

**Life Insurance:
How to Get the Best Quotes and Rates**

By BizMove Management Training Institute

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1. The Single Most Critical Factor in Getting the Best Life Insurance Plan.

The number one mistake made by life insurance seekers is approaching only the companies that are most heavily advertised. The first life insurance company that comes to mind is not necessarily the one that will offer you the best rates.

The single most critical factor in getting the plan that is best for you is shopping around for as many quotes as you can. Why? because different life insurance companies

charge different rates for the same coverage. In addition, insurance companies' competitiveness differ tremendously by customer location.

Only by obtaining several quotes that are specific to your situation and location you will be really able to discover the best plan that is available to you. How many quotes? go for at least 3 quotes from different insurers, less than that will not do the job.

Now, usually shopping around for three quotes can be a tedious and time consuming task, however, you can make it easier and more effective by using a free online quoting service such as [Insurance-Me](http://www.liraz.com/insureme) (If the link doesn't work, copy and paste the following URL into a browser: **www.liraz.com/insureme**).

Insurance-Me will provide you with several competing offers from reliable life insurance providers that offer good plans in your area thus enabling you to compare and pinpoint on the best plan that is available for your location.

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2. Life Insurance Overview

Your need for life insurance will change with changes in your life. For example, the arrival of children usually triggers a sharp increase in the amount you need. As children grow older and leave the nest, you will probably need less protection.

Term life insurance policies are the least costly. They pay death benefits but have no cash value if you decide to stop making payments. As the word "term" suggests, these policies are in effect for a specific period of time—one year or until you reach a certain age are common. You can compare life insurance policies online.

Whole life, universal life, and other cash value policies combine a long-term savings and investment product with life insurance. Canceling these policies after only a few years can more than double your life insurance costs.

If you have misplaced a life insurance policy, your state's insurance commission may be able to help you locate it. If the insurance company knows that an insured person has died, but cannot locate the beneficiaries, the company must turn the benefits over to the state's unclaimed property office. Check with that office if you believe that you are due a benefit. You can avoid losing your life insurance policy by alerting the policy beneficiaries and filing a copy with your will.

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3. 101 Great Life Insurance Tips and Ideas

1. To save some money consider switching to annual life insurance premiums instead of monthly life insurance premiums. Some life insurance providers will charge you extra fees if you pay for your premiums monthly, so, if possible, pay your annual premiums in one lump sum at the beginning of each year.
2. Life insurance is an important item to have in place, especially if you have a family that will need to be provided for after you have died. Do not leave this important issue until it is too late. Investigate a life insurance policy as soon as you are able and ensure that it is backed up with a current will.
3. When choosing a financial representative to assist you in the life insurance policy purchase process, ensure that you select an individual that you feel at ease with. This person should understand and acknowledge your goals and needs so as to be able to provide the best advice regarding products that are right for your situation.
4. When you are consulting an advisor to assist you in your search for a life insurance policy, you should know how the advisor is paid for his or her services. Discover if they are compensated through commission or fee. With commission involved, you should look at all the alternative products out there because the advisor may have their own interests in mind.
5. When you are considering buying a policy, find out what the cancellation procedures are. If there comes a time in the future that you are no longer happy with your coverage, you want to be able to easily cancel the policy. Make sure you find out in the beginning if the company imposes any penalties if you were to cancel. You need to know upfront
6. When it comes to Life Insurance, purchase it when you are young. Typically, a younger person is in good general health, so you will be able to lock in a great rate for the length of the policy. As a person gets older, they start to present more of a risk to an insurance company, and not only will the premium be more but, you may be denied coverage entirely.
7. Be the early bird when it comes to purchasing life insurance. One way to save money on life insurance is to purchase it early in life while one is still in good health. Insurance premiums can be quite high for those who wait too late or until health problems are emerging.
8. A person should not wait until they are sick to consider life insurance. Many preexisting conditions can make you ineligible for a life insurance policy. If you are eligible, premiums will likely be higher than they would be for a healthy individual. Taking out a policy while you're healthy is the best way to protect yourself, and your family.
9. When you are selecting your life insurance policy, it is important to determine how much coverage you actually need. The amount of money that will be needed after your

death is going to be specific to your family's situation, so you're the only one who can calculate the needed coverage. Don't let a salesperson push you into more coverage than you actually need.

10. Make sure you get an appropriate amount of insurance. If you need to find out how much life insurance coverage you need, it can be a very confusing process to go through, but it can in fact save you some time and hassle in the long run. Include considerations for costs related to house payments, yearly taxes, retirement and college tuition.

11. If you are buying a new life insurance policy, the best time for you to actually make the purchase is before you hit your half birthday. Insurance companies don't use your actual age, but what they call your "age nearest". So if you will be 30 in 6 months, they will consider you 30 now, and you will be paying a little more.

12. Quiz your agent on important matters and pay close attention to how they answer. Find out if you can renew the policy, if you can cancel the policy any time you desire, and also ask any questions you may have regarding premium guarantees. You have to understand each policy's terms to choose the best one.

