



My Story

A journal and
planner to keep
track and live well
with MS

Let's stop MS together

Journaling as an aid to self-management

Journals and trackers are used by many people, in all walks of life. They can help us to keep on track, be more organised and plan busy lives! One of our Living Well with MS participants is a particular fan of these and was keen to share her experience of them and how they help her to self-manage and live well.

I'm a researcher and I love journaling. I came across the Bullet Journal format in 2015 but failed to make it work for me. I gave it another go when I was struggling with my mental health and needed a better system to plan, organise and look after myself. I started my first journal in June 2016. With hindsight my shoddy mental health was down to going through the ups and downs of getting a MS diagnosis - which came in November 2016. After my diagnosis, I pretty quickly saw the benefits of using my journal to help me adjust to life with MS and manage my symptoms. It started with note taking, writing down questions etc. but in 2017 I started to use it for more detailed tracking - which has been great for appointments with my neurologist and MS nurse. Why not give it a go and see if it works for you. Remember the journal is flexible and you can use it however you'd like to, so make sure it works for you - good luck!

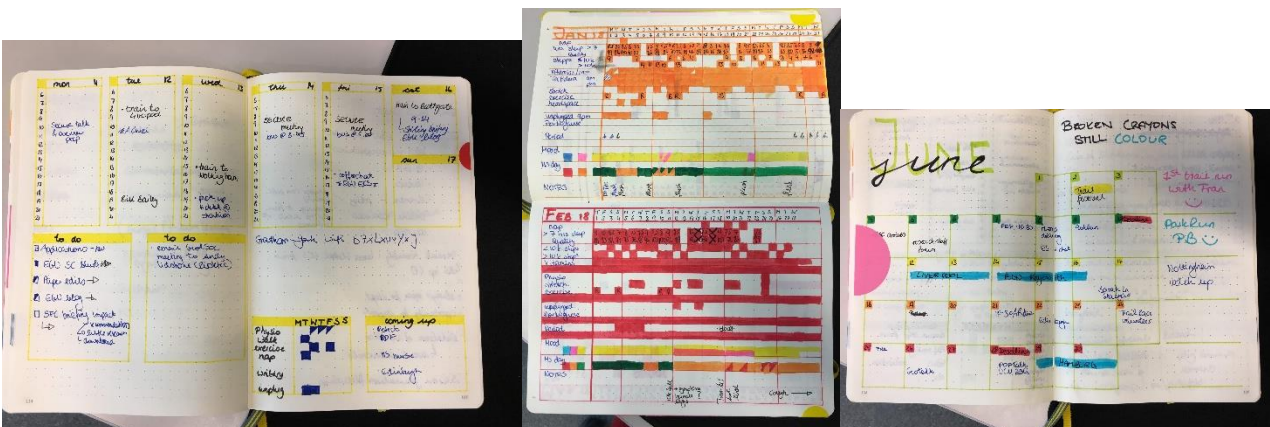
Steph

Keeping track of how you are feeling, symptoms you experience and helpful routines can be a useful self-management tool. Why not give it a try and see if it can help you?

Some of the potential benefits to using a journal and tracker are;

- To identify patterns of symptoms or other health concerns.
- Useful for keeping an eye on your health and can assist with communication in health care appointments.
- Help to highlight situations where fatigue or other issues may have cropped up or become problematic. Having this information can support you to plan and pace to avoid these situations happening.
- Support you to gain a better insight into your own health and management of it, to help you to self-managing and live well.

You can buy journaling books with set formats, blank books or use the sheets we have created here. It's important to find what works for you and your own circumstances. You want to get creative, make it colourful! Below are examples of Steph's own journal and how she uses colour and creativity to make it work for her.



Monthly planner

Map out what you have on this month. This can help you to plan, prioritise and pace the things you need and want to do.

Habit / Symptom tracker – use the right hand column to document your habits and symptoms and shade in the squares to show when you have experienced them. This is an easy way to identify patterns.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Notes																															

Daily and weekly planner – plan hour by hour to make best use of your time or simply use as a space for a list for the day.

	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	Saturday	
6		6		6		6		6			
7		7		7		7		7			
8		8		8		8		8			
9		9		9		9		9			
10		10		10		10		10			
11		11		11		11		11			
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20		20		20		20		20			
21		21		21		21		21			
22		22		22		22		22			

To do

Notes

	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	Coming up

How was your day? A space to record your reflections on what went well or what could've worked better.

Monday

Saturday

Tuesday

Sunday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday



These are just a few ideas for you to try out - we hope you find them useful to help you to live well.

If you find them useful or have developed your own way of tracking that you'd like to share then please do get in touch!

With thanks to Stephanie Zimhs for sharing her work and inspiring us!

We're the MS Society.

Our community is here for you through the highs, lows and everything in between. We understand what life's like with MS.

Together, we are strong enough to stop MS.

www.mssociety.org

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