

# THE TOP 10 THREATS TO YOUR LIFE IN 2018



The Year's 10 Highest -  
Probability Dangers to Your  
Life, Health, and Sanity,  
and How to Protect Yourself

**The Annual U.S. Report**  
**from YouDefense.com**



## **The Top 10 Threats to Your Life in 2018**

The Year's 10 Highest-Probability Dangers to Your Life, Health, and Sanity, and How to Protect Yourself

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# **Introduction: Clarity and Focus on What Actually Threatens You Most**



Below you will find the top 10 threats to your life and your quality of life in 2018.

This means the most serious threats to you right now and in the relative near future that are certain to wreak the deepest damage on the most lives.

This report does not dwell in other possible major threats that might occur now or in the future, such as massive environmental disasters or nuclear war. It is focused on the *guaranteed top threats* to you right now.

This is presented first and foremost to make you aware of and (re)center your own focus on these top threats. You are sure to be at least basically familiar with most of these, some you may even be intimately familiar with.

However, we live in an information-saturated and intensely polarized world, where an endless stream of issues you “should be” worried about spews at you from every corner. Fear-mongering is rampant. It is very easy to get overwhelmed, confused, and even numbed by it all. It is very easy to have your attention pulled away from that which is most deserving of it.

Just like our overall mission at [YouDefense.com](http://YouDefense.com), our mission with this report is to cut through all the noise and provide you clarity on what really threatens your life and well-being the most.

It is our hope, of course, that you take action on these insights to avoid the harm, or stop and even reverse the harm if any of these are already an issue for you. Because while nothing is 100% avoidable, as you will see you hold tremendous power in being able to dramatically reduce these threats.

As such, after reading about each threat, it is wise to make note of the extent to which each may be a threat, particularly to you. For those you find most concerning, it is important that you educate yourself deeply on how to best avoid the threat, and then work toward doing so. To get you started, for each threat below we provide a summary of the most important steps to take to avoid it.

(Be sure to subscribe to the [free YouDefense.com newsletter](#), where we provide you the most important insights ongoing to protect yourself from these and other top threats.)

## **But What About Spiders and Gun-Runners?**

If you have arachnophobia, some good news: spiders did not make the list of top threats. Not even close, because just 7 people die yearly in the USA from spiders.

So how were these rankings compiled?

In short, they are about the law of averages. They are based on data from a range of top resources. The algorithm is basically: the threats that will cause the most death and suffering to the greatest number of people = highest ranking.

Now clearly -- especially for the top two threats below, which are harder to quantify than the others -- there is some subjective interpretation. Whenever a

human being is involved in anything, there is some subjective interpretation. While some will inevitably argue that certain threats belong higher on the list, we are confident these rankings are solid, even if one threat belongs slightly higher and another slightly lower. In short, they are the most serious threats.

Another important point: all of these top threats are inclined toward the average populations in the USA and other countries of the “developed world.” If you are a gun-runner in the Middle East, for example, or even a gun-runner in the US for that matter, you face some pretty specific threats beyond those you will find here.

Also, because [YouDefense.com](http://YouDefense.com) is based in the United States, you will see mostly statistics from the United States. While there is indeed some variance, these same threats mostly hold true no matter where you are in the developed world today.

## **The Top Threats Are NOT What They Say They Are**

Not surprisingly, what the media portray as the biggest threats you face are greatly mismatched to the *actual* biggest threats you face.

You will see more on this below. Fortunately, though, the American public as a whole still seems to have a better grasp on the most serious issues versus the media, because there is at least some match between the top fears the American public reports having and the actual top threats to your life and quality of life.

Each year Chapman University researches and published American’s Top 10 Fears, and for 2017 they were:

Top Ten Fears of 2017	% Afraid or Very Afraid
Corrupt Government Officials	74.5
American Healthcare Act/Trumpcare	55.3
Pollution of Oceans, Rivers and Lakes	53.1
Pollution of Drinking Water	50.4
Not having enough money for the future	50.2
High Medical Bills	48.4
The US will be involved in another World War	48.4
Global Warming & Climate Change	48
North Korea using weapons	47.5
Air Pollution	44.9

These fears largely make sense, for both the short- and longer-term, even though we would argue that other threats should rank higher than some of these.

Environmental issues, for example, are likely the biggest challenge humanity has ever faced, and someday all-too-soon the problems they cause – water shortages, diseases, severe floods and fires displacing millions, etc. -- may make our list here of top threats to your life and quality of life right now. (And yes, it can be argued that environmental issues are already a significant cause of various widespread killer diseases.)

Meanwhile, corrupt government officials, American's #1 fear on the chart above, have a direct and extremely serious impact on all the top life and quality-of-life threats that follow. Elected officials play a key role in awareness and lack thereof of these threats, as well as on legislation and funding for prevention and cure.

And insufficient medical care and high medical bills are also directly related to some of the top threats below.

In other words -- despite the selective focus of the media, politicians, Hollywood and corporations on the “issues” that most benefit their own bank accounts -- the American public at large still kind of gets it.

## **“Something is Going to Kill Me One Way or the Other” = Stupid**

Here’s the bad news: 100% of all people living today will die. We will revise that as soon as the researchers seeking ways to achieve immortality succeed, but for now it stands.

Here’s the good news: going purely by the averages, it is extremely unlikely you will die this year. Or for quite some time, for that matter.

Because while 57 million people globally will die in 2018, the global population is 7.4 billion people. That means just 0.77% of all living people will die in 2018. And of course the younger of an adult you are, the more unlikely it is that you will die.

Here in the United States, the life expectancy rate for men is 76 years, while for women it is a full five years longer: 81 years. Concerning, though, is that life expectancy has actually [dropped over the past couple of years](#), especially for men.

And while living long obviously matters, living well matters too. Here there is even more to be concerned about if you live in the United States. The [World Happiness Report for 2017](#) shows the US has fallen from the 3<sup>rd</sup> happiest country in the world in 2007 to the 14<sup>th</sup> in 2017. Norway is the happiest, while Canada is 7<sup>th</sup>, Australia is 9<sup>th</sup>, and Israel is 11<sup>th</sup>. The UK ranks 19<sup>th</sup>, France is 31<sup>st</sup>, Japan is 51<sup>st</sup>, China is 79<sup>th</sup>, and the Central African Republic is lowest at position 155.

Whatever the case, if you are reading this, it is highly likely that you want to remain among the living for as long as possible, and have a high quality of life while you are here. And as you will see, you hold tremendous sway over whether that will be the case.

True, you are ultimately not going to beat death. And true too, chance holds a powerful sway as well – you may be born with a defect, you may be born in a war-torn country, you may be walking down the street and suddenly struck dead by a coconut (rare, but it happens). Etcetera.

However, any such disadvantages and any such possibilities are frankly just ignorant reasons to throw in the towel and not do all the things you can do to sway the odds of a long and high-quality life far more so in your favor.

Yes, plenty of people use that “Hey, something’s going to kill me one way or the other” attitude to justify their unhealthy habits and high-risk behaviors. But it is kind of like buying a car and then not changing the oil and other fluids, and not filling the tires and getting it tuned up, because, “Hey, something’s going to make the car break down one way or the other.”

You bet it is -- that very ignorance and negligence, 99% of the time.

The point is, you can do a WHOLE lot to dramatically increase the chances that you stay alive now and well into the future, and have a high quality of life while you are here.

## The Top 10 Ways of Dying Reveal Many of the Threats

Below are the top 10 ways that people died in the USA in 2016, the most recent year for which the data is fully available.

Based on longer term trends, the rank and proportions of these will remain the same in 2018 (though cancer may soon overtake heart disease as the #1 killer.)

**Data Brief 293: Mortality in the United States, 2016**

**Data table for Figure 4. Number of deaths, percentage of total deaths, and age-adjusted death rates for the 10 leading causes of death in 2016: United States, 2015 and 2016**

Rank <sup>1</sup>	Cause of death [based on International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10)]	2015			2016		
		Number	Percent of total deaths	Age-adjusted death rate <sup>2</sup>	Number	Percent of total deaths	Age-adjusted death rate <sup>2</sup>
...	All causes	2,712,630	100.0	733.1	2,744,248	100.0	728.8
1	Diseases of heart . . . . . (I00–I09,I11,I13,I20–I51)	633,842	23.4	168.5	635,260	23.1	165.5
2	Malignant neoplasms (cancer) . . . . . (C00–C97)	595,930	22.0	158.5	598,038	21.8	155.8
3	Accidents (unintentional injuries) . . . . . (V01–X59,Y85–Y86)	146,571	5.4	43.2	161,374	5.9	47.4
4	Chronic lower respiratory diseases . . . . . (J40–J47)	155,041	5.7	41.6	154,596	5.6	40.6
5	Cerebrovascular diseases (stroke) . . . . . (I60–I69)	140,323	5.2	37.6	142,142	5.2	37.3
6	Alzheimer’s disease . . . . . (G30)	110,561	4.1	29.4	116,103	4.2	30.3
7	Diabetes mellitus . . . . . (E10–E14)	79,535	2.9	21.3	80,058	2.9	21.0
8	Influenza and pneumonia . . . . . (J09–J18)	57,062	2.1	15.2	51,537	1.9	13.5
9	Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis (kidney disease) . . . . . (N00–N07,N17–N19,N25–N27)	49,959	1.8	13.4	50,046	1.8	13.1
10	Intentional self-harm (suicide) . . . . . (*U03,X60–X84,Y87.0)	44,193	1.6	13.3	44,965	1.6	13.5
...	All other causes . . . . . (residual)	699,613	25.8	...	710,129	25.9	...

... Category not applicable.  
<sup>1</sup> Code not included in ICD-10.  
<sup>2</sup> Based on number of deaths.  
<sup>3</sup> Deaths per 100,000 U.S. standard population.  
 SOURCE: NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality.

Now in most media reports about these top ways of dying, and even in the medical world, they list heart disease, cancer and all the rest above as the “causes” of death.

“Cause” is a word used understandably for convenience, we do it too, but it is entirely untrue. Because all of these ways of dying are triggered by something -- or more typically a range of various things -- which are the actual cause.

In some cases, this cause may be entirely an act of nature or God (call it what you will depending on your belief), which you have no control over.

However, these top ways of dying are very revealing. Because, as you are about to see, they demonstrate that in most cases you have direct influence over their actual cause. Often tremendously so.

Your life is largely in your own hands.

On a final note, though, remember you won't be perfect at leading your life. And that is okay. Never beat yourself up for mistakes you have made or will make, because doing so will hurt you worse than the mistakes. On the other hand, never give yourself permission to slack off on that which will protect and enhance your life and quality of life, either.

Just as it is important to become aware of and focused on what will most help you in this world, it is at least equally important to be aware of and focused on what can most hurt you, and to keep on trying to improve in those areas.

Incremental improvements tend to provide monumental results.

# Life Threat #1: You



Aside from the ways of nature itself, *you* are your own greatest threat. By a long shot.

Now telling you that may not seem like the best way to become friends, but it is actually very caring, because it is 100% true. And if you read nothing else in this report, at least carefully read the rest of this section. Because here is why it's 100% true:

Of the 2.8 million or so deaths that will occur in the USA in 2018, the [Centers for Disease Control estimates](#) that up to 40% of them are preventable.

Because the CDC is primarily taking into account *direct* prevention, though, it's likely that even more than 40% of deaths can be avoided. Optimizing your immune system, for example, can improve your chances of fighting and surviving even “non-preventable” diseases and accidents.

What this means is ***at least 40% of people who will die this year would not have died if better choices had been made.***

The same is even truer for situations and events that severely degrade your quality of life: most of them are avoidable.

And while the choices of others certainly do have an impact, you'll see that the choices of one person have a *far* greater impact on both the length and quality of your life than any other: your choices.

Your choices each and every day hold a tremendous sway over how long and how well you are likely to live.

There are really just two ways you pose a red-alert threat to yourself, and they are:

### **#1: You Might Lack the Knowledge...**

As you'll see below, the top two people-killers by far are heart disease and cancer. And if you don't know the best steps to prevent them, it makes it extremely difficult for you to avoid them.