13. Before you purchase life insurance, determine what kind of coverage you will need. The internet contains a large number of online calculators that can help you figure out the amount of money your spouse or children would need in the event of your death. Using this type of tool will help ensure that you are purchasing only what you have to have.

14. Renew your whole life insurance policy every year. Many companies automatically renew policies yearly, but you need to verify the specifics with your own insurance company. A lapse in policy coverage will drive up your insurance rates, and will not pay in the unlikely event that something should happen to you.

15. When preparing for a life insurance medical exam, be sure to follow all instructions carefully. At the same time, drink plenty of water the day before the exam and be cautious of what foods you eat. Taking these two actions can impact blood panel results and help you receive a better classification on life insurance rating.

16. Do not be afraid to make changes to your life insurance. As you get older, what you need from your policy will change. Once your children have left the house and you are financially secure for your retirement, you may even make the decision to drop your policy all together.

17. If you are about to get divorced, you should change your life insurance so that it reflects your new lifestyle. Perhaps you do not wish your ex-spouse to benefit from your life insurance: make the necessary changes to your policy. Ask your ex-spouse if he or she has a life insurance policy to make sure that your children will be well taken care of.

18. When purchasing life insurance, you should do your homework. Make sure that you understand what your actual needs are and how much you can actually afford. Make

sure that you understand the contract. If it is not clear, then have your representative explain it to you. To get the best deal, you should understand all of this.

19. You will want to consider what you are willing to pay for your life insurance policy. Term life policies are typically more expensive than other types. Term life does have the advantage of being an easier and more dependable payout. Be careful to not end up under-insured because of costs.

20. Refrain from exercising immediately before you go to the doctor for an examination for life insurance coverage. However, doing this will increase your blood pressure, which could give the doctors a false reading of your health.

21. Before you purchase any type of life insurance, you first need to figure out how much money you will need from a policy. This is what you first need to think about when you decide to buy life insurance. If you are currently unmarried, and do not have any children, then you most likely do not need life insurance. A good amount to get is somewhere between five to 10 times what your annual salary is.

22. Check with your employer before purchasing life insurance from another source. Often various types of life insurance may be available through employee benefit packages. These policies are frequently less expensive because the employer is able to obtain a group rate for employees purchasing life insurance through this channel. These policies frequently can be expanded to include family members as well.

23. If you have no dependents, you are probably not seeing the point of getting life insurance. But subscribing to a life insurance means that your funeral expenses will be covered. Your relatives will greatly appreciate this and if you subscribe to a more extensive policy, you will be able to leave some money to the relatives of your choice.

24. You should think about life insurance even if you do not earn any income. For instance, if you are a stay-at-home mom, subscribing to life insurance guarantees you that your family will be able to hire someone to take care of the housekeeping and also look after your children while your husband keeps working.

25. Use your life insurance policy as supplemental income for your retirement. You can borrow money against your insurance policies to cover anything you might need. You can make house repairs, or take a trip with your spouse. Check your policy for details. Loans against it do reduce its value, but not by much.

26. Look for a top quality life insurance company. There are many independent agencies that rate and rank life insurance companies. Look for your potential companies ratings in popular reviews of businesses. If you cannot find your company listed you might want to reconsider buying life insurance from them.

27. Educate yourself about life insurance. Not only do you need to determine your own needs, you need to understand general life insurance terms. Learning these things will give you an advantage in researching, and buying, the right insurance for you. The more you learn, the better your experience will be.

28. One of the main tips when purchasing life insurance is understanding exactly why you need it in the first place. Many people purchase it without understanding what it does for them. Realize that it is designed to provide financial security to your loved ones and family members in case of your death. Pretty much, if they depend on your income as their main support then you should definitely consider purchasing life insurance to protect yourself as well as your family.

29. When creating a divorce settlement that requires one parent to maintain life insurance in order to keep custody of children, create the insurance policy before signing the divorce settlement. This speeds up the settlement process and insures that any kinks in the making of the insurance policy are dealt with before the custody issues.

30. Watch out for insurance salesman that make unrealistic claims about their knowledge or performance. If an agent makes outlandish claims, or ignores the rating agencies, it's best to work with someone else, and to mention their claims to their supervisor.

31. Prior to purchasing an insurance policy, you should learn all you can about the available cancellation options. If you find yourself unhappy with your current insurance company, remember that you always have the option to cancel the policy you have with them. You want to look over your policy because there are companies that will go ahead and charge you if you decide to cancel a policy. You should be well aware of what the penalties are so that you know what to expect if you decide you'll be canceling your policy.

32. Your insurance agent may try to sell you additional riders to add to your life insurance policy. However, these are often unnecessary, so make sure you fully understand the purpose of each one before deciding if it would benefit you. For example, a family benefit rider allows for your death benefit to be paid in monthly increments rather than one lump sum, so your family receives a steady source of income.

