may be bewildered by the initials following your advisor's name—or a prospective advisor—or wondering about their absence. The answers you need depend on what your advisor does for you.

If you want your advisor to write up a personalized financial plan, hire one with the Certified Financial Planner (CFP) designation. If you're looking for life insurance, you might want to find a Chartered Life Underwriter (CLU). Some other respected designations

that are becoming more common are the Chartered Retirement Planning Counselor (CRPC) who specializes in retirement planning, and the Financial Paraplanner Qualified Professional (FPQP).

The gold standard for someone who recommends or manages investments for you is a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA). This is the top-level designation in the financial industry that centers on investments, especially for high net-worth clients.

Is finally learning to play an instrument or improve on an existing talent of interest to you? Do you want to casually explore this talent with others, or do you want to play in a band on stage or at church?

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## Blocking Out Time

You don't have to make a firm plan for anything; part of the joy of retirement is that you're allowed to change—again and again—how you spend your days. But it is helpful to have some sort of structure, as early as possible, as you transition into your new life.

You may need, or want, to build your days around a part-time job. You could join a reading group that meets once a month or have a weekly golf game with your best friend. You might commit to exploring a new opportunity with [MeetUp](#) every couple of weeks until you see what sticks, or attend a few meetings of a local history club or game night at your library.

Having some scheduled outings can help you fill chunks of time, which may ease the transition from days filled with work projects to days that may be unnervingly open. Take an hour for coffee and scrolling through news every morning if it helps and spend a couple of hours walking or at the gym every afternoon. Bake a treat for the neighbors every Saturday. Whatever activities float your boat, early retirement is a time to schedule them in so you can continue to feel productive.

## Social Security And Medicare

There can be severe penalties for failing to enroll on time or electing the wrong program/age to begin receiving payments. Go to an informational session at your local library or consult your finance professional about when to claim Social Security and Medicare benefits. They will not start automatically.

Although you will often see recommendations online to wait until age 70 to take Social Security, and

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## Member Testimonials

"We travel several times throughout the year and enjoy the security of leaving the Village with no cares about mail, papers, plant care or maintenance while we are gone. Also, I had used my mower and snow blower very effectively over the years, but now I can let somebody else take care of that for me, and I don't miss it at all."

**Dick and Sharon R.**

"The co-op makes real sense because you have no worries about safety, security, maintenance, etc. I've visited other Village Cooperatives and was delighted to find that the residents love their new homes. I really don't know what more a person could ask for with this lifestyle."

**Bob H.**

## QUARTERLYQUOTE

*If there's heaven for me, I'm sure it has a beach attached to it.*

— Jimmy Buffett

# Simple Solutions for Common Tech Problems

Tech problems plague all of us sooner or later, but you can quickly become a guru at defensive and offensive moves to make yourself, or those you care about, less vulnerable.



If you've ever had your computer quit on you, been victimized by a scam, or had a device hacked, then you know how expensive these problems can be. But what if you knew how to prevent some problems, and fix others, with a little know-how and sometimes, some inexpensive equipment? You will thank yourself again and again for mitigating headache-inducing tech problems before they happen, or using simple fixes to make devices work, or work better.

- **Deter Hackers and Scammers.** Bad actors may try to take over your Facebook account or ask for money over the phone. Don't make it easy for them. Protect accounts with [multi-factor authentication](#). Update passwords by changing any that have been reused or compromised and use a [password manager](#) to keep track of them. Read the [Washington Post Scam 101 Guide](#) to keep up with the latest fraud tactics. Share them with friends and family.
- **Help Fellow Seniors Avoid Future Problems.** Make sure their devices are running the latest software, and that they update automatically. Have them check passwords like you did for your own hardware. Find a local shop they can go to if they have problems. Set up [screen sharing](#) so you can troubleshoot no matter where you are.
- **Increase Online Privacy.** Read this [online privacy guide](#) to determine what settings you can change. [Remove personal data](#) from Google searches. [Scrub your information from the internet](#) wherever it makes sense.

