

How to Set SMART Goals

‘SMART’ is an acronym for 5 characteristics that help you set well-defined goals:

- **S**pecific, *or significant, stretching*
- **M**easurable, *or meaningful, motivational*
- **A**chievable, *or attainable, acceptable, action oriented*
- **R**elevant, *or realistic, reasonable, rewarding, results oriented*
- **T**ime-Framed, *or tangible, trackable*

Say your goal is ‘To lose weight’. Here’s how to make it SMART...

Step 1: Make it Specific

It helps to answer the 6 W questions:

Who: who is involved

What: be specific in what you want to accomplish

When: establish a time frame

Which: which strategy are you going to use

Where: where are you going to practice this goal...home at school, work

Why: give a specific reason or benefits of accomplishing the goal.

Step 2: Make it Measurable

How precisely will you know when you’ve reached your goal? What are the incremental steps, and what is the finish line?

Step 3: Make it Achievable

Here you run a reality check. Are you prepared to make the commitment your goal will take? If the skinny jeans are 12 sizes away, are you willing to dramatically alter your life? Is there a more achievable target you *are* willing to work for and achieve.

Step 4: Make it Relevant

Make your goal Relevant to your life and other priorities. If it’s a ‘should’ inherited from someone else or out-of-date thinking, ditch or revise it.

For instance, if a weight-loss buddy thinks your goal should be to finish a marathon but you hate running, choose something else. Make it relevant to you or you’ll run out of steam early on.

Step 5: Make it Time-Framed

What's a reasonable date for achieving your goal? Strike a balance between being so ambitious you never expect to succeed and aiming so low, you lack incentive to try. You can tweak the date as you make progress.

Optimize your chance of goal success: Bonus Steps

To really boost your likelihood of reaching that outcome, here are some extra questions to ask yourself during goal-setting activities. These move you from planning and strategizing to action.

1. What resources do you need?

Make a list of all the things, support groups and information you need to achieve your objective. For instance:

- Ask Sally to be my support group
- Buy comfortable running/walking shoes
- Buy a gym membership or enroll in a JC activity class
- Get some motivational magazines

2. What needs to be scheduled in your diary?

Most goals need time and activities – make sure you have these allocated in your diary. For instance:

- Schedule 3 x 30-minute walks per week
- Schedule 2 x bike rides per week
- Schedule menu planning
- Schedule menu shopping

3. What milestones are important along the way?

It helps keep up your motivation if you mark your progress along the way with rewards. Start by deciding which milestones to reward. For instance:

- Jeans go over my knees
- Jeans go over my hips
- Jeans zip up with effort
- Jeans zip up comfortably (final)

4. What rewards will you give yourself for reaching those milestones?

Next, choose your rewards. For instance:

- Jeans go over my knees – Get a manicure
- Jeans go over my hips – Go out to the movies
- Jeans zip up with effort – Go out for a meal
- Jeans zip up comfortably – Go to the beach

Follow these steps and you'll be well on your way to achieving your goal!