

# Setting Goals for 2024

## Here's to being SMART this year.

Happy New Year! Here's to a new you, new goals and new opportunities...for a few days. Most of us have long ago given up on "New Year's Resolutions" because we shoot too high, miss the mark, and give up by February.

I've been in education for a quarter of a century and have been bombarded with the most confusing and ridiculous acronyms. I probably need an acronym to be able to remember the acronyms, but there is one we've been taught that might be helpful in making it more possible to ensure our resolutions for the New Year stick.

### **SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound.**

About three years ago, in February, I made myself this goal: "Do something STRAVA-worthy every day." This goal was very Specific in that the activity I would do had to be something that would take enough effort to feel decent about posting online for others to see. It was Measurable because there was something posted each day to look back on. It was Achievable because I allowed myself to bike, hike, chop wood, exercise inside, or whatever. It was Relevant because studies show that we need at least 25 minutes of exercise per day, or 300 minutes per week of at least moderate physical activity. It was Time-bound because I required myself to do activities per day rather than one long activity at the end of a week.

Altogether, this was a successful goal and the next year I made it a little more specific by telling myself that I had to now make riding my bike a specific part of this goal —that I had to ride 100 miles indoors or outdoors and climb 5000 feet every week along with whatever other daily activities I had been doing. Again, very measurable but with enough flexibility that it was achievable. Three years later and I am still chasing and achieving this same goal. Maybe it's time for an upgrade!

### **Be Specific: What are you trying to accomplish?**

Are you wanting to get into shape for a specific event? Are you wanting to lose a certain number of pounds? Do you want to lower your resting heartrate? Do you want to explore every trail in a 20 mile radius? Do you want to be able to join group rides in the spring and be able to keep up without trouble? Decide what you want to accomplish and make it something you care about enough to focus on. Choosing goals like "I want to get in shape" are too nebulous to get a grip on and are easily pushed aside in the confusion of daily life.

**Measurable:** What technique can you use to keep yourself accountable? I am very good at trying to talk myself out of doing something I really don't feel like doing, and having a concrete indicator that the thing I didn't want to do was done, is a great way to get myself motivated. The best measuring tool I have found is the STRAVA app, but there are a lot of ways to keep track of your progress. I like the STRAVA app because it gives me recorded time and/or distance for nearly every exercise activity. You can record walking, hiking, biking, kayaking, cross-training (it's what I used for wood-splitting and gardening), skiing, gym or indoor cycling, virtually whatever gets you moving. It allows you to post pictures of the activity you are doing so it motivates you to do something interesting. It also makes you accountable to friends and family who 'follow' you on the app. No wiggling out of a day or cheating, you have to do it! This is the definition of Measurable.

**Achievable:** Think about the goal you want to set for yourself. Yes, you can do anything you set your mind to, but are you really going to set your mind to achieving this goal? I can say I want to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro like Margureite and Rick, but am I really going to train, get the

equipment, buy plane tickets and do this thing? Probably not. Do I really want to take the time to ride a million miles on my bike this year? That's like 300,000 miles a day so that's a hard no. You aren't going to give up eating your favorite food for a year because the first time that you break down and eat that food, you are done and feel like a failure — so think before you goal-set.

Choose something you know you can actually do, so that you will be motivated to do it.

Good examples might be something like the goal I discussed and choosing a number of activities per week or miles per week that you will have time to accomplish.

If you want to lose weight, choose a reasonable number of pounds to have lost by the end of each month (1-2) and record it. If you want to begin a new complex event, focus on one part at a time and reach out for support from like-minded people. Small achievable steps are much more effective than huge unachievable leaps.

**Relevant:** Make sure your goal is your goal and something you want for yourself. Having a workout “Relevant” continued from page 8.

partner is motivating, but your goals need to be your own. Do you really want to benchpress 200 pounds by the end of the year like your friend does? No? Then choose something else that you can do while the other person chases their own goals.

Maybe you want to ride a certain number of miles on local single-track and your friends invite you to go ride downhill trails at Sunrise. You turn out to be a miserable failure at the more technical trails and feel like you might as well give up on your goal. Is it relevant that you couldn't ride those trails? No, your goal was different and you can do that one, so keep on keeping on.

Maybe you choose the goal of giving up chocolate for a year but in reality you hate chocolate so you really aren't accomplishing anything. Maybe you have always wanted to learn piano. Get a piano and a tutor, set aside a time frame for practice and do it. Choose something with meaning to your life.