33. When purchasing a life insurance policy, be truthful on all medical exams or history profiles. Should anything happen and the carrier discovers you provided false information when purchasing a policy, they can legally deny a claim which defeats the purpose of buying life insurance. Letting your insurance company know about any pre-existing conditions or risky hobbies, may result in slightly higher premiums, but prevent problems with claims.

34. To save money on your life insurance policy, figure out your specific needs. Use an online calculator to get a sense of the amount of money it will take to cover your spouse until retirement and your children until they graduate college. You can find such calculators at MSN and The Life and Health Insurance Foundation for Education website.

35. To save money on your life insurance policy, improve your risk class by getting in shape. Something as simple as losing weight, reducing your blood pressure and cholesterol, or quitting smoking can save you a significant amount of money. Be sure to

take a medical exam as well before you apply for life insurance to insure you are not surprised by extra fees.

36. Don't decide on a policy without doing some comparisons. This comparison process can be done over the phone or online quite easily. If you call the companies, don't give them your personal information until you are ready to open a policy, though. You should obtain as many quotes as you can before selecting the best deal.

37. You should know that your current health condition is going to influence the price of your life insurance. There are certain things you have no control over such as diabetes. But you can lower your life insurance by quitting smoking and doing your best to cure a heart condition or a similar issue.

38. Here is a simple way to calculate how much your life insurance should cover: ask yourself how much you earn in a year, and multiply this amount by how many years you want your family to benefit from this same income. You should add to this amount how much you expect your funeral and related expenses to cost.

39. If you are about to get married, you will probably have to redefine your life insurance policy. You now have to worry about the future of your spouse, and perhaps of a family. Go see your insurance agent with your spouse and establish a new policy that reflects your changing needs.

40. When you are perusing life insurance plans, read the fine print carefully. If you don't understand it, talk with your agent. If you still don't understand it, have a lawyer (or at least a paralegal) look it over for you and explain it to you. Don't sign up for any life insurance plan you don't understand.

41. When buying life insurance, make sure to ask them questions about the policy. Things like whether the policy is renewable, how long the premiums are guaranteed, whether there is an accidental death rider, and what sort of things can cancel the policy. All the above are important to find out in advance, so ask them before you pay.

42. Be cautious when you see a benefit cap in your health insurance policy. While adding a benefit cap can greatly lower your premiums, it may end up costing you a lot more in the long run. If you have a benefit cap set at \$25,000, but have an accident resulting in \$75,000 in hospital bills, you will be required to pay the difference.

43. Try not to put off getting a life insurance plan. Get a life insurance plan as soon as you can comfortably afford it. If you get a life insurance plan when you are still young, the cost will be less for the rest of your life. Waiting until your health is failing will cost significantly more.

44. Having a life insurance policy can be a nice way to leave money for the family that you are leaving behind. This extra money can help out greatly to assist your family's needs. The right life insurance policy can give an individual a wonderful peace of mind, knowing that his or her family is going to be okay, financially.

45. Don't put off buying a life insurance policy. The older you are when you purchase the policy, the higher your premiums will be, even for the same amount of coverage. Also, if you are young and healthy, you won't have any trouble getting approved for coverage, which might be a problem as you grow older.

46. You need to find out what exclusions or limitations are included in your life insurance policy. There are certain things that a life insurance policy will not cover. If you do not want to leave your family in debt, you need to take the time to find out what is and what is not covered under your life insurance policy.

47. Sometimes a life insurance policy holder wishes to change their beneficiary after their policy is already set. Don't worry about this. The company won't penalize you for a change. You just have to make sure that you fill out the proper forms in the presence of a witness in order to finalize the changes.

48. Make sure you select the right type of life insurance for your current and long-term needs. Of the four primary types, some policies only cover you for a specific period of time while others cover you for the remainder of your lifetime as long as you keep premium payments current. Younger purchasers may want to start with term life insurance which can often be converted to whole life policies later.

49. If your financial situation changes significantly, such as what comes with purchasing a home, reassess your life insurance needs. A policy sufficient for a renter may need to be increased for a new homeowner to make sure your family has enough financial stability to maintain mortgage payments in the event of your death.

50. Remember the following when you purchase a life insurance policy. Read everything very carefully, ensuring that you completely understand every question before answering. Double-check to make sure that you have answered everything correctly. Keep a copy of all sales materials that were presented to you, along with a copy of the completed application form. When you receive the policy contract, you will be able to compare it with what was originally offered to you.

51. Make certain the life insurance policy is stored in a safe place. Tell the beneficiaries where they can find the documents, as they will need them to make a claim should you die unexpectedly.

52. Buy the right term for your term life insurance. Your agent might suggest that you buy a 10-year term policy, even if you need 20 years of coverage, so your rates will be cheaper. They suggest that you just sign up for a new 10-year policy upon expiration of the original policy. What they don't tell you is that the rates will be higher because you are older; you might have contracted an illness or disease in those ten years and can't pass the medical exam which you have to re-take, and the agent will get a new commission. Just buy the 20-year term insurance up front, if that is the amount of coverage you need.

