your little book of
5:2
tools & tips

KATE HARRISON
Dear reader,
In spring 2012, I thought I was destined to be overweight and miserable all my life - the pictures above show me 31lbs/14kg overweight, fed up yet unable to change my eating habits. I tried fasting once - and knew it was for me. Within 5 months, I lost all the weight. Now, in 2018, I am still that healthy weight - not to mention happier and healthier. And all because I limit what I eat on one or two days each week (depending on how I feel): my fast day is part of my routine. 
This quick guide can help you do the same, with 5:2 tips, winning recipes from my 5:2 books & more besides. Good luck!
Kate x
PS say hi on Twitter @katewritesbooks
5:2 is as easy as it gets - this chart shows how to do the simplest version of this flexible weight loss strategy.
For more, go to the5-2dietbook.com

2 x Fast Days per week
Choose days when you're busy so you won't think about food. If you're female, eat no more than 500 calories on those days. If you're male, 600. The days can be different each week: but never do more than 2 fasts 'back-to-back'.

Plan your meals
Eat your calorie allowance in 3, 2 or 1 meals: there may be benefits in eating later/skipping breakfast. Focus on veggies and protein e.g. eggs, fish, chicken. Soups are great in winter, salads in summer. Drink lots of water, black coffee, herb teas. Count any milk with drinks.

Eat normally on the other 5 days
Enjoy balanced meals, plus some treats. Your appetite is likely to reduce over time. If you need a guideline, calculate your TDEE which shows what you need to eat to maintain your weight (fasting provides the weight loss on other days). the5-2dietbook.com/calculator

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facebook.com/groups/the52diet
SPEEDY TOMATO SOUP

serves 4, 44 calories per serving

Preparation time: 5 minutes/Cooking time: 12–13 minutes

2 small celery sticks, leaves still attached, weighing about 60g 6 cals
¼ tsp olive oil 22 cals
1 red onion, chopped 38 cals
400g ripe tomatoes or 400g tin plum tomatoes 80 cals
1 tbsp tomato purée 10–20 cals
few black peppercorns, crushed, or pink peppercorns, left whole
¼ tsp fennel seeds (optional) 3 cals
800ml fresh vegetable stock 20 cals or water and 2 tsp Marigold
bouillon 24 cals
salt and pepper
To serve: (optional)
pinch celery salt /1 tsp Worcestershire sauce 5 cals /1 tsp Tabasco
sauce, less than 3 cals

1. Reserve four small celery slices, ideally with leaves attached, as garnish. Chop the rest
of the celery and set aside. Heat the olive oil in a saucepan and fry the onion, chopped
celery and fennel seeds, if using, over a medium heat for 3 minutes.
2. Add the tomatoes, tomato purée and the peppercorns and cook gently. After 5
minutes, add the stock. Stir everything together then increase the heat and bring to the
boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 5 minutes, or until the celery is tender.
3. Blend the soup in the saucepan using a stick blender (it’s normal for some of the celery
fibres to stay whole and give the soup texture). Season to taste, remembering you’ll be
adding more flavourings later.
4. Serve hot, or chilled, with your choice of the flavourings from the list, garnished with
the celery slices.
5:2 Top 5 Fruit & Veg for Fast Days!

On Fast Days, choose fresh and frozen produce that will help give maximum flavour for minimum calories. All calorie counts are per 100g. For the recipes, go to the5-2dietbook.com/get-started/food

Cauliflower
With 25 calories per 100g, cauli is a 5:2 hero - its flavour & texture means it can replace rice, potato & even be used to make pizza. If you've never tried it roasted, you're missing out!

Berries
Lower in sugar than most fruits, with intense flavour & lots of micronutrients, beautiful berries are a winner! Fresh strawberries (32 per 100g) are the taste of summer, while blueberries (57) are fab in salads & raspberries (52) freeze like a dream.

Courgettes
At 20 calories per 100g, courgettes are cheap & plentiful - griddling brings out their flavour. Better still, they make an AMAZING pasta alternative. At around 40 cals per courgette instead of over 150 for a very small (50g dry) portion of pasta, they're quicker & lighter & allow you to be more generous with your favourite sauce!

