

Retirement Wellness Outlook



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December 2017

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Resolve to Maintain Your Fiscal Good Health in 2018

It's that time of year again when most of us start thinking about New Year's Resolutions. Year after year, polls show that the most popular resolutions involve losing weight and/or exercising; in other words, improving our health. That's smart, but don't forget that physical and mental health go hand in hand, and stress and worry can undermine anyone's efforts to achieve overall good health through diet and exercise alone.

As most of you already know, I believe achieving—or at least working toward—*fiscal* good health can contribute greatly toward improving one's health in general. That's a pretty logical idea when you consider that studies consistently show the number one cause of stress for most Americans is worrying about money. That worry can increase significantly as retirement approaches—but it doesn't have to.

The Right Mindset

For much of this year, as the financial markets have entered new realms of irrationality, I have focused on the importance of adopting the right mindset for good fiscal health in workshops, newsletters, and interviews. The right financial tools and strategies are essential, of course, but odds are, you aren't going to end up using them unless you make the necessary shift in the way you *think* about saving and investing within 10 or 15 years of retirement.

As clients, most of you already know all this, but just as you must work to maintain good physical health once you achieve it, you must make the same efforts with your fiscal health. It's never a good idea to put any part of your financial plan on autopilot, and that includes the psychology behind it. It can be especially tempting in this day and age, with so much hype around the overinflated stock market, to fall back into outmoded ways of thinking and start

[Financial Tip of the Month](#)

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Tax-Savings Strategies Workshop

January 30, 2018
6 p.m.

Acton Public Library
60 Old Boston Post Rd.
Old Saybrook, CT

Thursday, February 1, 2018
6 p.m.

Henry Carter Hull Library
10 Killingworth Turnpike
Clinton, CT

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Did you know we host free, fun, educational REFERRAL DINNER EVENTS for our clients and their guests?

As you are aware, professionals rely on referrals to keep their business growing. We usually feel comfortable referring our landscapers, dentists, etc. However, since discussions of money matters are so personal, we tend to keep financial advisors to ourselves.

Let's change that. Do you know anyone who would benefit from the years of experience and knowledge Dave and Jay have shared with you? If so, you should start referring them.

Call us at 860-399-8202 to get all the details on how to RSVP for a referral dinner event. Remember, we want to educate your friends and

thinking of "growth" as the be-all and end-all of financial success.

Not only is that potentially dangerous, it's just plain wrong. I pointed this out in a recent newsletter in which I explained that when most people say they want "growth," what they really mean is they want a good, competitive return. Total return, remember, is the sum of both growth (in the form of capital appreciation) and income (in the form of interest and dividends). In my experience, staying focused on the latter more so than the former near and during retirement is the key to reducing risk, thus reducing stress and maintaining good fiscal health.

Remember, too, that this can be done without necessarily sacrificing return, as income-based investors have proven since the turn of the century. As I pointed out recently, although the stock market has soared by over 60 percent since 2000 (and over 20 percent since just last October), the actual average annualized return for buy-and-hold investors has been about 5 percent with dividends factored in. Plus, they had to endure the stress and uncertainty of two major market plunges—from 2000 to 2003 and 2007 to 2009.

By comparison, many income-based investors whose portfolios have been properly managed during this same period have achieved close to 5 percent income annually and *greater* than a 5 percent average annualized return! More importantly, they've done it with far less risk of a major loss during those two huge market drops, and without the continued risk of a third major stock market drop. To put that all in a simple formula that summarizes my point: comparable return plus less risk equals less stress and improved fiscal good health!

Get Healthy, Stay Healthy

So, by that logic, the first financial resolution on your list should be to make that shift if you haven't yet done so. You should reexamine your way of thinking to ensure you still have the right mindset for saving and investing after age 50—a mindset in which protection and income are your top priorities. Some additional resolutions that might accompany and help you achieve the first one include the following:

Revisit Your Goals – I recommended doing this as part of your year-end financial planning checklist in last month's newsletter, but if you don't get to it before the end of the year, make it a top priority after January 1. Again, goals can change, and sometimes they must be adjusted in response to new developments and circumstances in our lives. At the same time, your financial strategy may periodically need to be adjusted to make sure it is still aligned with your goals—and not potentially jeopardizing them.

Reexamine Your Risk– This is another one I recommended for your year-end checklist, but there is never a bad time to schedule a meeting with your advisor to better ensure that no new potential "weak spots" have developed in your financial plan. Again, long-term fiscal good health is, just like physical health, a matter of maintenance. That includes working with your advisor to maintain the appropriate strategies in accordance with the appropriate mindset.

