

# StrokeSmart

LIFESTYLE | RECOVERY | RESEARCH | PREVENTION

FALL 2009

**RICK  
WADE**  
KEEPING FAITH  
IN WAKE OF  
MOM'S STROKE

SET '**SMART**'  
REHAB GOALS  
FOR SUCCESS

On the **Job**  
Finding a New  
Career After Stroke

MAKE YOUR DAY:  
**HAVE A PLAN**



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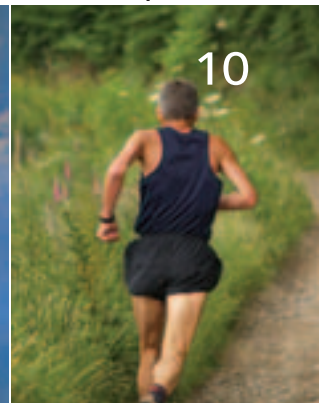
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# Setting SMART Recovery Goals

## For Best Results, Make a Plan and Stick to It

BY DAVID DANSEREAU

**W**ith determination and by being realistic, you can avoid becoming discouraged and can reach your recovery goals after stroke. The first step is to identify what you want to achieve and approach your goals using “SMART” guidelines.



### Specific

Determine your goal and why you want to achieve it. Figuring out “why” is important to stay motivated and to make sure you’re on the right track. For instance, if you gained weight during stroke recovery, your goal might be to lose 10 pounds.

“Why” you plan to lose 10 pounds can be to have more energy and move your extremities easier.

Exercising to lose weight can also help your body relearn ways to stay active for longer periods of time.

Once you’ve achieved your initial goal, you’ll feel ready to strive for the next goal. Do you need to lose another 10 pounds? Or maybe you will choose to focus on another area of recovery, such as improving balance.

### Measurable

You’ll want to set measurable benchmarks to gauge your daily, weekly and monthly progress. Often, you’ll



Mike Dabel

be surprised how far you’ve come, even if it feels like you’re making small steps. For instance, if your goal is to walk better:

- Create a log or home video of your walking progress. Report the number of minutes walked each

### HERE ARE MY SMART MOVES:

**Specific:** Run the Boston Marathon in 2009 as the ultimate challenge/sign of my physical recovery.

**Measurable:** I started with walking and measuring my distance by telephone poles then eventually miles once I was cleared to try running again. I kept a training log and had a local TV station do a segment about my plan to run the marathon. This served as a great motivator as I could replay the movie when I was having doubts. (See it at [my-nutrition-coach.com/Tedys-Team.html](http://my-nutrition-coach.com/Tedys-Team.html).)

**Action-Oriented:** I joined the stroke awareness group Tedy’s Team to help stay on track. A running coach planned out specific goals for the team as we built up our mileage for race day.

**Realistic:** I had run the Boston Marathon before my stroke, but I was much younger. Yet, I could picture crossing the finish line in Boston. For me, this was a realistic goal.

**Time Frame:** I gave up junk food, party invitations and family plans to make time to train, often at 4 a.m. before work.

**Did I meet my goal?** Yes, I successfully ran the 2009 Boston Marathon.

**Can you meet your goal?** Absolutely, if you’re determined and SMART.

## LIGHTS, CAMERA, YOU'RE THE ACTION

Making a movie of your goals helps the subconscious mind – your emotional side – think in pictures. The benefits of a movie dedicated to stroke recovery:



- Keeps track of success and failure by recording progress.
- Helps you view before/after results of therapies or stroke recovery tools.
- Helps motivate and increase adherence to goals.
- Provides a valuable record to show your doctors, therapists and, yes, perhaps even your health insurance provider, as they follow and plan your recovery.

Turn your goal into a success movie to help motivate you!

day, days walked per week, distance traveled and any assistive devices needed.

- Record your mood and energy level to help remind you how you felt when you reached a new walking level or hit a plateau.

By measuring your goal, you can tell what is working and can make adjustments to what isn't.

## Action-Oriented

Planning action steps will provide the blueprint to the end goal. For instance, to walk better, figure out:

- What specific walking workout is best for you?
- How often should you be doing the workout?
- Which strength and flexibility exercises should be performed for which muscles?
- What foods provide the best energy for your workouts?

Consult with your health care professional to develop five to eight small action steps to lead you in the right direction.

## Realistic

Keep your goals within the realm of possibility or you will get discouraged. Let's go back to the weight loss goal of losing 10 pounds. If you give yourself one week to lose the weight it is not only unrealistic but

could be unhealthy. If you are attempting to reach a rehabilitation goal in a short time frame, you will only increase the level of stress and possibly lose sight of why you started the goal process.

## Time Frame

Set a time frame for your goal and stick to it . . . and for that matter, stick it to something. You can:

- Write a goal down on paper.
- Put it on your calendar, post it to your refrigerator or stick it to the bathroom mirror: make sure it's somewhere you can see it often.
- Watch the video you created of your goals to reaffirm the process and assess whether you're on the right track.

Without a time frame, your goal will only be a wish. A recorded timeline will help you keep your focus.

Don't just wish for it, live for it! 🎬

*David Dansereau, MSPT, is a physical therapist and private practitioner in Providence, R.I. He also is a stroke survivor and author of Smart Moves Guidebook and Smart Moves 7-Day Nutrition Action Guide. Learn more by going to [my-physical-therapy-coach.com](http://my-physical-therapy-coach.com).*

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