

# Keys to Creating Achievable Goals

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Have you ever made a New Year's Resolution? Did you make a resolution this year? Would you like this year to be the year to keep those resolutions?

For most people, a new year brings renewed hope of achieving goals you have always wanted. We start the New Year off with great intentions to lose weight, exercise more, create more time with loved ones, achieve more in our careers, and the list goes on and on. However, as the weeks go by we lose sight of these dreams. Our lives get in the way. We allow our busy lives to get in the way of our dreams.

To truly achieve a goal, it is essential to have a clear vision of the goal. If you set a goal to lose weight and get fit this year, your goal is too vague. What does that mean, lose weight and get fit? If you clearly define your goal for instance as I will lose 20 pounds in 20 weeks and keep it off, you clearly know what your goal is. This is also a realistic goal. It is possible to lose 1 pound per week with a reasonable plan that will allow you to develop healthy eating and develop an exercise routine along the way.

Once you have a clear vision of your goal, you then can develop a plan of action to reach your goal. For instance, to lose approximately one pound a week you will need to have a calorie deficit of 3,500 calories per week. To achieve this deficit, you can walk briskly for 30 minutes five times a week at a 3.5 mph pace you will burn approximately 645 calories. You will then require a calorie deficit of 400 calories per day to make up the difference to lose weight. If you evaluate your diet, you may find it is easy to eliminate 400 empty calories from your day. One candy bar approximately 240 calories, one regular 12 ounce can of soda pop 140 calories, one Grande Latte at Starbucks 260 calories etc. If you go to [www.calorie-count.com](http://www.calorie-count.com) you can find a list of calories in some of your favorite foods and also an activity browser to inform you about the calories you can burn through exercise. Don't become too concerned about counting calories, just be aware of how many calories some of your favorite food contain so you can make wiser choices.

A trick to remember when you take something away from your diet is to replace it with something else. If you normally have a snack in the afternoon of a candy bar and a can of soda approximately 380 calories, replace that snack with a nutritious alternative. Experiment with healthy alternatives, such as fresh fruit and vegetables. These are low calorie, high volume foods that will fill you up and keep you satisfied until your next meal.

Once you have a clear vision and plan of action, you will need some form of accountability to ensure you follow through on your plan. Using a journal is a great way to keep yourself accountable for what you are eating and ensure you are following your exercise plan. Another form of accountability is to enlist the support of a friend or coach. Most people have a harder time breaking a commitment they have made to someone else than to themselves. If you regularly have someone to talk to about your goals and keep you accountable for your progress you are more likely to follow through with your plan. Overtime your lifestyle changes will become part of who you are and they will be easy to maintain, but in the beginning support is critical to make meaningful lifestyle change.

The last step to successful goal achievement is celebration. It is important to reward yourself for your accomplishments. The more fun you associate with achieving your goals the easier it will be to maintain your momentum. Have fun and enjoy the journey.

Lynn Smith is a health and wellness coach with Health Coach Team. Get your free report "10 Energy Zappers and How to Eliminate Them" at <http://www.healthcoachteam.com>

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