

e-Health: Setting SMART Goals

You probably set goals in your everyday life. Maybe you want to...

- Improve your finances
- Eat healthier to lose weight
- Get fit
- Work smarter to leave work early enough to get home for family dinners
- Organize the house

The purpose of setting goals is to achieve them. Whatever you want to accomplish, you can increase your chances of achieving your goals if you make them SMART.

Let's talk about what SMART goals are.

SMART is an acronym. In an acronym, each letter stands for something. Let's start by talking about the "S" in SMART. It stands for "specific."

S - Specific

When you set a goal, include as much detail as you can. Let's say you want to save up some money. But that doesn't say how much, why, or by when. It's much more helpful if you get specific. For example, "I want to save \$500 to buy a new TV before the next Super Bowl." Once you name your goal clearly, you know what you're going after. And that helps you figure out how much you need to save each month to achieve it.

M - Measurable

The next letter in SMART is "M." "M" stands for "measurable." Let's say you want to lose weight. You can set a schedule for weighing yourself to measure your progress. If you know you'll be stepping on the scale once a week, you may feel more motivated to stick to your weight loss eating plan.

A - Achievable

Let's move on to the letter "A." It stands for "achievable". You can't reach goals that aren't achievable. In other words, they must be possible and reasonable. If you set a goal that's just not possible, you're setting yourself up for disappointment. Let's say you're training for a marathon. You can set up mileage goals to keep track of your progress. That will help you set a goal that's achievable. And remember: If you fall short of your goal, that's okay. Just set a new goal that's achievable in a revised timeline. Give yourself credit for progress made along the way. It's not about success or failure; it's about moving toward reaching your goals and making changes as needed.

R - Relevant

"R" stands for "relevant." That means the best goals are those that can make a big difference in your life. So leaving earlier from work to be home for family dinners, cleaning your house so it's less cluttered or losing weight are all good examples of goals that will be relevant to YOU feeling better and improving your lifestyle.

T - Time-based

Finally, "T" stands for "time-based." "T" should tell you when you will start and when you're aiming to be done. So, let's say you want to get your house more organized so you can have an open house party on Memorial Day. By setting the goal of Memorial Day, you know the time-frame you have. It can help you figure out how much cleaning up you'll need to do each week.

See how it works? SMART goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-based. You can use SMART goals with almost anything you want to achieve. It's a great way to clarify what you want and hold yourself accountable. Give it a try and see if it helps you succeed!

Specific

Measureable

Achievable

Relevant

Time-based

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