

S.M.A.R.T. goal setting

Goals provide us with direction in all dimensions of our lives. Whether personal, professional, family, financial or health-related, goals inspire us to be the best we can possibly be. The term “goal” does not simply mean something we want, but also implies the steps to take before the goal is attained. Planning and preparing for goals is important in achieving these desired outcomes.

Establishing goals the SMART way

A goal is an end toward which you direct some specific effort. To be effective, a goal must be S.M.A.R.T.

Specific—The more detailed and focused your goal, the better.

Measurable—Have criteria for measuring the progress of your goal.

Action-oriented—Goal statements should start with an action verb.

Realistic—A goal must be something that you are both willing and able to work toward.

Timebound—Having a deadline will encourage action and help you avoid procrastination.

Achieving success

Once you have defined your goals, commit yourself to achieving them. Try these helpful tips to stay focused on attaining your goals:

- **Put your goals in writing.** Along with clear goal statements, include your reasons for setting each goal. Identifying reasons will help evaluate if the goal is something you truly desire, and not something you feel obligated to do. As you achieve your set goals, cross them off your list. This helps with motivation by visually demonstrating how much progress you have made.
- **List the obstacles to overcome.** It is inevitable that you will come across stumbling blocks on your path to reaching your goals. Identifying these early will give you time to find solutions for overcoming them. Remember that setbacks are normal.



- **Identify people that may need to help you reach your goal.** Some goals require the cooperation of other people. For example, if one of your professional goals is to manage a key project at work, you should discuss this desire with your supervisor.
- **Develop an action plan.** An action plan includes all tasks or activities needed to attain your goal. For example, if your goal is to lose 10 pounds by June, one task might be to join a gym.

As important goals are, it is important not to become overwhelmed by them or depressed if you fail at your attempts. Remember, goals are to help you improve, not to punish you. Celebrate your successes and recognize when you have attained even an intermediate step toward your ultimate goal.

This document is for your information only. It is not meant to give medical advice. It should not be used to replace a visit with a provider. Magellan does not endorse other resources that may be mentioned here.