The same is true of every other serious threat to your life and life-quality. If you don't have the knowledge to drive properly -- including knowing the key things you should not do while driving because they'll kill over a million people worldwide this year -- you are far more likely to end up a road fatality yourself.

If you don't know the signs to watch for that indicate you may be an alcoholic, it makes it far more likely that you'll screw up your life and even shorten it (not to mention others' lives) from alcoholism.

Knowledge is not only power, it's key to your longevity and happiness. (And the knowledge that can help you most is exactly what we're dedicated to providing you in every issue of our [free YouDefense.com newsletter](#).)

### **#2: But Far More Likely, You Lack Self-Control**

There's something even more important than knowing things: *putting the things you know into routine action*.

Knowledge without action is useless. And this is where most people fall far short, where they put themselves at greatest risk, and the top reason by far that preventable deaths and preventable situations that screw up life are not, in fact, prevented.

A few cases in point:

I'll bet you already have at least a pretty solid idea of the most important steps to take to avoid heart disease, cancer and other serious diseases: don't smoke, eat lots of fruits and veggies, avoid excess unhealthy foods like fried foods and sweets, and exercise.

I'll bet you already have a pretty solid idea of how to avoid serious traffic accidents, too: don't text and drive, don't drink alcohol then drive, don't run red lights, don't speed, and keep a safe distance from vehicles in front of you.

MOST of those who die from heart disease, cancer, and auto accidents knew this, too.

Everyone can always use ongoing reminders of this knowledge, of course, because constant reminders have been shown to lead to significantly smarter behavior.

However, knowledge is typically not the #1 problem.

The #1 problem is not *following through* on the things that we know, in theory, will enable us to live longer and better.

And the #1 cause of this lack of follow-through on what we know?

Lack of self-awareness and self-control of emotions that temporarily "blind" us to our own knowledge and get us in trouble.

You know those potato chips are bad for you, but you reach for them anyway. You know you spend too much time on the couch, but you're sitting there anyway. You know you shouldn't respond to that text while driving, but you do it anyway.

Then you receive that cancer diagnosis and you wonder "Why?" You're typing a "quick" reply on your phone and suffer a collision that destroys your back and kills the driver of the other vehicle and you wonder "Why?"

Why???

The reason why is a hard truth, but it's the truth that can save your life and will greatly improve your life: because your emotions are owning you instead of the other way around.

***Whenever your actions are out of sync with what you know to be most beneficial to you and those around you, it is out-of-control emotions that are in the way.***

It may be any number of “negative” emotions, like anger, fear, guilt, or sadness. They may be deep-seated, from unresolved issues stemming back years or decades.

Or the emotions may be fresh and new: for example, someone just cut you off in traffic, and now you're feeling more aggressive and tailgating that driver, even though you rationally “know” at other times this greatly increases the chances of an accident.

And surprising to many people, “positive” emotions like excitement and contentment can be just as dangerous if you aren't aware of them and manage yourself properly in light of them. For example, it's very easy to drink far more than you intend to when you're out with friends having a great time... even though at other times you rationally “know” that excessive drinking puts you at greater risk in a number of ways.

Unmanaged emotions are by far the top cause of preventable deaths and preventable situations that severely degrade people's quality of life.

## **The #1 Way to Live Long and Live Well**

*Continually learning to recognize your emotional states, and managing your actions in light of your emotions, is the #1 most powerful thing you can do to live long and live well – by far.*

You'll never perfect your “emotional intelligence,” but you can constantly get better at it, and it will make far more difference in your life versus anything else. All other positive change flows from it.

Consulting with therapists, life coaches and other guides who can help you do so is therefore one of the smartest things you can do. These days you don't need to have

a “problem” that needs “fixing” to consult with a therapist or coach (though if you do have one, you can work from there too). No matter how good you believe you already are at recognizing and controlling your emotions in life’s different circumstances, you can always improve – and you can tell the therapist or coach that’s precisely what you’d like to do.

For psychologists and therapists, start with this guide to find them in your area: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists> . For life coaches, Google your town or the closest major town and “life coach.”

#### **4 Recommended Books:**

[\*Emotional Intelligence 2.0\*, Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves](#)

The Dalai Lama summed this book up: "*Emotional Intelligence 2.0* succinctly explains how to deal with emotions creatively and employ our intelligence in a beneficial way." He’s right. It’s not a great book, but a very good book that is a concise and solid place to start improving your “emotional intelligence” – and improving and protecting your life.

[\*The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom\*, Don Miguel Ruiz](#)

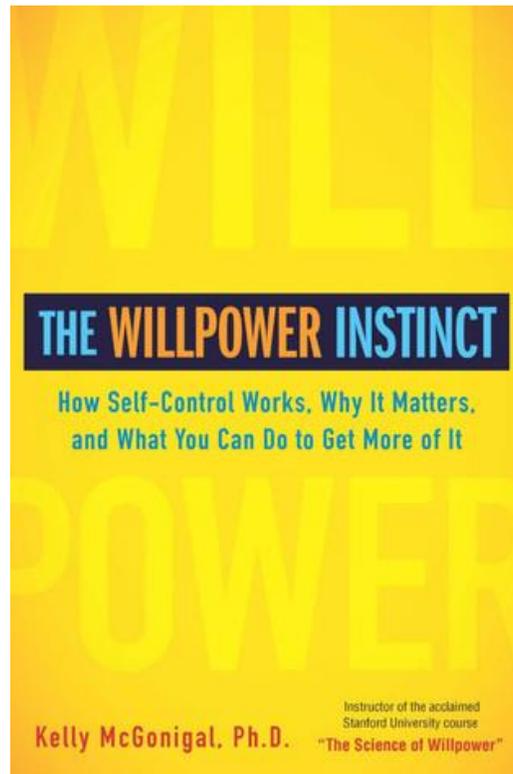
Some who haven’t read this classic consider it “New Age-y.” It’s not. It’s based on ancient Toltec guidance that science has confirmed as some of the most effective for recognizing and mastering your emotions. It’s also a short and engaging read.

[\*Unplug: A Simple Guide to Meditation for Busy Skeptics and Modern Soul Seekers\*, Suze Yalof Schwartz](#)

Far more claims have been made for meditation than science has been able to verify. But even skeptics concede the [research shows it can ease anxiety and depression](#). The practice of mindfulness in particular can be a powerful way to clear through what may seem like overwhelming thoughts and emotions and help you focus on what’s best for you. And despite the “flower child” reputation surrounding it and concerns that it’s time-consuming, it can be surprisingly straightforward and easy to gain fast benefits from. *Unplug* is a great guide toward this end. A bit long-winded to start, the heart of the book showing you the short, effective meditations anyone can do anywhere makes this an important read.

***The Willpower Instinct: How Self-Control Works, Why It Matters, and What You Can Do to Get More of It*, Kelly McGonigal, PhD.**

A powerful, science-backed and enjoyable-to-read guide to greatly improving your ability to control your emotions, from a health psychologist and renowned lecturer at Stanford University.



Don't let false beliefs about  
"willpower" sabotage your life.  
Read this #1 rated book.  
[Click here to find out more.](#)

Finally, because emotional intelligence is so central to protecting your life and quality of life, be sure to [join the free YouDefense.com newsletter](#), because we'll be providing you concise, authoritative insights that will help you down this avenue, too.

## Life Threat #2: Them



Let's say you and your friends are about to do a kayak tour around an island. And those particular waters are infested with sharks who have a history of killing many other kayakers. But instead of noting that, your tour guide discusses the importance of wearing sunscreen. And then off you and your friends go on your tour, properly covered in sunscreen. And several of your friends are attacked and eaten by sharks.

Would you be upset with the tour guide? Stupid question. And with that in mind...

Here's a widespread and dangerous problem most people are not aware of: *tune into your favorite news programs and chances are very high you won't hear much about most of the actual biggest threats to your life and quality of life.*

Most other popular forms of popular media including TV shows, movies, and major websites – don't focus on the threats, either. Certainly not relative to the various other topics that so often grab their headlines or themes.

Sure, you get some stories on unhealthy eating, for example, but rarely are those the top headlines, and even more rarely do they cover the larger scope and bigger problems lurking beneath that very serious issue.

Meanwhile, considering that alcoholism and drug addiction are unarguably a national (and worldwide) emergency at this point, as you're about to see, do you really hear enough about them?

How often do you hear from the news about the epidemic of chronic pain -- another top threat covered below -- at all?

Or about another top threat, suicide, considering all the lives lost, all the many more who attempt and consider it, and all the devastation it causes to family and friends?

You be the judge: scan all the top threats listed here and ask yourself if, relative to the topics the press does dwell on, and considering how many lives the threats covered here will end or otherwise crush this year -- are these issues getting enough attention.

Here's why this is so dangerous:

- If the media has its energy and attention primarily focused on a handful of issues, that's where, by and large, the public is going to have their energy and attention focused, too.
- If the handful of issues they choose to focus on barely mentions or flat-out ignores other very serious and widespread threats, too few will be aware of the scope and seriousness of those other issues. At least until it's too late and they're personally impacted by them. They'll apply more sunscreen just before getting attacked by a shark.

In other words, *the topics that the media chooses to captivate you with from every screen 24/7 to provoke your fear and anger don't match up to what is actually most likely to hurt and kill you.*

It's very easy today to have your attention and energy pulled away from that which matters most.

## **Blame Won't Help You**

Just “blaming the media” (and Hollywood, big business, politicians, etc.), though, is too easy and frankly risky in its own right, because it can make people feel and act helpless when they're anything but.

On the one hand, the media certainly are partly to blame, because while they're quick to point out others who can't be trusted, they don't exactly make loud announcements about how they shouldn't be trusted to reveal the news that matters most, either. On the contrary.

On the other hand, they're just doing their job.

*It's just that most people aren't aware of what their job really is.*

Their job is NOT to provide you the news that matters most to you and society.

Popular media's primary role is to generate revenue and profit. As such, their job is to emotionally grab and hold people with the topics and stories that do so best, especially among the key demographics that respond to the ads that generate their revenue.

At any given time, the producers and editors of news shows have dozens if not hundreds of news stories they *could* report, for example. They decide what gets published as news and what does not. They decide what details of the news they're going to focus on, how they're going to angle it, and how prominently they're going to position it.

So again, you be the judge: are they going to focus on the stories that actually impact the most lives, regardless of ratings and revenue? Or are they going to focus on the stories that emotionally pull in the largest demographic, leading to profits and happy shareholders?

To put it bluntly, another politician getting caught with his pants down is just far more provocative than the fact that yet another 2,200 people will commit suicide today, devastating many thousands of other lives. Even though the latter deserves at least as much focus.

## **Do These Companies Have Your Best Interests in Mind, or Theirs?**

Virtually every institution out there is after your attention – media, Hollywood, corporations, politicians and so forth. Applying everything from technology to neuroscience, they're becoming ever more sophisticated at grabbing your attention emotionally.

And you already know whose best interests they're working toward: they're own, not yours. That's not going to change.

So refer back to Life Threat #1 above – there's a big difference between knowing something and putting that knowledge into routine action. It's not easy, but to keep yourself as safe, healthy and happy as possible you've got to work toward immunizing your emotions and thoughts against them.

Train yourself to watch for, recognize and control your own emotions when you're watching the news, movies and TV shows, commercials, etc.

Watch especially for those instances where they're "pulling on your heartstrings," have you "all riled up," or otherwise have your emotions in their grasp. Resist. Remind yourself of their real intent.

*Own your own emotions and thoughts.*

It's way too easy to get manipulated into others' agendas, where your energy and attention and money get spent benefitting their lives. Meanwhile, because they're not getting your due attention, it's far easier for the most serious threats to sneak on you and bite you.

Finally, this is the very reason we built [YouDefense.com](http://YouDefense.com). *Our job and mission is to make and keep you aware of all the most serious threats to your life and well-being, and to provide you the best solutions – regardless of how appealing or unappealing certain topics may be.*

## Life Threat #3: Alcohol and Drugs



Over [65,000 Americans will die from drug overdoses](#) this year, making it the top cause of accidental death.

