

***** Seniorresource.com E-zine *****
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A. HOW MANY RETIREMENT PLANS DOES IT TAKE TO RETIRE?

The answer should be “one”. One integrated strategy that takes into account all of the fractured little bits and pieces you or you and your spouse have managed to stash away during your employment years.

One plan that looks at:

Your defined benefit pension plan account.

Your IRA with Solomon Smith Barney that has been used as play money over the past 15 years to satisfy your wild, gambling side.

The Delaware Trust you established for retirement when your children were little and in a period of unemployment you hung out your shingle as a consultant.

Your wife’s IRA with Fidelity Investments.

Your wife’s IRA with Charles Schwab which she rolled over from a Keogh established when she was self employed.

Your wife’s Roth IRA with Fidelity Investments rolled from another IRA.

One plan that looks at your retirement accounts whether in mutual funds, stocks, bonds or money markets and sets goals on percentage distribution of investments by industry, and distributes risk and provides diversity to hedge against drops in sectors.

If your investments are scattered around, bits and pieces, some pre-tax and some post-tax it is difficult to assess each

year how much of your total investments are in each sector of the market. How much is in bonds, stocks, and mutual funds, and what portion of the funds are invested in which market sector and in what level of risk?

When you look at your present investment allocations, which you should do at least annually, why not also look at how you can condense accounts and reduce the number of accounts you must track.

All of one individuals pre-tax IRAs may be combinable into one account. Roth IRAs which are post-tax accounts should not be combined with pre-tax IRAs, but it is possible that one broker or bank can hold both types of IRA accounts for you. That will simplify where you have to go to change addresses, beneficiaries and Powers of Attorney, should you need to in future. It will also make it easier for your heirs to track down assets when they have to file your final taxes and handle your estate.

In transferring IRAs between brokerage houses stay on top of the transfer, that it is done without errors that result in your being asked to pay taxes when you did not take distribution. In transferring IRAs between banks be aware that mistakes can be made by banks accepting IRA funds and placing them in regular accounts. The unanticipated consequences can be painful with a large tax bill resulting from the ordinary income tax rate owed on the sum of the funds. Such mistakes can also impact your heirs if an error is made in transfer which then prevents money that should have been in an IRA to pass to children as an IRA with incredible tax savings upon your death.

This article is meant to raise awareness and pose questions in the readers mind. Answers in each case are best discussed with a tax professional, CPA or Elder Law Attorney.

Elder Law Attorneys are certified by the National Elder Law Foundation as knowledgeable about health and long-term care planning, public benefits affecting retirees, surrogate decision-making, determination of legal capacity, estate planning, etc. They must also understand the tax consequences of legal actions, recognize signs of elder abuse. [Find one in either of two places in seniorresource.com](#)

B. A WHOPPING 100 YEARS AGO, IN 1904...

What a difference a century makes! Here are some of the U.S. statistics for 1904:

The average life expectancy in the U.S. was 47 years.

Only 14 percent of the homes in the U.S. had a bathtub.

Only 8 percent of the homes had a telephone.

A three-minute call from Denver to New York City cost eleven dollars.

There were 8,000 cars in the U.S. and only 144 miles of paved roads.

The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph.

Alabama, Mississippi, Iowa, and Tennessee were each more heavily populated than California.

With a mere 1.4 million residents, California was only the 21st most populous state in the Union.

The tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower!

The average wage in the U.S. was 22 cents an hour.

The average U.S. worker made between \$200 and \$400 per year.

A competent accountant could expect to earn \$2000 per year, a dentist \$2,500 per year and a veterinarian between \$1,500 and \$4,000 per year.

More than 95 percent of all births in the U.S. took place at home. Ninety percent of all U.S. physicians had no college education. Instead, they attended medical schools, many of which were condemned in the press and by the government as "substandard."

Sugar cost four cents a pound.

Eggs were fourteen cents a dozen.

Coffee was fifteen cents a pound.

Most women only washed their hair once a month, and used borax or egg yolks for shampoo.

Canada passed a law prohibiting poor people from entering the country for any reason.

The five leading causes of death in the U.S. were:

- 1. Pneumonia and influenza**
- 2. Tuberculosis**
- 3. Diarrhea**
- 4. Heart disease**
- 5. Stroke**

The population of Las Vegas, Nevada, was 30!!!

Crossword puzzles, canned beer, and iced tea hadn't been invented.

There was no Mother's Day or Father's Day.

Two of 10 U.S. adults couldn't read or write.

Only 6 percent of all Americans had graduated high school.

Marijuana, heroin, and morphine were all available over the counter at corner drugstores.

Eighteen percent of households in the U.S. had at least one full-time servant or domestic.

