

# Goal Setting Tips for Lasting Lifestyle Change for the Patient

Goal setting can help you make lasting lifestyle changes to improve your health. They help you see what is important to you and help you to stick to your plan. As you get into the habit of setting and meeting goals, you will find your self-confidence (believing in yourself to make changes) builds. The tips below will help you set clear and effective goals.

<b>1</b>	Make sure your goal is really <b>your goal</b> , and not someone else's. Too often we try to please others instead of ourselves.
<b>2</b>	Make sure your goal is <b>practical</b> . You should set a goal that is slightly out of your reach, but not so far that there is no hope of reaching it. You should be at least 70% confident (sure that you can meet the goal) within your time frame.
<b>3</b>	<b>Be specific.</b> Make sure your goal can be measured. Spell out exactly what you will do, how long, and how often you will do it. For example: <i>Over the next <u>two weeks</u>, I will <u>walk 30 minutes</u> over my <u>lunch hour</u> on <u>Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays</u>.</i>
<b>4</b>	<b>Break your goal into small steps.</b> Limit your goals to one to two weeks; reset the goal as needed, for the following week or two. Success in meeting small goals helps to build confidence for continued success.
<b>5</b>	<b>Write down your goal.</b> Putting your goals down on paper makes them clear and real. This is much more powerful than unclear thoughts in the back of your mind. Put your goal in a place you will see daily. <b>This helps to picture your success.</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Identify problems.</b> Write down a list of things that may stop you from reaching your goal. These problems may include your own negative thoughts. Use this list to make a plan to remove the problem or find a way to deal with it.
<b>7</b>	<b>Keep your balance.</b> Keep a good attitude with working on your goal. Don't get too upset if you miss a target. This can get in the way of helping you to make your changes.
<b>8</b>	<b>Reward your success.</b> Meeting even a small goal is worth celebration. Don't get overwhelmed with all you still have to do. Small steps are the key to lasting lifestyle change.
<b>9</b>	<b>Remain flexible.</b> From time to time, look at the goal you have set for yourself to see if the goal is still important and right for you. It is okay to change your goal to fit changes in your life situations.