Well over half of these will be from the skyrocketing opioid addiction epidemic.

Dying directly from [alcohol poisoning will kill an additional 2,200 Americans](#).

But the death and devastation of drugs and alcohol only start there.

Because alcohol and drug addiction play a massive and detrimental role in every other threat on this list, and many beyond this list.

For example, those with drug or alcohol addictions are more likely to:

- Kill others and be killed in an accident – [over half of all drivers killed in an auto accident](#) this year will be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Attempt and commit suicide.

- Commit sexual assault, and more likely to become victims of assault.
- Suffer from brain damage
- Be smokers, have unhealthy eating habits, and not get proper exercise.
- Suffer and die from heart disease and stroke.
- Have a wide range of other diseases, such as cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis, various liver diseases, and chronic pancreatitis
- Suffer sexual dysfunction
- Cause and be victims of other accidents besides vehicle crashes
- Perpetrate and be victims of all types of violence
- Have serious relationship issues
- Suffer financial calamity.

There's even more, but you get the idea.

If you have a drug or alcohol addiction – and even if you have other serious challenges, such as weight problems, cigarette addiction, or relationship issues – it's important that you prioritize beating the addiction first.

## **Almost Unbelievable Numbers – and Rising Fast**

This year, [30 million Americans will struggle with alcohol abuse](#).

And those numbers have been rising fast in recent years – especially among senior citizens, 45 to 65 year olds, women, and minorities. Particularly African-Americans.

Meanwhile, over [2.6 million Americans over age 12 will be addicted to opioids](#) this year.

This includes 2 million addicted to licit prescription pain relievers like oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, morphine, and fentanyl, and 600,000 addicted to the illegal opioid heroin.

And the rate of those becoming addicted to opioids is rising at astronomical rates – [a 500% increase](#) in the last seven years alone! If something is not done to seriously reverse these trends, opioids alone will kill over 500,000 Americans in the next ten years. That's equivalent to the entire population of Sacramento, California being wiped away.

Add to these numbers the rise in those addicted to methamphetamine (a.k.a. meth, crystal meth, ice, speed), and those addicted to other drugs like cocaine and crack, and even assuming some with multiple addictions, you've got 10% or more of the entire United States population addicted to drugs or alcohol!

## **5 Keys to Prevention**

Below are some keys to preventing addiction to alcohol and other drugs.

### **1. Strive to Address and Manage Your Emotions Without “Self-Medicating”**

Addictions start insidiously. They “sneak up” and become dependencies while people are focused elsewhere – typically on various emotions like anger, sadness, loneliness and even excitement, and the events leading to those emotions.

It's incredibly easy to feel internal pain of some sort, for example, reach for alcohol or drugs, and enjoy the effect of the chemicals temporarily “drowning out” the pain. It makes you want to repeat the process, because it feels like it's working – for a while at least, until the “self-medication” addiction becomes a bigger problem than the issues you were trying to drown out.

What is easy, of course, is almost never what is right – quite the contrary.

Again refer back to Life Threat #1 above. The more you can learn to recognize and be in charge of your own emotions versus them “owning” and controlling you, the less likely you'll be to take actions in reaction to those emotions that can harm you and others.

And again, if your emotions such as anger, sadness or fear seem overwhelming – making you feel as if you have little to no control over them -- one of the healthiest and most loving things you can do for yourself and those around you is seek professional health from counselors.

### **2. Follow Prescriptions, and Communicate Everything to Your Doctor**

Most addictions start by individuals finding their own way to the substances.

Increasingly though, many people who are prescribed opioid painkillers by doctors are finding themselves addicted.

If you suffer pain, the first step is to find out about and consider trying other options besides opioids.

[If you are prescribed opioids, always follow the prescriptions closely.](#) Do not use more opioids than listed. Do not “borrow” opioids from others, and do not share yours with others.

If you find that your current prescription is not working for your pain, or you find yourself having to fight the urge to take more than prescribed, communicate this to your doctor right away.

### **3. Keep Drugs Out of Your Domain**

The easier it is to access drugs of any sort, the easier it is to reach for them when you or those you live with are emotionally vulnerable.

Keep drugs out of your home, car, purse, and anywhere they are easy to access. If alcohol may be an issue, the same rule applies.

Obviously the exception is drugs prescribed by a physician, which per above you should only use as advised by a physician, store safely, and never share with others.

### **4. Avoid Situations Where Exposure to Drugs is More Likely**

Similar to keeping drugs out of your domain, the more you can avoid social situations where drugs are or are likely to be present, the less likely you are to reach for them.

In the “real world,” particularly with alcohol, it can be very difficult to completely avoid such situations. So it’s back to emotional management above. Drinking alcohol is legal for adults, and in moderation it can be enjoyable.

The big key is that moderation -- and the emotional self-control and frankly brutal self-honesty it requires.

If you set limits for yourself and find yourself exceeding those limits, it can be challenging for the ego to accept but it’s still no less true that your emotions are in

charge versus the opposite. It's smart to avoid alcohol and situations exposing you to it until you're in charge and can drink without exceeding safe limits you set.

## 5. Exercise

It may sound like a cheesy tagline but it's true – exercise is the smart drug.

In addition to all its other benefits, [exercise releases the “natural high” chemicals in your body called endorphins](#) that reduce your perception of pain and trigger a positive feeling in you similar to morphine. It's so powerful it can ward off anxiety and even depression.

As you become increasingly physically fit, you can also develop a natural aversion to alcohol and drugs because of their ill effect that you can feel on your body.

For these reasons and more, exercise can also be a great help for those who are addicted to kick the drug and alcohol habit.

## 16 Key Signs of Addiction:

1. Taking any of the most dangerous drugs like crystal meth, crack, and cocaine.
2. Taking medication, including opioids, beyond prescribed levels.
3. Exceeding sensible and self-imposed limits on alcohol or marijuana use, or not setting limits at all.
4. Drinking or doing drugs when you are stressed, upset, sad, angry or afraid.
5. Lying about and/or hiding the use of drugs and alcohol
6. Alcohol or drugs become a key focus in your life. You think about them and look forward to using them often.
7. Negligence to responsibilities and relationships.
8. Relationship issues.
9. Decreasing performance at work or school.
10. Decreased interest in other activities in life.
11. Increasing visits to bars or other social situations and venues where the substances are present.
12. Withdrawal symptoms. When you're not “on” the drug or alcohol you crave it.
13. Increasing tolerance to the alcohol or drug. You need more to get the “buzz.”
14. Blackouts. You sometimes don't recall things that occurred while you were drinking or high.

15. Binge drinking. You may not “always” drink, but when you do it’s at levels exceeding what is safe and sensible.
16. [Physical signs of addiction](#), such as premature aging, extreme weight loss or gain, flush skin, dry skin, jaundice, broken facial capillaries, brittle hair and fingernails, and poor hygiene.

## **If You Are or Might Be Addicted**

If you are or might be addicted to drugs or alcohol, today there are many steps you can take to get help.

Remember, even if you believe it’s likely you’re not addicted but accept there’s a slight possibility you could be, or could become, addicted, it pays big-time to take action now.

You can start by talking to your physician, or contacting a physician who specializes in addictions at the [American Society of Addiction Medicine](https://asam.ps.membersuite.com/directory/SearchDirectory_Criteria.aspx) ([https://asam.ps.membersuite.com/directory/SearchDirectory\\_Criteria.aspx](https://asam.ps.membersuite.com/directory/SearchDirectory_Criteria.aspx)).

You can also find addiction therapists at [PsychologyToday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/addiction) (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/addiction>).

For drug addictions, you can also find confidential guidance at [DrugAbuse.com](http://DrugAbuse.com), phone number 877-979-5297, or [AddictionResource.com](http://AddictionResource.com), phone 888-459-5511.

If someone you love may be addicted to drugs, you can also find help at [DrugAbuse.com](http://DrugAbuse.com) and [AddictionResource.com](http://AddictionResource.com) and via the phone numbers above.

For alcohol addiction, call the Alcohol Hotline at 800-331-2900, the Alcohol Treatment Referral Hotline 800-252-6465, or visit the [Alcoholics’ Anonymous website](#) for more information and where to find meetings in your area.

You can also find out much more about the different treatment options for alcohol addiction at [DrugAbuse.com](https://drugabuse.com/library/how-to-help-an-alcoholic/) (<https://drugabuse.com/library/how-to-help-an-alcoholic/>).

**Sources:**

AddictionResource: <https://addictionresource.com/>

American Society of Addiction Medicine: <https://www.asam.org/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/>

CNN: <http://www.cnn.com/>

Consumer Reports: <https://www.consumerreports.org>

Drugfreeworld: <http://www.drugfreeworld.org/drugfacts/alcohol/short-term-long-term-effects.html>

Healthline: <https://www.healthline.com/health/alcohol/effects-on-body#1>

Psychology Today: <https://www.psychologytoday.com>

Reuters: <https://www.reuters.com>

WebMD: <https://www.webmd.com>

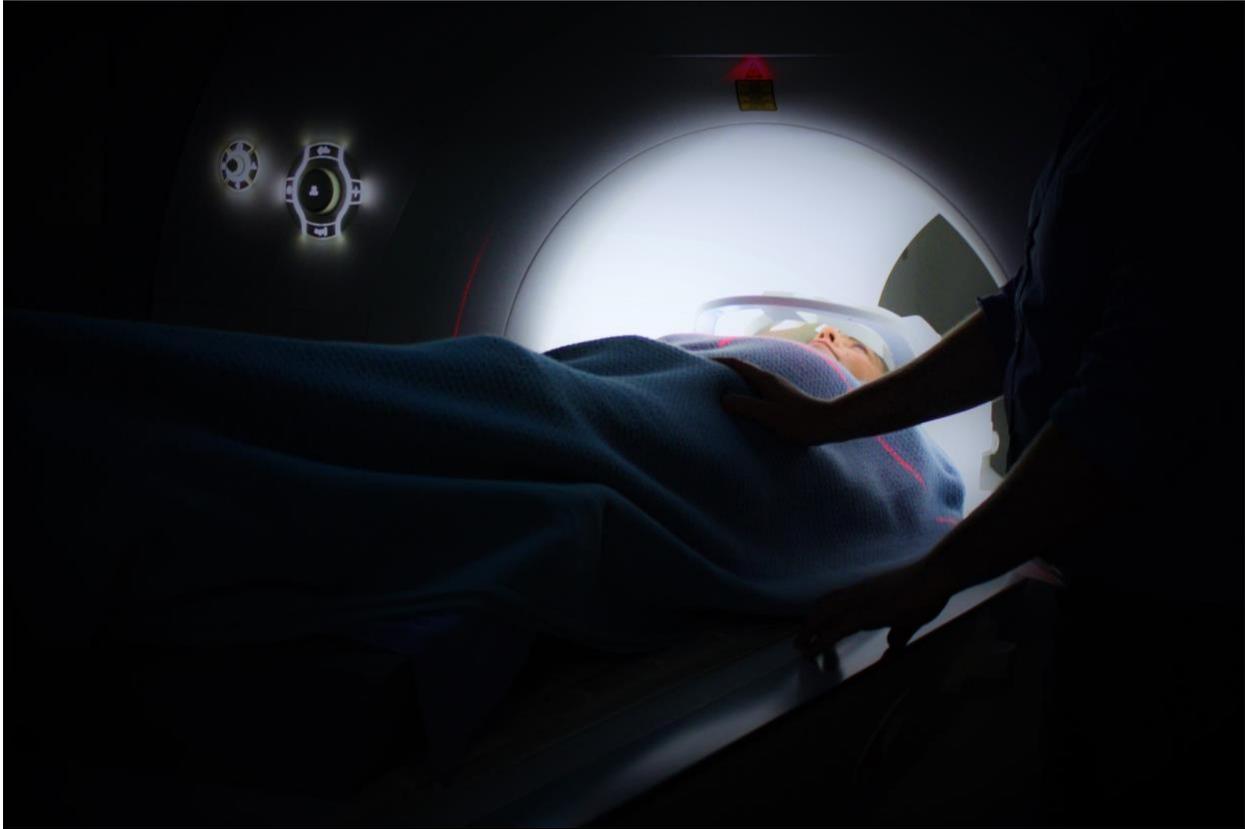


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## Life Threat #4: Unhealthy Diet



28 million American adults, or [12% of all American adults](#), will be fighting some form of heart disease this year.

