

# Life, Work & Family

Monthly work/life news for UAW-Represented DaimlerChrysler Workers

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## BOOMERANG KIDS: THEY JUST KEEP ON COMING

There's no place like home. It's a happy Hollywood thought, and after the adult kids have left the nest it's nice for parents to ponder those occasions when they'll venture back – perhaps with their own families – to spend a little time at the old homestead. However, in recent years the picture has changed. After striking out on their own, adult kids are coming back earlier, more often, and staying longer and longer. To live.

Yes, the adult children of baby boomers have now got a label of their own: the boomerang generation. This term refers to adults in their 20's and 30's who, after college or living independently, decide to move back home. Although primarily a reaction to tough economic times, adult children live with their parents for many reasons. And with a little planning and good communication, and extended visit to an empty nest can work out well for everyone involved.



- **Making Plans to Make it Work.** Before the transition, parents and adult children should sit down together and put everything out on the table. It's sometimes a good idea to have a family discussion in "neutral" territory, such as a favorite restaurant or coffee house. Wherever it happens, it's important to look at several things so a happy home doesn't turn into a war zone.
- **Set up House Rules.** Draw up a contract which deals with scheduling (who's going to use which bathroom in the mornings?), kitchen duties (who cooks and washes dishes, and who buys the food?), visitors (especially of the opposite sex), laundry and household chores, smoking and alcohol use, etc. *Having firm, written rules is especially important when small children or teenagers are part of the package.*

- **Decide Upon a Contribution.** Whatever is agreed upon, it is extremely important that the adult child back at home makes a regular contribution to the household. Usually this means a monthly rent or payment of some household expenses, but often includes a set responsibility for chores and/or home repairs.
- **Spell Out the Goals of the Stay.** Agree upon the reason for a child's return. Is it about saving money, securing a job, or recovering from a difficult situation? Putting this in concrete terms allows everyone to see the situation is not open-ended and not something that's going to happen over and over again.
- **Pin Down a Timeframe.** It may sound ruthless, but as a parent you're not helping your adult child unless you set limits. Whether it's two months or two years, it serves everyone best to commit to a timeframe, and work toward it.
- **Keep Communicating.** Problems will come up, and if they're swept under the rug, there's no chance of resolution. You might want to hold regular family meetings. If two parents are involved, make sure to form a united front. Parents, as well as adult children, should keep talking so that unwanted patterns of behavior from years gone by don't get repeated.
- **Don't Forget to Take Care of Yourself.** When an adult child is in need, moms and dads are usually happy to help as much as is possible. However, when you're putting yourself out there as a parent, remember to keep an eye on your own needs as well.
- **Remember Your New Relationship.** Even though they're home again, they're not kids anymore. Respecting each other as adults means that everyone takes care of themselves, and everyone treats everyone else with respect. This includes checking in with each other about comings and goings.
- **Make Sure Everyone Has Space.** Giving up a room or portion of the garage or kitchen in "your" house for your adult child may not be your first choice. But in a multi-generational household, it's vital that everyone has their own personal space. Remember, the sacrifice is only temporary.
- **Don't Let Go of Your Own Goals.** Until the kids grow up, parents are often used to putting their own plans on hold. It's always easy to shift back into that mode, but if your adult children return home as grown-ups, don't revert to old habits. Hang onto any retirement or long-term goals, whether it comes to financial planning or taking care of your own personal relationships.

Sure, parents have a lot at stake when it comes to opening up their homes to their adult children. And the situation gets even more complicated when the adult kids have partners, or kids themselves, and instead of an empty nest it's a full house and then some.

But the bottom line is that when boomerang kids come back, they generally give more than they get. Whether married or single, if you as a parent can keep an open mind, you can discover a whole new world of possibilities. Because after all of these



years, it's possible that both you and your children have learned something new.