53. Stay away from guaranteed issue life insurance policies. Almost everyone who applies is approved without being asked to complete a medical exam. They are extremely expensive because the company has no idea of knowing what kind of risk the

policy holder is to them. These policies would be a good choice, however, if you are not in good health.

54. Consider a Smoker Term Life policy if you use tobacco. These cost more, but they insure smokers. They also cover any medical bills that are a result of tobacco-related illnesses. Be aware that smokers are put into different categories based on how much and how often they smoke and use tobacco.

55. When deciding what term to take for your insurance, take a look at what will need to be done with that money. If your children are newborns, a 25 year term policy will make sure that they are cared for if anything happens to you before they are able to financially take care of themselves. If you have a 30 year mortgage on your home, considering making that your term to protect your home while it's being paid off.

56. Avoid the cost of high commissions when purchasing life insurance. These fees are added to your premiums and go directly to your broker and insurance agent. It is to your advantage to opt for a "no load" policy, if you can locate a company that offers one.

57. If you want to have some control and decision-making power over the money you invest in your life insurance, consider a variable, universal life insurance policy. With these policies, you have the ability to invest part of your premium in the stock market. Depending on how wisely you invest this portion of your money, your death benefit can increase over time. You should have some knowledge of the stock market if purchasing this type of policy or enlist the aid of a financial professional.

58. Do as much research into life insurance as you possibly can. It doesn't matter whether you buy a policy by yourself or with the assistance of a professional, you need to know what you are talking about in order to feel confident and sure of the decision you are making.

59. Research the company you're considering buying an insurance policy from to check out their financial stability. Your insurance company must have a rating that is graded as an A or higher by the independent agents.

60. When benefiting from an employer's life insurance, you should read carefully the policy. You need to know if this insurance will cost you anything, and decide to keep it or not. Ask if the insurance will still continue once you retire from the company, and for how long you have to work for the company before your coverage really starts.

61. Deciding who to put on your life insurance policy is a tricky business. You don't want to choose person X, Y, and Z and have person I get upset and ask why they weren't chosen should you pass. However, as a general guideline, you should choose those you trust the most, as they will be responsible for carrying out the policy and your will.

62. Be sure to have good information regarding your family health history when you shop for life insurance. If you have a family history free of medical defects, then you may qualify for a better rate. Insurance companies also take your personal medical and genetic history into account when calculating premium rates. Excellent medical histories equal excellent rates.

63. If your agent tells you that you are high risk, get a second opinion. Do not let yourself be deterred by one life insurance company telling you a high price. You will likely find a company that will offer lower rates than the others. You never know; one company may refuse coverage, while another will offer a great rate.

64. Don't be afraid to shop online when looking for a life insurance policy. When shopping online, it's much easier to compare and contrast the different policies than it is when you are strictly meeting with insurance agents in person. Not to mention, an insurance agent will only give you one side of the story. Take your life insurance shopping online to look for the best deals.

65. Disability insurance is a good idea, especially if you live paycheck to paycheck. It will pay you cash in the event that you are hurt, sick or can't work for any other reason. Your medical insurance will pay your doctor bills, but they won't cover your day to day living expenses.

66. If there are people in your life who rely on you financially, it is important for you to consider buying a life insurance plan. In the event of your death, your life insurance policy will allow your partner to pay off any debts, such as a mortgage, or put your children through college.

67. If you plan on buying a life insurance policy, make sure you purchase sufficient coverage to provide for your family. Financial professionals propose that you calculate this amount by multiplying your yearly income by seven. If you have children, it is suggested that you increase this number to 10.

68. Make sure that you are aware of how the insurance agents and financial planners make their money. They have to sell a policy or other insurance products to you in order to make a profit. The ones that work fee-plus-commission charge a fee and a commission for their products. The ones that work fee-only do not sell products. They sell guidance. In turn, you'd use that guidance to purchase your own policy.

69. If you intend on getting life insurance in the future, start planning for it, now. Take steps to improve your health, such as, quitting smoking. You can begin a fitness routine and try to reach your optimal weight. Have all the recommended health screening tests for someone of your age and gender. Work on getting your cholesterol and blood pressure to acceptable levels. Not only will you look and feel better, you'll save a bundle on your life insurance policy.

70. When determining how much life insurance coverage you need, don't just think about your mortgage payment and regular monthly bills. If you have children, they'll need financial assistance for college in the future. Although it's not pleasant, consider worst-case scenarios. Should you unexpectedly die in the near future, how much debt will you leave behind? Make sure your policy covers your outstanding debts, or the money you intended to be used for paying off the mortgage for your spouse may end up being used to pay off your creditors instead. You also want to ensure that your funeral expenses and any estate taxes and legal costs are covered.

71. If you're naming someone close to you as a beneficiary of your policy, make sure you inform them of it so that they're ready to act when you pass. This kind of news thrust on people after you're gone is not good for anyone. Make sure you bring it to their attention while you still can.

