RETIREMENT FASTLANE

FREE PRINTABLE WORKSHEETS

The 5-Year Retirement Countdown

A Year-by-Year Plan to Get Your Money, Health Coverage, and Life Ready

Daniel Larsen, CFA

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These worksheets come from *The 5-Year Retirement Countdown* by Daniel Larsen, CFA, part of the Retirement Fastlane series. Print as many copies as you like for your own personal, non-commercial use. Fill them out in pencil and update them as your plans change.

For educational purposes only; not individualized investment, tax, legal, or insurance advice. Examples and figures follow the book (2027 figures as of November 18, 2026). See the Important Disclaimer in the book before relying on anything here.

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Master Countdown Checklist

Countdown year	Task	Chapter	Done?
Year 5	Complete the inventory of accounts, benefits, and debts (Worksheet A)	2	
Year 5	Track 12 months of actual spending and estimate retirement spending	2	
Year 5	Download Social Security statements and check earnings records	2	
Year 5	Pick three dates: target, early, later	2	
Years 5–4	Maximize employer match, HSA, and catch-up contributions (Worksheet B)	3	
Years 5–4	Confirm super catch-up (60–63) and Roth catch-up rules with your plan	3	
Years 5–4	Make a mortgage and debt decision	3	
Year 4	Build a landing mix and descent plan (Worksheet C)	4	
Year 4	Consolidate old accounts; check company stock and fees	4	
Years 4–3	Run stress tests and identify backup levers (Worksheet D)	5	
Year 3	Price health coverage options and map MAGI for subsidy rules (Worksheet E)	6	
Years 3–2	Get pension election packet and benefit rules (Worksheet F)	7	
Years 3–2	Identify date triggers: bonus, vesting, year-end contributions	7	
Year 2	Build the income timeline (Worksheet G)	8	
Year 2	Test Social Security claiming ages for the higher earner	8	
Years 2–1	Plan charitable bunching, retirement month, NUA, withholding	9	
Years 2–1	Sketch Roth conversion and 0% gain-harvesting windows	9	
Year 1	Live on the practice paycheck; build cash runway (Worksheet H)	10	
Year 1	Handle big purchases, repairs, and medical/dental work	10	
Year 1	Update estate documents and beneficiaries; write “How Our Money Works”	10	
Ongoing	Housing decision, retirement week, purpose and family conversations	11	
Last 60 days	Work through the Retirement Day checklist (Worksheet I)	12	

Countdown year	Task	Chapter	Done?
First 90 days	Turn on the paycheck, set up taxes, 90-day review	12	

Worksheet A: Countdown Inventory

Part 1: Accounts

Account	Owner	Institution	Tax type (deferred / Roth / taxable / HSA / cash)	Balance	Primary beneficiary	Contingent beneficiary
Total						

Part 2: Employer benefits

Benefit	Details (amount, rules)	What happens when I leave?	Deadline or key date
Pension / cash balance plan			
Retiree health coverage			
Group life insurance			
Disability insurance			
Stock awards / options / ESPP			
Deferred compensation			

Benefit	Details (amount, rules)	What happens when I leave?	Deadline or key date
PTO / sick leave payout			
Other			

Part 3: Debts

Debt	Balance	Rate	Monthly payment	Payoff date	Paid before retirement? (Y/N)
Mortgage					
Home equity					
Auto					
Credit cards					
Other					

Part 4: Social Security estimates (from ssa.gov/myaccount)

	You	Spouse
Full retirement age		
Estimate at 62		
Estimate at FRA		
Estimate at 70		
Earnings record checked? Errors found?		

Part 5: My three dates

- Target date: _____ (my age ____, spouse's age ____)
- Early date: _____ (my age ____, spouse's age ____)

- Later date: _____ (my age ____, spouse's age ____)

Net worth this year: $_____ Last year: $_____ Change: $_____

Worksheet B: Savings Booster

Item	You	Spouse
Age this year		
Prior-year FICA wages over $155,000 (2026 wages, for 2027)? (catch-ups must be Roth)		
Employer match formula		
Contribution needed for full match		
2027 base limit ($25,500 for 401(k)/403(b)/457(b))		
Catch-up eligible ($8,500 at 50+; $11,750 at 60–63 if plan allows)		
Current annual contribution		
New annual contribution		
HSA eligible? Contribution (2027 limit $4,500 self / $9,000 family + $1,000 at 55+)		
IRA / Roth IRA contribution ($7,500 + $1,100 at 50+)		
Taxable savings per year		
Total annual savings		

Where the money will come from

Source	Monthly amount
Expense that's ending: _____	
Share of next raise	

Source	Monthly amount
Spending audit savings	
Other	
Total	

Mortgage decision: ☐ Pay on schedule ☐ Pay down faster ☐ Pay off before retirement.
Reason: _____

Worksheet C: Landing Mix

Step	Calculation	Amount
1. Portfolio withdrawals, first two years of retirement (from Worksheet G)	Year 1 gap + Year 2 gap	$
2. Cash reserve target	Step 1 + known big expenses	$
3. Remaining bridge-year withdrawals (until largest income source starts)		$
4. Additional years of withdrawals for the bond runway (2–4 years)		$
5. Bond runway target	Step 3 + Step 4	$
6. Safe money total	Step 2 + Step 5	$
7. Expected portfolio at retirement		$
8. Growth money	Step 7 – Step 6	$
9. Landing mix	Step 8 ÷ Step 7 = stock %	% stocks / % bonds and cash

Descent plan

Countdown year	Target stock %	Rebalancing date	How (new contributions / rebalance inside retirement accounts)
Year 4			
Year 3			
Year 2			
Year 1			
Retirement			

