



Thriving through retirement

Retirement is just the beginning of a new adventure.

Retirement can last 25 years or more. So rather than think of it as a finish line, it's important to see it as a new, decades-long phase of life. It's an opportunity to redefine your life's purpose.

Thriving in retirement looks different for everyone. Some might pursue an encore career. Others could prioritize spending time with family or volunteering for causes near and dear to them. No matter what fulfills you, there are countless adventures awaiting you.

CULTIVATE YOUR SENSE OF COMMUNITY

When researcher Dan Buettner teamed up with the National Geographic Society to study blue zones – areas with an unusually high number of centenarians – he found that longevity was deeply tied to a sense of belonging and community. If you hope to enhance your own connections with family and friends during your retirement, and to cultivate a greater sense of community, consider the following options.

[Ikigai](#) (pronounced EEE-key-guy) is a Japanese concept meaning the reason for being – or the reason you get up each morning. It is comprised of two words: 'iki' means life and 'gai' translates to worth or value. In the Okinawa culture, it is believed everyone has a personal ikigai. What's yours?

CONNECT THROUGH TECH

Keeping in touch with the ones you care about is just a click away thanks to online social networks and countless virtual communication tools. There are also apps to help you get around, keep your home in order, stay healthy and more. [Explore them here.](#)

UPGRADE YOUR VIDEO CHATS

According to AARP, video chats are a proven way to strengthen bonds between grandparents and faraway loved ones, including grandchildren. Keep your chats interesting with games like Pictionary, bingo, 20 questions or show and tell. To engage little ones in conversation, [check out these tips from PBS.](#)

LIVE LIKE A KID AGAIN

Make lasting memories with your grandkids with [interactive activities](#) you'll both enjoy. [The Genius of Play](#) offers a plethora of ideas and games. You can choose from exercises that help little ones explore their minds and feelings to activities designed to develop their social, cognitive, communication and creative skills.

SHARE YOUR LIFE STORY

Use online tools such as [Storyworth](#), [StoryFile](#) and [A Life Untold](#) to create keepsake books or videos. These offer an opportunity to pass on your values, preserve meaningful memories and share your legacy with those who matter most to you.

WIDEN YOUR SOCIAL CIRCLE

Discover virtual and in-person events through [Meetup](#), a free online platform for personal and professional networking. You can even organize your own group and plan events that interest you and your social crowd.

MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS

Get to know people in your own neighborhood with [Nextdoor](#), a hyperlocal app that allows you to chat with neighbors, support local businesses, read and share local news, and more. Since all neighbors are verified by the app, you can feel confident knowing you're sharing information only with people in your community.



Be inspired

It's never too late to be whoever you want to be – and [Growing Bolder](#) proves it. Featuring inspirational stories of ordinary people redefining the possibilities of life after 50, the platform also includes tools and tips to help you redefine your own life today.

MAKE A MEANINGFUL IMPACT

Volunteering doesn't just allow you to make a positive impact – it's also an opportunity to build new and meaningful relationships. Plus, doing good is good for you. Research suggests people who volunteer experience a boost in their mental health. Here are a few ways to get started.

CONTRIBUTE YOUR TALENTS

Use sites like [Points of Light Engage](#) – the world's largest digital volunteer network – or [VolunteerMatch](#) to find a nonprofit whose needs align with your professional skillset.

BROADEN YOUR HORIZONS

Quench your wanderlust and support a worthwhile cause by going on a volunteering vacation, where you – and your family – can be of service to others while exploring a new place. For instance, [Global Volunteers](#) offers opportunities to experience life in a Native American community or in the lush “hollers” of Appalachia for a week as you work one-on-one with local people on education, labor, childcare and cultural projects.

BECOME A MENTOR

Guide the next generation and share your expertise by becoming a mentor. You can either serve as an informal mentor, sign up for a company's mentoring program or use your professional experience to empower local entrepreneurs through an organization like [SCORE](#). Another option is the [AARP Foundation Experience Corps](#), a community-based volunteer program that invites people over 50 to serve as tutors for at-risk public school students seeking to become better readers by the end of third grade.

REDEFINE AND REFOCUS

The changes that accompany retirement are often an opportunity to grow, redefine what's important to you, and refocus on your values and passions. Ahead, we explore continued education options, encore careers, and blogs and podcasts – such as the [Century Lives series](#) by the Stanford Center on Longevity – that can widen your horizons.

EMBARK ON AN ENCORE CAREER

It might seem counterintuitive to embark on an encore career in retirement. But this could be an opportunity to find a role tailored to your passions or fulfill a lifelong professional dream. Plus, having a daily, purposeful routine provides a host of mental health benefits.

