

# Retiring soon...\*

\*my health. my wealth. my leisure.



The fall edition of **Retiring soon** focuses on new ideas in relaxation to help you be less stressed and live life more, working past your retirement to build that nest egg, and the most intriguing of vacation destinations – Antarctica.

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*Stop. Breathe. Relax.* – new ideas for relaxation

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## my health

### Stop. Breathe. Relax.

With the worries of family and financial responsibilities constantly piling up, stress levels are bound to rise. But before you reach your boiling point, consider a few relaxation techniques to keep your mind and body at ease.

Relaxation, which is the deliberate release of tension in your mind and body, can be achieved through various techniques.

#### Yoga

Yoga is an activity that can help achieve both physical and mental goals. The ancient Indian technique of postures and deep breathing has become very popular in the Western world, and there are many yoga classes available at studios and community centres across Canada. Benefits of yoga include increased flexibility, greater self-awareness, improved breathing and relaxation.

Consider a studio that offers 'Hatha' yoga, which is a style of slow-paced, gentle poses that can be a good introduction.

#### Tai chi

The Chinese martial-art of tai chi is another activity that can relieve stress and tension. It's a low-impact, slow-motion exercise, in which you go through several poses without pausing. The poses are named for different animal actions. Research has shown that tai chi can help ward off the ills of aging and can be a useful tool to prevent health problems. Like yoga, many community centres offer courses in tai chi.

Tai chi and yoga are both active and dynamic relaxation techniques, which encourage slow, controlled movements, accompanied with deep breathing. If you're looking for a relaxation method that requires no movement at all, try meditation.

#### Meditation

Most meditation experts suggest sitting in a traditional cross-legged position, but if you find that uncomfortable, try meditating while sitting in a reclining chair or lying down on an exercise mat – just don't fall asleep! Start by taking a few slow deep breaths, in and out



*Try not to concentrate on any one specific thought or image. Just close your eyes and focus on your breathing.*

through the nostrils. Try not to concentrate on any one specific thought or image. Just close your eyes and focus on your breathing.

You can use meditation principles to provoke the relaxation of a certain part of your body, if you focus your thoughts on a particular joint, muscle or ailment. When the mind focuses on a particular part of the body, it's possible to increase blood flow to that area, giving the cells more oxygen and nutrients.

### **Other self-relaxation methods**

When you consciously make an effort to relax a certain part of your body, using mental techniques only, it's called passive relaxation. Progressive relaxation involves both mental and physical techniques, where you deliberately tense the muscles in the area you want to relax. After tensing for about 10 seconds, your body will naturally relax the area for about 30 seconds. You shouldn't attempt progressive relaxation exercises if you have high blood pressure or a heart condition.

Visualization is another method of relaxation that makes use of an active mind. Athletes often use this technique to 'rehearse' their performance so they are ready when it's time for competition. You can use the same principle to facilitate total relaxation. Instead of picturing how you're going to make that winning basket or win the race, simply spend a few minutes imagining your body in its most relaxed and calm state. If you're able to picture yourself as a relaxed being, you'll be one step closer to achieving that goal.

Since they can be done anytime in virtually any place, the convenience of self-relaxation methods cannot be matched. But for chronic muscle tension problems, massage therapy may be required. Regular massage sessions can help loosen up tight areas, making it possible (or easier) for your whole body to enter a relaxed state.

Be sure to talk to your doctor before taking on any new physical activity.

## **fast track** >>>

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## **my wealth**

### **Working longer to build a nest egg**

If you're in your sixties, or approaching that age, you are considered to be in the retirement window. But when exactly is 'retirement age?'

Traditionally, the retirement age in Canada has been 65. (In many cases, you can actually start collecting a government pension earlier, at age 60.) But given the current economic climate, and the fact many people haven't saved enough by age 65 to retire comfortably, the concept of a set retirement age is changing.

People are living longer and spending more, and thus many are choosing to work longer and retire later in life.

Working past age 65 can be a useful tool to accumulate savings that you'll need to maintain a comfortable standard of living when you finally decide to hang up your skates for good.

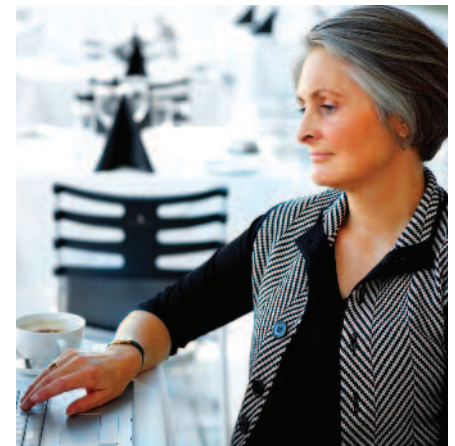
### **Part-time jobs as good as robust investment portfolio**

For example, if you had a part-time job that paid even \$20,000/year, that's about the same amount a \$400,000 investment portfolio would likely generate in returns, according to some financial experts. A part-time job can help compensate for the years you were unable to save as much as you needed for retirement.

Another benefit to working longer is that your investments have longer to grow in value. If you're able to delay withdrawals from your retirement savings, you'll be in a position to re-evaluate your risk profile, considering options that may potentially offer higher returns.

