

THE BRIDGE

FALL 2019 NEWSLETTER



8 HABITS FOR DESTROYING YOUR RETIREMENT SAVINGS

WHAT YOU SHOULD AVOID FOR A
HAPPY, HEALTHY RETIREMENT.

TAKE A FRESH LOOK AT YOUR GOALS

Building a healthy financial life is an important concern that everyone should address with diligence and care. Rather than being a one-time event, evaluating your finances—and ensuring you don't lose sight of your goals—requires timely, purposeful attention.

TIPS TO LIVING SANELY WITH A SPORTS ADDICT

Here's the secret to maintaining your sanity as football season gets underway.

A BOUNTIFUL HARVEST: COOKING IN AUTUMN

To welcome autumn with arms open and palates ready, we share some of our favorite ingredients, meals, and even a fall recipe to try at home.

WELCOME

DEAR FRIEND,

The Team at Alpha Financial is very excited about the onset of fall, and for good reason!

First, we are thrilled to debut the premier issue of this, our very own seasonal newsletter. Catering to the concerns and interests of our clients and neighbors, and composed like a magazine, it is designed to both inform and entertain you.

We've made some exciting additions at Alpha, including staff, improved methods of outreach, engagement, and education, as well as proudly initiating a tradition from our most popular social event from last year... the Wolverine Roast!

Autumn brings breathtaking views of seasonal change and welcome relief from hot summer temperatures. Many routines of the cooler months resume, including school, holiday travel, and much-anticipated fall sports!

In this Fall 2019 Newsletter, we offer you timely and lively articles that will help make your autumn more enjoyable and productive. Inside, you'll find fall-focused recipes that will help you make the most of the season's bounty, as well as savvy insights for your financial life, providing guidance for taking a fresh look at your goals.

You will discover the secrets to destroying your retirement savings - in other words, what you shouldn't do to spoil your golden years.

On a more playful side, we'll examine the challenges of living with a sports addict - specifically, the ardent football fan.

We hope you enjoy what you read here, and we wish you an autumn full of warmth, beauty, and all the things that you value most. Thank you for letting Alpha Financial be part of your life, through every changing season.

SINCERELY,



Steve McElroy
President & Founder



"Welcome Aboard, Tommy!"

SAVE THE DATE!

WOLVERINE ROAST

— TAILGATE & WATCH PARTY —

11.30.19

Bloody Mary Breakfast Bar @ 9:30am,
Game Kickoff @ Noon

*On-Site Smoked Pulled Pork with all the Fixings,
Chocolate Buckeye Treat Fountain, Cold Beer and Cider on Tap*

LOCATION

Quarry Place on the Scioto
6241 Riverside Dr Dublin, OH 43017

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Take a **FRESH LOOK**

at Your Goals:

Revisit Your Fiscal
Priorities Each Year



Building a healthy financial life is an important concern that everyone should address with diligence and care. Rather than being a one-time event, evaluating your finances—and ensuring you don't lose sight of your goals—requires timely, purposeful attention.

Imagine, for example, if you went to the doctor, created a thorough and personalized health strategy, carefully stuck to the plan, and then didn't have another appointment for 5 years. You might have felt as though you didn't need to go to for a checkup because your plan helped you make healthy life choices. However, the reality is that a lot can change in a very short period of time, such as medical advancements and new ailments. Though you believed you were on the right path, you might have missed critical guidance and professional insight.

The same scenario applies to your financial life: your fiscal strategies and priorities evolve with you, and they require ongoing oversight for your financial wellness.

Crafting a thoughtfully designed strategy is only the beginning of your financial journey. To make the most of your opportunities, you should revisit your strategy and financial goals at least once a year.

GOAL AND PLANNING REFRESH: WHAT TO REVIEW EACH YEAR



ADDRESS LIFE CHANGES

Key question to answer:
Have I experienced any major life events?

Your financial strategies should fit your life. So, if your life changes, your finances should change, too. Look back on your experiences since you last updated your fiscal strategy, and uncover any life events you have gone through. Common changes include starting a family, getting married or divorced, switching jobs, and buying or selling a home. However, the list can go much deeper and bring additional complexities to address. We recommend you talk to your financial representative about any events or experiences that might affect your financial priorities whenever they occur.



