



## Goal Setting

Goals provide encouragement, responsibility, motivation, and direction to individuals to make the commitment to fulfill their aspirations. Responsibility is encouraged when the athletes are included in the goal development process. By setting individual short-term and long-term goals, the athlete retains his or her individual identity and is provided with satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment when short-term goals are attained, increasing confidence and motivation to reach long-term goals.

When setting goals make sure they are **SMARTS**:

- » **Specific**—The goal needs to be clear to the individual.
- » **Measurable**—The goal needs to be stated in a precise quantifiable manner, allowing for the reliable evaluation of progress.
- » **Attainable**—The goal needs to be difficult yet achievable through the use of an action plan.
- » **Relevant**—The goal needs to be associated with skills that will add value to the athlete and their performance.
- » **Time-Bound**—Set a completion date for goals with intermediate checkpoints to evaluate progress.
- » **Self-Determined**—An individual needs to have input into their goals, without ownership, the goal will never be accomplished.

Set your goals in the present tense; goals in the future tense always allow you to say “I’ll do it tomorrow.” Goals set in the present make sure you’re working on it TODAY.

Develop detailed action plans to achieve your goals and devise strategies to overcome possible obstacles. You must remember to be flexible and to be willing to reevaluate your goals when needed.

If you have multiple goals, make sure they’re compatible with each other. For example, a goal of “watching more television” isn’t compatible with “adding additional workouts during the week.”

Goals need to be flexible to allow for change and revision. When you reach a checkpoint and notice you’re making progress faster than you anticipated, increase the end goal! Likewise, if you’ve fallen behind, adjust the end goal to account for that. Provide yourself with small rewards when short-term goals are achieved and bigger rewards when long-term goals are reached.

Finally, make sure your goals are in writing and put them in a place where you will be reminded of them regularly. Also, if you are comfortable with it, share your goals with someone, so with the help of your friends, you will be held more accountable for your progress.

### **SMARTS** vs. not-so-**SMARTS** goals

Not-so-SMARTS goal: I will go to the gym more often (future tense, not specific, no time frame for completion)

SMARTS goal: I spend an hour in the gym four days each week (present tense, specific, measurable, time bound)

Not-so-SMARTS goal: I work harder at practice (not specific, not too measurable)

SMARTS goal: I take the time to do one extra rep of each practice drill (specific, measurable)

Not-so-SMARTS goal: I lose 15 pounds between Thanksgiving and New Year's (may not be realistic)

SMARTS goal: I eat smaller portions at holiday meals and limit my intake of sweets/snacks between meals (portion size and food choices are controllable and attainable, while allowing for the family get-togethers and big meals of the holiday season).