



SETTING SMART GOALS

As a new year approaches, you might be thinking of life goals that you would like to pursue. Whatever personal or professional targets you may aim for — be it career, health, family, education, or finances — establishing SMART goals can help prepare you for — and guide you to — successful outcomes.

SMART is an acronym to help you remember the main qualities of a good action plan. In general, the SMART method provides a simplified framework for setting an effective goal.

SPECIFIC: Set a goal with clear targets, such as a dollar amount, specific quantity, a percentage, or another concrete result. The more detailed and focused your goal, the better.

MEASUREABLE: Plan to measure your progress and establish milestones to achieve along the way. For instance, if your goal is to be able to do 60 crunches in one minute by the end of a 30-day period, set a milestone to do 15 crunches by day five, 30 by day 10, and so on. Plus, breaking down your goal into smaller accomplishments can make getting to the finish line seem a little less daunting.

ATTAINABLE: Can you realistically achieve your goal? Is your timeframe reasonable? The key words are realistic and reasonable. While your goal should be challenging, it should also be attainable and practically within reach.

RELEVANT: Be sure your goal is aligned with the other priorities in your life. If you set a goal that is someone else's idea, you will likely set yourself up for a struggle. However, if you are already inspired to make healthy changes in your life, such as visiting your fitness center three times a week, this new goal should align with the rest of your life.

TIME-BASED: Have a specific deadline in place for meeting your goal. Remember to create deadlines for those milestones that get you to your ultimate goal, too. This will add accountability and can provide you with motivation to stay on track.

A FEW OTHER TIPS TO KEEP YOU ON TRACK:

COMMIT to your goal by writing it down — it should start with an action verb.

IDENTIFY your reasons for achieving a goal to help you evaluate your true desires.

LIST existing or potential obstacles, and solutions to overcome each one.

VISUALIZE your goal and find an actual picture or other representation to remind you of your goal.

If at any point your goal suddenly seems too ambitious, try breaking it down into smaller, more manageable parts.

Setbacks are normal so don't punish yourself if things don't go exactly as planned. Tomorrow is a new day — for a fresh start.

GET SUPPORT or encouragement by sharing your goal with someone.

CELEBRATE each milestones and your final achievement!

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