REVIEW YOUR ASSET ALLOCATION

Key question to answer:
Is my portfolio correctly diversified to pursue my goals?

A diversified portfolio can help you capture gains when certain asset classes perform well—and protect against losses when others miss the mark. As your life and the markets change, though, your asset allocation needs to evolve as well. You might be closing in on retirement, exceeding your savings goals, facing employment changes, taking more risk than you realized, or going through many other experiences. Your financial representative can help you understand not only how market performance is affecting your portfolio but also how your life stage and current circumstances should influence your allocation.



REVISIT YOUR ESTATE PLAN

Key question to answer:
Does my estate plan thoroughly and accurately reflect my wishes?

Creating a clear, airtight estate plan is a powerful gift you can give your family. However, one survey found that 63% of Americans do not have a will at all, and only half of seniors age 65 and older have updated their wills.² An outdated or missing will can land your assets in probate and create emotional strife for your family during an already challenging time.³ Avoid these challenges by revisiting your estate plan once a year to make sure you have clearly shared your wishes, designated your beneficiaries, and protected your assets.



**ANALYZE
YOUR TAX
LIABILITIES**

Key question to answer: Have changes to tax laws or personal circumstances affected my tax liabilities?

From deduction limits to income brackets to personal exemptions and beyond, tax laws change regularly.⁴ In addition, changes in your life, such as a different income or number of dependents, can affect your tax liabilities. Even the most tax-efficient, financial strategy still needs regular review to ensure it reflects current laws and your evolving life. By keeping up with the changing tax momentum—and revising your strategies as needed—you can help mitigate unnecessary tax liabilities and better preserve your assets.



**CHECK YOUR
INSURANCE**

Key question to answer: Do I have adequate coverage for my current and future needs?

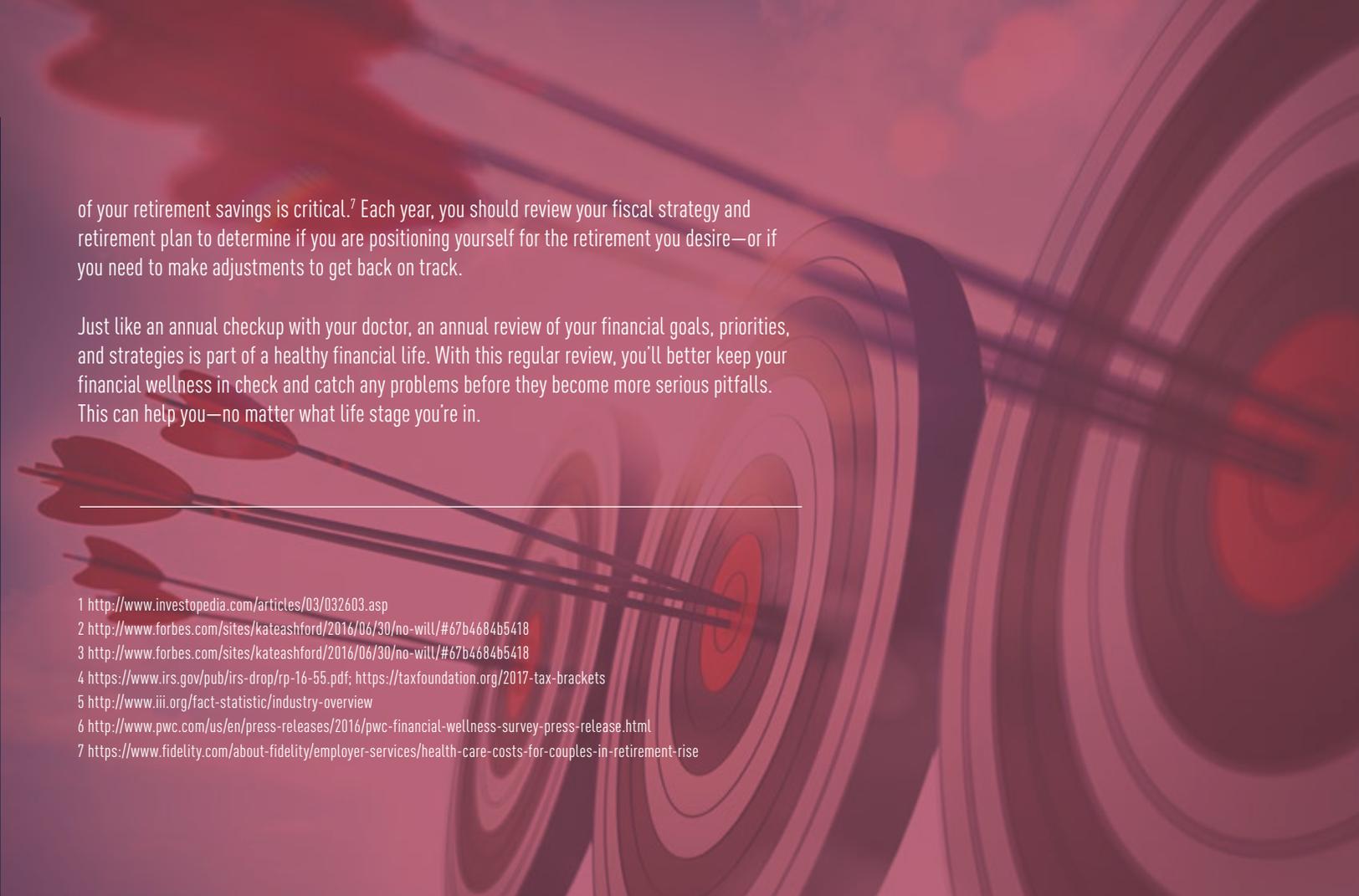
With 5,926 insurance companies in the United States and its territories, choosing the right insurance for your unique life can be a challenging endeavor.⁵ However, if you want to gain the benefits insurance can provide—such as passing wealth to future generations or preparing for high health-care costs later in life—you need to review what you own today and what you need for tomorrow. You will also want to make sure your beneficiaries are up to date and reflect your current financial priorities.



