

# NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS



# Achieving Success

## Harness accountability tools to keep your resolutions

Many of us make resolutions with the intent of initiating positive change in our lives.

However, maintaining motivation and accountability throughout the year can be challenging. Fortunately, a variety of tools provide help to stay on track and achieve our goals. These resources can range from digital apps and online platforms to low-tech options like calendars and sticky notes, all of which provide practical support and strategies for success.

Forbes reports that of people who make resolutions, 52% plan on using some sort of resource to help them stick with their plan, with apps being the most popular accountability tool.

### DIGITAL APPS AND ONLINE PLATFORMS

In today's technology-driven world, digital apps and online platforms offer convenient and customizable tools to help you stay on track with your resolutions. Fitness and habit-tracking apps, such as MyFitnessPal or Habitica, allow users to set goals, track progress and receive reminders.

Online communities and forums like Reddit or Facebook groups provide spaces for individuals with



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similar goals to support and motivate each other. Additionally, platforms like Trello or Evernote can help create task lists, set deadlines and organize action plans.

The accessibility and interactive features of these tools make them valuable assets for keeping resolutions on track.

### GOAL-SETTING AND TRACKING TOOLS

Effective goal-setting is

essential for maintaining accountability. Use tools like Google Calendar or a physical planner to schedule specific tasks and milestones related to your resolutions. Break down larger goals into smaller, actionable steps and set deadlines for each.

Habit trackers, whether in app form or physical charts, can help monitor progress and create a visual representation of achievements.

Consider using tools like Beeminder or StickK which introduce financial consequences for not meeting specified goals, providing an extra incentive for making those resolutions.

### PARTNERS AND SUPPORT NETWORKS

Sharing your resolutions and progress with a partner or support network can significantly enhance motivation

and success. Find a trusted friend, family member or colleague who is also working toward their own goals. Schedule regular check-ins, share progress reports and offer mutual encouragement.

Alternatively, consider joining existing support groups or online communities centered around your specific resolution. The shared experiences and collective support can provide valuable insights and advice while keeping you on track. Some communities even sponsor team competitions where each member contributes points by progressing toward their goals.

### PHYSICAL REMINDERS

Sometimes, simple yet effective low-tech tools can help you keep your resolutions. Create a physical display or vision board showcasing your goals, aspirations and progress. Place sticky notes with motivational messages or reminders in visible areas, such as your workspace or bathroom mirror.

Use a whiteboard or chalkboard to outline your resolutions and mark milestones to give yourself a visual representation of your progress. The act of physically interacting with these tools serves as a constant reminder of what you want to achieve and reinforces your commitment to your resolutions.

Any or all of these tools can help support your progress and turn your resolution into a life-long habit that improves your life.

# Body Positivity

## Resolve to embrace self-acceptance and empowerment

It's time to reconsider the purpose of our resolutions.

As the calendar flips to a new year, it may be time to take the focus off diet culture and striving for a perceived ideal and instead make body positivity and self-acceptance a resolution. In a world that increasingly celebrates diversity and inclusivity, celebrating our unique shapes, sizes, colors, strengths and abilities has become a powerful movement.

This year, plan out action steps that foster self-love and appreciation.

Psychology Today reports that the bombardment of unrealistic images of fit bodies, particularly those of women can lead to body dissatisfaction, body image distortion, eating disorders and mental health issues. It's why taking power back and reshaping one's mental image of beautiful can be a healthy resolution.

Body positivity is generally defined as appreciating one's body as it is, accepting the ways your body differs from idealized images, perceiving beauty based on a diversity of appearances, tending to the body's needs, feeling beautiful on the inside and rejecting negative body-related information.

### DEFYING SOCIETAL STANDARDS

To embark on a body-positive journey, you first need to



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challenge the unrealistic beauty standards imposed by society. Recognize that beauty comes in all forms and celebrate the diversity of bodies around you.

