

## **Planning for an excellent year – a New Year Guide for 2015!**

I wrote this guide to enjoyable goal-setting back in 2012 for members of the original [5:2 Diet Facebook group](#) – and had such great feedback that I ended up writing a whole book about making your life better in small steps, called [5:2 Your Life: Get Happy, Get Healthy, Get Slim!](#)

But this original guide is still an easy introduction to the ideas behind planning in a fun way, and setting yourself challenges and finding themes for the year ahead. Oh, OK, call them resolutions if you like – but these aren't about guilt, they're about feeling great and focusing on what really matters to you.

So... read on..

### **The glory of goals:**

Goal-setting can get a bad press, but I love it – I've been doing it for eight years now, and if I've achieved my goals, I get very excited ticking them off – and if I haven't, I still give myself a pat on the back because it's probably been a tough year.

Here's my step by step guide to making 2015 something spectacular!



### **Step 1: choose three priority areas for 2015**

Decide on three priority areas, the parts of your life that really matter right now. I've added some suggestions below but invent your own if you want. It's better if you express them in words that inspire you personally!

These are the 'headings' for your year – you'll use them to set the direction you're going to take, and give yourself some objectives under each category.

Don't choose more than three – if you've achieved them all by June, then you can always switch to new priorities.

- Fitness and health
- Family & Friends
- Work/business
- Money
- Creativity
- Work/life balance
- Fun
- Organising my life
- Travel & exploration
- Home
- Love
- 'Giving back'

**Step 2: Brainstorm what you'd love to have achieved 12 months from now in your three priority areas**

Time for some blue sky thinking....



- Take three sheets of A4 paper and your favourite pens (use different colours if you like)
- Write one of the priorities in the centre of each sheet.
- Set a timer on your mobile or kitchen timer for AT LEAST five minutes per sheet (I'd suggest 10) and take at least that time to scribble down ideas all over the page for where you'd like to be with that particular priority 12 months from now. Some rules:
  - Don't censor yourself – this is a time to dream.
  - Don't stop! Keep the pen moving, draw as well as write if that appeals
  - Be crazy and crazily ambitious – image a super-year and a super-you...
  - But don't ignore fears or less than glamorous objectives – for example, under health last year I put 'go to dentist' as I'd put it off for three years. Not exactly a 'dream' ambition, but I did it this year and feel so much better for it (especially as it all went fine!).
  - Build on your own ideas: so if you put 'write more' then imagine what you're writing – emails, letters, short stories, sketches, poetry?
  - Enjoy the time to dream!
- Do the same for the other two priorities. You might find you're veering towards another priority as you write your options down, from Fitness to Work/Life Balance, for example. That's cool.
- Take a break!

### **Step 3: Use the brainstorm sheets to refine and focus on your objectives for the year**

You probably want to end up with between 4-8 objectives under each of the three priorities. Look back at your sheets and circle the ideas that seem most appealing, most important or both. You're aiming for a mixture of objectives that inspire and excite you, and ones that will have a brilliant impact on your life.



Once you've identified the important ones, write them down.

You might have heard of SMART objectives – they're specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed. It sounds like management speak but actually it's a good idea to be less woolly and more specific. E.g. lose weight could mean anything, whereas 'be a healthy BMI by this time next year' is a SMART objective. You'll either have achieved it, or you won't.

If you like, share your objectives with a close friend or family member and ask them to help make them SMART – but don't worry if you want to keep them to yourself.

### **Step 4: Make your list look pretty, print it out and keep it somewhere you can see it**

You could use different colours, or images to surround it, or print it very small and laminate it so you can keep it in your wallet among the credit cards (or instead of your credit cards if one of your objectives is about spending!).

What I did last year was to keep my objectives at the bottom of the to do list on my computer – it was really inspiring to be able to look just below the tedium like 'pick up dry-cleaning' or 'MOT car' and see what really mattered.

