

Transcript

When you make lifestyle changes you can improve your overall health. To begin making changes that will last a lifetime, you need a plan. And an effective plan starts with setting goals.

There are two types of goals: long-term and short-term. A long-term goal defines what overall change you want to make. It is your overall objective. A short term goal is one thing you can do to move you closer to your long-term goal. A series of short terms goals are the steps you can take to help you reach your long-term goal.

To set a long-term goal, picture yourself 6 months or a year from now. How will you have changed your health for the better?

"I kind of just realized that okay, I'm more than I should be so it'd be nice to lose 20 pounds?"

When you start working toward any long-term goal, understand it will take time to achieve it. Be patient. That's why it's long-term.

Once you decide on a long-term goal, set 1 short-term goal that will help you reach it.

"I've been trying to drink a lot more tea or water instead of soda as well."

When you set a short-term goal, give yourself a specific amount of time to reach it. Can you make that change in a week or two?

For example, if your long-term goal is to lose 20 pounds in 1 year, a short-term goal may be to lose 4 pounds in the next month. Decide what lifestyle change can help you reach that short-term goal. Maybe you can increase the number of minutes you walk each week from 60 to 90. When you make that change, make another. Instead of ice cream, choose frozen yogurt to lower your calories. Once you lose 4 pounds, set another short-term goal. And so on, until you reach your long-term goal.

Here's another example. Maybe your long-term goal is to get your blood pressure below 140/90 in the next 6 months. Your first short term goal may be to lower it by 10 points in the next 2 months. To get there you may choose to stop seasoning your meals with salt to lower the amount of sodium you eat. Next, you may try to increase the intensity of your exercise sessions to work your heart. Keep making small changes until you reach your blood pressure goal.

This is a journey that can take time. Along the way, set a date to review your progress. Did you meet your short-term goal? If you did, congratulations! Set a new short-term goal and keep going.

If you didn't, that's okay. Do you need more time to reach this short-term goal? Or would a different goal be more realistic at this point? Don't be afraid to adjust your short-term goals. The important thing is to keep moving toward your long-term goal.

And don't forget to take some time to think about your overall plan. Is it working? For example, using less salt at home may not help lower your blood pressure if you are eating out at lunch every

day. You can be successful at your short-term goal and still need to re-evaluate because the plan may not be working. Re-evaluate and try something different to get you moving in the right direction. You'll get there.

Long-term goals can help you make permanent changes that can improve your health, and short-term goals can help you get there. Each goal you set is up to you. This is a personal journey to better health. But that doesn't mean you have to do all of this alone. Ask your healthcare provider for help setting goals that will help you live the healthier life you are aiming for.