

Simple and Sustainable Ways to Become Healthier in 2019

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 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 carbonated water, and unsweetened tea and coffee.



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 tenderloin; and lean cuts of pork, including center loin chop and tenderloin.
- **Plan your meal around veggies** (instead of making them the afterthought). At mealtimes, 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.



dles,” 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 produce section of many grocery stores. Try noodles made from zucchini, sweet potato, carrot, or spaghetti squash. Top them with chili, Bolognese sauce, or use

- **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. When you're craving a snack, you can

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- **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,”

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. If you're 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.

- **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, 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.

SOURCE: Jennifer Bucko Lamplough and Lara Rondinelli Hamilton. Excerpted from *The Diabetes Cookbook: 300 Recipes for Healthy Living Powered by the Diabetes Food Hub* (American Diabetes Association, November 2018, ISBN: 978-1-580-40680-2, \$24.95).

✂ Whole Roasted Cauliflower ✂ with Lemon Vinaigrette



This dish is worth the cook time. It tastes as beautiful as it looks.

Cauliflower

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 1/2 pounds whole cauliflower

Vinaigrette

- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon dried parsley
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 425°F. In a small bowl, mix together olive oil and salt. Place cauliflower, cut side down, in a large baking dish. Pour olive oil evenly over cauliflower and use your hands to rub the oil and salt mixture into the cauliflower.

Place on the middle oven rack and roast 60 minutes (if cauliflower starts getting too dark, then cover with aluminum foil). While cauliflower is finished roasting, pour vinaigrette ingredients in a small bowl. When cauliflower is finished roasting, pour vinaigrette evenly over entire head.

To serve, cut whole cauliflower in half, then cut each half into 4 pieces.
Prep Time: 5 minutes. Cook time: 1 minutes. Servings: 8. Serving size: 1/2 cup
Nutrition Facts:
Calories 80. Calories from fat 60. Total fat 7.0 g. Saturated fat 1.0 g. Trans fat 0.0 g. Cholesterol 0 mg. Sodium 170 mg. Potassium 260 mg. Total carbohydrate 4 g. Dietary fiber 2 g. Sugars 2 g. Protein 2 g. Phosphorus 40 mg.