

How to set **realistic** expectations to meet your goals

It's easy to make pie-in-the-sky goals. Grand proclamations like bucket lists or five- and 10-year goals indulge fantastic ideas. It's the process of getting there that can prove to be a challenge.

No big accomplishment happens quickly. There could be 10s of steps between you and the goal. The secret is to set realistic expectations along the way—taking steps or reaching smaller goals that may be just as satisfying.

Be **SMART** about it

Whatever your goals are, there is a way to get there. By setting realistic expectations, success is more likely. The SMART system³ teaches you to create goals that are:

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**elevant
- **T**ime-bound



Common reasons include:¹

- A shift in priorities
- Procrastination
- Fear of failure or success
- A lack of clarity in the goal or a shift in focus²

Specific

A vague, general goal may sound great, but it's the specific ones that hit the mark. Write a description of what you want to achieve and what you're going to do to get there. Ask yourself:

- What exactly do I want to achieve?
- Why do I want to reach this goal?
- How do I do it?
- Are there any conditions or limitations?

Measurable

This means there is a "before" and "after" that you can measure to track your progress. It might be a number that changes up or down or a visible, physical change. Break it down into one or more measurable elements.

Achievable

It's OK to shoot for the stars, but your expectations should be realistic for your current life. You want to meet them and feel successful. Set goals that you can accomplish rather than goals that are too challenging. That can set you up for failure.⁴

Relevant

Why is this goal important to you? Make sure your goal is worthwhile so you're more likely to stick with it.

Time-bound

Set a start date and deadline for each goal. Make it realistic yet flexible if you need to adjust slightly. With a time frame, you can visualize the finish line for your goal. Motivate yourself by putting your deadline on your phone or on sticky notes in your car or on your fridge.



With some thoughtful planning and reasonable expectations, anything is possible. You can do it!

Learn how Livongo can help support you on your wellness journey.
To sign up or learn more, go to Go.Livongo.com/BBU/New.

¹<https://summer.harvard.edu/blog/how-high-school-students-can-set-and-accomplish-their-goals/>

²<https://bootcamp.miami.edu/blog/4-reasons-fail-to-achieve-goals/>

³<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/focus-on-forgiveness/202401/5-essential-tips-for-goal-setting>

⁴<https://www.nami.org/people/mental-health/resolutions-for-the-new-year/>



Easy ways to add more protein to your diet

Protein is one of the most important nutrients for your body. It functions as a raw material your body uses for:

- Building and maintaining muscles
- Creating healthy hair, skin and nails
- Regulating blood sugar levels and more

In addition, it helps you feel fuller longer, which is helpful if you're watching what you eat.

The average adult needs
66 grams
of protein daily.^{1,2}

How much is the right amount of protein?

The average adult should eat .36 grams of protein for every pound they weigh¹ every day. But protein doesn't necessarily mean meat. There are many lower-fat protein options that can be swapped in for meat-based sources.

Consider:

- **Fish** Trout, salmon, halibut, cod, herring and more
- **Plant-based proteins** Fiber-rich legumes and ancient grains like lentils, chickpeas, edamame, peas, amaranth and quinoa
- **Low-fat dairy products** Especially milk, cottage cheese and Greek yogurt
- **Meat alternatives** Tofu, seitan and tempeh
- **Nuts and seeds** Including whole nuts, nut or seed butters, hemp seeds and pumpkin seeds
- **Eggs**
- **Hummus**



Pump up your protein with the following delicious meal options

Caprese cottage cheese breakfast bowl

Cottage cheese is having a moment. This savory bowl is a quick, no-cook option that is portable.

Makes 1 serving | Prep: 5 minutes



Ingredients

- ¾ cup no-salt-added, low-fat cottage cheese
- 1 small tomato, sliced (about 3 oz)
- 2 basil leaves, thinly sliced
- 1 tsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp olive oil
- Freshly cracked black pepper

Preparation

Add cottage cheese to a small bowl. Top with tomato slices and sliced basil. Drizzle with balsamic vinegar and olive oil and a sprinkle of black pepper.

Nutrition information | Serving size: 1 bowl



Calories: 197 | Total fat: 7 g | Saturated fat: 3 g | Sodium: 70 mg | Cholesterol: 15 mg
Total carbs: 10 g | Fiber: 1 g | Sugars: 8 g | Protein: 25 g | Potassium: 1630 mg

Healthy hamburger crock pot soup

This soup³ delivers all your veggies and protein in every delicious bite. Substitute one pound of cooked beans and vegetable broth in place of the ground beef and beef broth to make this dish vegan.

Makes 6-8 servings | Prep: 20 minutes | Cook: 8 hours

Ingredients

- 1 lb lean ground beef
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced (~2 cups)
- 1 green bell pepper, diced (~1 cup)
- 6 garlic cloves, minced
- 10 oz (1 large) sweet potato, peeled and cubed (~2 cups)
- 10 oz (2-3) Yukon Gold Potatoes, cubed (~2 cups)
- 2 medium carrots, diced (~1 cup)
- 2 ribs celery, diced (~1 cup)
- 2 (14 oz) cans fire-roasted diced tomatoes
- 1 (6 oz) can tomato paste
- 4 cups low-sodium beef broth, plus additional if needed
- 1 ½ Tbsp Italian seasoning
- 1 tsp sea salt (plus more to taste)
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 8 oz fresh green beans, cut into 1-inch pieces (can also use frozen green beans)
- 2 cups chopped and packed kale, tough stems removed (optional)



Preparation

In a large skillet over medium heat, add the ground beef, onion, green pepper and garlic. Cook and stir until the ground beef is no longer pink.

