

Messly's

F3 Pulse Check Workbook

Powerful reflective exercises
for a successful F3 Year



messly





Welcome to your F3 Pulse Check Workbook

Hi, I'm Amelia. I'm a Clinical Lead at Messly and an F5 Doctor.

At the start of each New Year, many people feel the urge to close the door on the year behind them and set new goals for the year ahead. For F3 doctors, January **can** and **should** mean something else entirely.

If you left training in August, then the New Year marks nearly six full months into your F3 Year. While the rest of the world is goal-setting for the next 12 months, January is a perfect time for you to take stock of your progress, goals, and aspirations for the rest of your time out of training.

In our F3 Workbook, I wrote that doctors considering an F3 Year 'face a momentous decision; one that could profoundly change [their] understanding of what being a doctor means, and that decision can be both terrifying and exciting.'

If you used that workbook then hopefully you came to the decision to do an F3 Year based on your desire to achieve something in particular, whether that was:

- to take the trip of a lifetime
- to save money to buy a home
- to gain experience in a particular specialty
- to try your hand at a new career or skill
- or to spend a bit more quality time with your loved ones

Six months into your F3 Year, checking in with your initial F3 goals and recalibrating your internal compass can ensure that you spend the next six months achieving exactly what you wanted to from this exciting career move. We call this deep reflection on your progress and challenges a 'Pulse Check.'

Think of a Pulse Check as an A-E assessment. Use it to review key areas of your life and goals to check their 'health' and identify things you can do to improve in each area. Doing this regularly can keep you on track to have the F3 Year of your dreams.

How to use this Workbook

This workbook has been designed specifically for F3 doctors but it can also be adapted and used by any doctor to check their progress against their career goals.

It can be used to help you:

- Remember why you initially chose to do an F3 Year
- Review your progress against your initial F3 goals
- Reflect on your achievements and challenges so far
- Plan the remainder of your F3 Year to help you meet your goals
- Start the process of deciding what comes after F3

This workbook provides exercises and prompts to help you explore these areas, and provides information, ideas, and additional resources to guide you in the right direction.

Working with Discomfort

A Pulse Check means answering a series of questions to help you understand yourself and your circumstances more deeply. Sometimes this can trigger difficult emotions as you explore negative events or challenges you've faced.

The key when doing a Pulse Check is to be non-judgmental and descriptive when considering your answers to these questions rather than ruminating on guilt, shame, blame, and negativity. However, if you are too uncomfortable to answer a particular question then please feel free to skip it. You don't need to use our prompts, but they can serve as a useful guide if you struggle to come up with meaningful reflective questions yourself.

You could simply think about your answers to the prompts, but you will generally find the exercises more valuable if you write something down. You can use long-form answers, mind maps, word clouds, lists of keywords and phrases, or a little of everything - it's completely up to you.

The benefit of writing something down is that it serves as a record of your thoughts and progress, and can be used again and again each time you do a Pulse Check. This data can help you identify patterns, bottlenecks, or hurdles, and help you keep track of your successes too.

Table of Contents

A: Aspirations Review your initial F3 goals and measure your progress

Exercise 1: Fulfilment Meter Audit how you currently feel in 8 domains to see which areas have changed the most since starting your F3 Year

Exercise 2: Prompts Explore your fulfillment domains using reflective prompts

B: Best Moments Identify the highlights of your F3 Year to date and consider what lessons you have learned from these.

Exercise 3: List of Success List as many of your accomplishments from the last 6 months as you can

Exercise 4: Prompts Explore your achievements in depth using reflective prompts

C: Challenges Explore the obstacles you have faced or will face this year and how you plan to tackle them.

Exercise 5: Prompts Explore your hurdles in depth using reflective prompts.

D: Direction Recalibrate your internal compass to help you decide how to invest your energy and attention for the rest of your F3 Year.

Exercise 6: Prompts Recalibrate your compass to ensure that you are moving in the right direction to meet your targets on time.

E: Experience Consider how you can use the rest of your time out of training to live life to the fullest.

