Happy Healthy Tuesday!

And Happy 2021! Every New Year, I like to write about setting SMART goals, etc., as we enter a new year. Long-time readers will be familiar with SMART goals, but I think it doesn’t hurt to rehash the idea.

Many of us start off the new year by making resolutions, some of which may be related to our health: quitting smoking, losing weight, exercising, etc. How often do you make a resolution and then never follow through with it? This can happen if we set our goals too ambitious or too vague. For example, I’m going to stop eating ice cream” is a radical change if ice cream is a big part of your diet. “I am going to be healthier” is vague without any clear strategies to help you achieve it.

One tool that can help us follow through on the changes we want to implement is the “SMART” goal. SMART stands for:

- **S**pecific (target a number and a particular part of your lifestyle)
- **M**easurable (to help you evaluate your progress)
- **A**chievable (take small steps so you don’t get discouraged)
- **R**elevant (to you, not someone else)
- **T**imely (choose a deadline)

For example, if you really like soda, instead of trying to completely cut it out of your diet, a SMART goal could be: “I will replace one cup of soda with water every day for a month.” Or, conversely, make a positive SMART goal, such as “I will eat one piece of fruit every day for a month.” Keep track of your progress and evaluate how you did at the end of the month. For example, a SMART goal could be “I want to lose weight” or “I want to increase my physical activity.” This is a more realistic goal to set for yourself.

SMART goals can help you break down your larger goal into smaller, more manageable steps. This can make it easier to achieve your goal and keep you motivated. SMART goals also allow you to adjust your goals as you go. For example, if you start out with a goal to run a 5K but then realize that you’re not ready to run that far, you can adjust your goal to run a 1K or 2K instead.

As you work towards your goals, remember to be patient with yourself. It’s okay to have setbacks and to adjust your goals as needed.SMART goals can help you break down your larger goal into smaller, more manageable steps. This can make it easier to achieve your goal and keep you motivated. SMART goals also allow you to adjust your goals as you go. For example, if you start out with a goal to run a 5K but then realize that you’re not ready to run that far, you can adjust your goal to run a 1K or 2K instead.

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