

Setting & tracking goals: The 6 best free online tools



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Goal setting tools help people turn notions of what they'd like to achieve into obtainable reality. Whether you or your team need assistance with motivation, organization, or accountability, goal setting software can set you on the right path. Best yet, the Internet contains a wealth of free online goal trackers.

With so many goal setting tools available, which should you select? The "right" one is whichever leads to success. Experiment to discover what works for your situation and style.

To help you get started, here's a look at six great goal setting tools:

Goalscape: Want a clear picture of what you hope to accomplish and where progress stands? If you're a visually-oriented person, this goal-setting software developed by two-time Olympian Marcus Baur might prove your perfect match.

Goalscape breaks down challenges to promote clarity and generate motivational energy. A clean, simple user interface assists with structure, visual hierarchy, timeframes, and sharing information with others who can keep you accountable. You can even color-code!

The free option allows you to create one online project with up to 30 goals. Packages offer additional perks, such as unlimited online projects and a mobile app.

Strides: If you are someone who enjoys viewing charts and data on what you've accomplished vs. what's left to conquer, let Strides serve as your personal statistician. With four unique interface types, this goal-setting tool encourages users to "customize to fit your needs" and "track anything that matters to you." See what you're on pace to accomplish. Learn your average. Know the percentage that still needs completion. You make the choice.

Built-in reminders assist with creating good habits and profitable actions. And congratulatory messages for accomplishments such as maintaining a streak provide positive reinforcement. Track up to three goals for free.

Lifetick: Billed as "goal setting made simple," this online goal setting software follows the S.M.A.R.T. (specific,

measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-based) methodology to increase odds of success. Key features include establishing your core values, writing about experiences in a journal, tracking to develop the right habits, and charting progress to see achievement over time. You also can share goals with others to work together on something big.

Track up to four goals for free. Monthly and yearly packages offer unlimited goals plus benefits such as the ability to customize trackers.

GoalBuddy: This platform's creators dub themselves as "two ordinary guys who want to achieve more in life and want to bring value to the world." They realize that changing habits and completing the necessary steps to get what you want aren't easy. Their "digital goal setting mentor" aims to take the guesswork out of what yields success and what leaves people with stagnant dreams.

The system consists of three key components – web-based training materials, web-based tools with exercises, and a free mobile app. As they warn, however, this goal-setting tool isn't a five-minute experience. In fact, it's divided into seven steps: The Confidence Fuel Tank, The True Goals Discovery Process, The What I Want Manifesto, The Vision Game Plan, The 90-day Focus, The Goal Buddy Support System, and The Goal Buddy Meetings. For people willing to put in the work, results can prove awesome.

stickK: Ready to put your money where your mouth is? This goal-setting platform employs behavioral economics and accountability to others to keep users on track through a "commitment contract."

First, you're prompted to determine a specific, actional goal. Next, define the parameters – the actual behaviors and milestones you need to meet. Then, assign a referee (such as a friend or spouse) who regularly can attest to your accomplishment; the system checks in with that person to keep things honest. Finally, come up with a financial stake – money you'll lose if you don't fulfill the terms of your contract.

You determine where the forfeited funds go. However, the most popular choice is an anti-charity – a group you really do not want to support. People so dislike the idea of handing over dollars to something they oppose (such as political campaigns of certain candidates) that they work harder to ensure that doesn't happen.

One Simple Thing: Finally, leave it to Google to come up with a goal-setting system that's both easy and effective. No bells or whistles, just a straightforward worksheet that managers there use with employees and the company has put online for interested parties to download.

Here's the basic idea: Participants select *one* (and only one) goal related to personal well-being, as setting sights on a single accomplishment helps maintain focus. They present the goal to others, such as colleagues and friends, to promote accountability. Individuals also share the goal with their manager, who checks in on a regular basis to ensure they're meeting it.

Why does this goal setting tool work? Writing down a goal has been shown to increase motivation. Pair that with the support (and watchful eyes) of others, and you have a recipe for success.