Working Longer

Retirement Decisions: Challenges and Possible Solutions

RETIREMENT PLANNING CHALLENGES

Rising Life Expectancy
As life expectancy has increased, workers need to accumulate more savings to cover a longer retirement period.

Low Long-term Rates of Return
The lower the rates of return, the higher the savings rate needs to be to replace a certain percentage of final earnings.

Working longer is a powerful way to improve retirement prospects
Among 65–69-year-olds...
- 57% are fully retired
- 18% are partly retired
- 23% are not retired
- 2% don’t know

POSSIBLE RESPONSE: WORKING LONGER

40% of 59–64-year-olds expect to work past 65.

Life expectancy at age 65 is the average number of years that a person at that age can be expected to live, assuming that age-specific mortality levels remain constant.

Source: OECD (2019).

Rising Life Expectancy

Life Expectancy at Age 65

Men
- 1960: 12.8 years
- 2016: 18.0 years

Women
- 1960: 15.8 years
- 2016: 20.6 years

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It is not about working forever; it is about delaying retirement to ensure financial security upon completely retiring.

Data from the 2014 Health and Retirement Study (HRS) shows that about 60% of workers age 50+ would prefer to gradually reduce their working hours as they get older.

Source: 2014 HRS.

Source: OECD (2019).

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Please visit GFLEC.org for additional information regarding our work and research.

Research support was provided by the National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE).
WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN DECIDING TO WORK LONGER

401(k) Savings
Working longer means people contribute more to their 401(k) plan and have more time to take advantage of the power of compound interest.

Social Security Benefits
Each year of delay increases the monthly benefit of Social Security by 7-8%. By waiting until age 70 to start claiming, monthly Social Security benefits will be maximized.

Retirement Period
Working longer shortens the retirement period for which the savings need to last.

Work Environment
Work enables people to feel mentally stimulated while offering a social support system.

PHASED RETIREMENT PROGRAMS AS A POSSIBLE SOLUTION

Traditional welfare systems are forced to change to adapt to the greater retirement risks and challenges faced by individuals. One possible solution to the need of working longer are phased retirement programs offered by employers.

Definition of Phased Retirement
“a gradual change in a person's work arrangements as a transition toward full retirement. This may involve a change of employers (including self-employment), a change of career or a reduction in the number of hours worked.”

INITIAL ACTIONS FOR NEGOTIATING A PHASED RETIREMENT PROGRAM

Check what’s available with your employer
If your employer offers a formal program, find the requirements and see if you qualify. Also, check which benefits are included and how your compensation will be calculated.

If there is no formal program, see whether your employer would be open to an informal arrangement and start the conversation.

Prepare for a conversation with your employer
Create a compelling case highlighting your experience and expertise.

Develop your ideal flexible work arrangement, if there is no structured program available, and present it to your employer. Also, think about transferring your knowledge by offering to help in hiring and training new employees.