

Setting SMART Wellness Goals That You Will Achieve

When it comes to our health and wellness, we tend to fantasize about what life would be like if we could just lose more weight, if we could fall in love with running like everyone else, or if we could master the yoga poses we see on social media. How many times have you seen pictures that inspire you to reach your goals, but then have no idea where to start? Setting **S.M.A.R.T. Goals** is the best way to stay on track and know for sure if you are making progress. So, what makes a goal S.M.A.R.T. and how can you revise your own?

SPECIFIC.

Avoid goals that are too general like, "I want to tone up," or "I want to be stronger." These statements do not allow you to truly know if you've ever reached your goal. What does "tone up" mean and look like to *you*? You want to be "stronger" than *what* or *whom*? Answering these questions will help you understand your specific end goal.

MEASURABLE

This is one of the most important elements of setting goals. Leaving this aspect out will never allow you to recognize if you are making progress. If your goal is to lose weight, it's important to set a benchmark. Something that you can measure and measure again. "*Lose 5 lbs*" as opposed to "*lose weight*" provides a much greater opportunity for positive reinforcement when you step back on the scale.

ATTAINABLE

Setting a goal too high most often leads to a loss of motivation. We love feeling successful and we need to be consistently rewarded for our hard work. You may want to set a goal of cooking at home five nights of the week. If you have an infant and have just returned to work after maternity leave, this may not be realistic. Starting with a goal of two times a week may allow you to build good habits first before moving on to bigger goals.

RELEVANT.

It is so important to create goals that make sense and fit into your life. Do you really need to "complete 15 pull-ups in one go"? How will achieving that fit into your larger, long-term goal? A new mom who wants to fit back into her pre-baby jeans may find the goal of, "cook 3 healthy meals a week" more relevant to her long-term goal.

TIME-BOUND

After all of this, it is so important to put some time boundaries on your goal. Set benchmarks by breaking your long-term goal into a few short-term goals. How long are you willing to give yourself to lose 5 lbs.? Most people are motivated by deadlines. It puts pressure on us to act and work on what we know we need to achieve.

Here are some examples of stated goals revised to be **S.M.A.R.T.**:

Stated goal = "I want to be more active"

S.M.A.R.T. goal = "I will walk on the treadmill for 30 minutes, 3x/week, for 1 month"

Stated goal = "I want to feel stronger in my core"

S.M.A.R.T. goal = "I will perform 3 sets of lower abdominal exercises, 4x/week, until April 2018"

Stated goal = "I want more energy to play around with my kids"

S.M.A.R.T. goal = "I will turn off all devices by 10 pm each night and aim for 7-8 hours of sleep/night over the next 4 weeks"



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