

## Goal Setting

While goal setting may be considered a routine task, I maintain that success in achieving your goals is very dependent upon how you set your goals. A great deal of thought must accompany your goal setting. To help you with this process, I'll discuss how to set SMART Goals for success. SMART is an acronym for the following:

**S** = Specific      **M** = Measurable      **A** = Attainable      **R** = Realistic      **T** = Time Bound

Let's discuss each of these.

**Specific** – Goals must unambiguous and specifically describe what's to be accomplished. A goal that states: "*I want to look better*" is ambiguous and does not identify what parts of you will look better. A better fitness goal might be written as: "*I want to reshape my body by losing 20 pounds and reducing my waist size by 3 inches and my hip size by 5 inches.*"

**Measurable** – Goals must be quantified so that progress can be measured. This can be accomplished by establishing numbers for goals such as: inches to be lost, pounds to be lost, or body fat percentage to be reduced, etc.

**Attainable** – Being an attainable goal must answer the question: "Is this goal attainable by an average person?" Setting a goal to lose 50 pounds in one month is probably not attainable (or healthy) for an average person. Expecting to run a 4-minute mile is also not attainable by an average person. Do some research and find out what is attainable or you could set goals that are "out of reach". On the other hand, don't make the goal too easy. Saying "*I'm going to lose ½ pound this month*" is not a stretch for you. Make the goal challenging, but not impossible.

**Realistic** – Even though you've set a goal that is 'attainable' by the average person, it may not be realistic for you. If you're extremely busy and can't exercise regularly, then you may need to be more realistic with your aspirations. Make the goal challenging, but 'within your grasp' considering your lifestyle, present health status, schedule, motivation and existing fitness level.

**Time Bound** – To make your goal challenging and measurable, you must establish a time limit for accomplishment. I recommend setting a long-range goal that would be in the 3 to 12 month time frame and short-range goals within a weekly or monthly time frame. An example would be: "*I want to reshape my body by losing 20 pounds and reducing my waist size by*

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*3 inches and my hip size by 5 inches, all within 6 months by losing 3-4 pounds each month."*