Of those, 735,000 will suffer a heart attack this year, including 210,00 who survived one or more before, and 525,000 getting one for the first (and often last) time.

Meanwhile, over 15,000,000 Americans will be fighting some form of cancer this year, including the [1.7 million Americans](#) who will learn for the first time they have it.

*Heart disease and cancer together will account for 45% of ALL deaths in the US this year. It's similar elsewhere in the "developed world."*

Unhealthy eating – along with its equally dangerous cousin, smoking (Life Threat #5) -- are the primary reasons heart disease and cancer are so rampant.

Unhealthy eating is also a primary cause of other diseases on the list, like diabetes and kidney disease.

It is actually a key contributor to virtually all diseases, in fact, even those that are genetic or otherwise non-human-induced, like those from viruses.

That's because your immune system is most dependent on an ongoing supply of high-quality "fuel" – that is, the proper range of high-quality nutrients you get from healthy eating. Without that, it cannot effectively fight anything that attacks your body.

So while you may not die from unhealthy eating this year, or even be diagnosed with any of the serious diseases this year, literally every single day you eat unhealthy you are dramatically contributing to your early death.

You are also contributing to a greatly diminished quality of life right now and in the future, by the way, because unhealthy eating is the top cause of low energy, reduced brainpower, bad moods, susceptibility to colds and flus, reduced ability to fight allergies and infections, and much more.

## **The 6 Key Things You Need to Do**

Forget all the noise and many arguments over relatively minute details about healthy eating.

Because there is rather universal agreement on the most important things you need to do, which most people by and large are still not doing. They are:

1. Eat far more fresh vegetables and fruit. 5 servings a day or more.
2. Avoid foods with processed/refined flours as much as possible. Opt for whole grain foods instead.
3. Greatly reduce your intake of sweetened foods. The best place to start is removing high sugar drinks from your diet, including colas and juices.
4. Greatly reduce your intake of fried foods.

5. Eat more clean and lean protein, such as fish, beans, and eggs and chicken meat from chickens that have been raised cage-free on their natural diet. Moderate your intake of red meats, and be sure to eat beef from cattle that have been grass-fed and pasture-raised. Most chicken and beef today is heavily tainted with artificial antibiotics and growth hormones that can cause you serious weight gain and wreak havoc on your health. It may be a bit costlier, but it's well worth it to your waist and life to choose eggs, chicken, and beef from animals fed their natural diets and allowed to roam.
6. Many supplements are a waste. However, there is widespread agreement that several types of supplements offer smart "health insurance" because people are falling far short of getting adequate amounts of the essential nutrients in their daily diet. The top 4 among these are:
  - [A high-quality multivitamin](#)
  - [A high-quality probiotic](#)
  - [A high-quality fish oil](#)
  - [A high-quality protein supplement](#)

IMPORTANT: Note the repetition of the word "high-quality" with supplements above. You need to aim for the best with supplements, because there are extreme differences in ingredients and processing methods different companies use. Unfortunately, *most* supplement companies cut major corners – meaning you're throwing your money away, even putting your health at risk. Click each supplement above for top-recommended choices ↑↑↑

If all of these are an issue for you, as they are for many people, don't try to bite off more than you can chew (bad pun intended) by trying to do them all. Pick one or two, stick to them until they become a habit, then move on to accomplishing another, then another.

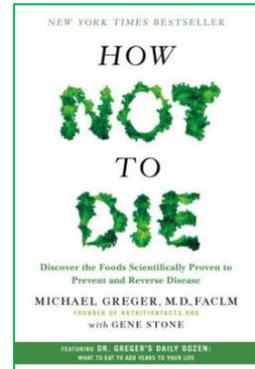
Because when you improve at any of the above, you're already doing your life and quality of life a lot of good.

## Recommended Book:

There are at least tens of thousands of books on healthy eating, and millions of articles. Many are certainly credible, but many more angle heavily toward specific theories that haven't been proven, and may even be harmful.

Here's one of the most credible (and readable) books if you want solid guidance on nutritious eating – it has a 5-star review with over 2500 customer reviews:

[How Not to Die: Discover the Foods Scientifically Proven to Prevent and Reverse Disease](#), by Dr. Michael Greger, M.D.



## Also See:



### Sources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/>

National Cancer Institute: <https://seer.cancer.gov/>

## Life Threat #5: Smoking



[Smoking will kill around 480,000 Americans](#) this year. This includes 41,000 non-smokers who are routinely exposed to secondhand smoke. Worldwide, smoking will kill 7 million people this year, including an even higher proportion of non-smokers killed from secondhand smoke.

Meanwhile in the US, more than 16 million people are living with a disease caused by smoking.

In addition to cancer, emphysema or heart disease, smoking will lower your quality of life in other ways as well: smokers suffer much higher levels of depression and anxiety, lower levels of daily energy, and negative effects to complexion and physical appearance.

You know how bad it is, in short, but as a reminder: there are between 4,000 to 7,000 chemicals in cigarettes, including 70 well-known to cause cancer such as formaldehyde, arsenic, lead, carbon monoxide, and ammonia.

[Smoking causes cancer](#) of the lungs, esophagus, larynx, mouth, throat, kidney, bladder, liver, pancreas, stomach, cervix, colon, and rectum, as well as acute myeloid leukemia. Lung cancer is the deadliest cancer killer for both men and women – 158,000 Americans will die of it this year, accounting for 27% of all cancer deaths.

Smoking also doubles your chances of heart attack and stroke. It lowers libidos and causes premature ejaculation in young men and erectile dysfunction in all men. And it ruins your bone health and makes them brittle, which leads to osteoporosis, joint pain, tooth pain and loss, high risk for broken and fractured bones, and more.

Plus, it greatly increases your chances of going blind.

## **The Key Thing You Need to Do:**

Quit smoking.

*Way easier said than done, of course. But because of the highly likely early death sentence, because of the anxiety and low energy and other side effects on your life right now, what could be more worth doing?*

Quitting smoking can be quite a struggle on every level – physically, mentally, and emotionally – so it's best to know what's coming before you quit, and have a plan in place for it.

This [Quitting Smoking Resources Guide](#) is one good place to start. It provides access to a range of information you need to know, such as what to expect when you're quitting and the various smoking cessation products available, and access to helpful tools like an app for your phone to help you quit for good.

MANY have also found success with the methods described in one book in particular, [Alan Carr's Easy Way to Stop Smoking](#). Over 15 million copies of the book have been sold, it's got a 4 ½ star rating on Amazon with 3000 customer reviews, and it's written by a man many consider the #1 expert on stopping smoking.

## But What About E-Cigarettes?

It's an inevitable question today. While they're relatively new and their effects are still being studied, here are two things that are rather certain:

- They're definitely not good for you.
- They're likely quite bad for you... but not nearly as bad as cigarettes. It's highly recommended you just quit regular cigarettes altogether, but if it's a choice between cigarettes and e-cigarettes, it's likely smart to choose e-cigarettes.



### Sources:

California Department of Public Health: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/>

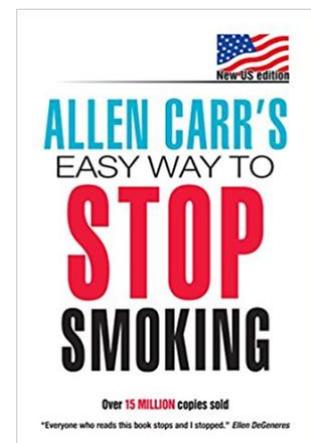
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/>

National Cancer Institute: <https://www.cancer.gov/>

*"His method is absolutely unique,  
removing the dependence on cigarettes."*

*- Sir Richard Branson*

CLICK THE IMAGE TO LEARN MORE →



## Life Threat #6: Physical Inactivity



My grandmother, who is 98 years old, says the golden key to her longevity is to “Keep moving.” And even with all of her neck and leg issues, and even with her walker, she certainly still does make it a point to walk around a lot, for a 98-year-old.

This corresponds to [research that shows exercise is the golden key](#) of all keys to living not only a very long but high-quality life.

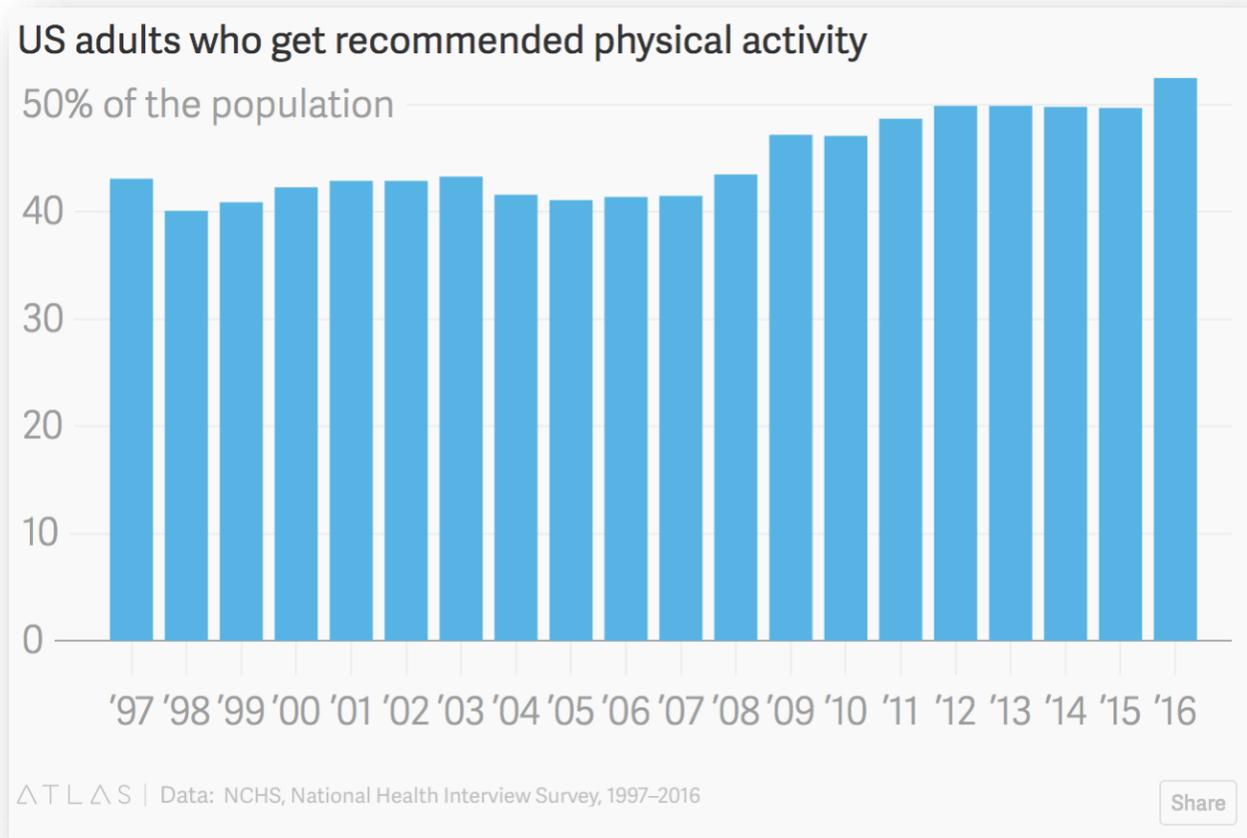
Here’s a fact: we humans were born to move. In our natural state, standing and moving should take up most of our waking day.

Here’s another fact: Americans are now sitting [an average of 13 hours a day](#)(!) Add to that an average of 8 hours of sleep, and that’s 21 hours people spend on their butts or backs daily.