Exercise 7: 100 Experiences Create a list of 100 experiences you'd be happy to have had by the end of your F3 Year.



A

Aspirations

If you watched our F3 Planning Webinar or worked your way through our F3 Planning Workbook then hopefully you started your F3 Year with a clear understanding of your reasons for wanting to take time out of training.

To refresh your memory, the main reasons doctors choose an F3 Year are:

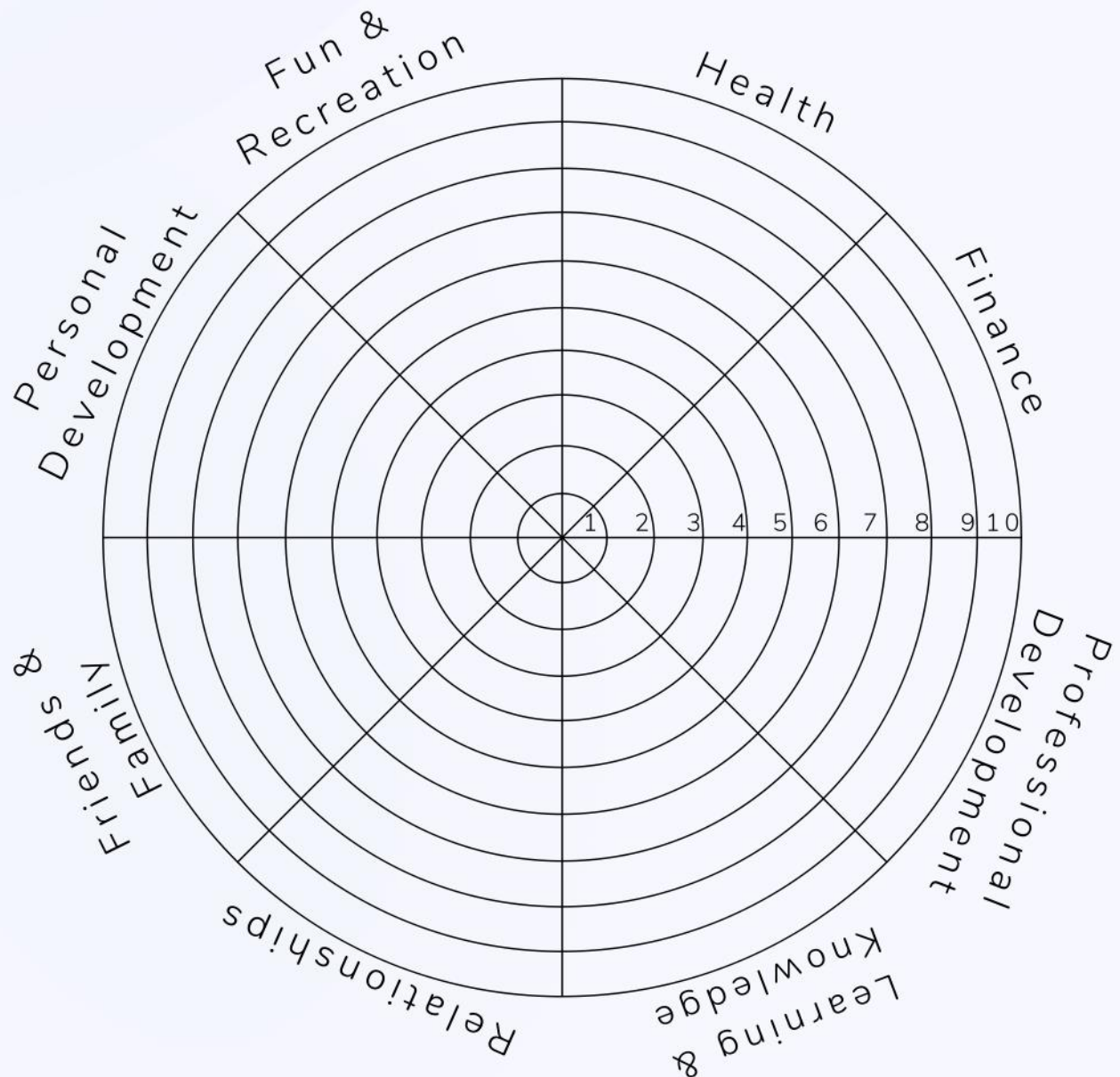
- **To broaden their medical experience** before committing to further training, or to bolster their applications to specialty training.
- **To recharge their batteries** and find a better work-life balance.
- **To find adventure and excitement** through travel or by working abroad.
- **To explore alternative options and careers** without committing to leaving medicine forever.

