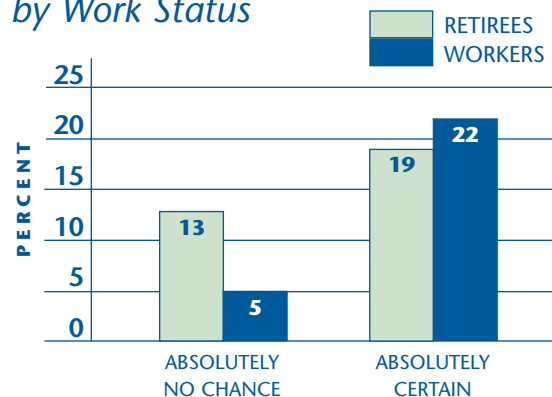




What Are the Attitudes of Young Retirees and Older Workers?

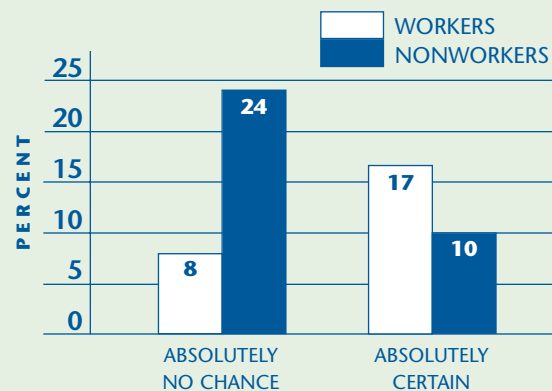
FIGURE 1
Proportion of People Age 51 to 59 Who Say They Will Live to Be 75, by Work Status



SOURCE: Center on an Aging Society analysis of data from the 1992 *Health and Retirement Study*.

Among the 2.6 million young retirees—people age 51 to 59 who are no longer working—most are satisfied with their lives. They enjoy freedom from stress and flexibility in how they spend their time. Most of the 1.8 million workers age 70 and older are active, productive, and optimistic about what their future holds. Both groups have concerns about health and finances.

FIGURE 2
Proportion of People Age 70 and Older Who Say They Will Live Another 10 Years, by Work Status



SOURCE: Center on an Aging Society analysis of data from the 1993 study of *Assets and Health Dynamics Among the Oldest Old*.

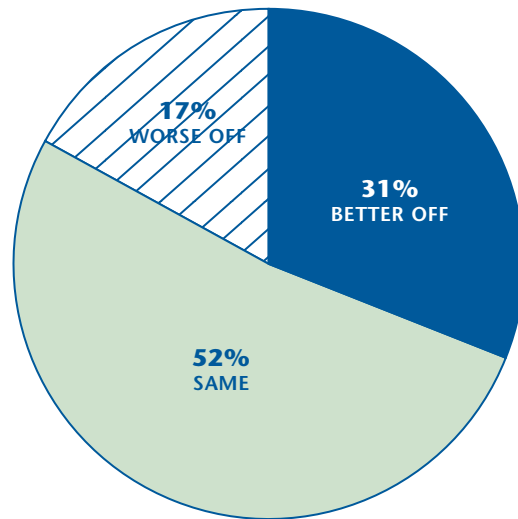
Attitudes and expectations for the future often are shaped by present circumstances. In general, young retirees do not expect to live as long as their working counterparts. Retirees are almost three times more likely than workers to say there is absolutely no chance they will live to be 75 (see Figure 1). Some retirees may feel this way because, in general, they are not as healthy as workers the same age. The proportion of young retirees who say they are in very good to excellent health is half that of workers.

Older workers are more optimistic they will live into their later years than their nonworking counterparts (see Figure 2). On average, older workers are more likely to be in good health than nonworkers. Over half—54 percent—of older workers report that they are in very good to excellent health, compared to just one-third—32 percent—of nonworkers the same age.

Retirees with higher incomes are more optimistic about their finances

Over half of young retirees expect their financial situation to remain the same in the next two years and about one-third think they will be better off (see Figure 3). Among those who think they will be better off, 62 percent say they are satisfied with their current financial situation, compared to just 44 percent of those who believe they will be worse off. This is not surprising since those who think they will be better off have a family income double that of other retirees who do not think they will fare as well in the future—\$33,000 and \$16,000, respectively. When looking at financial wealth, however, the gap between those who think they will be better off and those who believe they will be worse-off financially is not quite as large—\$99,000 and \$90,000, respectively.

