

Transcript

Anytime you decide to change something about your life, something that has become a part of your routine, it can be difficult and even overwhelming. For best results make your goals SMART.

SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely. And setting SMART goals when making healthy lifestyle changes will help you take the idea of healthy change and turn it into real action.

First, be specific. How many times in your life have you thought you are ready to get healthier and have made that your goal? How did it go? The idea is great, but without a clear goal you probably felt frustrated because there was never really anything to reach.

Instead, make a goal that is specific. Do you plan to walk 3 times a week for 30 minutes each time? Maybe you want to make sure you get 2.5 cups of vegetables each day. Or maybe you would like to quit smoking and decide to reduce the number of packs you smoke each day from 2 to 1. Whatever goal you set, if it is specific, you now know what you have to do to reach it. And you can do it.

To easily find out if you have reached your goal, it must be measurable. Did you walk for 30 minutes, 3 times this week? Did you get your servings of vegetables each day? Did you reduce the number of packs you smoke each day to 1? Measurable goals allow you to see how well you are doing and make adjustments if necessary.

And is your goal Attainable? In other words, can you reach that goal? It's important to set goals that aren't too easy because where is the challenge in that? And not too difficult because then you will get frustrated and give up. Try to set a goal that is not too far from where you are now, but far enough that you have some work to do. Avoid words like "always" and "never."

For example, deciding to quit smoking cold turkey "I will never smoke again", when you have smoked for years, may not be an attainable goal at this point. Try reducing the number of cigarettes you smoke each day, and then gradually decrease the amount you smoke each week. If quitting smoking is your long-term goal, you will get there over time.

Trying to run a marathon the first time you add exercise to your daily routine, may be hard to achieve, but may also cause injury. Instead, think of a goal that is attainable and work towards it safely.

Each goal you set should also be Realistic for you. After all, they are your goals and need to fit into your life. With your busy work and family schedule can you walk in your neighborhood 5 nights a week? Maybe 3 nights a week and once at lunch is more realistic for now.

If you have a medical condition make sure you take it into account when setting your goals. Meet with your healthcare provider to ensure your goals won't increase your risk of injury or make your condition worse. You are making healthy changes for the long-term, so do it safely.

And finally, every goal you set should be timely. Set an end date. You can have both short-term and long-term goals, but without a timeframe to reach each goal you may never get there.

I will switch from whole fat milk to low-fat milk this week. I will join a weight loss support group this week. I will join a water aerobics class before my birthday.

Starting to make healthy lifestyle changes can be difficult. But seeing results can give you the motivation you need to keep going. Make your goals SMART. Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely, and you will have a plan that fits into your life for the long-term.