

## Be SMART

SMART stands for specific, measurable, attainable, results focused, and time bound. When you say, “I want to lose weight,” you are really just stating a desire. When you set a SMART goal, you are creating a clear objective.

The following is an example of a SMART goal: “In one month from today, I want to be 5 pounds lighter.”

- **Specific:** “5 pound loss” is clear while “lose weight” is vague.
- **Measurable:** The number on the scale on day one to day 30 is objectively comparable.
- **Attainable:** A realistic weight loss goal is about 1.5-2 pounds per week. (It is also easier to wrap your mind around a 5-pound weight loss than a 50-pound loss.)
- **Results focused:** The focus is on the accomplishment of losing 5 pounds within 30 days.
- **Time bound:** By giving yourself a deadline, you hold yourself accountable.

### Make a Plan and Stick to It

Once you have your SMART goal, make a plan for how you will reach it. For example, *how* will you lose 5 pounds in 30 days?

To make a plan, look at your current habits and choose one (or maybe two) to improve. Weight loss is best accomplished when you work on changing your habits (e.g., eating in front of the TV, binge drinking every Friday, or mindlessly going through the drive-thru at lunch daily) instead of eating “diet” foods.

Here is an example:

- “For the first two weeks of the month, I will decrease my soda consumption from two cans per day to one can per day.”
- “For the last two weeks of the month, I will decrease my soda consumption from daily to three times a week.”

Both steps are specific, measurable, attainable, results focused, and time-bound.

### Steady Steps

Of course, zero cans of soda per day is the best, as is eating veggies at each meal. However, using terms like “none” and “all” and “every” sets you up for failure. Making changes can be challenging, so do not bite off more than you can chew.

When you start accomplishing your small goals, you will gain momentum and it will be clearer that the larger goal is attainable. Take as many small steps as you need; the important thing is that you keep going. So be SMART—set yourself up for success!