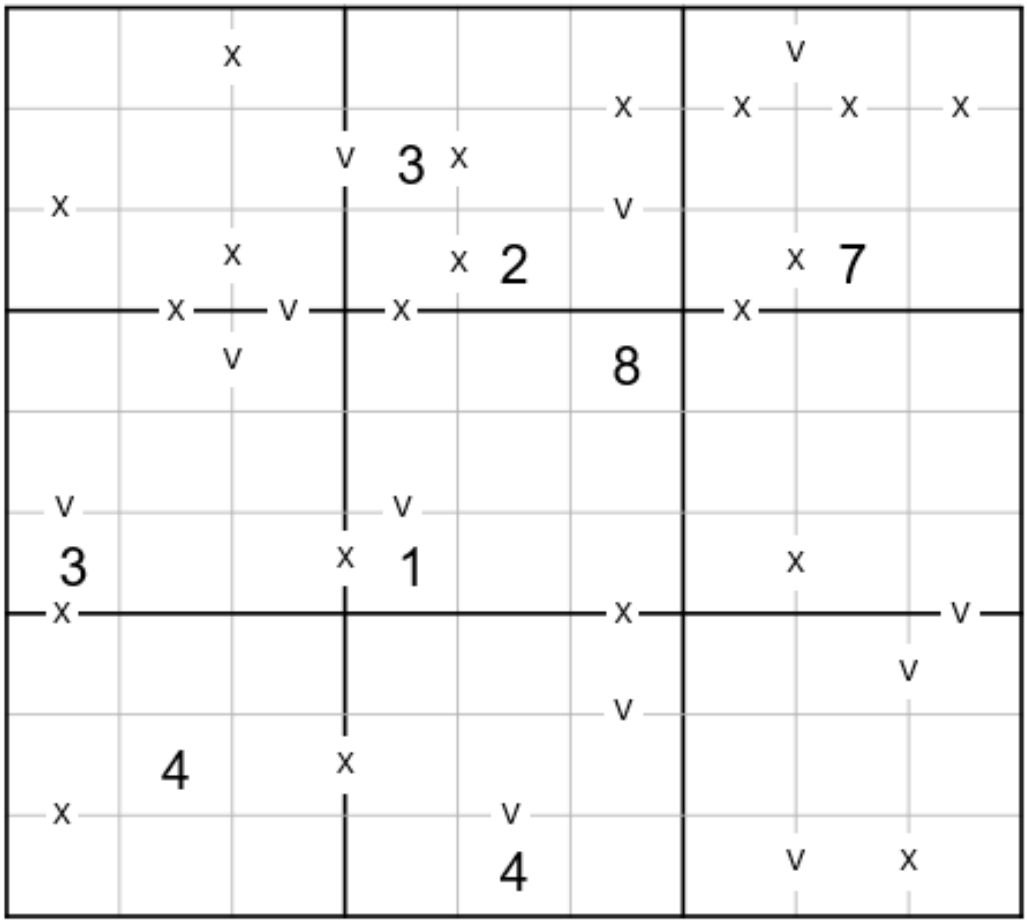
A Coxy XV Sudoku Guide



Tiny relationships,

local deductions, and approachable ways to think about XV Sudoku.

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Introduction

Why XV Sudoku Feels Different

Most of us are familiar with classic Sudoku rules:

Numbers 1 through 9 must appear once (and only once) in each row, column, and 3×3 box.

XV Sudoku adds an additional layer of logic.

When a V appears between two cells, those two numbers must add up to 5.

When an X appears between two cells, those two numbers must add up to 10.

At first glance, this seems like a fairly small twist. But one of the surprising things about Sudoku variants is that additional rules often make the puzzle easier, not harder — once you begin to see the relationships they create.

Instead of relying entirely on long chains or advanced solving techniques, XV Sudoku often rewards small local observations.

Sometimes one missing symbol tells you more than an entire row of candidates.

Sometimes a single deduction unlocks several others at once.

And sometimes you only need to look inside one box to make progress.

This guide is not meant to be a complete encyclopedia of advanced XV solving techniques.

Instead, it is a cozy field guide to noticing the tiny relationships that make XV Sudoku feel so satisfying to solve.

What Makes XV Sudoku Different

X and V Constraints

In XV Sudoku:

- V means the two connected cells must add to 5.
- X means the two connected cells must add to 10.

X and V symbols apply only to adjacent cells meaning the two cells they connect horizontally or vertically. Diagonal cells are not considered adjacent.

Possible V pairs:

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- 1 + 4
- 2 + 3

Possible X pairs:

- 1 + 9
- 2 + 8
- 3 + 7
- 4 + 6

One of the first things many solvers notice is that V constraints are often more restrictive than X constraints.

A V only allows two possible combinations.

An X allows four.

That tighter restriction often creates surprisingly strong deductions.

Why the Absence of a Symbol Matters

This is one of the most important ideas in XV Sudoku.

In most XV puzzles, all valid X and V relationships are marked.

That means the absence of a symbol becomes just as important as its presence.

For example:

If a cell next to a 2 could be either a 3 or a 4:

- 2 + 3 would equal 5
- which would require a V

If there is no V between those cells, then 3 cannot be correct.

So the cell must be 4.

The same idea applies to X relationships.

If a neighboring cell could be 8:

- 2 + 8 would equal 10
- which would require an X

Without an X, 8 is eliminated too.

This type of “negative constraint” is where XV Sudoku really shines.

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Sometimes the puzzle is solved not by what *is* present — but by what *isn't*.

