



# THE FITNESS CORNER

FACILITATING YOUR FITNESS JOURNEY

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## SETTING GOALS FOR YOUR EXERCISE PROGRAM

One of the first steps you should take when starting an exercise program is to set a few goals for yourself. Simply stated, you must be clear about what you want to accomplish. For example, you might want to lose weight, improve your athletic performance, improve your general health, reduce your risk for disease, feel better or some combination of these. Whatever you want to achieve, I suggest you utilize the SMART Goal process to improve your chances for success. SMART stands for *specific, measurable, achievable, relevant* and *time-bound*.

1. **Specific.** Make sure your goals are precise and stated in performance terms. For instance, if you want to lose weight, your goal might be "to be 10 lbs. lighter 8 weeks from today." If you want to improve your athletic performance, your goal might be "to run a sub 20-min 5K race by the end of the season". If you want to improve your body composition, your goal can be "to reduce my body fat percentage to 20% in the next 6 months".

2. **Measurable.** A goal is measurable when it is easy to determine if it has been met. The weight loss goal listed

above is easily measured. 8 weeks from now you will either weigh 10 lbs. less or not. Likewise, with the performance and body composition goals it will be easy to determine if you are successful. Conversely, a goal to "reduce my risk of disease" is not very measurable. A better goal is to "reduce my LDL cholesterol by 20 points in the next 6 months."

3. **Achievable.** One of the biggest mistakes people make in the goal-setting process is to set unattainable goals. Your goals should be set high, but they must also be realis-



## SETTING GOALS (CONTINUED)

tic. A goal to lose 20 lbs. in 4 weeks is unrealistic (and very unhealthy). Likewise, if you have never been a runner before and set a goal to finish a marathon 3 months from now, you are setting yourself up for failure (and a lot of pain). Make your goals challenging but attainable.

4. **Relevant.** Your goals should be important to you as an individual. Don't set a goal just because your friends, family members or exercise partners have set that goal. Remember, your goals will be your primary motivation to maintain your exercise program so make sure they are important to YOU.

5. **Time-Bound.** Make sure each goal has a specific time frame for completion. This allows you to easily determine if it has been achieved. It also greatly increases the likelihood that you will accomplish each goal since you know the clock is ticking! For example, if you want to lose weight, an effective time-based goal might be "By January 1, I will lose 15 pounds and decrease my body fat percentage to 18%." Of course, this assumes you don't set this goal on Christmas day! Labor Day would provide a more realistic time-frame.

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## LIFESTYLE COACHING

Lifestyle Coaching is designed to help you **lose weight, improve your health and fitness, and enhance your work/life balance.** By utilizing a variety of processes, tools and techniques, you will reduce stress, improve your work performance, and most importantly, feel better about yourself.

Lifestyle Coaching works because it takes a holistic approach to your development. Specifically, we address the mental, emotional, behavioral and psychological elements of body shape, health, fitness and their impact on your life. By looking at the "whole person",

we greatly increase your chances for long-term success.

Lifestyle Coaching is also effective because it is based on a simple premise: **The best way to improve your health and facilitate permanent weight loss is to make minor, reasonable modifications in your eating habits and to slightly increase your daily level of physical activity.**

To learn more about Lifestyle Coaching, visit my website at [www.holmesfitness.com](http://www.holmesfitness.com) and request a FREE CONSULTATION to begin the process that will change your life!