FIGURE 3
Expectations of Retirees Age 51 to 59 Regarding Financial Status in Two Years



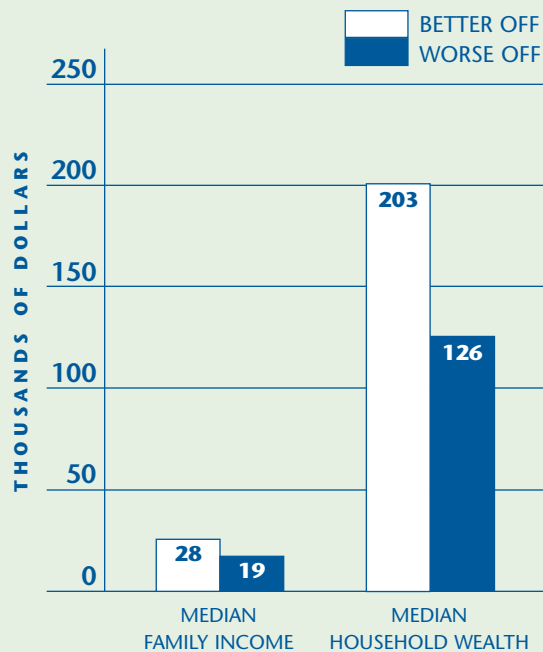
SOURCE: Center on an Aging Society analysis of data from the 1992 Health and Retirement Study.

OLDER WORKERS

Wealthier workers are more optimistic about their finances

Nearly two-thirds—64 percent—of older workers expect their financial situation to remain the same in the next two years, while 16 percent think they will be better off. In general, workers who believe they will be better-off financially have higher incomes and more wealth than those who think they will be worse off. For example, the financial wealth of older workers who think they will be better off is one-and-a-half times greater than that of their less optimistic counterparts (see Figure 4).

FIGURE 4
Median Income and Wealth of Workers Age 70 and Older, by Future Financial Expectations



SOURCE: Center on an Aging Society analysis of data from the 1993 study of Assets and Health Dynamics Among the Oldest Old.



YOUNG RETIREES

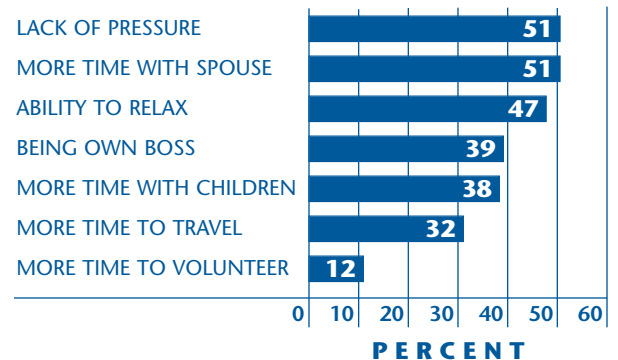
Young retirees enjoy certain aspects of their retirement, but also have concerns

Nearly 40 percent of young retirees say they are very satisfied with retirement, while 26 percent say they are not at all satisfied. About half of young retirees cite the lack of pressure, the ability to spend more time with their spouse, and the ability to relax as the most important aspects of retirement (see Figure 5).

The greatest concern for young retirees is that they may not be able to keep up with inflation. They also are particularly concerned about being ill or not having enough money. Of less concern are feelings related to the void that a lack of work can cause. Still, about one-fifth of young retirees report that they do not feel useful, that they miss coworkers, or that they are bored (see Figure 6).

FIGURE 5

Proportion of Retirees Age 51 to 59 Who Say Certain Aspects of Retirement Are Very Important to Them



SOURCE: Center on an Aging Society analysis of data from the 1992 *Health and Retirement Study*.

OLDER WORKERS

FIGURE 7

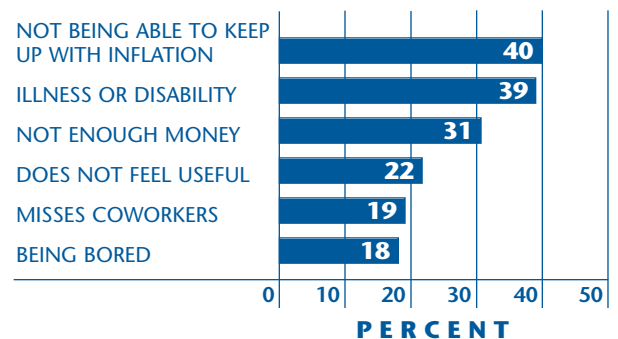
Attitudes of Workers Age 70 and Older Towards Their Jobs, by Occupation Type

OCCUPATION	STRESSED MOST OF THE TIME (%)	HAVE FREEDOM MOST OF THE TIME (%)
Professionals	21	95
Managers	18	85
Craftsmen	15	93
Sales	13	84
Operatives	10	82
Clerical	9	83
Service Workers	9	79
Farmers	5	95
Laborers	5	96

SOURCE: Center on an Aging Society analysis of data from the 1993 study of *Assets and Health Dynamics Among the Oldest Old*.

