

# Achieving your Goals

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## SET GOALS (and OBJECTIVES)

Goal setting is the art that makes everything else possible. It adds aim to energy, focuses effort and, for some, structures time. Surveys show that people who plan ahead are much more successful over the long term than those who plunge in without knowing where they're going or how they'll get there. You wouldn't take a long road trip without a map so it makes good sense to have a compass (and road map) for your fitness objectives.

### Goals Should Be Smart

**S = Specific.** Saying, "I'll go to training," is not a specific goal. I have a clearer picture when I write, "Next week I will train at 6:30pm Monday, Wednesday, and 7.30pm on Friday." Or perhaps the specific elements to be trained..."this week is trigger week"

**M = Measurable.** Set goals that are measurable in quality or quantity, and keep records of sessions or workouts achieved or increases in heart rate reserve. These are powerful and motivating tools to assuring a new habit becomes a long term behavior. Many folks find they're more committed to measurable goals if they report to a friend or colleague willing to help monitor their progress.

**A = Attainable.** In the enthusiasm of the moment we often make promises that are difficult to keep when enthusiasm wanes. If you're looking for a magic bullet the chances are you'll end up shooting yourself in the foot. Realizing that change doesn't happen overnight will help you set realistic goals you can achieve. It's the SMALL changes that are the key to permanent change.

**R = Realistic.** Goals should be reflective of your values and compatible with your lifestyle. If not they can be the source of distress. Success is about learning how to customize your activities to find the right fit for you. For example, if you don't enjoy working out with others it's unrealistic to join an aerobic exercise class.

**T = Timely.** It's not smart to plan too many changes at once-it's too threatening to your internal sense of balance. Before you begin, be certain you can identify other areas of your life that might be stressful and prevent you from "doing what you want to do". For example, although a workout can be an important stress reducer if it makes your schedule more unmanageable you may have to postpone a new weight training program or fitness class until it's more in keeping with a balanced lifestyle.

### Write Down Your Goals

It's important to put your goals in writing. Written goals are a tangible sign of a promise that you intend to keep. They can remind you of that promise when time is short or if other priorities become pressing. Written goals will also help you track your progress, make your accomplishments more obvious and help you identify problem areas that need more attention.



## **Identify Supporters And Saboteurs**

Some of us can be the lone ranger, but most people need coaches, cheerleaders and people whose belief in and support of us reminds us of our commitment to change. The friendship and support of others will make it easier for you pass through the sometimes difficult transition from old to new behaviors. Identify the people who will nurture you and help you maintain your well-being, as well as those who don't see your point of view.

## **Plan for the Unexpected**

Lack of time is the most frequently mentioned reason for discontinuing a training program. Life is filled with surprises so include strategies that assure you will make time for maintaining your commitment in the face of changing schedules, unexpected mini-crisis and external forces like long meetings, extra traffic, changes in employment.

## **Affirm Your Behavior**

Affirmations are powerful. Many people find that repeating certain sayings to themselves helps them accept things. They discover they are programming their sub-conscious to new beliefs. Affirmations should be positive such as "I am," "I have" as opposed to "I would like" or "I will try". Remind yourself daily, "I am a talented person making changes in my lifestyle so I can live in the most successful way."

## **Reward Your Success**

Set up a reward system so you can reward yourself for changed behaviors. Each of us have different values for measuring success. Yours should be structured to satisfy you, not others. That reward should make you hum from head to toe! Good examples include extra time for yourself with a favorite book, a manicure or pedicure, a trip with a special friend or relative or a movie or play that stimulates your mind.

Negotiating the path to new behaviors can be fulfilling and rewarding if we can hang in there for the weeks to months necessary to make new behaviors lifestyle habits. Then you are ready to actualize new potentials.

## **Go out and shoot..... and have fun**

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