72. Term life insurance is the type of policy that most experts recommend that people purchase. This provides insurance on the life of the policy holder for a predetermined time, such as 10 or 20 years. Premiums are normally paid annually, and once the term expires, the policy expires as well. By then, the insured's needs may have changed and he or she may not need a life insurance policy anymore.

73. Purchasing your funeral plot in advance of your death will help your family save money once you're gone. Unfortunately, spur-of-the-moment plot purchases bring out the unscrupulous nature of some in the funeral industry, and a plot after death can cost a lot more than a plot purchased well in advance.

74. Don't shy away from the old-fashioned life insurance salesmen out there. They might not show up at your door these days, but speaking with a live insurance agent as opposed to dealing with a computer could end up saving you some big money over the life of your insurance policy. No pun intended.

75. If meeting with a live broker, always watch to see if they're recommending a policy to you after only one meeting. If so, you can bet that they're only in this to make money and aren't accurately addressing your particular needs. You should just walk away and choose another broker instead.

76. If you have a property settlement agreement with a former spouse, setting forth an expectation that the other partner pays all or part of your children's expenses or alimony, factor this into your life insurance decisions. Should your former spouse die, unless it is clearly in the estate documentation, there is no requirement that the estate will continue to pay those expenses. Instead, it may make sense to insure your ex spouse and list yourself as beneficiary, in order to protect yourself and your children.

77. If you have a whole-life insurance policy and have had it for a long while, whatever you do, don't get rid of it or replace it with another one. Hold on to the old policy because you don't want to lose the investment that you have already made into past premiums. The better option is to keep the old policy without making any changes and purchase a new whole-life policy instead.

78. If you work for the government, you can get a good life insurance through Federal Employee Group Life Insurance. The government will pay for a third of the coverage if you get the basic plan. The basic coverage corresponds to a little more than your annual salary, but you can choose to upgrade it.

79. An insurance plan is not a buy-it and forget-it purchase. You will need to revise your insurance plan as things change in your life and you get older. Changes in marital status, having children, or reaching retirement age are all reasons to review your plan and make adjustments.

80. When purchasing term life insurance, consider how long it will be until your children are financially independent and your debts are paid off. The point of life insurance is to protect family members such as children who are totally dependent on your income. Take a policy that will outlast the period of your children's dependence and any long-term loans such as a mortgage.

81. Familiarizing yourself with some common life insurance terms can help you determine which type is best for you, as well as how much coverage you want to purchase. Cash value refers to the portion of your policy that is available for you to withdraw as loans for various purposes, such as education costs or credit card debt. A premium is simply the periodic payment that you make to keep the policy active. Another term you might see is dividends, which refers to the money you may receive back on your premiums if the insurance company overestimated their expenses and ended up with a surplus. A dividend is not guaranteed.

82. Try opting for a decreasing life insurance plan. This kind of plan is used to supplement a policy holder's investments as if something caused them to die before reaching a certain amount with their investments. The more these grow, the less the monthly premiums are. That's why these make a great option for those who are looking to save over the life of their plan.

83. Pay your premiums promptly. If the holder fails to pay the monthly premium on their insurance term, or if they decide to stop making payments before the whole life plan gains any value, they will lose the policy. They will also be forced to get a new policy and the new policy could be more expensive. This can especially be true if they have aged or fallen into poor health since their policy payments stopped.

84. Improve your credit score to save money on life insurance. Statistics have shown insurance companies that people with poor credit are higher risks. Raising your credit score could affect your rates differently depending on which insurer you choose, but it's always a good idea to get several quotes since every insurer evaluates new policies differently.

85. Be skeptical of hot shot brokers who act like they know everything during your consultation. It may seem a bit unrealistic, but there are many brokers in this field that act smug and intelligent, while only out to take your money.

86. Even after you've found a policy that you feel you love, you should still make sure to compare multiple policies to see if you can find a better deal on any other life insurance package. You never know; you might find the same package for 20% less per month. That would be a huge difference in the long-term.

87. If you are buying a life insurance policy for the first time, do not be afraid to ask questions with your adviser. Before you purchase a policy, you should clearly understand all of its ins and outs. An adviser who is unwilling to answer these questions is not an adviser to whom you should listen.

88. When considering life insurance, be sure to look outside what your employer provides. While this may be easier and you may assume they are providing what is best

for you, it is not always the case. Make sure that they rates and coverage are competitive or better than other offers that you could go with.

89. Before investing in a life insurance policy, learn the pros and cons of each of the four types. These are term life insurance, whole life insurance, universal life insurance, and variable life insurance. In order to help you understand the differences, you may want to hire a financial professional. Not only can a financial professional explain each type of life insurance to you, but he or she can suggest which one best suits your needs.

90. You may be surprised to find out that some companies offer premiums just about half the cost of others. There are many sites online that will allow you to compare policies, coverage and prices, but be sure to figure your medical history into the equation.

