

Healthy Goal Setting



Setting healthy goals is a powerful way to motivate you towards leading a healthier, better quality life. By knowing precisely what you want to achieve, you know where you have to concentrate your efforts and focus your acquisition of knowledge and resources to reach it. A healthy goal may start out small and end up taking you on a journey towards long-term benefits, such as improved self-confidence and strength as you develop daily lifestyle habits. Don't wait for New Year's Eve - start today to turn your goals into reality.

Steps to Success

In the words of Pablo Picasso,

Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.



Tip 1. See It, Believe It, Achieve It

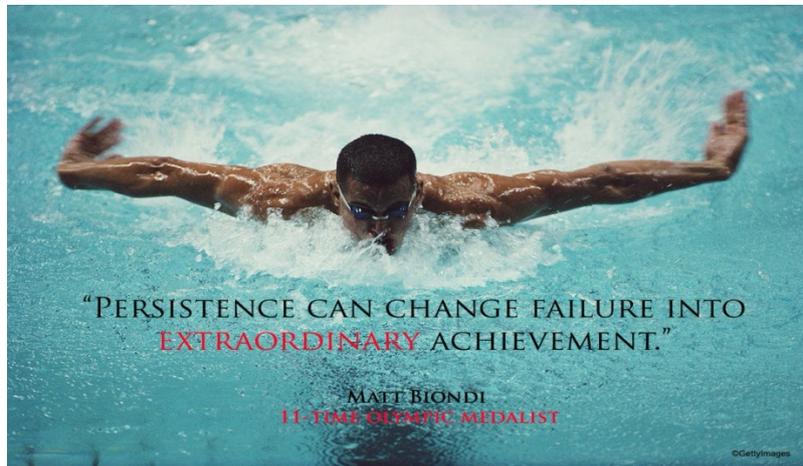
Defining your goals is the first step to bring positive change or improvement to your life. Choose a goal that genuinely matters to you and has personal high value. Goals that come from an authentic desire within ourselves are the most likely to spark the strongest drive and motivation to succeed. There's increasing scientific evidence, that you become what you think about. This is considered one of the single most important strategies for success. Successful people visualize their goals, write them down, and think about all the ways their life will be better as a result of achieving them. Keep a photo related to your goal in constant view, like a sign-up form for a 5K race. Frame your goal statement positively - as you write, use the word "will" instead of "would like to" or "might." Post your goals in visible places to serve as a daily dose of motivation. Put them on a post-it note on your walls, bathroom mirror, refrigerator or even on your Smartphone as a constant reminder. As you move closer to your goal, your goal will begin moving closer to you.



Tip 2. Power of Consistency

Doing one thing every day, without fail, in service of who or what you want to be is a guaranteed way to improve the reflection you see of yourself. Once you do that, everything improves, as you begin to believe in yourself and your own capabilities. If not, the habit very often falls apart and ceases to be important to you. For example around Christmas and the holidays, we can enter the month with a solid workout or health routine and say, "I'm just going to take four days off." And then, all of a sudden, it's mid-January and we haven't been to the gym in three weeks. But when you take action every day - even if it means just going for a brisk walk or doing some stretches for example - you continue to move closer to your

goal with ease. The most important person you can commit to is yourself. Build in daily reminders to keep yourself on track and book out that time in your diary every day as you would for anyone else. Prioritise yourself - you are the boss of you - and you have a job to do.



Tip 3. Make Yourself Accountable

Another way to set yourself up for success with your new habit is to have an accountability mechanism. The 10 most powerful two-letter words in the English language are 'If it is to be, it is up to me.'" In other words: Take responsibility. You, the person you see in the mirror every day, have the single greatest influence on your destiny relative to health. It's not your doctor who you see once or twice a year for 10 minutes. It's the decisions you make on a day-to-day basis, predominantly your behavioural choices. Tell your family or partners (so long as they're supportive of you) about your new goal and ask them to encourage you. Join a social media group of like-minded people sharing their goals or set up a workout buddy you can text with once a day. All of these will increase your chances of reaching your new goal.



Tip 4. Set SMART Goal

You are more likely to reach your ultimate goal if you break it down into small, short-term mini-goals that are SMART by making it Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely. The SMART method pushes you further, gives you a sense of direction, and helps you organize and reach your goals.

