



TREATMENT PLANNING

The importance of monitoring goals

The central importance of goal setting is clear.¹ But just as important, and sometimes overlooked, is the need for ongoing monitoring of progress towards that goal.² By regularly monitoring progress towards a specific goal, both you and your patient gain valuable information.



Monitoring lets you and your patient know when it's time to revise a goal. Even if it's not clear how a goal should be revised, the feedback provided by monitoring can help identify possible sabotaging behaviours or triggers.² Acknowledging their presence then allows your patient to start moving beyond them.

There's more to monitoring than weigh-ins²

While in many respects the goal of any weight management program is about the figure on the scale, regular weigh-ins may not necessarily be the way to monitor progress. Just as goals need to be relevant to the patient, monitoring needs to be relevant to each specific goal.

Here are some examples of specific monitoring practices that are relevant to a goal.

Goal	Monitoring
Lose 10% of my current body weight by losing 0.5 kg/week	which I will measure by weighing myself every Sunday morning at 9 am and recording the result
Comfortably wear a size [specific] clothing item by dropping one clothing size every 3 months	which I will measure by shopping for that clothing item in that size every 12 weeks and taking a photo of myself
Be able to walk to the park with the kids without having to stop and rest within 6 months	which I will measure by selecting a specific landmark that will be extended by 300 metres every 2 weeks



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Pick the right tool for the job

There are many different ways to monitor goals, depending on the goal itself, but also your patient's preferences. Weight scales and other measures will always have a role, but there are other tools that can be used.²

A 'weight journey' diary

A daily diary will allow you and your patient to spot trends over time, identify the practices or activities that are working and those that aren't, and can provide insight into how mood can affect outcome.

What your patient records in the diary will depend upon the goal, but some of the things to consider include:

- **Energy level** – for the day or how it fluctuates over the day
- **Food intake** – this can be an overview, but should include at least approximate times of intake
- **Activity tracker** – what time of day, intensity achieved, how it made them feel
- **Mood** – for the day or how it fluctuates throughout the day
- **Sleep** – quality and duration.

Take progress photos

It can often be difficult for a patient to see changes in body shape, size and muscularity, particularly if the scales are not recording much progress. Being able to compare over time can be highly motivating.

Use apps

There are apps and wearables for just about everything, and many of them are set and forget. If your patient is unsure about what app or wearable to use, most smartphones have an in-built health monitoring function. This can be a great starting point and does not involve any extra cost.

Check clothes

One of the simplest ways to monitor weight loss is simply to ask patients how they feel in their usual clothes. As body composition and size changes, clothing that was once tight may start to feel roomy.

However your patient chooses to monitor weight changes the most important thing is that it is done regularly, the results are recorded, and they reflect directly on your patient's goals.