



S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Make It Work

Although our intentions are usually noble, we can get discouraged or distracted when we are not seeing results or find ourselves off track. So, why do many of our personal goals fail? Simply put, we didn't map a path out of HOW we were going to achieve those goals and whether or not they were even realistic. The best way to stick with your goals is to make sure that each goal is a S.M.A.R.T. one, which means it is **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**imely.

Specific

Goals should be straightforward and emphasize what you want to happen. Specifics help us focus our efforts and clearly define what we are going to do. Specific is the What, Why, and How of the S.M.A.R.T. model.

Example: 'Applying sunscreen will be part of my daily routine, just like brushing my hair or teeth,' is more specific than 'I will try to be more conscious of sun safety'.

Measurable

If you can't measure it, you can't manage it. There are usually small measurements that can be built into the goal. Choose a goal with measurable progress, so you can see the change occur.

Example: 'I want to walk in my neighbourhood four times a week on my own before Victoria Day' shows the specific target to be measured.

Attainable:

If you set a goal that is too far out of your reach, you probably won't be successful. However, a goal needs to stretch you slightly so that it requires dedication on your part.

Example: If you aim to lose 5 kg (11 lbs) in one week, we all know that isn't healthy or realistic. Set a goal to lose .5 kg (1.1 lb) per week and when you've achieved that, aim to lose a further .5 kg (1.1 lbs) the following week.

Realistic:

This doesn't mean 'easy.' Realistic means 'do-able.' It means that the learning curve is not too steep, that the skills needed to accomplish the goal are available and that the goal fits with your personal plan for success.

Example: It may be more realistic to set a goal of eating a piece of fruit each day instead of a sweet item. You can then choose to work towards reducing the amount of sugary foods gradually or when it feels realistic for you.

Timely:

Set a time frame for the goal. Putting an end point on your goal gives you a clear target to work towards. If not, the commitment is too vague.

Example: 'I will talk with a tobacco-cessation counsellor or school nurse this week,' sets a specific time frame to perform a concrete action.

Review your Goals

Are they S. M. A. R. T. Goals?