RETIREMENT INVESTMENT ADVISORS, INC.

2925 United Founders Blvd.
Oklahoma City, OK 73112
(405) 842-3443
(800) 725-4530

9300 John Hickman Pkwy.
Suite 504
Frisco, TX 75035
(972) 377-2850

www.TheRetirementPath.com

top row, left to right: Chad A. Rudy, CFP®, Randy L. Thurman, CFP®, Andrew K. Flinton, CFP®, and Alexx V. Peralta, CFP®
bottom row, left to right: Sylvia L. Sterling, CFP®, Brenda C. Bolander, CFP®, and Carol Ringrose Alexander, CFP®

Financial Briefs

OCTOBER 2025

Making Money Last through Retirement

What many people don't realize is just how hard it is for one's money to last *through* retirement without having proper planning in place. The fact is, retirement is tricky no matter how well-off you think you are entering it, and making your money last is something that can only be achieved with careful calculation. Ready to learn how to make the most of your retirement without running short of money halfway through? Here are a handful of tips.

1. Make Your Home Age-Proof

The importance of age-proofing one's home is often overlooked by those who are preparing for retirement. Over time, wear and tear can wreak havoc on even the most well-built homes, and repairs can end up being extremely costly. What's the solution? Make your home age-proof before entering retirement. An age-proof home is not only able to withstand the elements and the test of time, but also will be easy for you and a partner to live in when you reach old age. Most age-proof homes don't feature staircases, for example, due to mobility issues later in life.

2. Choose the Right Withdrawal Rate

The withdrawal rate you choose for your retirement plan will have a major impact on how comfortably you're able to retire. Many people make the mistake of choosing a withdrawal rate that is simply too high, such as 10% in their first year

Continued on page 2

When Should You Consider a 401(k) Plan?

In 1981, tax laws established the 401(k) plan, a form of defined-contribution retirement plan. The government's motivation was to encourage Americans to increase their private savings as a supplement to Social Security. For employers, the appeal was that defined-contribution plans are simpler to administer and less troublesome to fund than pension plans. For workers, the advantages include an immediate reduction in taxable income, a potential investment boost in the form of employer matching contributions, and the potential for higher earnings accumulation from tax deferrals on capital gains and income.

No wonder, then, that defined-contribution plans are among the most recognized and prized benefits in the American workplace. Employers have learned that the range, quality, and performance of their plan's investment choices matter, as do the ability to make frequent changes in investment choices, take out loans, and flexibility to tap plan assets when employees experience financial hardship. They have also learned that a generous employer-matching contribution is the single most valued feature for employees.

But is your employer-sponsored 401(k) always the best place for your money? The answer may not be an unequivocal yes. Here are five questions to answer when deciding whether and how much you should contribute:

1. Do you have an emergency fund? Typically, every household's first priority is to establish an emergency fund equal to three to six months of earned income. While there are ways to access funds in your 401(k) plan (loans and hardship withdrawals), it is generally

Continued on page 3

FR2019-0919-0047

Making Money

Continued from page 1

of retirement. It's tempting to take out a fair amount of money and treat yourself once retirement age has been met, but it's generally not a good idea.

In the end, the right withdrawal rate for you will depend largely on the strength and diversification of your portfolio. A smart starting point for the first year of retirement for most people is 4%, keeping the same rate plus adjusting for inflation in the years to come.

3. Keep a Rainy Day Fund

Most people believe the best way to ensure a comfortable retirement is to put as much money as possible into their retirement funds. However, it's essential to keep a solid rainy day fund in case of an emergency. This fund will exist *outside* of your retirement plan. How much should you keep? In general, most people will benefit from keeping a rainy day fund of at least six months of living expenses available. Though it doesn't seem like much, it may be exactly what you need should an emergency occur.

4. Get a Light Job

Reaching the age of retirement doesn't mean you need to stop working altogether. For many, the shock of no longer working can actually be rather hard to deal with. There's something about community, for example, that can be hard to find outside a normal work environment. The solution, for some, can be found in getting a light job, and doing so comes along with a number of benefits.

While most people don't want to work hard once they've retired, there are plenty of lighter jobs that can not only help to foster community, but also bring in an increased amount of income each month. This money can be put towards a savings account to add extra insurance for retirement. Or you can choose to use it as spending money. Either way, holding a casual job after retirement is a great way to stay active and remain happy and healthy.