Why 5 Behaves Differently

One of the first unusual things many solvers notice is how strangely the number 5 behaves in XV Sudoku.

A cell that participates in either an X or V relationship can never contain a 5.

- 5 cannot be part of a pair summing to 5
- 5 cannot be part of a pair summing to 10

This causes 5 to "isolate itself" surprisingly quickly.

As a result:

- cells connected to XV symbols immediately eliminate 5
- neighboring possibilities tighten faster
- 5 often becomes easier to place than expected

The number starts to feel very "five-ish."

Once you begin noticing this behavior, it becomes much easier to spot opportunities quickly.

Another interesting way to identify a 5 is by looking at adjacent cells without an X or V between them. If the remaining candidates would force the two cells to add up to 5 or 10 unless one of them contains a 5, then that cell must be the 5.

For example, suppose one cell has candidates **4, 5, and 6**, while an adjacent unmarked cell has only **4 and 6**. If the first cell were either 4 or 6, the two cells would have to add up to 10. Since there is no X between them, the first cell must be **5**.

Sometimes One Box Tells You Everything

One of the most satisfying moments in XV Sudoku is realizing that an entire deduction can come from a single local area.

Sometimes you do not need to inspect the whole puzzle.

You only need:

- one box
- one row

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- one nearby constraint

Because XV relationships tighten local possibilities so strongly, a box can sometimes "solve itself" much earlier than expected.

For example, if every cell in a box except one belongs to an X or V relationship, then that one unmarked cell has to be a 5.

Looking Locally Before Globally

Newer solvers often try to scan the entire puzzle constantly.

But XV Sudoku often rewards a smaller focus.

Instead of asking:

"What can I solve anywhere?"

Try asking:

"What does this small neighborhood already know?"

Good places to focus:

- cells near multiple XV symbols
- crowded rows
- partially solved boxes
- places where missing markers eliminate possibilities

Small local deductions frequently create larger chain reactions later.

Cells Shared by Multiple Constraints

Some cells participate in more than one XV relationship.

These cells are often extremely restricted.

For example:

- a cell touching both an X and a V
- a cell participating in several nearby XV relationships
- cells surrounded by missing markers

These locations often become important anchors for the puzzle.

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Cascade Moments

One of the reasons XV Sudoku feels so satisfying is that a single deduction often unlocks several others.

A solved pair may:

- eliminate candidates nearby
- complete a row
- restrict a box
- create another forced XV relationship

The puzzle can suddenly “open up.”

These are some of the most rewarding moments in variant solving.

Why V Is Often More Restrictive Than X

Although both symbols are important, V constraints are frequently tighter.

Why?

Because:

- V only allows 1/4 or 2/3
- higher numbers are immediately excluded
- neighboring restrictions become stronger

An X still allows several possibilities.

But a V often narrows a cell almost immediately.

This makes V relationships especially useful during early scanning.

How I Usually Scan an XV Puzzle

There is no single “correct” solving order.

But these are some of the things I usually look for first.

1. Check Given Numbers Near XV Pairs

A placed number near an X or V often creates immediate eliminations.

Especially:

- low numbers near V pairs

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- high numbers near X pairs
- cells with limited neighboring combinations

2. Look for Isolated 5s

Because 5 cannot participate in X or V relationships, it often becomes restricted very quickly.

Sometimes an entire row or box only has one location where 5 can legally appear.

3. Check Rows or Columns Missing Only Two Numbers

XV constraints often help resolve binary choices very quickly.

Especially if:

- one option would require an X
- one option would require a V
- and the marker is missing

4. Look for Cells Shared by Multiple Constraints

Cells touched by several XV relationships are frequently good starting points.

They tend to become heavily restricted early.

5. Scan Crowded Areas First

Rows, columns, or boxes with many XV symbols often contain the strongest local logic.

Dense relationship areas usually produce deductions faster than sparse ones.

Gentle Beginner Mistakes

Forgetting That Missing Markers Matter

One of the easiest things to overlook is that missing X/V symbols are also clues.

Sometimes a missing marker eliminates more possibilities than a present one.

Looking Too Globally Too Early

XV Sudoku often rewards local observation.

Trying to scan the entire puzzle constantly can make important nearby deductions harder to notice.

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Forgetting Standard Sudoku Still Applies

Even though XV adds extra logic, the standard Sudoku rules remain just as important.

Rows, columns, and boxes still do much of the solving work.

Overlooking Restrictive V Relationships

Because V pairs allow so few combinations, they are often stronger than they first appear.

Afterword

Why I Enjoy XV Sudoku

I find that many Sudoku puzzles eventually come down to long chains or linked pairs.

But with XV Sudoku, even one violated X or V relationship can often make the correct path much clearer.

The added structure creates more opportunities for small observations and local deductions.

That balance is part of what makes the variant feel both approachable and satisfying.

It adds complexity — but also clarity.

And once you begin noticing the tiny relationships inside the grid, XV Sudoku starts to feel less intimidating and much more conversational.

Almost like the puzzle is quietly teaching you how it wants to be solved.

BONUS!

The cover page has a puzzle on it – it is a real, solvable XV Sudoku puzzle that requires using many of the elements described in this guide.

If you'd like to try XV puzzles, you can find free samples in the puzzle section of Curiosity Corner on oraclegrove.com as well as a growing collection of puzzle books for purchase in the Oracle Grove Shop.

Thanks for reading my cozy little guide! If you decide to purchase any puzzle books from Oracle Grove, use the coupon code Grove10 at checkout to save 10% on your purchase.

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