

1.4.1: Setting appropriate targets

Before setting long-term goals, the athlete and coach should gather as much physiological, psychological and technical data as possible. This data can then be analysed to formulate SMART goals.

Once the long-term goals have been agreed, the athlete and the coach must agree on the short-term targets that will act as stepping-stones for the athlete to complete their long-term goals.

When an athlete achieves a short-term target, they will not only have taken a step closer to their long-term goal, but they should also experience a lift in their levels of focus, motivation, effort and concentration, as they can see the progress they are making.

It is important that athletes and coaches regularly review their targets and goals, as they will experience negative feelings if they consistently fail to attain their short-term targets and long-term goals.

All short-term targets and long-term goals should follow the SMART principles of goal setting that are explained in the table below:

Specific	To the needs of the individual.
Measurable	So that an accurate picture of the progress can be provided for the athlete and coach.
Agreed	Between the athlete and the coach so they are both working towards the same desired outcome.
Realistic	The goal must be achievable so the levels of motivation and focus are maintained.
Time phased	An end point or deadline must be included to focus attention

The reasons why setting short-term targets and long-term goals is of benefit to an athlete

- i. **Improved health, wellbeing and performance:** the athlete can experience improvements in all three of these areas depending on the focus of their short-term targets and long-term goals. These improvements will occur due to the other impacts in this section taking place.
- ii. **Improved focus:** the athlete will have specific short-term targets and long-term goals to aim for within an agreed period of time.
- iii. **Increased motivation:** the athlete will be motivated to work hard in training and competition so that they increase the likelihood of them reaching their short-term targets and long-term goals.
- iv. **Increased effort:** the athlete will put more effort in to their training, preparation and performance to try and attain their short-term targets and long-term goals.
- v. **Increased concentration:** the athlete will concentrate more on their training, preparation and performance to increase the chances of them reaching their short-term targets and long-term goals.
- vi. **Improved exercise adherence:** the athlete will be more likely to complete training sessions to the best of their ability as they will be aware that every session will improve the likelihood of achieving their short-term targets and long-term goals.