Retirement is a tricky process, and there's no way to plan it better than working one-on-one with your financial advisor. Please call if you'd like to discuss this in more detail. ▮▮

5 Reasons to Start Saving

Saving money is a bit like exercising. We all know how important it is, but it can be hard to actually get into the habit. Here are five reasons to help keep you motivated.

1. You'll Be Prepared for Emergencies — Here's an alarming fact: most Americans don't have enough money saved to cover even relatively small unexpected expenses. Without cash on hand to cover these irregular but inevitable costs, you're more likely to turn to credit cards or loans when the need arises. Not only are you forced to take on debt, but you don't have time to shop around, increasing the chance that you'll end up with an expensive, high-interest loan.

2. You'll Be More Independent — With a healthy amount of savings, you can feel more free to take risks, like starting your own business, heading back to school to train for a new career, purchasing a home of your own, or moving to a new city. Plus, without savings, you're living on the financial edge, and you're more likely to find yourself stuck in situations that you may not be satisfied with. Committing to savings today, even if it's just a small amount, will start to give you the freedom to make different choices in your life.

3. You'll Be Able to Reach Your Goals — Maybe you simply want to enjoy a comfortable retirement one day. Or perhaps you're dreaming of a second home by the lake, sending your kids to college, or starting your own business. Whatever your dreams, they likely have one thing in common — they probably require some money to become a reality.

4. You'll Be Able to Earn More Money — Saving isn't just about setting aside what you've already earned. It's also about putting your money to work for you. Depending on where you save and invest your money, you can earn more just by being diligent about saving. Because of the power of compounding earnings, even relatively small amounts can grow.

5. You'll Be Happier — Money isn't the only thing that can make us happy. But there's evidence that *saving* money, even in small amounts, can make us happier. In contrast, having debt (often a consequence of a lack of savings) tends to lead to unhappiness. ▮▮

When Should?

Continued from page 1

easier to use an emergency fund.

2. Are you properly insured? If you have dependents, life insurance is a much more cost-effective way to provide for their needs than a savings plan.

3. Does your employer match your contributions? An employer-matching contribution is the single most compelling reason to participate in a workplace defined-contribution plan. So if your plan features a match, it's generally a good idea to participate at least up to the maximum matching amount.

That said, over the past few years, many employers have been forced to cut back or eliminate their ongoing matching contributions. If your plan doesn't offer one, it's not necessarily a reason to stay away from it. But it does mean you should research other ways to save for your retirement.

4. Does your plan offer enough diversification? Some plans offer very few investment choices. There may be nothing wrong with these choices, but limited choices may not offer the kind of diversification you need. You may need to open your own individual retirement account (IRA) to find the wider range of opportunities that will maximize your returns while controlling for risk.

5. Are the funds well managed? Not all funds perform equally well, and some charge more than others. While you shouldn't blame a fund when the financial markets underperform, you should evaluate a fund's performance relative to the markets in which it invests.

Is your employer's 401(k) the best place for your next retirement savings dollar? Only a thorough review of the plan and your needs can answer that question. Please call if you'd like to discuss your 401(k) plan in more detail.

FR2019-0919-0047
FR2023-0313-0007

Rules for Retirement Investing

When you start planning for retirement, you will need to determine the lifestyle you want to live and the income you will need. That way, you can define specific goals for how you are going to get there. Following are some basic rules that can help you prepare for retirement planning.

Investment Options

The first step is to understand your investment options. You will want to make sure you understand both the risks and the rewards of various types of investments and how they fit in your portfolio. Consider 401(k) plans and Roth 401(k) plans, traditional IRAs, Roth IRAs, SEPs, and SIMPLE IRAs.

Start Investing Early

The sooner you start investing for your retirement, the greater chance you have of building a significant portfolio. Time is your friend when it comes to investing because you have many years to invest, you have time to rebound from losses, and most importantly, you have the power of compounding.

Know Your Numbers

To make good financial decisions, you need to know where you stand financially, and also where you need to be by retirement. You should regularly calculate your net worth, which is the difference between your assets and your liabilities. Your assets should include cash, investments, property and personal property, such as jewelry, art, cars, etc. Liabilities include the debt you owe, such as mortgages, auto loans, credit cards, student loans, and medical bills. Once you understand your financial position, it will help you determine what you will need to do to reach your retirement goals.

