

The Top 5 Reasons I Want to Retire Early



[Editor's Note: This is a republished post from [Physician on FIRE](#), a member of [The White Coat Investor Network](#). There seems to be some confusion sometimes on these Saturday posts. In case it isn't clear, this isn't written by me or about me. It's written by Physician on FIRE and it is about HIM. The original post ran [here](#), but if you missed it the first time, it's new to you! Enjoy!]

Personal finance is personal, and personal posts tend to be more interesting than the typical clickbait lists that penetrate our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) feeds.

I've written a couple not-so-personal Top 5 lists, including the [Reasons to Retire Early](#), and the [Reasons Not to](#). The writing comes easier when I've got something more personal to say, as I did when I wrote the [Top 5 Things I'll Miss When I Retire Early](#).

Today, I'm going to give you my own reasons for wanting to retire early. These aren't the *best* reasons to retire early, or reasons *you* should retire early; these are just mine.

Editor's note: This was written before I switched to a part-

time schedule. Life has gotten better since then, particularly in the case of number 1, but the following reasons still apply.

The Top 5 Reasons I Want to Retire Early:

1. More Family Time



My boys are growing up right in front of my eyes. Well, sometimes they are. On weekday calls, I have about a 20% chance of seeing them. I always leave for work before they're awake for the day, and on hospital days, usually return after they're in bed.

In the summertime, my wife and boys spend a good deal of time at our [modest second home](#) a couple states away. They're out there having a grand time with friends and family, and I'm missing out because I have a job.

It's a choice we've made as a family. And before too long, I'll make a different choice. The choice to retire early.

If you've attended high school graduation parties and chatted with parents, they'll tell you they cannot believe how the time flew by. I don't want to wonder where the years went. I want to be a full-time Dad. Most of the physicians I know do

their best to find a balance between work, family, and play, but I'm going to take work right off the scale. I expect to find **the perfect imbalance** when I retire early.

2. Because it is There

I haven't always planned on retiring early – in fact, it seems as though early retirement chose me. Two years ago, the concept wasn't a blip on my radar. It wasn't until my nose was buried in anesthesia books to study for [a silly \\$2,100 computer exam](#) that I started to wonder if I would have to do this all over again in ten years.*

A google search opened my eyes to a [brave new world](#) of early retirement blogs, forums, and a community of good people who are in various stages of contemplating, planning, or living the life of an early retiree.

I want to show you and others that it can be done, and show you how I plan to do it. The truth is, mathematically, [I could have retired by now](#), but I'm not ready to leave my career behind just yet. I still like many aspects of my job, but as I'm explaining here, there are other things I do enjoy more.

I know many physicians who feel differently about their jobs than I do mine. [Burnout](#), long days, endless paperwork and computer work are taking their toll on this generation of physicians. Trying to spend your way out of a frustrating situation only prolongs your misery. I want to help those doctors that need it find their escape hatch.



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Sir Edmund Hilary climbed Mount Everest because it was there. I'm retiring early because it's there for the taking for those who want it and take steps to achieve it.

3. Turn the Happiness Knob [to Eleven](#)

Ask me most days how happy I am on a scale of 1 to 10, I'd usually give you an 8 or a 9. I have many reasons to be happy and thankful.

If a [professional athlete](#) can routinely give 110%, I'd like to be able to give an answer of 11.

I recently wrote about [10 ways to be happier](#) backed by science, and nearly all of them would be easier to do more effectively without the timesuck that is a full-time job.

Not long ago, my lovely wife asked me to name the three things that caused me the most stress in life. The answers came quick and they were all work-related. I believe I handle stress reasonably well, but that doesn't mean I don't deal with it on a daily basis.

A substantial reduction in stress, combined with ample free time, is [a recipe for Eleven](#) when I'm early retired.

4. I'm a Sleep Enthusiast.

One of the 10 happiness boosting ideas was to get better sleep. I have very little control over my sleep cycle these days, taking an overnight call about 73 times every 52 weeks, but who's counting? I live close to the hospital to minimize my commute, and I usually bike in the warmer months, but even with a 4-minute commute, I am up by 0515 to be working at 0600.

Post-call days, I'm frequently sleeping in. Alternating between 0515 and 0815 wakeups is not the healthiest sleep pattern, and being up at all hours several times a month makes it even more difficult to establish a healthy sleep schedule.

I signed up for the job, and I don't want to sound like I'm complaining. I'm compensated quite well for the sacrifices I make for my patients and my family. But I'd be a liar if I didn't admit that I'm looking forward to sleeping like a baby in early retirement.



my sleeping baby

5. To Pursue Other Interests

I can give you a list of [50 other things](#) I can think to do

with my time. There are things that I do now, but nearly as much as I'd like. Photography is one. I've taken just about every photo published on this site, including the one above of my second boy nearly six years ago.

You may have noticed that I like to write, and I spend a fair amount of my free time writing. I'd like to learn to write mo' better, but it's all I can do to keep up with the blog. I'd love to read more, too. Reading takes time. I need time. [Can I buy some time?](#)

There are other things I'd like to do that I don't do at all right now. I'd love to play piano half as well as my boys have learned to do. I'd like to [learn to speak Spanish](#). My two years in high school taught me enough to ask where the bathroom is, but not enough to understand the response. We may try to learn as a family, and in early retirement, we could do that in a Spanish speaking country. How cool would that be?

Honorable Mention

Now that I can talk freely about it, [there was an ugly lawsuit](#) that came about as a result of my brief volunteer stint as a non-voting member of the Board of Trustees at a hospital that eventually went belly up. Having lived for three and a half years under the threat of potentially losing a substantial portion of my net worth, and forking over thousands upon thousands in legal fees, I may have become a bit jaded.

Job dissatisfaction is nowhere on this list.

I think it's important to understand that I don't hate my job. Among jobs I've had, it's easily the best one. I will admit that I like my days off more than my workdays, and the best workday is a short workday, but I'm not desperate to leave, and I don't believe I'm burned out.

If I absolutely loved my job, I doubt I'd be planning on an early retirement. Of course, you don't have to retire early just because you can. Financial Independence comes with [a host of other benefits](#).

Is an early retirement on your horizon? What's your motivation? Look for the comment box below to say hello.

*The answer is no, I wouldn't have to take the exam even if I worked another 30 years. In fact, I didn't need to take the test I took but the ABA waited until after I had taken it to announce changes that were obviously in the works before I even registered for the exam.