

# The SMART way to reach your goals

March 2014 Newsletter



In last month's newsletter, we wrote about the benefits of making plans. Plans help you organize and focus. They help you commit to your project or goal.

And the best kinds of plans include SMART goals. What are those? SMART goals are:

- **Specific.** SMART goals are clear. They state exactly what you want to do. Once you take the fuzziness out of your goals, they become targets you can aim for.
- **Measurable.** How will you know when you achieve your goal? Or measure how you're doing along the way? It's important to set milestones so you can see your progress. Plan rewards to keep up your incentive. There should also be a specific outcome so you know when you've "arrived."
- **Attainable.** Is your goal reasonable? SMART goals motivate because they make you stretch a bit, but aren't out of reach. When goals are too high or too low, you can become discouraged or disinterested.
- **Relevant.** SMART goals need to be meaningful to you or you'll find it hard to commit to them. Connecting your goal to family, friends or the larger community can help. The more it means to you, the harder you'll be willing to work.
- **Timely.** Goals should start and end at specific times. When goals are open-ended, you may "put them on the back burner" every time something comes along that seems more urgent. Setting your own deadlines helps you stay focused, committed and motivated.

## Here's what a SMART goal might look like

Let's say you want to shape up for summer so you'll feel good in your bathing suit at the beach or pool. Here's what your SMART goal plan might look like:

**Specific:** I want to lose 16 pounds.

**Measurable:** I'll weigh myself once a week. I plan to lose 2 pounds per week for 8 weeks. Each time I lose 2 pounds, I'll treat myself to a movie, massage or something else I enjoy (other than food).

**Attainable:** I know I can do this if I join a support group. That keeps me accountable and gives me others to talk to about my goal. I've already found a weight loss group and signed up. I'll attend meetings regularly.

**Relevant:** Losing this weight will make me feel great about myself and boost my confidence as I head into bathing suit season.

**Timely:** I'll reach my goal by June 1.

Remember: the purpose of setting goals is to achieve them. Set SMART goals to help get what you're really after.