91. Purchasing term life insurance, as opposed to full-life insurance, is a wise choice for most consumers, but selecting the right term length is key. Factors to consider as you select the term is your own age, the age of your dependents, the nature of your financial commitments, as well as what you can reasonably afford. You may want to consider basing the term around fulfillment of milestone expenses like when your youngest child will have graduated from college or when the house will be fully paid off. Alternatively, many people choose a term that covers them until they can access their retirement resources. Whatever your own considerations may be, choosing your term length thoughtfully will bring many years of peace of mind.

92. Compare your group life insurance against other policies. Group life policies, usually provided by your employer, may not always be the least expensive option. The rates are set based on averages -- average age, average health and other important risk factors that may not apply to you. If you have excellent health, shop around to see if you can get better rates elsewhere.

93. You should find out about the payment options that are available to you when you are signing up for a life insurance policy. There are many companies that offer customers the ability to pay monthly, annually or even bi-annually. You need to consider which option is best for you, and set up the payment plans accordingly.

94. If a relative of yours recently died and named you as the beneficiary on his life insurance policy, but the policy itself is missing, there are steps you can take to locate the policy, even if you don't know which insurance company issued it. Examine the deceased's canceled checks for any that were written to insurance companies. Look through any mail you can find for insurance bills or policy status notices. Check with former employers or organizations that the deceased belonged to which may have offered the policy. Look at tax returns for expenses or interest earned in regard to life insurance. Finally, check with the Medical Information Bureau, which has a database that can inform you if the medical records of the deceased were requested by any insurance companies since 1996.

95. If you have a life insurance policy that is well founded, meaning you have a growing balance, you may be able to borrow against it to get the money that you need for a down payment on a house. If you do not want to borrow against it, you could even cash it out and start over on it again.

96. A lot of insurers will offer you premiums that can save you up to 40% off of other policies. Use a multi-quote website to browse quotes from multiple insurers in real time, such as Insurance-Me (If the link doesn't work, copy and paste the following URL into a browser: www.liraz.com/insureme). Make sure the site takes your medical history into account, though.

97. Before shopping for life insurance, put together a budget to project the amount of financial coverage you might need. Include your mortgage payoff, college costs for the kids, money to pay any other large debt obligations, funds to cover funeral and medical expenses and enough money to supplement your remaining spouse's retirement funds.

98. When looking into getting life insurance, there are two separate rate groups that are called standard and preferred. When you are comparing prices don't mix these up and compare a standard policy with a preferred one. They will cost very different and only about 1/3 of the population get a preferred rate!

99. When shopping around for a life insurance policy, be aware that certain occupations and hobbies are considered risky and can increase your premium. Some of these occupations include commercial fishing, logging, helicopter or airplane piloting, and roofing. Even a business executive position can be considered risky if it requires you to travel to certain perilous countries. Hobbies that are considered hazardous to your health include hang-gliding, parachuting, skiing, and motorcycling. Make sure to disclose this information to prevent your claim from being denied if the insurance company decides to investigate it.

100. With a term policy, check for renewal guarantees. When buying a term life insurance policy, look for one that offers a renewal guarantee. This gives you the opportunity to begin a new term after the current policy ends. You will have to pay a greater premium according to your age, but you won't have to undergo a new medical examination.

101. If you are receiving a life insurance as a benefit of your job, be careful who the beneficiaries of this insurance are. You have the right to choose for yourself the beneficiaries of your insurance, even if your employer is paying for it. You should be very wary if your employer names himself as a beneficiary.

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Special Bonus:

4. Sixty One Ways to Save Money

Here is a list of tips and ideas that will help you save money in various areas of your life:

Airline Fares

1. You may lower the price of a round trip air fare by as much as two-thirds by making certain your trip includes a Saturday evening stay over, and by purchasing the ticket in advance.
2. To make certain you have a cheap fare, even if you use a travel agent, contact all the airlines that fly where you want to go and ask what the lowest fare to your destination is.
3. Be flexible, if possible. Consider using low fare carriers or alternative airports and keep an eye out for fare wars.

Car Rental

1. Since car rental rates can vary greatly, shop around for the best basic rates. Ask about any additional charges (extra driver, gas, drop-off fees) and special offers.
2. Rental car companies offer various insurance and waiver options. Check with your automobile insurance agent and credit card company in advance to avoid duplicating any coverage you may already have.

New Cars

1. You can save thousands of dollars over the lifetime of a car by selecting a model that combines a low purchase price with low financing, insurance, gasoline, maintenance, and repair costs. Ask your local librarian for new car guides that contain this information.
2. Having selected a model, you can save hundreds of dollars by comparison shopping. Call at least five dealers for price quotes and let each know that you are calling others.
3. Remember there is no "cooling off" period on new car sales. Once you have signed a contract, you are obligated to buy the car.

Used Cars

1. Before buying any used car:
 - Compare the seller's asking price with the average retail price in a "bluebook" or other guide to car prices found at many libraries, banks, and credit unions.
 - Have a mechanic you trust check the car, especially if the car is sold "as is."
2. Consider purchasing a used car from an individual you know and trust. They are more likely than other sellers to charge a lower price and point out any problems with the car.

