

# SETTING GOALS FOR 2009

**We all have the best of intentions when it comes to New Year's resolutions, but often the reason these resolutions don't stick is because we're trying to change a habit overnight. For sustainable, realistic changes, these habits should be overcome gradually and consistently (I think it was Mark Twain who suggested that "a habit should be coaxed down the stairs, one step at a time").**

First establish your goals, for example, becoming physically active, eating more healthfully, dealing better with stress etc. Don't set these goals because someone else says you should; your goals should be yours alone and in setting them, not only will you buy into them, but you'll also be fully accountable for their achievement.

### Long-term goals

A long-term (LT) goal needs to be something that excites you to think about completing. It can be anything you feel is realistically achievable. Examples might be working fewer hours, cycling across the continent (!) or losing 6kg. Setting LT goals within a 4 to 12 month period should work well – anything longer and it may be hard to maintain motivation or commitment; anything shorter and you're moving into dangerous territory, since drop-out tends to be greater within the first three months of starting any new programme.

### Medium-term goals

These help you achieve your LT goals. For example, if your LT goal is to lose 6kg within a 4-month period, your medium-term (MT) goal may be to lose 1.5kg per month. If your LT goal, within a 6-month period, is to reduce your 10 hour working day by two hours, your MT goal may be to get home 15 minutes earlier every 2 weeks.

### Short-term goals

These are immediate events that facilitate your MT goals and include things as simple as attempting to get to the gym three times a week, eating a good quality home-prepared lunch daily, meditating for 5 minutes every day etc. Once again, make sure these are realistic – if you don't normally take a lunch break, don't opt for a one-hour walk at that time; rather attempt a 10-minute power walk until you become used to the idea of taking time for yourself during your working day.

The ST and MT goals you have set are steps to achieving your LT goal and all make up your action plan. All need to be written down so that you can remind yourself of your goals regularly. If you hit a rough spot and don't manage to complete your ST goals for the week, don't panic; simply start up again as soon as you can (don't wait till Monday!). If lapses start happening frequently, revisit your ST and MT (and perhaps even your LT) goals, since they may not be as realistic as you thought they were.

Lastly, be sure to reward yourself when you do achieve your goals consistently. Perhaps not with 'Death by Chocolate', but with a new item of clothing, a weekend away, time by yourself ... whatever floats your boat and makes you feel good. You'll have deserved it!



**Nutrition & Lifestyle Coach**  
[tanya@thehappybodyco.com](mailto:tanya@thehappybodyco.com)  
 041-5811679