

Physical activity goal setting

Setting achievable goals

Encourage patients to set achievable goals, gradually increasing their level of physical activity over time.

When discussing physical activity goals with patients, be realistic, set goals that are **SMART**, specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely:

- **Specific** - is the patient clear about what they want to achieve?
- **Measurable** - how will your patient know when they reach the goal?
- **Achievable** - is this goal achievable for your patient?
- **Relevant** - the easier it is for your patient to incorporate the activity into their lives the more likely they will be to continue.
- **Timely** - is it the right time for the patient to attempt this?

Three simple questions to consider:

1. What can I do more of? (Example: walking...)
2. What can I do less of? (Example: sitting...)
3. What would help me make these changes? (Example: plan ahead, support from friends/family)

Here are some examples of personal physical activity goals that you can use to prompt discussion when goal setting with patients:

- Find out what opportunities or activities are available to you in your area for you and those that you care for.
- Ask your friends if they would be interested in doing something with you. This makes it easy for you to stick to as you will not want to let your friends or yourself down.
- Challenging yourself to walk to work or school (or at least part of the way) once a week.
- Source an activity that you think you might enjoy and go along and give it a go.
- Get involved in an active event. This could be an active fundraising event, a charity event, a school or workplace challenge or a larger scale activity like an organised 5K to 10K walk or jog, or even a Zumbathon.

Use the goal setting postcard provided to record the patient's goal. Post the postcard to the patient in a couple of weeks' time as a prompt and subtle reminder of what they said they would do.