### **Step 5: Make it happen!**



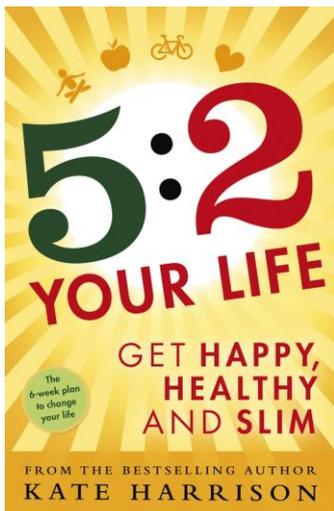
OK, that sounds a bit cheesy but all your objectives are achievable.

It can help to choose one from each category as your focus for the first few months of the year. If you've got a diary or electronic calendar, set reminders at the start of each month to see how you're getting on. If you review your goals regularly, even a quick glance, you're more likely to keep them in mind.

You might also like to add in a list of big events coming up this year – holidays booked, work events, family celebrations, anniversaries, so you can work around them and up to them. Then, this time next year, you'll be able to review a brilliant year of achievements: of course, life will get in the way and other opportunities will come up but that's part of the fun. Over the page are a few examples from my 2012 list... some of them are woolly, I admit, but I was much more SMART in 2013 and will be even better next year!

How was that for you?

If you enjoyed this approach, you might like [\*5:2 Your Life: Get Happy, Get Healthy, Get Slim!\*](#)



### What would YOU like to change in your life?

More time with friends and family? A more satisfying job? Better health and more energy? A closer connection to the place where you live and a feeling that you make a difference?

We're all so busy that sometimes tackling the changes we know we should make feels daunting, even impossible. But small changes can make a huge difference. And that's what 5:2 is all about: taking simple steps, on just two days a week, which will have a powerful ripple effect on your whole life. The 5:2 Diet has already transformed the lives of thousands of men and women all over the world. Now Kate Harrison, bestselling author of *The 5:2 Diet Book* and *The Ultimate 5:2 Recipe Book*, has taken her knowledge and experience to turn the diet into *5:2 Your Life: Get Happy, Get Healthy, Get Slim*.

An inspiring six-week plan will help you take control of the things that matter most to you, from your relationships, your work, your health, your leisure time and the dreams you've been neglecting. There's even a brand new eating plan to help you lose weight too – with exciting recipes and guidelines on eating the 5:2 way for the rest of your life.

**Small changes, big dreams – why 5:2 Your Life is no ordinary 'self-help' title.**

5:2 Your Life is packed with ideas, challenges, activities and psychological insights into the most effective ways to help small changes transform your life.

### Cut through the jargon...

As with her other books, Kate Harrison charts the highs and lows of her own 5:2 journey with absolute honesty – and her realistic, humorous approach cuts through the self-help jargon. The plan includes six weeks of challenges that are personalised to help you identify the areas of your life that need shaking up – and to make the good bits, even better! Each week, there's a different theme – with activities and tasks to help you achieve what you want.

Alternatively, if you have a major goal in mind already, like giving up smoking or changing your career, the DIY 5:2 Option can help you achieve it.

### **New 6-week eating plan included!**

5:2 Your Life also includes a six-week eating plan that complements the lifestyle challenges. You can choose to do them together, or separately – it's up to you.

*What are you waiting for? [It's time to 5:2 Your Life!](#)*

## Example of goals achieved and set:

2012

Writing

1. Write book 3 of Soul Beach – 99% done
2. Sony FutureScapes short story and other digital potential items - done
3. Research women's fiction and use it to work out what I want to write next– done

Health

1. Get to a healthy weight i.e. within correct BMI – yes!!!
2. Dentist and other medical check-ups I'd been avoiding yes!
3. Regular exercise I enjoy and can stick to - yes

Work/life balance

1. 1 x beach holiday & 1 x cultural trip – done, ish: Thailand and Tenerife
2. Revisit my Spanish – no, not yet (interesting – this isn't very specific and it's one of the few I didn't achieve!)
3. Carry on with dress-making - yes