Drain the ground beef mixture and transfer it to a large slow cooker. Add all remaining ingredients except for the green beans and kale.

Cook on low for 8-9 hours or on high for 5-6 hours.

When there is about 1 hour of cooking time remaining, open the lid on the slow cooker and stir in the green beans and kale. If you prefer your soup to be thinner, feel free to add additional broth. Replace the lid and continue to cook for 1 hour or until the green beans are tender. If using frozen green beans, wait to add them until just 30 minutes of cooking time remains.

Taste and season as desired before serving.

Nutrition information (as originally written) | Serving size: 1¾ cups



Calories: 295 | Total fat: 8 g | Saturated fat: 3 g | Sodium: 715 mg | Cholesterol: 49 mg
Total carbs: 34 g | Fiber: 11 g | Sugars: 13 g | Protein: 21 g | Potassium: 1,441 mg

Vegan superfood grain bowls

Try this protein-packed superfood bowl⁴ for meal-prep lunches or for dinner on busy nights.

Makes 4 servings | Prep/cook: 15 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 (8 oz) pouch microwavable quinoa
- ½ cup hummus
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 (5 oz) package baby kale
- 1 (8 oz) package refrigerated cooked whole baby beets, sliced (or 2 cups from salad bar)
- 1 cup frozen shelled edamame, thawed
- 1 medium avocado, sliced
- ¼ cup unsalted toasted sunflower seeds



Preparation

Prepare quinoa according to package directions; set aside to cool. Combine hummus and lemon juice in a small bowl. Thin with water to desired dressing consistency. Divide the dressing among 4 small condiment containers with lids and refrigerate. Divide baby kale among 4 bowls or single-serve containers with lids. Top each with ½ cup of the quinoa, ½ cup beets, ¼ cup edamame and 1 tablespoon sunflower seeds. When ready to eat, top with ¼ avocado and the hummus dressing.

Nutrition information | Serving size: 1 container



Calories: 434 | Total fat: 22 g | Saturated fat: 2 g | Sodium: 298 mg | Cholesterol: 0 mg
Total carbs: 48 g | Fiber: 13 g | Sugars: 7 g | Protein: 18 g | Potassium: 1,125 mg

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¹<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/how-much-protein-do-you-need-every-day-201506188096>

²<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/body-measurements.htm>

³<https://therealfooddietitians.com/healthy-hamburger-soup/>

⁴<https://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/269844/vegan-superfood-grain-bowls/>

Balance and flexibility for improved and ongoing mobility

There are many ways to improve your fitness. By moving your body just minutes each day, you can improve your overall health. But not all exercise provides the same benefits.

Focusing on flexibility and balance builds a foundation of fitness that will positively affect almost all elements of your life. Especially as you grow older, keeping joints flexible and your balance intact allows you to:



Work



Travel



Exercise



Lower your risk for injuries

Stretch it out

It is recommended that you stretch at least two to three times each week. This will allow you to maintain your range of motion. All major muscle-tendon groups should be stretched, including:¹

- Neck
- Chest
- Lower back
- Legs
- Shoulders
- Trunk
- Hips
- Ankles

Look for stretching classes at your local gym or community center or from reputable online sources. A qualified instructor, athletic trainer, physical therapist or healthcare provider can help you create a personalized stretching routine. Don't forget that when doing any kind of physical activity, it is recommended that you warm up and cool down to avoid injury.



A balancing act

Having good balance is important for everyday activities, including walking and going up and down stairs. Maintaining balance can help prevent falls, a common problem in older adults. Try these exercises you can do anywhere:²

- Stand on one foot, alternating each side for 10 seconds. Steady yourself with a wall if you need support.
- Walk heel to toe for 20 steps. Steady yourself with a wall if you need support.
- Walk normally in as straight a line as you can.

Tying it together

Tai chi combines stretching, strength and balance while working on mindfulness.³ It's often called "meditation in motion." Tai chi is gathering fans of all ages because:

- Movements are circular and never forced.
- Muscles are relaxed rather than tensed.
- Joints are not fully extended or bent.
- Connective tissues are not stretched.
- Almost anyone, at any level of fitness, can do it.

Plus, the movements have great, descriptive names. Try "Gathering the stars" or "Crane takes flight."⁴

Gathering the stars

- Start with feet evenly spaced, standing straight upright.
- Position arms as if holding a large ball.
- Turn to the side and open arms to gather the stars (or give a hug).
- Repeat on the opposite side.



Crane takes flight

- Start with feet evenly spaced, standing straight upright.
- Slowly bend your knees.
- As you rise, inhale and raise your hands, wrists leading the movement.
- As you sink back to bent knees, let your arms come back to your sides as you exhale.



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Before starting any new exercise routine, talk to your doctor to make sure it's safe for you.

¹<https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/the-ideal-stretching-routine>

²<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/fitness-basics/balance-exercise>

³<https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/the-health-benefits-of-tai-chi#>

⁴https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Tai-Chi-Fundamentals-Basic-Moves-7-Source-Jail-Janz-Betty-Driessen-and-C-2004_fig1_347225592