

## Solve Sudoku Easily

People work out at the gym, train at the track and jog every morning to keep their bodies in tip-top condition. But, what about their brains? Even though it's not a muscle, the brain can get sloppy if it doesn't get a regular workout. When brains aren't challenged and entertained, they get bored and lazy.

One way to keep your brain happy and alert is by taking up a hobby or, better yet, solving puzzles.

A puzzle is a problem-solving game that's meant to challenge your different mind strategies. Some puzzles are easy, some are quite difficult, however none sharpen your brain quite as well as logic and math puzzles.

One example of a fun brain-busting puzzle is "Number Place", more commonly known as Sudoku.

The purpose of is to complete a nine by nine (9 x 9) grid from three by three (3 x 3) regions, by entering the numbers 1 to 9 in each cell of the grid. The tricky part is that no single digit can be repeated in the 9 x 9 grid.

At first glance, the Sudoku seems like a fun and easy way to entertain your brain. However, the game begins to twist the mind into deep thought, finding strategies and devising formulations to solve Sudoku.

There are three suggested ways to solve Sudoku: scanning, marking up and analysis.

Scanning is a method used to solve Sudoku wherein the process of elimination reigns. The player may choose either counting or cross-hatching when using this method. Cross-hatching requires a systematic course of action in which the player scans rows and columns in a particular region to determine where numbers can or cannot be repeated. Counting, on the other hand, requires the player to count numerals 1 to 9 in rows, columns, and regions to find the missing numeral.

The marking up method is used to solve Sudoku when all possibilities have been exhausted in the scanning stage. To mark, you'll use notations such as dots or subscript. Whenever possible, use notations you're comfortable with, such as lines, shapes or codes. It is also advised to assign which notations are used for candidate numerals that will likely repeat, and which notations are likely to be in the particular grid. One drawback of using notations is when the Sudoku grids are quite small, as on magazine or newspaper pages.

Analysis is another suggested way to solve Sudoku puzzles. There are two main tactics to using analysis: the "candidate elimination" method, and the "what if" method. Candidate elimination is just that: you do away with candidate numerals from the grids, until just one option is left. Scanning can effectively be combined with the candidate elimination. Another way to solve Sudoku with the analysis method is by asking "What If?" In this approach, the player will guess which is the correct choice of two numbers.

These are the basic steps to solve a manual Sudoku puzzle, but solving a two-player computerized game can be a little different. With a computer game, you are able to set the level of difficulty for each game, and the games can get very difficult. Try to solve the puzzle using the methods outlined above. The computer may give you extra hints or strategies. Plan or search for a good computation that will help you solve the puzzle more rapidly.

In working to solve Sudoku, you can use a combination of methods, or can even formulate new solutions that will work best for you. Learn the basics of the game and take each puzzle one step at a time. If certain lines of attack are bogging your mind, let them go. Pick up pieces of information where you think you have succeeded, and learn from those times where you fail. As with any game, you need to learn to take risks.

Face it; your brain could use a good workout. Chances are, just thinking about a Sudoku puzzle has already cleared some of the cobwebs away. Now, pick up a puzzle magazine or newspaper, grab a pencil and solve Sudoku for a full-brain workout.