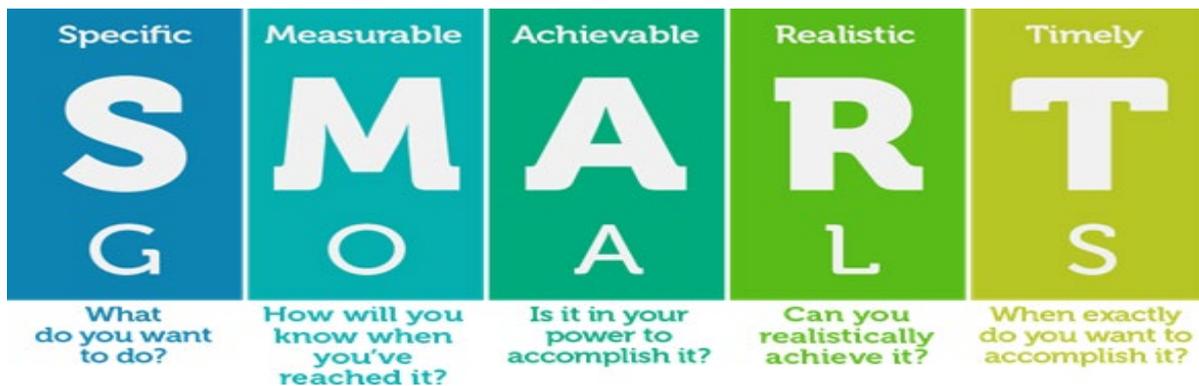
Specific: Your goal must be clear and well defined. Vague or generalized goals are unhelpful because they don't provide sufficient direction. Remember, you need goals to show you the way. Make it as easy as you can to get where you want to go by defining precisely where you want to end up.

Measurable: Include precise amounts, dates, and so on in your goals so you can measure your degree of success. If your goal is simply defined as "To get fit" how will you know when you have been successful? Your goal may be to go for a swim four days a week or to take part in a local parkrun at the weekend - whatever it is you should have a definite way of knowing when you have reached it. Keeping a diary or using a pedometer /fitness app can be a strong motivator to track your progress if it's an exercise goal.

Attainable: Realistic goals are likely to produce action. Your steps have to be steps that you think you can realistically accomplish. Ordinary effort on a day-to-day basis can yield extraordinary results. However, resist the urge to set goals that are too easy. Accomplishing a goal that you didn't have to work hard for can be anticlimactic at best. By setting realistic yet challenging goals, you hit the balance you need. These are the types of goals that require you to 'raise the bar' and they bring the greatest personal satisfaction.

Relevant: Set goals that are important to where you are in your life right now. By keeping goals aligned with this, you'll develop the focus you need to get ahead and do what you want. Whether you want to be able to bend down to play with your grandkids or to achieve a healthy weight for an upcoming procedure, pinpoint why a goal is significant to you.

Timely: Your goals must have a deadline. Again, this means that you know when you can celebrate success. When you are working on a deadline, your sense of urgency increases and achievement will come that much quicker. Maybe running a marathon is your long-term goal but if you've never been a runner, try setting smaller mileage goals such as accomplishing the couch to 5km running plan - build yourself up safely.



Tip 5. 4. Make an Action Plan

This step is often missed in the process of goal setting. You get so focused on the outcome that you forget to plan all of the steps that are needed along the way. By writing out the individual steps, and then crossing each one off as you complete it, you'll realise that you are making progress towards your ultimate goal. This is especially important if your goal is big and demanding, or long-term.



Tip 6. Staying on Track

When times get hard, remind yourself what you want to achieve, to cue your brain to resist temptation. Think about potential barriers and how to manage them. Rehearse the situations in your head and write down how to deal with them. For example, if your week involves long working hours, you could plan ahead by batch cooking healthy meals that are freezable on your day off if healthy eating is your goal. When you do achieve your goal (and you will!), reward yourself for your success with something to reinforce your new healthy lifestyle such as new workout clothes or to take a trip with somebody who supported you to get you to this place. Expand your potential and self-confidence by setting a new goal.



Tip 7. Be Kind To Yourself

Achieving health goals is like running a marathon, not a sprint. Don't worry about any particular point in the race where you may not have performed so well (e.g. if you went to a wedding and had a piece of cheesecake). Don't give up the entire plan because you deviated for a day or two. Success is measured by what you do over the long term, not by what you do on any one day.



Content Sources:

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