

# Pearls for Conquering a New Goal

*By the WDS Editorial Committee*



*The New Year ushers in new hopes, dreams, and ultimately new goals. To kick start 2022, the editorial committee has shared their best pearls for conquering goals.*

I find that it's helpful to stick to a goal by making it fun and easy. The biggest thing for me is to remove barriers to my goal, even if the barriers seem insignificant. I also set a reward that I think is very worthwhile. One that gets me pumped up! My reward for exercising this month is a small shopping spree at a garden nursery store. This is a reward I will work towards. I also share my goal with someone who will help me stay accountable and sign off on my reward.

*-Azeen Sadeghian, MD, FAAD  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana  
Instagram: @skinchickmd*

Conquering a new goal is typically easier when you share it with a friend or family member. If you strive to be more active in the New Year, perhaps plan times to meet at the gym with your goal buddy. I also find that keeping a daily and/or weekly checklist helps keep me accountable. Utilizing a small planner, the notes/reminders apps of your phone, or programs like Trello can help organize and manage your tasks. Of course, setting a reward for accomplishing a goal is great incentive!

*-Miesha Merati, DO, FAAD  
Miami, Florida  
Instagram: @drmieshamerati*

I love habit stacking - pairing something new with something you already regularly do. In clinic, I tell my patients to keep their sunscreen by their toothbrush so they remember to put in on first thing in the morning. In my personal life, my goal for this year is to read a bit of my dermatology journals while I make and drink my morning coffee.

*- Lori Fiessinger, MD, FAAD  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
Instagram: @DrDermoscopy*

I find it helpful and less daunting to make positive goals rather than negative. For example, instead of “spend less time on social media,” I would try, “spend more time being present with my family.” Or, instead of, “stop eating junk food,” I would try, “focus on getting more nutritious fruits and vegetables in my diet.”  
Happy New Year!

*-Cather McKay, MD  
Destin, Florida  
Instagram: @cathermckaymd*

A wise friend recently reminded me to allow for some self-forgiveness. Make room for moderation, for exceptions to newly established pristine habits, and avoid our tendency to equate deprivation with virtue. Moderation is key!

*-Julie Karen, MD  
New York, New York*

Sometimes when I think about my to-do list or 5-year plan, I feel overwhelmed and lose track of where to start. It can be paralyzing! In those moments, I find motivation when I remind myself to "just start somewhere." Even if it's not the exact task I feel I should be starting with, or the most glamorous one on my list. Starting somewhere - anywhere! - is the first step toward reaching your goals. When I check off that first something, I am motivated by my own sense of accomplishment and I'm inspired to continue my progress.

*-Morgan Murphrey, MD  
Sacramento, California  
Instagram: @morganmurphreymd*

Any goal, big or small, requires mindfulness and commitment to achieve. I find that long-term goals can often feel daunting, and creating daily or weekly targets, which are more manageable, increases opportunity for success.

*-Shadi Damanpour, MD, FAAD  
Dallas, Texas  
Instagram: @drdamanpour*

I find it helpful to break down larger goals into smaller, more digestible and attainable goals. So instead of listing "write manuscript," I will write goals like "organize references" and "write intro." Instead of writing "clean house," I write "take down Christmas tree" (still need to complete!) and "put away laundry." I am a lot more willing to take on one of these smaller tasks when I have a few spare minutes as opposed to waiting "until the perfect time" to tackle that one huge task.

*-Brittney Schultz, MD, FAAD  
Minneapolis, Minnesota*

Every year I vow to get more organized and try to "Marie Kondo" my home, my work, my life! But I find myself making excuses about not having "enough time" to accomplish big goals let alone smaller tasks. So I make time by carving out protected time in my schedule to use for priority items. Maybe it's an hour each week, or a half-clinic day once a month, or a full day each quarter, depending on what works best for you. Build it into your schedule ahead of time so it's there for you to use in whatever capacity you need-- for charting, seeing overflow patients, creating social media posts, going to see your own doctors, etc. For those in academic medicine, maintain a Google/Word doc with additions for your CV and dossier, and make it a goal to use your protected time to update your dossier periodically throughout the year. It will make life much easier when it comes to annual reviews or the promotion process by inputting this information in smaller increments rather than larger blocks from memory.

Happy 2022, and best of luck in accomplishing your goals for the year!

*-Susan Massick, MD, FAAD  
Columbus, Ohio  
Twitter: @SusanMassickMD*