

Stay the course this year with a New Year's resolution

The season is steeped in tradition. Many of those traditions are rooted in celebrants' faith, but one of the last customs people embrace each year is largely secular.

The tradition of making New Year's resolutions is older than many people may realize. According to History.com, the ancient Babylonians are believed to be the first people to make New Year's resolutions when they began doing so roughly 4,000 years ago during a 12-day festival known as Akitu. That festival was religious in nature, but many people now make resolutions

with a goal toward self-improvement unrelated to their faith. As people ponder their resolutions for the year ahead, the following strategies might help them stay the course over the next 12 months.

- Give serious thought to a prospective resolution. Statistics regarding New Year's resolutions vary, but a 2024 survey from the Pew Research Center found that 13 percent of adults polled indicated they kept none of their resolutions. Numerous variables can affect whether or not a person keeps a resolution, but giving a potential resolution little thought

ahead of time can make achieving a goal unlikely. Give any potential change ample thought before committing to a resolution. If you aspire to lose weight, identify the ways you're going to go about that. Find a local gym to join, identify ways to eat a more nutritious diet and, perhaps most importantly, study how you can make time to stay the course. A little leg-work in advance of declaring a resolution can pay off in the long run.

- Set periodic goals. Small goals along the way to the larger goal can serve as motivation to keep going. If you aspire to watch less tele-

vision and read more, resolve to read 100 pages per week and then gradually increase that total if you so desire. Small goals can provide a great means to measure incremental progress that will ultimately make achieving a larger goal more likely.

- Be realistic. Realistic goals are more likely to be achieved than ones that seem good on the surface but are too difficult to keep. For example, if you aspire to exercise for an hour each day but obligations to work

and family leave little time for physical activity, then you may need to reduce those expectations in favor of a more realistic, achievable goal. Taking on too much will only discourage you when hurdles inevitably appear, and that is likely to compel you to abandon the resolution entirely. If your initial goal is realistic, then any challenges that arise are less likely to derail your efforts.

- Don't go it alone. Many people employ the buddy system as a means to stay motivat-

ed with fitness-related resolutions, and that approach can be applied to any goal you set at the beginning of the year. Having someone there to hold you accountable, and doing the same for a partner, increases the chances you'll stay the course.

New Year's resolutions are an ancient tradition, even if the majority tend to be abandoned rather quickly. But anyone can buck that trend and stay the course by employing a few simple, yet effective strategies.

Tips to clear a cluttered home

The dawn of a new year is often characterized as a chance to wipe the slate clean and start anew. The tradition of making New Year's resolutions reinforces that characterization, as many people resolve to turn over a new leaf and commit to a year of self-improvement on January 1.

While the phrase "wipe the slate clean" may be figurative, some also might take it literally, particularly in regard to their homes. Those who want to turn over a new leaf in a cluttered home can consider these storage solutions to give spaces a fresh and less claustrophobic feel in the year ahead.

- Clear kitchen countertops. Kitchens are the most popular rooms in many homes, and that popularity can come with a cost. Clutter can quickly accumulate on kitchen countertops, which is both inconvenient when preparing meals at home and unsightly to residents and guests. Appliances used with frequency, such as coffee machines and toasters, can be given countertop real estate, but store lesser used items, like blenders and waffle makers, in cabinets or pantries.

Mail or materials sent home from children's schools also can pile up in a kitchen, so resolve to go through the mail each day and discard unnecessary items. School papers can be read when children arrive home from school and any that need to be kept can be stored in a folder placed inside a drawer in the kitchen or a home office.

- Install drawer dividers. Drawer dividers can help clear up cluttered spaces that might not be visible to the naked eye. Dividers inserted into kitchen drawers can ensure leftover containers are stored neatly and are easily accessible. Drawer dividers in a home office space can make sure desks don't fall victim to disorganization, which can make it harder to find supplies and important documents.

- Consider furniture that pulls double duty. Some home furnishings are more than meets the eye, and that multifunctional utility can help people conquer cluttered spaces. Storage ottomans are a prime example of furniture that serves multiple purposes. Blankets and throws left out on chairs and couches can make living areas feel more cramped and less

organized. A storage ottoman can be a great solution in such spaces, providing both a place to put one's feet and also a clever storage solution for blankets and pillows. A coffee table with a small drawer or two can make for a multifunctional centerpiece to store remote controls, coasters and other small items that can encourage the buildup of clutter if left out when the room is not in use. A storage bench in bedrooms and guestrooms also can ensure these spaces stay clear of clutter.

- Think vertical. It might be possible to work your way up if storage is a problem in certain areas of the home. Vertical storage solutions might be especially useful in areas like a garage, which can be difficult to navigate if garden tools and other outdoor items are left on a floor. Overhead storage racks that utilize a crank to raise and lower the rack when items need to be accessed and stored can be great ways to store holiday decorations and other items. Kitchens with high ceilings also can employ a hanging pot rack to create more cabinet space and reduce the amount of items that need to be stored on countertops.