Educate yourself on the harmful effects of media and advertising which often perpetuate narrow beauty ideals. Surround yourself with diverse representation through social media, books and films that showcase real bodies, breaking the mold of traditional stereotypes.

Nurturing self-love is at the core of body positivity. Start by practicing daily affirmations that acknowledge your worth beyond physical appearance. Focus on the unique qualities, talents and strengths that make you who you are. Engage in self-care activities that promote overall well-being, such as mindfulness, meditation, journaling or engaging in hobbies that bring joy. Treat yourself with kindness and compassion, acknowledging that your worth is not tied to exter-

nal validation.

### CELEBRATE YOUR BODY

Embrace the beauty of body diversity and appreciate the uniqueness of every individual. Surround yourself with communities, both online and offline, that celebrate and uplift all bodies.

Engage with body-positive influencers, activists and organizations that promote inclusivity and challenge societal norms. Participate in discussions and events that chal-

lenge beauty standards and encourage self-acceptance. Not only does this boost your mental health, but you contribute to a more inclusive and accepting society.

Shift the focus of physical activity from weight loss or changing one's appearance to joy and well-being. Engage in activities that you genuinely enjoy and that make you feel good. Explore various forms of movement such as dancing, yoga, hiking or swimming, and find what resonates with you.

Connect with like-minded individuals who value joyful movement rather than punishing exercise routines. Let movement be a celebration of what your body can do, regardless of size or shape.

### CHALLENGING INTERNALIZED BIAS

One of the most difficult parts of this resolution isn't challenging what society thinks. It's turning your eye inward and changing the words of your internal soundtrack, of stopping the negativity you have toward your body or looks.

Addressing internalized bias requires self-reflection and actively questioning societal messages ingrained within us. Challenge negative thoughts and judgments about your own body and others. Practice self-compassion and empathy, understanding that everyone's journey is unique.

This New Year, let us shift the narrative and make body positivity our resolution—a journey of self-acceptance and empowerment.

# Cultivating Gratitude

## Improve your well-being with an attitude of gratitude

Resolve in 2023 to be more grateful for the good things in your life, even when it might be a challenge to find them.

Gratitude isn't just a squishy concept to sell motivational posters. It can have real physical and mental health benefits. Harvard Medical School reported that research has linked gratitude with greater happiness. It helps people feel more positive, improve their health, be resilient and build strong relationships.

Psychology Today reported several studies that showed gratitude has many positive life effects. Thanking someone you've just met makes them more likely to seek out a relationship with you.

Gratitude reduces the experience of toxic emotions. Writing in a gratitude journal improves sleep. Having a grateful attitude can banish aches and pains. It enhances empathy and reduces aggression.

Gratitude involves acknowledging and appreciating the positive aspects of your life, even amid challenges and difficulties.

### GRATITUDE ACTIVITIES

Establish a daily gratitude practice. Incorporate gratitude into your routines by doing such things as keeping a gratitude journal, writing thank-you notes or sharing



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gratitude with loved ones.

Be as specific and detailed as you can. Go beyond generic statements and instead focus on specific people, experiences or things you are grateful for along with the reasons behind your gratitude. For example, instead of telling

your spouse, "I'm grateful for you," say something specific such as, "Thank you for always helping me to laugh when I'm feeling down" or "I'm really grateful you always make the coffee in the morning."

Incorporate gratitude into

your daily rituals or routines. For example, express gratitude before meals, start or end the day with a gratitude reflection or incorporate gratitude into meditation or prayer practices.

In addition to feeling grateful, express your gratitude

through actions. This might involve performing random acts of kindness, volunteering or expressing appreciation to others directly.

### TIMES FOR GRATITUDE

Cultivate gratitude during times of difficult or challenging periods. Look for silver linings, lessons or moments of growth within adversity as this can foster resilience and emotional well-being.

Use your gratitude practices to nurture and strengthen relationships. Express your gratitude to your loved ones and acknowledge the positive effect they have on your life.

Practice self-gratitude and compassion. Acknowledge your own strengths, achievements and efforts. Be kind to yourself throughout your personal growth journey.

Gratitude extends beyond material possessions. Appreciate the intangible aspects of life, such as relationships, experiences, nature, personal qualities and moments of joy.

Be consistent in your gratitude practice. Reflect on your gratitude journey on a regular basis. If you keep a gratitude journal, read over past entries. Revisit moments of gratitude. Be mindful about your approach and ways you can expand it.

Cultivating gratitude can have a positive effect on your well-being, relationships and personal growth. Embrace thankfulness as a transformative resolution for the upcoming year!

# Digital Detox

## Take a break from screens

Technology puts the world at our fingertips and lets us do things easier than ever before, but there comes a point where we need to disconnect.

In 2023, make plans for a digital detox to take a break from excessive screen time and embrace the benefits of disconnecting from technology regularly. Technology overuse can have a negative effect on mental health, productivity, physical health and overall well-being.

Psychological effects of using technology too much or depending on it for one's needs can include isolation, depression and anxiety and an increased fear of missing out. It can also expose a person to cyberbullying. Physical effects can include eyestrain, poor posture, sleep problems and reduced physical activity.

All of these are reversible—the American Psychological Association, for example, found that decreasing time on social media reduces feelings of loneliness for adults ages 18-22.

### SETTING BOUNDARIES

Set clear boundaries for yourself when it comes to technology. Designate screen-free times such as during meals, before bed or during social interactions. Create tech-free zones in your home.

Consider reducing your social media use. Limit the number of platforms you use for social purposes, unfollow-



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ing accounts that do not bring value or positivity. Set time limits for social media use.

Declutter your digital life by organizing your email, deleting unused apps and unsubscribing from unnecessary online subscriptions. Having a streamlined digital presence will make the time you do

spend online more productive and enjoyable.

Psychology Today recommends reducing your phone time to less than an hour a day.

### ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES

Your best chance at success with this resolution is to have something to replace technolo-

gy time. Plan activities such as reading, exercising, spending time in nature, pursuing creative outlets or engaging in face-to-face interactions with friends and family. Engage in baking or cooking activities.

Take a walk without your headphones. Enjoy meals without distractions. Designate a

technology-free hour before bedtime for relaxation or reading.

Consider engaging in mindfulness exercises that can help you stay present and focused in your daily life. Such techniques as deep breathing, meditation or mindful observation of your surroundings can produce positive mental results.

### SUCCESSFULLY DISCONNECTING

Enlist the support of friends, family or peers in your digital detox journey. Designate an accountability partner or participate in tech-free challenges together.

Turn off your notifications, which are designed to increase your use of any given site.

Consider buying or making a “phone safe” where you can lock your phone up for pre-set periods of time. And while it may seem counterintuitive to use technology to reduce technology, there are phone apps that will lock you out of your apps for set periods of time if you need that extra help.

It may not be easy to detox from the technology we've all become accustomed to using. Start with small, achievable goals. For example, you might aim for an hour of screen-free time each day and gradually increase it as you become more confident and successful.

By engaging in a digital detox program, you can develop a healthier relationship with technology and create a more balanced and mindful approach to your digital life.

# Embrace Wanderlust

## Make the world your oyster this year

Make this the year you embark on a transformative journey—literally as well as figuratively.

A resolution to travel more can bring many benefits to your life. Travel can be good for you and the new year is a great time to make plans so that your dreams can become a reality.

