

As You Get Ready...

When you begin to think about changing something in your life, first think about what's important to you.

1. Why do you want to make the change you wrote down?

2. Think about the things that are important to you. What do you value? How and where do you spend most of your time?

3. How will this change fit with the things you value? Will it increase your ability to enjoy them?

4. What is one small step you'll start with today or tomorrow?

This is a new way to start off on a journey of change

Making a change in your life doesn't mean that you should only focus on a big idea or goal. It's also about breaking it down into smaller steps that you're confident you can achieve. Taking small steps will get you to your bigger goal or vision!

- Focus on how this change will make your life better every day you're on the journey.
- Expect some bumps along the way. It won't always go smoothly. Stop to think about the steps you have taken. Give yourself credit for them!
- Pause to think about what didn't go well. Think about why it didn't work and what you can learn from it. Each "failure" can help you figure out what you can try next.
- Be flexible and compassionate with yourself. If something isn't working, it's not a "failure." Look at your options; make one or two adjustments; and try again. This isn't about being "perfect." It's about continuing to move forward toward what you value.

Making a change is about not giving up. No matter what. Keep taking small steps!



Setting SMART Goals

Goals help you get organized and keep you focused. When you reach your goals — daily and long term — they can give you a wonderful feeling of pride and accomplishment!

How important is goal setting?

Anyone can say, “My goal for this year is to exercise more.” But that actually isn’t as well-planned as a goal could be. Goals as vague as “exercise more” tend to be overwhelming and disappear. That means you don’t get any reward for your effort or your success. But, for example, going to an exercise class twice a week gives you immediate reward *each time you do it*.

How you think about your goals greatly affects your success in reaching them. Use a SMART outline. SMART goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-limited. This strategy is a big part of “the best way to make a lifestyle change.”

SMART goals are:

Specific	What are you going to do?
Measurable	How will you know you have been successful?
Achievable	Do you feel confident that you can do this?
Relevant	Is this important to you personally?
Time-limited	What can you do in a week’s time? Each goal should have a short-enough timeframe that you get a sense of accomplishment for your work. Plan to start TODAY. What can you do now?



Long- and short-term goals

An important part of fulfilling your plan is to set both long-term and short-term goals.

1. **Identify your long-term goal first.** An example is, "I will walk quickly 30 minutes a day at least 5 days a week." This is a great goal to help you increase your energy and fitness level. However, it may take time to reach this goal if you haven't exercised regularly.
2. **Next, make short-term goal(s)** to help you reach your long-term goal. For example, "I will walk 10 minutes at lunchtime at least 2 days this week."
3. **As you work toward your short-term goals, take time to think about your efforts.** What part of your plan is working and what might you want to change? Maybe lunch time meetings keep you from walking some days. So adjust your goal. Try parking in a ramp further away from your office. This could give you a brisk 10-minute walk before work.
4. **After you reach your short-term goal, increase your effort a bit more.** For example, add more time per day or add another day of exercise per week. **Build on your success.** When you increase your effort little by little, soon enough you'll accomplish your long-term goal!

Confidence

Your confidence in your ability to achieve your goals is an important predictor of success. Once you set long- and short-term goals, on a scale of 0 to 10, rate how confident you are that you will be able to meet each individual goal.

0 _____ 5 _____ 10
 Not confident Confident Very confident

If your rate ranks below 7, adjust your goals to bring your confidence level to a 7 or higher. You want to set goals that you will reach. That success will increase your confidence and keep you moving forward!



You Can Do This!

For many people, the best way to make a lifestyle change begins with changing their attitudes toward change.

Maybe, after reading this, you're going to stop and think about changes you tried to make in the past. Remember that they're learning opportunities. Ask yourself: What worked and what didn't work? What did I learn from what I tried?

Maybe you learned that you don't enjoy group exercise classes, such as water aerobics. But you did enjoy going for long hikes with a friend. Use that information as you complete your SMART goals this time. That is one of the best ways to make a lifestyle change!

Be curious. Get excited! Don't worry about the past. Keep moving forward!

Living your life the way you want to live it can make you stronger in body, mind and spirit!



SMART Goals Worksheet

Use this as a weekly guide and reminder. Be sure to make some photocopies of it before you write on it.

Specific: What are you going to do? How? When? Where?

Measureable: How will you know when you've accomplished your goal?

Achievable: What will you do to make this happen? Can you see yourself doing this?

Relevant: How does this fit with what's important to you?

Timely: What's your time frame for taking action? When, specifically, will you do it? Plan also when you'll stop to think about your progress and adjust your goals if needed.

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