



**South County  
SPOTLIGHT**

**Simple and Sustainable Ways to Become a Healthier You in 2019**



- Unity Schools resume 01/03
- VGH Frosh BBB @ SJO 01/03 at 6:00 pm
- VGH GBB vs Arcola (in Broadlands) 01/03 @ 6:00 pm
- HJHS VB @ Lovington 01/03 at 6:00 pm
- VGH BBB vs Lutheran 01/04 @ 6:00 pm
- VGH Frosh BBB @ PBL 01/05
- UHS JV Wrestling @ Lanphier tourney 01/05 at 9:30 am
- UHS GBB @ Tuscola 01/05 at 11:00 am
- UHS BBB @ Tri Valley 01/05 at 2:00 pm
- UHS GBB @ SJO 01/07 at 5:30 pm
- UHS Frosh BBB @ PBL 01/07 at 6:00 pm
- UJHS BBB vs PBL 01/07 @ 6:00 pm
- UJHS VB vs Mattoon 01/07 @ 6:00 pm
- HJHS VB @ Arcola 01/07 at 6:00 pm
- VGH BBB @ SJO 01/08 at 6:00 pm
- VGH GBB @ Chrisman 01/08 at 6:00 pm
- UJHS VB vs Franklin 01/08 @ 4:15 pm
- UJHS BBB vs Charleston 01/08 @ 6:00 pm
- UHS BBB @ Tuscola 01/08 at 6:00 pm
- HJHS VB vs Tuscola 01/08 @ 6:00 pm
- UJHS VB vs Franklin 01/08 @ 4:15 pm
- UJHS BBB vs Charleston 01/08 @ 6:00 pm
- UJHS VB @ Fisher 01/10 at 5:30 pm
- VGH GBB @ Hut-Pal 01/10 at 6:00 pm
- UHS GBB @ Olympia 01/10 at 6:00 pm
- HJHS BBB vs Tri-County 01/10 @ 6:00 pm
- UJHS BBB vs GRF 01/10 @ 6:00 pm
- HJHS VB @ STJ 01/10 @ 6:00 pm

By Jennifer Bucko Lamplough and Lara Rondinelli Hamilton

Around the new year, most of us vow to make drastic changes to our diet or lifestyle. For some that means adopting a strict (and joyless) diet or signing up for hardcore fitness classes that meet at 5:00 a.m. (despite the fact that you're horribly out of shape). It's no wonder these resolutions are often short-lived. When it comes to making lasting changes to your diet and lifestyle habits, slow and steady wins the race.

There's no doubt that committing to eat healthier and get more exercise are great New Year's resolutions. But unless your new practices are sustainable, any progress you make could be short-lived. Small diet and lifestyle changes over time that aren't too disruptive stand a better shot at becoming permanent healthy habits. Whether you want to lose 30 pounds, get better control of your diabetes, or achieve a similar health goal, it's best to make small but powerful changes. Eventually, you'll see results.

If you're ready to take some small yet mighty steps toward better health in 2019, give these tips a try.

Cut out sugary drinks immediately. Sugary drinks like regular soda, fruit drinks, energy drinks, and sweet tea raise your blood glucose and add empty calories to your daily intake. Even though it can be a hard habit to kick, do all you can to eliminate these drinks from your diet. Replace them with fresh water, low-fat milk, flavored calorie-free car-

bonated water, and unsweetened tea and coffee.

Purge the junk food. Cookies, chips, sweets, and other snacks are hard to resist when they are an arm's length away. The best way to avoid them is by removing them from your home. But don't worry. When you're craving a snack, you can try a healthier whole food option, like slices of avocado, a handful of nuts, kale chips, a small serving of Greek yogurt, a piece of fruit, veggies with hummus or nut butter. These snacks are more satisfying and pack more nutrition than your processed favorites.

Do some research and identify an eating pattern you can live with. Studies show that there are many different eating patterns that can be helpful in managing diabetes. That means that if you're trying to get your health in order, you don't have to stick to a rigid plan that restricts many of your favorite foods. Some effective eating patterns include vegetarian or flexitarian, Mediterranean, low-carbohydrate, and low-glycemic.

