



# **SMART Goals; What they are and crafting your own**

***Balance.***

# What are S.M.A.R.T goals?

SMART goals have long been a staple of effective goal setting. The acronym SMART stands for;

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Time-bound

This system breaks down the goal into smaller and more manageable chunks, making it easier to achieve.

How do you determine a **specific** goal?

The first step in developing a good habit/goal is to describe exactly what that new habit/goal will be. Instead of saying you will eat more vegetables and fruits, your goal might be to fill 2/3 of your plate with non-starchy vegetables and fruits at each meal.

How do you determine a **measurable** goal?

Measuring your progress and holding yourself accountable along the way will help keep you on track. An online or paper journal is a great way to monitor your progress. Monitoring doesn't always have to be quantitative either and data doesn't always paint the whole picture; that's why I'd like for us to keep a journal to reflect on how we feel, things we've noticed, wins outside of the gym and unrelated to our physique.

If you want to be more active, you might set out to walk for at least a half hour, five days a week, and write down your activity each day to track your progress. If you want to increase your daily steps, a simple step counter can tell you how you are doing.

How do you determine a **achievable** goal?

Make sure you have the tools, information and resources you need to reach your goal. If a gym membership is out of your budget, a walking program like the one described above may be a better option for a fitness goal.

How do you determine a **realistic** goal?

Setting a goal that is realistic can help avoid setbacks and false starts. For example, if you know you hate to run, training for a marathon may not be realistic.

Aim for something challenging but not impossible. You can always adjust the goal later if it's too easy. Long-term behaviour change is more likely if you start small.

How do you determine a **time-bound** goal?

Goals without starting points and deadlines are easier to put off. Spell out when you are going to begin your new behaviour or activity and how often you are going to do it.

If you want to improve your diet, a goal could be to substitute plant-based protein for meat three meals a week beginning this Sunday.



**Write the goal you have in mind;**

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**Now use the SMART principle to explore individual aspects of your goal to elaborate and establish a more focused goal;**

**Specific; What do you want to accomplish? Who needs to be included? When do you want to do this? Why is this a goal?**

**Measurable; How can you measure progress and know if you've successfully met your goal?**

**Achievable; Do you have the skills required to achieve the goal? If not, can you obtain them? What is the motivation for this goal?**

**Realistic; Do my circumstances allow for me to achieve this goal?**

**Time bound; What's the deadline and is it realistic to achieve within this?**

**Review what you have written, and craft a new goal statement based on what the answers to the questions above have revealed;**

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