There were only about 230 reported murders in the entire U.S. And I included this having received it from someone else without typing it myself, and sent it to you in a matter of seconds! Try to imagine what it may be like in another 100 years ... it staggers the mind.

Sent to jokes@seniorresource.com by J. Oppie

C. CAN YOU SET YOUR BRAIN'S "FAT THERMOSTAT" AT A HEALTHY LEVEL?

by Serena Harstad

Have you ever watched someone who looks healthy and slender indulge in a slice of chocolate cake and wondered how they stay thin? Part of the reason is that we all have a set-point in our brains that normally keeps our body fat and weight from varying by much. For slender folks, their set-point is at a low level, that is unless they do something to cause their brain to change its weight control settings.

That is what often happens when we stop smoking. After being slender all one's life, quit smoking and you can gain 25 pounds! Quitting can unknowingly trigger a reaction that changes a weight control mechanism in the brain. One's body begins making fat out of everything where formerly it

eliminated excess calories. (Withdrawal from nicotine is only one of many life changes that can cause the brain's body-weight controls to be adjusted upward.) Let's call the weight regulator in your brain a "set-point". A good image for the set-point is the temperature you set on the thermostat for the heating and cooling system of your house. If it is set at 71 degrees, then the temperature doesn't vary by more than a degree or two before the thermostat tells the furnace to heat up (or the air conditioner to cool down).

Your brain's set-point functions similarly, maintaining a consistent weight and fat level through interactions of hormones, etc. Exploring the body's chemistry is beyond this article's scope. It's sufficient to understand that if your weight has increased or decreased it's because the set-point in your brain changed. And so, if you prefer to regain your past set-point specific actions are necessary.

First, eat right by following these simple guidelines:

- a) minimize sugar and flour-based foods (refined carbohydrates)**
- . b) eat less animal fat, like butter, cheese, marbled meat.**
- c) eat less fat in general.**
- d) but don't use low-fat products like low-fat mayonnaise, because the chemicals they have to use to make this stuff palatable is hard for your body to process; just use real mayonnaise, only less of it.**
- e) eat complex carbohydrates like vegetables, fruits and whole grains, which your body recognizes as normal foods and will process as fuel, giving you long-term energy.**

Second, drink the right stuff: water. It supports your metabolism and helps your system eliminate toxins and other excesses. Coffee, tea, sweetened juices, diet or regular soda and alcohol do not contribute to your health nor to your metabolism. Keep consumption of them to a minimum.

Third, do the right kind of rhythmic large-muscle exercises daily and sustain them for 30 to 60 minutes. If this sounds like a lot of time, ask yourself, how important is it to you to be healthy and/or lose weight? You're not going to re-set your brain's weight regulator (the set-point) without exercise - it's that simple. But the exercise can be a pleasure once you understand which types to do. You're not faced here with push-ups or lifting weights.

“Large muscle” means to use your legs especially. The ideal exercise to start first is walking because you don't need special equipment or gear. Additional possibilities include swimming, biking and jogging. Chose what you will enjoy.

“Rhythmic” means exercise that is steady and repetitive. “Sustained” refers to continuity-- no stops to rest which lowers your heart-rate. Thirty minutes a day is the minimum. An hour a day will produce quicker results.

About heart-rate: keep it at a level that requires some exertion but where you can still carry on a conversation. Any higher level and you're not doing exercise that affects your set-point. It's unnecessary to think “no pain, no gain” in this case.

Once you adopt these three habits: the right types of eating,

drinking, and exercising, your set-point will change. With these habits Serena Harstad, personal trainer shed all 25 pounds gained after stopping smoking.

Note: This article is for informational purposes. Consult your doctor or health-care professional before adding exercise to your daily routine. Serena Harstad is a contributing author to [All About Nutrition Newsletter](#).

D. DON'T BE RAL-ROAD-ED AT TAX TIME

By Richard Kruth

Tax Tip: Save Money at Tax Time. Don't be RAL- road-ed with the enticement for Fast Cash Refunds. RALs (Refund Anticipation Loans) involve borrowing your own money; in some cases at triple-digit interest rates. RAL fees, combined with tax preparation, electronic filing, and other fees, can end up eating away a big chunk of your refund.

Recommendations: Seek a competent tax preparer who will electronically file your return with Direct Deposit into your bank account. This way you can get a refund in about 10 days. Also, ask the tax advisor to help you establish a tax plan because a large refund at Tax Time is not good financial planning.

The government is withholding your money (federal income tax withholding) from your pay check without paying you any interest. Good tax planning means that your tax return (refund or payment) is as close to zero as possible.