**REVIEW
YOUR
RETIREMENT
SAVINGS**

Key question to answer: Am I saving enough to comfortably retire when I desire?

Pursuing a satisfying, financially secure retirement is an important goal for many investors. However, staying on track toward that retirement can be hard. In fact, a recent PwC survey found that 28% of employees were saving less for retirement in 2016 than in 2015.⁶ When you consider that the average 65-year-old couple who retired in 2016 will spend \$260,000 on health care alone, keeping ahead

A graphic of a target with several arrows hitting the bullseye, set against a purple and red background. The target is the central focus of the top half of the page.

of your retirement savings is critical.⁷ Each year, you should review your fiscal strategy and retirement plan to determine if you are positioning yourself for the retirement you desire—or if you need to make adjustments to get back on track.

Just like an annual checkup with your doctor, an annual review of your financial goals, priorities, and strategies is part of a healthy financial life. With this regular review, you'll better keep your financial wellness in check and catch any problems before they become more serious pitfalls. This can help you—no matter what life stage you're in.

1 <http://www.investopedia.com/articles/03/032603.asp>

2 <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kateashford/2016/06/30/no-will/#67b4684b5418>

3 <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kateashford/2016/06/30/no-will/#67b4684b5418>

4 <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-drop/rp-16-55.pdf>; <https://taxfoundation.org/2017-tax-brackets>

5 <http://www.iii.org/fact-statistic/industry-overview>

6 <http://www.pwc.com/us/en/press-releases/2016/pwc-financial-wellness-survey-press-release.html>

7 <https://www.fidelity.com/about-fidelity/employer-services/health-care-costs-for-couples-in-retirement-rise>



8 HABITS FOR DEEST



ROYINING

YOUR RETIREMENT SAVINGS

You're looking forward to retiring and living a long, comfortable life of ease, freedom, and relaxation.

You've read the advice on saving and investing for retirement. You've spent years implementing responsible investment strategies. You're right on target to achieve your goals.

However, sometimes the best way to fortify your objectives is to examine the potholes and potential pitfalls that can send the best-laid plans into a ditch.

