



# Setting SMART goals

Get things done more efficiently and with less stress using SMART goals. They can not only help you experience less anxiety, but also concentrate and remember more effectively, feel greater self-confidence, perform better and achieve more, as well as be happier and more satisfied.

## WHAT MAKES A GOAL SMART?

You do! Some goals are straightforward to achieve, while others can be complex and difficult to define. By thinking carefully about what you want to accomplish and determining a clear course of action, you'll have a better understanding of what your goals really are and how you can reach them.

### Specific

State exactly what you want to achieve. Depending on your goal, you may have to outline others that will be involved, places you need to go, or constraints to getting things done. If your goal is large or complex, break it up into smaller items so that each item corresponds with a specific action or step.

### Measurable

Establish clear definitions to help you measure if you're reaching your goal. How will you know if you're making progress toward achieving your goal? How can you check that you're staying on track? For example, an academic goal you could measure progress towards an academic goal with grades.

### Action-Oriented

Describe your goals using action verbs. This will ensure that your tasks are clear, which can help you accomplish your goal more easily. Check this for each specific item you outline.

### Realistic

Set goals you believe you can actually accomplish. If your goals are so ambitious that they impossible to reach, you deny yourself the opportunity to succeed. At the same time, you don't want set the bar so low that achieving your goal won't be satisfying. Consider obstacles you may need to overcome and make an appropriately challenging goal.

### Time-Bound

How much time do you have to complete the task? Decide exactly when you'll start and finish your goal. A complex goal might require more approximate time limits at first, then develop specific deadlines as time goes on. For example, someone preparing for a career in public health might plan to do an internship in the fall and start applying for graduate schools the following spring. As time goes on, the dates for completing these tasks would become more concrete.

### EXAMPLE

I'm going to read Chapter 5 and answer the ten practice questions at the end of the chapter. This assignment is due on Thursday, so I'll preview and read the chapter by Wednesday. This will give me enough time to work on the homework from 7-9 p.m. so I can watch a movie with my friends at 10 p.m.

**Now take a goal of your own and make it SMART:**

---

---

---

---