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# Out With the New, In With the Old!

## 4 OLD-SCHOOL HOBBIES MAKING A MAJOR COMEBACK

January is National Hobby Month — and for good reason! As people set goals for 2021, they're also thinking about trying new hobbies. But with so many out there, picking just one can be a hobby in itself. Thanks in part to COVID-19, many people have rediscovered old-school hobbies. Some of these have been around for decades or even longer, and others have established communities that can rely on one another for support, sharing information, and more. Here are four great examples.

### MAKING BREAD

Over the last year, interest in this ancient hobby has skyrocketed. Homemade bread is tastier and more nutritious than store-bought, and it's so satisfying to watch it come together. Not to mention it's a great skill to have! With so many types of bread to try, you're not going to run out of ideas any time soon.

### COLLECTING CARDS

No matter what people were into during the '70s, '80s, and '90s, there was a trading card game for it. And even going into 2021, that tradition has been kept alive. When many people were stuck

at home last year, they rediscovered their card collections and remembered how much fun they were. As a result, card sales went through the roof, and online card communities lit up with activity from all over the world.

### RESTORING CARS

Car restoration is a hobby that lets you get your hands dirty, and it's one that you can do with your kids or grandkids. It can be not only educational for them but also fun! Together, you can track down parts, talk to folks who are also interested in restoration, and learn about the history of your car. Though car restoration can be a bit costly and time consuming, it's certainly a journey worth taking.

### EMBROIDERING

Embroidery has taken off because it's both inexpensive and fairly easy to get into. Plus, many people have fallen in love with its meditative quality. One of the great things about embroidery is that you can use it to make amazing personalized gifts, like pillows, wall hangings, and kitchen towels!

# Why Chris Nikic Is My Inspiration for 2021

## Meet the First Ironman Triathlon Champion With Down Syndrome

There's been no shortage of bad news this past year, but while sipping my coffee at sunrise, something extraordinary caught my eye. On the front pages of The New York Times, the very first man with Down syndrome signed up for the Ironman Triathlon — and completed it.

For an ordinary, healthy human being, completing the Ironman Triathlon within the official 17 hours mark is a major accomplishment. If you're not familiar, it's one of the most grueling sporting events in human history with a 2.4-mile ocean swim, then a 112-mile bike ride, and finally a 26.2-mile run. In terms of difficulty and severity of training required, it's the pinnacle of athletic challenges.

A few short years ago, nobody would've told Chris Nikic — born with Down syndrome, he had open-heart surgery at 5 months old — that he was physically capable of competing in the Ironman Triathlon.

With his naturally low muscle tone, he has struggled with physical weakness and poor balance (and still battles these challenges today). He didn't learn to walk on his own until he was 4. To keep him from choking, he ate baby food until he was 6. When he finally learned to run, it took months to learn how to swing his arms at his sides instead of holding them straight above his head. It'd take him several more years to learn how to tie his shoes.

Experts would always speak about Chris' future in terms of limitations, not possibilities. That pessimism started to seriously affect him and his parents. "I always felt isolated, left out, excluded," he said as he described his childhood to The New York Times.

But he didn't feel that way when he was competing in sports. Becoming a professional athlete became his passion. By his early teens, he was running sprints, swimming, and playing basketball in the Special Olympics. Then, when Chris was 15, his parents taught him to ride a bike. It took six months to learn how to ride 100 feet, but once he got the hang of it, Chris never stopped.

Then, last October, Chris set his sights on the Ironman Triathlon and never lost his focus. With the help of a local endurance training group, Dan Grieb (a volunteer coach), and his parents, Chris decided that if he could conquer the Ironman Triathlon, he could do anything. Slowly, he added muscle to his stocky, 5'10" frame, and everyone noticed that Chris wasn't only mentally sharper but also more attentive and confident.

Then, he did it: In 16 hours, 46 minutes, and 9 seconds, despite crashing his bike a couple times, Chris made it into the Guinness World Records as the first man with Down syndrome to sign up and complete the race.