Bad things are bound to happen with those kinds of numbers. Some experts even say so much sitting is [more dangerous than smoking](#). Add in the unhealthy diet most Americans eat, and obviously bad things are bound to happen.

Along with unhealthy diet and smoking, of course, lack of proper exercise is a key cause of and contributor to heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and many other diseases. Physical inactivity also dramatically reduces your quality of life right now, leading to depression, anxiety, reduced brain function, and generally worse moods.

In this area, though, there's been some good news, as the number of people getting the proper amount of physical activity has been trending up:



What exactly is the recommended amount of physical activity you should engage in, at a minimum?

Get at least [150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity](#) each week, or at least 75 minutes of more vigorous aerobic activity.

Moderate aerobic activity can include brisk walking, bicycling under 10 miles per hour, ballroom dancing, or gardening.

Vigorous aerobic activity can include jogging, running, bicycling over 10 miles per hour, swimming laps, or aerobic dancing.

Strength training for all your major muscles at least twice a week is also recommended. Major muscles basically include your legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms.

So, take my 98-year-old grandmother's advice: keep moving!

**Sources:**

CNBC: <https://www.cnn.com>

Photo: Freestockcenter – [FreePik.com](https://www.freepik.com)

Mayo Clinic: <https://www.mayoclinic.org>

National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/>



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## Life Threat #7: Serious Accidents



Accidents of all types are the third leading cause of death in the United States. They're a top cause of serious injury, chronic pain, financial distress, and emotional suffering.

The most common type of accidental death is unintentional poisoning; far and away, this means poisoning by drug overdoses, which is covered by Life Threat #3 above.

Motor vehicle accidents are the second leading cause of accidental death in the US, followed closely by accidental falls, which are both covered here.

### **SECTION 1: Motor Vehicle Accidents**

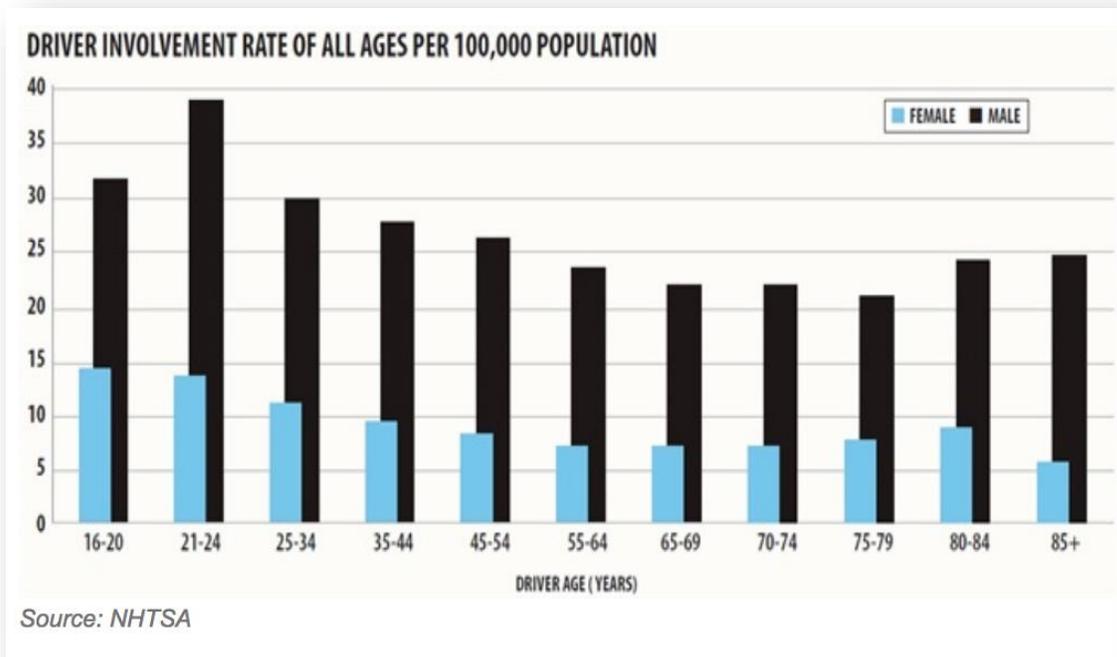
There will be over [6 million motor vehicle accidents](#) in the US this year, which will kill 40,000 people -- 110 Americans each day. It will be the [leading cause of death to children 8 to 17](#), and to adults age 18 to 24.

An additional [3 million will be injured](#), with 2 million sustaining permanent injuries such as paralysis, brain damage, severed limbs, and chronic back and neck problems.

Globally, [1.3 million people will be killed](#). This includes [260,000 children](#), making it the world's top cause of deadly accidents to children.

In the US, [half of all traffic deaths](#) will occur in urban areas and half in rural areas. About [55% of all deaths will occur in single-vehicle crashes](#), where no other vehicles are involved.

As this graph below shows, male drivers will be significantly more involved in deadly crashes than females, and old age but especially youth will play a significant role in such crashes.



### The Top 3 Motor Vehicle Accident Threats

These three threats below are responsible for the great majority of the serious to deadly motor vehicle accidents.

## 1. Drunk Driving

Over 10,200 people will be killed in the US this year because of drunk driving -- 1/3 of all traffic-related deaths.

60% of those killed will be the drunk driver, and 40% will be others such as passengers in their vehicle, in other vehicles, or pedestrians.

35% of fatal crashes involving a drunk driver will be caused by those between the ages of 21 and 24. 30% will be caused by those age 25-34, and 23% by those age 35-44. The remainder will be caused by those younger or older.

[1.4 million will be arrested](#) for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics. Three out of four of those arrested will be men, though the numbers over the last decade have been [rising for women](#) and declining for men.

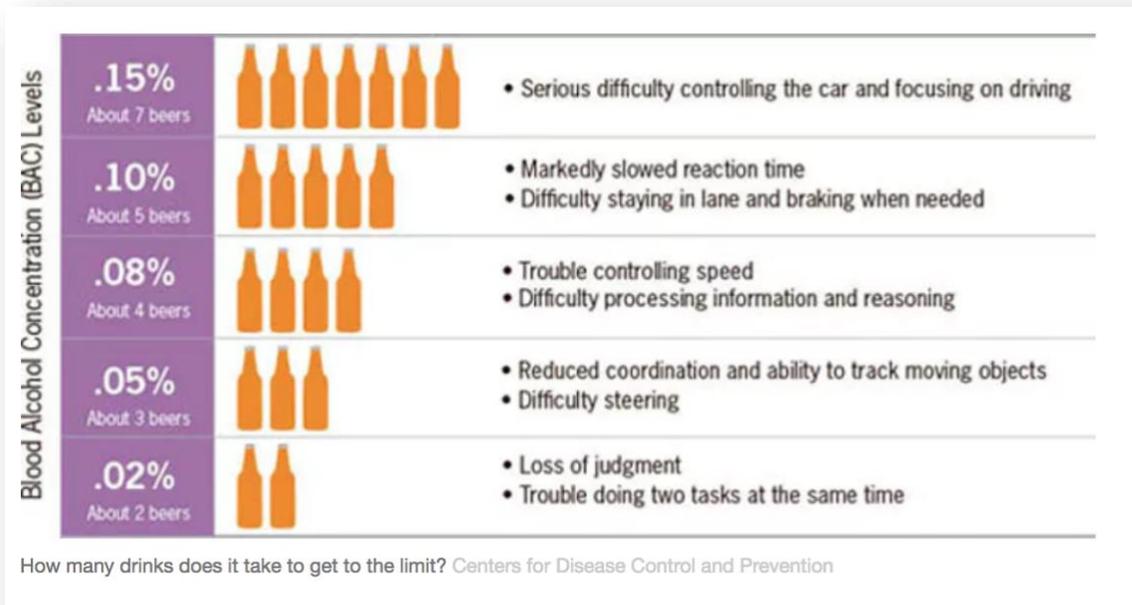
The penalties for these DUIs/DWIs are steep, and extremely steep for repeat offenders. The penalties for killing someone while intoxicated -- beyond having to live with that fact for life -- are justifiably severe: felony charges that carry prison time, fines, and license suspension or revocation.

Many people claim that they're uniquely fine to drive after drinking, or that alcohol doesn't affect them as much as others. This is frankly ignorance in the form of denial and ego talking.

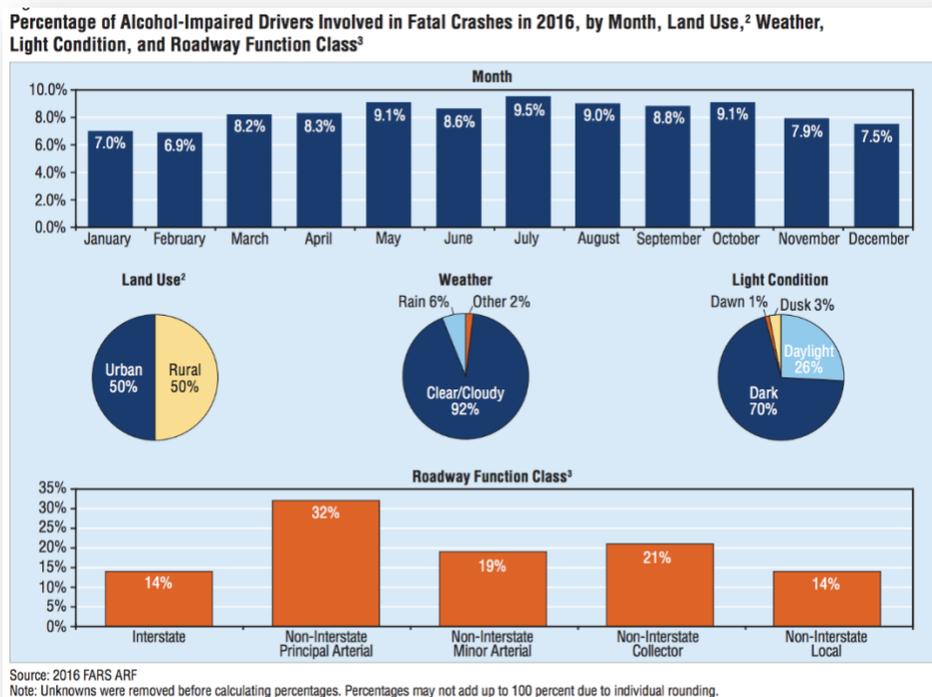
Human biology is human biology. People drink alcohol (and do drugs) for the relaxing or other mind- and mood-altering effects it has, and these very same effects are what makes it unsafe to drive.

Alcohol impairs alertness, reaction time, reasoning, vision, hearing, hand-eye coordination, and more.

***Drinking and then driving results in a 900% increase in the chances of getting into an accident.***



It's also a serious threat no matter where you live, what type of roads you drive on, or whatever the season and weather may be. The risks do seriously escalate at night, primarily because that's when far more people drink or do drugs.



## **Drunk Driving Prevention:**

- Make a vow to never drink and drive – including in those circumstances where you’ve “only had a little” or you’re “so close to home,” because those are the situations that most commonly get people arrested or killed. Share that vow with loved ones and friends.
- Before you drink, choose a non-drinking friend as the designated driver.
- If you’re out and you’ve been drinking, leave your car and get a taxi or Uber ride to get home.
- Never let friends or family drink and drive.
- Because deadly drunk-driving crashes are four times more likely during the night – and the risks are even higher on weekend nights – try to reduce or avoid driving at those times.
- Always wear a seatbelt, as it is your best protection against drunk drivers.

## **2. Distracted Driving**

Each day in the U.S., 10 people will die and another 1,000 will be injured from distracted driving.

[Distracted driving](#) generally includes any activity that takes your eyes, hands, and/or mind off of the road and driving.

Texting while driving is particularly dangerous because it involves all three.

A text that takes just 5 seconds to read equals taking your attention off the road for the length of a football field while driving at 55 miles per hour – a whole lot can go wrong in that space.

Other common forms of distracted driving involve talking on cell phones and using GPS systems – especially if they are not hands-free – and eating, gawking at an outside person or event such as an accident, and driving while “lost in thought.”

