



Bullet Journaling 101

Disclaimer:

This eBook is provided as part of the *Why Inflammation? Workshop*. It is for paid, private members of the program for educational use only.

This book is meant to provide information that helps you understand the physical and mental health benefits of journaling.

It is not intended to provide medical advice. Do not use it as an alternative to seeking help from a medical or mental health professional.

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Introduction

There are a lot of reasons to create and use a bullet journal, from wanting to become more organized, to looking for a more interactive planner.

Bullet journaling, created by a New York-based designer named Ryder Carroll, is a new twist on journal writing. The intended goal was to plan future events, keep track of things that happened in the past and organize things in the present.

This type of journal combines the best of planning, journal writing, creating to-do lists, and tracking important events in your calendar. It is a fully customizable type of planner that provides benefits like:

Giving you multiple views for your daily, weekly and monthly calendars

Providing a quick and easy way to keep your life organized

Allowing you plenty of space for to-do and tasks lists

Simplifies your life for optimal success

Gives you an overview of your priorities

Makes it easy to customize it to fit your needs

The bullet journal is ideal not just for someone who loves using a planner, but also someone who wants the benefits of a journal, but doesn't enjoy writing. Everything is done in a rapid logging method, reducing how much writing is actually done in the journal.

You may have searched the Internet to understand more about bullet journaling. In this book, you will learn what bullet journaling is, how to effectively use it, and learn how to make the most out of the technique. Bullet journaling is a lifestyle change because it changes your behavior about writing, organizing and priorities. However, the changes for the better are worth it and much more.

Chapter 1 – Introduction to Bullet Journaling



You are probably excited to get started with your bullet journal, but it helps to first understand a little more about what it is, how it works, and how it can be useful for you.

The more information you have to start with, the better your bullet journal will be.

One thing to remember as you go through these five chapters is that the bullet journal is customized for YOUR needs. Every decision you make is based on what will work best for you. Get inspiration from others, and use printables of layouts that work for different sections, but don't feel pressured to make it look or feel just like someone else's.

Let's get started.

What is a bullet journal?

A bullet journal is a calendar, planner, and journal all rolled into one. It becomes whatever you make of it, allowing you to keep track of your past events, help you organize the current events and activities, and to make plans for the future. It gives you a number of ways to create your journal and offers an easy way to make all of your ideas and plans work in harmony.

In the pages coming up, you will learn everything there is to know about a bullet journal, why it is beneficial, and how best to use it. As you will see, there is a lot to learn about bullet journals, from how it is set up, to the types of collections and pages you want to include.

All you need to begin is a blank journal or notebook and a pen.

A Brief Introduction to the Main Aspects of a Bullet Journal

As you will soon see – a bullet journal has a lot to it, but every single page and collection included is customizable for your needs. However, it does help to understand the basics first.

Here are some of the main pages that will be included in the bullet journal:

Index

The first page you will have in your bullet journal is the index. This works similar to an index in a book you are reading, providing a list of pages and sections in the bullet journal, and letting you know what page number each section is located on. It works in conjunction with your bullet journal sections, collections, and pages, making it easier to locate something instantly.

The index is more efficient when it is located on the first two open pages in your bullet journal, so it is easy to find and has adequate space within your journal to keep track of all pages and sections.

You will return to these two pages often, as you list the pages you create. More importantly, you will use your Index in the future to easily find the page of any number of journal entries that you need by adding the page numbers at the bottom of the page and entering them into the Index.

Future Log

The next part of the bullet journal is going to be your future log. The future log is a great way to plan for the near and distant future. It is meant to give you insight into the month coming up, including events or birthdays, weekend plans, work or school tasks, household errands, and everything else going on in your life.

To create this page, turn to the next two blank pages after the index, and write Future Log at the top of each. Divide both pages into three even horizontal sections. Use these as a six-month Future Log and enter the name of six consecutive months at the top of each of the six divisions. Add the page numbers at the bottom of the page and enter them into the Index.

Monthly Log

The calendar spreads are a big part of the bullet journal, starting with the monthly spread. There are many ways to customize the monthly spread, starting with a monthly log. Many people choose to place this after the Future Log in the bullet journal. Take a look at different templates to see how these spreads are set up.

Monthly Task List

For the monthly calendar spread, you can also have a task list, which may be on the right side of the calendar spread, or on a completely separate page. On this page, write a list of all the things you need to accomplish in this month. In front of each task, add a task bullet or a simple dot. As with the other pages, when you have finished with these two pages, add the page numbers at the bottom and log them into the Index.

Weekly Calendar Spread

Don't forget about the weekly calendar spread! This is going to provide larger spaces for you to write appointments, events, and tasks for each day of the week. It is great for work, school, and personal commitments. Just like in a planner, the order usually goes monthly calendar, weekly calendar, then daily calendar.

Daily Log

If you want even more space to write what you are doing each day of the month, include a daily spread or daily log as well. Begin the next blank page by writing a date at the top, then begin to write down all of the things you need to get done on that day.

Each one of these items will go into one of three groups: tasks, events and notes. These groups will have their own unique bullet style. For example, Tasks will be bulleted by a single dot; Events by an open circle and Notes with a dash. Obviously, you are free to use any type of bullet that helps you keep your journal in order.

