



Making Healthful Changes This Year How to Start SMART...and Recover When You Slip

Your SMART Goal Notebook

Snag a grocery store spiral notebook, or even a leftover one from your child's science class. Start brainstorming about your goals. Jot down anything you want to change. Take a big goal like "get healthy" and break it down into manageable parts. Write the letters S M A R T in a column and fill in your details. Check out the SMART goal template examples and draft yours. Need help? Contact your KnovaSolutions clinician. S/he can help you get started. And stay on track!

Use your notebook to record any small victories, those ways that you managed to stick to your goals. You can also write about your challenges. Getting the difficulties off your chest can get them out of your mind.

Are you planning on making healthful changes this year? Research shows that those who set SMART goals are more successful than those who just have a general idea that they want to get healthy.

In 1981, a corporate planning consultant named George Doran wrote a paper in *Management Review* called *There's a S.M.A.R.T. way to write management goals and objectives*. Doran is thought to be the first to put pen to paper to describe this goal-setting technique. Whether in business or our personal lives, setting goals focuses our efforts and reminds us what we want to get done, like making healthful changes!

Talking SMART

If you've decided to make healthful changes but aren't sure how to get started, it's time to talk SMART goal setting:

Specific: identify a specific area for improvement.

Measurable: set measurable criteria to gauge progress.

Achievable: set achievable goals, those that are ambitious but not impossible.

Relevant: make your goal meaningful to you (not set by someone else).

Time-bound: decide when you will achieve your goal, a time that is

realistic but not so far off that you feel you can postpone.

Setting Up for Success

It's hard work making healthful changes. Setting a goal like "get healthy" is too general since there are numerous ways to get healthy. Try to break the idea of getting healthy into manageable pieces. Your goal could focus on anything that affects your sense of well-being, such as diet, physical activity, weight loss, sleep, stress reduction, job success and relationships.

Do you want to start exercising, quit smoking, lose weight, improve sleep, lower your blood pressure or cholesterol? Pick one goal to focus your energies on.

Using the following sentences as a template can jump start your SMART goal setting: I will (insert your goal here) by (ways you intend to achieve the goal). I will know I'm making progress because (your method of measuring the goal) by (time frame you specified).

Example 1: I will lose 10 pounds by walking 30 minutes five days a week. I will know I am making progress because I will lose one pound a week for 10 weeks.

Example 2: I will improve my work-life balance by getting home from work by 6 pm. I will know I am making progress because I will be home to have dinner with my fami-

SMART Goals

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ly at least four nights a week over the next two weeks.

With your main goal clearly defined, you can set smaller, but related goals, to keep yourself motivated. Think of these smaller goals as mini challenges to keep it interesting. For best success, set one mini challenge at a time, and when you've achieved it, set a new one. Take example 1, the goal is weight loss by walking five days a week. What smaller, short-term challenge would support that goal? Here are two possibilities: replace soda with water this week or eat at least one serving of fruits and/or vegetables at every meal for two weeks.

Need more practical examples of smaller goals? Try drinking at least eight 8-ounce glasses of water every day; setting a regular sleep and waking time and stick to it every day, even on the weekends; starting each day with a to-do list and get the most important things done first; and asking for help when you know you need it. You set the time limits. What other ways can you think of to support your health goals?

Be Flexible and Kind Too

Set goals that feel right for you. Setting, and achieving, short-term goals helps to build confidence, and can contribute to developing good health habits. Avoid the temptation to set too many goals. Start with one or two goals. Add a new goal once you've completed, and achieved, the previous one.

Being willing to make changes to your goals along the way can make it more likely you will be successful. For example, if you've set an unrealistic goal or someone else's goal for you, hit reset. Or maybe you set a goal too easy that you feel you can slack off or don't feel motivated; that's another sign it's time to

reevaluate. You can change your goals at any time to make them SMARTer.

Since we mentioned motivation, some strategies can help you stay motivated to change. Telling friends, family or other supportive people about your goal can help you keep true to it. They will notice progress along the way and you can ask them for support at challenging times. Other tricks? Place photos or other reminders in your workspace or on the bathroom mirror that will signal your brain that things have changed. If you're wanting to get better sleep, you might set a picture of yourself sleeping peacefully near the TV as a reminder of those screen-time limits you've set. Some find that writing about their mini successes and hard moments in their SMART notebook (see box) helps them move successfully from one week to the next. You may find some additional tips in our newsletter on [resilience](#).

As hard as you try, you may hit a wall and slip up. A work party poses too many sweet temptations, you miss a whole week of workouts, or you binge watch a show into the wee hours. Whatever got you off track, don't beat yourself up! No, you are not a failure, and yes, you can get right back up on the horse. Start anew today by reviewing your SMART goals. You can return to making healthful changes!

We'd like to help you make healthful changes this year. If you don't know where to start, your KnovaSolutions clinician can help you draft your SMART goal(s). We'll also check back with you regularly to see how you are doing. Give KnovaSolutions a call at **800/355-0885**. We're available Monday to Friday, 8 am to 8 pm, Mountain Time.

Call us today, we're here to help!

The information contained in this newsletter is for general, educational purposes. It should not be considered a replacement for consultation with your healthcare provider. If you have concerns about your health, please contact your healthcare provider.