

Transition into Retirement

“Mark Twain once said, ‘It’s not the progress I mind, it’s the change I don’t like.’”

Your retirement brings with it a wealth of opportunities and choices. You may decide to go on and pursue a second career or start a new business. Whilst others will choose to enjoy their new found leisure time catching up on the fun things in life. It’s your retirement and your choice.

Retirement is an exciting time for most people - it’s an opportunity to finally do all the things you wanted to do, but couldn’t do before. But for many it’s also a challenging time, as they (and those around them) adjust to their new lifestyle.

Most of us work and save our entire careers in hopes of achieving a relaxing, comfortable life during retirement. However, the actual process of transitioning into retirement can bring about stress and worry.

Planning and preparation can help ease stress or worry when making the transition to retirement. It will help ease you into this new stage of life and help you get ready for the upcoming changes. Having goals for retirement and tracking your progress toward those goals are important throughout your life but become increasingly more crucial as retirement nears.

Take stock of your situation - As a police officer you will probably retire at a younger age than the average person and may decide to go on to do another career or a volunteer role. For more details read our What to do next - new career or volunteer? guide.

Adjust from saving to spending - Changing your mindset from saving for retirement to spending in retirement can be a challenge, both psychologically and financially.

Look after your health - Good health is key to a successful retirement. It allows you to remain active and enjoy your retirement years.

Understand the coming life change - Beyond the financial, there are psychological and emotional aspects to think through.

Retirement is a massive change, whether you have been looking forward to this change or not, you may still find it difficult and you may need time to adjust.

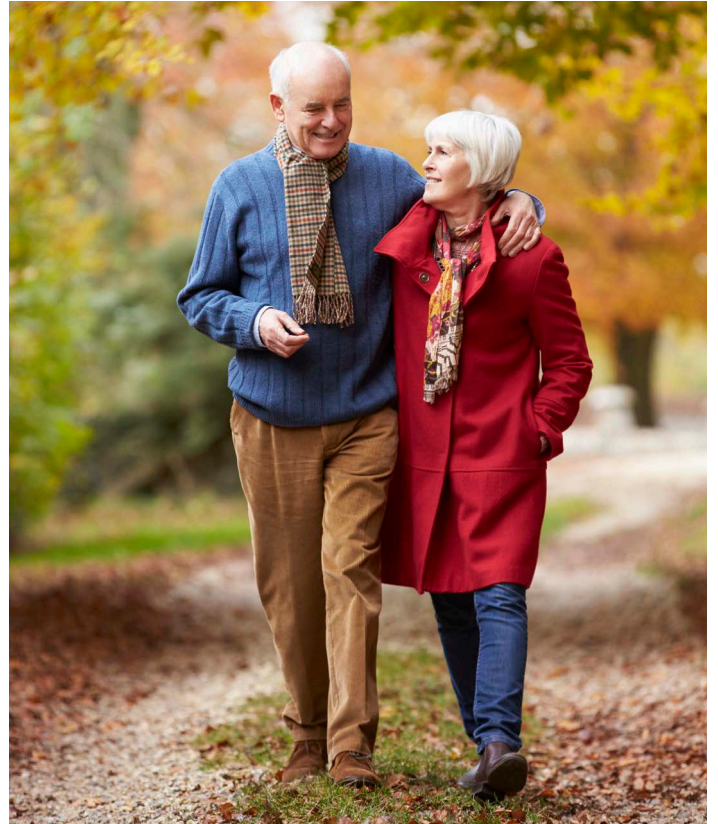
Change is inevitable for us all. Changes can be positive or negative, but any change can make some people feel apprehensive and anxious. Some people embrace change and the challenges and opportunities it brings, while others feel worried or stressed.

Your Relationships

If you have a partner or family, have you considered that your retirement could affect them too? There are the obvious financial changes your retirement could make to the household, but there are also emotional aspects which you may also want to take into account.

If your partner still has to get up and go to work every day, how are they going to feel if they're leaving you at home? You may find your roles and responsibilities will have to change so you can take on more of the domestic responsibilities to make their life easier at home.

If your partner doesn't work, your retirement could mean you spending more time with your partner. Whilst this may sound like a good idea, it could also lead to friction, especially if they're used to time without you and their own space. You may need to acknowledge and respect that they already have a routine for their daily activities. How you fit in with this is something you can discuss and develop over time. Agreeing boundaries and expectations for both of you at the outset might help avoid arguments later on.



Retirement gives you the chance to make a fresh start, but as part of this, there are changes you will face and it's up to you how you deal with them.

Feeling uncomfortable about change is a natural, and let's face it retiring is probably one of the biggest changes you'll ever have to face, especially if you've been with the Police service for some time.

Everyone deals with change in a different way and in a different timescale, but the process and feelings they go through in order to come to terms with it tends to be typically the same.



Changes to consider

Financial matters - Retirement may mean a change in the levels of income you're used to having at your disposal. You may have to consider reducing your expenditure.



Loss of routine - You may miss the stability of having your role. You will establish a new routine for yourself which may involve your new job, volunteering commitments or your hobbies.

Losing touch with colleagues - You've probably spent the best part of your life with some of your colleagues. So, it's important to make an effort to keep meeting up with your old work friends, as they're probably missing you too.

Losing your identity - One day you could be a Police Officer, the next, you're not. Retirement gives you a fresh start to re-define who and what you are. Whether this in your new career or your own business. Or you want to travel or start a new hobby or sport.

Physical health - Chances are you've enjoyed an active job, so, slowing down might be a struggle for you. It's important to do some form of exercise in order to keep you feeling healthy.



Having more time on your hands - Most retirees will have a list of things they want to get done when they retire, however, once this is complete you need to ensure you don't get bored. You may be surprised how quickly you slip into a routine at home and you may even start to wonder how you fitted it all in when you were working. Or perhaps now is the time to start a new hobby, begin a second career or volunteer?

If you are struggling with the change that retirement brings, here are some resilience techniques to practice that may help you.

Breathing Techniques

Deep breathing is one of the easiest relaxation techniques to master and it's also one of the most effective in helping you remain calm and resilient. Slow, deep (diaphragmatic) breathing slows down your heart rate, lowers blood pressure and reduces tension in the muscles.

Exercise

One key way of maintaining your resilience is to be active, in particular cardiovascular exercises and body stretches. The key is to do some exercise, little and often, for example walking, swimming, cycling or playing sports.

Talk to others

It can help to talk to family and friends about how you are feeling, when times are difficult. We all need support at times.

Choose to have a positive attitude

You may not be able to control what is happening to you but you can choose how you respond to it. Keep an open mind.



Try mindfulness or meditation

Take care of yourself

Being physically stronger and fitter will help you to face the challenges that life can bring.

Remain Calm

If you're struggling to stay calm when thinking about retirement try mindfulness or meditation.

Do something different

To try and change your mood or outlook, take a break, listen to music, go for a walk or call a friend.



Take baby steps

If you are overwhelmed by a change or challenge, take little steps to move forward.

Let go of any anger

The change may make you feel angry and upset. You need to let go of these feelings in order to be able to move forward.

Focus on the things that are good

Appreciate all the good parts of retirement as well as the day-to-day good things in your life.



Reflect

Take time to understand your current and future situation and how it is affecting you, reflect on the good and the bad and how they have made you feel.



Take the long view

Envisage the future. A long term view helps you to ride over adverse events as you are focused on the longer term vision.

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