If a task is very important, you should add an asterisk next to the bullet to indicate that it needs to be given special attention at some point in that day. These special bullets, like the asterisk, are known as 'signifiers', as they add priority to the bullet.

Collections

If you have notes that you may need for a bigger project and other tasks related to it, you can create a Collection on the next blank page. Collections are a good way to keep certain pieces of information together, or on-going projects or class information. As always, jot the page number at the bottom and Index your Collection.

How They All Work Together

As a new month is approaching, create the pages for the next monthly log just like before, remembering to enter the new pages into the Index. Go through the ending month's daily log and review the tasks. If you haven't done so already, cross out the items that you've completed.

For those tasks that remain, decide if they still need to be done. If not, you can cross through them. If they can be done in the upcoming month, turn the bullet into a Right-Arrow, then copy the sentence into the new monthly log. If the task or project isn't due for several months, turn the bullet point into a Left-Arrow and log the information into the month that the work should be done in the future log. This is called **Migration**.

That's all you need to do to set up your Bullet Journal.

The bullet journal is there to help you plan and organize your life and activities. It will keep the to-do list for next week or next month in the same location as your schedule for tomorrow. All of your plans are located in one place, easy to find and use whenever you need it.

Benefits of Using a Bullet Journal

Now that you know the basics of what is included in your bullet journal, it helps to understand what the benefits are. There are many different styles of journals, from a daily journal to a gratitude journal, and many other specific topics. With a bullet journal, you can write in it like a regular journal, but the main concept is about organizing and planning your life with it.

As you know, the bullet journal works as a valuable analog asset in a digital world. It's a way of briefly noting your thoughts, plans, events and other items of importance. It's different than the traditional idea of a journal in that your thoughts can be jotted down on paper quickly. You'll use just a few words and bullets (hence the name) and other symbols. No long paragraphs or flowery thoughts.

Some people use their bullet journals as to-do lists, planners, diaries -- or a bit of all of those forms of helpful self-communication. No matter how you choose to use yours, here's what you might gain from the experience.

Clarity

Do you have an ongoing low-level suspicion that you've got things to do and you're falling farther and farther behind? We all do. We're constantly assailed with the need to get stuff done. But what? And when? And how? Your first step, with a bullet journal, is to simply get it all down in writing. See what you're up against.

Organization

Your actions are constrained by the time you have to do them. But your life won't seem so challenging if you know how to react efficiently to the hours and days and months ahead of you.

What you hope to accomplish might be something physical, emotional, or financial. It might be as simple as a daily to-do or shopping list or as ambitious and esoteric as a long-term dream. It's up to you. But once you can set your tasks or goals or dreams in front of you and start to construct a realistic approach to getting where you need to be, you'll waste less time and get more done.

Stress Relief

Think about how good you'll feel when you have a realistic plan of attack in front of you and it all looks doable. That's what you get with a bullet journal entry -- the sense that you're moving logically forward.

You can see on a single page how realistic it is (or isn't) to proceed according to plan within the period of time you've designated. How does your day or your life look now? Don't you feel better?

Household Management

You're the president (or co-president) of your own small operation -- your family. Your "employees" don't always pitch it and can be occasionally disgruntled. Sometimes there's even disagreement within the management team. The operating budget is never sufficient, and your forecasts of future earnings are often off.

A bullet journal will help you plan your days, schedule play dates, school activities and away games, consider a job change and even plan and budget vacations or a new home purchase and move.

Setting and Meeting Goals

It's easy to say that you're going to build a garage, generate new streams of revenue for your business or plan your community's party. But those are just big blocks of dreams. With a bullet journal you can slice that block into manageable actions.

Take garage-building, for instance. Think of all that's involved. For starters, you have to plan the size and design, estimate the costs involved and figure out where the money will come from. You need building permits and to interview and select contractors, find and price building materials and schedule time.

A bullet journal lets you calmly and dispassionately figure out all that's involved, who will do what and the steps you must chronologically take to follow your timeline. You'll proceed with confidence, constantly updating the job in your bullet journal to correct your plans for new realities.

Is it Right for You?

Will a bullet journal improve your life? The best way to find out is to simply start one. It is such an easy and useful productivity tool that you'll be happy to make bullet journaling a part of your business or personal life.

Why Paper?

In this technologically savvy world, you may be wondering, "Why go back to paper?" It's a fair question. Apps are available to do most anything you need. But here are the benefits of using a paper journal:

Less Distractions – Less face it. You grab your phone to view your calendar or check your to-do list, and the next thing you know, you're responding to text messages or viewing funny cat memes on Facebook. Paper eliminates these kinds of distractions.

Many scientific studies indicate that handwriting your content will help you remember things better, as technology can have a distancing effect. Writing and actually forming

letters makes you feel more connected to them and the content they convey. Writing stimulates the portion of your brain that makes you sit up and pay attention. You've experienced the dulling effect of browsing Facebook or even watching TV.

You can do those things with half your mind engaged. However, don't feel like you must totally abandon technology. Technology and paper systems can complement each other. So, if you are used to managing your calendar electronically, there's no need to stop. The Bullet Journal has many more uses you can take advantage of.