How significant each of these factors were in your decision to take an F3 Year will have been specific to you. Therefore, your aspirations and goals for your time out of training will also have been unique, as would the particular experiences that would make you feel fulfilled in your life and career.

This section of our Pulse Check helps you to compare where you are now against where you hoped or expected to be. To do this, you must first recall your **expectations** for the year. Then you must take stock of your present **reality** and see how well it matches up. We have two exercises to help you do this.

Fulfilment Meter

A fulfillment meter is a useful gauge to see which areas of your life are satisfying you, and which are not. Use this meter by coloring in each segment to the level (1-10) that you feel satisfied in that domain. When you are done, move onto the reflective prompts on the next page.



Aspirations

PROMPTS

These prompts explore your initial F3 goals vs your current reality.

- Which domains have changed the most over the last 6 months? Are these changes positive or negative? Expected or unexpected? Intentional or accidental?
- In which domains do I currently score the lowest? Why do these areas score so low and how do I feel about it?
- What were my main reasons for taking an F3 Year? How do I feel about those reasons now?
- What new relationships or connections have I made that are meaningful to me?
- How have my relationships changed since starting F3 and how do I feel about the way that these have changed?
- Which 3 people am I most grateful for and why?
- How has my income changed since starting F3? How do I feel about this change?
- What did I want to achieve financially over my F3 year? Am I likely to meet this goal based on my work over the last few months?
- How have I been looking after my wellbeing since starting my F3 year?
- How has my body reacted to leaving training? Has my physical and/or mental health changed?

B

Best Moments

This section is about identifying all of your successes, happy memories, achievements, and milestones. It's human nature to focus on the negative, perhaps because there is a lot to learn from our failures.



However, it is also important to celebrate the positives. If you think of life like a long and difficult hike, sometimes it pays to take a moment to look back.

Appreciating how far you've traveled, how much you've gained, the challenges you've overcome, and the incredible things you've seen along the way - focussing on your successes can enrichen your experience, sweeten the memories, and remind you that the struggle has been worth it.

List of Success

Use this page to write down all of your accomplishments from the last months. Whether you registered with a locum agency, did your first locum shift, finally took the gym class you've wanted to do for a long time, published your research, did a CBD, took a holiday, made a friend, got your first F3 payslip, or simply had a good night sleep.

Best Moments

PROMPTS

These prompts explore your favourite F3 memories and wins.

- What do I enjoy about being out of training?
- What has been the highlight of the last 6 months? Why did this make me happy?
- What have I done in the last 6 months that makes me most proud of myself? Why?
- What has been the most rewarding part of my work since starting F3?
- How many of my achievements over the last 6 months would have happened without effort on my part? What actions did I take to reach these goals?
- How did these achievements influence who I am today and what did they teach me about myself, my needs, my desires, and my goals going forward?
- What teams or departments have I worked in in the last year, which was my favourite and why?
- How did I advocate for my patients in the last 6 months?
- How have I stayed up-to-date on medical advancements and best practices?
- Which three photographs from the last 6 months captured my happiest moments?
- What skill have I improved over the last 6 months?

C

Challenges

This section is about identifying the most difficult moments of your F3 Year so far and considering the factors that influenced these outcomes.



*I have not failed. I have found
10,000 ways that don't work.*

Thomas Edison

Failure is inevitable, but the idea that failure is bad is incorrect. The only true way to fail is to not learn when things don't go to plan. Thomas Edison reframed his failures as successful learning opportunities, and through his learning he shaped the World we live in today.