**Accor Services North America.**

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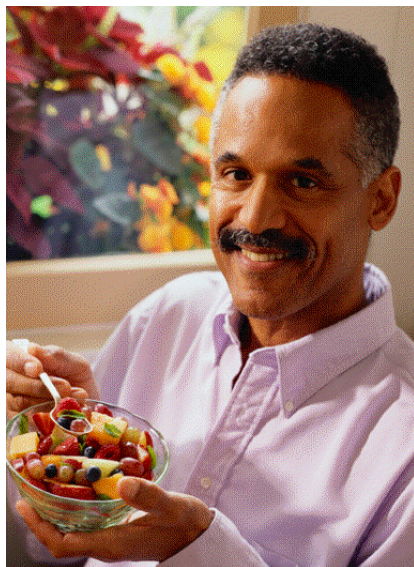
## COOKING FOR ONE

If you're living single, cooking for yourself can seem to be a time consuming and thankless chore. Not being obligated to feed anyone but yourself can make it very easy to just settle for whatever you can find or have delivered. Calling for take-out or substituting snack food for a meal can be tempting, but snacking instead of actually eating a well-balanced meal may eventually cause health problems.

Cooking for one person begins with planning meals for one. Start by thinking about how much food you use in a week. One way to tell what food you need is to see how much food you have left in the refrigerator, freezer or cupboard at the end of the week—or how much food you throw away. Buying less food and buying food weekly can save you money, time in the store and cooking time.

Most recipes can be halved or quartered. Visit [www.mealsforyou.com](http://www.mealsforyou.com) to assist in paring down recipes to serve one. This web site can locate recipes following your specific diet and once you select the number of servings it alters the ingredients to match. Many companies also offer cookbooks for one or two.

Once you plan what to buy, cooking for one person means shopping for one. It may be difficult to resist the temptation to buy more food or frozen ready-made dinners. Larger items may be cheaper per unit size, but the money you save is wasted if most of the leftovers are thrown away. Frozen vegetables are equal in nutritional value to fresh and can be cooked in the same variety of ways as those you find in the produce department. Already purchased fruits that have grown too ripe, such as bananas and strawberries, can be frozen for later use to make fruit smoothies or daiquiris.



Helpful hints when cooking for one:

- Buy fruits by the piece, not by the package.
- Ask the produce manager to halve heads of lettuce, cabbage or other produce to meet your needs.
- Buy smaller cuts of meat or ask the butcher to cut roasts or chicken into pieces big enough for one meal.
- Divide leftovers into meal-sized portions and freeze for convenient meals later.
- Save leftovers and create new meals by adding different vegetables, or cheese.
- Casseroles, stew and lasagna are all recipes that freeze well which can come in handy when you have unexpected guests.

After all the time and effort you've put into preparing a meal, don't forget your table. Many cooks know that the presentation of food can make the meal, even when eating alone. Vary the color of your foods or

accompaniments. Choose multi-colored food and use your best plates. Try music or flowers on the table. Make it fun to cook and eat for one.

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## **AGING SUCCESSFULLY**

Successful aging depends on many factors, some of which are within our control and some of which are not. As our knowledge of the aging process grows, so does our ability to slow its effect on us.

### **Physical Changes:**

Our muscular coordination and strength begin to decline as we age. Recent studies have shown however that even individuals in their 90's can benefit from exercise and strength training with weights. Biking, walking and swimming can all improve balance, circulation and overall fitness in people of all ages.

### **Mental Changes:**

Normal changes in the aging brain account for some decline in the speed with which we learn new information. But healthy elders continue to learn and process new information throughout life. Minor forgetfulness (forgetting a name, where you put the car keys) is common. Remember that stress can also have a negative affect on our ability to process information.

Since older brains contain more data, it is logical to assume that gaps sometimes occur in information retrieval. To assist the process, make mental note of when and where you put down an item, establish a routine and keep a calendar of important dates.

### **Six Steps To Help You Stay Fit and Healthy:**

- Stay active. With your doctor's help, establish an exercise routine.
- Do activities that stimulate the mind. Volunteer, travel, read, learn a new language, study an instrument, do puzzles, play games, sing songs.
- Eat a well-balanced diet. Good nutrition is a key factor.
- Be social. Spend time with family and friends, join peer groups or sign up for a class.
- Mental outlook. Keep a positive attitude.
- Support system. Maintain a formal and informal support system. This will help you be prepared for whatever may come.

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