

Fitness/diet goals ARE obtainable

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During bathing suit season, even the largest beach towel sometimes doesn't hide the sad truth: It's hard to stay on track with diet and exercise goals.

But some experts believe that we make things too difficult on ourselves by not sticking to the basics.

Here's some advice from Jay Giacalone-Butterfield, LCSW, director of emotional support for TrimTalk.com:

Just believe.

That might sound trite, but it is worth repeating. This is one area of your life that you can truly see the results for yourself.

Write it down.

Tracking your progress in a journal can help you stay focused. Write down not only what you eat and what exercises you are doing, but also the milestones you reach, such as fitting into last year's jeans.

Planning is key.

Plan out meals and grocery shopping carefully. Make sure you have the proper cooking gear, the right exercise equipment, the things you need to stay on track. Keep track of other commitments to keep them from sidetracking your fitness routine.

Set goals — and be specific.

This is a powerful tool. Goals should be specific, measurable, action-oriented and realistic. And don't forget to give yourself a deadline. Write them in a positive phrase. For example, "I will drink 64 ounces of water a day; I will walk on my lunch break three days a week."

Celebrate successes.

Reward yourself for milestones met. But skip the unhealthy food rewards.

Catch more ZZZs.

Sleep is just as important to your health as proper nutrition and exercise. You can't skimp on it and expect to feel no consequences.

Change is good.

Keep tweaking your diet and fitness program — often. Boredom is the enemy.

Smile!

Choose activities that you truly enjoy. Or try something new and surprise yourself.

Remember, it's the things that you don't do that you regret — not the things that you do.