

Rebalance^{MD}

Be SMART

So hopefully we've given you some information and inspiration about how to manage your arthritis. Planning to try everything at once? Here's a different suggestion:

SMART is an acronym started in the business community and first appeared in a "Management Review" article by George Doran to promote consistently moving forward with small achievable steps. If we take on too many goals at once, or reach for a goal way beyond our grasp, we set ourselves up for failure. This can feed negative thoughts that we can't make any positive changes in our lives. Instead, SMART goals are small achievable steps that set us up for success and reinforce our belief in ourselves and our abilities.



Specific goals help you focus on an action that you can actually do. For example, a goal to "be more active" is a good overall goal. A specific goal is "I'm going to go for a walk for 30 minutes, 3 times this week". If you have an overall goal to "lose weight" you can start on that journey with a specific goal like "I am going to stop snacking after dinner for two weeks".

Measurable goals help you know when you have achieved your goals or not. If you make your goals specific enough, they should be easy to measure. You want to be able to measure if you completed the action you've aimed for.

Making your goals **Attainable** is very important. Consider your goal on a scale of 0-10 if zero was a zero chance you would achieve this goal, and 10 was 100% certainty. Aim for goals that are at least a 6-7 to set yourself up for success. "I'm going to meditate for an hour every day for the next month" might be a zero or one for you. "I'm going to meditate for 5 minutes three times this week, in the morning" might make your goal a 7 of attainability, which creates success. Everybody is different in what is attainable for them. Be realistic and supportive of yourself and where you are today.

Relevant goals move you towards what you most want to achieve. They reflect your big picture goals, and ultimately your values. They will be a small but important piece towards shifting you forward.

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Keep your goals **Time Bound**. When will you do this new activity? For how long? This gives you a specific schedule and deadline to work with. Short term time bound goals allow you to reevaluate how you're doing and adjust if needed. Try something new for 1 or 2 weeks, then check in with yourself. If it's working, you may choose to keep the same goal. If it's not working, you might need to mix it up. Be kind to yourself and try a more achievable goal.

Try setting some SMART goals and write them down.

You may find it helpful to share your goals with a supportive friend or family member. Review your goals after the time period. If you achieved your goal: Great! Consider what worked for you, and helped you move forward. If you didn't complete your goal, consider what got in the way? Can you readjust your goals, get supports, or remove some barriers to help you achieve success?

Then, set yourself a new SMART goal.

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step"

-Lao Tzu