



Be S.M.A.R.T

Use the SMART principle. Determine all the eating, exercise, stress management/mismanagement, and any other habits you know you need to change.

GOALSETTING

1. Be **specific**. A couple of common, non-specific goals are: "I will watch what I eat," and "I will exercise more." Some specific goals would sound something like this: "I will read a book about exercise," "I will begin walking briskly for 15 minutes in the morning and 15 minutes in the evening three days a week for the first month and four days a week the second month," "I will buy a resistance band and a book demonstrating exercises and will add resistance training 2 days a week to my current cardiovascular exercise," "I will keep a food and exercise log for 2 weeks," "I will keep a pair of tennis shoes in my desk drawer at work to encourage me to use my breaks for physical activity," "I will cut up fruits and vegetables and put them in baggies on the weekend so my family and I can grab them and go." There are a million possibilities for you to put your signature on.
2. Create **measurable** goals so you will know when you have accomplished the goal. Examples would be lowering your cholesterol, blood pressure, blood sugar, or weight to specific numbers.
3. **Action-oriented** indicates the actions you are going to do to meet your goals.
4. **Realistic** goals are ones that are consistent with your ability. An unrealistic goal for someone who does not like to run would be: "I will start running in the morning before work, even though I don't like to." Running is not the ultimate form of exercise - there are so many other options! Choose ones that you look forward to and provide a little challenge, too.
5. **Time-bound** goals include a timeframe within which they can be accomplished. The example given earlier of losing 10% of current body weight within 6 months refers to a time frame.

SMART

Specific
Measurable
Action-oriented
Realistic
Time-bound

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The Council for Disability Awareness



A short-term goal would be something you want to attain in a week or two, or a time frame that works for you. Once that time is up, reevaluate, and consider if the plan is working or if you need to tweak the plan to overcome any obstacles. There is trial and error involved, so don't get discouraged! Take small steps and build on your new habits one at a time. **Planning can really make a difference in your ability to succeed.**

Life happens, too; so you also need to be creative and be ready with ways to deal with the unexpected - the unplanned roadblocks that could potentially keep you from reaching the goals you have set. With all the commitments in your life, making changes you know you need to make can be difficult. But it's not impossible. You should fall somewhere on your list of commitments. **Taking care of yourself now may translate into future vitality and independent living.** Become physically and fiscally fit!

Adapted from the Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. [6 Strategies for Successful Weight Loss](#) Retrieved May 3, 2005.

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