

# *"If you fail to plan, you plan to fail."*

While most people would agree that setting goals is important, many fail to understand the key components of the goal-setting process. Establishing clear, concise and congruent objectives requires time and thoughtfulness. In this article, we will look at the SMART system for setting goals; making goals Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-oriented.

## **Make it Specific**

Setting a vague goal is just as bad as having no goal at all. To make your goal specific, address the following:

- What is the goal?
- Why do you desire to achieve the goal?
- Who is responsible for achieving the goal?
- Where will the tasks to reach the goal be performed?
- When should the goal be achieved?
- How will you get from where you are now to the point that the goal has been reached?

## **Make it Measurable**

A goal to "get stronger" may not be measurable because it's too vague. With a measurable goal, future results are compared against past performance using a mathematical component, i.e., a number or percentage. As an example, one way to measure an increase in your strength is to perform a greater number of reps on a given exercise at a given weight. A measurable goal might be "bench 3 sets of 10 reps at 105kg" or "reduce body fat to 10%". Make the goal measurable by including standards that will define success.

## **Make it Achievable**

One sure way of "planning to fail" is setting a goal that is impossible to achieve. While you may desire for your bench to increase 150 percent this year, such a goal may be unachievable.

## **Make it Realistic**

When you are considering your goal, whilst it may be achievable e.g. win Mr O in 2005, it may not be realistic, as you don't have the time or the resources required to train for a bodybuilding competition let alone the genetics required.

## **Make it Time-oriented**

Finally, ensure you add a deadline for your goal, otherwise you will end up on first name terms with that old enemy – procrastination. Once you have a time frame, then you can begin to take action towards your goal(s).

## **The e-factor**

There is one other vital component that we have failed to mention and that is the E-factor. No, it's not another piece of Internet-related jargon; the E stand for Ecological. Your goal must not have a detrimental effect on another human being or the environment.

## **in summary**

So there you have it – the SMART(E) way to set goals.

Many of your peers will plan to fail by failing to plan - or failing to act on their plan. Setting realistic, SMART goals boosts motivation and maximizes performance. Remember; only develop one goal at a time. Although many of your goals will be interdependent, isolating each goal during the planning process will ensure that each meets the specific tests necessary to reach well-defined goals.

Take the first step today: write down your goals and make them SMART!