Choose leaner cuts of meat. Saturated fat—the kind found in animal protein—raises blood cholesterol levels, which is a risk factor for heart disease. An easy way to reduce your saturated fat intake is by choosing lean cuts of meat. Avoid or reduce your intake of lard, fatback, and high-fat meats like regular ground beef, bologna, hot dogs, sausage, bacon, spareribs, and the skin from chicken and other poultry. Instead, choose skinless poultry; fish, turkey, and beef trimmed of fat, including round, sirloin, flank, and ten-

derloin; and lean cuts of pork, including center loin chop and tenderloin.

Plan your meal around veggies (instead of making them the afterthought). At meal-times, try to fill at least half of your plate with nonstarchy vegetables like spinach, cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, bell peppers, Brussels sprouts, and eggplant. Veggies like cauliflower, broccoli, carrots, and Brussels sprouts are delicious when roasted in the oven, and sautéing cabbage, bell peppers, and eggplant brings out their natural flavors. Finally, start any meal with a simple salad of mixed greens to help you meet your veggie quota.

Try lettuce wraps instead of bread. Iceberg, green leaf, or butter lettuce make a surprisingly delicious bread substitute. Use them in place of bread for your next sandwich. Nestle burgers or grilled chicken inside a lettuce "cup" in place of hamburger buns, and carefully wrap deli meats and toppings into a low-carb lettuce sub sandwich and secure it with wax paper and a piece of tape. Then tear the paper away as you eat.

Eat veggie noodles in place of pasta. For a great pasta substitute, sample the veggie noodles trend. Veggie noodles are a delicious, lower-carb option that can be eaten in place of grain-based pastas. A kitchen tool called a "spiralizer" quickly and easily turns vegetables into "noodles," or you can use a standard vegetable peeler for a similar result. For even more convenience, you can now find these spiralized veggies in the freezer or pro-

duce section of many grocery stores. Try noodles made from zucchini, sweet potato, carrot, or spaghetti squash. Top them with chili, Bolognese sauce, or use them to make a cold "pasta salad" or noodle dishes like Pad Thai. Hint: You can also try cauliflower, butternut, or broccoli "rice" in place of regular rice for a lower-carb option.

Schedule in exercise five days a week. What you write on your calendar and allot time for is more likely to get done. Your workouts don't have to be extra rigorous to be effective. Just taking a brisk 30-minute walk each day—or at least five times a week—is a great way to get your heart rate up and kickstart weight loss and improved health. Of course, if you'd like to take up running or sign up for a cardio class, go for it! But if you are sedentary, it's important to start slow and build up your endurance so you can maintain your new routine!

But don't do ONLY cardio. Get in some strength training too (even if you're watching TV at the same time). Strength or resistance training makes your body more sensitive to insulin and can lower blood glucose. It also helps to maintain and build strong muscles and bones. The American Diabetes Association recommends doing some type of strength training at least two times per week. Activities include using weight machines, free weights at the gym, or resistance bands; exercises that use your body weight to work your muscles like squats,

lunges, planks, wall-sits, and push-ups; or activities that build and keep muscle like heavy gardening.

Do at least some of your exercise outdoors. There's nothing wrong with going to the gym, but if you're feeling unmotivated to do your normal indoor routine, take your workout outside. The fresh air is invigorating, and studies show that being in nature decreases stress and promotes positive emotions. So be sure to trade out some of your time on a treadmill for a walk or jog in a local park. Or do lunges, push-ups, and other strength training in your backyard for a change of scenery.

Shake up your sedentary workday every chance you get. Sitting at a desk all day can negatively impact your health. If the nature of your work causes you to be sedentary for eight hours a day, look for chances to build more movement into your day. For example, take a ten-minute walk after lunch, get up and move a little each hour (even if it's just a walk to the water fountain or restroom), park farther away than you normally would, take the stairs instead of the elevator.

