

Goal Setting

When recovering from a brain injury it can be difficult to stay motivated. Many individuals with brain injuries experience a significant shift in their routine and in their ability to carry out their usual activities. It may be difficult to complete tasks because one's energy level and/or symptoms can be very unpredictable. We created this tool to help individuals recovering from brain injuries build skills that will allow them to feel more in control over their ability to meet their daily goals.

Setting daily goals can help with:

- Establishing a new routine
- Building self-confidence
- Learning how to pace activities
- Working towards long-term goals

Tips for setting goals while managing unpredictable symptoms and/or energy levels:

- Put your mental and physical health first
- Set reasonable goals
- Build buffers into your schedule
- Be gentle with yourself

Step 1: Plan Your Week

Create a list of all goals you want to complete throughout the week and consider how much time each task or activity will take to complete.

| Task | Time to complete | Due Date |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| e.g. Read textbook chapter | 2 hours | Friday |
| e.g. Go for a walk every day | At least 20 minutes each | Daily |
| e.g. 3 loads of laundry | 1 hour each | None |
| | | |
| | | |

TIP: Build buffers into your schedule

When in doubt, double the amount of time that you budget for tasks. This will help to create a buffer so that if a task takes longer than expected, or a new task is added, you feel less overwhelmed.



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Step 2: Place tasks into your schedule.

Always follow the advice of your medical team when deciding how much you schedule into each day. Aim to spread out challenging tasks and be sure to include time for rest, spending time with loved ones, and other forms of self-care that work for you.

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Walk (20 min) | Walk (20 min) | Walk (20 min) | Walk (20 min) | Walk (20 min) | Walk (20 min) | Walk (20 min) |
| 1 load of laundry (1 hour) | Reading (30 min) | 1 load of laundry (1 hour) | Reading (30 min) | 1 load of laundry (1 hour) | | |
| Reading (30 min) | | Reading (30 min) | | | | |

Step 3: Be gentle with yourself.

When you are recovering from a brain injury it can be difficult to predict how you might feel on any given day. If a task goes uncompleted, simply remind yourself that you are doing the best you can and move the task over to another day. When you are feeling better, take a look at your schedule for the rest of the week and shift your to-do list accordingly.

Remember, if you plan your time expecting some unpredictability in your days it will be easier to shift your plans around. This will allow you to rest when you need to, with peace of mind that you are not falling behind on your goals.



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Remember:

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