

Friday

JANUARY 16-22, 2009



Haute and cool

Menswear high-lighted 44



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SAFETY

Survival crash course

Which form of transport is the most dangerous? Well, it depends on which statistics you use...

As we've long suspected, all statistics must be treated with great suspicion. But now I'd like to add to the confusion. You see, I've often wondered about the relative safety, statistically speaking, of the three modes of transport I use regularly in my life – scheduled air services, cars, and motorcycles. On the face of it, this is a no-brainer.

Popular wisdom says that commercial flying is as safe as houses, and you're far more likely to die driving to the airport. You're even more likely to die if you go to the airport on the bike, because motorcycles are more dangerous than cars. But is this absolutely true? I've decided it isn't, after a bit of statistical analysis, which will prove, if nothing else, that statistics are a device for illustrating the point you wanted to make in the first place.

I'm using the American fatal transport accident figures for 2006, and for two reasons. Firstly, they're available for nothing. Secondly, the US has recently come in for a lot of stick for having a less impressive road-safety record than was widely supposed – so this piece of research is biased against the car and the bike. But read on and there's a 50 per cent chance you'll be surprised.

Here are the raw figures, rounded out a bit. America's airline passengers died at the rate of 0.6 per 160 million kilometres, while over the same distance 1.4 drivers copped it and 42 bikers

suffered the big off. So statistically, flying is more than twice as safe as driving, and that would appear to be that.

But I've always had a bit of an issue with this deaths-per-passenger-kilometre sort of figure. The Boeing 757 is very fast and is used for long journeys. Once you're on board, you're committed, whether you like it or not. You can't help but go a long way on the Boeing and so that's going to turn the odds against buying the farm in your favour, at least as long as we think in terms of death against distance. But if you're on the flight with the bloke with the exploding shoes, you've definitely had it.

So what if I rework the figures to see how many times I use a mode of transport before I qualify for a harp? The results are interesting; if they're not, I'm sure you'll let me know. For example: in 2006 American scheduled airliners flew 13,120 million kilometres and killed 50 people, meaning you have to fly 265 million kilometres before the final curtain. But hang on. If we assume the average scheduled flight is 1,200 kilometres, we can also see that you check out after 221,000 flights.

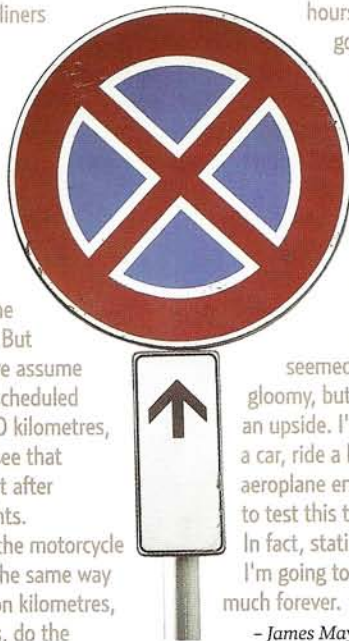
Working the motorcycle statistics in the same way (17,232 million kilometres, 4,553 deaths, do the "math") we can see that I'll

be joining Evel Knievel after just 77,000 rides if my average journey is 48 kilometres long. But here's the big one: again taking an average journey of 48 kilometres – since most people are commuting or going to the shops – the car won't kill you until the 2.3 millionth time you use it! Even if the average journey was 160 kilometres, you could still use the car 710,000 times before being called to partake in glory. Cars, statistically, turn out to be much safer than we thought.

There's something else. I also spend some time in light aircraft, and they are obviously lethal. Here, fatalities are expressed as 2.9 deaths per 100,000 hours of flight time; in other words, I'll be in the air for 34,482 hours before auguring in. To put that in terms of usage, as my average flight takes one-and-a-half hours, I'll have gone for a

Burton after just 23,000 flights. It's more than three times as dangerous as biking. Sorry if this has all seemed a bit gloomy, but there is an upside. I'll never drive a car, ride a bike or fly an aeroplane enough times to test this theory out. In fact, statistically, I'm going to live pretty much forever.

