

# Setting Goals and Staying Motivated

You have some big goals.

- ▶ The goal of being healthy.
- ▶ The goal of managing your diabetes.
- ▶ The goal of eating fewer RED foods.
- ▶ The goal of increasing GREEN activity.

These are big goals. It may take some time to do them, and you might get discouraged when things don't change fast enough.

When goals are big and far off, it's harder to keep trying. It's harder to know exactly what you should be doing now. So you need to find a way to sort things out again. That's where smaller goals, step-by-step goals, come in. You know you can't do everything all at once. So how much should you be trying to do now?



**Make a plan that will help you take one step at a time and still get you where you need to go.**

Making small changes can help you reach a big goal. But there's a trick to this. You must put your goal on a schedule. Yes. You schedule it. You make a list of small steps to take along the way. Then you put these steps on a schedule.

Here's how it works. You don't try to meet your goal all at once. Instead, you plan a way that you can meet your overall goal over a period of weeks. Or even months. Then you make a plan to help you reach your goal. Every goal needs a plan. If your goal isn't linked to a plan, it's not a goal. It's just a good idea.

For example, if you are eating an average of 18 RED foods a day, your final goal might be to eat only 3 a day. But you don't try to cut out 15 RED foods all at



**Staying motivated will help you meet your 4 key goals:**

- ⊙ Limit RED foods
- ⊙ Increase GREEN activity
- ⊙ Hold Family Meetings
- ⊙ Keep Track of Weight

once. That would be too hard to do.

Instead, you set a goal to cut down to 8 RED foods a day over six weeks. To do this, you set a smaller goal for each week. Each week you set a goal of fewer RED foods. That's doing it step by step.

- ▶ Week #0: Your starting point is an average of 18 RED foods a day.
- ▶ Week #1: Cut down to 16 RED foods a day.
- ▶ Week #2: Cut down to 14 RED foods a day.
- ▶ Week #3: Cut down to 12 RED foods a day.

## Here's what you'll learn about in this module:

- ▶ Breaking big goals into smaller goals
- ▶ Scheduling your small steps to meet these goals
- ▶ Making a realistic plan to meet these goals



Breaking a big goal into smaller goals is the first step. Then you make a schedule for meeting these smaller goals.

Every goal needs a plan.  
Otherwise it's not a goal.  
It's just a good idea.

- ▶ Week #4: Cut down to 10 RED foods a day.

After 4 weeks you are eating 10 RED foods a day! That's a big change from 18. You are eating 8 fewer RED foods a day than when you started. And you aren't done yet. You've made this progress because you took it one step at a time. It worked because you did it step-by-step. It worked because you didn't try to do it all at once.

What about the 5th week? You've been cutting out 2 more RED foods every week. Should you continue that pace? Should you set a goal of 8 RED foods? Probably not. It will be harder to cut out 2 more RED foods a day now than when you started. So set a smaller goal. Set a goal you can reach. Set a goal of cutting back only 1 RED food a day during that week. So your next goal would be 9 RED foods.

- ▶ Week #5: Cut down to 9 RED foods a day.

Do the same thing for the 6th week. Cut back by 1 RED food. That will put you at your goal of 8 RED foods a day.

- ▶ Week #6: Cut down to 8 RED foods a day.

You might want to stay at this level for a week or two.

That way you will feel more confident when you move on to another goal.

Be sure you keep track of your progress. That's the only way to see how well you are doing. Keeping a chart is one of the best ways of keeping track of your progress. See the sample chart in the Help Sheet for this module.



### **What should I do if I meet my small goal on only some of the days of the week? Should I go on to the next small goal?**

No. Don't go on to the next step if you haven't met your goal. For example, let's say you are eating an average of 7 RED foods a day. You have a goal of cutting down to 5 a day.

Say you met this goal on only 3 of 7 days for the week. On the other days you ate more than 5 RED foods. If that's the case, you should stick with the same goal for another week. You would probably also want to do some problem-solving so you can figure out how to meet your goal.

**Sometimes going slowly is the best way to get there.**

It's better to take it one step at a time than to race ahead when you have not completed each goal. It's always better to know what you are really doing than to pretend you are doing better

than you are. Facing the facts is the first step in making changes.