## **Distracted Driving Prevention:**

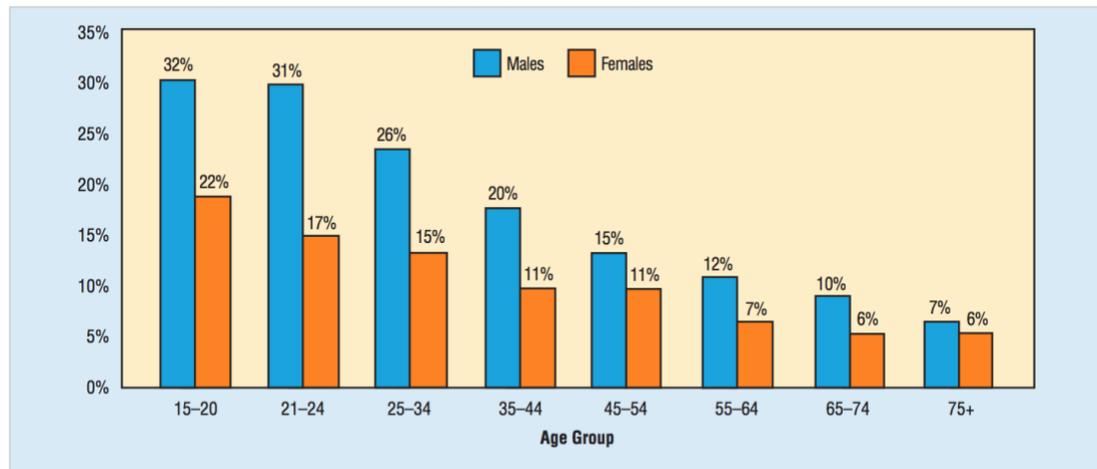
- Commit to focus on driving while driving.
- Do not text and drive, or use your cell phone or GPS while driving, because it's never worth the risks.
- If you're tired, or your thoughts are racing from some emotional event such as an argument, that lack of focus leads to many accidents – do not allow yourself to drive.
- Even if you have children in the back seat crying, resist the urge to take your eyes off the road.
- If you need to do anything other than drive, pull over to do it. Your lives and others' lives are worth the short inconvenience.

## **3. Speeding**

Driving faster than the speed limit will be a key factor in [30% of all traffic accident deaths](#) this year, killing nearly 10,000 Americans.

- While drivers may have a false sense of control while speeding, it actually greatly escalates the likelihood of both accidents in general and accidents that kill the driver and innocent people in particular. [Speeding consequences include:](#)
- Increased potential for losing control of the vehicle. Trying to swerve out of the way of something at high speed, for example, can have vastly more tragic consequences than at lower speeds.
- Increased stopping distances.
- Increased degrees of crash severity leading to greater severity of injuries. Hitting another vehicle while driving 75 miles per hour has vastly more tragic consequences than at 55 miles per hour, for example.
- Reduced effectiveness of driver and passenger protection equipment, because this equipment is designed with speed limits in mind.

Percentage of Speeding Drivers in Fatal Crashes, by Age and Gender, 2016



Source: FARS 2016 ARF

## Speeding Prevention:

Unless a raving lunatic is chasing you, there's never a truly good reason to speed considering the potential consequences. If you're driving alone out on the open road, it's foolish for reasons noted above. If you have passengers in the car, or there are other vehicles or pedestrians anywhere in the vicinity, it's downright self-centered and cruel, considering the innocent lives you are putting at risk.

Lack of emotional awareness and emotional self-control are almost always the base cause of speeding. Younger people especially may be prone to feeling a sense of power from speeding, for example, and experiencing an ego-boost from displaying this false sense of power to others in the car with them or driving around them. Other people of all ages may speed out of uncontrolled anger, frustration or worry, such as if they just got into an argument, someone cut them off in traffic, or they are running late.

It's crucial to keep reminding yourself, and to frequently remind those you love (regardless of how annoying it may be), about the extreme dangers of speeding and other reckless driving like running red lights and tailgating. As with the other serious threats, it's crucial to keep learning how to recognize and manage your emotions while driving to keep yourself and those around you safe.

## SECTION 2: Falls are a Serious Threat

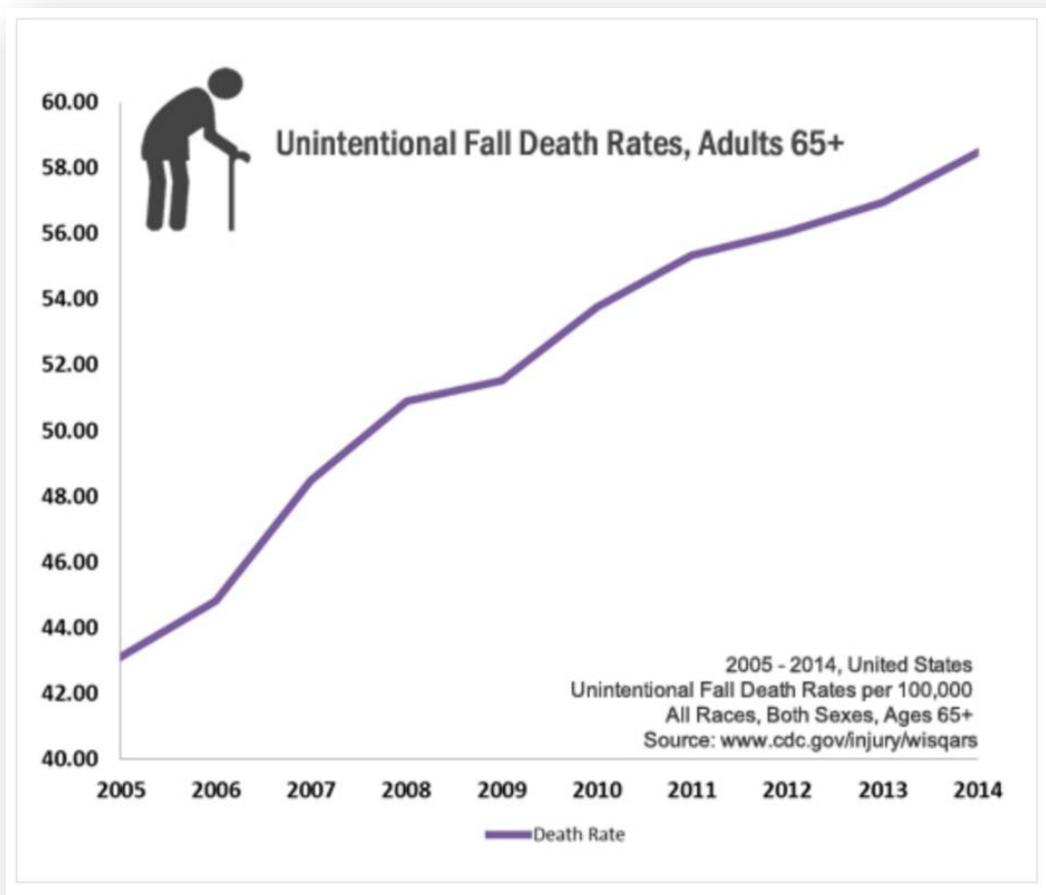
Surprising to many, falls are a very serious threat.

This year they will be the [top cause of nonfatal injuries](#) to virtually all age groups in the US, making them almost as deadly as traffic accidents.

More than [32,000 will die from falls](#) in the US this year alone.

Worldwide, falls are the second leading cause of accidental death – more than [640,000 people worldwide will die](#) from falls this year!

Globally and in the US, falls are especially and increasingly deadly to those 65 and older:



Key risk factors for falling in those 65+ include:

- Lower body weakness
- Vitamin D deficiency
- Difficulties with balance and walking
- Medicines (many prescriptions and over over-the-counter medicines can cause balance issues)
- Vision problems
- Hazards in the home, such as uneven steps, slippery showers, dim or bad lighting, and rugs and other items on the floor that can be tripped over

If you are a senior, or you have senior family or friends, it's wise to do a periodic A to Z evaluation to ensure all these risk factors are reduced or eliminated.

Routine exercise to improve your lower body strength and balance are recommended, as is making sure you are wearing the right prescription eyeglasses if needed.

Talk to your doctor and know the side effects of any medications you are taking, and make sure family and friends are aware, too.

Keep a fast and easy way to contact others in the case of an emergency with you if possible, such as this [top-recommended medical alert system that requires no monthly fees](#).

And do an exhaustive review of your home to ensure it's safe as possible.

Make sure there are no rugs or other objects on the floor that can be tripped over. Install grab bars in the shower and next to the toilet, ensure railings on both sides of the stairs, and make sure there is bright lighting throughout the home.

Babies and children are also particularly susceptible to death and serious injury from falls, so:

- Make sure cribs work properly and the sides are set high enough relative to the mattress so they can't climb out.
- Use sliding gates at both ends of stairways (not accordion gates, because babies can get their heads trapped in them.)
- Never leave babies unattended on beds and other furniture.
- Keep babies away from elevated decks and porches.

- Never leave babies unattended on changing tables or high chairs.
- Use a [nonslip bathmat like this top-recommended one](#), and never leave children unattended in baths.
- Most kids under 5 can fit through a 6 inch opening on windows. Install [stops that prevent windows from opening more than 4 inches like this one](#).
- Always make sure kids are wearing properly fitted helmets when riding bikes, skateboards, skates, and scooters.

**Sources:**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/>

Driver Knowledge: <https://www.driverknowledge.com/car-accident-statistics/>

Insurance Institute for Highway Safety: <http://www.iihs.org/>

MLive: <http://www.mlive.com/>

Mothers Against Drunk Driving: <https://www.madd.org/>

National Public Radio: <https://www.npr.org/>

U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: <https://www.nhtsa.gov>

World Health Organization: <http://www.who.int/en/>



**A medical alert system is a must for the elderly.**

**This system requires no monthly fees.**

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## Life Threat #8: Chronic Physical Pain



There are two basic types of physical pain – acute and chronic. Both suck. At their extremes, both really suck.

But if you're ever forced to choose between the two (and I hope you never are), choose acute pain. Because it's pain from things like bruises and cuts to broken bones and childbirth that typically just lasts from moments to hours, though it could last as long as weeks, such as recovering from certain surgeries.

Yes, it's true that some of the most extreme pain humans can experience are acute pain events, such as labor, tooth abscesses, penis fractures, passing kidney stones, and getting bit by a bullet ant. But at least there's an end to that pain in sight.

Chronic pain, on the other hand, is pain that persists for months, years, even decades.

A whopping [one in 10 adults in the USA](#) alone suffer some form of chronic pain. The four most common forms of chronic pain are back pain – especially lower

back pain -- followed by headaches, chronic pain of the joints such as arthritis, and nerve pain such as sciatica.

For many it's a "manageable" level of pain, but for many others the ongoing pain is so extreme it disrupts every aspect of their lives, such as sleep, relationships and career. Chronic pain, such as in the lower back or neck, is in fact the [#1 cause of long-term disability](#). It's next to impossible to focus on work or anything else when your nerves feel like they're being ripped to shreds.

Increasingly, doctors have been prescribing the powerful pain-relief drugs collectively known as "opioids," and they've helped many find relief where nothing else has.

As noted earlier in Life Threat #3, these opioids have big problems of their own. Because while the opioid addiction crisis is fueled more so by those who first tried the drug illicitly and "recreationally" and get addicted, an alarming one in four who are prescribed the drugs for non-cancer pain also get hooked.

Each day this year in the USA, about [100 people will die](#) from opioid overdose. Even for those who don't get addicted, the common side effects of opioids such as grogginess and dizziness may certainly be preferable to unbearable pain, but they still don't make for a high quality of life.

Chronic pain is primarily caused by either physical injuries or diseases. While it's not possible to completely avoid the possibility of chronic pain – some diseases behind it are non-preventable, for example, and not all accidents can be avoided no matter how careful you are – you can dramatically reduce the likelihood of suffering chronic pain.

How?

