

What now? Life after 9 to 5

While most people spend their working lives looking forward to retirement, many retirees don't realise exactly how much their lifestyle will change after the routine of working is gone.

At first retirement can feel like a holiday – which is why the initial phase is often referred to as the 'honeymoon' period. You can sleep in, catch up on reading or hobbies and spend more time with family and friends. But once this 'honeymoon' period wears off, some people can feel lonely, bored, isolated or depressed.

These are common feelings. A job provides much more than a source of income – it provides positive self-image, fulfilment, purpose and friendships. If you are leaving the workforce, it's important to plan your post-work lifestyle, including how you will stay connected to others.

People who plan an active life after retirement tend to be happier than those who have no plans or routines. Some suggestions of how to develop a retirement routine include:

- Discuss your options and expectations with your partner. Make sure you talk about ways to accommodate each other's wants, plans, needs and expectations for retirement
- Try to achieve at least five hours of purposeful community activity a week. Volunteer work is a satisfying way to add structure and purpose to your day, using your skills while giving back to the community. If you have been active with a club or association, you may like to take up a committee or leadership role to support and mentor others. Visit www.volunteeringaustralia.org.au for information about volunteer opportunities near you
- Think about the hobbies you always wanted to try but didn't have the time – you do now
- Further education options range from short courses through to university degrees; you could launch a new career during your retirement years
- Reduce the risk of health problems by exercising regularly. Joining a gym, walking club or team sport adds a social element to your weekly routine.

Remember that meaningful activities, regular exercise and social contacts can help make retirement a satisfying time of life. Loneliness is a common cause of depression, so make sure you maintain and increase your social networks. Remember, you are never too old to make new friends or try new things.

If you or someone you know is having difficulty adjusting to life after retirement, talk to your doctor or health professional for some help. Visit www.superfriend.com.au for information about support services near you.

This article has been produced in consultation with the Council of the Ageing (COTA) Victoria and SuperFriend. SuperFriend is a mental health initiative developed by www.superfriend.com.au and other industry super funds. For more information about mental wellbeing and staying active, visit www.superfriend.com.au