

FREE WORKBOOK

The Goal Achievement System Workbook

A printable, fill-in workbook that turns one goal into a milestone map, a weekly cadence, and an obstacle plan you can actually run.

Most goal setting stops at the wish. You name an outcome, feel briefly excellent, and return to the same week you were already having. A goal only becomes real when it has been converted into three things: a milestone you can hit in the next 30 days, a repeating slot on your calendar, and a written plan for the specific ways it will go wrong. This workbook does that conversion, one page at a time.

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Print it and work through it in order with one goal. Not three. Expect the first pass to take 60 to 90 minutes. The setup pages are done once per goal. The weekly and monthly pages at the back are meant to be reprinted and reused for as long as the goal is live.

Part 1: Choose one goal and make it observable

The test of a well-formed goal is that someone who does not know you could look at the evidence and tell you whether you hit it. Get healthier fails that test. Complete three strength sessions a week for twelve weeks passes it.

Sharpen the statement

FOUR QUESTIONS THAT TURN A WISH INTO A GOAL

Question	Weak answer	Strong answer
What exactly changes?	My finances improve	My emergency fund holds three months of expenses
By when?	This year	By the last day of the eleventh month from now
How will it be verified?	I will feel better about money	The account balance equals or exceeds the target number
What is the first visible sign?	Progress	The first automatic transfer lands within seven days

My goal, in one sentence

Deadline

How it will be verified

the specific number, artifact, or event

Where I am today, in the same unit

~~your honest starting number~~

Part 2: The why that survives month three

Motivation written on day one is unreliable by design, because on day one everything is easy. What you need is a reason that still functions on a cold morning in month three. Write both the pull and the push, then the cost.

The pull: what becomes possible if I hit this

The push: what continues if I do not

Who else is affected by the outcome

What I am giving up to pursue this

~~time, money, comfort, another goal~~

Is that trade still worth it after writing it down?

~~yes or no; a no here now saves you a wasted quarter~~

THE HONEST EXIT

If you cannot write a trade you are willing to make, the goal is not yours. Put it down and pick something you would actually pay for in effort. Abandoning a borrowed goal on page two is a success, not a failure.

Part 3: The milestone map

Work backward from the deadline. Break the distance into four to six milestones that are each verifiable on their own. A milestone is not an activity. It is a state of the world. Drafted three chapters is a milestone. Worked on the book is not.

WORKED EXAMPLE: RUN A 10K IN UNDER 60 MINUTES, SIX MONTHS OUT

Milestone	Verified by	Target date
Run 20 minutes continuously without stopping	A single logged run	End of month 1
Complete three runs a week for four straight weeks	Twelve logged runs	End of month 2
Cover 5K in one session	A logged 5K	End of month 3
Cover 8K in one session	A logged 8K	End of month 4
Complete 10K at any pace	A logged 10K	End of month 5
Complete 10K under 60 minutes	A logged timed 10K	End of month 6

Milestone 1 / verified by / date

Milestone 2 / verified by / date

Milestone 3 / verified by / date

Milestone 4 / verified by / date

Milestone 5 (optional) / verified by / date

Milestone 6 (optional) / verified by / date

Part 4: The weekly cadence

Milestones are hit by repeated small actions, not by heroic pushes. Identify the one or two actions that, repeated weekly, will produce the next milestone. Then place them on specific days at specific times. An action without a slot is a wish with better grammar.

Core action 1

the action that most directly produces the milestone

How many times per week and for how long

Exact days and times

Core action 2 (optional)

How many times per week and for how long

Exact days and times

The minimum viable week

~~what counts as not breaking the chain on a terrible week~~

PROTECT THE MINIMUM, NOT THE MAXIMUM

Design the minimum viable week for the worst week you will realistically have. Hitting the minimum on a bad week keeps the identity intact. Missing an ambitious plan three weeks running is what makes people quit.

Part 5: The obstacle plan

You already know how this will fail. You have failed at similar things before in similar ways. Write those ways down now, while you are calm, and pair each with a specific response. The format is if this happens, then I will do that.

WORKED EXAMPLE OF IF-THEN PLANNING

If this happens	Then I will
I miss my scheduled slot	Do the ten-minute version the same day, before bed
I miss two in a row	Cancel one other commitment this week to make room
Travel breaks the routine	Run the minimum viable week and resume fully on the first day home
I lose interest around week six	Reread the push and pull page and continue for two more weeks before deciding
Someone discourages me	Discuss it with the person on my support list instead
I hit an unexpected setback	Move the milestone date, not the goal itself

If ___ then I will ___

If ___ then I will ___

If ___ then I will ___

If ___ then I will ___

If ___ then I will ___

Part 6: Support and accountability

Set at least three of these up before you start

- ☐ One person knows the goal and the deadline
Told out loud, not implied
 - ☐ A standing check-in exists on a calendar with a date attached
 - ☐ The evidence is recorded somewhere visible
A log, a tracker, a shared sheet
 - ☐ There is a defined consequence for a missed week
Small and real beats large and theoretical
 - ☐ There is a defined reward at each milestone
Something you would not otherwise buy or do
 - ☐ One person can be honest with you when the plan is not working
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My accountability person

Check-in day and format

Where the evidence lives

Milestone reward

Weekly review page

Ten minutes, same day and time each week. Reprint this page for each week the goal is live.

Week of

Planned core actions vs completed

example: 3 planned, 2 completed

Current number vs starting number

the metric from Part 1

What moved this week

What got in the way, specifically

Did an if-then plan get triggered? Did it work?

The one thing I will do differently next week

Next week's three scheduled slots

Monthly review page

Month

Milestone due this month: hit, partial, or missed

Total core actions completed this month

The pattern I see across four weekly reviews

Is the plan wrong, or is the execution wrong?

answer honestly; the fixes are completely different

One adjustment to the cadence for next month

Is the goal still worth the trade I wrote in Part 2?

Reading the review honestly

DIAGNOSING A STALLED GOAL

Symptom	Diagnosis	Adjustment
Actions completed, metric flat	The action does not drive the outcome	Change the action, keep the goal
Actions not completed, no clear reason	The slot conflicts with real life	Move the slot, do not add willpower
Strong first three weeks, then collapse	Plan sized for peak energy	Cut the weekly volume by a third
Progress but constant dread	The goal is borrowed	Return to Part 2 and reconsider the trade
Milestone missed by a small margin	Ordinary variance	Shift the date, keep everything else
Two milestones missed in a row	The map was too aggressive	Rebuild the milestone map from where you actually are

The finish page

Fill this in on the deadline, whether or not you hit the goal. This page is what makes the next goal easier, and skipping it is why most people repeat the same mistakes across years of goal setting.

Goal and deadline

Final number vs target

What actually produced most of the progress

What I thought would matter but did not

What I would design differently next time

What this proves I am capable of

The next goal, and its first milestone

KEEP THE SYSTEM RUNNING

A practical skill in your inbox, on a schedule

The Insider Newsletter from Personal Development Skills goes deeper on the mechanics: cadence design, review habits, decision-making, focus, and the follow-through systems that keep goals alive past month three.

Join the Insider Newsletter at personaldevelopmentskills.io for \$15/mo

Important. This workbook is general educational information about goal setting and personal productivity. It is not medical, mental health, financial, or professional advice. If your goal involves health, exercise, diet, or money, consult a qualified professional before acting. Results vary.