

# Cultural News

UC Davis Health System  
Medical Interpreting Services

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## Top Ten New Year Resolutions

New Year's is the only holiday that celebrates the passage of time. Perhaps that's why, as the final seconds of the year tick away, we become introspective. Inevitably, that introspection turns to thoughts of self-improvement and the annual ritual of making resolutions, which offer the first of many important tools for remaking ourselves.

### 1. Lose Weight and Get in Better Physical Shape

Physical activity builds physical vitality. With every year of your life, you have more to gain from being physically active; as your age-related risks of chronic disease increase, regular exercise generally slows or reverses that trend. In fact, you're even more likely to notice the benefits of regular exercise if you already have a chronic condition.

### 2. Stick to a Budget

It's been said that the best defense is a good offense. Developing and sticking to a realistic budget is a brilliant offensive move as it prevents overspending and ensures peace of mind. Many people find it very difficult to stick to a budget. It does take hard work and a lot of self-discipline, at least in the beginning. The good news is that most people find the longer they can stick to a budget, the easier it becomes.

### 3. Debt Reduction

One of the first things you have to do before any debt can be eliminated is to stop using charge accounts. If you continue to use the accounts, you are only fueling the problem, and building on it, not solving it. Make a resolution now to stop charging anything and to get financially stable. If you can't pay cash for it, you don't need it, make it just that simple and you will find yourself out of debt in no time at all.

### 4. Enjoy More Quality Time with Family & Friends

More and more people are resolving to spend more quality time with family and friends this year. This means you must consciously decide to actively and purposely work on improving your family situation every day. You may need to do such things as reschedule business activities to make time for your kids, help your children set and achieve worthwhile goals, and setting aside an hour a day for the family, every day.

### 5. Find My Soul Mate

Romance is alive and well as more and more people are looking for that special someone, their soul mate who lights their fire, the ONE whom they love unequivocally and who shares their worldview. Soul mate relationships give both partners the fulfillment that deeply satisfies them and makes them feel that they have found the most wonderful person in the whole universe.

### 6. Quit Smoking

Becoming a non-smoker is probably one of the best decisions you can ever make, and is a life changing as well as a life saving decision. The benefits to your health, relationships, finances, vitality, the environment and to your sense of self-esteem for having conquered a really hard-to-kick habit will make any and all of your efforts and determination more than worthwhile. The resolution to become a non-smoker will also help you to live longer and enjoy the finer things in life.

### 7. Find a Better Job

A new year provides a sense of getting a free do-over, so you can try again and get it right. Many people resolve to find better jobs or to take a new approach to the jobs they've already got. To begin answering this question, examine whether your current career path matches your core interests, beliefs, values, needs and skills. Resolve to ask and answer those essential questions before making any new career changes.

### 8. Learn Something New

People throughout the world are realizing that a strong resolve to lifelong learning is more than just education and training beyond formal schooling. A lifelong learning framework encompasses learning throughout the life cycle, from cradle to grave and in different learning environments, formal, non-formal and informal. Challenge your mind in the coming year, break out of current routines and challenge every comfort zone and watch your horizons expand.

### 9. Volunteer and Help Others

A popular, non-selfish New Year's resolution, volunteerism can take many forms such as spending time helping out at your local library, mentoring a child, or building a house to name a few.

### 10. Get Organized

Resolve this year to plan your days, reduce interruptions, clean off your desk, say "No", and make detailed lists. The benefits of getting more organized include being able to save time, as you no longer look for the same things over and over again or need to replace things you can't find at all. You will reduce stress find yourself being much more productive, as all the time you once spent looking for things can now be used to do more important or more enjoyable tasks.