FIGURE 6

Proportion of Retirees Age 51 to 59 Who Say Certain Aspects of Retirement Concern Them



SOURCE: Center on an Aging Society analysis of data from the 1992 *Health and Retirement Study*.

Many older workers do not feel stressed at work

Relatively small proportions of older workers say that they are stressed most of the time. Stress levels vary by type of occupation, however. For example, one-fifth—21 percent—of professionals say they are stressed most of the time, compared to just five percent of farmers or laborers.

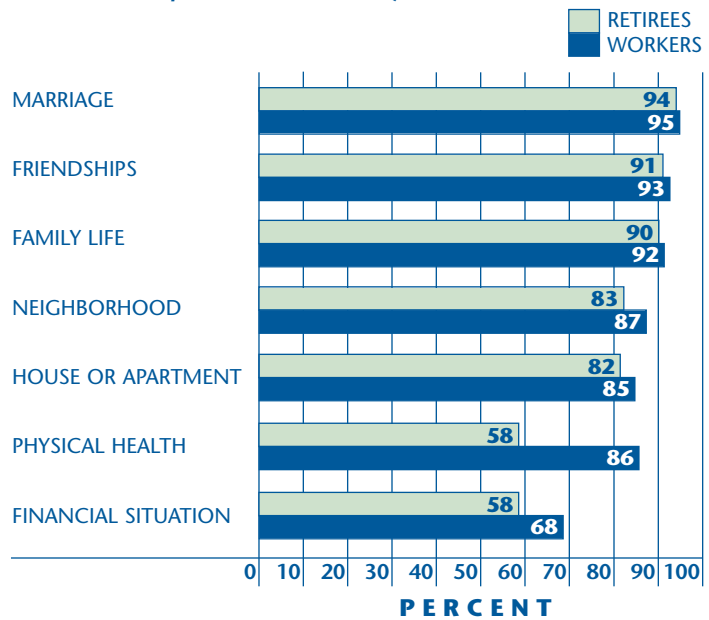
One reason that older workers may not feel stressed in their jobs is that most have freedom to do their own work, regardless of the type of work they do (see Figure 7).

Satisfaction is similar among young retirees and workers, except regarding health and finances

Overall, retirees and workers age 51 to 59 say they are satisfied with life as a whole—82 percent and 91 percent, respectively. Similar proportions of young retirees and workers are happy with social aspects of their lives, such as friendships and families.

The differences between retirees and workers are larger, however, with respect to their health status and financial situations. Slightly more than half of young retirees are satisfied with their health, compared to 86 percent of workers. This may be related to the fact that poor health is often a factor influencing decisions to retire early (see Figure 8). The differences in satisfaction with finances likely reflect the fact that retirees have lower incomes and less financial wealth than their working counterparts.

FIGURE 8
Satisfaction of People Age 51 to 59 with Certain Aspects of Life, by Work Status

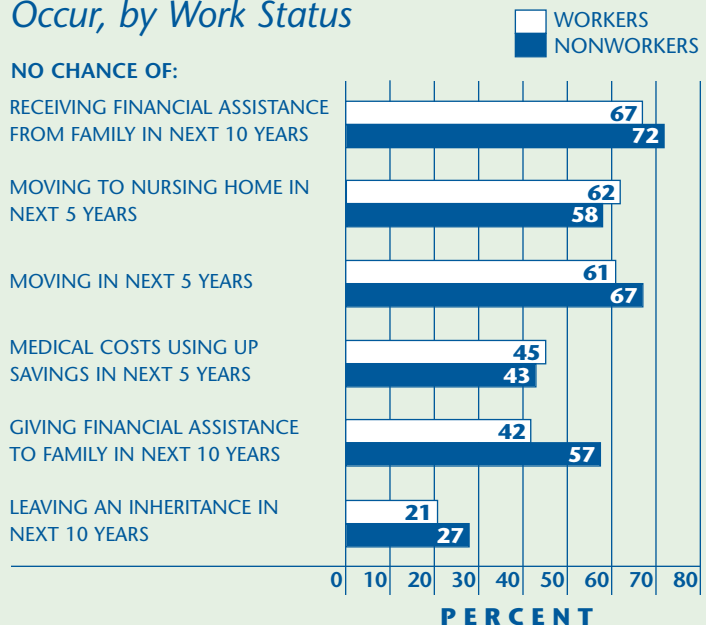


SOURCE: Center on an Aging Society analysis of data from the 1992 *Health and Retirement Study*.

