

# The “HOW TO” of Goal Setting

Goal setting is a simple tool you can use to maintain a high level of motivation in your sport. Athletes respond to goals in a very deep and personal way. The experience of setting, working towards and achieving a goal causes us to continue to strive higher and harder to reach the point we set for ourselves.

Goals offer two essential things that fuel your motivation.

Firstly, goals provide the destination of where you want to go in your sports participation. This endpoint is important because if you don't know where you're going, you're just going to stay where you are.

Secondly, having a place or level you really want to get to doesn't have a lot of value if you do not know how achieve it. Goals provide the roadmap for getting to your destination.

## **Set S.M.A.R.T.E.R. Goals**

The acronym S.M.A.R.T.E.R. represents the five criteria that you can use to get the most out of your goal setting:

### **Specific.**

Your goals should be specific to what you want to accomplish. For example, as a Softball player, you wouldn't want a general goal such as “I want to improve my batting.” Instead, you want to identify part of your batting that you want to get better at. A more appropriate goal might be: “I want to improve my sacrifice bunting.” The more specific you can get, the more you can focus on what you need to do in your training to improve that area.

### **Measurable.**

“Do your best” goals aren't very effective because they don't offer an adequate benchmark to strive for. Instead, you want to set goals that are measurable and objective. For example, you want to improve your pitching accuracy, a measurable goal might be: “My goal is to throw 20 first pitch strikes three times a week for the next four weeks to raise my first pitch percentage from 71 percent to 80 percent.”

### **Accepted.**

Own your goal and athletic success. Goals that are set by parents or coaches will not inspire or motivate you fully because they come from outside of mind set. When you set goals that you believe deeply in, they will create the source and become the fabric of your motivation and you almost have no choice about whether you strive them.

### **Realistic.**

If you set goals that are too low, they will have little motivational value because you know you'll achieve the goal without much effort. You don't want to set goals that are too high either as you will know that you can't achieve them and have little incentive to put out any effort. You want to set goals that are both realistic and challenging. Realistic meaning that you can actually achieve them and challenging because your only chance of achieving them is by working really hard.

### **Time limited.**

The best goals are ones in which there is a time limit for their achievement. You will feel highly motivated to put in the time and energy necessary to reach them when you have set a deadline to achieve them. For example, with your base running, a goal might be: "I'm going to work toward decreasing my home to home time by 2 seconds by doing 45 minutes of interval training three times a week for the next six weeks."

### **Exciting.**

Your motivation to strive toward your goals is driven by the emotions you associate with those goals. As a result, you want to set goals that inspire and excite you. These emotions can be the deciding factor in whether you achieve your goals when faced with setbacks, failures, disappointment, fatigue, pain and the desire to do other more interesting things.

### **Recorded.**

You are more likely to stay committed to the pursuit of your goals when you write them down (not just type them into your phone or computer) than if you just think about them. The physical act of writing your goals appears to somehow imprint them more deeply in your psyche. Writing them down also seems to make the goals more real. The act of writing down your goals creates a greater sense of ownership of them and makes you feel more compelled to strive your goals.

Make your goals public. You are more likely to adhere to your goals if you make them public. Share them with others, for example, showing them to your coach, family, or friends. Or posting them on your social media. By doing so, not only are you accountable to yourself, but also to everyone with whom you shared them.

Review your goals regularly. Because goal setting is not an exact science. You should view goal setting as a dynamic and ever-evolving process of review, adjustment, and recommitment. You should make it a habit to review your goals monthly and compare them to your actual progress. It can also be helpful to review them with your coaches who can provide useful feedback you can use to make adjustments that will further motivate you to pursue your goals.

### **Types of Goals to Set**

Goal setting involves establishing a series of goals that start with the big picture and get increasingly specific and actionable.

- Long-term goals: What you ultimately want to achieve in your sport (e.g., win and make your high school team, play in college, win an Olympic gold medal).
- Yearly goals: What you want to achieve this year (e.g., qualifying for a new level of competition such as State or National Championships or won-loss record).
- Performance goals: What results you need to achieve your yearly goals (e.g., finish in top 10 to qualify for big competition, achieve certain game statistics).
- Preparation goals: How you need to train and what you need to improve to reach your higher goals (e.g., physical, technical, mental).
- Lifestyle goals: What you need to do in your general lifestyle to reach the above goals (e.g., sleep, eating habits, study habits).

**To achieve this goal (answer all six questions):**

1. What do I have to do?

---

---

2. How am I going to do this?

---

---

3. How can I measure improvement?

---

---

4. Who can help me achieve this goal?

---

---

5. How will I know I have achieved it?

---

---

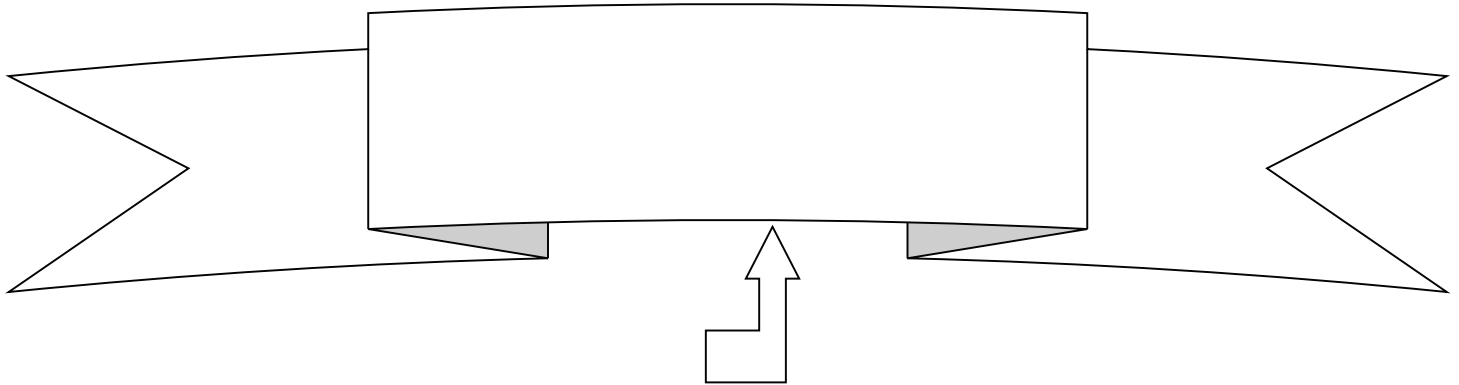
6. How will I prevent myself from achieving this goal? What excuses will I use?

---

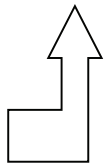
---

# GOAL SETTING PROGRAM

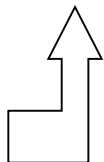
## HITTING THE TARGET



# ULTIMATE GOAL



## INTERMEDIATE GOAL



\*

\*

\*

## SHORT TERM GOAL

\*

\*

\*

\*