Who it is Good For

You have most likely seen these journals on a friend's desk, online in YouTube videos, on social media, or even in your local bookstore. You might have opened up this notebook to see what this hype is all about and upon opening the book, seeing a bunch of geometric dots all over the page, being extremely overwhelmed, confused, just to shut the book and continue on with your daily life.

Curious if it might be for you? Here are some people that the bullet journal is *perfect* for.

People whose minds wander and have a LOT of to-do lists:

There are a lot of people who are content with making a to-do list on a daily basis and checking off their responsibilities in a monotonous manner. However, some people are overwhelmed if they can't keep track of almost everything in their life, they are always planning in advance. These people will have lists for everything, today to-do lists, tomorrow to-do lists, this month to-do lists, event lists, goal lists.

If you are one of those people who is not satisfied with one list and need a better organization system in your planning life, a bullet journal would work for you. The Bullet Journal gives you the flexibility to write all the things on your mind in an organized fashion.

There are no lines in the notebook, like the usual journals, just dots. And it allows you to create short lists, calendars, you name it. It will organize and separate all the things that are important to you without getting them disheveled and mixed together.

People who are creative and enjoy journaling, scrapbooking, and other artistic projects:

The great thing about bullet journaling is that it is a technique more than a product. Sure, the notebook is filled with symbols, boxes, and intricate layouts, but for the most part, the bullet journal is empty and gives you enough room to design your journal in a creative fashion.

You are given a blank canvas to which you can start organizing your entire life, stay on top of things, keep track of important dates and events, and have fun with it. When

adding colorful scraps and additions to your bullet journal, you don't interrupt any intended process that the bullet journal means.

This type of journal is not restrictive in any way and allows you to add your own creative flair without losing any productivity. Other agendas and calendar journals are super restrictive; they have set planning box sizes and dates and uses a format that you are restricted to sticking to. This can become boring and make the routine of logging and planning tiresome; making many lose interest all together.

People who have tried to get organized, but have failed using normal agendas:

Many people really have a yearning to get organized, productive and aware of their daily planning. However, they have bought tons and tons of notebooks, agendas and journals and time and time again, have stopped using them after a few weeks. If the standard journals, the ones that resemble the ones we have all grown up with since receiving them in middle school, have failed you every single time, it might be time to bullet journal.

You have tried the basics, now it's time to try something totally different and take journaling into your own hands instead of following and using the strategies and books everyone else is using.

The traditional journals are often too basic and might not accommodate the complications and disorganized thoughts in your head. The bullet journal allows you to address every single issue you have had with Journaling and lets your deal with them in your own way, with no restrictions and only minor guidance. If you have the final say in how you organize your life in the bullet journal, you are more likely to keep up the habit of using a Journal.

Everyone else:

There are no specific requirements for a person to use a bullet journal. The main goal is organization in an individualistic manner. Anybody who has interest in this might benefit from trying a bullet journal. Even if you never had a major journaling or planning phase, the experience of trying out a bullet journal is one that is worth the try for any person of any age. It is definitely worth the time and effort you put into it.

While there are definitely some situations where you might be better suited for a bullet journal than someone else, it can undoubtedly benefit everyone. From the busy working mom who is trying to get everything done, to the entrepreneur with dozens of lists and tasks to get done, you can find a way to benefit from it no matter who you are or what your current lifestyle.

Chapter 2 – What You Need to Start Your Journal



By now, you understand more about what a bullet journal is and are ready to get started. It is imperative that you put in the right amount of planning. Instead of just using the first journal you can find and making an index, it helps to start with a little more insight.

This chapter is going to help give you a little more information about the different sections and components of your bullet journal, before delving into the physical supplies needed in the next chapter.

One thing that will be repeated more than once throughout this book – because of its importance – is that you should personalize and customize the bullet journal for YOU. It is your journal, your planner, and your calendar. Make it work only for you and nobody else.

Basics of Starting Your Bullet Journal

At its core, the bullet journaling system was designed to work so that even a minimal amount of effort could result in a consistent and effective log of tasks and routines. Creator Ryder Carroll studied his own workflow habits before sharing the most essential elements of this uniquely adaptable method of record-keeping and scheduling.

Express your individuality with the bullet journal, and keep working on it. Remember...

Every bullet journal varies from person to person, but identifying the first steps in making one starts with choosing basic materials and a few simple layouts for planning and tracking on a monthly, weekly and daily basis.

Two Things Every Bullet Journal Needs

So what do you need to start your bullet journal. It is actually much simpler than you might think.

Something to write with and something to write on are the most obvious and important materials anyone needs before they begin their journal. While this can mean any kind of paper, it's best to make sure pages are bound together securely so that it can withstand regular use and any potential travel without losing pieces or becoming easily damaged. Pens, markers or pencils can all be suitable choices for use individually or together for a layout's design.

Many bullet journal enthusiasts refine their own specifications based on how much detail or design their pages need. The weight of a piece of paper, measured by grams per square meter (gsm), determines how durable it will be for usage and storage over time. This affects how well any writing tool works on its surface, which can be an important detail for people who use heavily pigmented pens or markers and want to avoid staining between the pages.

For others, making sure the inks they use are water-resistant or of archival quality is a necessary factor if they intend to refer back to journals after they're completed and stored away.