If you stick with a small goal for another week or two until you meet it, you stand a better chance of meeting your big, long-term goal. If you race ahead trying to meet the next small goal on your schedule before you have met the one before it, you may get discouraged and feel like quitting. That sure wouldn't help.

Every plan needs a schedule. If a plan isn't linked to a schedule, it's just wishful thinking.

**Think about your reasons to change.**

Look at why this goal is important. Think about how this would help you. Look at how confident you are about reaching your goal. Then make a plan to help you move forward. It doesn't need to be moving forward with giant steps. It just needs to be moving forward. The Help Sheet gives you a good way to do this.

**Tips for making a plan that works:**

- ▶ Keep your plan *simple and clear*. It should say *what* you want to do. It should

say *where* you will do it. It should say *how* you will do it. It should say *when* you will do it. It should say *who* will do it with you. It should say *why* you want to do it.

- ▶ Keep your plan *realistic*. It must be doable. It's not realistic to say you will cut out all your RED foods so

you can lose 30 pounds in a month. It is realistic to say you will cut out enough RED foods to lose a pound a week.

- ▶ Put your goals on a *schedule*. We've already explained this.
- ▶ *Check* your plan out. Ask your parents about

it. Ask your PAL. Ask them these questions: *Does this make sense to you? Is it realistic to think I could do this? What are your suggestions for me? How can you help me follow my plan?*

Alicia wanted to do more than 200 minutes of physical activity a week. She wanted to get to 300, the gold medal goal. She knew she would have to average 45 minutes of physical activity a day to do that.

But on some days she didn't even get in 30 minutes of physical activity. That put her below her first goal of 200 minutes a week. She did an activity on the Help Sheet. This made some things clear to her. It made it clear that she really wanted to meet her goals. It also made it clear that she did not think she could.

She talked to her mother. Her mother reminded Alicia about going after goals one step at a time. She told her about setting small goals. She told her about making a schedule. She also reminded her to be realistic. There would be some days when she could not get in 30 minutes of physical activity. Other days she could do more.

"I know," said Alicia. "But I'm not sure I can do it. It's fall now. The days are shorter. It's harder to do things when it gets dark so early. Besides, school and my friends keep me really busy."

"All this is true," her mother said. "But it doesn't mean you can't do it. I'll help you make a plan. First, let's plan how you can get your 200 minutes in. Then we'll make a plan so you can get up to 300 minutes over the next few months."

"I'd like to do it sooner than that," Alicia said.

"Sure you would. Maybe you can. But first let's take a look at your schedule for the next few weeks. Let's see how you can get your 200 minutes in. Then we'll figure out how to stretch from 30 minutes a day to 35. Then to 40. Then to 45," her mother said.

They did this together. Alicia's mother had some good ideas. She pointed out how Alicia could get in more physical activity on the weekends. She offered to walk with her after dark on two days when she was able to. That way it would be safe. She suggested that Alicia also do aerobics at home. She could ask her PAL for a tape.

Alicia got really excited. She saw herself getting to 200 right away. She felt sure she could even get to 300 soon. She did the activity on the Help Sheet again. Before she had circled a "3" for confidence. This time she circled an "8." She felt sure she could reach her goal.

It worked. For two weeks in a row, Alicia met her goal of 200 minutes. Then she and her mother set some new goals. These were step-by-step goals, small goals on the way to 300.

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What made Alicia's plan work so well?

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Have you ever been in a situation like Alicia was? How did you handle it?

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- ▶ Week #0..... **180**      Alicia's starting point.
- ▶ Weeks #1 & 2. .... **200!**      Alicia meets her **1st big goal!**
- ▶ Weeks #3 & 4. .... **225**      One more step...
- ▶ Weeks #5 & 6. .... **250**      and another...
- ▶ Weeks #7 & 8. .... **275**      and another.
- ▶ Week# 9. .... **300! !**      Alicia meets her **2nd big goal!**

Alicia met all her goals. They were easier to meet because she had a plan. They were also easier because each one was just a little step forward. In fact, on some weeks Alicia went beyond her goals.

