

Setting Goals & Taking Action

A work booklet aimed at increasing exercise, but can be used for other lifestyle goals as well as your studies.



Introduction:

This work booklet is aimed at individuals who are new or returning to exercise and would like to increase the amount of exercise/physical activity they are currently doing.

This booklet will cover the topics of:

- Motivation
- Setting SMART goals
- Action Planning
- Confidence to achieve goals
- Self-monitoring

However, if your goals are related to other lifestyle behaviours like healthy eating, sleeping, smoking cessation then this guide will still be useful to work through. It should be noted though you will gain the most benefit from focusing on one behaviour at a time (i.e. just exercise) and not multiple (i.e. exercise and healthy eating). Furthermore, the topics on SMART goals, action planning, confidence to achieve goals and self-monitoring can be applied to studies, for example planning for an assignment or exam.

Motivation:

It is likely because you are reading this guide that you want to get more active, but it is important to know why? Knowing why will help keep you motivated towards achieving your goals. Let's start by thinking about your advantages and disadvantages of increasing exercise.

Advantages

- feel more energised
- reduce stress
- protect my mental + physical health

Disadvantages

- Affect study time
- Cost
- Reduce time with friends & family

Are there ways to reduce disadvantages?

Affect study time- Frequent short breaks during study time to increase exercise can improve productivity and minimise fatigue.

Cost- Choose free activities like walking or online exercise sessions on YouTube, or, attend off-peak classes or £1 Active Keele Sessions

Reduce time with friends/family- Ask them to exercise with you, you could go for a walk or play a sport (tennis/badminton) while catching-up.

If there are the options for stairs then I will use the stairs.

SMART Goal:

Having a SMART goal means you have a direction towards what you want to achieve.

S**pecific:** A goal should not be vague and should cover these questions: What, where, when, with whom are you going to do it? For example, a goal of I want to have better fitness is vague, a smart goal would be, I will walk for at least 20 minutes on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays around Keele Hall before lectures on my own.

M**asurable:** Being specific means it is easy to measure. Based on the above goal, you could record the number of times each week you went on a walk and the duration each week.

A**chievable:** Set a goal that is achievable for you. For example, setting a goal to run a marathon in 3 months when you are new or returning to exercise may be unachievable and cause injury. Potentially a more achievable goal could be jogging a 5k in 3 months (check out couch to 5K app for guidance on this).

R**elevant:** You are more likely to succeed at the goal if this is something you want to do and is important to you.

T**imely:** Is this the right time for you to be starting this goal? If so, think about when you want to achieve it by as this will keep you focused on your goal. For example, in 3 months if you want to be able to walk 5k, you may want to make weekly mini-goals as well to keep you focused towards the long-term goal.

What is your SMART Goal?

S

M

A

R

T

Action Plan:

Let's make a plan on how you are going to achieve your SMART goal. Your Action plan will reflect the specific part of your SMART goal. You may want to record this into your diary or calendar

What are you going to do? *walk*

Where are you going to do it? *Keele Hall*

When are you going to do it? *Before lectures*

Will you do it with someone else? *On my own*

If-then plan:

You can also make If-then plans, so exercise becomes more of a habit you do not think of. An If-Then plan is **If** situation *Y* arises **then** I will perform behaviour *X*.

If there the options for stairs and elevator then I will use the stairs.

If the kettle boiling then I will do some star jumps

Confidence:

Belief and confidence are important for achieving your goals.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how confident are you right now to complete your goal?



If your a 10, WOW, great! If you are below this let's think what is affecting your confidence, and the barriers to achieving your goal.

Barriers

I do not have time

I am to tired

Solutions

Fit exercise into my day to day life e.g. use stairs, park further away, use facilities on the top floor, go for a walk with family/ friends, stand while on the phone.

Exercise first thing, or record how I feel after exercise (like more energised?) to motivate myself to exercise when tired

Let's think of what can support you to achieve your goals?

Facilitators

Family / friends

Reminders

Previous Success

How to use them?

Can ask them to support and motivate me, or share a goal together

Can schedule my sessions into my calendar and set reminders

Repete what was previously successful

Now that you have identified how you may overcome any barriers to your goal and what will help support you achieve your goal, lets rate again how confident you are.



Self monitoring:

It is important to keep a record of your progress. This can act as a source of motivation when you see you are succeeding and give you an opportunity to reflect on areas that may not be working so you can adjust your action planning accordingly.

1. You could **keep a diary**

- a. Did you meet your goal today?
- b. What activity did you do? (type, duration, when)
- c. What went well? (did anything support you to be active today)
- d. What didn't go well? (any barriers e.g. motivation, time – were you able to overcome them, if so, how)
- e. How did the activity make you feel? (was it hard to do the activity today, did you feel better afterwards, did it feel challenging)

2. You could **download an app** like Google Fit to track your activity and answer the above questions in the note section.

How will you self-monitor your activity?