Auto Leasing

1. Don't decide to lease a car just because the payments are lower than on a traditional auto loan. The leasing payments may be lower because you don't own the car at the end of the lease.

2. Leasing a car is very complicated. When shopping, consider the price of the car (known as the capitalized cost), your trade-in allowance, any down payment, monthly payments, various fees (excess mileage, excess "wear and tear," end-of-lease), and the cost of buying the car at the end of the lease. *Keys to Vehicle Leasing: A Consumer Guide*, published by the Federal Reserve Board and Federal Trade Commission, is a valuable source of information about auto leasing.

Gasoline

1. You can save hundreds of dollars a year by comparing prices at different stations, pumping gas yourself, and using the lowest-octane called for in your owner's manual.

2. You can save up to \$100 a year on gas by keeping your engine tuned and your tires inflated to their proper pressure.

Car Repairs

1. Consumers lose billions of dollars each year on unneeded or poorly done car repairs. The most important step that you can take to save money on these repairs is to find a skilled, honest mechanic. Before you need repairs, look for a mechanic who:

- is certified and well established;
- has done good work for someone you know; and
- communicates well about repair options and costs.

Auto Insurance

1. You can save several hundred dollars a year by purchasing auto insurance from a licensed, low-price insurer. Call your state insurance department for a publication showing typical prices charged by different companies. Then call at least four of the lowest-priced, licensed insurers to learn what they would charge you for the same coverage.

2. Talk to your agent or insurer about raising your deductibles on collision and comprehensive coverages to at least \$500 or, if you have an old car, dropping these coverages altogether. Taking these steps can save you hundreds of dollars a year.

3. Make certain that your new policy is in effect before dropping your old one.

Homeowner/Renter Insurance

1. You can save several hundred dollars a year on homeowner insurance and up to \$50 a year on renter insurance by purchasing insurance from a low-price, licensed insurer. Ask your state insurance department for a publication showing typical prices charged by different licensed companies. Then call at least four of the lowest priced insurers to

learn what they would charge you. If such a publication is not available, it is even more important to call at least four insurers for price quotes.

2. Make certain you purchase enough coverage to replace the house and its contents. "Replacement" on the house means rebuilding to its current condition.

3. Make certain your new policy is in effect before dropping your old one.

Life Insurance

1. If you want insurance protection only, and not a savings and investment product, buy a term life insurance policy.

2. If you want to buy a whole life, universal life, or other cash value policy, plan to hold it for at least 15 years. Canceling these policies after only a few years can more than double your life insurance costs.

3. Check your public library for information about the financial soundness of insurance companies and the prices they charge. The July 1998 issue of Consumer Reports is a valuable source of information about a number of insurers.

Checking

1. You can save more than \$100 a year in fees by selecting a checking account with a low (or no) minimum balance requirement that you can, and do, meet. Request a list of these and other fees that are charged on these accounts.

2. Banking institutions often will drop or lower checking fees if paychecks are directly deposited by your employer. Direct deposit offers the additional advantages of convenience, security, and immediate access to your money.

Savings and Investment Products

1. Before opening a savings or investment account with a bank or other financial institution, find out whether the account is insured by the federal government (FDIC or NCUA). An increasing number of products offered by these institutions, including mutual stock funds and annuities, are not insured.

2. To earn the highest return on savings (annual percentage yield) with little or no risk, consider certificates of deposit (CDs) and treasury bills or notes.

3. Once you select a type of savings or investment product, compare rates and fees offered by different institutions. These rates can vary a lot and, over time, can significantly affect interest earnings.

Credit Cards

1. You can save as much as a thousand dollars or more each year in lower credit card interest charges by paying off your entire bill each month.

2.If you are unable to pay off a large balance, pay as much as you can and switch to a credit card with a low annual percentage rate (APR). For a modest fee, RAM Research Corp. (800-344-7714) will send you a list of low-rate cards. You can obtain a list of low-rate cards by accessing "www.ramresearch.com.cardtrack" on the Internet.

3.You can reduce credit card fees, which may add up to more than \$100 a year, by getting rid of all but one or two cards, and by avoiding late payment and over-the-credit limit fees.

Auto Loans

1.If you have significant savings earning a low interest rate, consider making a large down payment or even paying for the car in cash. This could save you as much as several thousand dollars in finance charges.

2.You can save as much as hundreds of dollars in finance charges by shopping for the cheapest loan. Contact several banks, your credit union, and the auto manufacturer's own finance company.

First Mortgage Loans

1.Although your monthly payment may be higher, you can save tens of thousands of dollars in interest charges by shopping for the shortest-term mortgage you can afford. On a \$100,000 fixed-rate loan at 8% annual percentage rate (APR), for example, you will pay \$90,000 less in interest on a 15-year mortgage than on a 30-year mortgage.