Three Common Components to Include

Because the spirit of the bullet journaling system lies in personal adaptation, there are very few rules to how it all works together. Most journals are a mix of chronological or categorical pieces. However, the single most important element is the use of what Ryder Carroll terms as rapid-logging. By fixing a dot (or other signifier) before every single entry on a page, each task or note has an easy starting point for more detail.

That can be as simple as checking the dot off when done or migrating it forward to the next list with an arrow, instead. Technically, a bullet journal doesn't need anything else to start in order to function at its most basic level of use, but the key and the index can become indispensable tools over time.

Remember the index we talked about?

Even when the task markers are as simple as that example, creating a key for what each symbol means is just as necessary as it would be for more detailed methods that might track progress and completion with other icons or color-coding. This is often kept at the front of the journal for quick reference, as well as the next common section for most bullet journals, the index.

An index serves as a table of contents for a journal and is typically written according to page order, though some may choose to organize by date or other themes depending on what their materials and layouts may be.

How to Choose Designs That Work Best

Though the original design for the bullet journal began as a way to make the most effective tool with the least amount of steps and effort, the intention was more about adaptability for each person as they used it over time rather than minimalism for simplicity's sake. Speed and ease of use are still important considerations for many people interested in the bullet journal system, but the ability to personalize the basic elements opens up so many opportunities for creative and conceptual layouts.

Pages built around scheduling or tracking tasks and goals typically feature a six-month spread often named as the future log, plus monthly or weekly layouts that offer a more detailed glimpse of the most immediate deadlines or important dates. Dailies, pages that are used each day, can be formatted ahead of time but are most commonly made on the day itself to leave as much room as possible on the page for whatever might need recording.

This comes from the first steps in the bullet journal method, which is to maintain scheduled tasks and useful itemized lists that adapt easily to change. As each journal develops, patterns develop that reveal important themes which can then be pulled together as collections each person can curate through the course of keeping their journal.

Using Pre-Formatted Pages and Accessories

At any point when a personalized style or system becomes difficult to use, reverting back to the simplest elements can keep a journal going. By encouraging handwritten and personally designed pages, the bullet journal system can be daunting for those who may not enjoy or are not able to create pages that work for their needs.

An easy way to bridge the gap between creating detailed or stylized design elements and maintaining ease-of-use from day to day is using journals or pages that are premade specifically for the bullet journaling method. Some designers may specialize in one brand's manufacturing specifications for printouts or inserts, but other available formats can be altered to many unique measurements for those who use blank or unformatted journals to start.

Stickers, decals, stamps and stencils can also provide accessible and affordable ways to add design without taking up time or requiring any particular set of skills or abilities. Bullet journaling is often used as a way to increase everyday mindfulness, so adding elements that make a journal a personal page-turner is an important consideration for everyone interested in the process.

With a huge social media community now sharing the ways they've used their journal throughout evolving trends, it's even easier to learn how to make a bullet journal that suits any personal preferences and any number of priorities.

Finding the Right Bullet Journal

While it's true that the bullet journaling system is designed to work no matter what kind of notebook is used, certain trends and favorite features have become the standard over time. Identifying preferred choices in binding, page quality, paper type lead into other considerations like formatting and plotting layouts according to the space provided or required.

Most journals are made to record at least three to six months at a time, but can also be used for shorter or longer periods of time. As well, the number of collections and trackers a bullet journal has can determine how quickly the pages are filled with other entries or calendars.

You will also find that many journal-making companies now have journals or notebooks specifically for bullet journals, including layouts and formatting that is all done for you. These are ideal for beginners, but you can really use anything you have on hand.

Journal Covers, Pages and Paper Quality

Choosing a hard or soft cover depends on how much wear and tear the journal should be expected to endure. For those who journal on the go and might be pulling their notebook in and out of a backpack frequently, size and weight will matter a lot. Some will only need to maintain their journals at home and can then experiment with notebooks that have larger or heavier dimensions.

Rotation is another important consideration when choosing the right notebook for bullet journaling. Depending on which monthly spreads or collections are used, a journal with a high page count may be more useful than smaller ones for those who prefer to reference past tasks and lists. More minimalist journal styles might work better with slimmer notebooks and a faster turnover between volumes.

If pages will have a high degree of detail or design, then thicker pieces of paper or pages that can be taken in and out of the notebook are more durable and appropriate choices.



Deciding Between Lined, Grid or Blank Pages

As you begin looking for the best notebook or journal to use for your bullet journal, you should also consider the types of pages within that journal. This is also personal preference above all else.

In many cases, journals are made with one style of page formatting throughout the notebook. This can be thinly or widely spaced lines as they are most useful for pages with a lot of text-based entries.

Dotted or lined grids can be better suited to stamping, stenciling or hand-lettered and drawn designs. Simple, blank pages are also common choices for more loosely arranged bullet journals that might also serve as freehand sketchbooks.

Using ringed binders instead of soft or hardcover bound journals offers unique opportunities to combine many different page styles into one journal. Some manufacturers make specialized binders and sets of multi-formatted pages for just this purpose, but other styles can be adapted for use with the bullet journal method.

While the designer behind the bullet journaling system, Ryder Carroll, offers his own branded notebook that comes with many pre-formatted features, many other companies have also made series of journals or inserts intended for use with this method.

