

Setting goals

What is a goal?

It's something you work towards, a focus, a future achievement

Why have goals?

They can help you feel in control, because you decide what they are and how to achieve them

What use is that?

You may feel that cancer has taken away your control over your life, and setting goals may help overcome that feeling

What goals could I set?

It's up to you. Think about what you really want to achieve. It doesn't matter how big or small goals are, or what the timescale is.

For example – you may choose to set yourself the goal of learning to drive by the time you are 19. Or you may want to email a friend by a particular date to let them know how you're getting on.

Tips for setting goals

- Decide what you want to achieve, not what you *think* you should achieve or what *others* want you to do
- Don't feel you have to achieve everything by one date, some goals may be long term, others short term
- Goals can cover all areas of your life: your cancer, family, friends, education, work, finances, healthy living, hobbies, fun
- Be realistic – be kind to yourself, you've got cancer, so check your goals regularly to see if they are achievable just now
- If you put back dates, or even don't achieve some of your goals, don't beat yourself up about it. Setting goals is all about making you feel better – not worse!

Getting started

1. **Write** down your goals in each of your categories – when they are in black and white you can see them clearly and are more likely to stick to them
2. Now **check** to see if you've phrased them positively (this helps goals feel more achievable), and that you've been as specific as possible.

For example... setting yourself the goal to 'complete my essay by x date' feels much more achievable than setting yourself the goal 'don't fall behind with schoolwork'.

3. Look again – how much **control** have you got over the goals? Bear in mind that you'll be on treatment and lots of unexpected things could come up.

For example... setting the goal 'don't be sick after chemotherapy' is not realistic. You've no control over how your body will react. But you could set the goal 'find out 3 ways I can minimise how sick I feel after chemo'.

4. How many goals have you got? If you've lots, set **priorities** as you don't want to feel overwhelmed.
5. Break each goal down into small steps or 'mini-goals'. This helps you focus on what you need to do in order to achieve you goal, and can stop you feeling overwhelmed. Plus you get to feel good about achieving sooner (no, it's not cheating!)

[See example chart on next sheet](#)

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My Goals chart

Category (your cancer, friends, education etc)	Goal/steps (be realistic, precise, and measurable)	By when? (check regularly/ revise)	Done?
eg. Friends	eg. email Jamie <ul style="list-style-type: none">Think about what I want to say in my email	eg. Friday, 12th Jan	✓