

WELLNESS MINUTE

April 2023



ARE YOUR GOALS SMART?

**LAUGHTER: AN OVERLOOKED WAY TO
MANAGE STRESS**

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

3 MOBILITY EXERCISES FOR BETTER FITNESS



SPECIFIC



MEASURABLE



ACHIEVABLE



RELEVANT



TIME-BOUND

ARE YOUR GOALS SMART?

Do you set goals and then have trouble sticking to them? Goals that are vague are not likely to happen.

It's common for people to set goals, such as "I'm going to lose weight." Even if you add the specific amount, such as 40 lbs., and the method, like "eating healthy and exercising more", this is still too general, doesn't include a plan, and may not be realistic.

Let's take a look at how we can turn this into a SMART goal.

SPECIFIC: How much weight do you want to lose and what action steps will you take in order to reach your goal weight? Consider what you may need to change. Can you eat more home-cooked meals? Do you need to reduce or eliminate sweetened beverages? Are you willing to reduce empty calories (sugar, refined carbs)? Do you need to reduce portion sizes? After reflecting on your current habits, decide what specific actions you are willing to take.

MEASURABLE: In order to track, you need to know where you are now and then identify a system or method for keeping track of your progress. In the case of weight loss, this is pretty straightforward, but you do have a few options: Weighing yourself on a scale, tracking your measurements, or calculating your hip-to-waist ratio.

ACHIEVABLE: Setting a goal that is achievable is crucial. It should challenge you yet be realistic. You're likely to get discouraged if you make your goal too big and don't reach it. Research shows that a 5-10% loss is attainable for those who are overweight. So, a 200 lb. person may want to start with a goal of losing 10-20 lbs.

RELEVANT: Take into account how important this is for you right now and whether it aligns with your other life goals. If you are experiencing major life or work challenges, it may not be the ideal time to try to change your habits. This doesn't mean you have to give up on your desire, but simply delay it until a time when you're able to focus on it a bit more or give yourself a longer timeframe to achieve it.

TIMEBOUND: An end-point is needed so you can measure and because deadlines can be motivating. Sticking with the weight loss example, it's important to keep in mind that a realistic expectation for safe and sustainable weight loss is 1-2 lbs. per week. So, if your goal is to lose 20 lbs., you may want to allow yourself 4 months to reach your goal weight.

Putting this all together, a SMART goal could be:

I will lose 20 lbs. in the next 4 months by:

- Drinking at least 8 glasses of water each day and eliminating sweetened beverages.
- Limiting restaurant food to 2-3 meals per week.

Whether your plan is weight loss, healthy eating, fitness, better sleep, tobacco cessation, stress management, or any other wellness goal, Wellness-Connect is here to support you! In fact, the portal has a SMART goal feature that allows you to set and track your goals. For some of our members, we also have Wellness Coaches available to help you create and reach SMART goals.

Source:

<https://www.acefitness.org/education-and-resources/lifestyle/blog/6763/smart-goal-setting-guide>

LAUGHTER: AN OVERLOOKED WAY TO MANAGE STRESS

While exercise, deep breathing, meditation, spending time in nature, hobbies, talking to trusted friends, and other relaxing activities can reduce stress, let's not forget how good it feels to laugh.

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT LAUGHTER CAN:

- Reduce the stress hormone, cortisol.
- Improve your mood by increasing endorphins or happy brain chemicals.
- Soothe and calm your body by relaxing your muscles.
- Stimulate your heart, lungs, circulation, and muscles by increasing oxygen.
- Improve your immune system.

The next time you're feeling stressed or anxious, turn to laughter. Find ways to make laughter a daily practice. Don't wait for something funny to happen. Be proactive and add laughter to your self-care routine.

HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO DO IT:

- Choose to watch comedies on a regular basis, whether that's a movie, a sitcom, or a stand-up routine.
- Play with young kids or a pet.
- Watch funny YouTube videos.
- You may even want to give laughter yoga a try.

In case you aren't familiar with laughter yoga, search it on YouTube and you'll be laughing in no time!

Reference:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress-relief/art-20044456>



Berry-Beet Salad

Serves 4

Try this delicious earthy and sweet salad, which can be either a main dish or a side dish. It can make a great addition to your Easter meal.

Ingredients:

- 1 each fresh red and golden beets
- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon honey
- Dash of salt
- Dash of pepper
- ½ cup sliced fresh strawberries
- ½ cup fresh raspberries
- ½ cup fresh blackberries
- 3 tablespoons chopped walnuts, toasted
- 1 shallot, thinly sliced
- 4 cups torn mixed salad greens
- 1-ounce fresh goat cheese, crumbled
- 1 tablespoon fresh basil, thinly sliced

Directions:

1. Place beets in an 8-inch square baking dish with 1 inch of water. Cover and bake at 400 degrees for 30-40 minutes or until tender.
2. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, whisk the vinegar, oil, honey, salt, and pepper; set aside. Cool beets; peel and cut into thin slices.
3. In a large bowl, combine the beets, berries, walnuts, and shallot. Pour dressing over mixture and toss gently to coat. Divide salad greens among 4 serving plates. Top with beet mixture; sprinkle with cheese and basil.

Source:

<https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/berry-beet-salad/>

3 MOBILITY EXERCISES FOR BETTER FITNESS

Lack of mobility can make it more difficult to do everyday simple tasks like reaching to get something out of a cupboard or bending over. Mobility is related to flexibility but they are not the same. Mobility refers to the range of motion of your joints. Flexibility is the ability to lengthen or hold a muscle in a stretch.

Lack of mobility can lead to poor walking mechanics, especially if you're someone who sits too long. Tightness in your hips can result in shorter steps, shuffling as you walk, and a hunched posture.

The older you are and the more you sit, the more important it is to do mobility exercises. Here are three to get you started:

1. **Child's pose to a downward-facing dog.** Kneel on the floor, lower your hips to heels, let your torso fall over your knees, and allow your head to fall to the floor between your arms that are reaching forward. Come into a tabletop position with shoulders over wrists and hips over knees. Push up into a downward-facing dog position with your body forming a triangle. Take a few deep breaths, release back to the floor, and repeat several times.
2. **Arm and shoulder circles.** Standing with legs shoulder-width apart, raise one arm to shoulder height and move it in circles 10 times. Switch direction for another 10 circles. Allow that arm to relax and repeat with the other arm.
3. **Hip circles.** Lie on the floor facing up with legs extended. Bend your right knee and bring it up so that it's pointing toward the ceiling. Draw 20 circles with your knee that gets progressively bigger then switch directions for another 20 rounds. Repeat with the other knee.

Source:

<https://www.everydayhealth.com/fitness/mobilityexercises-to-boost-your-health-and-fitness/>

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