Big Picture Ideas and Organization

Drafting layouts, designs and collections on a separate piece of paper ahead of time can help make choosing the right notebook for the bullet journaling even easier. Knowing how quickly a journal might fill up with regular use can be a deciding factor for the budget-conscious buyer.

If journal style and continuity are important factors for storage and future reference, choosing an affordable brand with the appropriate page count can minimize costs.

For certain journal types, embossing or stamping the exterior with the dates or year included inside is a popular way to mark the completion of a bullet journal. Some brands have selections in a wide range of colors that can help color-code the journals when stored or when used simultaneously for other major focus points.

Journals that function for personal use can be separate from journals meant to track professional or academic goals, so choosing different colors or styles helps keep things organized at a glance.

Commonly Overlooked Journal Details

The little things can make or break the perfect notebook for bullet journaling. This is why after you consider the basics, it is a good idea to think beyond that and how the pages will be designed and set up.

Consider Using Embellishments

Details like stickered tabs, ribbon bookmarks or attached pen holders might not seem like major considerations to think about before purchasing a journal, but they can wind up being an unexpected favorite feature. For heavily used journals that have loose inserts or stuffed pages, closures like snap-button tabs or elastic bands are necessary to keep it all together.

With the popularity of using stickers and scrapbooking accessories to enhance bullet journal basics, pages that can hold up to glue and tape applications are necessary for long-term use.

Don't Forget About the Quality of the Journal

Another factor that often gets overlooked until after a lot of use is how stiff the binding of a journal can be and how that influences frequent use. Notebooks that can't stretch or flatten enough can be difficult to write or draw in without the use of clips or a long time spent working the spine into more flexibility.

Ultimately, choosing the perfect notebook for a bullet journal system can depend on a little trial and error with a wide range of choices and specialized preferences. However, any pen and piece of paper can kickstart a personal bullet journal and a journey towards finding what works best in the end.

Chapter 3 – Setting Up the Journal



After you have purchased your journal or chosen a notebook to use, and gotten some of the writing utensils and other accessories, it is time to actually set up your journal. This is of course up to you, but planning ahead will save you a lot of time and headache later.

The more you plan, the more organized your bullet journal will end up being. Of course, you can always add or take away pages later through migration, but here are some tips for the beginning stages of setting up the bullet journal.

The Index

In the first chapter, you learned briefly what the index is, but you might still be unsure about why your bullet journal should have it. Here are some more details on the index, which should take up the first couple pages of your journal.

What Is a Bullet Journal Index?

A bullet journal index is similar to the content list at the beginning of a book. It tells you what you can find on page 3 to page 103. An index records where all of your pages are and what's on them. You can organize your index to whatever style suits you best.

Why an Index Is Helpful

An index allows you to keep track of exactly where a page is in your journal. Instead of flipping through the whole notebook to find "Grandma's Secret Chocolate Cookie Recipe," you can look at the index to quickly find the page.

How to Set up an Index

Creating a bullet journal index can be as easy as writing "Index" at the top of the first page of your journal and leaving the next couple pages blank. As you build pages, you add the page name to your index with the page number next to it.

Top Tips for Setting up Your Index

1. Make Sure You Have Space

The worst thing an index can have is not enough space. Check the number of pages in the journal and make sure you have at least that much room in your index. If you do run out of room, just flip to the back of the book and continue it there.

2. Organize It Your Way

A bullet journal index can be linear like a book index or categorical. You can list every page in the index as it is created. If you prefer to keep your pages together with their

specific categories, you can structure your index with different categories like “Projects” or “Calendars.” Each page will go under its category with the page number.

3. Be Specific

Use specific names to label your pages in the index. For example, instead of saying “House Ideas,” using “Organizational Updates for the House” will be clearer and make it easier to find the page.

4. Use Creative Bullets

Create your own bullet system for collections or lists that are unfinished, completed, or have been moved to another page or another journal.

Bullet journals can be fun and practical ways to get organized. Instead of floating lists or a hundred journals with only three pages used, you can keep track of everything in one place. A bullet journal index allows you to keep your journal organized the way you want.

Collections and Lists

One aspect of bullet journaling is the flexibility of keeping track of your responsibilities or tasks and notes in different specific manners or ways. One of the many ways people organize their information that they keep in a bullet journal is by creating and using collections. Normally you would make a collection in a bullet journal when you find a reoccurring theme or task that you routinely log in your bullet journal.

Think of a collection like a list, which can be a list of any information, tasks, events, ideas, favorites, or goals you might have.

For example, if you realize you are always writing "take your vitamin pills," in your Daily Log in your bullet journal, you might want to consider creating a collection to track specifically that section of your life. This makes keeping track of repetitive things much cleaner and take up less space in your precious bullet journal.

Below are some variations of collections and lists you can make in your bullet journal outside of your basic Future log, monthly log and daily logs:

Habit Tracker

This can really be about any type of habit you are trying to keep record of, such as exercise, healthy eating, water, sleep, and other habits. Simply use the bullets in your journal to outline boxes for the amount of days in the month for the habit you are trying to track. Label each pixel or box as a number to indicate the date of the month.