So, what's it take to destroy your retirement savings?

¹<https://www.gobankingrates.com/investing/13-everyday-habits-destroy-retirement-fund/>

²<https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/columnist/powell/2018/01/26/how-many-years-retirement-do-you-need-fund/1034976001/>

³<https://www.cnbc.com/2017/10/02/dont-let-emotions-cloud-your-investing-decisions.html>

⁴<https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/personalfinance/retirement/2018/04/19/baby-boomers-fall-down-on-emergency-savings-put-retirement-at-risk/33900295/>

⁵http://money.cnn.com/retirement/guide/401k_401kplans.moneymag/index7.htm



HERE ARE 8 HABITS, OFFERED SATIRICALLY, TO KILL YOUR RETIREMENT SAVINGS:¹

1 SPEND, SPEND, SPEND

Who cares about budgets? Although you maybe spent days or weeks developing a retirement plan and years saving for retirement, now that you're retired, throw it all out the window.

During your retirement planning days, you decided to maximize your income by cutting monthly expenditures, which may have included going with lower-tier cellphone plans, eliminating credit card debt, or moving into a smaller home.

Forget about that plan. Go out to eat at the fanciest restaurants. Use credit cards for everything. Keep living in that oversized house—although all your children have moved away.

In other words, live for the present. Splurge. Don't worry about the future. It's time to have fun.

2 OVERESTIMATE YOUR FUTURE INCOME

That's always the best advice for destroying your retirement. Although recent longevity projections say you may live another 20 or more years after retiring,² live (and spend your retirement savings) like there's no tomorrow.

Who cares about the future? Buy the boat. Take frequent, expensive vacations. And, most important of all, do not seek the advice of a financial professional who can help you with your long-range retirement plan. After all, you're looking for short-term results.

3 INVEST UNWISELY

Shuffle your individual investments in your mutual fund to the "high performers." While financial professionals may urge you to aim for the best-performing mutual funds that diversify your investments, you want to hit the big time quickly. Ignore sound advice that urges you to consider the big picture.

4 PLAN AND INVEST WITH YOUR EMOTIONS

Use your emotions to make investment and retirement saving decisions.³ When the market drops, head quickly for the exit. While financial professionals may urge you to weather what has historically been part of a naturally fluctuating market, you should opt for jumping ship.

IN OTHER WORDS, LIVE FOR THE PRESENT.

SPLURGE.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE FUTURE.
IT'S TIME TO HAVE FUN.

5 IGNORE YOUR RETIREMENT ACCOUNT

If you're still contributing to your retirement account, ignore it. Don't make adjustments. Don't see if you need to increase contributions or shift investment strategies. Don't talk to a financial professional to see if your saving levels are on target. Put off making changes until some distant date in the future.

6 YOU'RE INVINCIBLE

Don't worry about emergencies.⁴ They happen to other people. Not you. Focus exclusively on retirement savings and ignore setting aside money for emergencies, such as job loss or illness. You won't be caught off guard. Rainy day funds are for the cautious.

7 DRAW CASH FROM YOUR RETIREMENT ACCOUNT

After all, you need to pay off debt, buy a new car, make a down payment on a new home, or buy that fishing boat (recall habit 1). Just pull the money from your retirement savings account. You'll make it up, right?

Financial professionals may warn you about the 10% early withdrawal fees on 401(k)s or traditional IRAs if you're younger than 59½ and the federal taxes you'll have to pay on the withdrawal income.⁵ They may also tell you that you can make tax- and penalty-free withdrawals from Roth IRAs.

8 DON'T THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE

If you're retired, withdraw money from retirement savings early. Remember, life is short. You developed a sound financial plan that designated periodic withdrawals from your savings over the course of a long retirement. What's the fun in sticking with disciplined financial management?

You're excited about what lies ahead. You've meticulously planned your future, and you're eager to step into it to enjoy the fruits of your labor. Prepare today to enjoy your retirement. And keep a steady eye on the potential financial shoals that may lurk in the waters ahead.



