

The Great Longevity Rebound: Are We Living Longer?

6 MIN READ

OCT. 24, 2025

BY HEATHER HURLOCK

New global data reveal life expectancy is rising again, but not for everyone. The next longevity frontier needs to happen in people's 20s and 30s.

The world just regained its lost years. **A new *Lancet* analysis** from the Global Burden of Disease 2023 Project (GBD 2023), found that globally, people are living as long as they were before the pandemic: 76.3 years for women and 71.5 years for men. After the sharp dip of 2020–2021, nearly two-thirds of all countries now report mortality rates equal to or better than 2019.

That sounds like victory. But it's not the whole story.

One segment of the U.S. is falling behind. Between 2011 and 2023, mortality rose sharply among young adults in high-income North America, particularly in the United States and Canada. While children are healthier than ever and older adults are living longer, Americans in their prime years are dying sooner.

Researchers synthesized over 24,000 data sources to map mortality and life-expectancy trends in 204 countries and territories. And while uncertainty widens in regions with limited vital-records data, U.S. estimates draw on near-complete national death registration, making the young-adult mortality spike hard to dismiss.

The American Longevity Paradox

Despite world-class medical innovation and spending, the U.S. now **trails many peer nations** on life expectancy. Since 2011, mortality among 30–39-year-olds in high-income North America has jumped about 50%, and mortality among 25–29-year-olds has also risen (32%). Many of these are preventable deaths **tied to behavioral risks**, not genetic disposition or chronic disease.

The study authors say the high mortality rates in this population “reflect high and persistent rates of so-called **deaths of despair**—a category of deaths due mainly to suicide, drug overdoses, and alcoholism driven by economic, social, and psychological factors.”

Economists **Anne Case and Angus Deaton** coined the term “deaths of despair” to describe this trend. The result: a nation that’s extending life at the top (thanks to advances in cancer and cardiovascular care) while losing it in the middle. The very years that should be the most productive and fulfilling are becoming the riskiest.

Why Longevity Gains Have Stalled

From 1950 through 2019, every generation could expect to outlive the last. That streak is fading.

The U.S. has also plateaued in cardiovascular progress. The gains made through statins, blood-pressure control, and anti-smoking campaigns have **largely maxed out**. Meanwhile, metabolic disease and chronic inflammation **have surged**.

Beyond the demographic data, other recent studies show rising rates of **obesity**, **diabetes**, and **autoimmune conditions**, trends that contribute to the plateau in life expectancy seen in high-income nations. Layer in **stress**, **poor sleep**, **social isolation**, and **sedentary habits**, and the equation points to one conclusion: modern living has become its own risk factor.

The rebound in life expectancy is masking a cultural truth: We're adding years at the ends of life, but losing health in the middle.

Longevity is not just a measure of biology; it's a reflection of psychology, economics, and connection. The longevity divide is less about genes and more about how we handle the pressures of midlife, our habits, our relationships, and our collective efforts to support community care.

Which means there's room for agency. The same levers that drive decline are the ones we can strengthen.

How We Live Longer, Starting Now

At Super Age, we know that longevity isn't luck, it's design. The new frontier of aging is about mastering the systems to support our thriving: physical, mental, and collective. Here are six fundamental ways you can shift the arc of your life towards vitality, connection, and meaning

1. 1 **Build Connection as Preventive Medicine**

Loneliness increases mortality risk as much as **smoking** fifteen cigarettes a day.

Strengthen social ties deliberately: join a group, volunteer, reach out daily.

Connection lowers stress hormones, improves immune function, and protects cognitive health.

2. 2 **Protect Your Mental Energy**

Chronic stress **accelerates biological aging**. Mind-body practices like breathwork and meditation recalibrate the nervous system, improving heart-rate variability and

emotional regulation. These are not soft skills; they're survival skills.

3. **3 Support Systems That Help Communities Thrive**

Longevity isn't just personal, it's collective. When you look at **the healthiest countries**, you'll notice that they all invest in the systems that sustain well-being: local food networks, walkable neighborhoods, public green spaces, and community centers that foster connection and safety. When communities thrive, so do the people in them.

4. **4 Train for Metabolic Flexibility**

Exercise remains the **most potent anti-aging intervention**. Just 150 minutes of movement per week (even brisk walking paired with one day of strength training) reduces all-cause mortality **by up to 40%**. Focus on consistency over intensity.

5. **5 Eat for Inflammation Control**

Diets high in **fiber, omega-3 fats, and polyphenols** (think olive oil, nuts, beans, dark greens, and berries) **lower chronic inflammation** and improve vascular health. The GBD data reaffirm that cardiometabolic disease remains the dominant driver of midlife mortality.

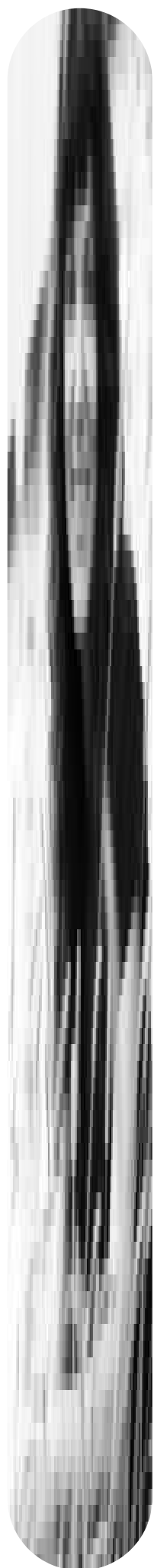
6. **6 Redefine Success Through Recovery**

Sleep and downtime aren't indulgences; they're regenerative assets. Adults who sleep **7–8 hours a night live longer**, have sharper cognition, and maintain better metabolic balance. Recovery is where longevity consolidates.

The global story of longevity is one of resilience, but also reckoning. We've reclaimed the years lost to a pandemic, yet we're facing a deeper epidemic of depletion. You can't control every variable of health and longevity, but you can influence the quality of your life in meaningful ways.

*The information provided in this article is for educational and informational purposes only and is not intended as health, medical, or financial advice. Do not use this information to diagnose or treat any health condition. Always consult a qualified healthcare provider regarding any questions you may have about a medical condition or health objectives. **Read our disclaimers.***

WRITTEN BY:



Heather Hurlock