

JANUARY 2024

FOODS IN FRONT

Monthly Focuses from the CMH Dietitians



Set a game plan for the new year

It's a new year and a perfect opportunity to settle into a new routine for your health goals. But don't let the pressure of new year's resolutions trick you into starting big and fizzling out quick - you should create a game plan that sets you up for the entire year, not just a month or two. Think of it like a 180° on the road - you don't have to pull a quick U-turn, you can also take it as a 3-point turn, which spreads it out in steps, and still gets you to the same place over time.

Instead of relying on sheer willpower to make your resolution happen, create a concrete plan to lessen the daily stress of a life change. If our goals were easy to achieve without logistics, we'd all just be doing them already - so break down HOW you are going to achieve your goal first, focusing on small steps day to day, week to week.

Let's break down the HOW on the next page, and use page 3's SMART goal builder to establish your goals for the new year.

Step 1: Choose your goal

Choosing a goal can start broad, as you get an idea of what you want, but should *become* narrow, to give you something specific to work toward. For example, if I want to get more in shape this year (a broad goal), I may set a *specific* goal based around my daily or weekly physical activity.

Step 2: Break down the plan

- **END GAME:** In concrete terms, what would be your ideal result? This will help you figure out what sort of "units" you can measure change in along the way. For example, it might be a difference in body composition (measuring with waist measurements, weight, etc.), lifting more weight or having more strength (measured in weight lifted, a new personal best, etc.), running or having more cardio endurance (measured in progress by speed, distance etc.), or something else entirely.
- **MAKE A STRATEGY:** Don't treat this like an all-or-nothing jump - treat it like the long game that it is. You wouldn't just run a marathon tomorrow without months of training, would you? Make one step, give it time to feel second-nature and routine, then make another, and another...
- **PENCIL IN PRACTICE:** Look at your schedule at the beginning of each week and choose specific days and times to do whatever it is you need to do. Whether it's preparing meals, gym time, grocery shopping, etc., if we leave this up to the chance of when we have "free time," there's a very low chance that it will happen consistently. (It wasn't a habit before, so we must intentionally *practice* to create that new habit.) Choose a time, block it into your schedule just like work or an appointment, and **KEEP** that appointment with yourself. You're booked!
- **BUILD A TEAM:** involve your friends or family in your goals. Ask them to take a walk with you to catch up, go to the gym together, or simply keep accountability together. Or, connect with a coach to check in with you - our Wellness program offers 15 minute dietitian appointments to build a plan like this and keep you honest.
- **USE POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT:** check off your workouts in a habit tracker app, put a sticker on a calendar, or keep a log of what you did each day. You deserve to look back on your changes with pride.

Now, it's time to brainstorm: how will this fit in your day or your week? How will you choose measurable steps that don't overwhelm you into burnout, but instead let your habits and consistency build up over time? Use the SMART goal creator on the next page to draft up each part of your goal.

Practice setting a SMART goal

Use this space to draft your own ideas:

SPECIFIC: What aspect of your broader goal speaks to your *specific* needs? Brainstorm what your ideal result might be, and think about the steps you might take to get there. This will help you to create a goal for your daily or weekly *action*. (for example, instead of "eating healthy," I might start by focusing on intentionally cooking one meal at home every day.)

MEASURABLE: Concrete, measurable goal-markers let you see whether you're making progress. How much? How many? Create a quantifiable goal to work towards. (3 cups of veggies per day, takeout only 1x per week, 2-4 pounds of weight loss per month, etc.)

ACHIEVABLE: We want goals to have an element of challenge, but in order to make a goal *stick*, it needs to be something that you **CAN** achieve right now (with a reasonable amount of effort), For example, if you haven't been to the gym in years, committing to workouts 7 days a week sets you up for burnout! Find a stepping-stone goal that helps you work it into your life over time.

RELEVANT: Is this something you want to do? What kind of goals or changes feel worthwhile for you? Think about your **WHY**, and make sure your goal is relevant to your life & your future. With this intention behind it, you are much more likely to continue on your path when things feel tough.

TIME-BOUND: Putting a concrete time frame on your goal builds in a point of pause for you, where you can measure your success and evaluate if you want to add anything else, adjust the goal, etc. Commit to a deadline to give your goal priority and avoid putting it on the back-burner!

With a SMART goal, "I'm going to get fit" might become:

- "I'm going to work out at the gym for 1 hour, 2x per week, for the next 6 weeks."
- "On each weekday, for the next month, I'm going to take a 30 minute walk when I get home from work."

Or, "I'm going to eat healthy" might become:

- "I'm going to eat 3 servings of vegetables per day, at least 5 days per week, for the next two months."
- "For the next 4 weeks, I'm going to pack a homemade lunch every day for work."

Use this space to write out your new SMART goal.

Start the new year strong with commute-friendly breakfasts

Sometimes sitting at home for breakfast is just not realistic, and you should always have more options than grabbing something at the drive-through along the way. Here are some make-ahead breakfast options with a nice balance of your recommended food groups, plus plenty of protein and fiber to keep you satisfied as you start the day.

Protein chia overnight oats



Recipe makes 1 serving

Ingredients:

- 1 serving rolled oats
- 5 oz plain greek yogurt
- 1/2 scoop protein powder (optional)
- 1 tbsp chia seeds
- sweetener of choice - honey, maple syrup, stevia, etc. (You also may want to omit this and use a no-sugar-added fruit flavored yogurt in place of the plain yogurt)
- Fruits for topping

Directions:

1. In a personal-size jar or tupperware, mix together your oats, yogurt, protein powder, chia seeds, and sweetener of choice.
2. If the mixture is too thick, feel free to add more yogurt to reach the consistency that you want.
3. Top with fruit and let sit in the refrigerator overnight.
4. The oats and chia will expand to take in the moisture of the yogurt overnight, similar to cooking on the stove.
5. Bring with you in the morning and eat cold.

Freezer breakfast sandwiches



Makes 6 servings

Ingredients:

- 6 whole grain English muffins
- 6 eggs
- 6 turkey sausage patties or slices of canadian bacon
- 6 thinly-sliced cheese slices
- 1 cup spinach
- 1 cup diced tomatoes and onions

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Whisk together eggs, spinach, diced tomato, and spread in a 9x9 baking pan.
3. Bake for 10 minutes or until eggs are cooked.
4. Slice egg mixture into 6 squares.
5. Let cool.
6. Assemble your breakfast sandwiches: add 1 egg patty, 1 turkey sausage patty or slice of canadian bacon, and 1 slice cheese to each English muffin.
7. Wrap each tightly in plastic wrap to avoid any air exposure, and freeze (or refrigerate if you are eating within 4 days).
8. Remove from plastic wrap and microwave for ~1 minute until hot when you are ready to eat.