

For New Direction VLCD and New Direction LCD Weight Control Programs

When you complete this module, you will be able to . . .

- Appreciate the importance of realistic goal setting
- Create exercise goals for your personal plan

**Goals—Who Needs Them? We All Do!**

Imagine you've been invited to a party, and you're on your way. As you pull out of your driveway, you realize you forgot to ask for the party location and directions. Worse yet, you don't have any gas in your car.

Without planning ahead—charting your course, understanding time commitments and making sure you (and your vehicle) are prepared—you'll likely miss out on a good time.

Becoming fit is quite similar. Picture good health as your goal and exercise as the vehicle you use to get there.

**Get S M A R T**

Many people avoid goal setting because they don't want to set themselves up for disappointment. But let's re-think this: How about setting our goals so that we can achieve them? Take things slowly and build on your successes, using these SMART ideas:

**S**pecific: Look for specific goals such as climbing the stairs without feeling winded or walking one mile to the grocery store.

**M**easurable: Note the way a certain pair of pants fits or how far you walk in 15 minutes. Repeat that measurement at one month intervals to see and feel your success.

**A**ttainable: Be realistic! For example, instead of declaring you'll exercise for one hour every day at 5 a.m. begin with two or three workouts a week for the first six weeks, then move to three or four a week.

**R**elevant: Does the fitness program you've decided on match your goals, and does it suit your lifestyle? Is the program enhancing your quality of life?

**T**rackable: Log your workouts in a notebook or calendar. Frequently look back to the first week or month of exercise and note your progress. It's a great motivator!

**How SMART are Your Goals?**

	S	M	A	R	T
Walk a mile without getting winded					

## Goals—Make Them Even Easier to Achieve

We hear the bad news all too often: Dropout rates from standard exercise programs reach 50% or more by the end of the first six months. The good news? There are things you can do to ensure you're not one of those dropouts. To achieve your goals, think about these factors:

- Perception of time. If you place exercise low on your priority list, you are more likely to quit. The key is to carve out small pieces of time that fit your schedule.
- Social support. Your biggest fans—friends, family or weight-loss buddies—can cheer you on when you're doing your best, or encourage you when you need that extra push. Ask for their support!
- Enjoyment and choice. Individuals who feel they can choose the type of exercise they do far better in the long run. Doing something enjoyable keeps you coming back for more.
- Reasonable exercise intensity. Remember Aesop's fable of "The Tortoise and the Hare," where the tortoise plodded along to the finish line while the speedy hare burned out before finishing. It's so true, "slow and steady wins the race."
- Self-management skills. Having the ability to manage your own behavior is another major factor to success. "Stick with it" exercisers develop the organizational skills necessary to track progress and consistency.
- Specific goal setting. Exercisers who are given a specific goal such as walk one mile in 20 minutes do much better than those that are given generic goals such as "do your best."
- Exercise for the right reason. Do it for you! You need to be mentally ready to take on the life-long commitment of health and self-care through exercise.



## When the "Goal-ing" Gets Tough

An important part of goal planning is deciding what to do when you find yourself straying.

There are many tools you can use to mentally prepare for a challenge or "psyche" yourself into exercising, even when you're having an off day. Don't give up!

- Dream it and you shall become it. Try doing a 10-minute visualization exercise.
- Call a friend for a pep talk or better yet, to find a walking partner.
- Just 10 minutes; agree to move for just 10 minutes. Then decide whether to continue your workout.

When you're ready to roll over and hit the snooze button or flop down on the couch with the remote control, trigger your "internal alarm" with these personally motivating ideas:



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