Ready to redefine your purpose? Explore [job boards](#) and resources that can help you find the right path.

COLLABORATE WITH YOUNGER GENERATIONS

Aiming to amplify age diversity in schools, workplaces, communities and social movements, [Encore.org](#) brings together new and older generations to address pressing social issues, bridge divides and co-create the future. Sign up [here](#) for different ways to get involved and stay informed, including upcoming events, fellowships and free webinars.

EXPAND YOUR MIND

Online classes are a convenient way to learn, connect and have fun – all from the comfort of your home. Create a [MasterClass](#) account to learn from inspiring artists and icons. Explore more online courses and certifications created in collaboration with leading universities at [CourseEra](#) or [edX](#).

REINVENT YOUR CALLING

Become a “modern elder” by enrolling in the [Modern Elder Academy](#), a school with 2,000 alumni across 30 countries seeking to invest in their sense of purpose, wellness and community. Choose from workshops, online programs and sabbatical sessions to help you navigate your next chapter.

TRY SOMETHING NEW

For free interactive events and classes on just about anything you can imagine, visit the [AARP Virtual Community Center](#), where you can search offerings by category – caregiving, cultural connections, gardening and nature, and many more. You can also get a selection of upcoming virtual events and classes delivered straight to your inbox twice a month by signing up for the [AARP Events SnapshotSM newsletter](#).



Uncover the secrets to aging well

Described as a playbook for aging well, [Aging Mastery[®]](#) – a National Council on Aging program – offers classes and a self-directed starter

kit designed to help people uncover the secrets to aging well and make the most of a longer life.

PRIORITIZE YOUR WELL-BEING

We all need a little help from our friends – or from convenient support services. Whether you want to focus on your physical or mental health, receive assistance making meals or with job training, or get an extra set of hands on a project that's difficult to tackle on your own, these services can help.

RELOCATE WITH EXPERT SUPPORT

Thinking of downsizing, organizing or moving from your home? The [National Association of Specialty & Senior Move Managers](#) can help. The association has a strict code of ethics, among other positive [differentiators](#), so you can feel confident knowing you'll have an expert assisting you.

LIVE WELL AND FIND CARE SUPPORT

Learn how to live well through [VistaLynk](#), which offers innovative aging programs full of proven insights and best practices. Courses focus on six key skills: wisdom, movement, inspiration, connection, agility and wholeness. If you're a caregiver seeking to live well, VistaLynk can also help. Its offerings can teach you how to be an intentional caregiver, embrace unpredictability, prioritize your well-being and enrich your emotional life.

FIND SUPPORT SERVICES IN YOUR AREA

Visit [AARP's Connect2Affect](#) to find support services in your area. These include free or reduced cost offerings that can help combat social isolation, along with services like medical care, job training and more.



Focus on yourself

Caring for your physical, emotional and mental health is important at any age. Check out [this article](#) for tips on addressing the challenges that can accompany growing older and insights on living life to the fullest.

NOURISH YOUR BODY AND MIND

Happiness and health are inherently intertwined. In fact, happy people live an average of 14% longer than those who report being unhappy, according to research published on [science.org](#). Living in the digital age means there are countless apps, gadgets and websites to support you in nourishing your body and mind.

GET SOME FRESH AIR

Find new hiking, biking or even paddling trails on [AllTrails](#). Use the app to access maps and guides without Wi-Fi (just make sure to download them ahead of time).

USE TECH TO STAY FIT

Wearable gadgets like the Apple Watch and apps like [Nike Training Club](#) can motivate you to get moving and stay healthy. You can also use the [MapMyWalk](#) or [Strava](#) apps to track your fitness accomplishments, connect with other exercise enthusiasts and partake in athletic challenges.

FIND YOUR ZEN

Elevate both your body and mind through thoughtful exercises. Find a board-certified tai chi instructor [here](#) or visit a local Pilates and yoga studio.

EAT FOODS THAT FUEL YOU

Research diets that offer specific health benefits, such as the [MIND](#) diet, which is said to promote wellness by merging the famous Mediterranean and DASH diets.

EXPLORE YOUR CREATIVE SIDE

Explore must-reads, videos, podcasts, research and more all focused on reinventing life through art. Aging is a beautiful thing. [Lifetime Arts](#) and [The Creative Aging Resource](#) are proud to help you live imaginatively.

Retirement can prove to be one of the most exciting chapters of your life. It's an opportunity to redefine your purpose, find causes that light up your life and embark on adventures that remind you age is just a number.

Ultimately, life is what you make it – and together, we can make it exceptionally wonderful.

Let's talk about how we can help you live better as you live longer.

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