TIPS TO LIVING **SANELY** WITH A SPORTS ADDICT

Some may call it acceptable addiction: the screaming, the uncontrollable weeping, the teeth gnashing, the drooling, the wild mood swings, the crazed stares, the sudden episodes of panic, the breathless desperation for more, the raving hysteria.

But is it an addiction? The American Psychiatric Association describes addiction as “a complex condition ... that is manifested by compulsive substance abuse despite harmful consequence.”¹

Who the heck cares what a bunch of psychiatrists think? There’s a game on tonight! And besides, sports addiction doesn’t involve any substances (that is, if you exclude the chipotle and lime roasted potatoes, the artichoke dip and roasted garlic dip with flat bread crackers, the ham and swiss sliders, and baked jalapeno poppers). It’s just a healthy—perhaps fanatical—devotion to a particular sports team, the sports addict sheepishly declares.

However you define the terms, zealous devotion to your favorite team or ravenous addiction to the activities of a group of athletes, it is a mainstay of American culture. And a relatively harmless one at that. Except, of course, to the poor, disillusioned loved ones (those unenlightened life partners who fail to grasp the rabid appeal of modern sports).

But alas, how can you cope—especially as the football season gets underway, ushering 25 weeks of frenzy and frolic? The football season begins—at least by NFL standards—the week after Labor Day in early September and ends in February.

What’s a non-sports fan to do?

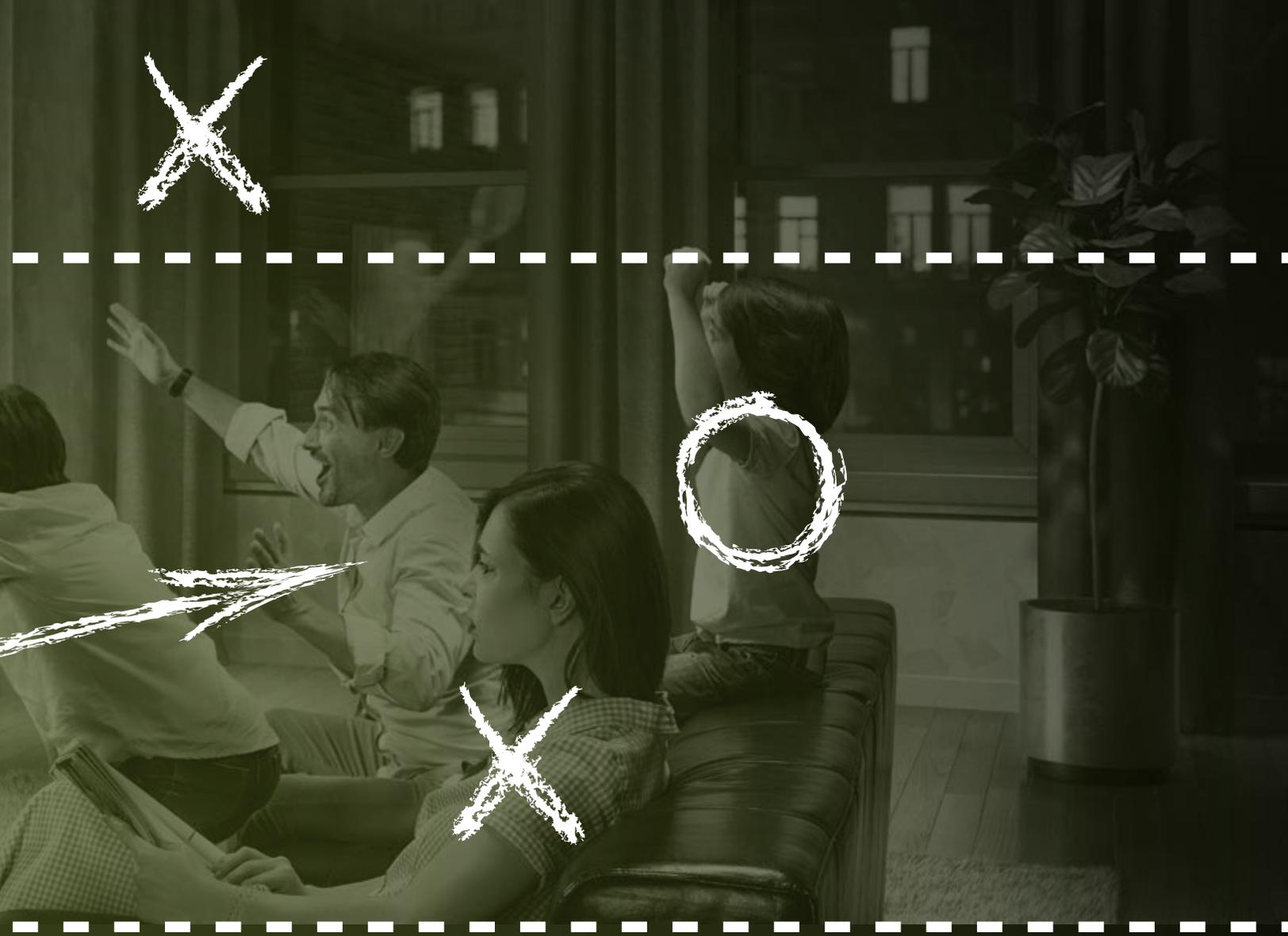
HOW DO YOU LIVE WITH AN ADDICT?