There's no reason your New Year's resolutions have to be painful, punishing, and ultimately unsustainable. Making more manageable changes—that you will actually enjoy—is a better game plan for success. Make 2019 the year you finally shift into a healthier lifestyle and start moving toward building a better you.

**Philo Library wishes everyone a Happy, Healthy New Year**

Wishing everyone a Happy, Healthy New Year!

We're already in the first week of 2019. How are your New Year's Resolutions doing so far? We've had people stopping in, looking at our new books and vowing to do a better job reading this year. Personally, I vowed to change my reading habits and pursue different genres. Fiction is a source of relaxation for me, but I plan to read a biography, a self-help book, new cookbooks and continue to read a different type of book each month for the coming year. We have some interesting new non-fiction books including "Hawk, I Did It My Way" by Ken Harrelson, announcer for the Chicago White Sox and another titled "The Good Neighbor the Life and Work of Fred Rogers". And, of course, I'll still be reading the fiction

that I'm so fond of. We've had a new Lee Child book, "Past Tense", on the shelf for almost 3 weeks and it's only circulated twice - it's large print and the author has been in demand previously. Hopefully people were just busy with the holiday season and didn't have time to see what new books are on the shelf. Keeping Lee Child company is David Baldacci with "Long Road to Mercy" an Atlee Pike thriller also in large print. And, continuing along those lines, Janet Evanovich's "Look Alive Twenty-Five" and Michael Connelly's "Dark Sacred Night" are also sitting here waiting for someone to check them out and take them home. The selection is good, why not try one this week?

Did you read about the photo albums on loan from Margaret Khachaturian? They

begin in 1991 and cover almost 30 years of Village Christmas Tree celebrations. Margaret has a note inside the first album that reads "The history of the Philo Village Christmas Tree is loaned to Philo Library each December...with the hope that looking at the pictures brings back many happy memories". Having just paged through it, I can vouch for the fact that there are years of happy memories in those albums. From the time my kids were young at the very beginning of the Village Tree trimming up to this past year, it's fun to see how the kids have matured and now some of those kids are bringing their kids to the celebration. The albums will be here a while longer, stop in and take a look.

**Helping Winter Birds**

Does winter weather get you down? Brighten up those dreary days by attracting beautiful birds to your yard. Whether it's a food source or protection from the colder temperatures, there are several ways you can attract birds to your yard this winter.

Unlike other wild animals, birds actually rely on us come wintertime. Since most of their natural food supply (which consists mainly of worms, fruit and fallen seeds) is difficult to locate during winter, many birds have a hard time coping with the colder temperatures. To keep themselves warm, birds will fluff up their feathers; this movement produces air pockets, keeping the

birds well insulated for a short duration. But, like typical warm-blooded animals, they can only do that for so long before exhausting themselves.

One way to coax them into your yard is by offering them high-calorie and high-fat foods. Rich in protein and packed with pure fat substance, these foods provide birds with high doses of energy so they can deal with the sudden drops in temperature. Whether you put out just one or many types of bird seed, you are actually helping several bird species stay alive.

Now that the birds are well fed, how do they stay hydrated? Like food in winter, water is in high demand but

in short supply. Since their typical water sources (ponds, streams and rivers) are frozen over, birds often have to search for fresh water. You can help these desperate birds quench their thirst by placing a heated birdbath in your backyard. And, if you already have an unheated birdbath, you can place a Birdbath de-icer at the bottom of your basin. This heating element is critical because it prevents the water from freezing, allowing the birds to sip on some crisp and cold water. Once a flock of birds identify a safe and secure water source in your yard, you'll have a lot of feathered friends visiting you in the coming months.

**"Signs of the Season"**  
*By Jim Balmer*



Frosty the Snowman spotted in Villa Grove, IL. Photo by Jim Balmer. To comment on any of the photos featured in Signs of the Season email us at [vgnews@mchsi.com](mailto:vgnews@mchsi.com) or send a letter to Villa Grove News PO Box 20, Villa Grove IL 61956. Comments may be published in future editions of the newspapers.

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