Mushrooms
Magical mushrooms are low in calories (13-26 depending on the type), high in flavour & very nutritious. Wild/button mushrooms can be fried in the tiniest amount of butter or oil, or used in my famous Mushroom Stroganoff. Flat or portobello mushrooms can be stuffed, grilled, while dried mushrooms add quick, intense flavour too.

Seasonal veggies
From flavour-and-vitamin-packed spring asparagus (add a poached egg & lemon zest for a perfect supper) to summery peppers & tomatoes, & autumnal butternut squash, eating seasonally offers the most flavour, & is cheaper!
serves 1, 70 calories per serving

**Preparation time:** 5 minutes/Cooking time: 15 minutes
2g dried porcini mushrooms 5 cals
50ml boiling water
1-cal cooking spray
½ onion, peeled and finely chopped 19 cals
1 clove garlic, chopped or crushed 4 cals
½ teaspoon paprika (or try smoked paprika) 3 cals
100g mushrooms, chopped or sliced (use your favourite variety, but chestnut mushrooms work well in this dish) 13 cals
squeeze lemon juice
1 tbsp reduced-fat crème fraîche 26 cals
salt and pepper
parsley leaves or chives, to garnish

- Soak the porcini mushrooms in 50ml of boiling water for at least ten minutes while you cook the other vegetables. Spray a small non-stick pan with 1-cal cooking spray. Cook the onion for 2–3 minutes, to soften. Add the garlic & paprika, and cook for another minute.
- Add the chopped fresh mushrooms and a squeeze of lemon juice (this will add flavour and also helps prevent the mushrooms from sticking to the pan until they begin to release their juices). Cook over a medium heat for 5 minutes.
- Chop or tear the soaked mushrooms into smaller pieces. Add these and the soaking liquid to the pan and heat for 4-5 minutes, until the sauce starts to thicken. Stir in 4 tablespoons of water, if necessary, to help loosen the sauce.
- Remove from the heat. If serving immediately, stir in crème fraîche and season with salt & pepper. Serve topped with chopped parsley or chives. Perfect with Cauliflower Rice or Courgette Pasta (see The Ultimate 5:2 Diet Recipe Book for the recipes, plus a spicy mushroom variation!).
CONVENIENCE FOODS FOR 5:2
THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE UGLY

Convenience food doesn’t have to mean junk food – and when you’re fasting, it can be handy to have standby options if you’re tired or stressed or don’t want to spend too long in the kitchen.

Follow these tips to stay on track.

**DO:**
- Check the ingredients: the fewer the better – beware of anything you don’t recognise, or wouldn’t add to your own home-cooking
- Become label savvy: Learn to read nutrition labels: start with: www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood
- Beware of serving size ‘sorcery’: sometimes calorie counts are for half or a third of a packet, so make sure you check the small print!

**DON’T:**
- Assume ‘low-fat’ or ‘no added sugar’ are automatically good for you: low-fat foods can contain bulking ingredients, while ‘no-added sugar’ can still give you a sugar-rush e.g. in smoothies
- Think ‘free-from’ is always better: gluten or nut-free foods are fab if you’re allergic, but often contain higher-fat or calorie ingredients.
- Dismiss frozen or canned foods – they’re often great value & freezing/canning can preserve nutrients.

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**Fridge & freezer**
- Fresh vegetable-based soups (I love Glorious!);
- Yogurt: plain + fresh/frozen berries is filling & yummy
- Ready-meals: smaller companies like Kirsty’s & Easy Bean often take extra care with ingredients

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**Snack drawer**
- Home-popped popcorn without oil, add spices
- Some cereal bars balance fruit sugar with protein from nuts & seeds e.g. Nakd bars
- Nuts/seeds: filling & nutritious but v. high in calories so eat small portions!

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**Cupboard**
- Canned veg & pulses (e.g. chick peas): preserved in water not oil.
- Pouches of pulses, rice and grains are convenient & fast, but pricey.
- Tinned soups & pulse-based curries e.g. lentil dal can be cheap & tasty

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**Fruits canned in syrup –very high in sugar & calories**
- Couscous/rice: often they contain 2 servings in 1 sachet

