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# The Home

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Happy New Year! When Purdue Extension offered an early retirement option in 2019, I watched 24 of my friends and colleagues leave Extension, taking 550 years of experience with them. My big sister and a couple high school friends have also decided to retire as well. This really got me thinking, "Hey! How can I do that?" which prompted me to purchase a book, [How to Retire Happy, Wild and Free](#), by Ernie J Zelinski. This book is different from most retirement books, because it doesn't focus on the financial aspect, but rather emphasizes the importance of leisure activities, creative pursuits, physical and mental well-being and solid social support.

One section of the book focused on the "Get-A-Life Tree". In this activity the reader is encouraged to identify (1) what excited you in the past, (2) what excites you now and (3) what might you like to do someday. The reader is encouraged to come up with at least 50 activities to include on their tree. A fourth "limb" I added to my tree was Wellness, because if you aren't healthy, you won't be able to do the things you want to do in retirement.

As you begin 2020, I hope you will think about what gets you excited and focus on your health so you can do the things you want to do for a very long time! Here are some tips to help you eat right, move more and live well!

### Start Simple....

About half of all American adults have one or more preventable chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, or diabetes. These illnesses are often related to food choices and inactivity. Start Simple with MyPlate provides a variety of easy recommendations that anyone can tailor to fit their individual situation. Start Simple is the most recent update to MyPlate and encourages small steps. **Check out the My Plate Plan Menu in this newsletter for an easy way to track your eating habits.** I've found over the years that it's easier to stick to a plan if I write it down! You can get a personalized plan by going to [www.ChooseMyPlate.gov/GetMyPlan](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov/GetMyPlan). This plan will tell you how many calories you need and provide recommendations for the number of servings you should consume.

### Exercise for your bone health

Exercise is important for treating and preventing osteoporosis. Not only can exercise improve your bone health, it can also increase muscle strength, coordination, and balance, and lead to better overall health.

The next page shows a simple strength exercise to try at home.

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## Chair Dip Exercise

**TARGETED MUSCLES:** Arm muscles

**WHAT YOU NEED:** Sturdy chair with armrests

This pushing motion will strengthen your arm muscles even if you are not able to lift yourself up off the chair.

- Sit in a sturdy chair with armrests with your feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart.
- Lean slightly forward; keep your back and shoulders straight.
- Grasp arms of chair with your hands next to you. Breathe in slowly.
- Breathe out and use your arms to push your body slowly off the chair.
- Hold position for 1 second.
- Breathe in as you slowly lower yourself back down.
- Repeat 10-15 times.
- Rest; then repeat 10-15 more times.



Look for more easy strengthening exercises at [www.go4life.nia.nih.gov/exercise-type/strength/](http://www.go4life.nia.nih.gov/exercise-type/strength/) for exercises you can do at home.

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## Manage Stress Using the 4-7-8 (or Relaxing Breath) Exercise

The 4-7-8 breathing exercise is utterly simple, takes almost no time, requires no equipment and can be done anywhere. Although you can do the exercise in any position, sit with your back straight while learning the exercise. Place the tip of your tongue against the ridge of tissue just behind your upper front teeth, and keep it there through the entire exercise. You will be exhaling through your mouth around your tongue; try pursing your lips slightly if this seems awkward.

- ◆ Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound.
- ◆ Close your mouth and inhale quietly through your nose to a mental count of **four**.
- ◆ Hold your breath for a count of **seven**.
- ◆ Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound to a count of **eight**.
- ◆ This is one breath. Now inhale again and repeat the cycle three more times for a total of four breaths.

Note that with this breathing technique, you always inhale quietly through your nose and exhale audibly through your mouth. The tip of your tongue stays in position the whole time. Exhalation takes twice as long as inhalation. The absolute time you spend on each phase is not important; the ratio of 4:7:8 is important. If you have trouble holding your breath, speed the exercise up but keep to the ratio of 4:7:8 for the three phases. With practice you can slow it all down and get used to inhaling and exhaling more and more deeply.



This breathing exercise is a natural tranquilizer for the nervous system. Unlike tranquilizing drugs, which are often effective when you first take them but then lose their power over time, this exercise is subtle when you first try it, but gains in power with repetition and practice. Do it at least twice a day. You cannot do it too frequently. Do not do more than four breaths at one time for the first month of practice. Later, if you wish, you can extend it to eight breaths. If you feel a little lightheaded when you first breathe this way, do not be concerned; it will pass.

Once you develop this technique by practicing it every day, it will be a very useful tool that you will always have with you. Use it whenever anything upsetting happens – before you react. Use it whenever you are aware of internal tension or stress. Use it to help you fall asleep. This exercise cannot be recommended too highly. Everyone can benefit from it.