Older workers and nonworkers have similar expectations

Although older workers and nonworkers feel differently about whether they will live into their later years, they have similar expectations about their future financial and living situations. When asked about the chance that certain events would occur, a substantial proportion of older workers and nonworkers say they are certain that they will not receive financial assistance from family members in the next 10 years. Both older workers and nonworkers are confident that their living situations will not change in the future. For example, about two-thirds of both groups expect that they will not move in the next five years. Older workers are more optimistic than nonworkers, however, that they will give financial assistance to family members or that they will leave an inheritance (see Figure 9). This is probably related to the fact that workers tend to be better-off financially than those who do not work.

FIGURE 9
Proportion of People Age 70 and Older Who Say There is No Chance Certain Events Will Occur, by Work Status



SOURCE: Center on an Aging Society analysis of data from the 1993 study of *Assets and Health Dynamics Among the Oldest Old*.

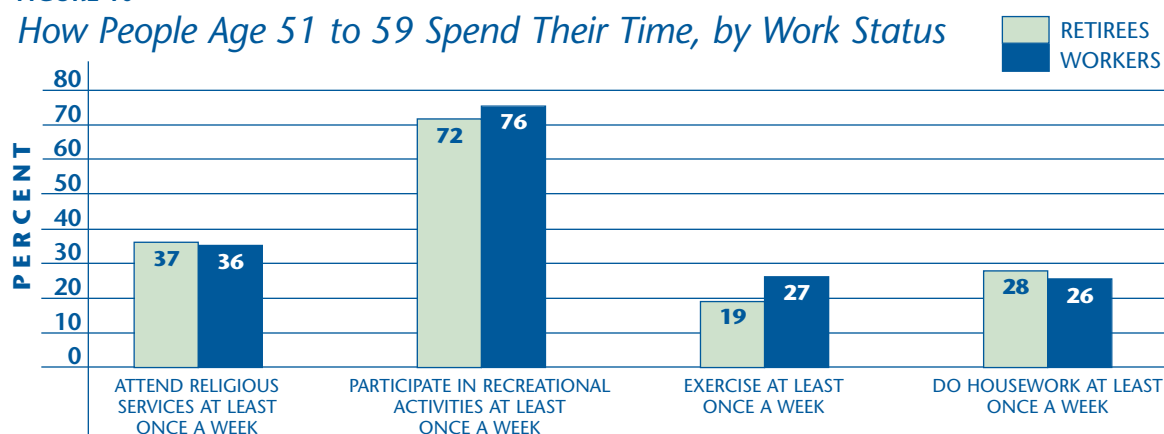
Retirees and workers spend their time in similar ways

Work status does not appear to have a large impact on the ways in which 51 to 59 year olds spend their time. Over one-third of retirees and workers in this age group attend weekly religious services. And about

three-quarters of both groups say they participate in recreational activities, such as gardening, golfing, or dancing. Young retirees are less likely to exercise vigorously than workers the same age, however (see Figure 10). This is not surprising since many of these retirees left the labor force due to poor physical health.

FIGURE 10

How People Age 51 to 59 Spend Their Time, by Work Status



SOURCE: Center on an Aging Society analysis of data from the 1992 Health and Retirement Study.

OLDER WORKERS

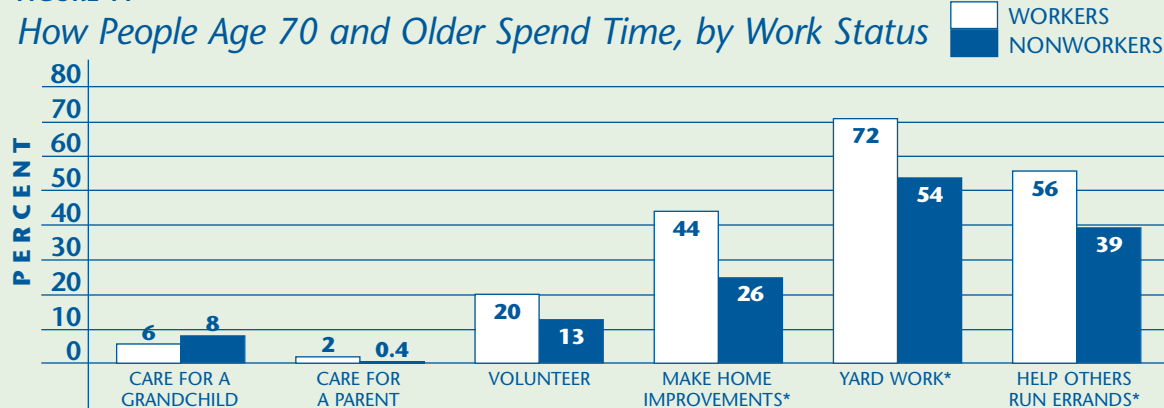
Older workers are more active at home and in the community

