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How Much Can You Safely Withdraw in Retirement?

The 4% Rule: Where It Came From (And What It Really Means)

Back in 1994, Bill Bengen sought to determine the safe annual withdrawal amount from a portfolio that would last 30 years, despite potential wars, recessions, inflation, and market crashes.He tested every possible retirement start date within that window, using quarterly start dates, including the absolute worst-case scenario: retiring in October 1968, right before a brutal stretch of high inflation and lousy markets. What he found was this: if you withdrew 4.15% of your portfolio in year one, and then increased that amount each year for inflation, you would not have run out of money in any 30-year period. In the worst-case scenario, the retiree would have seen their last check bounce, meaning they would have run out of money at the end of the 30 years, but every other retiree would have had something left. That's right—4.15% was the worst-case success rate. And because people like simple rules, it got rounded down and became known as "The 4% Rule."

But Let's Be Clear: This Is About Smart Risk, Not More Risk

Bengen's findings didn't include fancy hedge funds or speculative plays. He wasn't chasing yield. He proved that good asset allocation makes a difference—especially when markets get choppy. Dave Ramsey says, money is like manure, left in one spot, it stinks, spread out, it helps things grow. Ecclesiastes 11:2 says, "Give a portion to seven, or even to eight, for you know now what disaster may happen on earth." So it's Biblical and Bengen approved!

That said, you need to be careful when you start adding conservative assets like bonds. If you're 30, 40, and sometimes even older, we're not putting you in bonds just because retirement is on the horizon. You don't have a sequence of return risk yet. However you might be in bonds and you don't even know it! Ever heard of something called a Target Date Fund? This is a fund that does the investing for you. It was an excellent invention for 401(k)s because many people didn't know what to invest in and didn't have access to a Financial Advisor. However, even the most aggressive target date funds, such as the Vanguard Target Retirement 2070 Fund, has 8% of the portfolio in bonds.

But once you do hit retirement, the game changes. Now you're not just building wealth—you're drawing from it. And the timing of your withdrawals can work for you or against you. And this is where you can't go all in on stocks. You might have an entire year that stocks will be dropping, and thus you shouldn't be selling. You might have 1.7 years (603 days) that you need to wait until stocks get back to where they were (or even longer).

How We Help Boost Your Withdrawal Rate (Without Gambling)

We're not in the business of stretching any withdrawal rate to make things look good on paper. But there are real-world ways we work to improve the numbers:

- 1. Turning Off Dividend Reinvestment
- 2. Private Equity & Private Credit
- 3. Rebalancing

So... What's Your Withdrawal Rate?

If you've saved well, appropriately diversified, and built your plan with a team that knows what they're doing, you might be able to withdraw more than 4%—safely. Anyone who tells you it can only be 4% doesn't understand the research. Anyone who tells you that you can withdraw 10% or 11% doesn't understand non-sequentially returns (the stock market doesn't go up in a straight line). But here's the bottom line: Your number isn't some rule of thumb. It's your plan. Your goals. Your risks. Your life. That's why we don't give cookie-cutter advice. We build a custom withdrawal strategy around you, backed by research, battle-tested by history, and confirmed by real-world simulations.

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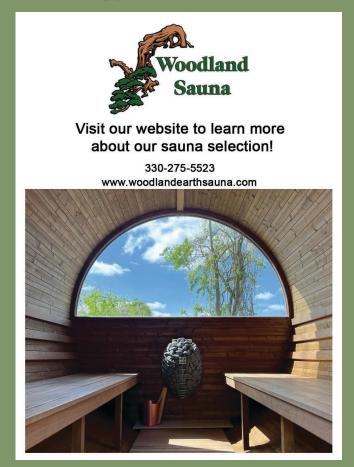
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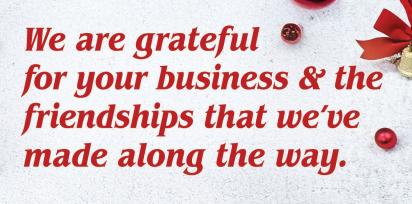


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