



# What are Wild Pointers? How can we avoid?

Difficulty Level : Easy • Last Updated : 01 Oct, 2018

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Uninitialized pointers are known as wild pointers because they point to some arbitrary memory location and may cause a program to crash or behave badly.

```
int main()
{
    int *p; /* wild pointer */
    /* Some unknown memory location is being corrupted.
    This should never be done. */
    *p = 12;
}
```

Please note that if a pointer `p` points to a known variable then it's not a wild pointer. In the below program, `p` is a wild pointer till this points to `a`.

```
int main()
{
    int *p; /* wild pointer */
    int a = 10;
    p = &a; /* p is not a wild pointer now*/
    *p = 12; /* This is fine. Value of a is changed */
}
```

If we want pointer to a value (or set of values) without having a variable for the value, we should explicitly allocate memory and put the value in allocated memory.



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```
int *p = (int *)malloc(sizeof(int));  
*p = 12; /* This is fine (assuming malloc doesn't return NULL) */  
}
```

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