

Start your retirement

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

This step-by-step guide will help you take the first steps towards enjoying your life in retirement.

When you're finished, you'll be on top of your finances and lifestyle and be ready to begin realising your retirement dreams.



You may not be able to do everything in one go, but make sure you check off each step after you complete it so you know you're making real progress.

STEP

1

Prepare the paperwork to claim an Age Pension

(7–9 minutes)

Note: You can apply for the Age Pension 13 weeks before you reach Age Pension age. If you are starting a super pension or taking a super lump sum at the same time it may make sense to go through those steps first (step 4) so that you don't need to inform Centrelink again about your updated circumstances.



Sign up for a myGov account if you don't already have one.

i Learn more about [myGov](#).

Link your myGov account to Centrelink using the Link to a service tab so you can submit your Age Pension application easily online. Use your Centrelink **Customer Reference Number (CRN)** to link Centrelink to myGov if you've claimed a Centrelink payment before.

Prove your **identity through myGov** if you haven't claimed a payment from Centrelink before. Select I don't have or don't know my CRN and enter the requested details from your identity documents. You may need to visit Centrelink to have them verify your identity documents in person. You can then link Centrelink to your myGov account.

i Learn about [applying for the Age Pension](#).

Check the date on which you can submit your application for the Age Pension (up to 13 weeks prior to reaching your Age Pension age). Use SuperGuide's Age Pension age calculator to work out the date.

- Gather all the documents you'll need to fill in your Age Pension application online. These include personal information (such as your Tax File Number and accommodation details) and details of all your income and assets (such as bank balances, super, pensions, managed funds and investment properties).

i Learn about the [Age Pension income test limits](#) and the [assets test limits](#).

- Scan copies of the required documents so you can attach images to support your claim for the Age Pension.

STEP 2

Submit your claim for the Age Pension

(5–7 minutes)



- Click the Centrelink icon in your myGov account and use the Make a claim tab to apply for the Age Pension online.

- Fill in all the required details and submit your Age Pension application.

Apply for an Age Pension as early as you are eligible so you can address any potential issues with Services Australia and ensure you receive your first fortnightly payment on your eligibility date.

- Ensure you apply even if you don't think you will qualify, as even a small part-Age Pension can get you a Pensioner Concession Card (PCC) for discounts on healthcare and medicines, rent assistance, utility rebates and one-off government cash payments.

- Sit back and wait to hear from Centrelink, as the assessment process can take some time, depending on staffing and the complexity of your personal circumstances.

- Ensure you promptly notify Centrelink of any changes to your circumstances via myGov.

i Learn how to [maximise your Age Pension](#).

- Advise your utility providers and local council if you are granted an Age Pension to obtain discounts on rates, electricity, gas and water bills.

STEP 3

Check your eligibility for government concession cards and benefits

(5–7 minutes)



- If you are not eligible for an Age Pension, apply online for a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC) through the Services Australia website as the card provides cheaper prescription medicines, bulk-billed doctor visits, access to higher Medicare refunds and additional concessions from state and local governments.

i Learn about [applying for the CSHC](#).

- Submit an application for your state's non-means tested Seniors Card if you don't already have one. These cards provide access to government benefits and public transport costs, plus discounts from participating businesses. Check out the benefits available with your state's [Seniors Card](#).

- Register for the Medicare Safety Net through Services Australia to lower your costs for out-of-hospital medical services. If you hold a PCC or CSHC, you can access the Extended Medicare Safety Net.

i Learn more about the [Medicare Safety Net](#).

- Visit the government's online portal for [older Australians](#) to learn about the wide range of payments and services it offers.

- Check out the [My Aged Care website](#) to learn about aged care services in your area or to arrange an assessment for a [Home Care Package](#).

STEP 4

Apply for your super savings

(6–8 minutes)



- Decide whether you intend to withdraw part or all of your super from the super system. You can leave money in the accumulation phase even if you are retired.

i Learn about [leaving super in the accumulation phase](#).

- Decide how you want to access your super savings – as an account-based pension, lump sum or mixture of both – or if you plan to purchase an annuity or invest your money outside the super system.

i Learn about [converting super into retirement income](#).

- Contact your super fund and inform them you've retired and want to access your super. Let them know if you want to take a lump sum, start a pension, or do a combination of both. They can provide you with the disclosure documents and application forms you need. You will need to provide proof of identity.

- Think about which investment option to choose if you plan to commence a super pension with your fund.

i Learn about [choosing an investment option for your super pension](#).

- Confirm how much you will be required to take each year as a drawdown from your super pension.

i Learn about the [minimum pension drawdown rates](#).

- Check how much income will be **deemed** from your super (and other financial assets) under the Age Pension tests.

i Learn about [how your super affects the Age Pension](#).

STEP
5

Get your retirement finances in order

(8–10 minutes)



- Add up all your potential sources of retirement income (such as Age Pension, super pension and investments held outside super).

- Spend some time playing with ASIC's MoneySmart **retirement planner calculator** to work out how much income you can expect to receive from these sources.

- Set an annual budget for all your household expenses to ensure you don't overspend your retirement income.

i Learn about the [cost of living in retirement and how much you can spend in retirement](#).

- Compare the **ASFA Retirement Standard's** detailed quarterly report of retiree expenditure with your budget and actual spending.

- Check out Services Australia's **Financial Information Service**, which provides information and support to help make decisions about managing your finances in retirement.

- Investigate if you qualify for home help (such as cleaning or personal care) or discounted tradespeople and home maintenance support services through your state government.

- Apply for the Home Equity Access Scheme if you find it difficult to live on your retirement income. This top-up for your retirement income is open to both Age Pensioners and self-funded retirees.

i Learn how the [Home Equity Access Scheme works](#).

- Visit the Department of Health website to learn about the free vaccines available for Australian aged 65 and over.

STEP
6

Start enjoying life in retirement

(6–8 minutes)



Get your retirement travel plans underway and start make some bookings.

Join some community groups or start volunteering to make new friends and social contacts.

▶ Watch SuperGuide's video on [wellbeing in retirement](#).

Sign up for some further education courses (such as short courses, online courses, the University of the Third Age).

▶ Watch SuperGuide's video on [brain health in retirement](#).

Get started on your retirement exercise program to ensure a long and healthy retirement.

Put aside time to devote to the hobbies you planned to enjoy in retirement.

Start renovating your home if you decided to leave any updates until you were in retirement.

Plan your goals for the next few years and start thinking about how to achieve them.

▶ Learn about the [different phases of retirement](#).