**Time-bound:** You need to set an end date and periodic checkpoints along the way. If you allow yourself a vague ending date, you will be able to talk yourself out of completing the task. I began with requiring myself to do a daily activity. That was pretty easy but still something that I could potentially talk myself into by letting me do two activities on one day and nothing the next. I had to be strict time-wise, because then three activities could count for three days and pretty soon the goal would become irrelevant. At least one per day. No wiggle room!

When I moved on to adding the 100-miles-per-week condition, I could do 20 miles each day for five days or 25 miles in four days, giving more flexibility but still accountability by Sunday night. If I'm at 96 miles by the end of the week, I make myself do the extra four before going to bed. No wiggle room!

I made a goal this year of finishing 100+ miles on my single-speed bike in a December race event. A year of persistence, dedication and focus on the race date paid off with a podium finish.

Choose specific accountability dates/times and stick to them. You want to learn guitar? Sign up for a class and do the homework. Taking a class automatically sets time-bound limits on you and requires accountability. Letting yourself slide week after a week causes goal failure and lets you cheat yourself. Don't let anyone cheat you, including you.

So, this year let's all be SMART. This year let's all get something done that we want to do. Whether its summiting Mt. Kilimanjaro, bike-camping across the state, starting a new business, hammock camping for the first time, helping a talented young athlete get a start or just successfully making it through the year without injury, make goals and work towards them. Mile by mile, day by day, incremental progress by incremental progress, your goals can be achieved!



**Marguerite Tan and Rick Langley** decided that they wanted to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa. They were very Specific about what mountain to climb and what trail they wanted to use. This was a Measurable goal because, well, there is a top of the mountain to get to. This goal was Achievable for them because they have stayed in great shape and worked hard to be sure that they would be able to accomplish the feat when the time came. Climbing the tallest peak in Africa was Relevant as they have done a lot of amazing things both individually and as a couple and this was something to be remembered. Finally, it was Time-bound because they set the date for the summiting as New Year's Day, 2024, not just "sometime." Great job guys!



**Zach Bates**

One of the most inspiring goal-setting stories of this year is the story of local hero, Zach Bates. After graduating from High School, Zach made a goal of running in a 100 mile race. With the help of local endurance runner, John Hendrix, he was able to qualify for an international race and traveled, with his coach and supporters, to France to run — and is still successfully competing in races to date. There is a great movie about his journey, "Breaking the Mold". Amazing story worth watching.



**Sara Fernau** State Champion Arizona Cycling Association 2023



**Conrad Loney and Laura Larisch** are active members of the White Mountain Tri club and supportive and encouraging to anyone who is interested. Laura took on motocross this year and has done well in races.



Local cyclist Matt Hatfield reached a milestone number of 100,000 accumulated miles ridden and recorded on STRAVA. This is the equivalent of 4 times around the Earth at the equator. What an achievement!



Kelsea Zongker is a relatively new enduro rider who decided she wanted to do enduro races. She jumped in full speed, using Sunrise as a training ground. She ignored bumps and crashes and finished the season with several podiums. Her determination and bravery are outstanding.



Rick Brimhall and Brandon Hatch have been instrumental in the development of the new MTB trails in Snowflake, Az. They are dedicated to constant improvement and expansion of the trails and have added immeasurable value to White Mountains' mountain biking. They deserve a huge thank you from both locals and mountains bikers as a whole across Arizona. Their work is relevant both to themselves and the Az mountain biking community.



Dave Goedecke is the definition of an ironman, placing well in the Ironman World Championships as well as first place in the Tri in the Pines.





Mike Enfield has done several amazing long-distance races, but one of the most spectacular was his Ride Across Arizona. Over 600 miles border to border. Mike is inspiring because despite repeated set-backs, he keeps on challenging himself and setting new goals. This is totally Relevant to his life style and looks amazing.



Evie Glass Ulibarry made a goal of improving on her bike. She went to clinics, entered races and practiced for hours and miles. She finished the year with first place in the Women's Enduro series, master's class. This is relevant to her because cycling is a huge part of her family's lifestyle and she credits the support from her husband and son for her successes.



Bob Mitchell made a goal of bike-packing on the Black Canyon Trail from Prescott Valley to Phoenix with his son. There is nothing more relevant than spending time with your family.



Susie Griffin made a birthday vow and peddled the years of her age on one day across several local single-track trails. 56 miles for 56 years of age. Awesome idea! I know she worked hard to get the correct number of miles that day and had worked all year to be in the great condition she is in to be able to achieve this Time-bound goal. Happy Birthday!



Janice Rubin took on a new challenge and organized a group trip cross country bike packing. Janice is a dedicated cyclist, hiker and snowshoer



Carol Godwin, Author  
A podium win.