### **More employment opportunities for retirees**

As Canada's baby boomers continue to age, there will likely be a skilled labour shortage. This is prompting many employers to provide incentives for retirees to return to the job,



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sometimes in a mentoring or part-time role. In most instances, the retirees collect pensions while they continue to earn a regular salary.

Some employers are offering programs called “retirees on call.” This is where retired workers are called in on an as-needed basis, to help fill gaps during busy times.

### **Mandatory retirement regulations**

While the actual age of retirement is in flux (for many Canadians it is not 65 anymore), concerns about mandatory retirement still exist.

Most provinces allow termination on the basis of old age, if you work in a job where physical fitness is a key requirement.

In New Brunswick, termination is permitted if you’re old enough to qualify for a company pension or retirement plan, and if such a plan exists.

Quebec has the toughest laws in place to protect aging workers. In Quebec, the *Charter of Rights of Freedoms* prevents any termination on the basis of age.

Mandatory retirement policies continue to evolve as human rights challenges across the country work their way through the courts system.

But given the need for skilled workers and the looming labour shortage, more and more employers are showing interest in keeping older workers on staff.

And, working past 65 may be one of the best strategies when it comes to saving for your golden years.

Working a few extra years, perhaps on a more relaxed schedule (fewer hours per week), can help ease the transition into retirement.

While spending more time with loved ones is one of the perks of retirement, many retirees aren’t prepared for the additional stress a drastic increase in family time often brings. It can also be tough to leave your job ‘cold turkey,’ especially if it’s something you find stimulating and motivating.

For many financial and lifestyle reasons, you may find it’s worth exploring the benefits of working into your retirement years.

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## **my leisure**

### **Explore the isolated – Antarctica**

Many of us are looking for that ‘once-in-a-lifetime’ trip -- that trip you take to what seems like a completely different world, removing yourself from your surroundings and embarking on a journey that’s not only inspiring, but also something you’ll remember and recount for years to come. That one vacation that has you contemplating just how vastly different nature can be - the terrain, the wildlife – a trip to a virtually untouched part of the world. That trip is Antarctica.

Set almost entirely south of the Antarctic Circle, Antarctica is the southernmost continent and is surrounded completely by the Southern Ocean. Its area encompasses 13.7 million square kilometers, of which 98% is covered with ice that’s four kilometers deep.

Often thought of as a symbol of endurance and survival, Antarctica is regarded as the last unknown. Before being first spotted in 1819 by Russians Mikhail Lazarev and Fabian Gottlieb von Bellingshausen, the existence of the continent was under constant speculation and spoken of in mythical terms – the unknown Southern Land. It wasn’t until 1899 that the first people set foot on Antarctica. Today, although there are no permanent inhabitants, anywhere from 1,000-5,000 people are living in research stations across Antarctica.

The coldest, driest and windiest place on earth, Antarctica sees minimum temperatures hovering around -80 degrees Celsius in winter, and in summer, balmy highs of 5 degrees Celsius. With such a harsh climate, you may wonder why anyone would want to visit it.



*A pristine paradise for wildlife that can stand the sub-zero temperatures, Antarctica is the largest remaining virtually untouched wilderness.*

But this barren ice-and snow-covered land not only produces some of the most picturesque scenery you will ever encounter, it is also home to some of the most fascinating wildlife on earth.

A pristine paradise for wildlife that can stand the sub-zero temperatures, Antarctica is the largest remaining virtually untouched wilderness. Here you'll discover penguins in their tens of thousands. Witness orcas spring from the ocean to catch their unsuspecting seal prey. Watch the albatross as it soars the skies and then dives into the icy waters. The ability of these animals to live in such a harsh environment is almost incomprehensible.

The adventure traveler to Antarctica will encounter eerie landscapes as far as the eye can see. From mountains capped with ice and snow to stunning glaciers and a freezing cold ocean littered with gigantic icebergs, Antarctica is certainly a place that needs to be seen to be believed. At night, look up and observe an exceptionally clear sky lavishly speckled with stars – you'll be amazed.

The only way you'll get to see Antarctica is on an escorted tour. There are many tourist-orientated cruises from differing companies all with slightly modified itineraries, so it's best to do your research or consult your travel agent. There is no getting around it: None of these are cheap; however, it is a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

But don't think that an Antarctic vacation is simply a cruise amongst the icebergs. Your tour may include optional activities such as cross-country skiing, hiking and sea kayaking – get up close and personal with some of the wildlife while kayaking around the enormous icebergs. Or, for the more intrepid, why not try Antarctic camping? Suiting you up with all the proper Antarctic climate camping gear, this is one activity not for the faint of heart!

It is worth noting that peak season for travel to Antarctica is November to March. During these months the weather is a little more tolerable and, since it's the southern hemisphere's summer, you'll also encounter longer days of sunlight. In mid-summer, expect nearly 24 hours of daylight. You'll also need to invest in a heavy-duty sunscreen, as the surface of Antarctica reflects almost all of the ultraviolet light that shines on it.

Antarctic journeys usually commence in Argentina, Chile, New Zealand, South Africa or Australia, and you may need a visa to enter these countries. Consult your travel agent for information regarding visa requirements or further information on Antarctica.

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