

# How to set goals so you will achieve them

*Welcome to Glynis Kozma, who will be writing a monthly blog for Menopause Matters on making positive changes before, during and after your menopause. She will also be penning a regular Q&A Column as our Positive Change Coach in Menopause Matters magazine.*



***Glynis is a qualified life coach and writer. She writes for national publications including the broadsheets and magazines on careers, health, family and relationships.***

***She helps to coach women to help them make positive changes to their lives, feel more confident and fulfil their potential.***

During perimenopause and postmenopause we often take stock of everything in our lives.

‘The Change’ in our fertility can also be the start of changes in many other aspects of our lives; relationships, lifestyle, careers, friendships. It may be a time when you decide to set yourself some goals, ditch bad habits and start a new chapter of some sort.

February is the month when a lot of us feel negative; we were full of good intentions at New Year, but four weeks later we’re back where we were before. It’s easy to wish for life to be different, but most lasting change takes effort and perseverance.

At this time of year, most of us are focusing on trying to lose a few pounds and being fitter. But whatever your goals for 2018 are, I’ve put together some ideas to help you achieve them.

## **Score that goal**

I’d like you to score your goal. Out of ten how much do you want it? Be honest. Unless you’re up to a 9 or 10, it’s not looking like something you really want.

If you do really want that goal, why are you failing? For many women who are peri or post menopausal, these are common goals: getting fitter, losing weight, feeling more confident, having a better work-life balance.

When you set a goal you think of your destination: lose two stones, exercise five times a week, never bring work home and have more time with your family. Because these are all end-points, it’s going to take time to get there.

Psychologists have discovered that it takes around three weeks to change behaviour and re-wire our brains. After that it becomes easier. It is also much easier to reach a small goal

rather than a big one. If you reach a small goal you will still feel a sense of achievement which you can build on. Nothing breeds success like success.

### **Baby steps**

How can you break down your end goal into smaller achievable goals? The trick is to choose something you are pretty sure you will achieve today. The Japanese have the term 'Kaizen' for long term, measurable improvements in small increments. Although the Kaizen philosophy is often linked to a business model in the West, it's increasingly used for personal development.

If we take the weight-loss goal, what small change could you make that you can achieve today? It could be omitting sugar in your tea or coffee or not eating a biscuit or muffin with your midmorning drink. Even if you did nothing else except that for a year, you'd lose weight as long as the rest of your food intake stayed the same. With the exercise goal, can you commit to a 15 minute brisk walk today? In reality you might do 20 minutes or even half an hour. The trick is to start small, but to keep going. The difference between success and failure is usually that a successful person keeps going.

### **Keep a log**

One way to help keep motivated is to use a diary. Sometimes it helps to buy a pretty journal and devote it to your own self-improvement. At the end of each day, record your progress, however small. After a week, check your progress and reward yourself. How you do this is up to you but you might want to buy yourself a magazine, a book, a bunch of flowers...something that says 'I did it!' Recognising your efforts is as important as making them.

Yes, everyone has bad days. There will be days when you achieve nothing or go backwards. The important thing here is to ignore them. The reason people give up is they have a bad day, feel they cannot continue and their goal is out of reach. It's vital you acknowledge your bad day and accept it, then let it go. A bad day doesn't mean you are failing, it just means you had a bad day. Everyone does. Try writing Bad Day on a post-it. Look at it, tear it up, move on.

### **Write it down**

And finally, some self-affirmation. Your goal becomes more real when it's written down. If it stays in your head it's still a dream. But you have to write it in the present. 'I am a healthy weight', 'I am a healthy eater', 'I'm good at exercising', 'I've a good work-life balance'. Pop these on post-its where you can see them- on the fridge, on a mirror, on your computer screen.

### **Positive psychology**

Remember how at school you may have gone around telling everyone you were bad at maths? Or maybe your teacher or your parents told you that you were never going to be good at maths (or another subject.) Odds are you grew up believing that. So let's reverse that with the post-its. By telling yourself you are good at something, you will become that if you apply yourself.

**Key points to improve your motivation:**

- Be honest about how much you want the goal – what will achieving it give you?
- Break your goal into small achievable chunks
- Keep a journal of your success
- Reward yourself
- Use self-affirmation
- Keep going even when you have a bad day

For more tips see my blog [www.glyniskozmacoaching.com/blog](http://www.glyniskozmacoaching.com/blog)

*Glynis will also have a regular Q&A column in Menopause Matter's Magazine. If you're not a subscriber to the ONLY magazine dedicated to the menopause [you can subscribe here](#).*