Guide to Setting and Achieving Fitness Goals

This is the year you will achieve the results that YOU want!

Glen Gosch Fitness, 2013
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Introduction

Hi, my name is Glen and I hit my fitness goals in 2010. And 2011. And 2012. I am pretty darn confident about 2013, 2014, and beyond. I say this not to brag about my achievements, nor to secure any votes for "Most Likely to Succeed (in Fitness)." I tell you this because I have learned a few things about goal-setting in the past few years, and I want to share them with you so you can achieve your specific goals this year, next year, and for years to come.

In the spirit of confinement, I will not give you my entire life story and give you a run-down of why you should listen to me. I'll give you just a snippet: In my teens and early 20's I was a really fit guy. From my early 20's to age 30 I gained a lot of weight. I would lose a little weight here and there, work out and exercise in blocks of 2 or 3 months, and soon go back to being, well, fat. At age 30 I turned things around. I lost 50 pounds in a 5-month period and have pretty much held on to those results ever since. I trained with some of the world's best trainers, coaches, and mentors, and in doing so I have been able to stay fit and in shape. I have found some methods in setting and achieving goals related to fitness that have worked exceptionally well for me, and I know they will help you too.

Why do so many people not hit their fitness goals? Why have you not accomplished yours? Why did I struggle for nearly a decade to reach mine? It's not because we don't want to achieve our goals, or because we can't, or we are not willing to. There is probably not one specific answer to why a lot of people fail to succeed when it comes to fitness-related goals. But if we have an understanding of how to reach our goals and have our minds completely focused on achieving what is truly valuable to us we can achieve anything we want. Any previous obstacles will no longer be an issue. With a clear vision of what we really want, nothing can get in the way. That's what this guide is about: creating a clear vision of what you want to achieve with your fitness goals – and achieving them!

Throughout this guide you will find Action Steps. These are what will help you reach your goals. The content of this guide is meant to be acted upon, not just read. Take the Action Steps and I have no doubt you will succeed. Alright, let's get you on your way to achieving your fitness goals.

Introduction Action Step:

Read and do the rest of this guide. Get great results. Tell your friends.

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Part 1: The Importance of Specific Goals

The importance of setting specific goals cannot be understated. There is a certain process when it comes to setting goals that brings us motivation to act on our goals and reach our own personal finish line. Goal setting methods and psychological theories on motivation in the human brain have been researched for some time. There are several different theories on motivation and several studies that have been done that analyze these subjects in-depth, but to skip an entire lecture on psychology I will tell you that I have found 3 generally accepted factors in setting goals that are common in most theories:

1. Goals need to have ***value***
2. Goals need to be ***measurable***
3. Goals need to create a sense of ***urgency*** (have a timeline/deadline)

Again, are there other aspects and factors in goals? Yes. But the 3 elements listed above provide a simple and easy approach to going after any goal, especially those related to health and fitness.

One problem many people have is they have a vague goal in mind when they begin a fitness routine. Vague goals might be:

"I want to get in shape"

"I want to lose weight"

"I want to perform better"

Goals like these have good intentions, but they do not provide a vision that keeps one motivated to see the goal through.

A better way to state a goal might look something like this:

"I am going to lose 20 pounds in the next 90 days to look good for my vacation"

- This goal has a *value* element – When it is accomplished the result will be "looking good on vacation". It is valuable and worth doing.
- This goal is *measurable* – 20 pounds of weight loss can be measured by tracking body weight along the way. Progress can be evaluated during the course of action and until the end result is reached.
- This goal creates a sense of *urgency* – 90 days is the timeframe to accomplish the goal. There is a deadline to hit this goal.

As you begin to think of your own specific goal, think of these elements. What do you want out of a fitness routine? Do you want to lose a certain amount of weight? Put on a certain amount of muscle? Increase your speed on the track by a certain time? Lower your cholesterol to a certain level? Whatever the case, be sure it is something that is measurable.

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Next, think about why you want to accomplish your goal? What is the meaning behind it? Are you trying to look a certain way? Feel a certain way? Win a race? Define your *why*. Decide what the value is in achieving your goal.