– James May/The Telegraph Group LTD, London 2009



Art of Africa

It is only when Stephanie Neville – a South African artist living in Dubai – is quizzed about the origins of her series of works featuring three African domestic workers that one understands that there is more to this story.

“As a South African artist I use African themes in my work quite regularly. I am still influenced by my memories from growing up in South Africa. During my childhood we had a domestic worker, Miriam, who cooked and cleaned for us on a weekly basis. I still recall Miriam carrying me on her back to the local shop to buy bread. Lucy still works for my parents part-time.

“During my college years I worked part-time in an ice cream shop and I became quite close to Maria, the cleaning lady. Although she was a cleaner she was surely clever enough to also use the till and sell the ice cream. She used to love working with me, as I would hide in the kitchen and talk with her while she served the customers in front.”

HEALTH

Work it out!

No matter what your emotional state, exercise can be an incredibly effective and productive coping strategy for stress,” says Dr Deepa B. Dhavjekar, director of the Taj Spa and Health Club at Taj Palace Hotel in Dubai. Over the next few weeks she'll offer some tips to improve your exercise programme and to start you off with a stress-free 2009.

“Cardio workouts are indispensable to an effective training programme and general

Got a personal story or advice that you would like to share? Something quirky, funny, sad, mad, profound, poignant or a combination of a few or all of these? Then send your ORIGINAL ideas and perspectives to Friday's 'Collage' by e-mailing friday@gulfnews.com.



Stephanie Neville describes her work as an 'art of conscience'.

GRACE PARAS/AJMM

Neville admits that she had quite a sheltered youth. It was only when she started to travel that reality hit home pertaining to her privilege. "My first job was as a housekeeper in a resort in the US. I was asked to clean toilets and make up the guests' bedrooms. On another occasion, I worked in a small hotel in Wales in the UK and I had to

scrub the bins out. At one point I was reduced to tears because I thought to myself, 'How dare they ask me to do such work!' I realised then just how privileged a life I had growing up." The positive effect of travelling was plain to see when Neville returned home to her parents in South Africa. She insisted on doing her own laundry

and making her own bed. "My dad was quite taken aback and so was Lucy!" she says.

Neville now lives in Dubai. Living in a foreign country has made her nostalgic, she says: "Being away from Africa for so long makes me miss it more now. I feel more African now than I did when I lived in South Africa. Perhaps it's because I married a foreigner that makes me cling to my roots more. Or perhaps, being South African helps me to ground my identity. For my art, my roots are truly inspirational. I have a unique message behind my art and something different to offer to art buyers. My art has a conscience."

Neville's work focuses increasingly on African identity. She is interested in the variety of tribal culture. "I hope that through my art I can pay homage to the African people," she says.

Neville's work has also evolved into a series of faces from the whole African continent. "I paint real people in little moments of their lives: coming home from the markets carrying dinner or selling pineapples on the streets in Kenya. My admiration for these people who carry on with their lives in simple ways inspires me to tell their stories and strengthens my pride in being South African." ■

For more information e-mail admin@stephanieneville.com

– Preethi Janice D'Sa, a Dubai-based freelancer



Dr Deepa B. Dhavjekar offers tips on how to beat stress through exercise.

good health. By definition, cardio workouts can be any exercise – jogging, running, biking, swimming, elliptical machine, stairs, even jumping rope for 30 to 60 minutes a week. Cardio raises and maintains your heart rate over a predetermined amount of time. By doing so, you strengthen your heart and lungs and lower your resting heart rate, which means that over time the same effort that produced a 10-minute kilometre will produce a nine-minute kilometre.

Cardio workouts burn fat. In addition, cardio fitness is what gives you endurance and the ability to persist in sports and in life," says Dr Dhavjekar.

The benefits of cardio

- Increases metabolic rate.
- Increases growth hormone secretion.
- Reduces stress levels.
- Increases blood flow to the brain increasing alertness.
- Improves cholesterol levels.
- Improves digestion.
- Boosts immune-system function.

"For mood regulation, optimum health and weight control, aim to do at least four cardio workouts each week," says Dr Dhavjekar. Select your workout according to your mood, or do a combination.

– Hina Navin is a Dubai-based freelancer