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**Flavoured yogurt can be full of sugars/sweeteners**
- Some ready meals, especially ‘diet’ recipes, contain unrecognisable ingredients!
PEA & HERB PANCAKES WITH POACHED EGGS

serves 2, 222 calories per serving

Preparation time: 10 minutes
Cooking time: 9–10 minutes

Pancakes 127 calories per serving
150g frozen peas, 90
Good bunch/10g chopped herbs, such as dill, mint or chives, 5
1 egg, 66
1 tablespoon cornflour, 57
Freshly ground salt and pepper
5g butter, 36, or 5ml oil, 41
Topping, 95 calories per serving
Splash of vinegar
2 eggs, 132
20g watercress, 5
2 level tablespoons half-fat crème fraiche, 52

1. Cook the peas in a pan of boiling water or in the microwave according to the packet instructions. Meanwhile, bring some water to the boil in a medium saucepan to poach the eggs for topping the dish.
2. Blend the cooked peas and chopped herbs using a hand blender, reserving a few herb leaves for garnish. Add the egg and cornflour and blend until well mixed. Season well.
3. Heat the butter or oil in a large non-stick frying pan, and when hot, make 4 pancakes by spooning 2 level tablespoons of the pea batter per pancake into onto the pan, keeping the pancakes separate (if you don’t have a large enough pan, do this in two batches, keeping the first set warm on a plate in a low oven while you cook the others).
4. Cook over a high heat for 2–3 minutes until the bottoms are lightly browned and the tops are set enough to turn. Turn carefully using a spatula and knife and lower the temperature, then cook for another 2–3 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, poach the eggs: add a splash of vinegar to the pan with the boiling water. Break your eggs into a cup. Slip the eggs into the boiling water as gently as possible. Turn off the heat and set a timer for 3 minutes. After that time, check that the egg whites have set before removing from the saucepan using a slotted spoon. Place gently onto a plate lined with kitchen roll to absorb the excess cooking water.
6. Arrange the watercress on one side of a plate and place two pancakes alongside. Place the poached egg on top of the pancakes and spoon the crème fraiche next to it, topped with the reserved herb leaves. Season and serve immediately.
Interruption fasting is flexible, but some changes may make it harder, not easier, to lose weight so we always advise you try 'simple' 5:2 first.

Here are our verdicts on other approaches.

1. Limiting eating times on non-fasting days
You can restrict when you eat e.g. 16:8 means food is only consumed during an 8-hour ‘window’ like 11am to 7pm. This strategy can reduce the risk of over-eating, & might have a metabolic advantage i.e. help you lose weight faster.

   **Pros:**
   - Simple & flexible way to limit calorie consumption
   - Enjoy fewer, but larger meals, with more freedom

   **Cons:**
   - You can still over-eat in 8 hours
   - May not be suitable for those on medication/with blood sugar disorders.

   **Our verdict:** can be helpful especially for maintenance: many of us now skip breakfast/enjoy two larger meals rather than 3+ smaller dishes with no ill-effects.

2. Changing the number of fast days per week
Some people increase fasting days from 2 to 3 per week/fast every other day.

   **Pros:**
   - Increases calorie shortfall which may speed up weight loss

   **Cons:**
   - Harder to schedule 3 fasts per week
   - Harder to sustain & could raise risk of bingeing

   **Our verdict:** can be useful before holidays or a special event but is definitely harder to stick to. Don’t do more than 2 fasts back-to-back to avoid unwelcome changes to your metabolism.

3. Restricting calories on non-fasting days
Some people limit calorie consumption on non-fasting days e.g. to 1,200 calories, or combine 5:2 with other plans, like Slimming World™/WeightWatchers™

   **Pros:**
   - Increases calorie shortfall which may speed up weight loss
   - Feels familiar/reassuring
   - Plans can promote healthy eating

   **Cons:**
   - Hard to sustain like other diets
   - Plans may contradict each other

   **Our verdict:** this can work, but bear in mind sustainability - if you go too low on non-fast days, it gets boring.
**YOUR 5:2 MEAL PLANNER**

Print off copies of the planner to help you plan your meals and then monitor how your Fast Days go. You can experiment with different meal times or arrangements - many of us like to skip breakfast, for example, and keep track of your mood and strategies that help you succeed!