Finally, give yourself a timeframe. Create that sense of urgency. When do you want to achieve your goal? Is it something that can be done in 90 days? 6 months? A year? Keep this in mind, and as you read through the rest of this guide we will talk a little about short-term goals, long-term goals, and sub-goals.

Once you have an idea in your head of what it is that you want to achieve, go ahead and write it down. Using a pen or pencil to write down your goal is one way to bring clarity and importance to your specific goal. It is the first step in taking a thought or dream and turning it into something physically visible. This is something that most people fail to do, and a big reason why most people do not reach their goals.

Action Step 1: Write Down Your Goal

Remember the three elements *measureable*, *time/urgency,* and *value*.

I am going to_____

By this date: _____

Why? _____

You can use this get started; in this next section we will look at other ways to see your written goals.

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Part 2: See Your Goals (Literally)

Not being able to physically see your fitness goals is like a runner that can't see a finish line, a quarterback that can't see the end zone, or a soccer player kicking a ball without a goal and net in site. This is why it is not only important to write your goals down but also to put your goals where you can see them constantly. Doing this will serve as a constant reminder of what you want to achieve and keep you motivated.

There are several ways you can do this that are proven methods of motivation in achieving goals. Creating a true vision of your goals can bring clarity to thoughts and make them become a reality. Again, these are things that most people do not do. This is one factor why gym traffic skyrockets in January, but thins out in February or March. Each person that crowds the gym, buys a new exercise DVD program, or signs up for fitness classes in January has an idea in their head about completing their goals; those who have a clear vision of what they want to accomplish are still working out in March, April, May, and beyond; those that lack the clear vision are back to square one.

Below are some ways you can create that clear vision of your goals:

Hang up your written goal

- Write your specific, measurable, valuable goal with a deadline big and boldly on a piece of paper.
- Hang the written goal up where you can see it and say the goal aloud daily.
- Fixate on the goal until it becomes more than a goal; allow it to become a burning desire.

Use pictures for motivation

- Is your goal to get six-pack abs? Hang up a picture with someone with great abs next to your written goal. Want to be able to run a 6 minute mile? Hang up a picture of a stopwatch that reads "6:00." These are just a couple of examples, but you can use pictures of what you want to accomplish as a motivating tool.
- Make a collage of all of your goals (fitness-related and otherwise); what many people call a "goal board". Use pictures, typed and printed text, hand-written achievements, etc.
- Keep these images where you will see them several times each day and be constantly reminded of the things you want.

Set reminders of action steps toward your goals

- Ask yourself: "What do I need to do to accomplish my goals?" Take action on that immediately.
- Use printed calendars, daily lists, and electronic calendars with reminders of the actions you need to take to accomplish your goals.
- Continually write down your goals and the action steps you need to take to reach your goals in your scheduling tools. If you do not own a daily planner, calendar, or use any electronic device for organization, begin doing so.

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Writing down goals and hanging them up? Making a "goal board" and hanging up pictures? Do people really do these things? YES! Does everyone do all of these things? Maybe not, but people that are achievers do these things in one fashion or another. I'll have to admit, the first time I heard of using these methods I thought with internal sarcasm, "Yeah, *right*. Just hang up what I want to accomplish and voilà," as I sat there overweight, bankrupt, and not living how I envisioned myself living. Several years later I sit here typing this at a lean weight, life in order, looking at my goal board above my computer.

If doing these things sounds a little strange, that's okay; it did to me at first too. Strange and different are okay. If you are doing these things and accomplishing your goals, you will be doing things that most people don't do. Remember though, most people do not achieve their goals. Give these things a try; they work.

Action Step 2: See Your Goal

- Put your written goal where you can physically see it often. Look at it several times a day and even say it aloud.
- Use a goal board. Put pictures, motivational quotes, written goals and sub-goals, and any other imagery related to your goals. You can use this goal board for goals other than fitness-related ones too. You may want to display your financial, health, relationship, and educational goals as well.
- Use calendars, planners, and lists. Be sure the actions you are taking every day are moving you toward accomplishing your goals.

