

New Year's SMART Goals

About 50% of the resolutions made each year are health-related—making them the most popular (by far). These resolutions include but aren't limited to, eating healthier, losing weight, exercising more and quitting smoking. Research shows that 80% of New Year's resolutions fail within one to six weeks after starting, and many of these resolutions get repeated year after year. Why? There are many reasons resolutions fail; the most common are:

- Not being ready to make the change
- The goal is unrealistic or too vague
- Lack of planning, actionable steps, or accountability
- An all-or-nothing mentality

If you're someone who plans to set a New Year's resolution, try to set a New Year's SMART goal instead. Setting goals and achieving them is a rewarding experience, and it helps drive your personal and professional success. Empower yourself to move outside your comfort zone, achieve your goals, and have the best year possible.

Participate in the following activities to learn more:

#1 What Are SMART Goals

#2 Set a SMART Goal

#3 Tips and Resources

Research shows that, on average, it takes more than two months before a new behavior becomes automatic—66 days to be exact.



Questions? [Send us an email.](#)

Activity 1: What Are SMART Goals?

What are SMART goals?

SMART goals are intentions that you set and commit to reaching over a period of time. They should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based. Each goal should have these characteristics to ensure you start on the right foot. Carefully craft each goal after reflecting on what you want to accomplish to continue growth and success.

Why are they important?

When you follow a goal-setting and measurement process, you set yourself up for success and build a roadmap for the future.

What SMART means:

Specific

How are you going to meet your goal? Think like a journalist and use the *Five Ws*.

- Who – Who needs to be involved?
- What – What are you trying to accomplish? (Important: Be very specific)
- Where – Is there a location involved? (Note: This isn't always relevant)
- When – What's the time frame you're setting?
- Why – Think deeply about the why. Often this is the driving force of the goal in the first place.

Measurable

What metrics are you going to use to define success? Checking your progress throughout will help increase your likelihood of keeping your resolution. Also, writing things down and keeping track of your progress helps put things in perspective so you can see progression or regression toward achieving your goal.

Achievable

This is where your SMART goal will be made or missed. Everyone's definition of achievable is different. Remember, you must go outside your comfort zone to change and grow. What you get out of your goals is what you put into them.

Relevant

Your goals should be relevant to you and not to someone else. Make sure that your goal is something you want to achieve for yourself, it's the right time, and you're ready to make the change—the motivation and drive to achieve it will come more naturally.

Time-Based

Setting a time or a date for your goal sounds easy, right? Pick a date, get started, and poof—magic happens. Remember, if your goal lacks realistic timing, you're not going to succeed. Be honest about how long your goal will take, and if your goal spans months or even the entire year, create time-based checkpoints to keep yourself on track.

SMART Goal Example

I will eat a minimum of [QUANTITY] servings of fruits and vegetables daily by [DATE] by planning meals ahead of time each week, shopping once a week, and eating one or two servings per meal.

Activity 2: Set a SMART Goal

Now that you have the foundation to build your SMART goal(s), use this worksheet to set yourself up for success next year! Write down your New Year's resolution and complete the worksheet; then rewrite your resolution as a SMART goal based on your answers.

My New Year's resolution is:  My New Year's SMART goal is:

Specific

How are you going to meet your goal? Your goal should be well-defined, detailed, and clear. Use the *Five Ws*—who, what, where, when, and why. (refer to page 2)

Measurable

What metrics will you use to determine if you meet the goal?

Achievable

Can you reach the goal considering your available time and resources? How can you obtain what's needed?

Relevant

Does the goal matter to you, and is it something you want to achieve for yourself and not someone else?

Time-Based

What's the timeframe for accomplishing the goal? (Set a start and end date.) If your goal is big, try to break it down into smaller pieces with milestones along the way.

Consider these additional questions to help you succeed in achieving your goal.

What barriers might I face that could keep me from completing my goal?

Do I have to compromise on something else to achieve my goal? (e.g., if your goal is to save money or pay off debt, you may need to give up or cut back on eating out.)

Are you ready and willing to make the change? (use the Stages of Change)

Stages of change

- **Precontemplation:** No interest in change
- **Contemplation:** Thinking about it, but not sure about taking the next step
- **Preparation:** Know that a change is needed
- **Action:** Actively taking steps to change
- **Maintenance:** Success and copes with temptations
- **Termination:** No desire to go back to negative behavior

What stage of change are you in? _____

On a scale of 1-10, how important is it for you to make the change?

1_{Low} 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10_{High}

On a scale of 1-10, how confident do you feel about making the change?

1_{Low} 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10_{High}

The reason I am at a ___ and not higher is: _____

For me to get to the next stage of change, I need _____

Activity 3: Tips and Resources

Research shows that on average, it takes more than two months before a new behavior becomes automatic—66 days to be exact. The time it takes to form a new habit varies widely depending on the person, behavior, and circumstances. In one research study, it took anywhere from 18 to 254 days for people to build a new habit. Here are some tips and resources to help you be successful with sticking to your new habit(s).

Tips on setting a New Year's goal that will last a lifetime.

- **Plan it and post it.** Write your (specific) goal and your plan for achieving it on paper. Post it where you'll see it every day.
- **Create accountability.** Share your goal and progress with someone or join a group. And ask for help or support when you need it.
- **Be consistent.** Create a schedule for yourself and set reminders on your phone or calendar. (e.g., if your goal is to drink more water, put reminders on at 8 a.m., 10 a.m., Noon, and 2 p.m., or if it's exercise, put it on your calendar)
- **Focus on sub-goals.** Break your goal down into smaller tasks that are easier to achieve.
- **Track your progress.** Have a process in place to measure success. (e.g., habit trackers and apps)
- **Mistakes will happen.** You'll encounter bumps along the way, so lose the all-or-nothing thinking and know that it might take a few tries before your habit becomes routine.
- **Remember your why.** If you start to slip back into old habits, remember why you're making this change to keep you motivated. If boredom is the problem, switch things up. (e.g., try a new class, search for new healthy recipes, etc.)
- **Celebrate wins**—even the small ones!

Resources

Health Promotion has a variety of tools and resources across all dimensions of wellness to support you and your SMART goal—whatever it may be.

- **[Nicotine Cessation](#):** Get help quitting.
- **[Daily Habits*](#):** Sign into your Living Healthy/WebMD account* for goal-tracking tools such as back health, a balanced diet, exercise, weight loss, quitting tobacco, sleep health, and social connection.
- **[Events](#):** Browse programs and topics to support your goal. Plus, check out the [video library](#) for recordings of past events.
 - **Book club**
 - **Learning Loft**
 - **Move with a Doc**
 - **Webinars**
- **[Nutrition newsletter and consult*](#):** A nutrition newsletter with recipes and tips for eating healthier. You can also request a free consultation with a Registered Dietitian*.
- **[Partner Perks*](#):** Member-only discounts on fitness centers, massage therapy, workout equipment, and craft/hobby businesses.
- **[Real Goals](#):** Preset goals and more education on specific topics.



**Resources are available to everyone, regardless of insurance, unless otherwise noted.*