

# Goal Setting and the New Year: Be SMART

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It's that time of year again... a new beginning. The time when we all commit to New Year's Resolutions. If you are like most Americans, you will make it your goal to do something, or not do something, for the next year. But how many of us actually keep these resolutions? I know I don't most of the time. The reason most people fail to keep up with their resolutions is because the goals they set aren't "SMART".

In an article published January 3, 2013, University of Illinois nutrition and wellness educator Marilyn Csernus discusses what a SMART (**Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time Bound) goal is and how/why they work. Although she uses a weight loss goal as an example, this theory can easily be applied to swimming goals.**

Taking a very broad goal, let's say dropping time in a best event, and going through the process to make it "SMART" is a great exercise for both swimmers and coaches to do together. The process forces people to be very specific about what they want to do and how they will go about achieving it. It also builds in accountability because it requires measurement throughout a defined time frame.

This can be done with goals of all types and sizes, whether you want to attend more practices, improve starts/turns/finishes, or improve on your best time. All of these larger goals can be broken down into pieces to ensure that they remain specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound.