

# SUDOKU FEVER



The recent popularity of Sudoku - a Japanese numbers puzzle, has led to it being dubbed “the Rubik’s cube of the 21st century” or the “fastest growing puzzle in the world.” When playing Sudoku you play against yourself and you can also challenge another’s time.

A classic **Sudoku Puzzle** is played over 9x9 grid (eighty one small squares), that means, 9 squares wide and 9 squares deep. The nine large squares are called the mother squares. The lines of squares running horizontally are called rows, and the lines running vertically are called columns. The grid is further divided by the darker lines into nine 3 X 3 square ‘boxes’. Some of the squares already have numbers in them, some of them are empty and need to be filled. The hard part in Sudoku is that each of the areas can only contain a particular number once.

**The bottom line:** Each row, column and “box” (3x3) should contain the numbers 1 to 9:

- Number can appear only once on each row
- Number can appear only once on each column
- A number can appear only once in each box (3x3 area)

Although the grid has numbers, nothing has to add up to anything else. You solve Sudoku Puzzles with reasoning and logic. No math is needed to complete the puzzles, and no guessing should be necessary either! In fact the numbers are used only for convenience. One can also use symbols, colors and shapes in place of the numbers. The important thing is to adhere to the rule that there should not be the same element in a row or column of the bigger square.

It may take 3 – 4 days for an inexperienced player to solve a hard puzzle, while the ‘pros’ might solve it within minutes. But that’s the beauty of **Sudoku!** Even with a busy job and only a few minutes in your lunch hour to do it, you can still enjoy the challenge. There are no shortcuts in this game, your skills simply get better and better through regular playing. Once you get the concept - the ultimate challenge behind sudoku is doing it fast!

Sudoku develops your **reasoning skills** and **concentration**. Many also believe that as ‘age starts catching up with us’, this mental workout which the brain gets from playing logic puzzles, can help to **decrease memory decline**, make us smarter and even slow the progress of Alzheimer’s disease.

The allure of Sudoku lies in that it first seems to be an easy game, yet difficult ones keep the avid player coming back for more. If you’re a fan, you’ll be pleased to know there are 6,670,903,752,021,072,936,960 possible games in that 9x9 grid! **Sit back and relax, this friend will last a lifetime!**

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