
Refocus Your Goals For Practical Extra Benefits

The more we learn about longevity, the more there is to think about! A growth mindset is good for us because it encourages us to keep learning and applying what we learn (see [Mindset](#)).

Longevity planning encourages you to sharpen your decisions about what you will focus on. Your own knowledge and our suggestions help you frame how you will proceed. Often with links to other guidance and research. This helps you to set your goals.

Goals

It's common to read that 'proper' goals are essential, as often defined by the acronym SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound). But are SMART goals always a good idea?

Some current research suggests that an **open goal** can be better at motivating you to achieve your real goal than a SMART goal. What's an open goal? It's one that is less specific and exploratory. In other words, see how well you can do. But is that just avoiding commitment?

It turns out that open goals can make you feel much better about your achievements. For example, if the open goal is to increase your physical fitness by walking regularly, aiming to gradually increase your distance over time, it's much more rewarding than struggling to achieve your 'number' (say, 8000 steps a day). The trauma of failing is replaced by a sense of achievement every time you set out – your focus is on the starting point, from which you are always doing better than nothing and trying to improve.

Does it always work?

A downside is that open goals can be too vague, but they do encourage curiosity and exploration, such as 'let's see how this goes?' There's rarely only one way to achieve a goal (such as satisfactory fitness) if we are serious about it, so genuinely exploring alternatives (such as swimming) and setting regular reviews of progress can lead to valuable outcomes.

Goals and longevity planning

This is why the actions suggested in your longevity plan are simply that – suggestions to alert you to the need for your attention. Your plan provides links to ideas that can work, but always invites you to make the choice, to increase your commitment. It also prepares you to consult with your health advisers and to talk your ideas over with others (family, friends), so they become part of your team – which may lead you to define some SMART goals anyway.

Establishing goals is an important part of each of your action decisions in longevity planning. Open goals can help you to enjoy getting your progress under way, to get on track with making the best of your longevity.

It's a good idea to update your SHAPE Analyser results regularly - why not do one now?

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