Critical Retirement Mistakes to Avoid

Life happens so fast these days. As a teenager in high school, you are consumed with homework and friends. In college, you choose your area of studies in hopes of getting the career of your dreams. After you graduate, your dream is sometimes delayed with the harsh reality of entry-level jobs, lower pay than originally expected, and a few unforeseen bumps along the way. Years later, you finally earn that dream job, you meet and marry the man/woman of your dreams, you start your beautiful family that you always wanted, you buy that bigger house on the hill, you plan spectacular yearly vacations for your family, and you invest in your brilliant child’s Ivy League education. Wow… your life speeds by before you know it. So, what do you do now with your retirement years on the horizon? Don’t become so blinded by planning for your career, success, and family early in life that you forget to plan for yourself later in life too.

When planning for your retirement, avoid making these classic errors that could potentially threaten your retirement savings, happiness, and financial security.

**Mistake #1:** You start saving for your retirement in your later years. **Solution:** You need to start saving when you are young. Don’t be caught behind the eight ball and trying to make up for lost time, and consequently, lost savings. Liz Weston, author of The Ten Commandments of Money: Survive and Thrive in the New Economy, suggests that an individual needs to start saving for retirement by age 35. Otherwise, he/she will have an impossible uphill battle trying to catch up.

**Mistake #2:** You ignore your debt. **Solution:** Before you retire, focus on tackling your mortgage and credit card debt. It sounds obvious and somewhat self-explanatory; however, some studies now indicate that older Americans are taking on more mortgage and credit card debt at an alarmingly increased rate. Don’t add to this increasing number of older Americans who enter into retirement deep in debt. Pay off your credit card debt and mortgage debt as soon as possible. Make your climb out of debt number one priority so you are not making these payments with your retirement savings.

**Mistake #3:** You expect a large amount of retirement support from Social Security. **Solution:** Base your expectations on reality and not what you hope it will be. Don’t place so much of your retirement stability on your expectations of Social Security. Just think, if you underestimate the boost provided by your social security, you will only be pleasantly surprised in the long run. This way of thinking is much better than the alternative method of being caught off guard.

**Mistake #4:** Your investment decisions resemble the same investing risks that you took in your twenties. **Solution:** Diversify your retirement investments so you don’t place all of your eggs in one basket. What happens if the basket breaks? What do you have to fall back on? You don’t want to lose all of the hard work accomplished with your own blood, sweat, and tears. The vitality of your retirement savings and investments is not worth that kind of risk even if a high-risk investment looks like it will have enormous growth potential. The key word here is “looks”. You do not want to place your future welfare in “looks”; you want to place the future of your retirement stability in “diversification”. That’s right, the term “diversification” is not just a fad term coined for stock portfolios anymore.

-Gregory Ricks
NEW ORLEANS FESTIVALS IN OCTOBER!!!!

**Oktoberfest**: TBA: On the last weekend of September and every weekend during October, visitors can enjoy a piece of Germany in the heart of New Orleans.

**Louisiana Seafood Festival**: October 12-14, 2012: Come out and enjoy the fabulous seafood our city is famous for and be assured that it's as good as the music you'll be hearing at this annual September event in the Fulton Street Mall.

**Crescent City Blues & BBQ Festival**: October 12-14, 2012: This FREE weekend festival presents many of the top performers from southern Louisiana and Mississippi, plus delicious food and unique visual art.

**New Orleans Film Festival**: October 12-18, 2012: New and established filmmakers premiere their latest full-length features, shorts and animation and music videos. Get inspired through the art of film.

**Voodoo Music Experience**: October 26-28, 2012: Held each October around Halloween, Voodoo Music Experience brings together great music, food & crafts.

**Halloween in New Orleans**: October 31, 2012: Thought Halloween was just a silly holiday for trick or treating? Think again. Halloween in New Orleans is an all-out celebration complete with a parade, music festival, cemeteries, and plenty of voodoo magic.

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We're so proud of the triplets doing so well at three of New Orleans’ finest schools.

Gregory Ricks and Associates was able to raise $1,200 in August for New Orleans Women’s Shelter

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Stacey’s Birthday Just passed on September 8!

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Ashley’s Birthday just passed on September 30!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY GREGORY!!!

Gregory’s Birthday is October 3rd!
Dr. Oz’s 8 Secrets to Great Health

Follow these eight simple habits – from sunrise to sunset – to live better and longer, Dr. Oz style.

By ROBERTA CAPLOE, Prevention Magazine October 2012

There’s plenty for Dr. Mehmet Oz to feel good about these days. His TV show, The Dr. Oz Show, is an Emmy Award-winning hit, with an average of 3.5 million viewers daily. His wife, Lisa, and four children (ranging in age from 13 to 26) are flourishing. But now he has an extra spring in his step. “You’re happiest at age 50,” Dr. Oz says. “You’ve worked out your issues and gotten past worrying. You can just enjoy the bliss of being in the game of life.”

