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Russian Olympian and Vegan Alexey Voyevoda Wins Gold

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BY JOAN REDDY FEBRUARY 18, 2014

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Russian gold medalist, **Alexey Voyevoda**, is not only winning medals at this year's Russian Winter Games, but he is a [champion for animals](#) as well. A native of Sochi, he competed in this year's Winter Olympics on a plant-based diet, making both his country and his fellow vegans proud.

In an interview with [PETA](#), Voyevoda was asked what made him decide to become a vegan, and when did this happen? He replied that "[t]hree and a half years ago," he made the decision to become a vegan. "At first, I approached it from a scientific standpoint. However, I then came to have some ethical views about this diet. [I love happy, living animals!](#)" he says. "I no longer eat the suffering and pain of defenceless animals."

Voyevoda's large frame and arm-wrestling world champion status contradicts the popular myth that one must eat animals to build muscle and strength. As a professional arm wrestler, and an Olympic bobsledding gold medalist, Voyevoda needs to be in prime condition, and attributes becoming a vegan in helping him achieve this level of physical excellence. "In my profession, flexibility and elasticity are incredibly important, and I increased both of these," says Voyevoda. "[M]y [body has become lighter](#), so to say "clearer." In fact, he says, "I almost never suffer from a cold or flu."

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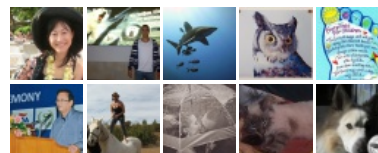
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Meat and dairy-free athletes have become increasingly popular in the competitive arena. “Legendary sprinter **Carl Lewis**, who won ten Olympic medals, credits his record-breaking success in the 1991 World Championships in part to his vegan diet, and just this week, vegan figure skater **Meagan Duhamel** [walked away with a silver medal](#) in Sochi. More and more athletes, including ultra-marathon runners such as Rich Roll and Fiona Oakes, mixed martial arts fighters, German strongman Patrik Baboumian, footballers, cricketers and even Venus Williams have [gone vegan](#) in order to boost their performance – and, of course, to help animals at the same time. Plant-based diets are nutrient-rich and low in fat and cholesterol, so it’s hardly surprising that they’re a top choice for some of the fittest people on the planet,” says PETA.

In an interview with the Moscow Times, Voyevoda discusses the responsibility he feels to represent Russia, and to promote wholesome living. “My role as one of the ambassadors of the Games is to promote sport, to encourage people to [adopt a healthy lifestyle](#),” the Russian bobsledder said.

When asked what advice he gives to other young athletes, whom are inspired by him, Voyevoda advises them: “[s]tudy and [listen to yourself, to your own heart](#), and you will get to the place which is just right for you!”

Photo Credit: courtesy of [PETA](#)

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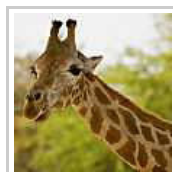
Joan Reddy is a professional photographer, writer, Animal Rights activist, and environmentalist. Joan holds a Masters degree in English Literature from the University of Toronto, and a Masters of Environmental Studies from York University, in Toronto, where her thesis focused on Animal Rights.

Through her writing, Joan wants to help to educate the public about the way animals are abused and exploited, in cultures around the world. Also, Joan is willing to assist animal advocacy, or environmental organizations, that are in need of her writing services. Her company's website can be found at

www.animaljusticecommunication.com, and her professional profile on LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/pub/joan-reddy/22/999/449.

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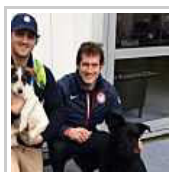
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