Older workers are more likely to be active and particularly to participate in physically demanding activities than their nonworking counterparts. For example, nearly three-quarters—72 percent—of workers say

they did yard work in the past year, compared to only 54 percent of nonworkers. Older workers are also more likely to run errands for others, make home improvements, or work for senior organizations than nonworkers (see Figure 11). The differences may reflect the fact that older workers are generally in better health.

FIGURE 11

How People Age 70 and Older Spend Time, by Work Status



* These data are from a time use module in the 1993 AHEAD.

SOURCE: Center on an Aging Society analysis of data from the 1993 study of Assets and Health Dynamics Among the Oldest Old.

People retire for different reasons

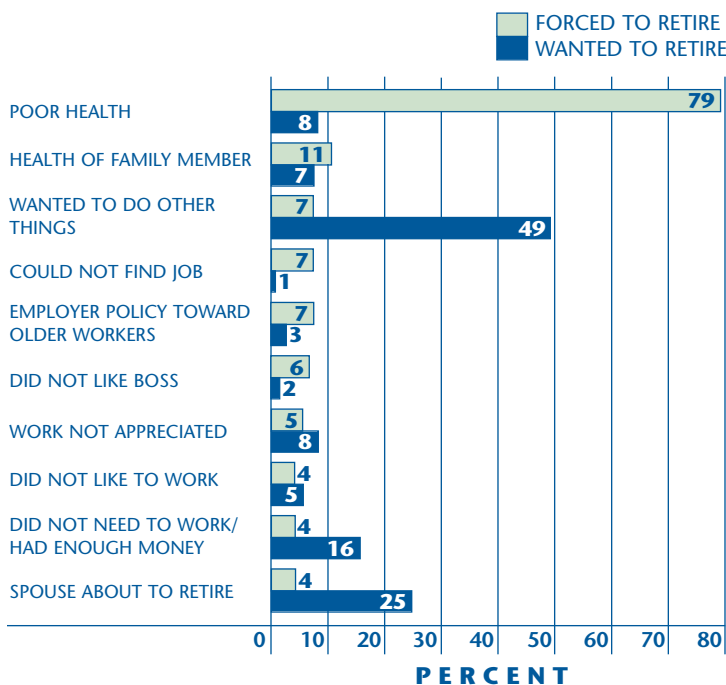
Only 38 percent of young retirees say they wanted to leave the labor force, compared to 56 percent who say they were forced to

retire. Reasons for retirement differ between the two groups. People who say they were forced to retire often cite their own poor health or the health of a family member. For example, over three-quarters—79 percent—of those who were forced to retire say they did so because of their health and 11 percent say they did so because of a family member's health.

The reasons given most often by people who say they wanted to retire are that they did not have to work for financial reasons, they wanted to spend their time differently, and they wanted to spend time with a spouse who was retiring. Almost half—49 percent—of people eager to retire reported they wanted to do other things, compared to only 7 percent of those who did not want to retire (see Figure 12).

FIGURE 12

Reasons for Retirement of People Age 51 to 59



SOURCE: Center on an Aging Society analysis of data from the 1992 *Health and Retirement Study*.

ABOUT THE PROFILES

This series, *Data Profiles: Young Retirees and Older Workers*, is supported by a grant from the AARP Andrus Foundation. This *Profile* was written by Kristen M. Kiefer with assistance from Laura Summer and Lee Shirey of Georgetown University's Center on an Aging Society. It is the fifth in the series. Previous *Profiles* include:

1. Who Are Young Retirees and Older Workers?
2. How Financially Secure Are Young Retirees and Older Workers?
3. How Healthy Are Young Retirees and Older Workers?
4. Do Young Retirees and Older Workers Differ by Race?

The National Academy on an Aging Society is a Washington-based nonpartisan policy institute of the Gerontological Society of America.

ABOUT THE DATA

Unless otherwise noted, the data presented in this *Profile* are from two national surveys of the community-dwelling population living within the United States. Wave 1 of the Health and Retirement Study (HRS) provides information for a population age 51 to 61 in 1992. Wave 1 of the study of Assets and Health Dynamics Among the Oldest Old (AHEAD) provides information about respondents age 70 and older in 1993 and 1994. Both the HRS and the AHEAD data sets were sponsored by the National Institute on Aging and the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan.



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