

Walk
NEBRASKA**Set SMART Goals for Motivation and Accountability**

Even with the best intentions for maintaining healthful physical activity and dietary habits, hectic schedules and to-do lists often get in the way. Give yourself every advantage when it comes to maintaining healthy habits: set goals the SMART way!

Goal-setting helps clearly define where you are and where you want to go. Both long- and short-term goals are useful tools for tracking progress and maintaining enthusiasm. Taking a look back at how far you've come creates a sense of accomplishment and motivation to continue on. Whether you want to improve your stress management or eating habits, increase your physical activity or get more rest, the SMART principles can be applied to a wide variety of modifiable behaviors.

Specific: clearly define exactly *what* you want to do. Instead of saying, "I want to be more physically active," be more specific with, "I want to do more walking." Instead of "I want to eat better," try "I want to eat at more fruits and vegetables."

Measurable: tracking progress is much easier if you know where you're headed. Make the *amount* of change you'd like to achieve clear enough so you know when you've reached it. Be specific with how much and how often. For example, "I will walk 30 minutes at least three times each week," or "I will eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables four days of the week."

Achievable: choosing goals that are most important to you requires that you have the attitude, abilities, skills and support necessary to achieve that goal. Without those, it is easy to become frustrated and discouraged. Assess the amount of time you have available, any equipment, resources or knowledge and support you may need and make your goal match what you are capable of achieving with those in mind.

Realistic: developing goals that are doable to you yet require enough of your effort to create motivation is important. Choose goals that you are willing & able to work toward.

Time-oriented: every goal should be accompanied by a *time frame*. Setting your goals up to be accomplished 'someday' just won't cut it. With a deadline, you'll be motivated to start and to continue on your path.

Set your own SMART goal:

What you want to do: _____ How much: _____

By when: _____

What you will need: _____

Sources: <http://topachievement.com/smart.html>, <http://smallsteps.unl.edu/>

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Know how. Know now.



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