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# ASPEN *happenings*

*The idea that there's a correlation between exercising the brain through puzzles and improving its function, much in the way that lifting weights can strengthen the muscles of the body, seems reasonable.*

## How Puzzles May Benefit Brain Health

Many people enjoy the challenges posed by puzzles such as crosswords, word finds and Sudoku, among others. Some even wonder if puzzles are more than simple fun and something that can actually benefit the brain.

The idea that there's a correlation between exercising the brain through puzzles and improving its function, much in the way that lifting weights can strengthen the muscles of the body, seems reasonable. Studies are ongoing, and the reviews are mixed. A 1999 study examining crosswords that was published in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology* found no evidence to suggest crossword puzzles reduced age-related declines in cognition. However, research published a year later in *Psychology of Aging* suggested that crosswords, when done by older subjects, seemed to partially attenuate the negative effects of age on memory and perceptual speed tasks.

Data published in *USA Today* indicates that solving puzzles may help reinforce existing connections between brain cells and the generation of new relationships. This may improve mental speed and thought processes.



Doing jigsaw puzzles could help with short-term memory, namely remembering shapes and colors, and visualizing the larger, finished picture.

Researcher Keith Wesnes, a professor of cognitive neuroscience at the University of Exeter in England, studied the impact of crosswords on attention, reasoning, and memory. Wesnes found a direct relationship between solving puzzles and the accuracy of varying ranges of functions, including reasoning, attention and memory recall. *(continued on page 3)*

## UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

**01 HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

**14** Community Coffee Club, 8:30 am

**16** Grief Support Group, 6 – 7 pm

**20** Parkinson's Support Group, 6-7 pm

Visit [www.aspenofbrookhaven.com](http://www.aspenofbrookhaven.com) to view the entire Aspen activity calendar.

## Recipe of the Month – Curried Squash Stew

### Ingredients:

- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 yellow onion (chopped)
- 2 cloves garlic (minced)
- 1 celery stalk (chopped)
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 large zucchini (chopped)
- 2 Tbsp. curry powder
- 3 cups butternut squash (chopped)
- 1 14.5-ounce can low-sodium tomatoes (diced)
- 1 14.5-ounce can low-sodium chickpeas (drained, rinsed)



### Directions

1. Heat a large pot on the stove over medium heat and add oil. Add the onion, garlic and celery, and cook about 10 minutes, until the onion is tender.
2. Add zucchini and curry powder and cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Add the butternut squash, tomatoes and chickpeas, and cover. Continue cooking for about 10 minutes.
4. Serve with cooked brown rice.

Makes: 4 servings

**Nutritional Information (per serving):** Tot Cal 234, Tot Fat 6g, Protein 9g, Carbohydrates 41g, Dietary Fiber 9g, Sat Fat 1g, Sodium 167mg, Sugars 10g

# Happy BIRTHDAY.

January 01 – Grace

16 – Van and Jimmy

21 – Irene

23 – Jerry

30 – Wesley

## 9 BEST Movies To Watch at the Beginning of the YEAR

9. New Years Eve (2011)
8. New Year (2010)
7. The New Year (2010)
6. Bridget Jones's Diary (2001)
5. When Harry Met Sally (1989)
4. The Apartment (1960)
3. Bundle of Joy (1956)
2. Holiday Inn (1942)
1. After the Thin Man (1936)

## 5 Space Heater Safety Tips

**Pick a Safe Location.** Place your heater on a flat, dry and level surface. To avoid tip-over and injury, avoid putting a space heater in areas where children or pets are often present.

**Follow the 3-Foot Rule** Ensure your space heater is positioned at least 3 feet away from any flammable object or substance. Having items within 3 feet can pose a serious fire hazard.

### Check Safety Features

Read the instruction manual and safety tag on your space heater before operating it to confirm it will automatically shut off if it is tipped over or becomes overheated.



**Avoid Extension Cords** Always plug your space heater directly into an outlet to decrease chances of overheating, electrical shock and fire.