Your impact doesn't have to be as profound as Edison's in order to gain meaningful insights from your failures. Understanding how our actions influence the World around us is essential in creating the life and career that we want.

It is true that sometimes, we do not have the power to change things no matter how hard we try. People get sick, interviews go badly, and pandemics happen. But how we respond to unexpected events can help us identify opportunities, improve services, and develop resilience.

Challenges

PROMPTS

These prompts explore your biggest hurdles and learning opportunities.

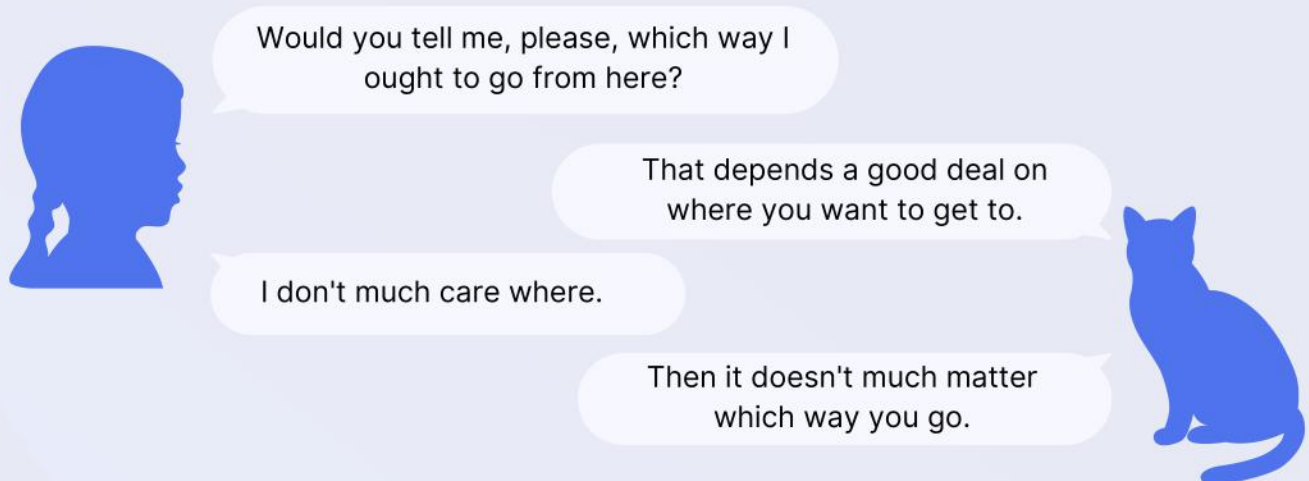
- What do I miss about being in training and can I incorporate these things into my F3?
- What were the worst parts of the last 6 months? Which memories make me feel sad, angry, or stressed?
- Which opportunities did I miss? Which failures kicked my confidence? Which decisions do I regret?
- What was the most challenging part of my work this year and what did it teach me about myself as a medical professional? Has it highlighted potential areas for development?
- Of the challenging experiences over the last 6 months, what actions or decisions did I make that contributed to that moment?
- How did I overcome any challenges over the last 6 months? Did it involve working alone or involving others?
- If I could live the last 6 months again, what would I spend more or less time doing?

D

Direction

This section is about reorienting yourself to your goals so that you can continue to move in the right direction.

Taking an F3 Year means stepping off the treadmill of training that has kept you moving steadily one way for a long time. As an F3 you can finally run freely, but without a good sense of direction, you risk going in circles or ending up somewhere you don't want to be. This can be illustrated by a quote from Alice in Wonderland when she reaches a fork in the road.



F3 is a great time to explore different paths, but having overarching goals for the year is still important for making the most of this opportunity. An annual appraisal is a requirement for most F3 doctors so it is important to keep that in mind as you go through the year.

It is easy to get caught up in the minutiae of your day-to-day work and life and forget to occasionally step back to appreciate the bigger picture. Success rarely comes from one big action, but a series of small, incremental steps toward a larger goal.