Dr. Oz is 52, so he knows what he’s talking about. For him, being in the game of life means that he remains passionately focused on helping Americans live better and longer. “At no point in history have we had the opportunity to be as healthy,” he says. “My prediction is that Prevention readers will all live to 90 but feel 60 - if they want to. It’s all about having the right lifestyle.” That sounded so good to us that we asked Dr. Oz to share what he sees as the eight most important health habits to cultivate. “These are changes you’ll want to make,” he says. “It’s an opportunity to reinvent yourself.”

HABIT 1: Stretch first thing in the morning

“Stretching for 10 minutes every morning has a variety of benefits, including decreasing risk of heart attack, alleviating stress, and improving circulation. You can feel the effects in just 10 days. My morning stretch starts with my hips. If I can’t touch my toes, I know I’m too stiff. Then I loosen Up my neck, because that’s where I store tension. A lot of times I’ll think, I’m too tired to do my sit-ups today. But after stretching for 15 seconds, I have the energy for them. I also do yoga in the morning. I try to feel enough discomfort in the poses so I can breathe through it and loosen up my body. That means I’m ready for meditation – after some activity has taken the nervous energy out of my body. Yoga is perfectly designed for that, and I think it can help a lot of people.”

HABIT 2: Don’t skip breakfast

“Our bodies have a biological expectation of a morning meal, so when you skip breakfast, your body gets confused and thinks there’s a famine. This decreases your metabolic rate and makes it harder to burn calories throughout the day. Additionally, you may end up eating more calories at lunch. But a good breakfast that includes fiber helps you eat fewer empty snacking calories throughout the day. It also helps ensure you have enough energy and ability to concentrate.”

HABIT 3: Show up early

“Being 5 minutes late is a small thing that creates big stress, which in turn can cause chronic inflammation and high blood pressure. So many of us are hypertensive, but it comes from external stressors we place on ourselves, and those are adjustable. For instance, if you get to work at 5 minutes before 9, you’re not stressed because you’re ahead of everybody. You watch them all come in, while they wonder how you got your life so organized. So the mantra should be ‘If you’re not 5 minutes early, you’re late.’ That way, when unexpected things happen, you have a cushion.”

HABIT 4: Get off your tush

“Try replacing couch time with 30 minutes of activity. For example, do the dishes, rearrange your closet, or dance to a favorite song. I pace when I’m on my cell. If you work at a keyboard, sit on a stability ball. It doesn’t matter what it is, and you don’t need to sweat – just be active.”

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HABIT 5: Increase intimacy
“Fundamentally, what has always allowed us to weather the storm of stress is social connection. When we don’t have that structure around us, we pay the penalty in spades. In America in particular, I think we see the results of this lack of connection in weight gain, loss of energy and loss of libido. “So many of us run from intimacy by using hobbies, a job, or events that, on the larger scale, you know deep in your heart aren’t nearly as important. Instead, try a new habit that links you. Write a thank you note every night to someone – a teacher, a coworker, a doctor, a friend or your spouse.”

HABIT 6: Control the 3 PM crash
“Food is absorbed in the gut, the small intestine, and then goes to the liver. When we eat more than we need, the excess nutrients are converted into fat, which gets stored long-term in the body, the liver, and a covering of the intestines called the omentum, the organ that catches and stores fat.
“The worst time of day for mindless eating: 3PM, when energy dips and many people find themselves making a trip to the vending machine to fill upon lots of unnecessary calories. Sugar, by the way, is as addictive as crack cocaine. That’s because when you eat a sugary food, it rushes into your brain and pushes you to have more of it. Salt does the same, by the way, but sugar’s really powerful.
“Instead, carry healthy snacks, like carrot sticks, so you reach for those instead of a bag of chips. If you’re really craving a specific food, though, practice portion control. Acknowledge to yourself that the first taste is the best taste. Have a few bites, and then wash them down with a big glass of water. Get the taste out of your mouth, or else that drive to have more will continue.”

HABIT 7: Don’t sweat the small stuff
“We have a limited bank of decision-making ability, and we waste it by making too many decisions about small things, like What am I having for breakfast? Just have the same darn thing for breakfast every day. I automate as many decisions as possible, which helps me.
“Also, get rid of nagging, unfinished tasks. There are probably, like, five in your life. You know what they are: the windshield wipers that need changing, the screen door that needs oiling, the new iPhone that isn’t synching with your iPad. Just fix them and check them off your list. It will make you feel more in control and less stressed out.”

HABIT 8: Respect the 10 PM Hour
“There’s a sacredness to sleep that we overlook, and it’s a big problem in America. We set our alarm clocks for the morning; we should set them for the time at night when we need to start preparing for bed. By 10 PM, you’d better be getting ready for sleep, because the average American gets up at 6, and you need your 8 hours.
“Not having a regular nighttime routine can result in inadequate sleep, which can make you fat by boosting levels of a hormone that makes you hungry: ghrelin. It is like the gremlin of hunger.”

Planning Procrastinators
Top tasks financial advisers say their clients put off:
◆ Preparing or updating a will
◆ Sticking to a budget
◆ Raising contributions to 401(k) or IRA
◆ Rebalancing portfolios
◆ Talking to family members about money
◆ Buying life insurance

Thank You for Your Referrals
There’s no question I have the BEST customers on the entire planet. My business is built on word of mouth advertising and I’d like to thank those clients who were kind enough to recommend my services to their friends. Thank you so much!