

Better management of free time ensures happier retirement

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Retirees should be masters of their own destiny, and actively manage and plan their free time to ensure a happy and fulfilling retirement. This is the advice of Wei-Ching Wang of the I-Shou University in Taiwan, leader of a study published in Springer's journal *Applied Research in Quality of Life*. The study found that the effective management of free time has a far greater impact on a retiree's quality of life than the amount of time the person actually has available for leisure activities.

Wang and his team studied the responses of 454 Taiwanese retirees to understand if there is a link between their management of free time and their overall quality of [life](#). With regard to their free time, the retirees were asked about the goals they set, their general attitude towards it and how they schedule and manage it. The Quality of Life scale of the World Health Organisation was also adapted and used for the purposes of the study.

Free time refers to those periods when people are under no obligation and can decide for themselves what to do. It is usually spent in leisure pursuits in order to relax after experiencing stress, or to improve one's health. Several previous studies have revealed that [leisure time](#) is important for older people, and that it has a positive influence on their quality of life, happiness and sense of peace. Other studies have also shown that a lack of planning can create problems such as boredom and an unhealthy [sedentary lifestyle](#).

Compared to studies that focus on the management of work and study

time, very little has so far been done on how retirees manage their free time. The current study is therefore of importance, especially in light of an increasingly aging population worldwide due to increased longevity and declining [fertility rates](#). The phenomena of aging, along with an increasingly [aging population](#) and longer [life expectancy](#), implies that the overall amount of spare time available to people is increasing. In Taiwan, for instance, nearly 10 percent of its population of 2.44 million people are retired.

"Quality of life is not affected as much by the amount of free time that a retiree has, but on how effectively the person manages this time on hand," says Wang. "Therefore it is important to educate people on how to use their free time more effectively to improve quality of life."

Wang therefore advises that governments, community centers and service organizations should consider the introduction of guidance programs or leisure education that teach people the management techniques that they need to schedule their free time better and to make the most of their retirement life.

More information: Wang, W-C. et al (2013). Free time management makes better retirement: a case study of retirees' quality of life in Taiwan, *Applied Research in Quality of Life*. [DOI: 10.1007/s11482-013-9256-4](#)

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