Set Goals

When setting goals for your retirement, you'll want to be as specific as possible so you can measure your progress. You should review your goals on a regular basis, because they may change over time as your life takes twists and turns and your financial situation changes.

Don't Let Emotions Rule

Emotions are probably the biggest nemesis to investing. When your investments are doing well, you may become greedy and underestimate risks. When your investments perform poorly, fear may cause you to pull out of the market so you can't take advantage of any recovery.

It is important to keep your emotions under control during periods of volatility so you can make good decisions and rebound from losses. Try to maintain a balanced portfolio that will better weather both the ups and downs of the market.

Read the Fine Print

Make sure you understand the fees associated with your investment and retirement accounts, including transaction fees, expense ratios, administrative fees, and loads. Your account statements will show the fees you are paying and the prospectus for the funds you own will show information on expense ratios. While a prospectus is not necessarily a fun read, you should take the time to review it carefully because it provides a lot of important information about your investments.

Admit When You Need Help

Investing is not easy. Don't take risks with your retirement by not seeking help when you need it. Please call if you'd like to discuss this in more detail.

News and Announcements

From The Rudy Household

It's hard to believe we celebrated our boat's fifth "birthday" last month. As first-time boat owners, we had no idea if our enthusiasm would last, but five years later, we love it more than ever. This past summer, our daughters often invited friends out for tubing, swimming, or simply soaking up the sun. It was great to hit pause on our busy lives and enjoy a shared experience in nature.

My wife, Amy, and I also find our own peaceful moments on the water. Sometimes it's just the two of us; other times we're joined by friends. We never know what the day will bring. Will it be windy and wavy, or will the water be smooth? Will we slowly drift or drive fast and far? Are we going to swim or stay in the boat? What songs will come up on the playlist? Will we be out for one hour or four? What we do know is that the sunset will be amazing. Every sunset is different and uniquely beautiful!

We had no idea how much we would love boat ownership, but we are happy with our decision from five years ago. We've found that with a little maintenance and a lot of appreciation, our boat gives us opportunities to create memories and moments that truly matter. We hope to have many more happy boating days ahead with the people we love.

Chad A. Rudy, CFP®
Executive Vice President - TX

From the Peralta Household

Lately, I've been reflecting on how quickly time passes. It feels like just yesterday I was in Houston celebrating my niece Addie's third birthday, and now I've returned from Penny's very first. I still remember the moment my sister told me I was going to be an uncle, and now I'm having full conversations with Addie. Before long, Penny will be talking too, and we'll start to see her personality shine.

One of our founders, Randy Thurman, often says, "It doesn't take long to live a lifetime." The older I get, the more I understand what he means. Life moves fast, and the moments that matter most can slip by if we're not intentional. That's why I'll probably make a few more trips to Houston before the year ends; to create as many memories as possible with the people I love most.

Another phrase I hear often from our president, Andrew Flinton, and one I share with families all the time is, "Live a life that allows you to look back and say, 'I'm glad I did,' not 'I wish I would have.'"

I'm learning to blend the wisdom of both sayings in my own life. Time may move quickly, but we can slow it down by being present, cherishing the moments, and making choices that lead to a well-lived life.

Alexx V. Peralta, CFP®
Financial Advisor

Compliance Corner

Have you received a text claiming your Amazon account is suspended? You are not alone. Scam texts like these are increasingly common. Before responding to an unsolicited text message, check for red flags:

- **Panic-inducing language:** Scammers rely on emotional, not rational, reactions.
- **Requests for sensitive information:** If you are asked to provide personal details, it's likely a scam.
- **Poor spelling or grammar:** These are classic signs of a fraudulent message.
- **Suspicious sender information:** Valid Amazon texts often come from short codes like 262966. A random 10-digit number or odd sender name like "AMZN-Alert" should raise concern.
- **Too-good-to-be-true offers:** Messages like "You've won a $500 Amazon gift card!" are bait. Scammers use fake rewards to trick you into providing sensitive information.

Helpful reminders:

- **Do not click on any links** until you have verified the source.
- **Log in directly** to your Amazon account to check for alerts or messages.
- **Report the text message** by forwarding it to 7726 (SPAM).
- **Block the sender** and delete the message.

Jade Franke
FPQP®, IACCP®
Chief Compliance Officer