

Strive To Thrive

Pathways... Leading the way to a better feeling you!

How to Set and Reach SMART Goals

- By Melinda Hershey,
Health Educator



it's time to look at how you will gauge your progress. After all, if you don't have any way to measure your goal, how will you know when you've reached it? Your goal is measurable if you can find a way to quantify your success using real numbers. Some examples of measurable goals might be pounds lost, a positive change in blood work numbers, or fitness minutes accumulated.

Make Your Goals ATTAINABLE
It's good to think big, but it's also important that you

don't set a goal that is too big. A goal that's attainable for you is one that you believe you can reach and have the means necessary in order to achieve. So if you plan to work out with a personal trainer but don't have the discretionary dollars in your budget, that goal wouldn't be attainable for you.

To determine whether your goal is attainable, ask yourself honestly if you believe you can achieve it and have all the resources (including time) available to make it happen. Do you have (or will you be able to obtain) all the support, equipment, knowledge and resources needed to put your goals into action? Does this goal fall in line with your other priorities in life? If not, how can you revise your goal to make it more realistic?

You need to make sure that you're choosing a goal that fits you and your lifestyle. Don't choose a goal out of guilt, or just because someone else thinks it's something you "should" do. Pick something that is meaningful and relevant to you and you'll set yourself up for success.

To determine if your goal is relevant, ask yourself why you want to achieve it. So you can feel more confident? Be a good example to your kids? Or live a longer, healthier life? These whys are important because they will serve as your motivation throughout the process.

Make Your Goals TIMELY
If you don't put a deadline on your goal, it will be difficult to know how to pace yourself to reach it. Every goal should have a date, which will help you stay on track. In addition, set up a few benchmarks, or "mini-deadlines" to keep you on track to reaching your big-picture goal and keep yourself accountable.

You might be gung-ho about tackling new goals in the New Year, but not so fast! The best way to set yourself up for success is to make sure that your goals are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely. Using these guidelines is a proven way to create goals that you can stick with for the long haul. After reading the explanation of SMART goals in this article, print our goal-setting worksheet to create your own SMART goals.

Make Your Goals SPECIFIC
Ambiguous or undefined goals aren't going to provide you with the direction you need to succeed. You want to give yourself a concrete goal so you know exactly what you're working toward. You know your goal is specific if it answers these ques-

tions:
WHO: Who will be involved in helping you reach your goal (including yourself)?
WHAT: What exact goal do you want to accomplish? Be very specific. Rather than "lose weight" or "get fit," define those terms: "I will lose 25 pounds," or "I will be able to run a 5K."
WHEN: When will you start and when will you reach your goal?
HOW: How will you make this happen? These are the action steps to get you toward your goal. If you want to lose 25 pounds in 6 months, your "how's" might look something like: I will eat between 1,500 and 1,800 calories each day; I will exercise for 30 minutes 5 days per week; I will track my food and calories burned each day; and I will pack my lunch at least 3 days of the week.
Make Your Goals MEASURABLE
Now that you have some of the specifics of your goal nailed down,

Make Your Goals RELEVANT

HEALTHY ROUTINE FOR JANUARY:
Try to stay positive!

Water is a Secret Ingredient

Is water important? Well let's see, other than making up 50%-60% of our bodies, regulating body temperature, helping our breathing, transporting nutrients, carrying away waste and helping our muscles function, water is pretty much useless. Oh, and you need water or, after three days without it, you'll die.

So in other words, water is pretty darn essential. It can even be an extremely important (and often unappreciated) weight loss factor.

Somehow, though, water is one of the most neglected parts of our diet. Some of us possibly go an entire day at times without one glass! Every part of your body is dependent on and comprised of water, and the most important parts need even more. Your brain is made up of 75% water, your blood 82% and your lungs nearly 90%.

Besides being a vital component of your body, water also helps to reduce weight. The more hydrated you are, the quicker your metabolism works. When you are dehydrated – even before you start becoming thirsty – your liver has to help the kidneys function and can't metabolize fat as quickly. Your metabolism slows down, causing some unwanted fat to remain.

If your body is used to not getting water, it actually stores more in ankles, hips and thighs. In other words, it doesn't trust you to keep bringing water, so it keeps what it can get, like a thirsty cactus. Once it realizes the water will keep coming, your body will get rid of the stores and you'll lose weight!

Plus, if you're suffering from cravings or having trouble controlling hunger, drinking water is a quick, healthy way to feel full. Drink a glass when you normally snack, and have one before your meal and

right before going out.

Staying hydrated is not restricted to drinking water; milk, juice and other liquids – even some fruits and vegetables – are good sources of water. But avoid caffeinated beverages (coffee, soda), as they actually cause you to lose fluids and become dehydrated.

The recommended daily amount of water is eight cups a day, but don't feel bad if you have neglected your water intake. Even if you constantly drink coffee or soda, you can make some simple changes to increase the water in your diet. Here are just a few ways to get more water every day: Find the water bottles with pop tops. They're easier to carry around and use than twist off caps.

Keep a water bottle in the car. Take a water break instead of a smoke break at work. Set a rule with your water glass:

once it's empty, it gets filled back up right away.

Drink orange juice or eat fruit in the morning.

Get two water bottles, one for work and one for home. Fill up one every day when you leave to go home, and fill up the other before you go to bed each night.

Order water at restaurants instead of soda. Even if you have something else to drink, have water too.

Weekends are the toughest, so be aware of your water and fluid intake throughout Saturday and Sunday. Keep more than one water bottle in the fridge so you always have a cold one.

Follow the example of a SparkPeople member: this woman put a water glass on her windowsill with 8 pennies on one side. Each time she filled up her glass and drank it, she moved a penny to the other side, until all the pennies were moved. Great reminder system!

-- By Zach Van Hart, Staff Writer

Adapted from sparkpeople.com

Honey Balsamic Chicken

INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 tsp of dried thyme
1/2 tsp salt
1/4 tsp black pepper
1 tsp olive oil
1lb chicken breast
2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
2 tbsp honey

PREPARATION

Combine first 3 ingredients; sprinkle over both sides of chicken. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add chicken; cook 7 to 8 minutes on each side or until chicken is done. Transfer chicken to a platter; keep warm. Reduce heat to medium-low; add vinegar and honey to pan. Simmer 1 minute or until glaze thickens; stir constantly. Pour glaze over chicken. Yield: 4 servings

NUTRITION

Servings Per Recipe: 4
Calories: 173.3
Total Fat: 2.6 g
Cholesterol: 65.7 mg
Sodium: 367.6 mg
Total Carbs: 10.1 g
Dietary Fiber: 0.2 g
Protein: 26.3 g



Sparkrecipes.com



A Caring Path to Better Mental Health

Pathways, Inc. of Greenwich
175 Milbank Avenue
Greenwich, CT 06830

Phone: 203.869.5656

Fax: 203.869.4059

WWW.PATHWAYS-GREENWICH.ORG

Pathways' Strive for Five Mission Statement:

Pathways' Strive for Five Program is dedicated to helping consumers living with mental illness to achieve a higher quality of life by enhancing one's nutritional awareness and helping consumers to become more active. Pathways understands that our consumers will be able to live longer, happier, and healthier lives by providing them with the tools, knowledge and resources any person would need to achieve a physically and mentally well-balanced life.