Travel is more than just visiting new places; it is a gateway to personal growth, self-discovery and a broader perspective on life. Why resolve to travel? Consider these reasons:

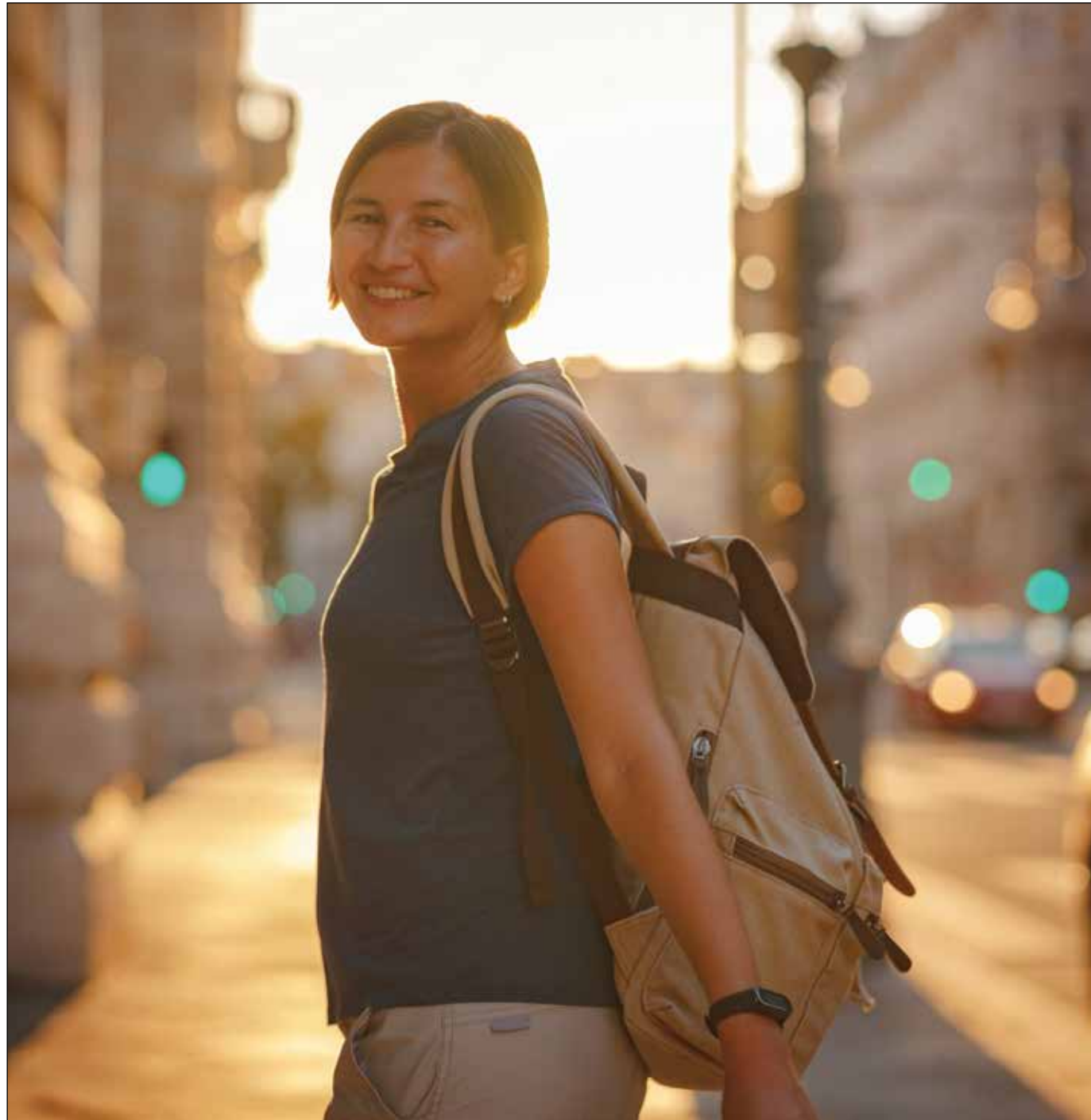
- Cultural enrichment.

Experiencing different cultures fosters empathy, tolerance and understanding. It broadens our horizons, challenges our assumptions and expands our knowledge of the world.