Help Someone Else "Get Healthy"— Study after study has shown that doing good for others is also good for you! So, when taking steps to improve your own fiscal health, include regular efforts to also improve the fiscal health of people you know and care about. That effort could mean making a commitment to invite someone to an educational workshop. It could mean striking up a conversation with one person each month about growth versus return, and opening their eyes to the fact that increasing one's retirement income actually involves *reducing* financial risk, not increasing it. Or, you could simply recommend a book or TV show geared toward educating investors near retirement about how to achieve fiscal good health by reducing risk and focusing on income—a book such as my own *Return on Principle: 7 Core Values to Help Protect Your Money in Good Times and Bad*, for instance, or a show such as *The Income Generation*, which airs weekly on NewsmaxTV, hosted by yours truly!

Happy New Year!

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family. Invite someone you know who would benefit from hearing Dave speak about important financial topics such as quantitative easing, interest rates, caution in the markets and more.



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SCRANTON FINANCIAL GROUP TEAM:

Steven P. Cox



FINANCIAL TIP

5 Tips for Handling Holiday Financial Stress

If you're like many people, the holidays cause more financial stress than any other time of year. Figuring out how to afford gifts, décor and food for the big feast is often overwhelming.

You might never be able to remove all of your holiday money worries, but you can alleviate some of them. Even though your shopping list might continue to grow while your wallet shrinks, you can enjoy this season without breaking the bank.

Here are five ways to survive holiday financial stress.

1. Set a Budget

Review your earnings and expenses, and then decide how much you're willing to spend on holiday gifts, food and other items. Consider making a list and assigning each item a specific dollar amount. This will help you overcome the temptation to overspend.

2. Plan Your Shopping

Whether you're headed to the grocery store or braving the crowds at the mall, know what you intend to buy and who it's for. Sticking to your list will also help keep you from buying unnecessary items and prevent overspending. It's easy to make impulse purchases with all the eye candy in stores this time of the year, but you won't fall prey to these consumer tricks when you know what you need.

3. Don't Buy it if You Can't Afford it

A 2016 report from investment management firm T. Rowe Price showed that 25% of parents have dipped into their emergency savings or 401(k) retirement plan or taken out a payday loan in order to cover holiday expenses. If you can't afford to buy your children something on their wish lists without taking out a loan or borrowing from another account, the best option is to not buy it--it's okay to say no. Your children will survive. Shortchanging your savings or going into debt is ultimately more detrimental to your family than skipping a few presents.

4. Get Creative with Gift Giving

You can give thoughtful gifts while spending a fraction of the cost. If you're crafty, handmade presents are extremely thoughtful. And if you're lacking in artistic abilities, you can always give the gift of your time. Cooking someone a meal, giving new parents a night out while you babysit, or offering to clean someone's house are gifts that recipients will love and will cost you nothing.

5. Remember What the Season is All About

It's easy to be swept up in the consumerism of the season, but remember that it isn't about money and materialism. Focusing on its religious purpose or enjoying time with your loved ones will keep you from stressing over less important things.

With a little planning and creativity, it's possible to get through the holidays and avoid debt or wiping out your savings account. And you'll feel even less stress when you reach January in good financial shape.

The article [5 Tips for Handling Holiday Financial Stress](#) originally appeared on [NerdWallet](#).

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Now in the Second Season

Did you know our very own David Scranton is the host of the hit television show "The Income Generation" on Newsmax TV?



Not only does David offer his own expert insights, but he also interviews top-financial minds about timely issues that affect us all. Past interviews were with Ed Slot, Peter Morici, Mohamed El-Erian, and Steve Forbes.

Stay tuned, every Sunday at 10 AM Eastern time, for a new episode of *The Income Generation with David Scranton* on Newsmax TV.

To find out how to watch, [click here](#).

Don't forget...Dave Scranton is also regularly seen on:



Sound Income Strategies

Sound Income Strategies was founded in 2014 by David J. Scranton (CLU®, ChFC®, CFP®, CFA, MSFS). Sound Income Strategies is a Registered Investment Advisory firm specializing in active management of individual fixed income securities. With our expertise and experience, Sound Income Strategies focuses on maximizing the value of fixed income portfolios and helps build retirement plans that deliver dependable income, growth potential and – most importantly – defense against damaging losses.

As a Registered Investment Advisory firm, Sound Income Strategies diligently honors its fiduciary responsibility, as spelled out in the US Investment Advisors Act of 1940. Our goal is to "always act and serve in the best interest of our clients."

To learn more about Sound Income Strategies, please [click here](#).

Resource Library

Our mission is to educate you and your loved ones concerning the best options for meeting your current financial needs, achieving your long-term financial goals, avoiding common



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retirement-planning mistakes, and enjoying a lifetime of financial security.