Here are some tips to kick you off to a more stress free, joyous autumn as the exuberance gets underway.²

JOIN THE PARTY: It may seem challenging at first. After all, watching 22 heavily padded men run around on a field and stop every few seconds to listen to a man in striped clothes do weird hand signals doesn’t sound exactly like riveting drama. But once you learn the basics, it can get pretty exciting.

You can do some basic research to learn the rules, the scoring system, and the objectives of the game. For instance, football has four quarters, baseball has nine innings, and soccer has two halves. Most sports games involve the use of balls, which require kicking, hitting, throwing, jumping on, or striking with a bat.

It may take time to understand the personalities and the interplaying between the teams. But once you do gain a basic understanding, you may find yourself falling into the same addiction yourself.



However, if you just can't muster the zeal, join the fun by embracing the emotion of the social gathering. Connecting yourself into the enthusiasm and passion may help strengthen relationship bonds. That alone deserves a hardy "go team, go!"

LEARN A NEW HOBBY: If you simply cannot bear the animated drama of football (or the other sports), you can use the game time to acquire a new hobby.

Going to another room to learn a new activity might not be the best approach to maintain or build strong relationships. You may want to consider learning a portable hobby, one that you can carry with you. How about knitting or something with yarn?

If that sounds too 1950s for you, you can do some online research to find another hobby you can do with your hands. Or spend the time reading or surfing the Internet.

CONTEMPLATE THE DEEPER MEANING OF SPORTS ENTHUSIASM:

Why are people so passionate about sports? Obsession with sports could be an offshoot of upbringing. Sports fans were taken to games by their parents or grandparents, for example. Other sports enthusiasts gain a connection to a particular team for other reasons. Maybe they were born in the team's city or went to college there.

Realizing that the "addiction" transcends mere enthusiasm helps you understand the underlying drive to cheer for the favorite team. Sports addicts are often embracing, in a manner of speaking, their identities.

DON'T GET JEALOUS: Recognizing and acknowledging that your sports addicts' connection to their teams goes beyond mere allegiance to an "addiction" helps make for smoother and more robust relationships.

Issuing "us or them" ultimatums only serves to sour relationships and creates misery or coldness—on both sides of the sports divide. Allowing jealousy to germinate in a relationship is unhealthy. Develop an action plan (just like they do in team sports) ahead of time to manage schedules and other activities. Allow respect, not jealousy, to grow in your relationship.

Learning to embrace the passion of sports and the enthusiasm for the success of your favorite teams are good traits to nurture. Remember, both sides win in the long run when everyone learns to play by the rules.

