



# Setting Goals & Making Healthy Changes

A healthy lifestyle is the most significant way you can improve and maintain your health and sense of well being. You really can impact both the quality and length of your life. Adopting a healthier lifestyle means making changes in your daily routine. Goal setting and planning are the keys.

Setting goals provides an opportunity to think about your personal lifestyle and what you're willing to do to improve your health. Consider these goals:

- Exercise more
- Eat healthier
- Lower stress
- Achieve a healthy weight

Setting goals is not as easy as it sounds. You will be setting yourself up for disappointment if you simply identify one or two things you would like to happen and just expect them to occur.

Long-term goals are generally too big to work on all at once. You're more likely to reach a goal if you break it down into smaller action steps. Make a plan. Decide which small step to take first and what you need to do to get started.

An easy way to get started on setting a goal is to use this handy SMART acronym: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Trackable.

## Be Specific

Put into words exactly what you would like to achieve. Be sure to include how you will go about this and when you would like to achieve it. If you have an overall goal that

will take a long time to achieve, it's best to break it down into smaller (daily, weekly or monthly) goals. As you accomplish each small goal, move on to the next.

## Include Measurable Limits

You'll experience great satisfaction when you meet your goal. Creating measurable limits makes it easy to see when you've reached your objective.

## Make sure it's Attainable

When setting a goal, determine if it's within your reach. For example, if you've never run a race before, completing a marathon may not be an achievable goal, but finishing a five-kilometer race is.

## Be Realistic

Honestly consider your abilities and limitations. A goal needs to be within your capabilities and control in order for you to succeed.

## Make Goals Trackable

Keep a record of your progress and improvements as you work toward your goal. Small changes go a long way to support motivation and encouragement. Being able to see where you started and how far you've come will keep you focused on reaching your goal.



## Healthy Lifestyle Goals

Consider setting a goal for yourself in any of the following areas or create your own personal goals:

- Physical activity
- Stress management
- Weight management
- Family time
- Smoking cessation
- Spirituality
- Doctor visits
- Medication consumption



*(Continued on back)*

## Example

Here's an example of applying the SMART principle to the "exercise more" goal.

### Goal

I will exercise 40 minutes each day.

### Completion date

I will strive to achieve my goal in four weeks.

### Ways I will achieve my goal

Each evening after dinner, I will walk.

Week one - I will walk 10 minutes

Week two - I will walk 20 minutes

Week three - I will walk 30 minutes

Week four - I will walk 40 minutes

If I am not able to walk outdoors due to weather, I will go to the local shopping mall and walk indoors or stay home and walk on the treadmill.

### Methods I will use to track my progress

I will record on my calendar (or in my journal) when I walked and for how long. I will also note how I felt before and after my walk.

## Get Started with your Own Goal!

Clip and save this SMART guide. Keep it with your journal or notebook to help you reach your goals.

### Goal

### Completion date

### Ways I will achieve my goal

### Methods I will use to track my progress



### Live better and longer.

Begin by taking better care of yourself with SMART goals and plans for healthier lifestyle choices. Talk with your health care professional about your personal goals and plans and other options to better manage your health. *Here's to your health!*