- Stress relief and well-being: Travel allows us to disconnect from everyday stressors, rejuvenate our minds and embrace relaxation. It promotes mental and emotional well-being, reducing anxiety and enhancing overall happiness. Some research has found that even thinking about travel can make a person happier for weeks.

- Physical health benefits: People who travel have a lower risk of heart disease. It can boost your immune system and, especially for those with sedentary jobs, can promote physical activity.

- Self-discovery and personal growth: Travel pushes us beyond our comfort zones,



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encouraging personal growth, self-confidence resilience. It presents opportunities for introspection, self-reflection and self-discovery.

### MAKING IT HAPPEN

It's not enough to decide to travel, your resolution needs to be specific and practical.

Create a travel bucket list and identify the destinations you yearn to explore. Set achievable goals and prioritize them based on your interests, budget and time availability.

Allocate a portion of your income specifically for travel to start saving for the trip. Explore cost-effective travel

options. Is there an expense you are willing to cut in order to travel? If so, identify it and make it happen not as a way of depriving yourself, but as a way of rewarding yourself. Research to secure the best deals on flights, accommodations and activities.

Incorporate travel into your

schedule by setting aside dedicated vacation days or planning extended weekends. Break free from the notion that travel is a luxury and recognize it as an essential investment in your well-being.

### TYPES OF TRAVEL

Travel holds endless possibilities, from epic adventures to tranquil getaways.

Embark on a solo journey to challenge yourself, develop independence and embrace self-discovery. Be safe and let someone know where you are going, but enjoy the opportunity to spend time with yourself and do the things that you want to do.

Let your travel be an opportunity for cultural immersion. Fully participate in local traditions, festivals and cuisine, interacting with locals to truly experience the essence of a destination.

Discover the beauty of natural wonders through hiking, camping or eco-tourism, reconnecting with the earth and finding solace in serene landscapes.

Combine your passion for travel with social impact by participating in volunteer programs, contributing to local communities and causes.

Embracing a New Year's resolution to travel more is an invitation to adventure. Beyond the stunning landscapes and exciting adventures, travel enriches our lives. Make 2023 a year filled with unforgettable travel experiences that will leave an indelible mark on your soul.

# Forming Friendships

## Embrace the new year by resolving to make new friends

As you embark on the journey of a new year, resolve to expand your social circle.

Friendships help keep us healthy both physically and mentally. Cultivating meaningful connections with diverse individuals can bring joy, broaden perspectives and foster personal growth. Social isolation was a problem before the COVID-19 pandemic, but it became even worse during and after. Let 2023 be the year you inoculate against isolation.

The Mayo Clinic points out that friends help prevent isolation and loneliness. They boost our happiness, reduce our stress, increase our sense of belonging, help us cope with traumas and encourage us to avoid unhealthy lifestyle habits. They have found that adults with strong social connections are less likely to have significant health problems, including depression and high blood pressure. Studies have found that older adults with a good social support network live longer than their peers who have fewer friends.

### EMBRACING DIVERSITY

It is important to seek out relationships with individuals who possess diverse interests and backgrounds. Surrounding ourselves with people from different walks of life can open doors to new experiences, challenge our



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perspectives and promote personal growth.

Engaging with individuals who have varied interests allows us to explore new hobbies, passions and viewpoints. By venturing beyond our comfort zones, we expose ourselves to fresh ideas and opportunities for self-discovery. Diverse friendships can enrich our lives by fostering cultural understanding, increasing empathy and cultivating an appreciation for the richness of human experiences.

### TIPS FOR MEETING NEW PEOPLE

Making new friends requires stepping outside our familiar social circles and actively seeking opportunities to meet people. Here are some tips to help you expand your social network:

- Join interest-based groups: Engage in activities or join clubs centered around your passions, whether it's a sports team, music ensemble, book club or art class. This allows you to connect with like-minded

individuals who share your interests.

