
GOAL SETTING: Tips, Tricks and Activities to Help Keep You On Track

with Adam Mayo

The Holiday Season is here and before you know it we will be turning over the calendars to 2023. The start of the new year also marks the universal period for resolutions towards self-improvement. Whether you are someone just looking to make healthier life choices or an athlete looking to take your performance to the next level, let's make 2023 the year where those resolutions become the foundation to achieving the mindset, health and performance you have been longing for.

Let's talk **GOAL SETTING!!**

Before I provide you with definitions and activities that can be very helpful in achieving your goals, let me start by laying out some thoughts, tips and tricks to keep in mind throughout your journey.

1 Setting a "Goal" (or making a New Year's resolution) without a plan is NOT goal-setting. These are called hopes and dreams and although there is still a possibility that they come true, you are much more likely to achieve and sustain the success you are looking for by creating a plan.

2 Patience in the Macro, Hustle in the Micro...In other words make sure you are patiently working NOT patiently waiting. Similar to the point above, if you are not continuously finding ways to work towards your goals, just waiting around may result in them never coming to fruition. It is so important that you trust the process and stay dedicated to it, over time you will see the changes starting to take place and the end goal coming closer and closer.

3 Think about the why behind the goal you want to achieve. Is this something you just like the idea of or is it something that you are truly ready to commit to achieving. Think about what you are (and are not) willing to sacrifice in order to achieve this goal. Is it still important to you?

4 Make it visible to yourself daily. Whether you write it on a whiteboard at your house, make it your screensaver on your phone or post a note on your steering wheel, write your goals down and keep them visible in a place that you will be sure to read them every day.

5 Keep track of the journey through journaling. There are many ways to journal, it could be something as simple as recording your body weight daily, keeping track of how much weight you lift for each exercise or how many glasses of water you drank that day. It can also be very detailed, doing a self-reflection on how your practice went that day or why you felt the way you did in your race. Keep it simple or as detailed as you would like, the purpose behind it is to create self-awareness, self-accountability, track progress and keep your mind engaged on the process.

6 Share your goals with a friend, teammate, coach, trainer, etc. / find a partner that can help hold you accountable. Sharing goals isn't for everyone, but there is something to be said for putting it out there for others to hear as it can be a source of motivation knowing other people are watching. Finding a partner to train with or talk to can help push you to train on days that you don't want to, push harder if you are in a rut, or talk to when you need someone who has gone through the ups and downs of a similar regime, especially on those difficult days that you may be feeling down.

7 Celebrate the small wins. Sure the end goal is the ultimate prize but it's hard to stay motivated and dedicated long term if you don't take time throughout to recognize the hard work you are putting in daily, weekly, monthly. Make sure to reward yourself for accomplishing the small goals in pursuit of the big ones.

8 Strive for progress, not perfection. If you are looking for perfection, achieving goals could be near impossible. Right now it's all about making small changes over an extended period of time that will eventually add up to get you to where you want to be. Start with changing one thing at a time until it becomes routine, then add another.

Next up, we need to make sure we are all on the same page by defining some of the different types of goals:

Outcome Goals:

Outcome goals focus on the end-point of an event, for example a competitive result such as winning a match or specific event e.g. winning a gold medal at the Olympics. Achieving these goals depends not only on an athlete's own efforts but also on the ability of their opponent.

Performance Goals:

