

# Goal Setting

Talking about doing something is one thing, actually doing it is another. Here are some tips on how to set goals:

**Your goal must be observable** – In other words, people should be able to see you working toward accomplishing your goal. For example, if you wanted to become a better basketball player, other people could observe you shooting fifty more free throws a day, eating the right foods, adding ball-handling drills, strength and endurance training to your workouts, etc.

**Your goal must be measurable** – “I want to increase the average amount of time I spend studying from fifteen to twenty hours per week,” is an example of a goal that is measurable.

**Your goal should be specific** – The above goal is specific. It could be made even more specific by stating, “I want to increase the average amount of time I spend studying from fifteen to twenty hours per week by studying one additional hour on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays.” Goals often have target dates for completion: “I am going to finish my term paper one week before it is due.” If you don’t meet your target date, don’t give up on your goal – set a new target date.

**Your goal should be realistic** – Success usually comes in small steps. People often set themselves up to fail because they set their goals too high. If you have just started a jogging program in the hopes of improving your physical fitness, it is much more realistic to set a goal of running 3-5 miles per week than running 10-15 miles per week. Set a realistic goal, and work on achieving it. Once you achieve your first goal, you can set your second goal higher. Remember that success comes in small steps. Large goals are more easily achieved when they are broken down into smaller goals.

Here is an example of a large goal broken down into smaller goals:

**GOAL:** To complete my term paper in SOC 100 one week early (March 4) than the date it is due (March 11).

**METHODS:**

- 1) Select the topic for my paper between January 13 and February 13.
- 2) Research my topic in the library and write note cards from February 14 through February 25.
- 3) Write the paper from February 25 through March 4.

Dayplanners are excellent tools for planning papers, keeping track of reading assignments, and for scheduling tests.

## The Reverse Planner

- Look at each assignment as several smaller assignments instead of one.
- Divide your assignment into smaller, more manageable and less intimidating chunks.
- Create a reverse calendar of events for your academic task.
  - December 11- final exam-ULTIMATE GOAL
  - December 10 - review material for final
  - December 3 - begin final review of material for the test
  - November 26 - review chapter 4 and notes for final
  - November 12 - review chapter 3 and notes
  - October 30 - review chapter 2 and notes
  - October 14 - review chapter 1 and notes
  - October 7 - set study schedule for final exam