



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission



Goal setting

A goal is a specific level of performance or skill level that you want to achieve.

Having goals can help you to:

- > increase your motivation to achieve
- > increase your satisfaction and self-confidence in your performance
- > get more out of your training sessions
- > improve your skills and performance
- > prevent boredom – working to achieve goals makes training more challenging and fun
- > develop a performance ‘ethos’ – always striving to do your best and fulfil your potential.

HOW DOES GOAL SETTING WORK?

Goal setting is like a road map – the big-picture goal is the destination, the short-term goals are the pit stops along the way, and the action goals are what you do to get to the pit stops (for example, fill up with fuel, get new tyres, keep to the speed limit).

Most people have a destination in mind when they go for a drive, and as an athlete you need to know where you are headed.

SETTING EFFECTIVE GOALS

A good tip to help you remember the characteristics of effective goal setting is to think of the word **SMART** and remember the following associated principles:

- > Specific
- > Measurable
- > Actions
- > Realistic
- > Time limited.

It is also important to remember that you have less control over an outcome (for example, winning a game, beating an opponent, doing a particular time/distance, etc.) than you do over your own performance. However, if you achieve your performance goals, you will have a better chance of achieving the outcomes that you want, so always try to focus on your performance and the associated processes when setting your goals.

GOAL-SETTING TIPS

- > Write your goals down
- > Set short, medium, and long-term goals (that is, goals you can achieve within the next day, week, month/s)
- > Set a combination of process, performance and outcome goals
- > Set goals for training and competition
- > Visualise yourself achieving your goals
- > Always remember to acknowledge the successful achievement of your goal.

TAKE ACTION

You can develop this skill further with the support of a performance psychologist. If you have access to a performance psychologist speak to them of your interest in this area. You can also go to our free on-line course designed to help you develop this skill. To complete the course, register here: <https://learning.ausport.gov.au> and search the topic of interest. Finally, your coach, state institute or academy, or national sporting organisation are good places to start looking for further help.