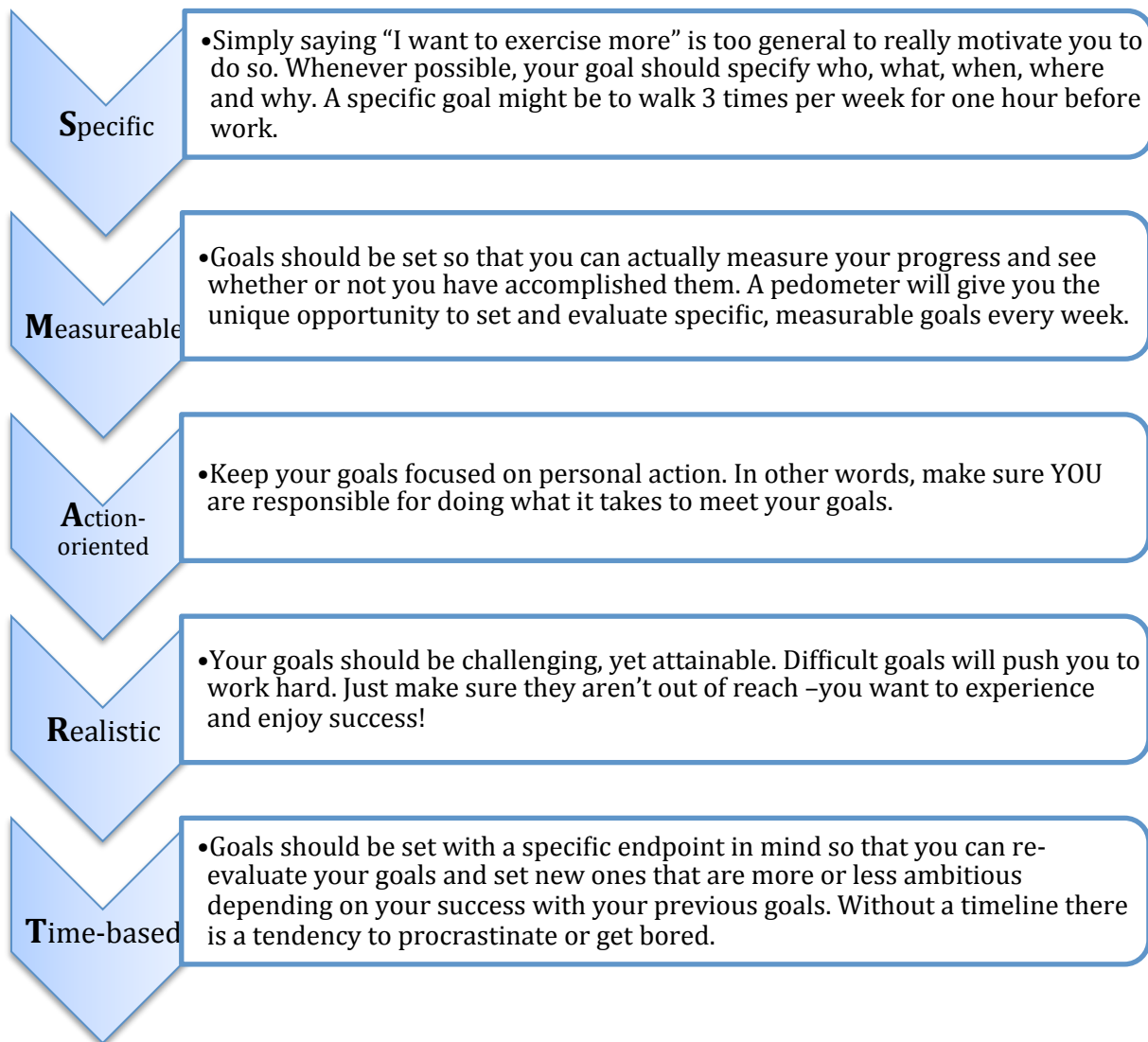


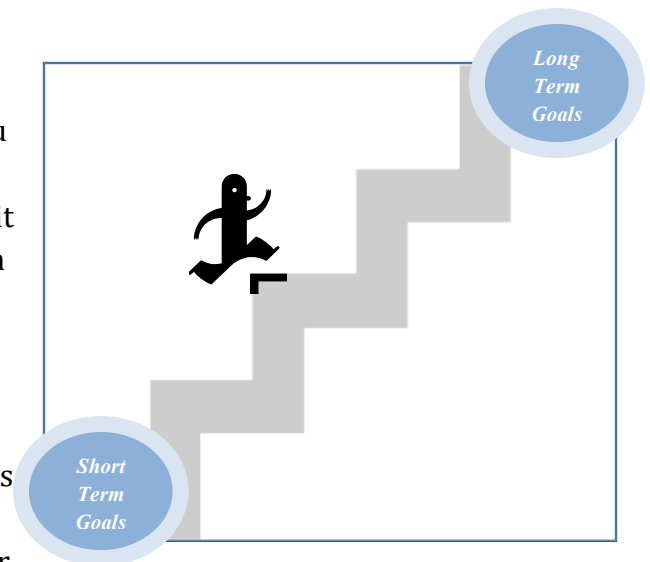
# SMART Goal setting

Whether you're aware of it or not, you are most likely already quite adept at setting goals. You have a long list of things to be accomplished and you develop a plan of action for tackling each of the items on the list. In simple terms, goals are objectives we're aiming to achieve. When used effectively, they can be one of the best tools for successfully adopting and maintaining a behavior such as exercise. *Why?* Goals motivate us by helping us direct our efforts toward what's really important and energizing us to try harder to accomplish what we want to accomplish. They force us to develop strategies that will lead to success and they give us the determination to persevere when we face obstacles or challenges. Unfortunately, many people do not set the right kinds of goals. Ask yourself: Do I set **SMART** goals?



Following the SMART goal principles is one of the key aspects of goal setting. Here are some other important aspects to consider:

- Focus on **process goals** rather than **outcome goals**. Weight loss goals are a classic example of outcome goals. You might say: “I want to lose 10 pounds in the next 2 months.” This is not necessarily a bad goal - it is specific, realistic, and time-based. The problem is that you don’t have complete control over whether or not you lose weight. What you CAN control are the things you do to lose weight (i.e., the process - diet and exercise). So instead, you might set a process goal: “I will walk for 30 minutes 5 times per week for the next 2 months.” Hopefully, if you’re able to stick with your process goals, the desired outcomes will come too, but if not, you will still be proud of what you’ve accomplished.
- Set both **short-term** and **long-term** goals. Long-term goals are important for helping you keep the big picture in mind. When the daily grind of exercise starts to feel tedious (which it undoubtedly will at times), having a long-term objective can provide an answer to the question: “Why am I doing this?” However, such a far-off goal may be too distant to keep you interested and motivated in the present. Short-term goals can act as the stepping stones to longer term goals. By setting small, manageable goals for the current day, week, or month, you will enjoy regular feelings of success, which is essential for keeping your motivation and confidence high!
- **Modify goals** as needed. You should revisit your goals regularly and assess your progress. Perhaps your initial goals were too easy or too difficult. Neither one will motivate you – you won’t have to invest any effort to reach easy goals, nor would you bother trying to achieve goals you know are out of reach. So be flexible and adjust!
- **Write your goals down** and display them somewhere you will see them every day. It will be much easier to stay motivated and focused when you have a constant reminder of the things you want to accomplish.



Your turn: ***What are your SMART Goals?***

✦ Specific ✦ Measurable ✦ Action-oriented ✦ Realistic ✦ Time-based

1.

2.

3.



Read over your goals again. Do they follow all the SMART principles?  
Don't forget to post your goals where you will see them!