

SMART Goal Setting

A goal should provide guidance and direction. Goals like ‘lose weight’, ‘eat better’, or ‘have less stress’ are far too vague and unspecific to help very much in making change. Use the S.M.A.R.T. criteria to help put more detail into your goal. Spending some time creating effective goals will be a huge help later on.

S - Specific:

- You must state your goal as specifically as possible.
- Try to put as much decision work into your goal now.
- Set the goal “lose 20 pounds” instead of “lose weight”.
- But you can do even better. Try “Lose 20 pounds by increasing my exercise to 4 times a week and reducing sugar and portion size”.
- Have your goal be like an instruction telling you what to do.

M - Measurable:

- You need to have a way to measure progress.
- Progress will feel good and measuring will keep you from cheating. The goal “lose 20 pounds” can be measured by a scale.
- Produce evidence for your progress. If your goal is to “reduce stress” create a stress measure for yourself like the number of times you get upset every day.
- Keep a log and record each stressful reaction.

A - Attainable:

- Your goal should be meaningful to you. It should be set by you, not someone else.
- The goal should be inspiring enough that it motivates you to success. If you are not determined to meet your goal, obstacles will be very difficult to overcome.
- If your doctor says, “lose weight” but you are not inspired by this, find another goal that also improves your health while you try to find a way to become inspired about weight loss.

R - Realistic:

- Goals should be ambitious, but not impossible.
- Do not set yourself up for failure.
- Choose a goal that you are confident you can reach, but that will stretch yourself also.
- Break large goals into smaller goals.
- Create a plan to do all the steps you need.

T– Time Based:

- When will you finish your goal?
- You need to choose a time, the sooner the better.
- Saying “I will lose 20 pounds in 3 months” is good, but saying “I will lose an average of 2 pounds every week for 10 weeks” is better.

Write your goal:

Now really think about your goal. Finish the following sentence, write it down and put it somewhere you can see it.

I will [your goal here] **by** [how you will do the goal]. I will know I am making progress because [how you will measure the goal] [time goes here].



For example: I will lose 20 pounds by increasing my exercise to 4 times a week and cutting back on sugar and [portion size](#). I will know I am making progress because I will lose 2 pounds a week for ten weeks.

Now evaluate your goal – is it **Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-Based**? Good. Now go do it!

My goal is: I will

By: _____

I will know I am making progress because:

My goal is:

- ☐ Specific
- ☐ Attainable
- ☐ Realistic
- ☐ Time based

Things I need to do so that I can be ready:

Who will hold me accountable: _____
