

## Creating New Fitness Goals You Can Really Meet – Cheat Sheet

Thinking carefully about the fitness goals you create, and the type of exercises you use to meet them, will help increase the chances of success. Although any exercise at all is better than simply sitting down in front of the TV every day, thinking about what you do can make a real difference to the results you'll see.

This cheat sheet will help you think about how you're going to fit exercise into your routine, what kinds of exercise will work for you, and how to set the right kind of exercise goals.

### Understand Exercise Intensity Levels

It's important to realize that exercises can vary in their intensity. Some exercises are considered mild intensity, because they're easy for us and they don't cause us to get out of breath or a little sweaty. This exercise is still good for you, but you'll also need some moderate intensity exercise.

A good test is to see whether you can still hold a conversation without getting a little out of breath. If you can, you need to up the intensity!

Intensity will vary depending on the purpose, since we all start at different fitness levels. When you're just getting started, a brisk walk may tire you out completely. A few weeks or months down the line, though, and you might find you need to job to keep the intensity up!

### Aim For 30+ Minutes of Exercise A Day



Many experts recommend you should exercise for at least 30 minutes, five days a week. These 30 minutes can be broken up into smaller blocks throughout the day, but it must be of moderate intensity to give you any benefit.

There are cases where you may need *more* than 30 minutes a day (for example, if you're obese). In this case, it's important to talk to your doctor.

## Be Realistic

It's important to be realistic when setting your fitness goals. Are you really going to work out for an hour every single morning before you leave for work at 8am? If you try to take on too much, you'll probably end up failing.

Remember, things like walking to work (at a brisk pace) or doing the gardening (as long as it makes you warm or a little out of breath) still count as exercise. If you're busy, this is a good way to ensure you're getting in at least 30 minutes each day.



## Do You Really Need To Lose Weight?

If you're unfit, you may assume you need to lose weight, though this isn't always the case. Yes, you may need to get fitter, but the two are not exactly the same.

You may need to lose weight if:

- Your waist to hip ratio is higher than 1.0 for a man and 0.8 for a woman,
- Your clothes are a lot tighter than they used to be,
- Your waist measurement is over 35 (for women) or 40 (for men).

Remember, though, that all your measurements could be healthy, but if you're eating fatty, sugary foods and leading a sedentary lifestyle then exercise and diet changes do matter. The only difference is you won't aim to lose weight, just to get fitter and maintain a healthy weight.

Weight loss is a temporary measure. Weight and fitness maintenance will be a life-long pursuit. The healthy habits you gain when losing weight can be carried over to any weight maintenance program.

### Don't Try To Lose Too Much Weight Too Quickly

Trying to lose 100 lbs. over 6 months is not a realistic or a healthy goal. It's far more likely that you'll achieve your goal if you choose something that's really attainable. This probably means around 1-2 lbs. per week.

Some weeks, you may only lose half a pound, but you shouldn't get disheartened. Weight loss can be slow but it's far better to lose it slowly and surely than to starve yourself only to put it all back on a couple of months later.

### Create Smart Goals

Having a goal to "lose weight" or "get fit" is not enough. Instead, you need to make smart goals. SMART stands for:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Realistic
- Tangible

An example of a SMART fitness goal will be to lose 15 lbs. to bring your BMI into the healthy range, or to burn off 10% body fat in total. It could also mean eating five portions of fruit and veg each day and cutting down your unhealthy snacks to once or twice a week.

### Make A Plan

Following on from the point above, you'd need to make a specific plan from that broad goal. For example, if you wanted to cut out on snacking you could replace those cookies with some healthy carrot sticks, start eating breakfast every morning so that you don't feel hungry before lunch, and walk to work every day so that you get your 30 minutes of exercise in.



## Make Healthy Lifestyle Changes Your Goal

Instead of focusing on how much weight you want to lose every week, you could simply make healthy lifestyle changes your goal. The number one goal should be to start eating breakfast each day and getting those 30 minutes of activity in.

If you're losing weight, you also need to create a calorie deficit, which means taking in fewer calories than you burn through exercise each day (this is where tracking is very important).

## Schedule Your Workouts

You'll be far more likely to meet your goals if you make a schedule. This means choosing a time of day, and which days of the week, that you'll always set aside for working out. That way, you'll never have the excuse that you just didn't have time! This could mean Monday-Friday mornings before 9am, or everyday after you finish work, with 1-2 days break.

## Set Yourself Up for Success

Lastly, set yourself up for success by making sure you're always prepared. Make sure you always have your workout things ready and packed in a bag to make it easy to fit it in after work, or pack your lunches the night before so that you won't be tempted to buy unhealthy fast food on your lunch break.

Start tracking from day one, and let everyone close to you know about your goals so that they can encourage you to meet them!

Good luck! ☺