Alicia thanked her mother. She knew it would have been much harder to do without support.

"It's not magic," her mother said. "Part of it's the hard work you are doing. Part of it's because you made a realistic plan. Part of it's because you scheduled your goals. You can do the same thing with a lot of other goals, too," her mother said.

### Skills and Goals to help you stay motivated

- ▶ Schedule small goals that will help me work toward a big goal.
- ▶ Make a realistic plan that will help me reach my goals.
- ▶ Learn to motivate myself when I get down.

#### SPECIAL FOCUS

### How can I keep meeting my goals?

Make sure you have set realistic goals for yourself. Put them on a schedule. Then make plans to do them. Use the Help Sheet for this.



### Steps that help you meet your goal

- ▶ Find out where you stand now. Use your Lifestyle Log to find your starting point. Write it down.
- ▶ Put small goals on the calendar.
- ▶ Keep your goals clear and simple. That way you know what you want to do.
- ▶ Make sure each goal is realistic. If the goal isn't doable, you'll just get discouraged.
- ▶ Keep track of your progress. Making a chart is a great way to keep a record.
- ▶ Stick with a goal until you reach it, even if it takes longer than you planned. Don't give up on your goal. Just push back your schedule.
- ▶ Make a plan to help you reach every goal.
- ▶ Praise and reward yourself each time you meet a goal. But remember, food should never be a reward.

Notes to myself—some things I want to keep in mind this week:

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# Setting Goals and Staying Motivated

## Explore Your Goal

*Pick a goal that you want to work on. Be specific. Think about what you want to do. Then, think about why you want to do it and answer the questions about this goal.*

My Goal:

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My desire to meet my goal: (0 = not at all, 10 = very much)

0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

What makes me so interested in this goal?

What would it take to make me more likely to really try?

How will meeting this goal help me meet other goals?

How confident am I that I can meet my goal: (0 = not at all, 10 = very much)

0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

What makes me this confident I can meet this goal?

What would it take to make me more confident I can meet this goal?

What can I do to meet this goal now?



## Schedule Your Goals

Use the form below to schedule your goals. Break your big goal into smaller goals. Schedule them over the coming weeks. Use the "Progress" column to keep track of how well you met your goal. Use your Lifestyle Log to keep track of your progress each day. This form will help you keep track of the big picture.

Big Goal:

Week	Small Goals	Progress
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

In the space below, write down how you will meet your goals. Make your plan clear. Make it specific. Make sure it is realistic enough for you to do.

My Plan:

# Setting Goals and Staying Motivated

## Every goal needs a plan.

- ▶ If your goal isn't linked to a plan, it's just a good idea.

## Every plan needs a schedule.

- ▶ If your plan isn't linked to a schedule, it's just wishful thinking.

**SPECIAL FOCUS**

## Schedule yourself to meet a goal.

- ▶ Use your Lifestyle Log to see how many RED foods you eat or how many minutes of physical activity you get each day.
- ▶ Put small, one-step-at-a-time goals on the calendar.
- ▶ Keep your goals clear and simple.
- ▶ Make sure each goal is realistic. If a goal isn't doable, you'll get discouraged.
- ▶ Keep track of your progress. Making a chart is a great way to keep a record.
- ▶ Stick with a goal until you reach it.
- ▶ Make a plan to help you reach your goal.
- ▶ Praise and reward yourself each time you meet a goal. But remember, do not choose a reward that involves food.

## Should I go on to the next small goal if I meet my small goal on only some of the days of the week?

- ▶ No. Not if you haven't come very close to meeting your goal most of the time.
- ▶ Stick with the same small goal for another week. Push back your schedule.
- ▶ Problem-solve with your parents to figure out how to meet your goal.

**MAINTENANCE**

**TIP**

## Make a plan that works.

- ▶ Keep your plan *simple and clear*. It should say:
 

<i>What</i> you want to do.	<i>Where</i> you will do it.
<i>How</i> you will do it.	<i>When</i> you want to do it.
<i>Who</i> you will do it with.	<i>Why</i> you want to do it.
- ▶ Keep your plan realistic. It must be doable.

