

## ACT: Setting and Achieving Integrative Health Goals

Improving your health has much more to do with solid attitudes than it does with solid abs! Setting and achieving health goals is a great way to strengthen your mind, body, and spirit. Here are some simple but valuable tips to guide you.

**Be specific: Make your action plan clear and precise.**

Ditch vague proclamations like "I'm going to quit eating so much junk." Replace them with clear, specific plans such as "I will eat two pieces of fruit daily."

**Be measurable: Measurable action steps make tracking your progress a snap.**

Instead of saying, "I really need to work on controlling my stress," try saying "I will meditate for twenty minutes every morning."

**Be action-oriented: Make plans which include real, tangible steps.**

Real change requires real action. Before you set a goal, decide how you will achieve it. For instance, instead of saying, "I will lose weight or exercise more," commit to four 30-minute walks each week.

**Be realistic: Choose action steps that are largely within your reach.**

Don't immediately reach for the pie in the sky. Can you really meditate each morning, walk four times a week, or eat two pieces of fruit daily? If not, restate your goals to fit what you are ready for now. Later, you can move closer to the ultimate targets. Make small lifestyle changes, which are doable for you like taking the stairs instead of the elevator.

**Be timely: Establish a timetable for actions.**

Forget about forever and focus on the foreseeable future. Don't just say that you'll visit the dentist regularly. Set a deadline. Set up the next appointment this week!

*- Adapted from the Duke Center for Integrative Medicine*