

Just in time for National Hobby Month



Learn something new today

Have you resolved to learn something new this year? You're not alone. Each year, millions of people resolve to expand their horizons and for the sake of a more fulfilling life.

It is one thing for adults decide to something new, but quite another to narrow down how you will enhance your knowledge or experiences. Don't be discouraged by the adage that you can't teach an old dog new tricks. It's never to late to move out of your comfort zone, and these ideas may help you do just that.

- **Learn a new language.** If you have always dreamed of traveling internationally and speaking in a country's native tongue, begin taking lessons. A Gallup Poll indicates that only about 25 percent of Americans can speak another language sufficiently enough to carry on a conversation, although many agree that knowing a second language is a good skill to have. In addition to private tutors or classes at nearby community colleges, make use of foreign language apps and computer programs, which allow you to practice in the comforts of home. Depending on how much time you can devote to studying, it may be just a matter of a few months before you have mastered a new language. How quickly you pick up a new language may be affected by your knowledge of other languages. For example, if you already speak Spanish, learning French or Italian may be easier because of similarities between these widely spoken romance languages.

- **Take up a new sport or hobby.** Hobbies and sports appeal to all types of people. Adults who never participated in sports as a child may find their interest piqued upon joining an adult league.

Don't underestimate your potential abilities on the playing fields or with regard to certain hobbies. Give painting, woodworking, paper-crafting, and other hands-on hobbies a go and you may be surprised to discover the talent lies within.

- **Go back to school.** Even if you already have a degree, don't be hesitant to pursue additional education. In 2013, a report in The Wall Street Journal indicated that just 29 percent of college students fit the "traditional" student mold. That means nontraditional students, many of whom are adults, make up the majority of students on campus. Many local colleges and universities offer distance learning or adult education programs. Speak with a curriculum advisor about a particular school's offerings and find out if you're eligible for reduced tuition or financial aid.

- **See new sights.** If travel is a passion of yours, make sure your passport is current and start making plans to visit areas of the world you have always wanted to visit. Perhaps there are particular ancient ruins you hope to see, or maybe you want to trace your genealogy back to your ancestral homeland.



Trying something new is easier than one may think, and it can make for a great resolution and a more fulfilling life with lots of precious memories.

Scrapbooks can help document your year

Many interesting and special events take place during the course of a typical year. While the trend

is to share photos and anecdotes via social media, these memories tend to be forgotten soon after they are posted.

Rather than relegate birthdays, holidays, school milestones, and other such yearly events to the black hole of cyberspace, crafty men, women and children may want to display them in more prominent ways. Scrapbooking is a popular hobby that can help people document various events over the

course of the year. But scrapbooking can be much more than that as well. Scrapbooks

can serve as valuable resources that speak to the way life once was.

Such traditions are not new. Books highlighting family memorabilia, such as recipes, poems, letters, and illustrations, were popular in England as early as the 15th century. Even school yearbooks are a type of scrapbook, highlighting students and events in a single convenient book.

The reasons for scrapbooking are the same today as they once were. Scrapbooks preserve memories, record family stories and pass down information through generations. Scrapbooks can even be customized in any manner their creators desire. For those who have resolved to devote more time to documenting happy times and special events in the year ahead, scrapbooking is a great way to do just that. Here's how to make the process creative and successful.

- **Devote a box to "scraps."** At the beginning of the year, set aside a medium-sized box, such as a shoebox, that can store various items you want to include in your scrapbook. These may include ticket stubs, receipts, brochures from trips, or any other items you deem worth saving.

- **Make time to scrapbook.** Set aside a few days each month to go through collected items and

organize them so you have an idea of what will be included on your pages. Every event may not make the final cut, but that's up to you.

- **Indulge in some craft-store shopping.** Not everyone has the time to design each scrapbook page from scratch. Fortunately, there are numerous pre-designed templates or slip-in pages that require little work on the part of scrapbookers.

- **Use your own handwriting.** Handwritten sentiments can make the scrapbook even more meaningful.

- **Don't overload with photos.** Let one or two photos on a page best convey the emotions and stories. Create balance with white space, text and other accents.

- **Categorize your photos.** Disorganized photos can make scrapbook creation more challenging and ultimately frustrating. Organize your photos by month and rely on cloud-based photo storage systems to keep them safe. Then, when you need them, you can print only those images you want to include in your book.

- **Have fun with the process.** You have the entire year to create a beautiful scrapbook. Take your time and experiment with different ideas.



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