You can keep track of your ability to perform tasks and help create habits by color filling in a box every time you complete that repetitive daily task. Putting color tape on the edge of the page is beneficial as well, so you can easily refer back to it on a daily basis.

Your Year in Pixels

Another cool collection you can make is a giant box filled with 365 individual boxes to indicate every day of the year. Make a key of different colors which indicate certain moods. Every day, fill in a box with a certain color. After continually tracking your mood every day, you will have a nice overview of your mood fluctuations in a colorful artistic fashion

Book Tracker

Have a lot of books you need or want to read over the year? Keep a list of books and checkmark boxes next to those books to always keep track of your reading progress! You can additionally add a reading section to your habit tracker as mentioned above.

Pages

Here is another section of your bullet journal you want to plan out beforehand. Decide what pages you would like to include in the journal, after starting your index. Once you decide on the pages, you can then start organizing the bullet journal by putting them into the right order, and starting to number them and add them to your Index.

Signifiers

An important aspect of setting up your bullet journal is to choose signifiers. These are the cornerstone of a bullet journal, as they allow you to make notes in the journal without writing a lot. Writing traditional journal pages is not practical in this type of journal since there is rarely sufficient space for it. Instead, you choose symbols, known as signifiers, to represent each note you make.

Here are some examples:

- <3 – Use a heart signifier for anything you like or love in the bullet journal.
- * - Use the asterisk symbol when you want to mark something important.
- \$ - The money symbol is perfect for anything related to your budget or finances.

Get creative when choosing signifiers for various notes and lists you add to the bullet journal.

Key

Not everyone feels the need to do this, but for beginners, this is a must. After you have decided on your signifiers, you may want a quick key that shows you exactly what each

signifier or symbol is being used for. Putting it near the beginning of the journal, typically after the Index, makes it easy for you to reference as needed.

Calendar Pages

Since your bullet journal is being used primarily as a way to plan and organize your life, it naturally consists of calendar pages. We talked about these briefly in a previous chapter, but let's delve a little deeper into these pages and how they are set up.

Date: _____

<p>Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Text○ Text○ Text○ Text○ Text○ Text	<p>To Do's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ _____○ _____
<p>Birthdays</p> <p>Jan</p> <p>Feb</p>	
<p>Goals</p>	

Calendar Spreads VS Logs

The first thing you should understand is that in the calendar pages, you might have both Logs and Spreads. These are not the same thing, though for a more simplified bullet journal, are sometimes located on the same pages.

Calendar Spread – The calendar spread is what you see with any calendar program, app, or planner. The monthly calendar spread shows you the current month with a box for each day. Then there is a weekly spread with larger spaces to see your week at a glance, and daily spreads for things like events and daily tasks or to-do lists.

Calendar Log – With the Calendar Log, it is simply a list of things that will happen on that day, week, or month. You typically want to list the log items first every time a new month begins, then use that to fill in your monthly calendar spread.

Monthly Calendar Spreads and How to Create Them

Each of the twelve months of the year are usually given a single page in a bullet journal. At the top of a monthly page, write the given month and below number the lines 1-30 or 1-31, depending on how many days are in that month.

Next to each numbered date, write the letter abbreviation for the day of the week it is. Use M for Monday, T for Tuesday, W for Wednesday, H for Thursday, F for Friday, Sat for Saturday and Sun for Sunday. If you prefer, you can use the first three letters of each day. This one-page spread allows bullet journal users to quickly get a visual overview of the upcoming month.

Since you only have one line for each day of the month, use this space wisely. It's okay if you leave some days left blank, depending on what your schedule looks like and whether or not anything noteworthy is planned.

Pro Tips

One interesting possibility for bullet journals involves printing out a monthly calendar and gluing it into your journal. As long as you're not gluing in items on every page, a few key items glued in sparingly shouldn't disrupt the thickness or cover of your bullet journal.

Additional Pages

Before you start setting up the pages in the bullet journal, make sure you are thinking of any additional pages you want to include. This is entirely up to you and determined by your main use of the bullet journal. If you are in school, you may want pages with your class schedule or other notes about your degree, while people using it for personal use will have some pages dedicated to household chores and finances.

Chapter 4 – Rapid Logging



Before looking at some additional tips for your bullet journal, there is one more thing to discuss – rapid logging. This will really help to tie together all this information and understand how it all works.

Traditional note-taking and journaling can be a beautiful experience for any writer. However, the more complex the entry, the more effort you must put into it to make your note-taking or journaling reality. In fact, note-taking and journaling may become more of a chore, than an expression of yourself, the more complex it is. You may want to abandon your journal writing altogether.

You have another option. The option is referred to as rapid logging. This is how a bullet journal is composed. *Rapid logging* consists of four parts: topics, short sentences, bullets and page numbers. Now let's start your journey of rapid logging.

What are Some Topics in Rapid Logging?

The first step in rapid logging is to place a topic, or heading, at the top outer corner of your page. Whether you are in grade school, college or somewhere in between, you may know what a heading is. It is the subject of your journal, article or paper. A topic in Rapid Logging is similar. A topic is a short descriptive heading. The heading, or title, describes what you are planning to discuss.

The important thing you need to do is remember to take a little time with your heading. It will help you clarify or keep track of your journal entry. Once you have your entry, write it down. Each time you begin a bullet journal, or any note-taking, think about your topic and write it on the page.