- Company stock as % of investable assets: _____% (flag if over 10%; check NUA before rolling over)
- Total annual investment costs: $_____ (_____% of portfolio)

Worksheet D: Stress Test and Backup Levers

Base case

- Retirement age(s): _____ Portfolio at retirement: $_____ Annual spending: $_____
- Social Security start ages and amounts: _____
- Pensions/other income: _____ Real return assumed: _____% Plan to age: _____

Scenario	What changes	Result (lasts? money left / age money runs out)
Base case		
Forced early retirement (2 years)		
25% decline in first year		
Live to 100		
Death of a spouse at ___		
Real return 1% lower		
Combined: _____ + _____		

Backup levers tested

Lever	How much / how long	Result when applied to worst scenario
Skip inflation raises		
Cut discretionary spending ___%		
Delay Social Security to ___		
Part-time income $_____ for ___ years		

Lever	How much / how long	Result when applied to worst scenario
Delay big purchases		
Downsize / tap home equity		
Work longer by ___ years		

My backup plan: "*If* _____ *happens, we will* _____."

Worksheet E: Health Coverage Bridge

	You	Spouse
Retirement date		
65th birthday (Medicare start)		
Years of bridge coverage needed		
Retiree coverage available? Cost?		
Spouse's plan available? Deadline to join?		
COBRA monthly cost (up to 102% of full premium)		
Marketplace benchmark silver premium (real quote)		

Subsidy cliff (2027 coverage, 48 contiguous states): $63,840 single; $86,560 two-person household (2026 coverage: $62,600; $84,600). Check HealthCare.gov for current figures.

MAGI plan for each bridge year

Year	Spending need	From tax-deferred (adds to MAGI)	From cash / Roth / basis (doesn't add)	Other MAGI (wages, gains, SS, interest)	Estimated MAGI	% of poverty level	Expected premium after credit

Medicare dates

- Initial Enrollment Period opens (3 months before 65th birthday month): You _____ Spouse _____
- Stop HSA contributions (6 months before applying for Medicare, if applicable): _____

- First “IRMAA lookback” year (2 years before first Medicare year): _____

Worksheet F: Exit Package and Key Dates

Pension options (from election packet)

Option	Monthly amount	Survivor receives	Notes
Single life		$0	
Joint & 50% survivor			
Joint & 75% survivor			
Joint & 100% survivor			
Period certain (___ years)			
Lump sum	$		Payout rate = annual single-life payment ÷ lump sum = ___%

- Spousal consent required? ☐ Yes ☐ No. Election deadline: _____

Date triggers

Trigger	Date	Value if I'm employed on that date
Bonus payment		
Vesting (stock or match)		
Year-end profit sharing / match		
Pension age or service milestone		
Health coverage end date rule		
PTO payout rules		

401(k) at separation

- Rule of 55 applies? (Separating in or after the year I turn 55) ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Partial withdrawals allowed after separation? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Company stock in plan? Cost basis $_____ Current value $_____ (evaluate NUA)

My tentative exit date: _____ Reason: _____

Worksheet G: Income Timeline

Year	Ages (you / spouse)	Spending	Social Security	Pension / annuity	Other income	Paycheck gap	Portfolio	Rate

Rate = paycheck gap ÷ portfolio at the start of the year. Note milestones (Medicare, claiming dates, debt payoff, RMD age) in the margin.

- Total bridge withdrawals: $_____ Long-run withdrawal rate: _____%
- Social Security claiming ages tested: ____ vs. ____ Bridge cost of delay: $_____ Lifetime increase: $_____/month
- Survivor's guaranteed income under each strategy: $_____ / $_____

Worksheet H: Final-Year Checklist

Practice paycheck

- Annual retirement spending (before income taxes) ÷ 12 = $_____ per month
- Start date: _____ Adjusted amount after practice: $_____

Cash runway

Location	Amount	Holdings	Counts toward MAGI when withdrawn?
Total (target: 1–2 years of paycheck gap)			

Big purchases and repairs before retirement

Item	Estimated cost	Done?
Vehicle		
Roof / HVAC / water heater		
Dental / medical / vision / hearing		
Other		

Documents and insurance

Item	Date reviewed	Notes
Will / trust		
Financial power of attorney		

Item	Date reviewed	Notes
Health care power of attorney and advance directive		
HIPAA authorizations		
All beneficiary designations		
Life insurance (keep / convert / drop)		
Umbrella liability		
Long-term care plan		
“How Our Money Works” summary		

Worksheet I: Retirement Day and First 90 Days

Timing	Task	Done?
60 days before	Confirm last day and end date of each benefit	
60 days before	Apply for marketplace coverage / plan COBRA / spouse's plan	
60 days before	Spend FSA; schedule medical and dental appointments	
60 days before	Decide on life insurance conversion or portability	
60 days before	Confirm final pay, bonus, PTO, severance, and withholding	
60 days before	Get retirement plan distribution paperwork; finalize pension election	
60 days before	Update email and address on every account	
60 days before	Download records: pay stubs, plan documents, stock agreements	
Retirement Day	Return company property; get receipt; write yourself a note	
First 30 days	Turn on automatic monthly paycheck	
First 30 days	Set up tax withholding (W-4P, W-4R, W-4V) or estimated payments	
First 30 days	Confirm health coverage is active; carry new card	
First 30 days	Apply for Social Security / Medicare if due	
Days 31–90	Avoid major irreversible decisions	
Days 31–90	Vet any new advisor (fiduciary? how paid? BrokerCheck/IAPD)	
Day 90	Review spending, cash, taxes, coverage, paperwork, and how you feel	
Day 90	Schedule first annual retirement checkup	