

Make Type 2 Diabetes Different:

Goal setting guide

Making lifestyle changes for people with type 2 diabetes

Whether you are newly diagnosed or have been living with type 2 diabetes for a while, you may have been given a long list of do's and don'ts. The changes you may have been asked to make to your diet and lifestyle could sometimes seem unachievable, and rather than inspiring you, this may leave you feeling overwhelmed.

To help make this process of change easier, this guide sets out a number of steps you could take to help you to identify your goals and break them down into small changes that could help to put you on a journey to success:

You may feel you need to make all the example changes listed below, but actually it may often be better not to make more than two or three changes at a time.

Focus on a goal that you feel enthusiastic about and put your energy into achieving it. Once a new habit has been formed, you could revisit the list and focus on new goals.



Step 1: Self-assessment questionnaire

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

5 Strongly agree	4 Agree	3 Neutral	2 Disagree	1 Strongly disagree
1. I am happy with my eating habits and food choices	<input type="text"/>		4. I am happy with my day-to-day mood	<input type="text"/>
2. I am happy with my weight	<input type="text"/>		5. I am happy with my sleep pattern and quality	<input type="text"/>
3. I am happy with my activity level	<input type="text"/>		6. I am happy with my blood sugar testing routine (if part of my diabetes care)	<input type="text"/>



Step 2: identifying your achievable goals

Based on your responses, identify the two or three focus areas where you feel you need to prioritise making changes at this time in your life.

To help connect you to the goal, you may like to ask yourself the following questions:

How will your life be different if you change this area of your health?

- *How will you feel?*

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

- *Is it your partner, your grandchildren, your work life, something else?*
- *How will making this change positively impact not just you and your health, but those areas of your life that are important to you?*

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

- *If so, what got in the way of making the change, and what could you learn from that experience that may help you this time?*

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

- *If you love planning and making lists, use this to your advantage and track your progress towards your goals.*
- *If you're an early riser, try using those spare hours in the morning to go on a walk outside.*
- *If you have a strong support group, sharing this experience with them could help you reach your goals and make you feel more accountable.*

Tips to help you make your goals achievable

- ☆ Try breaking your goals down into small achievable steps that lead from one to another. Goals that seem vague and intangible could become frustrating, being all too easy to give up on.
- ☆ Aim to strike the right balance between being realistic and achievable, but not so easy that they don't make any impact, or you can't see any measurable difference.
- ☆ Measuring a difference could help you stay motivated. You may not be able to physically measure a difference, but something just as simple as feeling more positive is often just as powerful. If you feel good about the changes you have made this may inspire you to keep going.

It is advisable to set goals that follow the SMART approach:

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Realistic

Timed

- ☆ For example, rather than saying "I'm going to change my diet" think of something specific you will change, for example: "I am going to cook meals from scratch."
- ☆ However, this change should be realistic for you, so you might say: "I am going to cook meals from scratch three times a week."
- ☆ But, this is still open-ended, and your goal needs an end point to work towards. So, you might say: "I am going to cook from scratch 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 bring in a healthy lunch to work twice a week for a month".



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

Next you may need to think about the practicalities of achieving your goal. **What practical changes do you need to consider to make your goal achievable?**

For example, if you are going to cook from scratch three times a week, you may need to:



Make a shopping list







Discuss with family members or others in your household what to make



Plan which nights you will cook and avoid busy evenings

The same approach is needed for taking in a healthy lunch, for example you may need to consider what you can take, where you can store it, and even really simple things such as what container you can take it in!

To help you identify your own specific goals, below are some practical things you could think about for each focus area, which may inspire you.

Focus area	Practical things you could think about
 <p>Diet and weight management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Plan meals in advance ☆ Make a shopping list ☆ Include foods you don't usually eat ☆ Explore new recipes and cook from scratch ☆ Plan your diary to allow treats, such as lunch at a restaurant with a friend, and compensate on other days ☆ Break down your target weight loss, for example you could start with an aim to lose 5% of your starting weight by a certain date
 <p>Exercise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Look for opportunities to be active that you could incorporate into your day and prepare for it ☆ Think about the points in your day-to-day routine when you could make time for exercise ☆ Pick an activity you enjoy - remember all physical activity counts, not just 'sports' ☆ Exercise with a friend to keep motivated ☆ Sign up to an event to help set a 'timed' goal
 <p>Mood</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Be kind to yourself, focus on your strengths ☆ Keep well hydrated - being dehydrated could make your energy levels drop and affect your mood or concentration ☆ Eat well - good mental health depends on a well-balanced diet ☆ Talk to your friends, family or healthcare professional about how you are feeling, so they know how to best support you ☆ Ensure you're getting enough pleasure and relaxation in to your life – just 15 minutes a day of time just for you could make a real difference ☆ On difficult days, it may be helpful to bring to mind the things in your life you are grateful for, for example by writing a daily gratitude list
 <p>Sleep</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Establish a healthy bedtime routine, such as no screen time in bed ☆ Set a regular bedtime ☆ Try to avoid eating or drinking too close to bedtime



Step 4: Tracking your progress

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

Be kind to yourself - it's okay not to meet your goals every time as sometimes life just gets in the way. But, tracking your progress helps you to see if you have set achievable and realistic goals or if perhaps you need to rethink.

Acknowledging your emotions

It's common to experience a range of feelings when we're making changes – from the highs of pride when we achieve our goals, to the lows of disappointment when we don't.

All emotions are important, and releasing these emotions could allow you to process and reset. Some things you could try include:



Simply saying to yourself "I'm feeling x because y" (e.g. "I'm feeling disappointed for skipping the gym today") is a good start



Having a good cry



Journaling your feelings



Going back to Step 2 and reminding yourself of all the important reasons you started this journey. Keep in mind how your life will be different, both for you and those that matter to you.



Doing something physical like a walk or some deep breathing



Talking about how you're feeling with someone you trust

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 each of your goals, and making the small practical changes that could help you achieve them.

Priority goals

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

Focus area	Diet	Activity	Sleep
My SMART goal	Home cook 3 times a week for 2 weeks	Walk 1 mile in the morning 3 times a week for 1 month	Go to bed by 10pm 4 times a week for 1 month
Practical changes to help me get there	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a weekly shopping list Identify which nights I will cook on in advance Discuss with family what to make Add extra veg to recipes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get up 20 minutes earlier to allow time Buy a raincoat so I can still walk if it is raining Look up the nicest walking route 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set the TV to record any programmes you like that start after 10 Shower half an hour earlier

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to cook on Tues/Weds/Fri, decided meals and found recipes Made shopping list and did weekly shop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchased raincoat Identified route through the park Downloaded podcasts to listen to while walking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Went to dinner with friends, got home late In bed by 11pm
Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Made Thai green curry for dinner Added an extra portion of carrots to the recipe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Woke up 20 mins early Went for a morning walk Recorded 10,000 steps in total today 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In bed by 9:30, read book for half an hour
Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked late so did not have time to cook as planned. Will cook on Thurs instead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overslept, no time for a walk Recorded 3000 steps in total today 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In bed by 10:30

Your personal goal tracker

Priority goals

Once you have identified your three 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

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Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			