

Make Type 2 Diabetes Different: Goal Setting Guide

Making lifestyle changes for people with type 2 diabetes from South Asian communities

If you have type 2 diabetes, you may have been given a long list of do's and don'ts. This guide sets out four steps to help you identify your goals and break them down into small changes. This could help you balance managing your type 2 diabetes alongside **family life, work and cultural/religious occasions**.

"Success is easier to achieve if you set your mind on a specific goal! Once a new habit has been formed, you could set yourself a new goal."



Step 1: Self-assessment questionnaire

For each of the below statements, give a score between 5 and 1 to indicate how much you agree, using the scale below:

5 Strongly agree	4 Agree	3 Neutral	2 Disagree	1 Strongly disagree	
1. I am happy with my weight	<input type="checkbox"/>			5. I am aware of how type 2 diabetes can affect my mental wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I am happy with my cooking style and food choices	<input type="checkbox"/>			6. I can balance managing my health with other responsibilities like work and family	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I am happy with my activity level	<input type="checkbox"/>			7. I am happy with my blood sugar testing routine (if part of my diabetes care)	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I am happy with my day-to-day mood	<input type="checkbox"/>				



Step 2: identifying your achievable goals

Based on your responses, choose the one or two focus areas where you feel it is most important for you to make changes at this time in your life.

To help you feel motivated, ask yourself these questions:

What areas of your life are most important to you right now?

- *How could making this change be good for these other important areas of your life, like your family?*

Have you tried to make a change in this area of your health in the past?

- *If yes, what got in the way, and is there anything you could learn from that?*

What strengths do you have that could help you make this change?

- *If you're a great cook, could you try different cooking styles or ingredients to make your dishes healthier?*
- *If you're an early riser, could you go for a walk in the morning?*

Tips to help you make your goals achievable

- ★ Break your goals down into small steps that are achievable and realistic, but enough to make a difference.
- ★ Measuring a difference could help you stay motivated. Even just feeling more positive can be powerful.
- ★ Following healthy South Asian recipe groups on social media, or setting up a WhatsApp group to share ideas with your friends can help you feel inspired and more motivated.

Try to set SMART goals so that they are:

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Realistic

Timed

- ★ For example, instead of saying "I'm going to change my diet", be more specific, like:
"I am going to use less oil and salt in my cooking."
- ★ This change should be realistic for you and should consider any cooking you do for your family. So, you might say:
"I am going to use less oil and salt in my cooking three times a week."
- ★ Your goal still needs an end point to work towards. So, you might say:
"I am going to use less oil and salt in my cooking three times a week for two weeks."

Once you have achieved this goal, it's time to add a new goal, such as:

"I will eat smaller portions of chapati and rice with my dinner twice a week for a month."



Step 3: identifying small changes to help you achieve your goals

Next, think about the practical changes that could help make your goal more achievable.

For example, if you are going to use less oil and salt in your cooking, you may need to:



Find different ingredients or cooking methods



Share recipes with friends who are making similar changes

To help you identify your own specific goals, below are some examples which may inspire you.

