

Creating S.M.A.R.T. Goals

The first step to making a healthy lifestyle change is to decide on what is important to you. Writing down your goals will help change your wishful thinking into a recipe for taking action.

S.M.A.R.T. stands for: *Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely*

Be Specific

Specific goals help to clearly define what we are going to do. It is much easier to reach a specific goal - "exercise 3 days a week" than a general goal, such as "get in shape." Specific goals answer:

- WHAT? For example, "I want to lose 10 pounds."
- WHY? For example, "I want to lower my blood pressure to decrease my risk of a heart attack."
- HOW? For example, "I am going to walk for 30 minutes every day after dinner."

Be Measurable

Measuring your progress helps you stay on track and stay motivated to achieve your goals. For example, "I want to lose 2 inches off my waist" is a measurable goal, while "I want to slim down" is not.

Be Attainable

A goal should require a real commitment from you to achieve it. It needs to pull you out of your comfort zone but not be too far out of reach. For example, a goal of losing 1 pound per week is more attainable than losing 20 pounds per week.

Be Realistic

Realistic means, is this goal do-able? For example, if you have a sweet tooth and currently eat 5 sugary foods per day, a realistic goal might be to reduce this number to 3 or 4. After a month, you may want to reduce this number again! Breaking down a large goal into smaller goals helps to keep it simple.

Be Timely

Set a timeframe for your goal (1 week, 3 months, 6 months, etc.) to help you stay motivated with a clear target.

