



Using the Model for Healthy Living in **YOUR OWN HEALTH GOALS**

Perhaps reading about the Model for Healthy Living or taking the Model for Healthy Living Self-Assessment has inspired you to set some new health goals.

Changing habits generally involves replacing old habits, a process that takes about 21 days. Success depends on goals that reasonable for you to achieve in your situation, and that varies from person to person. “SMART” goals can be a helpful tool.

The acronym “SMART” is popular among people who manage projects in the business world. The general usefulness comes as a quick, easy-to-remember checklist for goals that lead to getting things done. What likely started in the corporate world leaked into the lives of everyday people who just want to be sure they’re staying on track with their goals.

- S = Specific
- M = Measurable
- A = Actionable
- R = Realistic
- T = Time-bound

These words reflect the fundamental principles of changing behaviors and forming new healthy habits for wellness. Habits change when we know specifically what to do, it’s realistic to do what we plan,

and we can see our progress within a certain period of time.

For instance, “I’m going to get healthy” is not a SMART goal, but “I will walk 20 minutes three times a week on my lunch hour for six weeks” is a smart goal. Do you see the difference?

Here are a few more examples:

“Make more time for my friends,” compared to “Twice a week for

the next two months, I will invite a friend to coffee or lunch.”

“Cut back on sugary drinks,” compared to “I will cut back on soda to two cans per day for two weeks, then one can per day for two weeks.”

“Not get so stressed out,” compared to “Write in my journal three times a week for a month before bed to review what triggers my stress.”

See the difference?

As you aim to establish new habits and goals, keep the SMART model in mind to help you succeed—or get back on track. Always remember to give yourself some grace and gentleness when you fall short of your own expectations. Every day is a chance to begin again with compassion for yourself.