By taking the sensible steps to avoid the preventable accidents and preventable diseases that do cause the majority of chronic pain, and by strengthening your body and mind to best defeat chronic pain should it ever occur.

Auto accidents, for example, are a leading cause of not only death but serious disability – including chronic pain – and most can be prevented.

Falls are another top cause of serious injury and disability, including chronic pain, and most can be prevented.

Lifting heavy things is another very common cause of chronic back pain. (Remember, bend at the knees, not your back, when lifting something heavy off the ground. And if it feels too heavy, err on the side of caution and don't lift it at all.)

Meanwhile, the very same steps you can take to protect yourself against serious diseases like cancer, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and more can, of course, protect you from the chronic pain that can stem from those diseases.

Furthermore, taking these same steps make it far more likely you'll avoid and defeat chronic pain should it occur from any source, including both "preventable" and "non-preventable" diseases and accidents!

The following 10 steps are most important:

1. Properly manage your emotions, including emotional pain. If you have lingering guilt, feel full of anger, or fear seems to control your life, for example, these emotions can severely compromise your physical immune system and make it far more likely you'll suffer from chronic pain. Consult with a therapist or life coach toward this end.
2. Avoid excessive drinking of alcohol. If you have an alcohol or drug addiction, it's wise to make it your top priority to beat it.
3. Follow prescriptions and your doctor's guidance to a tee. NEVER take more medication than prescribed, and NEVER take medications that have not been prescribed.
4. Get adequate amounts of exercise. Even if you suffer pain or have some time of physical condition, there are a wide range of low-impact workouts available. Consult with a physical therapist if necessary.
5. Quit smoking.
6. Eat healthy. Consume tons of fresh produce and clean protein, and avoid excess fried foods, processed flours, and sweets.
7. Avoid / overcome overweight and obesity.
8. Prioritize sleep, and sleep well.
9. Avoid repetitive strain on your joints (i.e., doing the same motion over and over). If you have a physically repetitive job, be sure to take plenty of breaks and stretch your muscles.
10. Learn and practice proper sitting, standing, and walking posture (mom was right!)

Obviously it's best to consult with professionals to provide you guidance in each of the steps above -- such as therapists, physicians, nutritionists, and certified trainers -- especially if you have particular challenges in any of the areas.

And be sure to [subscribe to the free YouDefense.com newsletter](#), as well. It is our mission to provide you guidance in these areas and more backed by reputable research.

Do all of the above even relatively well and your chances of chronic pain, and disease in general, go WAY down.

For that matter, do all of the above even relatively well and you can significantly reduce chronic pain you may already have!

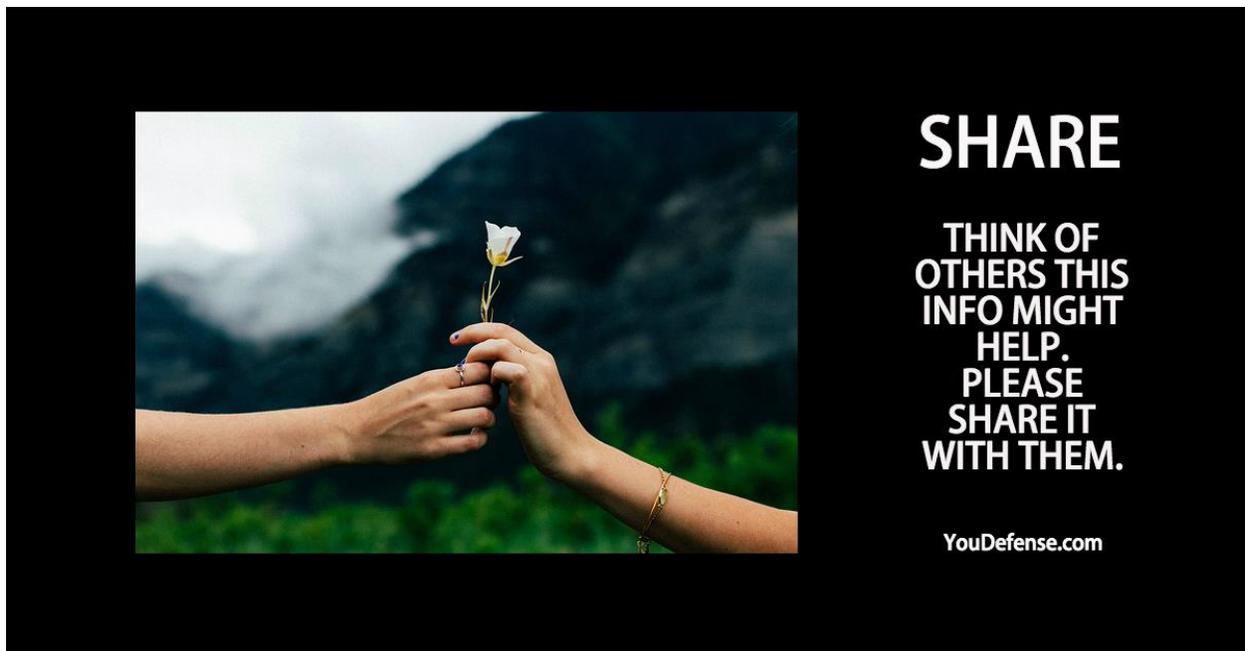
It's not necessarily easy, but it is simple: a fit and healthy body is designed to live long and live well, including fighting chronic pain and the causes of it. An unfit and unhealthy body and mind invites the causes of chronic pain in, and cannot fight chronic pain well when it does occur.

**Sources:**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov>

The Good Body: <https://www.thegoodbody.com/>

Washington Post: <https://www.washingtonpost.com>



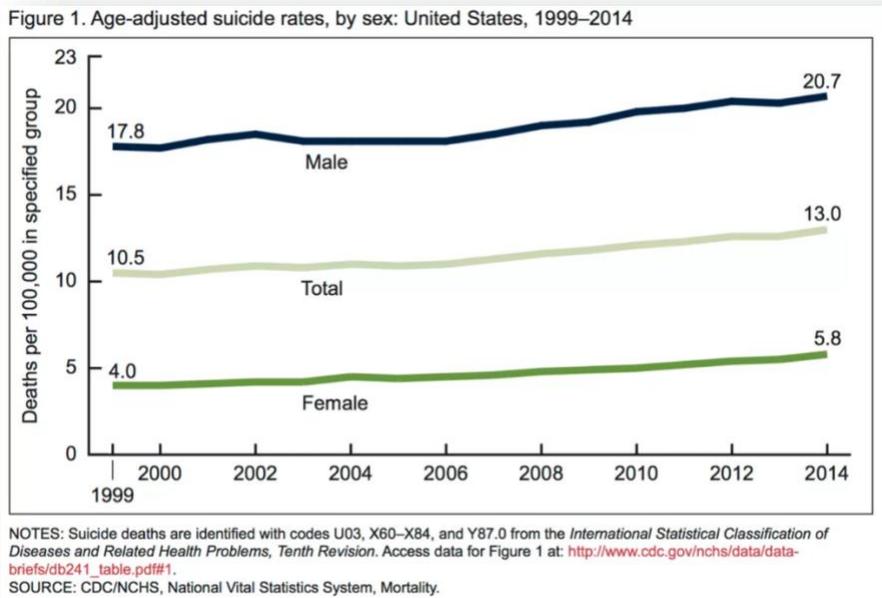
## Life Threat #9: Suicide



Globally, one person kills themselves every 40 seconds. 800,000 people worldwide will die from suicide this year. For each of those people, at least another [20 more will attempt but not succeed](#) at suicide – that's 16 million people.

In the USA, [45,000 will die by suicide this year](#). That's more than twice the number that will die from homicide. At least another 1.1 million Americans will attempt suicide but not succeed.

Men will take their own lives at nearly [four times the rate of women](#) – 78% of all U.S. suicides will be men – though females will report having more suicidal thoughts. In terms of age, middle-aged adults will account for nearly 60% of all suicides.



Of course the devastation extends far beyond those who commit and attempt suicide, impacting family and close friends for years and even decades.

To make a terrible matter even worse, you hear very little about this epidemic from the media, aside from when a celebrity such as Robin Williams takes his own life.

In part that’s due to the stigma of shame still associated with suicide and suicidal thoughts. Many still consider suicide a “selfish” act, for example, as if those suffering from the depression or other overwhelming feelings of despair and hopelessness didn’t have those very issues impairing their judgement. It’s akin to calling to calling someone who is suffering from or dies from cancer “selfish” for making the lives of those who love them more difficult.

This leads to perhaps the key reason men kill themselves at such a higher rate than women. Men are still largely encouraged, starting at a young age, to ignore their emotions, and are taught that their primary role is to compete and provide. Feelings of despair, hopelessness, fear and failure are perceived as weaknesses – that’s the prevalent message from the outside, that’s the feeling inside – and so these feelings are suppressed.

Many men are ashamed to ask for help, and don't have a strong network of emotional support. Instead, they hold it all inside... until they burst.

## **If You are Having Suicidal Thoughts**

Whether you are male or female, if you are having suicidal thoughts, the most important step to take right away is to talk to someone about it – family, friends, clergy, coaches, your doctor, and especially therapists or other professionals who can help.

Another completely confidential option there for you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week is **the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**, or you can chat online 24/7 with someone here: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

There's no shame in your feelings, and even if you feel hopeless and the following sounds hollow, it is still true: *there is great hope, and many who have felt the same way as you have survived such feelings and gone on to live a good life.*

## **Top Suicide Risk Factors**

These are some key life factors and situations that can increase the risk of suicidal thoughts:

- Mental illnesses and disorders such as depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, anorexia nervosa, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and gender identity disorder.
- Having a drug or alcohol abuse problem.
- Learning you have a potentially terminal disease such as certain cancers, and battling such diseases.
- Living with severe chronic pain or other serious disabilities.
- Experiencing physical, sexual and other abuse and assault.
- Experiencing financial calamity.
- Being in serious trouble with the law or accused of a serious crime.

- Divorce, separation, or other relationship breakups, especially “harsh” ones.
- Grieving the death of a loved one, especially the death of a child, or if you feel in any way you could have “saved” the departed or were responsible for their death, such as if they were murdered, died in an accident, or committed suicide.
- Feeling isolated or lonely.
- Rejection by peers, family, other social groups, or those you desire.
- Job loss and unemployment.
- For youth, having serious disciplinary, social or school problems.
- Imprisonment, or being sentenced to prison.
- Sleep deprivation

If you experience any of these, try to remain aware that suicidal thoughts are a possibility and commit to talking with therapists, doctors and loved ones (and/or calling the Suicide Prevention Hotline) immediately should any such thoughts arise.

If anyone you love experiences any of these, try to maintain open communication with them and let them know you’re always there to talk about any thoughts or feelings they may have. Help them develop a plan they promise to follow should suicidal thoughts arise, including identifying any likely “triggers” like consuming alcohol, anniversary of a loss, or encountering their ex.

Should they express any suicidal thoughts in any manner, always take it seriously. Encourage them to discuss their thoughts with a therapist, or to call the Prevention Hotline noted above. You can also call the Hotline yourself for further insights on how to help. If you believe they might or are going to attempt suicide, do not hesitate to call the police.

And NOTE: It’s a MYTH that talking about suicide may “give someone the idea to do it.” According to experts, bringing up the subject of suicide and discussing it openly is one of the most helpful things you can do!

Finally, the following may help lower the risks for you or those you love:

- Participating in support groups. There are support groups for virtually every risk factor noted above, such as those for PTSD, sexual abuse, alcoholism, divorce, chronic pain.
- Adhering to treatment plans, appointments with therapists, taking prescriptions, etc.
- Healthy eating.
- Exercise, which has been [shown to reduce depression](#), relieve anxiety, and boost mood.
- At least 7 hours of solid sleep daily.
- Avoiding alcohol and illegal drugs.
- Avoiding isolation. If family and friends are not available, participating in the aforementioned support groups and in any group activities can go a long way.
- Eliminating means of suicide from the home, such as guns, razors and dangerous drugs.

