

Stretching the Savings

Finding senior discounts in unlikely places.

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If you can force yourself to admit that you're a senior, you can cash in on discounts on everything from cell phones to ski trips. That doesn't sound so old, right?

The oft-ridiculed senior-citizen discount is alive and well at most businesses you might expect, like restaurants and movie theaters, and at a host of surprising ones, too. "We're finding new discounts all the time," says David Smidt, of seniordiscounts.com, though he admits that some of the deals are less stellar than they used to be. As the baby-boom generation blows through the 50-year-old mark that used to set most discounts into play, the age of "seniority" seems to be creeping up, too, and many deals aren't offered to consumers until they are 60 or older.

Whatever. It doesn't hurt to ask, especially because many businesses train their employees to not offer senior discounts unsolicited, lest they offend touchy boomers.

Here are some great deals worth requesting.

- **Travel.** Southwest is the only remaining airline that offers deals to fliers who are 62 and older (southwest.com/travel_center/seniors.html).

Amtrak cuts 15 percent off the top for travelers over 62. The National Park Service offer a lifetime senior pass for \$10 that gets you into all the national parks and cuts your camping costs, too. Marriott offers 15 percent off for anyone over 62 at any hotel, any time (marriott.com/specials/senior/default.mi). Many cruise lines, destination resorts and other hotels offer bargain prices to older travelers. Typically they'll give you the AARP discount even if you don't have the card.

- **Cell phones.** Most telecom companies offer a special seniors' cell-phone plan that involves reduced minutes and reduced fees. Start by calling the pro-vider you already have, and compare that with Verizon and AT&T offers.

- **Toys.** KB Toys gives a 10 percent discount on Tuesdays to shoppers over 50.

- **Clothes.** Too many to mention; check at seniordiscounts.com and seasonedspender.com to find the latest lists, or simply Google the name of your favorite store and "senior discount." Highlights include Banana Republic, 10 percent for those 50 or older; Christopher & Banks and CJ Banks stores, 10 percent off on certain days; and Ross, 10 percent off on Tuesdays. Check with your individual store; lots of retailers have discounts only on special days.

- **Outlet stores.** Even retailers that don't offer senior discounts through their regular stores like to woo older shoppers to those big outlet malls. Some—like Prime Outlet Centers and Chelsea Premium Outlets—offer senior-discount days that kick in as early as 50. Others have discount coupon books free of charge for older shoppers.

- **Groceries.** It's worth shopping at spots like Albertsons and Harris Teeter if you know you'll be saving 10 percent off the top. Check for discount days.

- **Gyms.** Gold's Gym and Bally Total Fitness both offer special membership rates to older gym rats, though the terms vary depending on which gym you walk into. Look for the best deal and cash in. The regular exercise will keep you looking buff enough to not worry about calling yourself "senior."

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