

How to set a goal

Having goals is a really great way to give yourself direction, focus and motivation. Work out what goals to set, and learn how to plan them so that you maximise your chances of achieving what you want most in the world.

Why goal setting is useful

Turning something you want in life into a goal is a really great way to make it happen. That's because you're making a decision to act in order to get what you want. Goals give you direction, they keep you focused and motivated, and increase your chances of achieving things.

What's important about the goals you set is that they need to mean something to you – they shouldn't be things that you think you "should be doing", rather they should be things you "want to do". You will get the most benefit out of achieving goals that you want to achieve, less out of achieving goals that don't mean much to you.

Goal setting: where to begin

To be able to set a goal you need to know what it is that you want. This is a huge stumbling block for a lot of people – but it's an important one to work through. If you don't know what you want, you aren't going to get it, which isn't great for your happiness.

Some tips for helping you work out what you want include:

- > *Start with things you enjoy. We are happiest when we are using our strengths. Write down the 5 things you enjoy most in life. Are there any goals you can identify?*
- > *Don't get too caught up in 'big' things. A lot of the time when we think about goals, we think they need to mean a big thing, and that can get overwhelming. Change how you think about goals. A goal should be anything you want to do or achieve – big, small, or completely random.*
- > *Think about what you don't want. Write a list of 5 or 10 things that you don't want. Then turn them around to become goals. E.g. turn 'I don't want to be stuck at home' into 'I want to travel.'*
- > *Goals can be made about lots of different areas of your life. Think about*
 - > *Personal qualities*
 - > *Friendships/relationships*
 - > *Family*
 - > *Work / study / career*
 - > *Physical health*
 - > *Interests/Hobbies*
 - > *Attitudes*
- > *Are there things you want to change about/work towards in any of these aspects of your life?*

Goal setting can help when...

- > *You feel overwhelmed by how much is going on*
- > *You feel like you're lacking direction*
- > *You have a big project to tackle*

Take action...

- > *Grab a notebook and listing your goals and sub-goals*
- > *Timetable your sub-goals and be realistic*
- > *Learn how others have managed their goals*

The process of goal setting

When you have an idea about what it is that you do want, there are three simple steps you need to take to set a goal.

1. Define your goal.

- There are two important parts to defining a goal:
- › *Make your goal specific. Goals should be measurable and have an endpoint.*
 - › *Make your goals realistic. Taking on challenges can be really motivating, but don't set yourself up to fail. If you're not sure if your goal is realistic, talk to someone you trust about it.*

2. Set sub-goals:

- › *Break up your goal. Breaking up your goal into sub-goals is really important to staying motivated, particularly for larger goals that take a long time to achieve. Sub-goals help you recognise and celebrate when you've made progress.*

3. Work through a plan of action.

Having a tangible plan of action helps you to stay focused:

- › *Write down your sub-goals. Once you've worked out your sub-goals, make sure you write them down and keep them in a place that you can see. Having them close by will help keep you motivated.*
- › *Include a time frame. Deadlines are important. They keep you on the go and help you stay motivated. For each written sub-goal, write down a deadline to prevent you from putting things off or forgetting your goal.*