



So, have you scheduled your colonoscopy?

How's the diet going?

How much weight have you lost?

How many hours of sleep do you get a night?

Welcome to client/advisor conversations of the future.


And the future is **now**.

It's easy to comprehend how unhealthy people accumulate less wealth, may be forced to retire sooner and suffer shorter life expectancies. If anything, being unhealthy in retirement even if one has the finances, makes for an emotionally challenging existence.

According to De Nardi, Pashchenko and Porapakkarm authors of NBER Working Paper 23963 *The Lifetime Costs of Bad Health*, unhealthy people accumulate substantially less wealth than healthy people. Among 65-year-old males with a high-school degree, the median wealth of healthy individuals is almost twice that of those who are unhealthy - \$230,000 vs. \$120,000 in 2015 dollars.

According to Fidelity Investments, the average couple will spend a total \$280,000 in today's dollars for medical expenses throughout retirement not including long-term care. In retirement, I've witnessed unhealthy couples spend close to half of their annual income on healthcare costs which includes Medicare premiums plus out-of-pocket costs. I've seen their annual inflation rates hit close to 6% and the quality of their retirements deteriorate.

For me personally, it was a wake-up call to make dramatic improvements to my health habits over three years ago. I don't want a retirement saddled by poor health. Nor do I want to witness clients go through a lifetime of hard work just to face a poor-quality retirement. Ostensibly, it will require that financial advisors step up and begin to incorporate health tips and monitoring to the financial planning equation.

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Health checklist ? Work personally on tackling the top 3 common health issues that plague the U.S.

There are dramatic improvements you can make to battle the top 3 most common health issues we face in America: Lack of physical activity, being overweight or obese and tobacco usage. Improvements in these areas are squarely in your control. Just like a financial discipline to pay yourself first, small, steady improvements over the years can lead to big results.

When people come to me to help analyze their spending habits and create a budget, I make sure to discuss the importance of additional spending on high-quality, unprocessed foods. Many seek to cut the gym expense. Not only do I outline the importance of continuing the membership, I look for

ways for people to invest in a personal trainer and possibly a nutritionist to hold them accountable.

Start small and form one positive health habit. Right. Now.

Studies show it takes about three weeks for a habit to stick.

In his latest book, [?Own The Day, Own Your Life,?](#) Aubrey Marcus founder and CEO of Onnit one of the fastest growing companies in the country, has a chapter on water, light and movement that describes his morning ritual. I've taken up this regimen after I read that 78% of Americans are chronically dehydrated. He outlines that how you handle your first 20 minutes out of bed sets your day.

So, every morning on an empty stomach and before caffeine, I down 14 ounces of room temperature filtered water with a squeeze of lemon and a dash of dissolved pink sea salt. I then complete deep breathing exercises for 5 minutes and bask in 10 minutes of blue-light exposure using a Philips GoLite Energy Light Therapy Lamp as the natural light of the sun is still three and a half hours away from gracing my front yard.

Whatever ritual you choose, exclude checking e-mail or a smartphone at first open eye and think to prioritize hydration and motivation. Some successful people I know also journal in the morning to start the day on a positive note.

Tie physical health into your financial health.

I created a mental trick that helps to keep both my long-term financial and physical health on the right track and in the forefront of my thoughts. Before I indulge in an activity, I mentally increase or reduce my retirement savings by \$100. For example, if I trade out a burger and fries for a salad, I add \$100. If I'm about ready to indulge in something unhealthy or miss a workout, I subtract \$100. All this mental ruse is designed to do is compel me to halt, consider what I'm about to do and operate less on impulse.

At the end of a week, I review my additions and subtractions. The goal is to finish net positive. Some weeks, I'm 100% positive and reward myself with a treat. It's at the point where this mental accounting exercise is on auto-pilot and has been highly effective to keep me on a healthy path.

Postpone retirement.

In the National Bureau of Economic Research working paper 24127, *The Mortality Effects of Retirement: Evidence from Social Security Eligibility at Age 62*, penned by Fitzpatrick & Moore, even Social Security can be a health hazard if taken early. In their analysis the authors studied mortality data from the National Center for Health Statistics' Multiple Cause of Death files for the years 1979-2012 and discovered a significant increase in deaths among Social Security recipients especially men, who took retirement income benefits at age 62.

Floss after every meal and once before bed.

According to a Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation [report](#), most Medicare beneficiaries lack dental coverage and go without needed care. Shockingly, per KFF.org, almost half of all Medicare beneficiaries did not have a dental visit within the past year. Over 65% of the Medicare population does not carry private dental insurance.

It's incredibly shortsighted how Medicare doesn't include dental benefits even though oral health and overall physical health are interlinked. Ultimately, poor oral hygiene leads to greater healthcare expenses for seniors which in turn places more pressure on Medicare when it's probably less expensive just to add dental coverage. A dental health regimen that includes flossing can reduce periodontal disease which shares common risk factors with cancer and heart disease.

If your job jeopardizes your health, try to make a change.

Listen, I know. I was there.

Although I love serving clients' financial needs, my past experience in the brokerage industry was nothing short of deadly. Unreasonable quotas, long hours, lack of job security and deterioration of a once-honorable corporate culture took their toll. I found out firsthand that prolonged stress is a silent killer. I developed high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes and a consistent and embarrassing twitch in my left eyelid. Today, my health is better than ever. Perhaps you need to assess how your current employment situation is affecting your health and ultimately your wealth. It could be a matter of life or death.

A recommended reading list on health ? My top 3 go-to books.

1. [?Own The Day, Own Your Life: Optimized Practices for Waking, Working, Learning, Eating, Training, Playing, Sleeping and Sex,?](#) by Aubrey Marcus.
2. [?The Bulletproof Diet: Lose Up to a Pound a Day, Reclaim Energy and Focus, Upgrade Your Life,?](#) by Dave Asprey.
3. [?The Healing Power of Essential Oils: Soothe inflammation, Boost Mood, Prevent Autoimmunity, and Feel Great in Every Way,?](#) by Eric Zielinski D.C.

It's time to consider the overall impact of health on the quality of retirement and life overall. Certainly, DNA plays a part. However, a proactive attitude coupled with actions may decrease the odds of spending more on out-of-pocket healthcare expenses throughout retirement.