There were painful points of the race, like when his ankles were attacked by fire ants. But Nikic's story is an incredible reminder that working on your patience, perseverance, and grit can take you further than you can dream or imagine. It makes me realize that we set a lot of our own hurdles and limitations without realizing it. For Nikic, everything became possible when he embraced a new mindset regarding the negative voices: "Do not put a lid on me."

I know another inspirational, influential figure who had very delicate health: Winston Churchill. He'd get sick very easily, yet he was one of the 20th century's greatest leaders. He once wrote: "Continuous effort — not strength or intelligence — is the key to unlocking our potential." He couldn't be more right.

I hope your New Year's goals aren't just resolutions to keep moving forward, but to embrace perseverance and hope. If Nikic can overcome every odd, you can, too.

**"Nikic's story is an incredible reminder that working on your patience, perseverance, and grit can take you further than you can dream or imagine."**

*— John Colvin*

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# How to Find Your Flow in 2021

## IS DEEP FOCUS THE SECRET TO SUCCESS?

Have you ever started working on an important project and looked up at the clock after what felt like minutes only to find that hours had passed? If you have, you've probably experienced "flow state," aka the Holy Grail of concentration and achievement.

### WHAT IS A FLOW STATE?

Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi describes a flow state as a "focus that, once it becomes intense, leads to a sense of ecstasy, a sense of clarity: You know exactly what you want to do from one moment to the other; you get immediate feedback." That sounds complex, but you can also think of flow as being "in the zone." And it might be the key to achieving your New Year's goals. That's because a flow state almost always coincides with tackling a difficult task, and when you're in a flow state, even the most challenging things feel relatively easy.

### WHY ARE HIGH ACHIEVERS OBSESSED WITH FLOW?

Flow state doesn't only happen for people with desk jobs. You can get it while running, playing chess, dancing, or climbing a mountain, and it's considered the Holy Grail because it has a host of benefits. According to the meditation app Headspace, those perks include heightened focus (goodbye, distractions!), a sense of clarity, feelings of happiness and pleasure, and the impression that all obstacles ahead of you have disappeared. That makes accomplishing your goals feel like less of a struggle. It's no wonder high-achieving hobbyists, workers, and creatives crave the feeling!

### HOW CAN YOU GET IN A FLOW?

Usually, a flow state isn't planned — it just happens. In a BBC article, author

Steven Kotler describes flow as "a happy accident." But he also notes that we can make ourselves "more accident-prone." To set yourself up for a flow state, find a quiet place to work and choose an activity that's difficult but meaningful for you. Ideally, it should be something you've already put work into perfecting. If you've never tried painting before, you probably won't find flow on your first attempt, but an experienced painter could achieve it while mastering a new technique.

Some people claim that being in a flow state is a form of meditation and that learning how to meditate can help you reach it. To that end, apps like Headspace and Evenflow (for iPhones only) are great places to start! Before you know it, you'll be finding the flow like a pro.

# 3 Little Known Facts About the Beginning of Elvis' Career

## A TRIBUTE TO THE KING OF ROCK AND ROLL

There used to be a time when music wasn't made for teenagers — it was made for adults. Then, Elvis Presley arrived in the 1950s. His rebellious, fun, youthful spirit became legendary, inspiring the lives of the younger generations forever. His unique style and energy intimately influenced future artists like the Beatles and Michael Jackson. John Lennon once said, "Without Elvis, there would be no Beatles."

As a Tennessee resident, we tend to know a lot more about Elvis than most. That's why, to celebrate his 86th birthday on Jan. 8, we thought we'd share a few rare facts about the start of the legendary king's career that you may not know yet.



