

This month, you're the star



A beloved necklace

I love stars: the gold kind you got in kindergarten for watering the plant, or my favorite, the starfish, because it regrows a limb if it needs to, a kind of natural miracle. To me, the starfish symbolizes resilience, the ability to change and become the person you want to be, no matter what happened yesterday. So it makes sense that when we set out to update and upgrade the SELF Challenge (page 113), our most popular program for more than 10 years running, we added a star system. You earn up to four stars by doing healthy things each day, such as working out, eating right, getting enough sleep and treating your body kindly by stretching. (I personally also count getting a massage or any soothing thing!) The fifth star is for a mental and emotional approach: talking positively to yourself. Each star is important, but

my best day is when I strive for five. Once I start to build my five-star day, I get invested, and I don't want to blow it by diving headfirst into a jar of chocolate sauce late at night. For me, diets (which involve negative thinking) never work. Aiming to earn stars is motivating, hopeful and really does result in healthy living and permanent weight loss, because, like the starfish, you can start fresh every day. Try it yourself at Self.com/challenge. By spring, you'll have a five-star body!

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Lucy S. Danziger, Editor-in-Chief

MY WEEK AT A GLANCE Not every day rates a perfect five stars. But that's the beauty of Your SELF Challenge: Every day is a do-over!

	Sleep well?	Eat right?	Work out?	Stretch?	Talk yourself up?	How many stars?
SUN	Got my seven hours.	Breakfast of champions...fresh berries and yogurt	Jogged 5 miles in the park.	Stretched my quads and hams so I felt loose.	Told myself, Five miles is awesome! Hooray!	★★★★★
MON	Didn't spend quite enough time here.	Check! Salmon for dinner	Took a yoga class, even though I stink at it.	Well, I consider yoga stretching! Hellooo!	Down on myself today because I skipped a swim.	★★★☆☆
TUES	Seven hours (though I'm striving for an earlier bedtime).	Lunch: chicken and spinach. Good stuff.	Early a.m. sprints. I'm sore—in that good kind of way!	Did my fave yoga pose, the Pigeon. That's a stretch!	I'm happy I pushed through that last hill.	★★★★★
WED	Eight hours of sleep. Finally!	Dinner out. Pasta overload!	Biked and fit in a little jog, too. Feels so great!	A whirlpool after my workout. That's good for muscles, too, right?	Rewarded myself with some cute new workout gear.	★★★★☆
THURS	Slept like a baby for a solid seven-plus. Yippee!	Three glasses of wine (oops)	Jogged 3 gentle miles to recover from yesterday.	Stretched in the park on a bench—sort of. I'll take the star!	Today I get credit for taking it easy.	★★★★☆
FRI	Watched Letterman when I should have been catching zzz's.	Turned down a muffin and had a healthy egg-white omelet.	Biked to work. Crazy traffic!	Too busy (OK, also too lazy) to worry about flexibility today.	Told myself three stars are better than none. (Trying here!)	★★★☆☆
SAT	Slept in and enjoyed every second of it.	Cooked a veggie-filled stir-fry.	Drumroll, please...I swam 30 laps. Woo hoo!	Stretched all over. Thank goodness for weekends.	Three cheers. A perfect healthy day!	★★★★★



LISTEN UP!
Check out my playlist (it rocks!) at Self.com/fitness/playlists.

Tunes to sing and sweat to

Research proves it: Music helps get you moving and keeps you going longer. I might as well not even put on my sneakers if I don't have my Shuffle. What's on my playlist?

- "Love Story" Taylor Swift
- "Single Ladies" Beyoncé
- "Say You Will" Kanye West
- "Rehab" Rihanna
- "Glamorous" Fergie
- "If I Were a Boy" Beyoncé
- "Miss Independent" Ne-Yo
- "Forever" Chris Brown
- "American Boy" Estelle
- "Love Lockdown" Kanye West
- "Untouched" The Veronicas
- "I'm So Paid" Akon
- "Closer" Ne-Yo
- "Live Your Life" Rihanna