Direction

PROMPTS

These prompts help you reorientate yourself to reach your goals.

- What project, skill, or habit do I wish I had devoted more time to over the last 6 months, and what is stopping me from changing that today?
- If I knew I couldn't fail, how would I spend my time, energy, and attention for the rest of my F3 year?
- Am I getting the mentorship, supervision, learning, teaching, and research opportunities I expected? If not, what is stopping me from getting these opportunities and what actions could I take to change that?
- How accurately does my portfolio from the last 6 months reflect the work I have done and what 3 things could I add to it over the next 6 months?
- If I spent the next 6 months doing exactly what I have for the last 6 months, would I feel that my F3 year was a success at the end of it?
- How does this F3 experience bring me closer to the person I want to be in 10 years?
- Do I know what I plan to do after F3 ends and what steps have I taken to secure the outcome that I want to have post-F3?
- What one outcome would make me feel the most successful if it was realised in the next 6 months? What steps would I need to take in order to achieve this goal?

E Experience

This is the most fun section of your Pulse Check because it challenges you to think about all of the experiences you want to have in your life, and break them down into actionable steps.

Think back to the 8 domains of your fulfillment meter:

- Health
- Finance
- Professional development
- Learning and knowledge
- Relationships
- Friends and family
- Personal development
- Fun and recreation



Using these domains as prompts, come up with 100 actions that you can do over the next 6 months. The trick is to make sure that each action can be achieved in a couple of hours or less, and can be satisfactorily ticked off the list once it is done.

Try and write things like;

'Go for a run' instead of 'exercise more.'

'Read X book' rather than 'read for 30 mins every night.'

'Book a paragliding experience' instead of 'be more adventurous.'

This exercise is not about habit-building, but about collecting life experiences that will bring you a sense of joy, satisfaction, contentment, excitement, and fulfillment.

100 Experiences

Use these pages to write down 100 actions that will bring you a sense of joy and fulfillment. They should be actions that can be completed in a couple hours or less, and ticked off when done. The first 20 may come easily but the next 20 will be harder. Push through the brain blocks until you get to 100. Once the ideas start flowing, there'll be no stopping you!

100 Experiences continued

F3 Pulse Check Resources

Congratulations, you have now done a Pulse Check! Hopefully now you can:

- appreciate how far you have come,
- identify what you did well or might do differently in the future,
- understand what you need to do next to get where you want to be,
- have a list of things you'd like to do to make your F3 year one of your best and most successful years ever.

The final step is to check out the additional resources which will help you meet your F3 goals (we suspect that appraisal features on the list of things you need to do over the next 6 months). Messly has an incredible trove of resources and articles specifically written for F3 doctors which you can check out by clicking the links below.

Portfolio Companion www.portfolio.messly.com

Find out everything you need to know about portfolios and appraisal in our Portfolio companion. It has templates, worked examples, and specific appraisal guides for F3 doctors.

F3 Hub www.messly.com/f3-hub

The best of Messly's content, guides, and videos for planning your F3 year.

F3 Planning Workbook and Webinar tinyurl.com/bdf6fufz and tinyurl.com/mvphty44

The OG F3 goal-setting workbook and workshop for budding F3s.

Locums

Find out how locuming works: www.messly.com/blog/locum-doctor-hub

Find quick answers to your locum questions: app.messly.com/academy

Register for Messly's Locum Finding Service: www.messly.com/doctor/f3-locum

Australia / New Zealand

Messly's guide: www.messly.com/blog/ultimate-guide-working-australia-junior-doctor

See a selection of live jobs in AUS and NZ: www.messly.com/blog/australia

Exams tinyurl.com/2estdur8

For exam dates and details, search 'membership exams' on www.healthcareers.nhs.uk or enter the URL above.

Specialty Applications tinyurl.com/y4wfbw36

For specialty application dates, search 'recruitment timelines' on www.specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk or enter the URL above.

Jobs www.jobs.nhs.uk

Find Clinical Fellowship and Trust Grade jobs online.