**Sources:**

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: <https://afsp.org>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov>

Mayo Clinic: <https://www.mayoclinic.org>

World Health Organization: <http://www.who.int>

## Life Threat #10: Sexual Assault



Sexual assault includes sexual touching without consent, forcing a victim to perform sexual acts such as oral sex, and forced penetration of a victim's body, known as rape. Force can be physical pressure, but it also can be emotional or psychological manipulation, such as threatening to hurt the victim or those they love.

The good news, [according to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network \(RAINN\)](#), is that the rate of sexual assault and rape has fallen 63% in the US since 1993.

The bad news is that every 98 seconds another American is sexually assaulted. This year over 320,000 people in the US over age 12 will be sexually assaulted or raped. Over 60,000 US children will be victims of sexual abuse. Over 80,000 prison inmates will be sexually assaulted or raped.

1 of every 6 American women have been the victim of an attempted or completed rape in her lifetime, while the number is 1 out of 33 for American men.

7 out of 10 sexual assaults are perpetrated by someone the victim knows.

## **20 Keys to Protecting Against Sexual Assault:**

First, it must be repeated: sexual assault is never the victim's fault. How they're dressed, where they're at, and what they've done in the past does not grant anyone permission to sexually touch them or more in any way.

Because sexual assault can occur in the home, in other's homes, in schools and businesses, and in public places, and because perpetrators can range from dates to strangers and everyone in between, there are a wide range of prevention tips.

These are 20 key tips:

1. Always trust your "gut instincts." If a person, place or situation makes you uneasy, leave. Let someone you trust know, if possible. Get somewhere you feel safe.
2. If someone is trying to touch you in a way that you do not want, including dates or friends, firmly tell them no and to stop. Repeat if necessary. Leave the situation if possible.
3. Always remain alert and aware of your surroundings. Know where exits are if indoors. Assess who is around you whether indoors or out. If you are walking outside and someone is behind, always turn to see who they are. Again, if anyone feels like they may be a danger, trust your instincts.
4. If you ever feel threatened in any situation, try to find something you can hold onto and use as a weapon if you don't carry one already. Be sure to see [The Top 10 Women's Self-Defense Products](#) at YouDefense.com and carry at least one of these products. But keys, rocks, bricks, sticks, flashlights, even pens or anything that could inflict some damage are far better than nothing at all.
5. If you are alone, try to avoid isolated areas and areas that are not well lit if possible. If you must go, try to find someone to go with you, or at the least have something you could use as a weapon ready in your hand.

6. If you are in danger of being attacked, run from the situation if possible, and scream and draw attention to yourself.
7. If you are being attacked, try to scream and draw attention to yourself.
8. If you are being attacked, also try to fight back in any way possible – kicking, fists, hair pulling, fingernails, using anything around you as a weapon.

NOTE: Some victims report “freezing up” and feeling immobilized and unable to scream or fight back while being attacked, which can occur in extreme fear situations. First of all, no victim should feel guilty and like they “just let it happen” if this is the case, as again it is one common response to fear. Two – and we must stress this suggestion is unverified -- but mentally preparing yourself to scream and fight back should you ever be attacked can increase the chances of doing so. This type of mental visualization of and preparation for various types of attacks is an effective tactic used by the military.

9. With the above in mind, consider taking a self-defense course.
10. Be extra cautious in parking lots! If it is unlit or you feel unsafe in any way, try to find a group or security official to walk with, or use your phone to call the police or someone you trust to escort you.
11. Always check under your car and surrounding cars as you approach it in parking lots, and check the floor and rear seat of your car before entering it.
12. Always keep your doors locked at home and in your car.
13. It's also wise to keep at least one of [these top 10 women's self-defense products](#) in your home where it's easily accessible.
14. Always know who you are opening your door to. Ask to see the identification from sales and repair people, and confirm their identification by calling the company they represent before allowing them into your home.
15. At home, always close your blinds or curtains at night.

16. If your car breaks down, turn your hazard lights on, stay inside your vehicle, and keep your doors locked. Call 911 or someone you trust for help if you have a phone. If someone offers help, roll down your window just enough to thank them, to let them know that you have called the police if you already have, or ask them to call the police for you for help. Do not get out of the vehicle. If their intentions are good, they will understand.
17. Be wary about revealing personal information over the phone or Internet to those you don't know or don't know well.
18. Alcohol and drugs negatively impair judgement, including mental and "instinctual" judgements of what is safe. If you are going to partake, do so in groups. Set limits and stick to them. Never travel alone or with anyone you do not trust when you're under the influence.
19. At bars, parties and other social events, only accept open drinks, foods or any consumables from wait staff or those you trust.
20. Always let at least one other person you trust – spouse, other family, friends, etc. – know where you will be. This is especially true if you are going somewhere out of the ordinary.

Finally, if you are being stalked, otherwise feel at threat for becoming a victim of sexual assault or rape, or have been a victim of sexual assault or rape, call the **National Sexual Assault Hotline 24 hours a day / 7 days a week, confidentially, at 1-800-656-4673.**

**Sources:**

Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network: <https://www.rainn.org>

**Know Anyone Who Could Be Safer and  
Benefit from the Insights in This Report?  
YES, Please Do **SHARE** It with Them!**

# What about Domestic Abuse, Guns, and Digital Crime?

As noted, the 10 Life Threats above were included for the depth and breadth of death, pain and suffering they will cause people this year.

Data has been provided where possible because the numbers tell the story, but as previously noted, there is also subjectivity involved in this and any human endeavor. Some may argue that certain threats belong higher or lower, in other words, but most certainly all these threats deserve an ultra-bright spotlight and your attention.

That said, we certainly do all face other real and relatively high-probability threats you need to be aware of. Frankly, it's that we had to stop this particular report at some point, and 10 is a reasonable number.

If we did expand this report out to more of the most serious threats, it would certainly include domestic abuse, for example. Nearly [20 people per minute are physically abused](#) by an intimate partner in the United States. This includes an alarmingly high number of both women and men being violently abused by a partner, and this epidemic needs far more attention than it's getting in the media.

It would include the ever-controversial issue of guns, because [guns will be involved in 40,000 deaths](#) in the US this year.

And it may even include [a top fear of many Americans, cybercrime](#), also known as digital crime. Because while digital crime may not yet pose a widespread threat of death, the devastation it's already causing many people financially and emotionally is very real. And because of the fast-growing prevalence of digital in every facet of our lives, this threat is only going to increase.

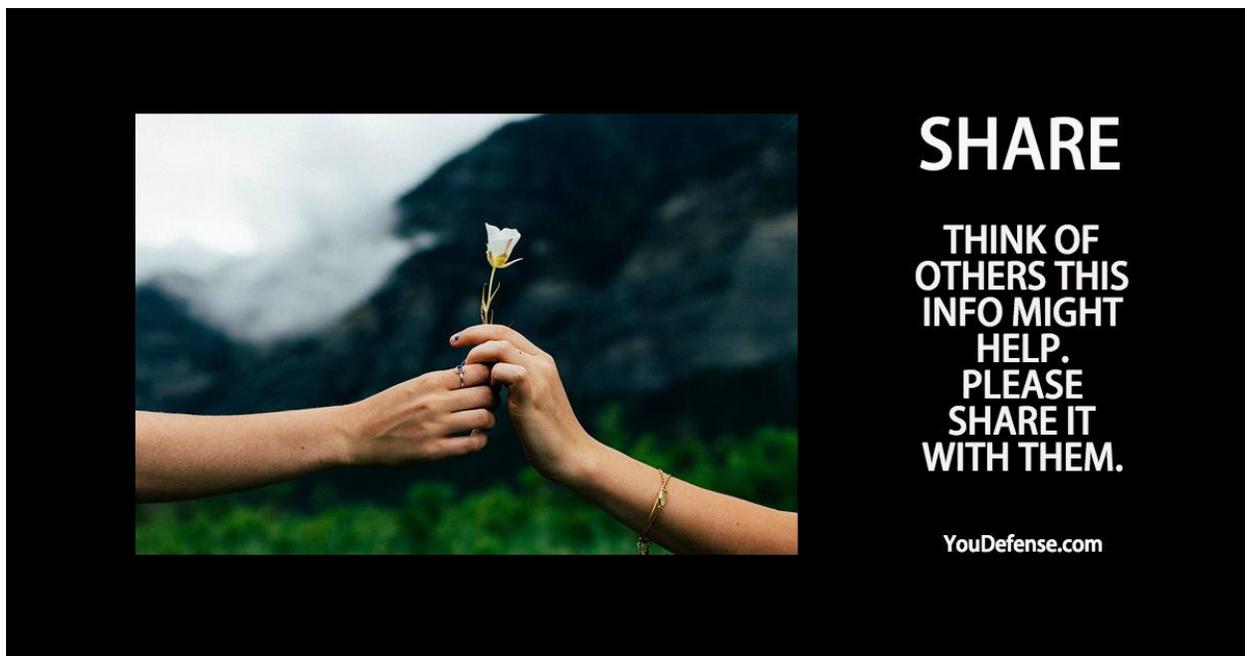
# Subscribe Free. And Please SHARE This.

With the above noted, please do [subscribe to the free YouDefense.com newsletter](#), because our mission, in short, is to help you protect yourself.

Toward that end, we are committed to providing you the most essential insights and tools to avoid and overcome threats like those directly above, those covered in depth in this report, and any and all others that pose a risk to you.

Finally, please do **share this report with everyone you care about**. Granted this may not be the world's most exciting read, but it is important as it gets.

Reviewing this information enables people to focus and refocus on these most serious threats. That focus and awareness -- especially in a world of information overload -- is the key to improving and saving lives.



## About Brian Vaszily

Brian Vaszily is the co-founder and CEO of [YouDefense.com](http://YouDefense.com).

He's been featured on ABC, [NBC](#), [CBS](#), [Fox](#), in [major newspapers](#) and extensive [other media](#), and via [his writings](#), [speaking engagements](#), [videos](#) and more is known as an agent of positive change for both individuals and businesses.



As an entrepreneur, he's been key to building five different prominent and successful businesses dedicated to improving peoples' health, wellbeing, and happiness. Brian's works have been widely published, most notably the international bestseller [\*The 9 Intense Experiences: An Action Plan to Change Your Life Forever\*](#) (Wiley Publishing.)

## Brian Vaszily on Why YouDefense.com Was Created

I've watched way too many people young and old suffer in terms of their health, relationships, safety, finances, and in other ways — and even die — because they were not paying attention to the real threats. I'm talking about things they could have avoided, in many cases easily avoided, if they were properly aware of them.

In short, the big problem is distracted attention.

With so much information pounding our brains from every direction — most of it heavily-biased hype — peoples' attention is scattered all over the place. They're focused over there and there and there, while the real threat creeps up on them from right over here.

**People are being provoked to fear a thousand different things, much to the benefit of certain others, while what gets lost are the actual dangers most likely to hurt them.**

What then happens is people then don't know who to trust. Some just follow the best and loudest manipulators. Many others stop trusting anyone altogether, and tune out.

This is, of course, the perfect situation for the real dangers to creep up — or come crashing in — from seemingly “nowhere” and destroy and even end lives.

**Indeed, as you’ve seen in this report, most of what is killing people today and destroying their quality of life is catching people by surprise.**

This is all the very reason YouDefense.com was created.

I wanted a place where every adult – including my own wife, grown son, sister, and my mother — could finally get clear and reliable guidance on the real dangers they need to beware of to protect their health, finances, and their lives.

People certainly don’t need any more b.s. sensationalism and polarization with ulterior motives. They need genuinely useful information based on verifiable facts.

YouDefense.com is, in other words, first and foremost about integrity and trust.

Some may smile politely to our faces but call that a crazy business model behind our backs, but I disagree.

**The marketplace is all about serving unmet needs, and integrity and trust are *sorely* unmet needs right now.**

People deserve that, dearly need that, and I am certain they will appreciate that.

**[Subscribe to the Free YouDefense.com Newsletter Now](#)**

And again, please [SHARE](#) this report with others it might help.