## January Calendar

*National Glaucoma Awareness Month*  
*National Volunteer Blood Donor Month*

- 3-9 – New Year's Resolutions Week (USA)
- 4 – World Braille Day
- 6 – Epiphany (Western Christianity)
- 7 – Christmas Day (Eastern Christianity)
- 13 – Public Radio Broadcasting Day (USA)
- 13 – Maghi (Sikh)
- 16 – World Religion Day
- 19-21 – Mahayana New Year (Buddhist)
- 20 – Tu B'shvat (Judaism)
- 26 – Australia Day
- 27 – Holocaust Memorial Day

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## World Braille Day

January 4th is the birth date of Louis Braille, the inventor of Braille, and marks International Braille Day around the world.

Over 180 years ago, Louis Braille revolutionized the lives of people who are blind, deafblind and vision impaired, with his invention of a simple system of six raised dots. Used in various combinations, the six dots can be used to form letters of the alphabet, musical notations, chemistry symbols, numbers, and punctuation and can be read by touch or by sight.

Although technology has played a vital role in opening up communications and information for people with sight loss, braille has endured. In fact, computers have facilitated the expansion of braille, with the introduction of software and portable devices which have increased its accessibility. Software programs and portable electronic Braille note-takers allow users to save and edit their writing and have it displayed back to them either verbally or tactually. Other computer programs transcribe Braille to print and vice versa.

"Braille is to the blind person what the printed word is to the sighted individual - access to information and contact with the outside world," said, Des Kenny, Chief Executive of NCBI.

Des Kenny uses Braille daily in his working life. Having lost his sight at the age of nine, he combines the newest electronic technologies with the oldest reading for people who are blind.

"Technology has opened up many different worlds for people with sight loss but we must not forget more traditional technologies, like Braille, which still plays an essential role in the lives of people who are blind and vision impaired," he continued.

Braille literacy is particularly important for children with sight loss, who may not learn to read or write if they rely solely on audio texts and computers. "In this, the year of equal opportunities for all, it is essential that children with sight loss have the same opportunities to progress as their sighted counterparts. In order to do this, we must teach Braille and ensure that it is valued by parents, educators and children around the country," Mr. Kenny outlined.

Source: <http://www.ncbi.ie/news/>



### Louis Braille (1809-1852)

Six dots. Six bumps. Six bumps in different patterns, like constellations, spreading out over the page. What are they? Numbers, letters, words. Who made this code? None other than Louis Braille, a French 12-year-old, who was also blind. And his work changed the world of reading and writing, forever.

Louis was from a small town called Coupvray, near Paris—he was born on January 4 in 1809. Louis became blind by accident, when he was 3 years old. Deep in his Dad's harness workshop, Louis tried to be like his Dad, but it went very wrong; he grabbed an awl, a sharp tool for making holes, and the tool slid and hurt his eye. The wound got infected, the infection spread, and soon, Louis was blind in both eyes.

All of a sudden, Louis needed a new way to learn. He stayed at his old school for two more years, but he couldn't learn everything just by listening. Things were looking up when Louis got a scholarship to the Royal Institution for Blind Youth in Paris, when he was 10. But even there, most of the teachers just talked at the students. The library had 14 huge books with raised letters that were very hard to read. Louis was impatient.

Then in 1821, a former soldier named Charles Barbier visited the school. Barbier shared his invention called "night writing," a code of 12 raised dots that let soldiers share top-secret information on the battlefield without even having to speak. Unfortunately, the code was too hard for the soldiers, but not for 12-year-old Louis!

Louis trimmed Barbier's 12 dots into 6, ironed out the system by the time he was 15, then published the first-ever braille book in 1829. But did he stop there? No way! In 1837, he added symbols for math and music. But since the public was skeptical, blind students had to study braille on their own. Even at the Royal Institution, where Louis taught after he graduated, braille wasn't taught until after his death. Braille began to spread worldwide in 1868, when a group of British men, now known as the Royal National Institute for the Blind, took up the cause.

Now practically every country in the world uses braille. Braille books have double-sided pages, which saves a lot of space. Braille signs help blind people get around in public spaces. And, most important, blind people can communicate independently, without needing print. Louis proved that if you have the motivation, you can do incredible things.

Source: [www.afb.org](http://www.afb.org)