

5 Things Worth Knowing Before You Set a Retirement Date

01 Your Full Retirement Age Isn't Your Only Option

Claim Social Security as early as 62 and your benefit is permanently reduced. Wait until 70 and it grows every year you delay. For married couples, coordinating who claims when can add up to a meaningful difference in lifetime household income — there's no single "right" age, it depends on health, other income, and your spouse's benefit. **Ask yourself:** *Have you compared what claiming at 62, your Full Retirement Age, and 70 would actually mean for your household?*

02 The Order You Withdraw From Accounts Matters as Much as the Amount

A taxable brokerage account, a traditional 401(k), and a Roth IRA are all taxed differently when you draw from them. Required minimum distributions can force withdrawals whether you need the money or not, and the wrong sequence can quietly push you into a higher tax bracket or higher Medicare premiums. **Ask yourself:** *Do you have a plan for which accounts you'll draw from first — and why?*

03 Healthcare Costs Don't Wait for Medicare

Retire before 65 and you'll need a bridge plan — COBRA, the ACA marketplace, or a spouse's coverage — often at real cost. Medicare itself doesn't cover everything either: dental, vision, and most long-term care are typically excluded, which is why many retirees plan separately for a supplement or long-term care. **Ask yourself:** *If you retired before 65, do you know what your coverage gap would actually cost?*

04 "Will My Money Last" Depends on More Than the Total Balance

A market downturn in your first few years of retirement can do outsized damage compared to the same downturn happening later — because you're withdrawing while values are down, often called sequence-of-returns risk. Two people can retire with the identical balance and land in very different places, depending on when the downturns hit. **Ask yourself:** *Does your plan account for a downturn early in retirement, not just the average?*

05 A 30-Year Retirement Isn't Rare Anymore

A healthy 65-year-old today has a real chance of living into their late 80s or 90s — and for couples, the odds that at least one spouse reaches 90 are higher than most people assume. Plans built around "average" life expectancy can leave the healthier spouse short later on.

Ask yourself: *Is your plan built for an average retirement, or a long one?*

Worth knowing: nearly half of workers and retirees say they've never actually calculated how much they'll need for retirement. Reading this puts you ahead of that curve — the next step is putting real numbers behind it. (Source: 2026 EBRI & Greenwald Retirement Confidence Survey)

QUESTIONS WE HEAR MOST OFTEN

"Am I actually on track?"

There's no universal number — it depends on your spending, timeline, and income sources.

"Should I pay off my mortgage before I retire?"

Often a math question and a peace-of-mind question at the same time.

"What's my biggest blind spot?"

Usually taxes or healthcare — the two costs people plan for last.

SEE YOUR REAL NUMBERS

This guide is a starting point, not a plan. Bring your questions to us today and we'll walk through your actual numbers together.

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Source for retirement confidence statistic: 2026 EBRI & Greenwald Retirement Confidence Survey.

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