



Knowledge

## Planning & Prioritizing to Achieve Goals

Goals help you (re)gain control of your life. Goals can be achieved through planning and commitment. The brain's ability to perform higher level functions such as setting goals is compromised after a brain injury

Goals can simply be classified based on the 'time' required for completion as short-term and long-term; short-term goals may help you achieve a long-term goal in a step-wise manner

**Short-term goals** may include: booking a doctor's appointment, preparing dinner, organizing bills in a folder

**Long-term goals** may include: moving into stable housing, securing a job, taking a vacation

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Below we have outlined some key **strategies** that may guide you in planning for and prioritizing your goals in life:



Strategies

### Establish a priority system

Step 1: Make a "master list" of all things that you need to do in order to achieve your short-term and long-term goals

Step 2: Each task should be described as urgent or non-urgent and "important or not important; when you are done you may have tasks split in up into four groups

1. Important and urgent – "Must be done" tasks; schedule right away to achieve a time sensitive goal
2. Important but not urgent –A task/unit of the task needs to be completed in a routine manner until the goal is achieved
3. Not important but urgent – Tasks can prevent you from achieving your goal; can be rescheduled or delegated
4. Not important and not urgent – Tasks that waste time; need to be avoided

*Resource shared courtesy of Reema Shafi, PhD, OT. Reg. (Ont.)*

## Take things one step at a time

- Step 3: Break the task down further into smaller manageable units (consider each step as a unit of the task)
- Step 4: Arrange units of the task into a sequential order; this will help you organize as well as plan for each unit of the task
- Step 5: Schedule each unit of the task into your calendar starting with the last unit that has the final deadline
- Step 6: Work backwards to see which date each step must be completed by; re-assess to see if your plan is still realistic; make note of resources you may depend on to complete each unit
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## Practice setting SMART goals:

1. Be **S**pecific – Answer the 5 Ws: Who is the goal for? What will the person achieve if successful? When will activities be undertaken? Where will the tasks be undertaken? Why are you wanting to achieve this goal?
2. **M**easurable – How can you measure that the goal is achieved?
3. **A**chievable – Can the goal be reached successfully?
4. **R**elevant – Is this goal consistent with your bigger plans?
5. **T**ime-bound – What is the time limit by which you intend to achieve the goal?



Exercise

**EXAMPLE - For the next four weeks, after dinner and before going to bed, I will spend 15 minutes at the kitchen table checking and adjusting my planner schedule for the next day to help with time management.**

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Remember: Allow time for contingencies; urgent and important tasks may come up and take time



Tip!