

A Realistic Approach to Goal-setting

With regard to health coaching, realistic goals benefit both the health coach and the client. Realistic goals ensure that the client's efforts are focused in the correct areas for success and that the program is tailored to the client.

Key Benefits to goal-setting:

- Goals have the power to motivate you during the process of behavior change.
- Goals enhance your program adherence.

Key considerations when goal-setting:

- Big changes result from small goals. Unrealistic goals can demotivate and overwhelm you.
- Ensure that your goals are realistic.
- Recognize and often remind yourself of your "why" for change. This can help you in times of challenge.
- Identify internal and external obstacles and determine solutions to navigate before you encounter them.

Use the elements of SMART goals when setting goals:

- Specific (S)
- Measurable (M)
- Attainable (A)
- Relevant (R)
- Time-bound (T)

An example of a weight-loss goal using these elements for success:

Goal: I want to lose 20 pounds in 6 months (S, T)

My "why": so that I am healthier and have the energy and ability to play with my grandkids. I want a sustainable lifestyle change that I can live with, not a crash diet. (R)

Food: I will use the myplate.gov guidelines and I will prep my 5 meals per week

Movement: I will walk, swim, etc (something I can commit to) 30 minutes per day

Thought-work: I will journal my progress each day and reflect on successes and opportunities for improvement and adjust accordingly. I will focus on progress, not perfection. (S, M, A, R, T)

Weighing: I will weigh weekly. (S, M)

Goal breakdown: 20 lbs/6 months (24 weeks)=.83 average pound per week (A,M)

Now you have set yourself up for success. Go for it!

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(Disclaimer: this information is for educational purposes and should not override that of your healthcare provider)