KORE

WEALTH MANAGEMENT

FREE GUIDE · FROM THE FIDUCIARY ADVISORS AT KORE

The 10 Retirement Decisions You Can't Undo

A plain-English guide to the retirement choices that only happen once, and how to think each one through before you commit: Social Security timing, pension elections, the Medicare window, and your first year of withdrawals.

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Most retirement decisions can be adjusted along the way. These ten, for the most part, cannot. They happen once, and they set the terms for decades. None of them should be frightening. Each one simply deserves to be thought through before it's committed to, in plain English, with the trade-offs on the table. That's what this guide is for.

01 The day you stop working

The retirement date itself is a financial decision. Retiring into a falling market means drawing from investments while they're down (what planners call sequence-of-returns risk), and the first few years carry outsized weight. A written plan tells you whether your date is chosen or just assumed.

ASK BEFORE YOU COMMIT *If markets fell 20% in my first year, would my plan still hold?*

02 When you claim Social Security

You can claim as early as 62 or as late as 70, and the monthly difference, often well over 50%, lasts for life. The choice also shapes what a surviving spouse receives. The right answer depends on health, work, savings, and the two of you together, not a rule of thumb.

ASK BEFORE YOU COMMIT *What does each claiming age mean for us over 25 years, not just this year?*

03 How you take your pension

Monthly income or a lump sum is usually a one-time, irrevocable election. The comparison isn't obvious: it depends on the payout terms, your health, inflation, and what the lump sum would realistically have to earn. This one rewards slow, careful math.

ASK BEFORE YOU COMMIT *What would a lump sum have to earn, every year, to match the monthly checks?*

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04 The survivor option you choose

When a pension or annuity starts, the survivor election decides what your spouse receives after you're gone, and waiving it usually requires spousal consent for good reason. A smaller check with protection is often worth more than a larger one without it.

ASK BEFORE YOU COMMIT *If I die first, exactly what changes for my spouse's income?*

05 The Medicare enrollment window

Medicare has a seven-month window around your 65th birthday. Miss it without qualifying employer coverage and the penalties can follow you for life, along with gaps in coverage. If you plan to delay, the reason needs to hold up in writing.

ASK BEFORE YOU COMMIT *Does my current coverage actually allow me to delay, and can I prove it?*

06 Your first year of withdrawals

Which account you draw from first (taxable, tax-deferred, or Roth) sets a tax pattern that compounds for years. The first year establishes habits and brackets, and once the year is over, that opportunity is spent.

ASK BEFORE YOU COMMIT *In what order should my accounts be drawn down, and why that order?*

07 Roth conversions

The years between retiring and required distributions are often the best window to convert, but a conversion, once made, cannot be undone. It also counts as income, which can raise Medicare premiums two years later. Worth doing deliberately or not at all.

ASK BEFORE YOU COMMIT *What does this conversion do to my taxes and Medicare premiums, this year and after?*

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08 Buying an annuity

An annuity can be a legitimate way to turn savings into income. It is also largely irreversible, often with surrender charges and costs that take patience to read. Anyone pressing you to decide quickly is answering a different question than yours.

ASK BEFORE YOU COMMIT *What exactly am I giving up in exchange, and what does it cost me each year?*

09 Selling or keeping the home

Moving in early retirement is common, and expensive to reverse: transaction costs, taxes, and the realities of a new place. The house should fit the plan you actually want, not force the plan to bend around it.

ASK BEFORE YOU COMMIT *Does the house fit the plan, or is the plan bending around the house?*

10 The beneficiaries you named years ago

Beneficiary designations on retirement accounts and life insurance override your will. They pay exactly whoever is named (an ex-spouse, a deceased relative, no one at all), and the mistake surfaces only when it can no longer be fixed.

ASK BEFORE YOU COMMIT *When did I last actually read every beneficiary line I have?*

If one of these decisions is sitting in front of you right now, that is the conversation to have first. Fifteen minutes, nothing to prepare.

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Think them through before you commit.

If it would help to walk through any of these decisions with a fiduciary advisor, the door is open: fifteen minutes, nothing to prepare, no obligation. Plain English, no jargon, and no question too basic.

Book a 15-minute intro call: calendly.com/alexi-kore/15min

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