



DECISION FRAMEWORK · PLANNING

Retirement Timing Decision Framework

Evaluate optimal retirement age based on financial readiness, healthcare, and lifestyle factors

9 steps · with space for your answers

Assess Financial Readiness

KEY QUESTIONS

- What is your current net worth?
- What is your projected portfolio value at different retirement ages?
- Can you sustain a 3.5-4% withdrawal rate?
- What is your projected Social Security benefit at different ages?

Considerations. Use conservative assumptions: 5-6% real returns, 3% inflation, and 30+ year retirement period.

YOUR NOTES

Model Income Sources

KEY QUESTIONS

- What Social Security strategies optimize your benefits?
- Do you have pension income? What are the options?
- What other income sources do you have (rental, part-time work)?
- How will income change throughout retirement?

Considerations. Delaying Social Security to 70 increases benefits by 8% per year after full retirement age—often the best 'investment' available.

YOUR NOTES

Plan Healthcare Coverage

KEY QUESTIONS

- How many years until Medicare eligibility (65)?
- What are your healthcare marketplace options?
- What will health insurance cost during the gap years?
- Do you have HSA funds available?

Considerations. Healthcare is often the biggest challenge for early retirees. Budget \$1,000-\$2,000/month per person for pre-Medicare coverage.

YOUR NOTES

Project Expenses

KEY QUESTIONS

- What are your current annual expenses?
- Which expenses will decrease in retirement?
- Which expenses will increase (travel, healthcare)?
- Have you accounted for inflation?

Considerations. Many retirees spend more in early retirement (active years), less in middle retirement, and more again in late retirement (healthcare).

YOUR NOTES

Consider Lifestyle Factors

KEY QUESTIONS

- What will you do with your time?
- Do you have purpose and community outside work?
- What does your spouse/partner want?
- Are you mentally ready to leave work?

Considerations. Financial readiness doesn't guarantee fulfillment. Many retirees struggle with identity and purpose. Plan your life, not just your finances.

YOUR NOTES

Optimize Social Security

KEY QUESTIONS

- What is your break-even age for delaying benefits?
- How do spousal benefits factor in?
- What is your life expectancy based on health and family history?
- How does claiming age affect taxes?

Considerations. For married couples, the higher earner delaying to 70 often maximizes survivor benefits and total household income.

YOUR NOTES

Manage Sequence of Returns Risk

KEY QUESTIONS

- What is your asset allocation at retirement?
- Do you have 2-3 years of expenses in cash/bonds?
- What is your plan if markets drop 30% year one?
- How flexible are your spending plans?

Considerations. Poor returns in the first few years of retirement can devastate a portfolio. Build a cash buffer and maintain flexibility.

YOUR NOTES

Plan Tax Strategy

KEY QUESTIONS

- What is your Roth conversion opportunity window?
- How will RMDs affect your tax bracket?
- What is the optimal withdrawal sequence?
- How can you manage Medicare premium brackets?

Considerations. Years between retirement and Social Security/RMDs often offer the best Roth conversion opportunity.

YOUR NOTES

Make Your Decision

KEY QUESTIONS

- At what age are you financially ready?
- At what age are you emotionally ready?
- What is your spouse/partner's timeline?
- What would you regret more: retiring too early or too late?

Considerations. Consider a 'practice retirement' with an extended leave. Many find they want to keep working part-time for purpose and social connection.

YOUR NOTES

Decision summary

My decision:

Why, in one sentence:

Date to revisit:
