



January 17, 2023

Setting your Health Goals for 2024!

Improving your health with intent will improve your success. I invite you to start the year off right with a structured health plan for 2024.

In thinking about a goal to set, ***think holistically about your well-being***. Perhaps you are already well-hydrated, exercise regularly, and eat lots of fruits and vegetables. Consider expanding your health regime with goals in other areas of the wellness spectrum, through financial, social, spiritual, leisure, or psychological goals.

What to put in your health plan

- Where you are headed, and what success will look like when you get there.
- Why you want to get there – what is your personal motivation?
- What challenges you may face along the way.
- How you plan to work through the challenges.

Create a health vision

Visualize your goals and what health means to you this year:

- What will success look like in three months, six months, and 12 months?
- What is your "Why?"
- What is your internal motivation for achieving the goal?

Craft these thoughts into a short, clear statement: **your health vision**.

Examples of a health vision:

- "I want to improve my physical fitness, so that I am no longer out of breath when I walk the dog up the hill in my neighbourhood."
- "I want to pay off my credit card, so that I put my family in a better financial position and feel less stress each month when the bill arrives."
- "I want to practice positive psychology to reduce my rumination and feel more joy in my relationships."

Now is the time to set a SMART goal

A specific goal will help you keep focussed once you set your health vision. Achieving your identified goal(s) produces a feeling of accomplishment and the much-needed motivation to fuel your health journey.

Use the SMART acronym:

- Specific — *What am I going to do?*
- Measurable — *How will I track my progress?*
- Achievable — *What steps will I take to make this happen?*
- Relevant — *Is this important enough to me to want to do it?*
- Time-bound — *When will I do this?*

[This video](#) explores how using SMART goals can help enhance success through 21 SMART goal examples. Once you move past the business/career goals, there are many great examples of holistic health goals.

Online, you will find many different apps to assist in setting and managing your health plan. Search for *Apps for setting health goals* and see the results!

In the meantime, to get you started quickly, here is a [fillable health worksheet](#). You may not complete the whole form, but thinking about the questions will set you in the right direction.

Considering for your health plan in 2024

Here are some ideas to help with thinking and planning. Which health focus speaks to you, and what would be your one goal to target?

Physical Health Examples:

- Increase your activity levels or, state more specifically that you will:
 - Improve your cardio capability to enhance energy
 - Make notable changes in your strength or flexibility to reduce injury and release tension
- Pursue sleep goals, such as going to bed and waking up at consistent times daily
- Focus on a specific eating goal, such as consuming more fibre, or eating more slowly
- Reduce alcohol intake
- Quit smoking

Psychological Health Examples:

- Practice ways to release stress from the body
- Be consistent with mindfulness
- Take two non-work-related courses or workshops over the year to continue learning
- Practice positive thinking

Social Health Examples:

- Carve out an hour a week, per child, for some time together
- Volunteer a number of hours each month
- Create more opportunities to meet with friends
- Connect regularly with a distant friend or relative over video chat

Financial Health Examples:

- Pay down a certain percentage of your credit card balance each month
- Create an emergency fund by adding a certain dollar amount every month
- Work with your child to review scholarships and bursaries that may ease the cost of post-secondary education

Spiritual Health Examples:

- Incorporate or increase time for meditation or yoga
- Find ways to explore gratitude
- Increase your commitment to your beliefs, values and principles

Leisure Goals Examples:

- Dedicate time to a hobby
- Join a club or class focused on an interest or leisure activity that brings you joy
- Set a joint goal with a partner or friend to spend time together doing something you both enjoy

For more inspiration and goals you may not have considered, check out this [article](#).

Tips for success**Break your big goals into smaller ones**

Perhaps start slowly for the first three months, and make a plan to revisit and update the activities to continue your momentum towards your goals.

Monitor your progress

Track how you are progressing. Even with a slow start, movement forward is still progress.

Use visual reminders

New behaviours take time, so keep your health intent and goal top of mind by using visuals such as key words on the wall beside your desk, a picture on your phone's lock screen, or a colourful chart of your progress.

Make sure your plan includes rewards for reinforcement

Think of ways to celebrate your progress – how, and when – even if you start slowly. Perhaps reward yourself with a purchase related to your goal: if you finish a class or workshop on woodwork, buy a new carving tool.

Don't let setbacks stop you

We rarely charge forward without any pauses or regression. Be kind to yourself when you have a pause or you forget to work on your goal. Pick up from where you left off, knowing that any time spent on your goal is one more step towards better health.

Sources:

<https://www.developgoodhabits.com/areas-of-life/>

<https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/making-new-years-resolutions-that-stick>

<https://www.health.com/mind-body/top-10-healthiest-new-years-resolutions>

<https://blog.ohiohealth.com/ways-achieve-health-goals/>

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/mens-health/an-easier-way-to-set-and-achieve-health-goals>

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Morandini', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rochelle Morandini

Member Health & Well-Being, Director

If you would like to contribute or have ideas about what you would like to see in the ReFresh series, we would love to hear from you: contact rochelle@bcpvpa.bc.ca.