



How to Create a Bullet Journal

KS 3/4 appropriate

Concepts, skills and qualities taught:

This exercise may be used to encourage young people to be more physically active, creative, reflect on their daily life and to improve mental health and wellbeing.

Suggested age range: Ages 11 and up

Materials needed: A bullet journal or paper and ribbon to bind pages together into a book of your own; coloured pens; pencils.

The activity

The idea of a journal is to create keep track of different aspects of your life that you either would like to understand better or want to improve. Everyone's journal will be different with a selection of individual trackers according to need.

Suggestions for common types of trackers

- Why not create an **activity or exercise tracker** for the month – you could theme it by using footprints or training shoes to represent the days of the month.
- You could also create a **sleep tracker** for the month with the days of the month and a key for the number of hours slept and the quality of sleep.
- To add to this, create a **mood tracker** page for the month so you can look for trends between the level of your activity, the amount of sleep you get and the mood you are in the next day.

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How to create a tracker

For each tracker you wish to create, to do create a month-long daily log, draw 31 icons (or as appropriate for the month) representing each day of the month. Then create a key (see overleaf) so you know what your colours represent and colour one icon in each day in the appropriate colour. For example, for a mood tracker, yellow could represent happy, blue for sad, and so on. On the same page, or even the same tracker, you could also log a second trend, exercise or sleep for example.

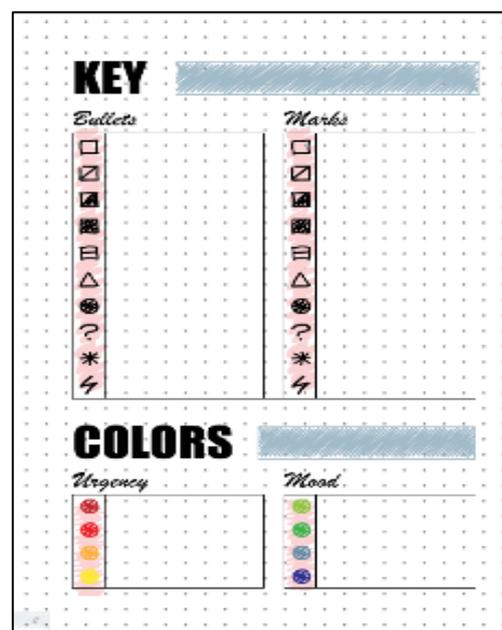
If you keep all your trackers for a month on one double page spread, this will allow you to easily look back and identify trends. Perhaps you will identify how changes in one area will lead to changes in others. For example, perhaps increasing your activity levels will lead to increased sleep quality or a more positive mood.

Your tracking pages need to suit your own physical and mental lifestyle so, for example, if you are a cyclist you could track the distance you have cycled each day. If you prefer to walk, track that instead.

Once you have some data built up, you could compare and share ideas from your journal with friends or family. There are also lots of ideas which you could use for inspiration if you search for 'bullet journal' online. Microsoft Word has some templates you can use to start you off.

Ideas for designing your own bullet journal

- First, develop your own **key** for your journal. Here is an example:



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Then decide what **trackers** you would like to create, i.e. what you would like to journal. Below are some basic templates from Microsoft work to start you off, but there are lots more ideas online.

<h3>Mood Tracker</h3> <table border="1"> <tr><td>○</td><td>○</td><td>○</td><td>○</td><td>○</td></tr> <tr><td>○</td><td>○</td><td>○</td><td>○</td><td>○</td></tr> <tr><td>○</td><td>○</td><td>○</td><td>○</td><td>○</td></tr> <tr><td>○</td><td>○</td><td>○</td><td>○</td><td>○</td></tr> <tr><td>○</td><td>○</td><td>○</td><td>○</td><td>○</td></tr> <tr><td>○</td><td>○</td><td>○</td><td>○</td><td>○</td></tr> </table> <p> Happy Relaxed Content Energetic Focused Creative Lazy Blah Just No Annoyed Tired Sick Stressed Emotional Angry </p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	<h3>Wellness Tracker</h3> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Mon</th> <th>Tue</th> <th>Wed</th> <th>Thu</th> <th>Fri</th> <th>Sat</th> <th>Sun</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Nutrition: Eat more fruits & Veggies</td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hydration: Drink more H2O</td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fitness: Play more</td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wellness: Sleep more</td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Nutrition: Eat more fruits & Veggies								Hydration: Drink more H2O								Fitness: Play more								Wellness: Sleep more							
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Other ideas for trackers include:

- Sleep tracker
- Stress tracker
- Personal productivity tracker – for example, how many hours of studying completed, class assignments completed, books read, tasks achieved

Use your favourite colours to create interesting and visually attractive designs which you can enhance and develop as you progress.



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Evidence

As mental health awareness is greater than ever before, protecting the wellbeing of young people is a priority of all public services. Research has found that 20% of adolescents may experience a mental health problem in any given year.¹ Moreover, 50% of mental health problems are established by age 14 and 75% by age 24², therefore any interventions that provide young people with coping strategies should be encouraged.

Journaling is a means for recording daily experiences and developing personal insights. Research has identified many benefits of keeping a journal, reduces stress and boosts mood³, increases productivity, enhances growth and learning through self-reflection, and supports well-being and mental health⁴. There is also evidence to suggest that journaling has benefits on physical wellbeing.

Journals, as described in this document, have been described as 'mindfulness meets productivity'. 'Mindfulness' describes a psychological state of awareness and a way of processing information⁵. There is a strong evidence base supporting the positive effects on wellbeing of practising mindfulness, by stress reduction⁶ (**Hoffman et al., 2010**), increasing positive mood, and reducing anxiety by enhanced emotion regulation⁷ (**Farb et al., 2010**). In addition, mindfulness meditation enhanced participants' ability to focus attention and suppress distracting information⁸ (**Moore and Malinowski, 2009**). Therefore, this practice of journaling will help you declutter your mind by writing things down, along with the many other benefits of mindfulness practice.

There is a great deal of evidence to support physical exercise as important for not only physical health, but also for mental health and wellbeing⁹. Regular physical exercise has been shown to reduce the symptoms of depression and anxiety¹⁰, increase sleep quality¹¹, increase self-esteem¹² and boosts mood¹³.

References

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