- Attend community events. Participate in local events, festivals, or volunteer activities. These gatherings provide excellent opportunities to meet people from diverse backgrounds who are also looking to forge new connections.

- Embrace online communities. Explore online platforms such as social media groups, forums or meetup websites, that bring together people with shared interests. Engaging in

online discussions and attending virtual events can lead to meaningful friendships.

- Take initiative. Don't hesitate to strike up conversations with acquaintances, coworkers or neighbors. Show genuine interest in their lives, actively listen and be open to developing deeper connections.

### NURTURING LASTING FRIENDSHIPS

Forming friendships is just the beginning. Maintaining and nurturing them is equally important.

Be present and reliable. Show up for your friends by being dependable, attentive and supportive. Invest time and energy into fostering your relationships.

Practice active communication. Regularly reach out, initiate plans and make time for quality conversations. Be a good listener and offer genuine support when needed.

Embrace vulnerability by opening up and sharing your thoughts, feelings and experiences with your friends.

Cultivate an environment of trust and understanding.

Embrace and celebrate the diversity within your friendships, appreciating the unique perspectives and experiences each person brings.

In the spirit of personal growth and enriching our lives, making a New Year's resolution to make new friends is a wonderful endeavor. Embrace the beauty of expanding your social horizons in the coming year.

# Quirky Goals

## Mix up your resolutions with some unusual activities

New Year's resolutions don't have to be serious.

Give yourself permission to have fun this year and inject some whimsy into your life. Amid your more weighty goals of time management, fitness and life improvement, resolve to do something unusual this year. Maybe it is something that feeds your soul, maybe it is a way to jump start your creativity or maybe it is just something that you've always wanted to do but felt like it was frivolous.

Remember, New Year's resolutions can be as unique as the individuals making them. Feel free to create resolutions that align with your personal interests and aspirations, no matter how unconventional they may be.

Read on for some ideas that might spark your imagination and take you to your own goals that can make you smile throughout the year as you work on them.

### THINGS TO DO

Learn to speak a fictional language. Resolve to master languages like Elvish from "The Lord of the Rings" or Klingon from "Star Trek." Dive into literature and learn Nadsat from "The Clockwork Orange" or Newspeak from "1984."

Read a book from every country in the world. Set a goal to explore diverse litera-



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ture by reading at least one book from every country, broadening your horizons through global stories.

Perform random acts of kindness daily. Commit to spreading positivity by performing a small act of kind-

ness every day, such as paying for a stranger's coffee or leaving uplifting notes in public places.

Start a quirky collection. Decide to collect something unusual and offbeat, like vintage lunchboxes, rubber ducks

or snow globes from different cities.

Complete a puzzle marathon. Challenge yourself to solve a specific number of jigsaw puzzles within a year, progressively increasing the difficulty and complexity.

Search out unusual lodgings during your travels. Resolve to find and stay in unusual lodgings such as a hammock-only site on a beach, a yurt, tree-houses or an ice hotel.

Resolve to try one new food each week. You can make it a world tour and try foods from different countries or stay close to home and try one new local food each week.

### THINGS TO MAKE

Perfect the art of balloon animals. Dedicate time to learn and master the skill of creating intricate balloon animals, bringing joy to children and adults alike.

Create a time capsule. Gather meaningful items, photos and letters and bury them in a designated spot to be opened on a specific future date, preserving memories for yourself or future generations.

Take up extreme knitting. Combine an unexpected hobby with an adventurous twist by trying extreme knitting, which involves knitting with oversized needles or unconventional materials.

Build a treehouse. Embrace your inner child and construct a whimsical treehouse in your backyard, providing a unique retreat for relaxation or a creative space for hobbies.

Create a photo journal. Resolve to take a minimum of one picture each day of the subject of your choice. Document the growth of a child throughout the year or resolve to find and photograph a different tree every day of the year.