

GOAL

SETTING



Goal setting

Many of our food and exercise habits have taken a long time to form, and changing them can be hard. Goal setting has been shown to help motivate you and keep you focussed. Follow these five steps to write a helpful goal.

1. Make it S.M.A.R.T

Specific: Have an exact goal in mind, rather than something vague. For example, “be able to run around the oval without stopping” is a more specific goal than “be fitter”.

Measurable: You need to be able to measure your goal so you will know when you have achieved it. For example, “have a maximum of one sugary drink per week” is measurable, but “don’t have many sugary drinks” isn’t.

Achievable: Be realistic about what you can do. It’s better to set small goals and then build on them than to set a goal that is far out of your reach.

Responsible: Will this goal make you healthier and happier? Does it fit in with your lifestyle and the things that are important to you?

Timely: Put a date on your goal. This might be for when you would like to achieve your goal or when you will have started working towards it. For example, “I will lose 1kg in the next four weeks”, or “by Monday night I will have prepared healthy snacks for the rest of the week”.

2. Double check your goal

List the good things and the bad things about your new goal. If the bad things about the change outweigh the good things, maybe choose a different goal. You might be ready to tackle that one some other time.

Example: Going for a 30-minute walk every morning

	POSITIVES	NEGATIVES
Making a change and going for a walk	Could lose weight Have more energy for my kids	It’s cold in the morning Might get less sleep or will have to go to bed earlier
Staying the same	Get to sleep-in in the morning Don’t have to make any effort	Won’t get fitter Continue to gain weight

3. Set yourself up for success

Changing a habit takes some effort! Give yourself the best chance possible and do some planning.

What do you need to do to achieve your goal? Making lists can be helpful. For example, if your goal is to eat at least five different vegetables a day, make sure you buy the vegetables in advance.

Check your calendar; what else is coming up in your life? It may be better not to start on a new goal if you can spot short-term risks to success, like a holiday or significant birthday in the next week or two.

There are often many barriers to achieving a goal. If you think about the things that could get in the way of achieving your goal in advance, you’ll be better prepared to tackle them.

4. Share

Share your goals with other people. They can help remind you and keep you motivated. If friends and family can join in to help you achieve your goals it will be easier and more fun. They might get healthier too.

5. Celebrate

Reward yourself when you achieve your goals. Whether it’s a new outfit or a massage, find some non-food reward that fits your goals and your budget. This will help motivate you to keep up your good work. Before you know it, it will be a habit and be easier to maintain.

If you don’t achieve your goals, don’t beat yourself up. It’s rare for people to succeed completely the first time. In hindsight, your goal may not have been achievable. Think about what to do differently next time and learn from your experience. Most importantly, keep going!