Sources:

1 <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/addiction/what-is-addiction>

2 <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/fulfillment-any-age/201301/five-tips-living-avid-sports-fan>



A BOUNTIFUL

Harvest

COOKING IN AUTUMN

With summer behind us, and hibernating barbeques everywhere dreaming of warmer times filled with juicy burgers and chargrilled vegetables, Americans are turning to one of the most exciting food seasons: Fall. Sure, the changing of the leaves and cooler weather are great, but for our money the best thing about fall is the food. Who can resist fresh fall produce, like squash, sweet potatoes, and apples? Or how about the satisfaction of creating the most comforting of comfort food dishes, like stews, pot pies, and mac and cheese? No matter who you are autumn, as our cousins across the pond call it, is a season ripe with possibility for the intrepid home chef. To welcome autumn with arms open and palates ready, here are some of our favorite ingredients, meals, and even a fall recipe to try at home.



Citrus Brussels Sprouts with Bacon and Breadcrumbs¹

Ingredients

2½ lbs. Brussels sprouts, trimmed
4 oz. slab bacon or pancetta (Italian bacon), coarsely chopped
3 Tbsp. olive oil, divided, plus more for serving
1 cup coarse, fresh breadcrumbs
1 small Fresno chile, seeds removed, finely chopped
1 Tbsp. thyme leaves
1 tsp. lemon zest, finely grated
Kosher salt
2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice, divided

Preparation

Make this breadcrumb mixture up to 3 hours ahead: store uncovered at room temperature. Brussels sprouts (without leaves) can be made 2 hours ahead; store covered at room temperature. Reheat before adding leaves.

1. Remove outer leaves from Brussels sprouts; set aside. Halve the Brussels sprouts; set aside.
2. Lightly pulse bacon in a food processor until finely ground.
3. Heat 1 Tbsp. oil in a large skillet over medium-low heat.
4. Cook bacon, stirring often, until browned around edges and fat is rendered, about 4 minutes.
5. Add breadcrumbs and cook, stirring often, until browned and crisp, about 5 minutes.
6. Transfer breadcrumb mixture to paper towels and let cool slightly. Toss in a medium bowl with chile, thyme, and lemon zest; set aside.
7. Increase heat to medium-high and heat 2 Tbsp. oil in same skillet. Add reserved halved Brussels sprouts; season with salt.
8. Cook, tossing occasionally, until deeply browned all over, 5–8 minutes.
9. Reduce heat to low, cover skillet, and cook until tender, about 5 minutes.
10. Uncover skillet, add reserved leaves and 1 Tbsp. lemon juice, and toss to combine.
11. Cover skillet and cook, tossing occasionally, until leaves are bright green and just wilted, 4–5 minutes.
12. Uncover; add remaining 1 Tbsp. lemon juice and season with salt.
13. Transfer Brussels sprouts to a platter, drizzle with more oil, and top with reserved breadcrumb mixture.

Sources

¹Adapted from Bon Appetite: <https://www.bonappetit.com/recipe/lemony-brussels-sprouts-with-bacon-and-breadcrumbs>

Pears, Parsnips, and Brussels Sprouts... Oh My!

This magical trio is at its best in the fall when the ingredients create a symphony of layered, comforting flavors across a variety of preparations. Imagine a table loaded with poached pears, roasted Brussels sprouts with a rich parsnip puree or a spiced pear butter, or even just shaving this tasty triumvirate to make a refreshing, raw slaw.

Hazelnuts and Bacon Make Everything Better

If you're not allergic to nuts, toasted hazelnuts and crispy, thick-cut bacon can make any fall vegetable dish feel decadent and warm. Another tip is to try making your own dressing by combining lemon juice, sherry vinegar, and hazelnut oil for all your autumn salads. The simple, yet delicious, dressing compliments cruciferous vegetables like broccoli or Brussels sprouts perfectly.

A Season for Swordfish

Many home cooks already know that fennel and pork are a magical combination. But what about swordfish? This flavorful, semi-sweet swimmer is a perfect match for "warm" spices like coriander, cumin, fennel seed, mustard seed, and black peppercorn. A quick sear and you're more than ready to serve this surprising fall favorite over a bed of braised spinach or make a pillow of fluffy, mashed root vegetables.

No Experience Necessary

One of the joys of cooking¹ is that almost no experience is necessary. As long as you follow a recipe and take your time, preparing wonderful Fall dishes is easy. Ready to eat your fill of delicious autumnal fare? Try the following recipe, and you'll be more than satisfied!

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