Why Set Goals?

Omar got tired quickly in gym class and didn’t feel very strong. He wanted to get in shape, but he wasn’t sure how to begin. He had a brief talk with his older brother, Miguel. Miguel explained that the key to making changes in life is setting goals and working to reach them. Omar realized that he needed to set specific goals to improve his physical health.

Goal setting is a powerful tool, one that you can use to shape your future. Goals help you focus so that you can accomplish what you want in life. They can give you a sense of purpose and help you make good decisions. They can also help you measure your progress. In this way, goals become milestones along your journey of life. They can help you determine how far you have come and how far you want to go. Finally, reaching a goal can boost your self-confidence. This strengthens your mental/emotional health.
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Health Skills Activity

Goal Setting

Setting a Physical Activity Goal
Goal setting is one good strategy for improving and maintaining your personal health.

The President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports recommends that teens participate in at least one hour of physical activity five days a week. Does that sound like a lot? Well, the good news is that you don’t have to do it all at once. Here is an example of how to fit one hour of moderate to intense physical activity into your daily routine:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
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You don’t always have to take time out just to exercise. Instead, just do more of the physical activities that you already enjoy, such as dancing, biking, inline skating, skateboarding, swimming, and sports.

On Your Own
What are some physical activities that you enjoy but don’t participate in very often? Choose one of these activities and set a goal to participate in it regularly. Use the goal-setting steps on page 45 to help you reach your goal.

Some goals you set may be easy to reach, while others may be more challenging. It’s important that you set realistic goals. If you want to improve your grade in math, getting a better score on the next quiz is realistic. Getting an A for the whole year might be a lot harder. Thinking about your strengths and your limitations can help you decide what is realistic to achieve in a reasonable time period. Then you can start planning strategies for how you will reach your personal goal and improve your personal health. Reaching your goal can give you a sense of accomplishment.

Omar decided that a realistic goal for him would be to be able to run 2 miles without stopping. He also wanted to be able to do 50 push-ups. He could already run half a mile and do 10 push-ups, but he knew that he still had some work to do to reach these goals.
Often, setting a goal for one area in your life can lead to your accomplishing goals in other areas. For example, if your goal is learning to dance, you will also achieve fitness goals as well. Your overall sense of well-being can also benefit.

**Reading Check** Explain How can reaching a goal strengthen mental/emotional health?

### Long-Term Goals

Some goals take longer to achieve than others. A **long-term goal** is *a goal that you plan to reach over an extended period of time*. Omar’s long-term goals were to do 50 push-ups and run 2 miles.

If the goal you set will likely take months or years to reach, it’s a long-term goal. Learning to play the piano and making the soccer team are some examples of long-term goals. Becoming a teacher or a doctor is another example of a long-term goal.

### Short-Term Goals

How do you reach a long-term goal? Usually by setting and meeting a number of short-term goals. A **short-term goal** is *a goal that you can achieve in a short length of time*.

To **achieve** his long-term goals, Omar set a few short-term goals. His first short-term goal was to run half a mile each day for one week. The next week he increased this goal to running three-quarters of a mile. He increased the distance each week until he could run 2 miles. Omar also set a similar short-term goal for push-ups. The first week, he would do 10 push-ups each day. The next week he would do 15 each day. He would increase the amount each week until he reached his goal of 50 push-ups.

Within three months, Omar had reached his long-term goal of doing 50 push-ups and running 2 miles. Take a look at **Figure 2.4** to see how short-term goals can help you reach a long-term goal.

**Reading Check** Explain What is a short-term goal?

### Strategies for Attaining a Goal

Once you decide on your goal, you need to think of a plan or strategy to help you meet your goal. A goal-setting plan with a series of steps for you to take can be very effective. Creating and following a goal-setting plan will help you stay on track.
FIGURE 2.4

MILESTONES IN REACHING A LONG-TERM GOAL

Setting and meeting short-term goals helped this teen reach his long-term goal of getting an A in science. How can reaching short-term goals improve mental/emotional health?

Here are the steps of a goal-setting plan:

**Step 1:** Set a realistic goal and write it down.

**Step 2:** List the steps you need to take to reach that goal.

**Step 3:** Find others who can help and support you.

**Step 4:** Set checkpoints to evaluate your progress.

**Step 5:** Reward yourself after reaching the goal.

Read through the goal-setting plan shown in **Figure 2.5** on the following page. Notice how the plan helped a teen organize his time and activities so that he could keep moving toward reaching his goal.

**Reading Check** Identify List the five goal-setting steps.
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**Reading Check**

**Explain** How can reaching a goal strengthen mental/emotional health?

### Long-Term Goals

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**Go Online**

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**Reading Check** Identify List the five goal-setting steps.
**FIGURE 2.5**

**AN EFFECTIVE GOAL-SETTING PLAN**

Making and following a goal-setting plan can help you meet a goal. Think of a goal to set. What are some steps you could take to reach that goal?

- **My Goal:** Earn $400 to purchase a mountain bike and helmet

- **My Goal-Setting Plan:**
  1. Start a newspaper-delivery service
  2. Make flyers to advertise my service
  3. Deliver flyers to neighbors' houses
  4. Deliver papers every day
  5. Save all money earned

- **Sources of Help:**
  1. Jenna (can help me hand out flyers)
  2. Mark (older brother)

- **Checkpoints:**
  1. By December: earn $125
  2. By March: earn another $125
  3. By June: earn another $150

- **Reward:**
  1. New mountain bike and helmet

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**Lesson 2 Review**

**After You Read**

*Review this lesson for new terms, major headings, and Reading Checks.*

**What I Learned**

1. **Vocabulary** Define *short-term goal* and *long-term goal.* Then use both terms in a sentence that shows the difference between them.

2. **Give Examples** List at least two steps in a goal-setting plan.

3. **Explain** How can short-term goals be used to reach long-term goals?

**Thinking Critically**

4. **Analyze** How are checkpoints useful in meeting a goal?

5. **Predict** How might priorities, changing abilities, and responsibilities influence setting health goals?

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**Applying Health Skills**

6. **Goal Setting** Think of one goal that you would like to achieve. Then make a goal-setting plan for reaching it. Use the five goal-setting steps to create your plan.