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serves 2, 357 calories per serving
Preparation time 5 minutes/cooking time 30-35 minutes
1 teaspoon olive oil
1 white onion, peeled and finely chopped, 38 cals
50g sliced fennel, 15 cals OR 1 celery stick, finely chopped, 6 cals
1 garlic clove, finely chopped, 4 cals
150g Arborio rice, 510 cals
30ml white wine, 21 cals
350–400ml hot fresh vegetable stock (e.g. made with 1 teaspoon
Marigold bouillon powder), 12 cals
75g petit pois (frozen is fine), 38 cals
30g smoked salmon (offcuts are fine for this, or chop into small
pieces), 66 cals
Zest and juice of ½ a lemon, 9 cals
A dozen or so pink peppercorns (optional)
Optional: 1 tablespoon light cream cheese, 22 cals (additional 11
cals per portion)

Spray a little 1-cal spray into a large, heavy-based, non-stick saucepan. Fry the onion
and fennel/celery for 2–3 minutes over a medium heat, until softened but not
coloured. Turn down the heat, add the garlic and fry for another minute.
Add the rice and stir for 2 minutes. Turn up the heat, pour in the wine and heat for a
couple of minutes.
Then begin adding the hot stock, a ladleful at a time, waiting until each one is
absorbed before adding the next: the rice grains will gradually change colour.
When you’ve used about half the stock, add the petit pois, and stir through. When the
rice is almost cooked but still has a little bite to it – this will take 15–20 minutes
depending on the rice – stir in the salmon offcuts, lemon zest and juice and cook for 3
more minutes, stirring occasionally so it doesn’t stick. Stir in the cream cheese, if
using. Just before serving, scatter the pink peppercorns over the top, or use freshly
ground black pepper.
Get the results you want

If after a couple of weeks of following this plan you’re not losing as much weight as you'd hoped - or your loss has stalled - it may be that the amount you’re eating on your non-fasting days is cancelling out the calorie gap produced by the fasts.

To get back on track:

1. Keep a food diary on two non-fast days: one weekday & one weekend day

2. Carefully calculate the calories you consumed on those days and compare to your TDEE (calculate at the5-2dietbook.com/calculator)

3. If you're over your TDEE, find ways to cut down. See strategies below:

Strategies for kick-starting weight loss again:

- cut out snacking - eat 3 good meals a day
- cut out sugary drinks and juices - & restrict alcoholic drinks to 1-3 days per week
- reduce portion sizes of carbohydrates like bread, pasta, potatoes or rice: make up the difference with more green vegetables
- consider adding an extra fast day during the week for a fortnight to see if that works for you
Brand new for 2018: ditch the guilt, love your food

a new, tried & tested plan from Kate Harrison, combining fasting with great gut health and a celebration of eating well

Ditch the guilt, love your food

The Dirty Diet is the antidote to ‘clean-eating’: the brand new four-week plan that combines the revolutionary successes of fasting with the latest scientific findings about gut health – without cutting out the foods YOU love. What does this mean? Results!

I lost 12.5lbs (5.7kg) in 4 weeks and I’m over the moon – I’m sleeping better, my IBS has settled down a lot and I’ve rediscovered enjoyment of food as well as a few new favourite recipes!

Jenni, 36, UK

I lost 15.5lbs (7kg) after 28 days. The Dirty Diet is the best diet I’ve ever been on – it’s the first diet that made sense because there is so much emphasis on me as an individual.

Bridget, 62, UK

I’m 10lbs (4.5kg) down in 28 days and I feel so much healthier; it’s working better than any other diet I’ve ever tried and it’s allowed me to change my eating habits and expand on my tastes.

Quinton, 27, South Africa

I lost 12.5lbs (5.7kg) in 28 days. I am proud of my achievements and feel that I can, for the first time in over 20 years, reach my goal this way. I felt so overwhelmed by all the different diets. Should I eat clean, should I eat paleo, or low-carb? Then I tried The Dirty Diet and I felt liberated!

Kellie, 48, Australia
fast day tricks
to stay on track & make it happen

plan your meals in advance

try

hobbies
exercise
hot drinks

distract yourself:

eat: veggies, berries, eggs, fish, beans, poultry
avoid: white rice/bread/pasta, sugar, alcohol

Join the Facebook group

Psst

you can eat it tomorrow!

LEAVE EATING AS LATE AS POSSIBLE

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want more tips & recipes?

Get veggie on your Fast Days - it's a win-win combination!

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Live happy, eat dirty
health & diet ideas for real people
PS: did you know Kate writes novels too? read more @ kate-harrison.com