

## Setting a SMART Physical Activity Goal



TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY

Who among us has ever said this before: “I really should exercise more?” Can anyone identify what is wrong with this statement? (*Presenter: allow a few responses from members*). Quite simply, this statement is too vague. What exactly do you mean when you say you should exercise more?

If you are not establishing concrete goals—including a timeframe and the steps you will take to reach those goals—then you do not have a clear target to aim for, and you may quickly lose interest and enthusiasm as a result. SMART goals are a great way to structure a physical-activity program. SMART goals are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**imely. They can help make the process of becoming more active less intimidating.

Think of it like this: Do you think a runner envisions the entire marathon (26.2 miles) at the starting line? Probably not. A thought like that is much too overwhelming. Instead, it is likely that the runner thinks of the race in small chunks: 1-mile mark, 5-mile mark, 10-mile mark, and so on. Passing each mile marker is an accomplishment in and of itself. Think of your SMART goal as a “mile marker” in building more physical activity into your lifestyle.

Each member is to set a SMART goal focusing on physical activity, making certain the goal is :

**Specific**—Be explicit in your intentions. Don't say you'll “walk more,” commit to walking at least 30 minutes on most days of the week.

**Measurable**—Log your activity, recording how often you exercised, how long you exercised each time, and what you did. It's hard to fool yourself when you keep a record of what you've actually accomplished.

**Attainable**—Make certain that you can take specific steps to reach your goal.

**Realistic**—Goals must be within reason. Vowing to “exercise hard” one hour every single day if you are brand-new to exercise is not reasonable and may even be unsafe. Instead, commit to a smaller goal – such as 20 to 30 minutes, four days a week – and gradually work your way up.

**Timely**—Aim to achieve your goal within a certain amount of time. Set a realistic timeframe, noting a specific date on which you will have accomplished your goal.

My SMART Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

**Specific    Measurable    Attainable    Realistic    Timely**

### Review SMART physical activity goals with your chapter

While the timeframe for each member's SMART goal will vary, set aside one future meeting in advance to review progress, including how you are doing, how you feel and obstacles encountered along the way.

#### Extra Motivation:

Having someone “sponsor” your SMART goal makes the process more enjoyable. Enlist the support of a friend, spouse, co-worker, sibling or fellow TOPS member. Ask this person to sponsor you with some type of incentive—housework reprieve, a night at the movies, a mini-trip—whatever will motivate you to reach your goal. Your sponsor may also choose to keep you motivated by awarding your progress with smaller gifts along the way.