Unfortunately, many taxpayers rationalize this end of the year refund as a way to save money. How many of you would actually put money in a savings plan that didn't pay any interest?

Community Service Announcement: Free Tax Preparation Programs for those that qualify. The IRS provides a free tax preparation service to low-and moderate-income taxpayers. The VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program is available for families (2 or more) with income under \$35,000 and individuals with income under \$15,000. For the nearest VITA site, call the IRS general help line at 1-800-829-1040 or go to www.tax-coalition.org

[Richard Kruth](#) a VITA volunteer is author of "Spend it? Save it? Invest it? What's Your Financial Plan?" a book to give to your children and grandchildren to get them started on a good financial track before they become inheritors of your wealth.

E. DID YOU KNOW...?

Always be aware of the ways that you can be more alert to scams looking to whisk your hard saved nest egg from you.

- Never give personal information to someone who calls YOU.**
- Don't carry your social security card with you.**
- Ask your health insurance company to use another number as an identifier, not your social security number.**

- **If it sounds too good to be true, it is.**
- **Never send money in advance for the right to have money sent to you. If they are real they should be able to take the fees out of the proceeds - if in fact they are real.**
- **If you are monitoring an elder who is less financially savvy than you are, find ways to keep track of their spending activities without stripping them of dignity.**

If you lose a tooth the bone around the lost tooth may recede leaving your jaw weaker. Adjacent teeth may shift causing further instability and you may find your chewing ability diminished with time. Discuss tooth replacement options with your dentist. They include a removable bridge, a permanent bridge and an implant. No one answer is right for everyone. Explore which will work financially and medically for you. It is important to your future good health to replace lost teeth..

More than 25 percent of women's fashion-dollars are spent on size 16 and over. .

Studies abound trying to profile seniors, retirees, the old-old and the not-so-old..

- **The Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging with 1,400 males (the longest running aging study in the U.S.) has found older people cope with stress more effectively than younger adults. .**
- **The New England Centenarian Study with 1,500 people, (centenarians their siblings and children) has determined that Alzheimer's disease is not inevitable and half of centenarians**

have first-degree relatives who also achieve longevity. .

Washington state has joined the rebel states that want their residents to have access to the lower prices on drugs available from Canada. The state is helping their residents electronically access RX Washington via www.rx.wa.gov and order drugs from our northern neighbors. The site is set up to help “make decisions about saving money on ...medications”. It also explains the legal status of importing drugs from Canada. The site states that it has partnered with the state of Wisconsin in this offering of information and access. Washington State Health Care Authority can be reached at 206.521.2027. (From Senior Scene, December 2004 by Loren Bliss) .

If you live in a no-income-tax state than you are entitled to deduct your sales tax paid throughout the year from your federal income tax. If you did not save your receipts during the year to prove your taxable purchases and amount of sales tax paid, use the federal sales tax tables to get a federally approved amount you can deduct based upon the income declared on your federal tax form. (Meant for informational purposes only and not meant to replace or supplant professional advice from a CPA.)

F. FREE

[MyZiva.net at the Complete Nursing Home Guide](http://MyZiva.net) - is a completely free, objective resource for healthcare professionals and caregivers to find, evaluate and compare nursing homes across the nation. Their search results contain

government survey (inspection) reports, quality measure rankings and nurse staffing level ratios (including County averages). The unique MyZiva Comparison Tool also empowers users to easily create and print a comparison chart containing selected facilities.

G. SPECIAL SURFING SITES

[understand "Social Security Disability Secrets"](#). If nothing else it will help you realize that the system is not easy to navigate. Navigate the site however, by clicking on the topics at the top part of the page.

[The Over The Hill Gang, International](#) offers outdoor activities for people over 50 (even if they don't think they're over the hill). Get package savings on equipment and trips including ski clinics. Check out membership.

[Citizens for Pets in Condos](#) has a petition to allow home owners in Florida to have pets. There is no valid reason to deny seniors the opportunity to improve their health and well-being with pet companionship in dwellings which they own. Private home ownership should allow responsible persons to keep pets. Sign the petition, even if you do not live in Florida.

[Advocates for the legislative change have a website](#) on the health benefits of pet companionship.

I. OH MY AGING FUNNY BONE

A very elderly gentleman, (mid nineties) very well dressed, hair well groomed, great looking suit, flower in his lapel smelling slightly of a good after shave, presenting a well looked after image, walks into an upscale cocktail lounge

Seated at the bar is an elderly looking lady, (mid eighties). The gentleman walks over, sits along side of her, orders a drink, takes a sip, turns to her and says: "So tell me, do I come here often?"

E. Tabb

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Edited by Betsy J. Day.

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