**Shut it Off** Before leaving your room, always turn off your space heater and unplug it from the outlet.



## Did you know?

1. January was named after the Roman god Janus, who ruled over beginning and transitions.
2. January's birthstone is the beautiful red garnet. It is said that garnet represents balance.
3. The Dianthus Caryophyllus is one of two flowers recognized as the official January flower.
4. It's *Donate Blood* month!
5. January is considered the coldest month in the Northern Hemisphere
6. Famous people born in January: Danica McKellar, Michael Stripe, Nicholas Cage, Katie Couric, Frank Sinatra, Patrick Dempsey, Orlando Bloom, LL Cool J, Michelle Obama, David Lynch
7. Historical Figures Born in January: Paul Revere—1735, Betsy Ross—1752, Franklin D. Roosevelt—1882, William McKinley—1843, Edgar Allen Poe—1809, James Madison Randolph—1806, Martin Luther King Jr.—1929, Richard M. Nixon 1913, Milliard Fillmore—1800, Helen Taft—1861.
8. Major Historical Events in January
  - 45 BC-Julian Calendar takes effect
  - 1547-Henry VIII died
  - 1789- first US Presidential Election held
  - 1848- gold was discovered in California
  - 1863- Lincoln signs the Emancipation Proclamation
  - 1865- the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment abolished slavery
  - 1912- New Mexico becomes part of the US
  - 1914- Henry Ford introduces his assembly line
  - 1933- the Holocaust began
  - 1959- Alaska entered the Union
  - 1967- first Super Bowl played
  - 1973- the Supreme Court's Roe vs. Wade decision
  - 1986- the Challenger exploded

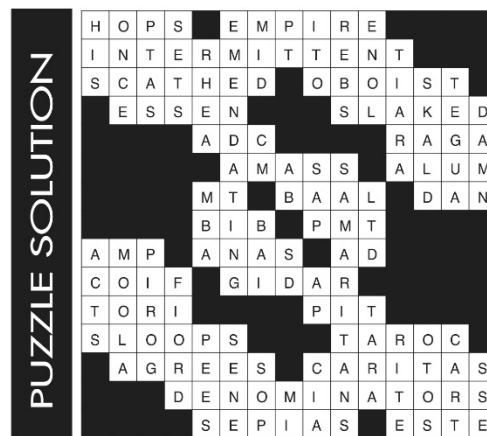
January Facts; [prettyopinionated.com/2012/01/fun-trivia-facts-about-january/](http://prettyopinionated.com/2012/01/fun-trivia-facts-about-january/)

## Daily Use of This Supplement May Help Lower Heart Disease Risk

According to a team from Harvard's School of Public Health, daily use of omega-3 fish oil supplements may help you bolster your heart health. The team reviewed data from 13 different studies and found that consuming about 840 milligrams of omega-3 fish oil per day was linked to a lower overall risk of dying from heart disease.

In addition to taking omega-3 fish oil capsules daily, the team recommends focusing on living a healthy lifestyle to keep heart disease at bay. A healthy lifestyle includes maintaining a healthy weight, getting enough exercise, avoiding tobacco and alcohol consumption, and eating a well-balanced diet.

For more info about changes that you can make to lower your risk, contact your doctor or other health-care professional.



(continued from page 1) Puzzles can keep the brain active. Tangible results notwithstanding, one can reason that engaging regularly with word-based puzzles can improve vocabulary fluency and keep people in tune with turns of phrase and even current events. Puzzles also may assist with thinking creatively and employing reason to solve problems. Achieving success with puzzles may pave the way for tackling larger challenges by thinking outside of the box.

Even though studies are ongoing, there is some belief that doing puzzles can slow decline in memory among healthy individuals as well as those who have been diagnosed with dementia. A 2014 trial funded by the National Institutes of Health found that the benefits of cognitive training for older adults can last as long as 10 years. The researchers recommended that older adults try any cognitively stimulating activity, such as solving crossword puzzles and playing cards.

