

## Fact Sheet One: The Ins and Outs of Goal Setting

*Without goals, and plans to reach them, you are like a ship that has set sail with no destination.*  
**Fitzhugh Dodson**

Instead of taking our word for it, we want to give you another perspective, enough evidence that will leave you no option but to wholeheartedly embrace and commit to your own personal goal setting process. We have scoured the latest research to bring you the most up to date and effective info on the ins and outs of goal setting for your ensured success. Firstly, is there any proof that it really works and secondly how does it work?

### Does goal setting work?

According to the brains trust, yes. Over 90% of recent research (over 500 studies) across all sorts of populations and tasks, has revealed that goal setting has a consistent and powerful effect on the person's behaviour. The friendly university folk have also refined several gems of knowledge on how to make goal setting work the best for you. Most of you have probably done goal setting before, but bear with us and have a quick browse below as you may just find the key to success.

### Keys to successful goal setting:

1. **Use a combination of different goals** (see types of goals fact sheet). Surprisingly there are multiple types of goals, more so than just your short and long-term goals. Hence, just like any good investment portfolio, diversification is the way to go.
2. **Have personal input to your goals.** Making sure your goals are something for you, not just those around you will allow you to truly commit to the process. After all, it will be you dragging your butt to training at 5.45 in the morning.
3. **Be specific with your goals-** this point is key, the more specific and the more 'real' you make your goal. The more real it is, the more attainable it will seem. In other words the more resources you commit to a goal, both emotionally and physically, the more compelling it will become to you and thus it is more likely to occur.
4. **Have moderately difficult goals.** Your goals should be a stretch, get out of your comfort zone, and dare to dream. Once you have your ultimate goal you can back track and set in place realistic small goals to get you moving onward and upward.
5. **Have both short and long-term goals.** Short-term goals (usually 2-6 weeks) feed into your long-term goals (mostly 6 months-2 years) and provide you with a good cycle, helping you to remain engaged and ultimately successful in your journey.
6. **Get feedback on your progress** toward your goals. Everyone likes a pat on the back when they achieve a goal, or may need extra support, or even need a kick in the pants if they are fall short of their goal. Your short-term goals will help assess how you are travelling, as will assessment sessions. Evolution has these assessments every eight weeks or you can set some benchmarks for yourself.
7. **Public acknowledgement of goals.** You might not want to be tattooing your goals to your arm, however writing them down and telling anyone who will listen is well worth it. This is just another way to commit to your goals and leave you less opportunity to fall short of your heart's desire.

8. **Commit to your goal.** Really take the time to prioritise your goal and set aside as many resources you can towards it. Set your goals at a time you feel very resourceful, this is not necessarily New Year's Day or birthdays.
9. **Don't base your goals on a comparison to someone else.** The research finds that social comparison is one of the most demotivating things a person can do. Setting task-focused goals, i.e. things you can actually do, are more productive and ensure greater success. For example, getting to training on average three times a week for the next three months. So close up those magazines and get planning, air brushing can make anyone look fabulous.

### **How does goal setting work**

If you are not ready to jump into your own goal-setting and need a little more convincing, let me explain how goal setting actually works.

Again those friendly scholars have narrowed it down to a process called the *direct mechanistic approach*. In normal speak, goals influence performance in four direct ways:

1. **Goals direct your thoughts and attention to the important and often undesirable, or overlooked tasks,** which need to happen to achieve our result.
2. **Goals mobilise your effort.** There are only so many hours in the day, and having a goal keeps you on task and away from those usual distractions.
3. **Goals prolong persistence.** The feedback cycle and the setting of short-term goals, allows you to maintain motivation and thus keep you striving towards your ultimate long-term goals. It also provides something to refocus on when we hit the inevitable obstacles.
4. **Goal setting helps you to develop new skills and strategies.** Goal setting often takes you where you have never been before; it allows you to identify the new skills and strategies you need to achieve success.

So ladies and gents if you were a little dubious on whether a structured goal-setting plan would be worth the time I am sure you are no longer unsure. So what are you waiting for, jump into our ingenious goal-setting questionnaire and get cracking!