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Part 3: Short-term and Long-term Goals

It is important to have short-term and long-term goals with health and fitness. We should also have sub-goals to hit along the way. These give us a sense of where we are at in achieving our goals. If we are setting measurable goals, we should, after all… measure them.

Short-term goals are important because they give us a sense of achievement and a sense of urgency; two big factors in motivation with achieving goals. My favorite workout programs and the ones that I distribute such as P90X®, Insanity®, and Slim in 6® (to name a few) are great programs for achieving short-term goals. They provide excellent ways to maximize results and truly make short-term goals become *achievements*. So, if you are setting a short-term goal of losing 15 pounds in 90 days, you can even break that accomplishment up into sub-goals of hitting a 5 pound weight loss every month; an ambitious, but realistic goal.

Long-term goals are important because they give us a plan to follow and stick with beyond short bursts of achievement. I don't think many of us plan to lose 20 pounds and then have the desire to put the weight right back on a few months later. We don't *want* to do that, yet often times it *is* what happens. If we set long-term goals for ourselves we can eliminate some of the driving factors that cause us to not see our goals through. A lot of people do not plan for the long-term in a lot of areas of life such as retirement, financial planning, marriage, and health/fitness. This is one reason why a lot of people are broke, divorced, and fat. If we plan and set goals for the future, we are more likely to succeed. We need to look ahead and have a target to aim at in the future.

"If you aim at nothing, you will hit it every time." – Zig Ziglar

One way to look at and achieve your long-term goals is to *reverse-engineer* the process. How do you see yourself one year from today? If everything was perfect, what type of body would you have? How fast could you run? How many push-ups could you do? What would the test results be if you took a physical exam at the doctor's office next year? Have the idea in your head of exactly what it is that you want and you can then fill in your short-term and sub-goals. This essentially creates a road map of how to get where we want to be and can create an effective plan.

Again, I could spend pages discussing psychological theories and proof that shows the effectiveness of these methods in goal-setting. But again, in the spirit of creating a mostly fluff-free guide, I will spare you the lecture and just say this: <u>If you follow these methods you are far more likely to reach your goals.</u>

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Here is an example of how one might plan a year's worth of exercise to achieve a short-term goal and stay with exercise for the long-term.

Goal: *I am going to lose 15 pounds by April to look good for my sister's wedding.*

Long-term goal and vision: *I am going to be 20 pounds lighter by the end of the year - The same weight I was back in high school.*

The plan:

January: Start 90-day boot-camp program; lose 5 pounds before the end of the month.

February: Continue program; lose another 5 pounds.

March: Finish boot-camp program; reach 15 pound weight loss goal.

April: Continue to exercise three times per week and prepare to compete in local 5K run; maintain current weight.

May: Same as April, and participate in race on May 21.

June: Begin sports training workout program to lose another 5 pounds and look great in a swimsuit!

July: Continue with sports training.

August: Maintain results with exercise 5 days per week.

September: Same as August.

October: Choose between boot-camp, sports training, or another program to finish the year.

November: Continue with said program.

December: Continue with said program.

Weighing-in on Weight

I often use weight as an example of a way to measure success with fitness goals, but we should really use more than just a scale to measure our progress with fitness and health goals. Weight has so many variables including muscle tone and water retention, to name a couple. It can be deceiving at times. In addition to tracking weight, also consider using the following:

Tape measurements around the waistline and other areas

Body fat calipers

Before and after pictures

Less-tangible results such as compliments from those around you and clothes fitting loosely

Now this is just an example. There are a million different ways you can plan your fitness routine and related goals throughout the year. There are dozens of fitness routines that produce results, and what works for you might be different than what works for me. If you are brand new to working out it might take a little bit of exploring to find the perfect routine. I recommend finding one that appeals to *you* the most. I also don't recommend writing these long-term plans in stone, woodwork, permanent marker, or

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with a tattoo gun. In the long-term these goals might slightly change, and that's okay. We just want to be sure we are looking ahead and have a target to aim for.

