

Reverse Goal Setting for Weight Loss

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Reverse Goal Setting for Fast Fat Loss

Any day is a great day for setting goals or making a healthy lifestyle change, so get started now.

So whether you are aiming for a reduction in body fat, an increase in muscle mass, more energy to keep up with everyday life, or a goal specific to your elite athletic pursuits, start setting your goals ASAP so that you can get on the road to success.

Goal setting is not a behavior limited to fitness and working out. It is something that should be incorporated into almost every aspect of life, from financial planning to fitness, to networking and building social contacts.

Your fitness goals can be as simple as promising to learn a new exercise or as specific as setting out to lose 18 pounds of fat and to gain 6 pounds of muscle!

Just like when you set financial goals, you may also want to consider sitting down with a professional trainer or strength coach to outline strategies and behaviors that are directly in line with meeting your fitness and performance goals.

A smart trainer will give you simple and effective solutions to prevent that awkward stray from your workout program, such as the importance of keeping a training and nutrition log book. Also, because people are so often overwhelmed by a vast number of commitments in life, workouts are often the first thing to be dropped from their day.

Fortunately, there is another simple solution to this problem, and that is simply to book your workouts as you would book your daily business appointments.

Goal setting is also much more than a tool to keep you consistent with your training. It's much more than that. It can be both a rigid plan that ensures success and a highly motivating technique that offers continuous rewards as you meet your smaller goals on the road to your larger primary goal. So how does one goal set for success?

Fortunately, there is a process called "Reverse Goal Setting" that meets all of the above descriptions and can help bring your goals to fruition. Reverse goal setting is stricter and more accurate than simply setting a long-term goal and hoping that nature takes its course. One should expect reverse goal setting to lead to much better results and a more enjoyable process, although it may mean dealing with a little more pressure.

So how does it work? Well, first you set your long-term end goal, whether it is fitness-related or financial. For example, let's say that you want to lose 20 lbs. of fat by the summer. Your first step would be to identify the exact date that you want to have met that goal (let's say the holiday weekend in May).

Now, instead of setting goals to work up to that date, you will actually set a series of smaller goals by working back from the original date. This way there is no going easy at the start, a trap that many people often fall into by setting one vague goal after the other. With this method, you can't afford to delay because you have rigid deadlines to meet!

Step 2 is to arrange for a test to determine your level of success in reaching this goal. In this case, simply arrange for a body composition test with an experienced professional at the final date in May.

Now comes the more difficult part, and that is setting smaller goals from May back to January. Given that it is very manageable to lose one pound of fat per week, your next-to-last goal will be to have lost ~17 pounds of fat by the first of May.

You should also understand that those last 3 pounds may be the most difficult to lose, so additional goals for May could also be to train more consistently than ever before and to follow a well-devised nutritional plan as strictly as possible.

Stepping back another month, you will need to have lost at least 13 pounds of fat by the first of April. If you don't meet that goal, then you will seriously have to adjust your training program for the remainder of the month.

Since research has shown that interval training can result in greater fat loss than continuous traditional aerobic training, now is the time to become fully committed to interval fat loss training! Preparing workout plans far in advance of the training period also makes for a very smooth and successful program, so be sure to plan the final two months at this time.

Now to March, and the end of a long winter for many, when the opportunity to train outside will tease you with brief stints of warm weather, but the days will still be too short to enjoy. You know from your timeline that 10 pounds of fat should have been lost since the first of January.

And since March is a long month, you should probably have many different workout plans available to help overcome any staleness or a lack of motivation for training. If you haven't already set a mid-program body composition test or progress check, do so now so that you will see just how far you have advanced!

And on to February, where you will have already seen the benefits of the dietary and exercise changes you made in January. You should have noticed a large loss of body weight by now, but this month should be dedicated to ensuring that the weight loss was entirely fat and that all of your muscle is maintained to help burn calories. A great way to do so is to make February's goal to incorporate more resistance training into your weekly routine.

Simple exercises such as squats, deadlifts, rows, and presses should give you more benefits than any combination of curls and extensions.

Slick and sleek as they may be, few isolation exercises even come close to the benefits of these multi-joint exercises. Dedicate 3 to 4 days of the week to weight training

(followed by interval training or traditional continuous exercise) to help you achieve a better body composition.

Finally, you come to January, and your chance to set the first goals that will kick-off your program. Before you do anything else, take a "before" picture. No matter what program or nutritional advice you follow, and no matter what the final result, you can always take great pride in your transformation. To accompany your photo, schedule a body composition test with a professional, or simply take a few measurements at home to satisfy your curiosity.

You will now begin your program planning, identifying immediate nutritional and exercise goals, such as decreasing your sugar and soda intake, and increasing your energy expenditure. You also know to decrease your intake of hydrogenated and saturated fats, while increasing your intake of fats from fish.

Finally, replace your soda intake with Green Tea, and greatly increase your intake of fruits and vegetables. It's a very simple dietary turnaround that is the first major step to help you reach your goal.

And now that you've set a deadline, you need to implement a fitness plan. The best program for fast fat loss is [Turbulence Training](#) or the Belly-Off Program.

Make one of your original goals to be consistency! Follow your training and nutritional outline and your goals will be reached faster than ever!

But once you set that big goal, you must be 100% committed to reaching it! Setting down smaller concrete steps will outline your path to success in such a detailed manner that there will be no room for failure. By knowing where you have to be at each specific date, you can make the necessary nutritional and training changes to the program.

For fat loss, let goal setting take the place of informal questions. Don't just dream of being somewhere in 4 months! Put the steps down on paper and the deadlines as well (i.e. if you want to burn 10 pounds of fat in 4 months, what do you need to do now?).

Determine the long-term goals first and then move down to the specific skill or physical attribute that you need to improve this year and next. Goal setting is your road map to reaching your dreams.

Craig Ballantyne, CSCS, is a Men's Health Fitness Advisor and recommends the Men's Health Belly Off Program to help you burn your belly fat fast. Craig is also the creator of the Bodyweight 500 Workout and the author of Turbulence Training. For more of Craig's [fat burning workouts](#), fat loss tips, and for his free report on the "Dark Side of Cardio", [Click HERE](#).