Focus area	Practical things you could think about
 <p>Diet and weight management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Have a conversation with your family about how you can work together to improve your diet ★ Plan meals in advance and make a shopping list ★ Always consult your healthcare team before fasting ★ Swap white rice for wholegrain options like brown basmati, multi-grain roti or chapatis made with millet or chickpea flour ★ Instead of fried snacks like chevda and papad, try healthier options like roasted chana, baked papad or steamed dhokra ★ Eat baked samosas or fish rather than fried samosas or fish ★ Instead of full-fat coconut milk, try low fat yoghurt or light coconut milk in curries like Biryani ★ Swap paneer for tofu in dishes like Chanar Dalna ★ Flavour vegetable curries with garlic instead of extra oil or ghee ★ Eat smaller portions of carbohydrates like rice and chapatis ★ Avoid adding extra oil to snacks or salt to rice water; try using 1 calorie cooking sprays or limit oil to 1 tsp ★ Plan to allow for treats on special occasions, and eat healthier on other days ★ Break down your weight loss goals - for example, start by aiming to lose 5% of your starting weight by a certain date
 <p>Exercise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Look for ways to be active during your day ★ Pick an activity you enjoy. All physical activity counts, not just 'sports' - it could just be walking to the shop or gardening ★ Exercise with friends or family to keep motivated and help set healthy habits ★ Buddy-up with a friend to go for a walk
 <p>Mood</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Be kind to yourself, focus on your strengths ★ Drink water - being dehydrated could make your energy levels drop and affect your mood or concentration ★ Type 2 diabetes can bring up a range of emotions. Try talking to those you trust, so they know how to support you ★ On difficult days, write a list of the things in your life that you are grateful for
 <p>Balancing time and responsibilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ If you're juggling type 2 diabetes with other work and/or carer responsibilities, planning 'me time' in your week could help you take care of yourself, even if it's just 15 minutes ★ When you're busy or feeling down, try doing one thing per day that makes you feel good and helps with your type 2 diabetes, like a walk with a friend or asking a family member to cook a healthy meal for you



Step 4: Tracking your progress

It's important to track your progress so you can see what is working and what is not.

Be kind to yourself - it's okay not to meet your goals every time. **Sometimes life gets in the way.**

Face your emotions

It's common to go through a range of feelings when making changes – from the highs of pride to the lows of disappointment.

All emotions are important and releasing them could help you to 'reset'. **Some things you could try include:**



Doing something physical like a walk or deep breathing



Crying if you need to



Writing or talking about how you're feeling



Going back to Step 2 and reminding yourself of all the reasons you started this journey



Saying to yourself how you feel and why (e.g. "I'm feeling disappointed because I skipped the gym today") is a good start

Below is an example weekly goal tracker, followed by a template you can print off and fill in yourself. This is designed to help you track how you are doing against your goals.

Priority goals

Once you have identified your two priority SMART goals for the week, fill in the below sections for each of them

Focus area	Diet	Activity
My SMART goal	<i>Use less oil and salt in cooking for 2 weeks</i>	<i>Walk 1 mile to work 3 times a week for 1 month</i>
Practical changes to help me get there	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Make a list of different cooking methods that use less oil and salt</i> • <i>Identify which nights I will use less oil and salt, avoiding special occasions</i> • <i>Discuss with family what to make</i> • <i>Buy a 1 calorie cooking spray to fry food with</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Get up 20 minutes earlier to allow time</i> • <i>Buy a raincoat so I can still walk if it is raining</i> • <i>Look up the nicest walking route</i>
Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Decided to use less oil and salt on Tues/Weds/Fri, planned meals and found new cooking methods</i> • <i>Prepared low-salt snacks low in salt for the week</i> • <i>Made shopping list and did weekly shop</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Purchased raincoat</i> • <i>Identified route through the park</i> • <i>Downloaded podcasts and music to listen to while walking</i>
Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cooked for the whole family for my cousin's birthday, used a lot of oil so will cook an oil and salt-free meal on Friday instead</i> • <i>Also had some birthday cake as a treat</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Overslept, drove the kids to school rather than walking them</i> • <i>Didn't feel like going outside today, so did a short yoga class inside instead</i> • <i>Recorded 3000 steps in total today</i>
Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Baked samosas rather than fried them</i> • <i>Used extra garlic and chilli instead of salt</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Woke up 20 mins early</i> • <i>Walked to work</i> • <i>Recorded 10,000 steps in total today</i>



Your goal tracker

Priority goals

Once you have identified your two priority SMART goals for the week, fill in the below sections for each of them

Focus area		
My SMART goal		
Practical changes to help me get there		

Weekly progress notes

Each day, make a note of how you are progressing towards your goals. At the end of the week, review your progress and identify anything that you could change or challenges to anticipate next week

Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		