

RETIREMENT IN SIGHT



MONTHLY NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE RETIREES
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QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Pretending is not just play. Pretending is imagined possibility. Pretending, or acting, is a very valuable life skill and we do it all the time.”

MERYL STREEP

ARE YOUR FEDERAL INCOME TAXES DUE IN MAY? MAYBE, MAYBE NOT

In March, the Internal Revenue Service announced that it was pushing the deadline for 2020 federal tax returns ahead to Monday, May 17. This extended due date does not apply to all individual taxpayers, though. For example, if you live in Texas, Oklahoma, or Louisiana, you could have the opportunity to file as late as June.

The deadline for first-quarter 2021 estimated tax payments still falls on Thursday, April 15, and it applies to taxpayers in 47 states and the District of Columbia. If you're retired and are taking distributions from retirement accounts and have other investments, you may need to heed this April 15 estimated tax deadline. If you already pay estimated tax because you are self-employed and/or own a business, you may have made that Q1 estimated tax payment already. If not, remember that any loans received through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) or grant programs may need to be factored into the calculations. Last year, the I.R.S. extended the deadline for Q1 estimated taxes from April 15 to July 15, but that has not happened this year. Individual income taxes and Q1 estimated taxes are not due for taxpayers and businesses in Texas, Oklahoma, or Louisiana until June 15; the I.R.S. is granting these taxpayers additional time in view of the rough winter storms that hit these states.¹



RECIPE

25-Minute Strip Steak with Mushroom Sauce

Serves 4

Ingredients:

12 oz. boneless beef top sirloin steak cut 1" thick and trimmed
2 tsp. salt-free steak grilling seasoning
2 tsp. canola oil
6 oz. broccoli rabe, trimmed
2 cups frozen peas
3 cups sliced fresh mushrooms
1 cup unsalted beef broth
1 Tsp. whole-grain mustard
2 tsp. cornstarch
¼ tsp. salt

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°. Sprinkle meat with seasoning. Heat canola oil on medium-high in a 12" cast-iron skillet. Add the sirloin steak and broccoli rabe to the oil. Cook for 4 minutes, then turn only the broccoli rabe once (do not turn the meat). Add peas around meat. Take the skillet, transfer it to an oven, and bake for 8 minutes or until the meat is medium-rare (145°). Remove meat and vegetables from the skillet; keep the skillet covered and warm.

For the sauce: Begin creating the sauce by adding mushrooms to the drippings within the skillet. Cook on medium-high heat for 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Whisk together beef broth, mustard, cornstarch, and salt; stir this mixture into the mushrooms. Cook and stir it all until it is thick and bubbly; once it is, cook and stir it 1 minute more. Serve the meat and vegetables with the sauce.

Recipe adapted from EatingWell.com, March 21, 2021²

STEPS TO STAYING IN THE ZONE

Today, it can be hard to focus. How can you stay focused with all the distractions, anxiety, and uncertainty brought by the pandemic? Interestingly, the way to maintain your focus might be to unfocus your mind now and then.

One school of thought urges us to overfocus. If we learn to intensely focus on one task, we can theoretically apply that focused intensity to multiple tasks and become more productive. Multitasking, though, is arguably a myth: our brains can only focus on one task at a time. As University of California-Irvine informatics professor Gloria Mark told NPR, "Every activity we do uses a different set of cognitive resources," and if we try to do two or three activities seemingly at once, we end up depleting our cognitive energy instead of focusing it. We can also do this through overfocusing, which is a conscious effort to rigidly absorb and perform every detail of a task. Paradoxically, cognitive researchers have concluded that a little idleness is good for our focus, and that our brains need the occasional break. Prof. Mark and Dr. Srinii Pillay, a TED-talking neuroscientist and psychiatrist, offer six steps for optimal focus: schedule breaks in your workday; daydream positively during the workday; block out distractions before diving in deep to something; schedule your most intense work for the time of day your brain and body seem to work best for you; allow your brain time to read, play, and engage in new hobbies; and take the occasional "digital sabbath" from being online.³



DID YOU KNOW?

Our current American flag was designed by a teenager

Bob Heft, a 16-year-old in Lancaster, OH, designed a 50-star U.S. flag for a high school assignment in the late 1950s, when Alaska and Hawaii were poised for statehood. His teacher gave the design a B- and told him it was "unoriginal." Out of thousands of new flag designs submitted to the federal government, Heft's was accepted, and his teacher later changed his grade to an A.⁴

ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

Thanks to the passage of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, tens of millions of individual taxpayers aged 50 and older are receiving stimulus checks of up to \$1,400 this spring. Some of these payments have gone to Social Security recipients.⁵



BRAIN TEASER

Frank weighs half as much as John. Hubert weighs three times as much as Frank. Their combined weight is 720 pounds. How much does each man weigh?

STUMPED? CALL 281-724-8181 FOR THE ANSWER!

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CITATIONS.

- 1 - CNBC, March 18, 2021
- 2 - EatingWell.com, March 21, 2021
- 3 - NPR, March 21, 2021
- 4 - Spokane Spokesman-Review, June 14, 2020
- 5 - CNET, March 20, 2021