Another thing to keep in mind is that many people experience an uneven climb to the *Fitness Goal Summit*. The results don't always come at a steady and even pace. With a 90-day program, you might lose 3 pounds by day 30, another 3 pounds by day 60, and then bam! In the last 30 days you lose another 10 pounds. You can almost always count on fluctuations in weight and things not going *exactly* as planned. That is okay though. If you are persistent and following a well-guided fitness routine and a well-guided nutrition plan, everything will work out.

Struggles will happen too. There will undoubtedly be obstacles and unexpected things that come up and get in the way of you achieving your destination. Once again, this is normal and to be expected. Say you are driving down the freeway on your way to work and you hit a patch of bad traffic. There's a collision up ahead and it is going to put you behind 30 minutes and make you late. You'll have to clock in late, explain to your supervisor what happened, and maybe even miss a half-hour of pay. The obvious choice is to turn around and head home because it is not a smooth ride to work, right? No it isn't! You wait it out, find a detour, call your boss, and do whatever it takes to get to work with the least amount of time and wages lost. Same thing holds true for your goals. When you hit a roadblock, you don't quit; you persist. You find a way to make it happen; it might not be perfectly on-schedule, but it will happen, and *you* have to make it happen.

Action Step 3: Make Short-term, Long-term, and Sub-goals

1. How do you want to look, feel, or perform one year from now? Where do you see your health and fitness level in the long-term? Make this your long-term goal.

2. What are your short-term goals? What do you want to accomplish in the next 60 or 90 days? What fitness routine do you need to follow to reach your short-term goal in the next few months? What about the next several months after that? Make these your short-term goals and be sure they are reflective of your long-term goal.

3. What sub-goals can you make to measure your success and achievements on your path toward reaching your goals? Break your short-term goals down into bench-marks you can hit.

Other Tips

Here are a few other things to keep in mind and a few suggestions to help you in your fitness journey:

Be sure to eat healthy and follow a nutrition plan. Can you get some results from exercise alone? Yes. Can you get some results from diet alone? Yes. They way to get the BEST results and make your efforts worthwhile is to do both. Be sure you are following a *plan.* Unless you have an extensive background in nutrition, you will need some guidance that will ensure you are eating the right foods and the proper nutrient levels. It is possible to eat "healthy" food and not get the results you want if your macronutrient (protein/carb/fat) ratios are out of whack.

Keep positive influences around you. If you want to be an athlete, associate with athletes. If you want to be wealthy, learn from wealthy people. And if you want to stay active with your fitness routine, associate with those that are fit and active. Visit fitness websites, read motivating magazines, read motivating books, and tap into resources that will help you with your goals rather than work against you

If at first you don't succeed, keep going. For whatever reason, if you do not hit your goal, that does not mean that you can't achieve it; it just means you're running a little late. Exercise and health should be a lifelong habit, not something done temporarily. If you are following a proven plan, you will succeed in the long run.

Follow a fitness plan. It is always a good idea to follow a proven routine with fitness. No shortcuts; just fitness, nutrition, and support. There are plenty of ways to follow a routine; personal trainers, group fitness classes, DVDs, online workouts, and even reading a good book on the subject can provide effective training programs and results.

Take action now. Don't delay in taking action toward achieving the body and health you want. You can read and learn all about fitness and healthy eating (which is good), but no one has the power to make it happen except for you. Give yourself a start time of right now! Ask yourself, "What is one thing that I can get started on right away to help me with my health and fitness goals?" Start immediately.

More info:

For further reading, check out "Get Fit, Stay Fit, Remain Fit" by Glen Gosch on Amazon.com

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Results may vary. Exercise and proper diet are necessary to achieve and maintain weight loss and muscle definition. Consult your physician and follow all safety instructions before beginning any exercise program or using any supplement or meal replacement product. The information in this guide is not intended to diagnose any medical condition or to replace the advice of a healthcare professional. If you experience any pain or difficulty with exercises or diet, stop and consult your healthcare provider.

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