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## Career options for older workers

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When Madam Angie Ng turned 62 in 2005, she looked forward to retiring from nursing to fuss over her grandchild Rachel Pang, then three.

But her bosses at Thomson Medical Centre asked her to stay on, pointing to the great loss of knowledge if she left. At the time, her husband, 67, was already retired.

The former director of nursing accepted a part-time arrangement at the centre, working on Thursdays to Saturdays from 8am to 5.30pm. Her new position is director of operating theatre, which is less high-profile.

But Madam Ng, now 66, is just thankful that all her years of training can still be put to good use. "It feels good to be wanted. At my age, I look for job satisfaction," she said.

Arrangements like hers are one way employers can retain experienced older staff, like those approaching the retirement age of 62. Other positions for such workers include ad-hoc consultancy, administrative or clerical, customer service and freelance accounting, depending on their skills, recruitment firms say.

"Many retirees offer consulting services to the firms they retired from, particularly in the financial and energy industries," said Mr Josh Goh, assistant director of corporate services at The GMP Group. Another recruitment firm, Kelly Services, said most "white-collar" jobs it has seen on offer to those aged 55 and above are administrative or clerical ones.

Traditionally, many of the jobs for older workers are, say, as hotel housekeepers, cleaners, cashiers or food servers. All this often means limited career options for retirees who had held high or skilled positions.

Mr Goh said: "Not all employers look beyond age... This is why employers tend to offer less-skilled, manual work to older workers."

But as one gets older, it becomes harder to stay on one's feet the whole day. Proactive employers will thus have to redesign jobs to fit the mature workers' requirements - including flexible work arrangements - and physical limitations, said Mr Goh.

Still, the norm is re-employment (upon reaching 62) with one's current employer instead of switching company or industry, in which case "the learning curve may be too steep", he said.