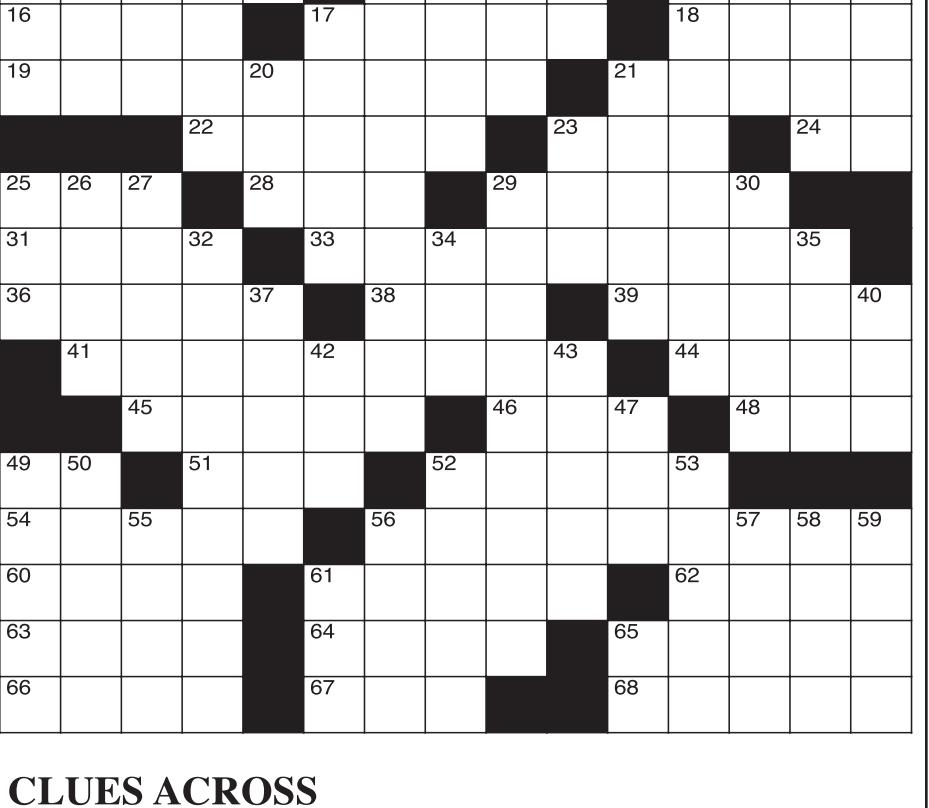
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LEGAL NOTICE

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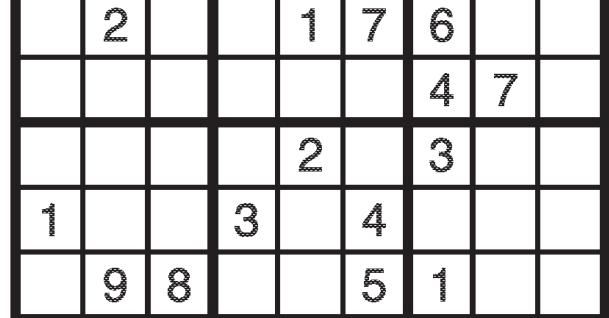
CLUES ACROSS

1. Lakes	38. Unpolished
6. Electromotive force	39. Drenches
9. Invests in little enterprises	41. Pant style
13. Longtime Utah Jazz coach	44. Son of Noah
14. Small sailboat	45. Spiritual being
15. Actor Idris	46. Upton Sinclair novel
16. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls	48. Journalist Tarbell
17. System that detects objects under water	49. Popular sports highlight show
18. Harsh, grating noise	51. Born of
19. Steward	52. Rich tapestry
21. A fencing sword	54. S. China seaport
22. Infections	56. State of being unclothed
23. Actress Ryan	60. Surrounded by
24. Sodium	61. Residue
25. Swedish castle	62. Away from wind
28. A lump of slime	63. Dried-up
29. African antelope	64. Visionary
31. Insurance providers	65. A very large body of water
33. Choosy	66. Garden tools
36. Ringworm	67. Screen type
	68. Ancient Scandinavian poet

CLUES DOWN

1. Millisecond	29. One from the Big Apple
2. Spanish city	30. Genus of woolly lemurs
3. A sudden very loud sound	32. Songs to one's beloved
4. "The Indiana Jones of beer"	34. Indigenous person of N.E. Thailand
5. Tin	35. Supplemented with difficulty
6. Sea eagles	37. Farewell
7. Volcanic crater	40. Investment account (abbr.)
8. Type of coat	42. One from Utah
9. Women's apartments in Ottoman palace	43. Begets
10. divulge a secret	47. A male child
11. Norwegian playwright	49. Break apart
12. "It's a Wonderful Life" director	50. Brief appearance
14. Poisonous perennial plant	52. Partner to "oohed"
17. 18-year astronomical period	53. A light informal meal
20. Clothes	55. Fabric with smooth, shiny surface
21. Places to sit	56. One billionth of a second
23. Family of regulator genes	57. Ancient Italian-Greek colony
25. New York ballplayer	58. Close tightly
26. Impressive in size or scope	59. Mail out
27. Jacques ___, French biologist	61. Language
	65. Computer characteristic

SUDOKU



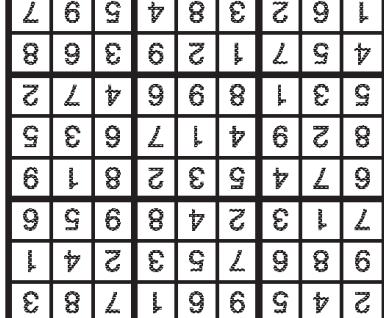
Level: Beginner

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!



ANSWER:

Answers on 8A