

PLAN FOR HEALTH

Setting Exercise and Nutrition Goals for A Healthier You

MAY 2023

Goal setting is everywhere. There are goals for careers, finances, health, and more. We are always being encouraged to think about our next steps, milestones, or what we want to achieve. However, one thing we may not always focus on or think about is a strategy to accomplish our goals.

Good health is a very important piece to our everyday lives. It should be a priority to schedule preventive care visits, eat a balanced diet, and exercise daily. Exercise and nutrition goals can hold us accountable, keep us on track, or help encourage us to make it through times that may seem challenging or uncomfortable. A good, well thought out goal can act as a guiding light when days or times are the hardest. The goals you set can help keep you on track.

Everyone will have different and individual goals they set for themselves. The U.S Department of Health and Human Services recommends that each week adults need 150 minutes (or 30 minutes five days per week) of moderate-intense physical activity and two days of muscle strengthening activity, creating a more realist action plan.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health.

Being physically active can help you improve in areas such as:

- Brain health
- Helping to manage weight
- Reducing the risk of chronic health diseases
- Strengthening bones and muscles
- Improving the overall ability to perform activities of daily living

There are no limitations to being active, everyone can experience the health benefits of physical activity – age, ability, ethnicity, shape, or size do not matter.

There are many things to keep in mind when setting a goal around fitness or nutrition. Often or at times, goals might be set that are unreachable, or possibly unrealistic. When it comes to our food choices and eating healthy, many people across the country do not eat a healthy diet. Eating an unhealthy diet may lead to, but not limited to the following:

- Obesity
- Heart Disease
- Type 2 Diabetes
- Other cardiovascular issues such as stroke or high cholesterol

Strategies and interventions to help people choose healthy foods can help reduce their risk of chronic diseases and improve their overall health. Some of these tips and strategies to keep in mind when having nutrition, exercise, or any goal for yourself is to identify and work on ONE GOAL AT A TIME. Making your goals your own, specific, attainable, and realistic while having a clear path of what your intent is, will keep you on track and allow you to reach them.

THE SMART GOAL METHOD

Specific – Have a certain area you are focusing on.

Measurable – Quantify your goals so you can track progress.

Attainable – Making sure your goal can be reasonably reached.

Realistic – Your goal is within reach and relevant to you.

Timely – Create a clear timetable to keep you on track.

To learn more about SMART goals, please visit <https://www.webmd.com/balance/features/how-to-reach-your-goals>.

Journaling is a great tool to use to log on a regular basis. There are many apps and websites, such as the Sharecare platform that allows you to log information and provides feedback and suggestions. Use pedometers or step trackers to track your physical activity.

If you are having trouble with where to start with your SMART goal that you have set for yourself, there are a variety of individuals and professionals to help and support you along the way.

- Support from Family and Friends.
- Personal Trainers
- Registered Dietitians
- Health and Wellness Coaches offered through Highmark [if you are eligible for these services] (can be reached by calling 1-800-650-8442) have a variety of experience and backgrounds ranging from exercise physiology, nutrition, stress management and tobacco cessation to help in the areas of health you have set goals for.

“Setting goals is the first step in turning the invisible into the visible” – Tony Robbins

Sharecare Featured Challenge

Join the Take Care for Mental Health Awareness Month Challenge this May. Track for 21 days taking a self-care action throughout May to complete the challenge! Join the challenge by going to [Mycare.sharecare.com](https://mycare.sharecare.com), clicking **Achieve → Challenges → Upcoming → and Join the challenge.**



**Plan ahead...Join us next month for June's health topic:
*The Great Outdoors***