

# Set SMART weight loss goals and reap success

If you want to lose weight: be SMART, says **Sonya Stanley**

When it comes to successful weight loss, the key is to keep it off. It makes sense that long term weight loss, can bring long term health benefits, such as lowering blood pressure, cholesterol & improving insulin sensitivity and blood glucose control.

## BE SMART

While many diets and diet products try to convince you otherwise, losing weight too quickly can lead to fluid loss, not fat loss. If your body goes into starvation mode, you can slow your metabolism, making weight loss even harder! So it is vital to aim for sensible weight loss with gradual changes eating and exercise habits. Set yourself up for success with SMART goals which are:

- **Specific:** Be clear about what you want to achieve
- **Measurable:** Make sure you can work out if the goal has been met.
- **Achievable:** If you are carrying extra weight, a loss of 5-10% of your current body weight is a great start.
- **Realistic:** Think about weight loss, which you want to maintain in the long term.
- **Timely:** Set a timeline for your goal.

*Set the right goals for weight loss you can maintain.*

Weight loss, which can be maintained, requires a commitment to long-term lifestyle changes to both eating habits and regular activity. By setting SMART goals, you can put yourself on the path to success and while the weight loss might take a bit longer, you'll see the rewards in the long term. ♥

**Sonya Stanley is an Accredited Practising Dietitian & the South Australian spokesperson for the Dietitian's Association of Australia.**



## Set the right goals for weight loss you can maintain

- DO change your eating to healthier habits, which include a balanced diet with all the core food groups include whole grains, fruit, vegetables, lean protein & low fat dairy.
- Don't fall for quick fix weight loss schemes, which exclude whole food groups.  
SMART goal: Aim to lose 0.5 – 1kg a week and include the right balance of all 5 essential food groups everyday.
- DO complete a weekly food and drink diary of everything you eat and drink, including soft drinks, juice and alcohol.
- Don't forget to take a close look at how much you are eating and drinking, as well as the type of food and drinks.  
SMART goal: Cut back on extra foods and any food groups you are overeating according to recommended daily serves.  
For more information on how much you should eat, visit [www.daa.asn.au](http://www.daa.asn.au)
- DO limit 'treat' foods, which are high in fat, especially saturated fat and/or high in added sugar.
- Don't worry about food as "good" or "bad", or forbid yourself from having any food. This can lead to unnecessary guilt about eating, and increase eating for comfort or emotional reasons.  
SMART goal: Limit yourself to one treat per week.
- DO enjoy your food and eat it slowly. It can take a while for your brain to get the message that you are full.
- Don't eat on the run, in the car or in a rush as you may miss the 'full and satisfied' signals from your body.  
SMART goal: Eat all meals slowly and where possible, sit at a table without distractions including no television.
- DO monitor your progress against daily or weekly goals related to healthy eating and being active.
- Don't just focus on the scales or weigh yourself more than once a week.  
SMART goal: Increase your daily intake by 1 serve of fruit and veg, up to 2 serves of fruit and 5 serves of vegetables or salad everyday.
- DO make sure you're as active as possible, including incidental and planned activity.
- Don't just make excuses, which stop you from moving more, there's more ways than just walking to get active!  
SMART goal: Build up to 30-60 minutes a day, most days of the week, and try one new activity every month.