Visit <http://www.sfgpresents.com> to access
our informative videos and white papers

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

December



Garden Veggie Pizza Squares

Ingredients:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 (8 ounce) package refrigerated crescent rolls • 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened • 1 (1 ounce) package Ranch-style dressing mix • 2 carrots, finely chopped | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/2 cup chopped red bell peppers • 1/2 cup chopped green bell pepper • 1/2 cup fresh broccoli, chopped • 1/2 cup chopped green onions |
|--|--|

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C).
2. Roll out crescent rolls onto a large non-stick baking sheet. Stretch and flatten to form a single rectangular shape on the baking sheet. Bake 11 to 13 minutes in the preheated oven, or until golden brown. Allow to cool.
3. Place cream cheese in a medium bowl. Mix cream cheese with 1/2 of the ranch dressing mix. Adjust the amount of dressing mix to taste. Spread the mixture over the cooled crust. Arrange carrots, red bell pepper, broccoli and green onions on top. Chill in the refrigerator approximately 1 hour. Cut into bite-size squares to serve.

Originally Published online at allrecipes.com

HEALTHY LIVING

5 Winter Health Tips

Winter is just around the corner and as the temperatures drop, it can become more challenging to stay healthy and active. Seniors can be especially prone to the “winter blues,” so it’s more important than ever to be mindful of your habits and mood during the colder months. Exercise is a proven mood-booster, and eating healthy can help you feel strong enough to fight off those winter colds.

Below are 5 easy ways to stay healthy during the winter months.

1. Keep Eating Healthy

During the winter months, it can be more challenging to maintain a healthy diet. Since many produce items are “out of season” during the winter, their prices can increase substantially. Take this opportunity to check out your store’s selection of frozen veggies, which often contain less sodium than their canned counterparts. Be sure to stock up on winter fruits and vegetables, like pomegranates, cranberries, citrus fruits, grapes, and root vegetables. It’s also important to eat to support your immune system; this includes taking your vitamins (especially Vitamin C) and eating foods rich in zinc, such as fish, oysters, poultry, and eggs.

2. Exercise Outdoors, Smartly

If you’re able-bodied and have your doctor’s okay to exercise, don’t let colder weather keep you from enjoying your favorite outdoor activities. Be sure to dress in layers so that you can remove articles of clothing as needed, and be sure to wear a hat since the majority of your body heat escapes through your head. Don’t forget your sunscreen and sunglasses with UV protection, and protect yourself from windburn as well. Be smart about checking the weather forecast and wear the proper footwear for the season.

3. Let the Sunshine In

Sunshine, and the Vitamin D it imparts to your body, is key in battling the winter blues. Try your best to get fresh air and some natural light every day, even if it’s just to walk the dog or check the mail. If it’s particularly cold, open your blinds and spend some time sitting by the window. Don’t underestimate the value of light and sunshine in helping your energy level and your overall winter attitude.

4. Keep in Touch

Seniors and caregivers often face an increasing sense of isolation; proactively fight the winter blues by keeping in touch with friends and family members during the colder months. Make appointments to meet for coffee, take a bundled-up walk, or set aside time for a longer phone call with friends on a regular basis. Take special care of others you know who are primarily home bound, and may be feeling lonely or in need of help running errands. Helping others is an excellent way to feel connected.

5. Winter-Proof Your Home

As we age, it gets increasingly difficult to maintain body temperature, and with a more limited budget, we may be tempted to scrimp on the heating bill. Unfortunately, hypothermia is a very real concern for seniors, as more than 600 seniors die every year from it. An easy way to ensure you are staying warm enough is to set your thermostat to at least 68 degrees Fahrenheit (many utility companies offer assistance to seniors on fixed incomes during the winter months on their bills). It’s always a great idea to have working carbon monoxide detectors in the home, especially if you use space heaters.

With a little planning and determination, winter can be truly *enjoyed*, rather than simply endured. Prioritize your health and well-being, body and mind, and you can make the most of the cold season.

Originally published online at senioradvisor.com

EVENTS

Tax-Savings Strategies Workshop

Join Jason Carrier as he discusses different tax-planning strategies. Jay will discuss types of investments relating to taxation, Required Minimum Distributions (RMD), capital gains, Social Security and Trump's proposed tax plan. Don't miss this informative workshop that may help prevent unexpected surprises during tax season. Two different dates and locations are available for your convenience.

Date:
Tuesday, January 30, 2018

Date:
Thursday, February 1, 2018

Time:
6 PM

Time:
6 PM

Location:
Acton Public Library
60 Old Boston Post Road
Old Saybrook, Connecticut

Location:
Henry Carter Hull Library
10 Killingworth Turnpike
Clinton, Connecticut

For more information or to RSVP, please contact Laura at (860) 339-1116.



From our family to yours, Scranton Financial Group wishes you and your loved ones a happy, healthy and safe holiday season.

Referral Dinners

Did you know we host free, fun, and educational REFERRAL DINNER EVENTS for our clients and their guests?

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Please take us up on any of our offers in this newsletter, as we are here to make sure your financial future is secure. If you'd like to learn more about a specific topic or have any ideas about future "Prefer to be Educated" workshops, please let us know.

We value your feedback and are here for all of your financial needs.

**Please contact us at: (860) 399-8202 or
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We look forward to hearing from you!

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