

Making SMART Nutrition Goals

When you decide to make a behavior change, it is important to set SMART goals. Use the SMART acronym below to help you set nutrition and physical activity goals in your life.

Specific

Goals need to be clear and well defined to provide you with specific direction. A specific goal answers the questions, "When will you start? What will you focus on? How will you do it?" An example of a general goal would be, "Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables." However, a specific goal would say, "Increase fruits and vegetables consumption by including a serving at one meal per day."



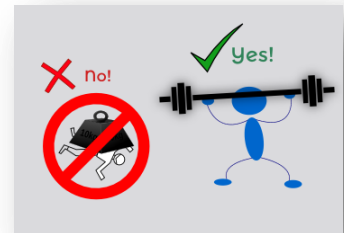
Measurable

Goals need to be measurable in order to determine if you have been successful. A measurable goal answers the question, "How will I know when I have reached this goal?" The previous example, "Increase fruits and vegetables consumption by including a serving at one meal per day" would be a measurable goal because we are measuring if fruits and vegetables are consumed one meal per day.



Attainable

Don't make your goal too hard to reach. While you want to push yourself a little, try dividing your ultimate goal into many smaller, achievable ones. Our example of a goal was to "Increase fruits and vegetables consumption by including a serving at one meal per day." Is consuming a serving of fruits and vegetables at one meal a day possible given social, economic, or cultural resources? If not, then this would not be an attainable goal.



Realistic

Can you see yourself completing this goal? Be honest! Plan to set goals based on what is realistic to your lifestyle. Instead of thinking, "I'll never have dessert again", plan on only eating dessert on Saturday night, or, instead of saying, "I will walk 60 minutes seven days a week", say, "I will walk 30 minutes five days a week".



Timely

Set a time, like a week, month, or year, to complete your goal. Setting an end gives you a clear target to achieve.