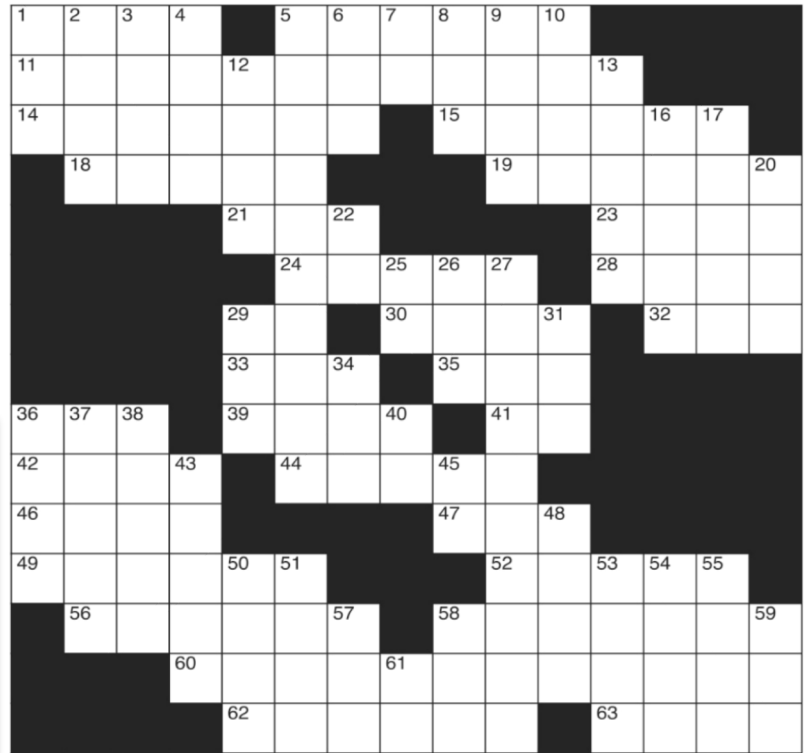
### CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Beer ingredient
- 5. Popular FOX TV show
- 11. Recurring from time to time
- 14. Criticized severely
- 15. Musician
- 18. German urban center
- 19. Quenched
- 21. Human gene
- 23. Indian music
- 24. Accumulate
- 28. One who graduated
- 29. Atomic #109
- 30. Semitic fertility god
- 32. Sportscaster Patrick
- 33. Child's dining accessory
- 35. Payment (abbr.)
- 36. Guitarist's tool
- 39. Dabbling ducks
- 41. Commercial
- 42. Style someone's hair
- 44. Biu-Mandara language
- 46. Actress Spelling
- 47. Large hole in the ground
- 49. One-masted sailboats
- 52. Tropical Asian plant
- 56. Concurs
- 58. Latin term for charity
- 60. The number below the line in a fraction
- 62. Reddish browns
- 63. This (Spanish)

### CLUES DOWN

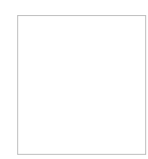
- 1. Belong to he
- 2. One time only
- 3. Parent-teacher groups
- 4. Puts in place
- 5. Editing
- 6. In the course of
- 7. Helps injured people (abbr.)
- 8. OJ trial judge
- 9. Resist authority (slang)
- 10. Formerly alkenols
- 12. "Cheers" actress Perlman
- 13. Jewelled headdress
- 16. Viking Age poet
- 17. Vanuatu island
- 20. Wish harm upon
- 22. Unit of length
- 25. Blood type
- 26. Drain
- 27. Do-gooders
- 29. Advanced degree
- 31. Business designation
- 34. Chinese-American actress Ling
- 36. Performs on stage
- 37. Slang for money
- 38. Large Russian pie
- 40. The Mount Rushmore State
- 43. Narrow inlet
- 45. News organization (abbr.)
- 48. Scarlett's home
- 50. Micturates
- 51. Monetary unit
- 53. Any customary observance or practice
- 54. Sons of Poseidon
- 55. Facilitates grocery shopping
- 57. Standard operating procedure
- 58. Former OSS
- 59. Midway between south and southeast
- 61. The Wolverine State

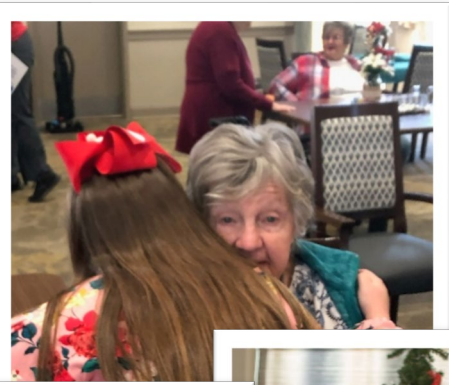
*Puzzle solution on page 3.*



500 Silver Cross Drive  
Brookhaven, MS 39601

*A community enriched by you.*





*making memories...  
a look back at December...*

- Arts & Crafts
- Piano Social w/Mrs. Nancy
- Community Coffee Club
- Group Exercise
- Prayer & Music
- Devotion w/ Bro. Luke
- Devotion w/ Randy Youngblood
- Family Christmas Tea Party
- Camelia Line Dancers
- BLT Disney Frozen Play
- Christmas Carolers
- Cookie Decorating
- Trip to Hobby Lobby & Out to Eat
- Resident Christmas Party
- Christmas Play at BA
- B-Day Bash w/St. Luke
- Card Games & More!