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## Quick and Cheap Device Fixes

Sometimes all you need is a little bit of tech or know-how to make what you have work better. Save a bundle of money with these four tech tips for common devices.

### Computer crashing?

Do movies suddenly quit streaming? You don't need a new router or extender, or even a better internet service plan. Get a [cat 6 ethernet cable](#) that plugs directly into your router on one end and your computer on the other. Even the longest 150' cable is less than \$31, a whole lot cheaper than other options.

### Computer slowing down?

You don't need to buy a new laptop when you can solve the problem with a flash drive for about \$10. Just transfer large files onto the flash drive, a removable storage device about the size of a small pack of gum.



## Try This First to Fix Your Computer

If your computer quits working or quits working well, you can feel panicked and desperate. You need it now, and you don't want to spend hundreds of dollars. Before you run to the nearest computer store, try these quick fixes to get your laptop operating smoothly.

First, turn it off and then on again. You'd be surprised how many times your problem will be gone. Here's how to [restart your computer the right way](#).

Try [clearing the cache](#) of your browser. This erases the record of the last pages you've visited that gets stored on your hard drive.

Next, run a [scan for viruses and malware](#). Your anti-viral software should have warned you about any problem, but check to be sure.

[Delete the cookies](#) in your browser. Cookies are tiny files that can inhibit optimal performance.

Finally, if the problem is related to a specific program, you can uninstall and reinstall the software on your [Mac](#) or [PC](#).

## Community Spotlight

If you've thought about cashing out of your house and moving into a worry-free lifestyle in a community with peers, this is your time! With so many amenities and home style options to choose from, hassle-free home ownership is within reach. **Call us today to learn more about cooperative living and availability at this location.**

that is often wise advice, there are a variety of personal circumstances when starting Social Security at an earlier age may be best. Start by reading this [guide to Social Security](#) to determine how to optimize your own situation. continued from page 2...

Medicare is wonderful to have, but it is a complicated healthcare system with outside implications for missteps. Start by reading up on how to [get started with Medicare](#). Read articles about the pros and cons of Original Medicare and Medicare Advantage and consult the [State Health Insurance Assistance Program](#) in your state for more information about Medicare in general and the plans available in your area.

## Finances

Before you fully retire, it's crucial to know how much you will spend every month to make sure your income will cover your needs, and hopefully, your wants. Your financial situation will largely dictate your retirement lifestyle. Work with a financial professional closely to make sure you don't get hit by unpleasant surprises.

Start by making a budget of current expenses, then remove items you will no longer need to spend on, such as a work wardrobe or a mortgage that will be paid off. Add in expenses that may increase, like traveling more or helping to fund college for the grandkids.

Take a look at what income you can expect in retirement. You may have a pension, Social Security, a 401(k), IRA, and brokerage investments. Work with an advisor to ensure that your investments are properly diversified and understand how much you'll be able to safely use without depleting your accounts.

Plan on unexpected expenses. If you still live in a house, have a fund available for the inevitable surprises, such as needing a new roof, windows, siding, furnace, A/C and other major appliances. Otherwise, have funds available for car repairs, a health emergency, or helping family members through tough times.

Finally, clear up debts that may be depleting your budget. Credit card debt is particularly costly and pervasive. Get rid of it before you quit working.

Like pretty much everything in life, easing into a happy retirement requires planning and some work on your part to get it right. To make the most of those years, you'll need to prepare a framework for how you'll pay for them, and how you may spend them. With that in place, they likely will be golden years for you.

### Sources/Related Content:

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*\*This article is not intended to be a substitute for professional financial advice from a qualified financial advisor.*



**Dawn Anderson**

SALES MANAGER

**Sales Office:**

8412 Davis Blvd., Suite 130  
North Richland Hills, TX 76182

**(817) 770-0200**

[centuryhills@reeddevelopment.com](mailto:centuryhills@reeddevelopment.com)

SEE WHAT MAKES US DIFFERENT  
[www.VillageCooperative.com](http://www.VillageCooperative.com)

  
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