**Become a SuperAger for a Higher ROL**

[Northwestern University's SuperAging Study](https://www.brain.northwestern.edu/join/SuperAging.html) defines a "SuperAger" as a person in their 80s whose cognitive function is comparable to an average middle-aged person. These are the "sharp" seniors who keep learning, keep growing, and keep adapting to whatever life throws at them. SuperAgers also lose brain matter at a slower rate than average seniors [and may have some immunity to Alzheimer’s and dementia](https://www.alzheimers.net/05-10-2017-superagers-immune-alzheimers).

While genetics may play a part in SuperAgers' mental durability, researchers have also found that these three habits can help seniors age better and improve Return on Life.

**1. Staying active.**

[A three-year study by the University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/medicine-vet-medicine/news-events/all-news/news-2012/exercise-231012) found that folks over 70 who exercised regularly exhibited less brain shrinkage than seniors who did not. The study also found that active seniors had better cognitive function and a reduced risk of dementia.

[The U.S. Government's National Institute on Aging](https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/infographics/mental-health-benefits-exercise-and-physical-activity) says that regular exercise can lead to lower levels of stress, better sleep cycles, and better mental health. And the more you're moving, the greater the benefits to both your physical and mental health. In fact, [the risk of developing Alzheimer's triples](https://www.healthline.com/health/alzheimers-disease-risk-factors#3) for seniors who have a high body mass index.

Improving your activity level doesn't have to be as daunting as it sounds. The National Institute on Aging recommends that adults do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise every week. If you're not a natural gym rat, you can rack up those 2.5 hours by taking long walks, riding a bike, playing golf without the cart, swimming, or even practicing online yoga from the comfort of your living room.

**2. Finding new challenges.**

A common trait among seniors who struggle with retirement is boredom. Without work and raising a family to provide structure and purpose, many seniors feel lost. Instead of building a new weekly routine around things they enjoy doing and the people they love, they putter around the house struggling to fill the time.

SuperAgers don't get bored. They constantly seek out new ways to challenge themselves and expand their worldviews. They enroll in classes at their community college and attend workshops at their senior centers. They work with professional coaches to lower their handicaps and smooth out their backhands. They read, stream, listen to a variety of podcasts, and buy memberships to local museums and theater groups. They learn new languages, take up new hobbies, and teach themselves how to repair and upgrade their homes.

In other words, they keep learning. [And research has found that learning creates new connections in our brains](https://ce.ccsu.edu/what-happens-to-your-brain-when-you-learn-a-new-skill/) that strengthen existing pathways and improve our powers of cognition, even as we age.

**3. Maintaining an active social life.**

[According to Harvard Medical School](https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/3-ways-to-build-brain-boosting-social-connections-202109082585#:~:text=How%20does%20social%20life%20engage,brain%20is%20hard%20at%20work), our social connections are very important to our brain health. Afterall, every interaction we have with someone is another potential learning experience that stimulates the brain and provides the same learning benefits that guard against cognitive decline. Unsurprisingly, studies have found that folks who don't have strong social ties and those opportunities for interaction have a higher risk of dementia.

SuperAgers have learned to embrace the variety of ways we can connect with other people, from video chat and social media to joining social clubs and shopping at local businesses. But, as is true at any stage in life, it's not the number of relationships you have that matter. It's the quality of your connections to the people who matter the most. Devoting a significant part of your retirement to nourishing those relationships and making meaningful new connections to grandchildren, neighbors, and extended family can make anyone feel young again.

Is enjoying a longer, more active, and more stimulating retirement one of your top financial goals? Get in touch and let’s talk about how our Life-Centered Planning Process can help.