

What are S.M.A.R.T. Goals?

S.M.A.R.T. is an acronym that describes the various attributes a goal should have to ensure maximum probability of success. The actual adjectives that the acronym stands for differs depending on the circumstances. [ProjectSmart](#) describes some of these variations:

S – specific, significant, stretching

M – measurable, meaningful, motivational

A – agreed upon, attainable, achievable, acceptable, action-oriented

R – realistic, relevant, reasonable, rewarding, results-oriented

T – time-based, timely, tangible, trackable

How Can I Set S.M.A.R.T. Goals For Fitness And Weight-Management?

Whether your goal is to lose weight, gain muscle or just be fit, setting S.M.A.R.T. goals will give you an edge by keeping you focussed and motivated throughout your endeavor. See how being S.M.A.R.T. pays off:

1. Be Specific About Your Fitness Goal:

Most of you might begin with a reasonable goal like “I want to lose weight”, but if you really stop to think about it, that goal is not quite specific enough. What amount of weight do you want to lose? When do you want to lose this by? The answers to this and other so-called “W-questions” make our goals more Specific.

Typically you try to answer the 6-W questions (Via [TopAchievement](#)):

Who: Who is involved? That’s easy! “I ...”

What: What do I want to accomplish? Again, be specific here: “... want to lose 5 lbs ...”

When: Establish a time frame. “... in two months ...”

Which: Identify requirements and constraints. Which way are you going to do this? “... by eating right and exercising ...”

Where: Identify a location. The more details you fill in to form a complete picture, the more likely you will be to execute the plan. “... in the gym ...”

Why: Give specific reasons, purposes or benefits of accomplishing the goal. “... so I can be healthy, fit and energetic.”

“I ... want to lose 5 lbs ... in two months ... by eating right and exercising ... in the gym ... so I can be healthy, fit and energetic.”

Seems specific enough!

2. Make Your Goal Measurable:

OK so you have set a specific goal and have started making positive changes in your life toward achieving it. But how do you how well you are doing?

Measuring your progress at frequent intervals is as important as setting the goal in the first place. This serves a two-fold purpose: firstly you know pretty quickly whether what you are doing is working or not and you can take corrective action to keep yourself on track. However, the bigger advantage is the motivation that initial success will give you: nothing will boost your confidence and morale than seeing your body change for the better in the mirror every day.

3. Set Attainable Goals:

What if instead of setting a “5 lbs in two months” goal, you decided instead to shed “30 pounds in one month”? Not only is this unrealistic and virtually unattainable, but you are already setting yourself up for failure from the very beginning. Creating reasonable and attainable goals for yourself will propel you to success and keep that motivation factor alive as well. Think small, attainable targets and you’ll be alright because it’s the attaining of small goals that boosts your morale and helps you aim higher.

4. Be Realistic:

This is a little different from setting attainable goals. For example you might set yourself the attainable goal of a 32 inch waist in 3 months. That is certainly attainable if you are only a few inches away from your target. But when it comes to the methods you plan to use to achieve this goal, you might start to become unrealistic. “I will run everyday for two hours”, “I will not eat any sweets, candies, cakes or pastries for the next 3 months” and “I will avoid all fried foods” are all examples of unrealistic methods that you have a slim chance of sticking to.

Be realistic and ask yourself what the chances are that you will stick to any drastic change in behaviour.

Do you have two hours to spare for running? Every single day?

You won’t eat cake? On your wife’s / kid’s / best-friend’s birthday?

No fried foods? Even on SuperBowl night?

While some of these may be possible with extreme dedication, you are the ultimate judge about whether they are realistic – and sustainable.

5. Stick To Timely Goals:

Finally, no goal makes much sense unless you attach a timeframe to it. This is the “... in two months ...” part of the goal statement. By limiting the time you have to accomplish a goal you have a fixed timetable to work with and the sense of urgency that will spur you to keep on track. In my opinion this is probably the most important attribute of a well-set goal because none of the others matter if you don’t set a time-limit by which to accomplish your goal.

By using the S.M.A.R.T. technique of goal setting to your fitness regimen, you will see slow but steady incremental benefits that are bound to raise your morale which will, in turn enable you to raise your own expectations even higher.

Go ahead – set a S.M.A.R.T. fitness goal right away and work toward it!