You also want to number each page before you begin your bullet journal.

What do Bullets Have to do with Rapid Logging?

To successfully complete rapid logging you need to use short, condensed sentences. This is a one or two sentence blurb about what your topic. A bullet point is placed next to the short, concise sentence.

It is a must that every sentence you write must be to the point and summarize your topic. The purpose of the bullets in rapid logging is to get to the next step in the process. The next step involves the following categories: Notes, Tasks and Events.

For instance, your topic may be lessons learned today. You would write short sentences to include things like talked to teacher, lectured by parents and winning an award. Each short sentence would have a bullet point in front of it. After you have finished writing your bulleted sentences, you must separate your sentences into those three categories.

Your Tasks

A task is any type of actionable item on your list, and an important element of rapid logging. Your task will have a dot placed in front of it. Next to the dot, you want to further separate your task according to whether it is a completed, scheduled or migrated tasks.

For instance, you place an X next to the dot for any completed task. You may place a less than sign, or (>), next to the migrated task. A more than sign, or (<), would be placed next to the dot indicating that it is scheduled.

Separate Your Events

An event entry is any type of date-related notation that can be logged after it happens or scheduled. For instance, sign a lease would be something you would schedule. Attended graduation would be something that you would log.

Keep the event entry as brief as you can. It doesn't matter how emotionally daunting or personal it is. Place an O next to any event entry when you are Rapid Logging.

Once you have rapid logged the event, you can write about the event at length on the next pages.

Categorize Notes

Notes are any notations that include your thoughts, facts and observations. The note entry can be something you want to remember, but you are not required to do anything about such as you would with an event. Place a dash in front of all sentences you categorize as notes on your page.

Placing Your Organization into Overdrive with Your Rapid Logging

A Bullet Journal is a framework. Within that framework are modules. These modules are ways created to help you organize and collect certain entries. Your Bullet Journal gives you the power to match and mix modules to suit your needs. You have four modules: Daily Log, Future Log, Monthly Log and Index.

Migrating Content

Once you are in your second month of bullet journaling, you are ready to migrate content. Migrate means that you are transferring information from one area to another. This requires you to look at all of your previous entries. You want to take note of all the tasks marked with an X that you did not complete. Determine if the task is still relevant. If it is no longer important to you, mark out the task line. If you still need to complete it, migrate it. Next to the bullet, place the less than sign.

This shows you have transferred that task to the next month. You also must place that on the Task Page of the new Monthly Log. You can do this with both tasks and events, but not notes. Place the migrated scheduled entries to your last month's log to your current Future Log.

Place all scheduled items in your Monthly Log's calendar page.

If you cringe at this part of Rapid Logging because you hate to rewrite things, it is OK. You are supposed to not like this part of Rapid Logging. The goal is for you to pause and process each item. If the entry is not worth rewriting, it probably was not that important to you.

By migrating an entry from one month to another, this instills in you what is truly worth the effort to complete. A lot of times we become aware of our habits and patterns, but we fail to separate them from our good intentions.

Start Rapid Logging

Now that you know what Rapid Logging is about, it is time to do it. Try it for at least two months. You do not need any special notebook or journal. Pick one you like and get started. The best thing about Rapid Logging is that you will have a series of notebooks you can look back at as a reference point. This reference point show how much you have changed, matured and grown since you began Bullet Journaling.

Chapter 5 – Tips and Tricks for Bullet Journaling



For the final section of this book, you are going to learn some additional tips, tricks, and hacks for bullet journaling. This includes everything from setting it up, to choosing

details that will make it more efficient for you. Bullet journaling is completely customizable, so at the end of the day, you should create it exactly how YOU want it. However, here are some tips to get you going.

Bullet Notations

The bullet journal uses three primary bullet types that denote events, notes, and tasks. You learned more about this in the previous chapter about Rapid Logging, however you might still be a little confused with how this works as you are setting up the bullet journal. The Rapid Logging framework allows you to capture all your ideas quickly using four components: topics, page numbers, short sentences and bullets.

Here is a rundown of the notations:

Topics – Choose a page and write a short, descriptive title on the top left-hand corner.

Page Numbers – Number the page

Bullets/Short Sentences – Use short phrases or sentences along with bullet notations to help organize your content into three categories: Tasks, Events and Notes.

Then there are signifiers for your notations, like:

Tasks – Use a dot to represent actionable items, like taking your child to the dentist.

Events – Use an open circle to represent events, like "moving day"

Notes – Use a dash to represent notes, which can include observations, thoughts, facts and ideas.

You can go a lot deeper with various types of bullet notations, called signifiers, but the above will get you started.

Keeping It Simple

Those new to bullet journaling often find all the examples of nice fonts and complex designs overwhelming. Keep it simple at first and just focus on the basics. Once you master those, you can then start to experiment with design. Remember the goal is not artistic ability but functionality. Will it help you plan your life and meet your goals?

All you need to get started is a notebook, a pen and possibly colored markers, a ruler and a stencil. At this point, don't get sidetracked trying to find the perfect notebook; any notebook will do. You may even have a couple of unused or half-used journals lying around. Those are perfect for your first Bullet Journal.

Ideas to Get Started

Once you have your notebook and pen, you are ready to get started, but where do you begin? The best place to start is at the beginning of the book, which will include standard pages like the index, a calendar and the future log so you can find them easily. For now, just label the pages even if you don't yet have anything to put on them. You can always go back later.

The great thing about the bullet journal is that you can start wherever you are, with whatever you want. After your initial pages are set up, there's no rule for what goes on the next page. You might want to start with a daily page to plan out your day, a page of collections of books you want to read or a monthly page to plan out your month. What you choose is up to you. And as you fill up and number your pages, you will return to the index to fill in the page number and activity.

One of the most helpful things about the Bullet Journal is that you don't have to wait until the beginning of the year. If it's June when you begin, you would simply start your Bullet Journal with June. Maybe you're even starting in the middle of June, and that's ok too.

In the beginning, limit your viewing of other journals, as they will likely make you feel inadequate with all their gorgeous, elaborate designs. Sure, you do need some guidance and inspiration to get started, but remember to focus on the basics until you feel more comfortable. If you try to mimic everything you see other people doing, you will likely get frustrated.

Yes, everything can be included in your bullet journal, but not everything that included in others' journals has to go in yours. Give yourself time to figure out what's important to you.

However, it's probably not much fun if you are not at least a little creative. Go ahead and purchase some colored markers or crayons, even gel pens can be fun. If you can't draw or your handwriting is poor, use stencils to enhance your design skills. Purchasing fun supplies can help motivate you to use the journal on a regular basis.

We talked about signifiers earlier, those varying bullet symbols you can use. There are many different symbols to choose from online, because people create new ones based on their needs. Look at a few to get some ideas, and then go ahead and create your own. But only a few.

Don't get sidetracked with 100 different signifiers. Use simple ones like hearts, stars, boxes, etc. or use a symbol that has special meaning for special projects and memories.

Collections can be lots of fun but can get out of hand quickly. Just think of all the things you can categorize! On second thought, don't! Initially, brainstorm just a few things you'd like to keep track of and stick with those.

Need some ideas for what to include in your Bullet Journal? Try these ideas:

Habit Tracker – Monitor your daily habits, such as how often you exercise, whether you are getting enough sleep, etc.

Time Tracker – Track your time in one or many areas to determine how much time you spend on a particular activity.

Task Lists – Make lists of the steps you need to accomplish them the various tasks and projects you've got going on.

Goals Overview – This is where you have a list of all your goals, so you can see them in one place.

Brain Dump – In this space, write whatever comes to mind on any subject.

Gratitude Section – Here you can take time on a daily or weekly basis to recall the things you are thankful for.

Journal Entries – Use this space like a diary to write your thoughts about what took place throughout the day.

Schedule Time to Use the Journal

Perhaps you think keeping a bullet journal can get quite time-consuming with all the calendars, bullets, and special pages. It can certainly eat up your time if you let it get out of hand, but it doesn't have to. You should schedule time for bullet journaling just like you do with anything else. It's up to you to find and make the most of your time.

A good habit to get you in the groove is to spend time with your bullet journal each night. Thirty minutes to an hour should be enough time.

Review Your Day – Evaluate your day, mark tasks completed or move them to the next day, make notes about whether you completed goals, write a diary entry, etc.

Prepare for the Next Day - Brainstorm how you want the next day to look. What do you want to accomplish? Set up the next day's daily page in whatever format you choose. Refer to your main event calendar to see whether you have any appointments scheduled to record for that day. If you have any unfinished tasks, go ahead and write them down as new tasks for the next day, and add any new tasks.

Brainstorm how you want the next day to look. What do you want to accomplish? Set up the next day's daily page in whatever format you choose.

Refer to your main event calendar to see whether you have any appointments scheduled to record for that day.

If you have any unfinished tasks, go ahead and write them down as new tasks for the next day, and add any new tasks.

Refer to Your Journal in the Morning – This will refresh your memory on what you must do that day.

There are substantial benefits in taking time to plan for the next day. Putting your thoughts down on paper helps clear your mind and allows you to sleep more peacefully. In the morning, you will save time figuring out what to do first because you can simply refer to your Bullet Journal. Your day will go more smoothly, and you will be more efficient.

If you have weekly, monthly, and yearly pages, you'll want to plan time for those as well. For example, you may want to plan for the following week on Sunday evening, plan the following month on the last night of the previous month and plan the following year a few days before the end of the current year.

Final Thoughts

Since the bullet journal began, people have dreamed up numerous ways to use it. Always keep the important thing in mind. After you have taken the time to view everyone else's time management methods and all the pretty art and colors, your bullet journal system must be one that works for you.

Otherwise, you'll just be left with a book filled with pretty art and no substance. Your bullet journal doesn't have to be an art project. It doesn't have to win any beauty contests.

The best thing about the bullet journal is its flexibility and the freedom it allows. Every page doesn't have to look the same. You don't have to organize any of your content. One page can be a list of tasks for the day and the next page might be a list of movies you just thought of that you'd like to watch. There's no right or wrong way to use your bullet journal. It belongs to you, and you are free to fill it however you wish.

Now is the perfect time to get started on your bullet journal if you want to finally organize your life, keep up with tasks and to-do lists, and have one handy place for all the most important things in your life.

Have fun!