

[IMAGE]

Setting Goals: Secrets to Success

By Emily Duval Ledger

Ready to reach your fitness goals? Here are a few tactics to help you achieve and maintain the body you want.

Write it Down. The easiest goals to achieve are those that are clearly defined. Start by setting a goal that is challenging to meet, but not impossible, and answer these questions:

1. What is your goal? When do you want to reach it?
2. What are you willing to do to achieve it? What are you willing to give up?
3. Who can help you? Who may be a challenge?

Be specific! Writing it down helps clarify what you are really after, and keeping it in a visible place can be great motivation to stick with it.

Marry Your Mantra. Often, it is ourselves – not outside obstacles – that stand in the way of our goals. To combat these personal "roadblocks," create a mantra for yourself that encourages positive behavior to keep you on track.

fitness goals - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark For example, if your goal is to fit into your little black dress for an event, as you approach the ice cream aisle, recite your mantra, "That isn't going to get me into my dress." If you have trouble getting out of bed to exercise, perhaps your mantra should be, "It may be hard to get up, but I won't be sorry I did."

Check In. About a month in, measure your progress in a way appropriate to your goal. For example, if you are looking to slim down and lose fat, take new circumference measurements and have your body fat % re-tested. Then ask yourself:

1. How am I doing? Is this where I thought I'd be at this point?
2. Was my time line realistic for the size of my goal?
3. What small things can I do daily to help my progress? Do I need professional help, like a trainer?

Variation is key, so change it up, try new things, and you may find surprising solutions for getting what you want.

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