



April is National Records and Information Management Month

Managing records and information isn't just for businesses. Everyone has documents to manage, and often they're more complex than we realize, especially for those taking retirement distributions, caring for multiple generations of family, or planning the legacy of assets. It's good to take stock at regular intervals, and when better than the nationally designated month for doing just that?

Take time to organize your paperwork.

Tackle those stacks of bills, statements, tax documents, receipts, medical records, and anything else that may have accumulated over the past year (or more). Sort and file what you need; shred what you don't. Clean your files of outdated documents. Take care of any outstanding or unopened mail. You'll feel better once you know all your paperwork is settled and up to date.

File or plan to file for Social Security and/or Medicare.

The earliest you can receive Social Security is age 62. For Medicare, it's age 65. You can file for either in the three months before your eligible birthday. Your window to [enroll in Medicare](#) extends to the three months following your 65th birthday and then January 1 through March 31 each year thereafter. For Social Security, you may file any time until the age 70 ½. Plan for benefits to begin three months after you file, and consult your financial advisor to determine the right claiming strategy. Your monthly benefit will change depending on your full retirement age and when you choose to [start claiming](#).

Review and update your beneficiary designations.

This is an easy one to overlook, and you'd be surprised how many estranged ex-spouses are never removed as beneficiaries. Take a look at your current insurance policies, and update your beneficiaries if needed. You may also want to take this opportunity to review your will.

Complete or review your household inventory.

A complete documentation of every item in your home will be invaluable if you need to make an insurance claim. You'll want photographic or video evidence and as much information as you can record about each item. Consider things like serial number, year, original value, and so forth. You can find [templates](#) online to help you get started.

Designate or review your power(s) of attorney.

Accidents or illnesses that incapacitate decision-making are unpredictable. In that unfortunate event, your power(s) of attorney will be making decisions about your finances, your medical treatment, your legal concerns, and even your business. Make sure the right person or people (you can designate multiple powers of attorney for various facets of your life) are at the helm. Consult your attorney to learn more.



Time on your hands? Take up a hobby.

Retirement is a great time for hobbies, and you may have a long list of golf courses to visit or sights to see the world over. Unfortunately, now isn't the time to get out and see the world. With the current state of global affairs, many people are looking for things they can do a little closer to—in fact, totally within—their homes.

If you suddenly find yourself with hours to fill at home, consider taking up a hobby you can do right where you are.

- **Knitting**—Yarn is easy to order online, and you can find many tutorials to help you learn from the safety of your own home. Start with a few simple scarves, and you'll be ahead of the game for your next gift-giving season.
- **Sewing**—Sewing can be both a fun hobby and a great way to help out. With the Center for Disease Control [recommending facial coverings](#) in public, many people—maybe even your own family and friends—don't have access. If you have the tools and the skills, donated masks can be a welcome surprise.
- **Online classes**—Many workshops and classes are available virtually. The popular site [Coursera](#) offers courses from universities around the world. You can even take Yale's most popular class, on [how to be happy](#).
- **Games online with friends**—Many card games, board games, and similar variations are available on your computer, phone, or tablet. You can play with friends in real time or take turns when you have time. It's a great way to stay connected with friends and family.
- **Food preparation**—Pickling and preserves are great pastimes, especially if you might need extra groceries in the future. Many people are also baking artisan bread and making their own sourdough starters.
- **Woodworking**—Many hardware stores are still open, so if you wanted to try building a chair or a table, you should be able to get supplies. You could even build yourself a pool table and start a whole new hobby!

Income-generating hobbies

While you're trying new things, consider turning a hobby into a little extra money.

- **Share a skill**—Many people are looking to use this time to learn something new. If you have a skill, like playing an instrument, cooking, soldering, fixing things, magic tricks, etc., you could set up an online workshop to teach your skills to people who want them.
- **Set up an online shop**—If you're building or crafting, you could sell your creations online. You could even sell things you already have in your home, such as antiques, old records, or vintage clothing. Just make sure you have a plan for shipping your wares that protects your safety and others'.

We hope you're staying safe and well in this time of uncertainty. As always, help is just a quick call away. If you have any questions, please contact the office.