

Setting Goals That Stick

Supports: Building Block 1 — Program & Personal Goals

Why It Matters

Goals give your effort direction, and they help you feel a sense of progress along the way. When a goal is clear and doable, it is easier to stay motivated and to notice the small wins that add up over time. The good news is that lasting change rarely comes from one giant leap; it comes from steady, everyday actions you can actually keep up. As you get started, it helps to know what makes a goal easy to follow through on, and how to set yourself up so success feels within reach.

What to Know

Focus on what you can control

It helps to know the difference between two kinds of goals. An outcome goal names a result you hope to reach, like walking a 5K next month. Those matter, but you cannot always control them directly. An action goal names something you will actually do, like walking for 30 minutes on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Action goals are the ones you can steer day to day, so let them do most of the work. If you want, you can hold one outcome goal in the background as your bigger-picture hope, but it is completely optional, and your daily actions are what deserve your attention.

Make it S.M.A.R.T.E.R.

A simple way to shape a goal you can stick with is to make it S.M.A.R.T.E.R. This keeps a goal realistic and easy to check, and it builds in room to adjust as life changes.

- Specific: name exactly what you will do, not just a vague wish.
- Measurable: set it up so you can tell whether you did it.
- Action-oriented: center it on something you do, not a result you hope for.
- Realistic: pick something you can genuinely keep up.
- Time-bound: give it a timeframe so it stays front of mind.
- Evaluate: check in and notice how it is going.
- Readjust or reward: tweak what is not working, and celebrate what is.

One small goal at a time

It is tempting to change everything at once, but that usually leads to feeling overwhelmed. Try choosing just one action goal, practicing it until it feels routine, and only then adding another. Prepare what you need ahead of time, set a reminder, and consider a small reward for following through. Small, repeatable actions are what quietly turn into lasting habits.

Set it, then support it. Once you pick a goal, make it a little easier to keep. Lay out what you need the night before, put a reminder on your calendar, or ask a friend to check in with you. A little planning goes a long way.

Try This

Take a few minutes to shape one goal you can start this week. Keep it small and specific, and let it be something you can genuinely see yourself doing.

- ? What is one bigger-picture hope for your health that matters to you right now?
- ? What is one small, specific action you could do a few times this week to move toward it?
- ? How will you know you followed through, and how might you celebrate when you do?