

Goal Setting for a Healthy Lifestyle

You are ready to improve your health with nutrition and exercise. Goal-setting is an important step to a healthy lifestyle. Use the tips below to help create a goal for your nutrition and/or exercise plan in order to reach your desired results.

A good goal-setting strategy is the **SMART** goal checklist.

- **Specific**
 - Be specific. Describe exactly how and what you want to do. A **SMART** goal has specific details and is not vague.
 - Example of a goal: Eat healthy food.
 - Example of a **SMART** goal: Eat at least 2 ½ cups of non-starchy vegetables and fruits a day.
- **Measurable**
 - If you can measure a goal, then you can determine how successful you are at meeting the goal.
 - Example of a goal: Exercise more.
 - Example of a **SMART** goal: Walk 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week.
- **Attainable**
 - This is a goal that can work with your lifestyle. For example, if your schedule does not allow you to go to a gym 7 days a week, do not make going to the gym 7 days a week a goal. Try alternative days or weekends. Set an attainable goal for yourself based on your schedule.
- **Realistic**
 - Everyone is different. Each person has different abilities, likes/dislikes, and schedules. Set a goal that is realistic for you. For example, if you are not physically capable of running, a goal of walking or swimming may be more realistic. Setting a realistic goal can help avoid potential failure.
- **Time-bound**
 - For a goal that has a measurable end, it is important to set a deadline. Goals without deadlines are often put off until another day.
 - Example of a goal: Join a gym.
 - Example of a **SMART** goal: Join a gym this Saturday morning.

It is important to evaluate your goals often and adjust them as needed to maintain your healthy lifestyle.

My SMART Goal(s):

Diet and Exercise Setbacks and Slips

Certain situations may tempt your healthy eating or exercise habits. These times may be during the holidays, social gatherings or even after a long day of work. You might indulge or postpone exercise and find yourself feeling guilty. If you think of a slip as a failure, consider the following:

- A slip does not undo all the success you have had so far.
- A slip does not mean that you are weak or have failed.

Use the slip as a learning experience. Learn what triggers your unhealthy eating and inactive behaviors. Come up with a plan to help balance your lifestyle with your current health goals when you encounter these triggers.

- **Explore your motivation.** Take a closer look at your reasons to pursue a healthier lifestyle through diet and exercise. Do these reasons outweigh the reasons to eat unhealthy and not exercise?
- **Take time to evaluate your goal.** Does your goal work for you in your current situation? Goals can be changed. Think about what will work for you. For example, if your work schedule does not allow you to exercise for an hour, try 30 minutes instead.
- **If you slip, try to get back on track right away.** Life happens and everyone can be tempted to eat unhealthy or avoid a workout day. Do not quit just because you slipped.
- **Keep going.** If you have had a major setback or just have not reached your goal, keep going. A healthy diet and exercise are the best things you can do to reduce your cancer risk.
- **Talk with your healthcare team for further support.**