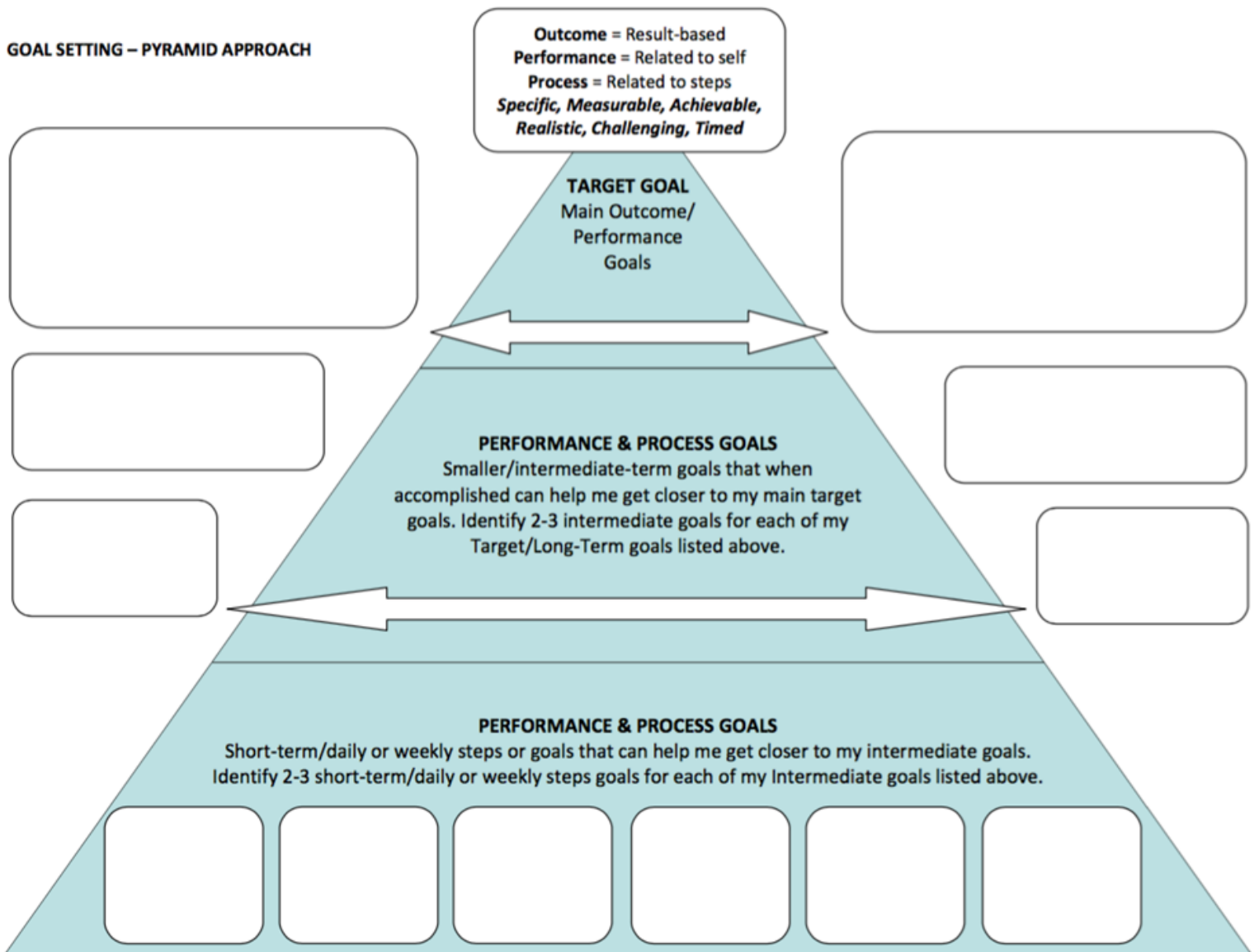
Performance goals specify the end products of performance, but are usually expressed in terms of personal achievement, and often involve a numerical value. More specifically, in performance goals, the focus is on achieving standards or performance objectives that are compared with your own previous performances. These goals are often more flexible and within your control.

Process Goals:

Process goals can be targeted towards improvement of specific skills that directly relate to improving performance or performance stepping stones that show progression towards the larger goal. For example, process goals can focus on improving strategy, technique or can be measurable values that show improvement in performance.

Activity #1: The Goal Setting Pyramid

This activity gives a quick reminder of the three different types of goals discussed above (Outcome, Performance & Process) and structures this model on a visual scale that represents climbing a pyramid to success. When setting goals make sure to follow the Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic (I prefer to change this to Relevant/Relatable), Challenging and Timed.



Activity #2: The Goal Setting Roadmap



Set a goal and a date for when you will accomplish this goal by.

Identify the 3-5 key performance components in your sport, position or activity that are required for success of this goal. For example, a hockey defenseman might write a) game knowledge, b) strength, c) mobility, and d) good handling skills.

For each performance component listed above, describe how you would measure the ideal performance. For example, for mobility you might write 1) agility and quick feet, ability to tie up players in front of net, and 3) ability to take away the outside drive to the net.

Next, rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 (1=poor, 5=average, 10=ideal) for each performance component in terms of where you are right now, today.

Identify 1-2 things you can do to improve each of the performance components listed above over a 2-3-week period.

Choose one of the performance components that you want to focus on improving over the next 2-3 weeks. After the 2-3 weeks repeat this activity to see if you have improved that performance component by 1-2 points on the scale and choose another component to focus on for the following 2-3 weeks.

Breaking goals down into this simple step-by-step approach is a very effective way to keep track of progression, stay focused and see improvement in a short period of time.

I will end on these final notes. Remember that goal setting should be fun and motivating as should the process to achieve your goals. This doesn't mean it will be smooth sailing the entire journey, but understand failure and setbacks are normal and a part of the process. It is your mindset and ability to keep moving forward that will ultimately determine your success. Finally, remember that there can be many different ways to accomplish a goal and everyone's path may be different. Once you have your plan in place, keep patiently working at it and you will soon see how quickly you improve and your dreams becoming reality.

Best of luck and Happy Holidays!



Adam Mayo, S&C, BScKin(hons), CSCS
adam.mayo@proactiveperformance.ca