Watch a video of Dr. Weil demonstrating the 4-7-8 Breath at <https://www.drweil.com/videos-features/videos/breathing-exercises-4-7-8-breath/>

# Block Party at Lake Village Library



Playing with blocks is fun for children of all ages and promotes STEM learning activities. Research shows that block play can help children's social development, physical skills, and potentially their school readiness. Purdue Extension – Newton County will be hosting a **Building Block Party Monday, January 20 at the Lake Village Library from 10:00-11:00 AM**. Please call the library at 219.992.3490 to reserve a spot. The program is free, but we need to know how many to plan for. Each child attending will also receive a free story book.

Adults can guide children's early learning experiences and use blocks as tools to support development. Playing with blocks can provide experiences where children learn math and science, new words and pre-reading skills, social skills and physical skills.

Let's focus on **Math Skills** in this newsletter. Blocks are a tool for learning Math Skills! When playing with blocks, children can learn:

- \* Counting and quantity (How many blue blocks do you have?)
- \* Shapes (Can you find another square block?)
- \* Sizes (Try this smaller block and see if it fits.)
- \* Adding and subtracting (Add two more blocks to the tower.)
- \* Sorting (Let's find all the green blocks and put them away first.)
- \* Patterns (You used a pattern: red, yellow, blue, red, yellow, blue.)
- \* How to put things in order (Line the blocks up, smallest to largest.)

Math Skills in action:

- \* A child tells a friend that her tower is bigger because she used more blocks. *What it means:* This child is using words to compare quantity (more, less, greater than, fewer, same).
- \* A child counts blocks and then asks a friend for four more. *What it means:* This child understands that a number means "how many" or a quantity.

Attend a block party to learn more about science, pre-reading, social and physical skills!

## National Wear Red Day® is Friday, February 7

National Wear Red Day® is dedicated to raising awareness about heart disease. According to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, 1 in 4 women die from heart disease, and coronary heart disease is the leading cause of death in both men and women in the US.

National Wear Red Day was established by the American Heart Association along with the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. The day is celebrated annually by wearing red to represent the fight against heart disease and stroke in an effort to generate awareness and initiate change.

Factors that increase the risk of heart disease include:

- Physical inactivity
- Increased cholesterol levels
- High blood pressure
- [Smoking](#)
- [Diabetes](#)
- Obesity

For more information go to: <https://www.goredforwomen.org/en/know-your-risk/risk-factors>





# Extension Homemaker Notes



## Bits and Pieces from Pat Boldman

Hope everyone has had a very nice and relaxing Thanksgiving and Christmas and got to spend some time with your family.

Thank you to Carol Light for hosting the Holiday Council Luncheon in her lovely home for the ones that could attend. Thank you to Happy Seniors for inviting me to attend their meeting and tour of Autumn Trace in Rensselaer. It was very informative. If you would like me to visit your club, please let me know.

Jane Kereven, Nancy Jo Prue & I took all of the nuts out of the Extension Office the first of December and set up a booth at Sacred Heart School in Fowler for their Bazaar on December 7. Thank you to Jane Kereven, Nancy Jo Prue, Lee Haste and Paula Reed for helping out at the Bazaar in selling the nuts. I also sold the nuts at Kentland Bank on Friday, December 6 so between the two spots we sold over \$1,000. We have sold them at Morocco Bank, Murphy's and planning to sell the nuts in Brook. We are down to 2 bags of walnuts left to sell. A big thank you to all of the businesses who allowed us to set up a table in support of our two student scholarships.

The next Council Meeting will be January 23 at 1:30 at the Government Center. Nominations for County Officers are due to Extension Office by March 31. **Please volunteer.**

Homemaker volunteer hours forms from each club are due to me Monday, March 2. This should include club hours, lessons given, donations and activities from March 1, 2019 thru February 28, 2020.

First Timer applications to go to Home and Family Conference in June in Plainfield are due to Wanda Monjon by March 1. If you have never been to Home and Family Conference, this is the perfect time to think about it and apply for this award. It helps defray some of the cost of the Conference. Home and Family Conference is June 1-3, 2020. The Cultural Arts special project for 2020 is an apron.

These are to be brought to the April council meeting to be voted on and the winner will go to Home and Family Conference to compete with other Counties in the State. We will also vote on the other Cultural Arts projects at the April council meeting which includes Quilts, Needlework, Crocheting/Knitting and Crafts/Miscellaneous of which only one goes to the Conference.

The Lafayette District Meeting will be in Warren County on March 23, 2020. It will be held at the Beef House in Covington. The cost is \$15 and if you plan on attending, please send the money to Carol Light by February 20 so she can send one check to Warren County along with who is planning on attending.

The deadline for applying for Ruth B. Sayre (home-schooled & high school senior girls) scholarship is February 15 to Cindy Saferight, State President. Career Advancement (age 25 and older Scholarship applications are due March 15 to Stephanie Jerabek, Past State President. If you need more information on these Scholarships, please contact me or the Extension Office. There are also 5 Steps to Success scholarships available this year to apply for. The deadline for these scholarships is May 1. You can visit the website at [www.ieha-families.org](http://www.ieha-families.org) for all of the applications. If you know a senior this year, please pass the information on to them.

Have a Happy and Safe New Year!!

Be kind to one another!