### NO. 1: HE TURNED DOWN A RADIO GIG AT 12 YEARS OLD.

On his 11th birthday, Elvis got a guitar instead of a rifle, which was pretty disappointing for the young boy from Tupelo, Mississippi. But the boy already had a passion for country, gospel, and R&B. It didn't take long for Elvis to pick up the guitar and start to sound good. A year later, in 1947, a local radio show offered 12-year-old Elvis a chance to sing live on air — but, growing up a loner, he was too shy to go on.

### NO. 2: ELVIS WAS REJECTED BY A GOSPEL QUARTET.

Before his breakout hit "Heartbreak Hotel," Elvis struggled to find work to launch his music career. Chasing his love for gospel music, he auditioned for a gospel quartet called the Songfellows in 1954. He was rejected because he "couldn't sing."

### NO. 3: PEOPLE DIDN'T BELIEVE THAT ELVIS WAS WHITE AFTER HEARING HIM.

The same year that Elvis was rejected from the gospel quartet, a Memphis DJ played Elvis's version of the blues song "That's All Right." It was requested to be played 13 more times, and listeners had a difficult time believing that Elvis was actually white, not Black, as most blues and R&B singers traditionally were.

We hope these facts were fun to learn, even if you're not terribly familiar with the star's story. Enjoy the perfect excuse to break out in dance to a sweet Elvis tune!

# The Historical Transformation of Presidents Day

On the third Monday of February, we celebrate Presidents Day to commemorate all presidents of present and past. It's a traditional American holiday to embrace patriotism and national pride, but it's a tradition that has transformed several times throughout U.S. history. Presidents Day gained official national holiday status in 1879, but you could say it originated on Feb. 22, 1732 — George Washington's birthday, the first president of the United States.

That's why, originally, Presidents Day was just called Washington's Birthday. Since Washington's death in 1799, people already celebrated the holiday unofficially, so it was only a matter of time before it became legally recognized. It was the fifth official holiday recognized by federal banks, along with Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Day, and Fourth of July. (The sixth would be Martin Luther King Jr. Day in 1983.)

Washington's Birthday was commemorated in many ways you'd expect — gatherings and remembrances — although the holiday took a special meaning during the Great Depression. Newspapers and media would print pictures of Washington and publish articles on him every Feb. 22. Then, in 1932, Washington's Birthday was used to reinstate the Purple Heart — the oldest U.S. military decoration, designed by George Washington to honor soldiers killed or wounded while serving in the armed forces.

Then, as the labor movement boomed, Congress proposed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, which would transform Washington's Birthday into Presidents Day, and shift it (and several other federal holidays) to predetermined Mondays to give workers more three-day weekends.

It was a very popular bill with both the private sector and labor unions. It passed.

Since the third Monday of February lands between Washington and Lincoln's birthdays, the holiday is widely regarded to celebrate these two presidents mainly. However, it's also considered a day to celebrate all U.S. commanders in chief. When you take a break from work that weekend, we hope you take the chance to think about your favorite U.S. president!



# Slow Cooker Chicken Casserole

Inspired by GoodHousekeeping.com

### Ingredients

- 8 chicken thighs or drumsticks, lightly salted
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 1 onion, finely sliced
- 2 celery sticks, thickly sliced
- 2 carrots, thickly sliced
- 1 leek, thickly sliced
- 1 lb potatoes, peeled and cut in large chunks
- 2 garlic cloves, sliced
- 14 oz chicken stock
- 1 sprig rosemary
- Finely grated zest and juice of 1/2 lemon
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, finely chopped

### Directions

1. In a large frying pan, heat oil and fry salted chicken on high until brown.
2. Transfer chicken to the slow cooker. Add flour and stir.
3. In the frying pan on high heat, fry the onion, celery, carrots, leeks, and potatoes until lightly browned. Add garlic and fry for 30 seconds.
4. Transfer vegetables to the slow cooker and add the stock, rosemary, and lemon zest.
5. Cook on high for 2.5–3 hours or until chicken is tender.
6. Check seasoning and add lemon juice to taste. Top with parsley before serving.

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