
SMART GOALS

If you're really serious about achieving your goals, make them SMART. S.M.A.R.T. is an acronym that stands for specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely. By learning about SMART goals and how to set them specifically for your health and wellness objectives, you're more likely to get the healthier lifestyle you want.

SPECIFIC

A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. To set a specific goal you must answer the six "W" questions:

- Who: Who is involved?
- What: What do I want to accomplish?
- Where: Identify a location.
- When: Establish a time frame.
- Which: Identify requirements and constraints.
- Why: List specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.

EXAMPLE: A general goal would be, "Get in shape." But a specific goal would say, "Join a health club and work out three days a week."

MEASURABLE

Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress on each goal you set. When you measure your progress, you stay on track, reach your target dates and experience the exhilaration of achievement that motivates you to reach your goals.

To determine if your goal is measurable, ask yourself questions such as:

- How much?
- How many?
- How will I know when it is accomplished?

ATTAINABLE

When you identify the goals that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways to make them come true. You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills and financial capacity to reach them. You begin seeing previously overlooked opportunities to bring yourself closer to the achievement of your goals.

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You can attain most any goal you set when you plan your steps wisely and establish a time frame that allows you to carry out those steps. Goals that may have seemed far away and out of reach eventually move closer and become attainable, not because your goals shrink, but because you grow and expand to match them. When you list your goals you build your self-image. You see yourself as worthy of these goals, and develop the traits and personality that allow you to possess them.

A can also stand for **accountable**.

Most of the time people know what they SHOULD be doing. SMART goals make us accountable. The trick is being accountable to yourself (or being accountable to your support system of friends and family) to accomplish your short term SMART goal. It's also important to stick to them even when you may be going through a difficult period of time. When we set goals, we have to keep in mind the upsets and changes that come our way and still accept personal responsibility for whether we achieve our goal or not. I'm not advocating beating yourself up, but being honest about your role in your own missteps helps you make SMARTer goals in the future.

REALISTIC

To be realistic, a goal must represent an objective toward which you are both WILLING and ABLE to work. A goal can be both high and realistic; you are the only one who can decide just how high your goal should be. But be sure that every goal represents substantial progress. A high goal is frequently easier to reach than a low one because a low goal exerts low motivational force. Some of the hardest jobs you ever accomplished actually seem easy simply because they were a labor of love.

Your goal is probably realistic if you truly BELIEVE that it can be accomplished. Additional ways to know if your goal is realistic is to determine if you have accomplished anything similar in the past or ask yourself what conditions would have to exist to accomplish this goal.

TIMELY

A goal should be grounded within a time frame. With no time frame tied to it there's no sense of urgency. If you want to lose 10 lbs, when do you want to lose it by? "Someday" won't work. But if you anchor it within a timeframe, "by May 1st," "before my daughter's wedding," etc., then you've set your unconscious mind into motion to begin working on the goal.

T can also stand for **tangible**.

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A goal is tangible when you can experience it with one of the senses; taste, touch, smell, sight or hearing. When your goal is tangible you have a better chance of making it specific and measurable and thus attainable.

Here are a few examples of SMART goals to help you on your journey of successful accomplishments:

- ***Nutrition example SMART goal:*** I will eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables daily for at least 4 days per week on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.
- ***Another Nutrition example SMART goal:*** I will drink at least 64oz of water per day at least 5 days per week. I will drink a glass of water before drinking anything else; furthermore, I will have water with every meal.
- ***Fitness example SMART goal:*** I will work out by doing cardiovascular activity of walking 3 days per week on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. I will do this at the gym for 30-45 minutes from 5:45pm-6:30pm. I will pack my gym clothes with me and bring them to work for no excuses.
- ***Life Balance example SMART goal:*** I will take one hour for myself every evening of the work week to turn off my work phone and computer. During this time, I will do something for me, spend time with my family, read a book, meditate or do something physically active around the house.

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S

**Make it
Specific**

What do you want to accomplish?

M

**Make it
Measurable**

How will you know when you accomplished your goal?

A

**Make it
Attainable**

How can the goal be accomplished?

R

**Make it
Relevant**

Is the goal worth working hard to accomplish?
Explain.

T

**Make it
Timely**

By when will the goal be accomplished?