2.You can save thousands of dollars in interest charges by shopping for the lowest-rate mortgage with the fewest points. On a 15-year, \$100,000 fixed-rate mortgage, just lowering the APR from 8.5% to 8.0% can save you more than \$5,000 in interest charges. On this mortgage, paying two points instead of three would save you an additional \$1,000.

3.If your local newspaper does not periodically run mortgage rate surveys, call at least six lenders for information about their rates (APRs), points, and fees. Then ask an accountant to compute precisely how much each mortgage option will cost and its tax implications.

4.Be aware that the interest rate on most adjustable rate mortgage loans (ARMs) can vary a great deal over the lifetime of the mortgage. An increase of several percentage points might raise payments by hundreds of dollars per month.

Mortgage Refinancing

1.Consider refinancing your mortgage if you can get a rate that is at least one percentage point lower than your existing mortgage rate and plan to keep the new mortgage for several years or more. Ask an accountant to calculate precisely how much your new mortgage (including up-front fees) will cost and whether, in the long run, it will cost less than your current mortgage.

Home Equity Loans

1.Be cautious in taking out home equity loans. These loans reduce the equity that you have built up in your home. If you are unable to make payments, you could lose your home.

2.Compare home equity loans offered by at least four banking institutions. In comparing these loans, consider not only the annual percentage rate (APR) but also points, closing costs, other fees, and the index for any variable rate changes.

Home Purchase

1.You can often negotiate a lower sale price by employing a buyer broker who works for you not the seller. If the buyer broker or the broker's firm also lists properties, there may be a conflict of interest, so ask them to tell you if they are showing you a property that they have listed.

2.Do not purchase any house until it has been examined by a home inspector that you selected.

Renting a Place to Live

1.Do not limit your rental housing search to classified ads or referrals from friends and acquaintances. Select buildings where you would like to live and contact their building manager or owner to see if anything is available.

2.Remember that signing a lease probably obligates you to make all monthly payments for the term of the agreement.

Home Improvement

1.Home repairs often cost thousands of dollars and are the subject of frequent complaints. Select from among several well established, licensed contractors who have submitted written, fixed-price bids for the work.

2.Do not sign any contract that requires full payment before satisfactory completion of the work.

Major Appliances

1.Consult Consumer Reports, available in most public libraries, for information about specific brands and how to evaluate them, including energy use. There are often great price and quality differences among brands.

2.Once you've selected a brand, check the phone book to learn what stores carry this brand, then call at least four of these stores for the prices of specific models. After each store has given you a quote, ask if that's the lowest price they can offer you. This comparison shopping can save you as much as \$100 or more.

Electricity

1.To save as much as hundreds of dollars a year on electricity, make certain that any new appliances you purchase, especially air conditioners and furnaces, are energy-

efficient. Information on the energy efficiency of major appliances is found on Energy Guide Labels required by federal law.

2. Enrolling in load management programs and off-hour rate programs offered by your electric utility may save you up to \$100 a year in electricity costs. Call your electric utility for information about these cost-saving programs.

Home Heating

1. A home energy audit can identify ways to save up to hundreds of dollars a year on home heating (and air conditioning). Ask your electric or gas utility if they can do this audit for free or for a reasonable charge. If they cannot, ask them to refer you to a qualified professional.

Local Telephone Service

1. Check with your phone company to see whether a flat rate or measured service plan will save you the most money.

2. You will usually save money by buying your phones instead of leasing them.

3. Check your local phone bill to see if you have optional services that you don't really need or use. Each option you drop could save you \$40 or more each year.

Long Distance Telephone Service

1. Long distance calls made during evenings, at night, or on weekends can cost significantly less than weekday calls.

2. If you make more than a few long distance calls each month, consider subscribing to a calling plan. Call several long distance companies to see which one has the least expensive plan for the calls you make.

3. Whenever possible, dial your long distance calls directly. Using the operator to complete a call can cost you an extra \$6.

Food Purchased at Markets

1. You can save hundreds of dollars a year by shopping at the lower-priced food stores. Convenience stores often charge the highest prices.

2. You will spend less on food if you shop with a list.

3. You can save hundreds of dollars a year by comparing price-per-ounce or other unit prices on shelf labels. Stock up on those items with low per-unit costs.

Prescription Drugs

1. Since brand name drugs are usually much more expensive than their generic equivalents, ask your physician and pharmacist for generic drugs whenever appropriate.

2. Since pharmacies may charge widely different prices for the same medicine, call several. When taking a drug for a long time, also consider calling mail-order pharmacies, which often charge lower prices.

Funeral Arrangements

1. Make your wishes known about your funeral, memorial, or burial arrangements in writing. Be cautious about prepaying because there may be risks involved.

2. For information about the least costly options, which could save you several thousand dollars, contact a local memorial society, which is usually listed in the Yellow Pages under funeral services.

3. Before selecting a funeral home, call several and ask for prices of specific goods and services, or visit them to obtain an itemized price list. You are entitled to this information by law and, by using it to comparison shop, you can save hundreds of dollars.

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