



Setting Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics

I stopped making "New Year's Resolutions" long ago, but I still take a look back between Christmas and New Year's and take time to write down things I'd like to see happen in the coming year. Goals, objectives, strategies, tactics. What's the difference? **Goals** are statements you make about your future. They represent your aspirations. **Objectives** are the exact steps you must take to reach your goals. They are typically measurable and quantifiable. They also are realistic and attainable and have an associated timeline. After you have defined your goals and objectives, you can get even more specific in your diabetes management by developing strategies and tactics. **Strategies** are more abstract than tactics, and **tactics** are the exact things you can do to achieve the objectives that will help you reach your goals.

Goals

As a diabetic, your priority goal is probably pretty simple: to keep your diabetes "in control" (whatever that means to you). For those who follow your doctor's instructions explicitly, it may mean keeping your A1C at 7.0% or less (or 7.9% if you are over 65). Others may have a goal to get and keep your A1C in the non-diabetic normal range of 4.0-5.6% (above which point you become pre-diabetic). Still others may simply want to keep your A1C low enough to delay any collateral damage of diabetes, such as Alopecia areata (hair loss), foot neuropathy, dental disease, liver and kidney disease, dialysis, blindness, and amputation. Or heart disease or stroke. If you are a Type 2 diabetic, you may have a goal to lose weight; or if you are a Type 1 diabetic, you may want to gain weight. Some more specific goals could be to practice portion control, to increase your insulin sensitivity, to take better care of your teeth and your hair, or to exercise more consistently. Or to exercise at all.

Objectives

For goals to become objectives, you need to add a measurable quantity and a time frame, such as to lose 10 lbs. in the next 5 months, or to lower your A1C by .25 by your next 3-month checkup. It has always distressed me to hear my doctor say, "You've got to lose weight!" without giving me anything more specific than "eat less" or "exercise more." And the most frustrating thing is that when you're on insulin you tend to *gain* weight! Yet, the more weight you gain and the worse your A1C, the more insulin your doctor prescribes. Is there even any hope?!?

Strategies

This is the point where you have to create strategies to achieve the objectives that will help you reach your goals. For losing weight, your strategy might be to keep your calories under 1200/day or to keep your carbohydrates under 60 grams/day or to totally eliminate all processed (meaning anything not 100% whole) grain products. You might develop a strategy to exercise a minimum of 30 minutes a day for at least 3 days a week.

Tactics

These are the most specific of all. You might define an exercise tactic to include walking 30 minutes and/or 2,000 steps on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and ride your bike for one hour or x number of miles on Tuesday and Thursday. Your specific tactic for a dietary strategy might be to keep a food journal that records calories, carbs, and fats for 5 days every week. You may get even more detailed with using a system that calculates percentages of macronutrients (carbohydrates, fat, and protein) based on the grams of each that you consume.

To keep it simpler, just ask yourself, “What do I want to accomplish?” and “What can I do to accomplish it?” Whether you are a high-carb low-fat vegan, an Adventist non-vegetarian following ADA recommendations, or a low-carb high-fat vegetarian--or a totally different combination--you *can* succeed in reaching your goals this year! But you must define your goals/objectives and develop strategies/tactics, whether simple or complex. And you only have to do it one day at a time. Starting *today*.

Examples

Goals (broad primary outcomes)
1. Eat a better diet.
2. Lose weight.
3. Exercise more.
4. Drink more water.
5. Stop doing things that damage my health.
6. Get more sleep.
7. Reduce stress in my life.
8. Lower my A1C and daily blood glucose.

Objectives (measurable steps you take to achieve goals)	Strategies (approaches you take to achieve objectives)	Tactics (specific activities and collaborative ventures)
Eliminate trans fats this week.	Dispose of hydrogenated shortening and high-heat vegetable/seed oil.	Give the margarine and corn oil to the local food bank or shelter.
Reduce refined processed foods by the end of the month.	Get rid of the candy, chips, and cookies in the pantry.	Take items to the next church potluck and don't bring any back home.
Lose 10 lbs. by my birthday.	Do not consume foods/drinks that make me gain weight and inches.	Check weight and measurements no more than once a week to stay on track.
Exercise 30 minutes a day 3 times a week.	Go for a 15-minute walk after breakfast and before supper on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.	Put on clean socks and walking shoes before breakfast and leave on until supper. Wear activity tracker.
Drink four (4) 16-oz. bottles of water a day five days a week.	Get water bottles out of the cupboard every morning before breakfast and set on counter or put in day bag.	Drink one bottle by mid-morning, one by noon, one by mid-afternoon, and one by supper.
Practice portion control at every meal of the day.	Figure out exact amount for one serving of all foods eaten.	Keep a food journal to track calories, carbs, fats, protein, and fiber.
Sleep at least 7 hours for six nights a week.	Go to bed by 10:30 p.m. Sunday through Friday.	Set alarm clock, spend last half hour reading, no TV, no electronics.
Spend one day a week offline.	Turn off TV, tablet, and computer on Friday night until Saturday night.	Engage family in non-electronic activities one day a week.
Lower my A1C by 0.5% in the next 6 months.	Check blood glucose 3 times a day.	Eat to my meter. Do NOT plan a “cheat day.”

Print out multiple copies of page 3 as needed for your personal use.

Name	Date
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Date _____

Goals (broad primary outcomes)
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2.
3.
4.
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7.
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9.

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