

You Can Do It!

By Betsy Dru Tecco

Fitness goals can help you find success.

When you watch skateboarders or snowboarders perform daring jumps and spins, you might wonder how they became so good. You can bet it took more than courage. "The kids who do these tricks have strength, stamina, and excellent balance," says Kathy Kaehler, a fitness trainer who created the kids' exercise programs Schoolhouse Workout and Fitkids. "They've also practiced so much that their skills look easy." At one time, those boarders only dreamed of doing those tricks. But they made it happen.

Any accomplishment takes time and effort—but it starts with setting a goal. Here's some great advice for tackling even your biggest challenges.

Get Goaling

1. Figure out what your goal is. Setting a goal provides focus so that you can make a plan and stick to it. Make your goal as specific as possible by understanding why it's important to you and when you want to accomplish it. For example, you might say to yourself, "I want to improve my karate skills so I can earn a new belt by the spring."

"You don't want the goal to be too hard so that you get frustrated and quit," says Kaehler. Maybe you want to run the 100-meter dash for your school track team. Breaking your goal into small steps that are easier to reach can make the process seem a lot more doable. "Instead of focusing on the end goal—the race—set up a monthly goal," Kaehler says. Each month, gradually increase the speed and distance of your runs until you are ready to run a 100-meter dash.

2. Write down your goal and your plan of action. It can help you clarify what you are doing at each step along the way. For example, list the specific exercises you will do each day and how you will progress. As you accomplish each step, check it off your list. If you miss a workout, don't give up. Just get back on track the next day.

3. Seek support. "Work out with someone," Kaehler recommends. "It's more fun that way, and you'll be more likely to stick with it."

If staying motivated is a problem, think about how you will feel when you reach your goal. "See yourself crossing the finish line with a huge smile on your face," says Therese Pasqualoni, a health expert who has created a physical fitness program called Strike It Healthy.

4. Remember the small accomplishments you made along the way, even if you fail to reach your ultimate goal. "It's not about being perfect," says Pasqualoni. "It's about being healthier."

Pep Talk From Real Achievers

Do you need some motivation? Check out what these kids have to say about setting and keeping goals.

"Don't give up. You may not see any improvements when you first start, but they will come if you stick to your goal."

—Michael, 12, Deerfield Beach, Fla. Michael has improved his fitness by riding his bike and participating in a YMCA exercise class.

"If you're trying to get fit, take it little by little. That may mean five push-ups and sit-ups twice a day and/or limiting yourself to one sweet food a day. If you believe, you can achieve."

—Amanda, 12, Montvale, N.J. Amanda reached her goal of running a half-mile in three minutes. She plays many sports and runs regularly.

"Don't expect to be good at something when you first begin it. It may look easy, but once you try it, it's hard. So keep trying, and someday you'll be triumphant."

—David, 10, of Marana, Ariz. On his second try, David made the soccer team. He practices every day, does stretches in the morning, and eats healthy foods.

Get Goaling

Make a copy of this fitness chart. Use it to help you set a fitness goal and keep track of your progress. At the end of the month, you will be able to look back and see how well you have done!

My Fitness Goal for the Month:

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
This week's steps to take toward goal				
How I felt after completing steps				
Did I reach this week's goal?				
What I can do to improve				

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. According to the passage, what is the first thing you should do to reach a fitness goal?

- A find an exercise buddy
- B buy new running shoes
- C figure out your goal
- D keep a journal to track your progress

2. What should you do after you accomplish a step toward your goal?

- A give up
- B go back to the first step and start again
- C skip the next step
- D check it off your list

3. Based on the passage, what would be the best goal to start with if you want to run a 100-meter dash?

- A run 100-meter dashes right away
- B give up and not try
- C run 10-meters to start
- D jump rope 5 times a week

4. Read the following sentence: "You don't want the goal to be too hard so that you get frustrated and quit."

As used in the sentence, what does **frustrated** mean?

- A excited
- B reaching your goal
- C upset or angry
- D proud or happy

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A why it is important to exercise
- B why you should quit a sport
- C how to become a pro skateboarder
- D how to reach a fitness goal

6. Why would you seek support to help reach your fitness goal?

7. Based on the passage, why would imagining crossing a finish line be likely to help someone reach their goal of running a race?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Some people may get frustrated and quit before they reach their goal, _____ it is important to set smaller goals that make it seem possible to reach.

- A but
- B because
- C so
- D after

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Ashley reached her goal of running a half-mile in 3 minutes by running regularly.

Who? Ashley

(did) What? _____

How? _____

10. Read the vocabulary word and definition below and complete questions 10a, 10b, and 11.

Vocabulary Word: motivation (mo·ti·va·tion): can make you feel determined to do something, especially if it is challenging.”

10a. Read the sentences below and underline the word **motivation**.

1. Sam put a poster of his favorite basketball player on his wall as motivation to make the basketball team next year.
2. When I’m feeling tired, it helps to remember my goal as motivation to go to the gym and exercise anyway.
3. I like to exercise with a friend, because the motivation keeps me on track to achieve my goal.
4. If you share your goal with people you care about, their support can be a good motivation.
5. I imagine myself scoring a winning goal as motivation for when I get tired during soccer practice.

10b. Which photo below would serve the best as motivation for cleaning your room?



11. What would you suggest as motivation for someone who wants to be a professional athlete?

Teacher Guide & Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 860

Featured Text Structure: Enumerative – the writer includes a list, giving examples of something. This text structure is often combined with cause/effect or problem/solution

Passage Summary: This passage shares tips for tackling challenges to accomplish a fitness goal. The passage also shares advice from real kids for setting and achieving these goals.

1. According to the passage, what is the first thing you should do to reach a fitness goal?
 - A find an exercise buddy
 - B buy new running shoes
 - C **figure out your goal**
 - D keep a journal to track your progress
2. What should you do after you accomplish a step toward your goal?
 - A give up
 - B go back to the first step and start again
 - C skip the next step
 - D **check it off your list**
3. Based on the passage, what would be the best goal to start with if you want to run a 100-meter dash?
 - A run 100-meter dashes right away
 - B give up and not try
 - C **run 10-meters to start**
 - D jump rope 5 times a week
4. Read the following sentence: "You don't want the goal to be too hard so that you get frustrated and quit."

As used in the sentence, what does **frustrated** mean?

 - A excited
 - B reaching your goal
 - C **upset or angry**
 - D proud or happy
5. What is this passage mostly about?
 - A why it is important to exercise
 - B why you should quit a sport
 - C how to become a pro skateboarder
 - D **how to reach a fitness goal**
6. Why would you seek support to help reach your fitness goal?

Suggested answer: It is important to seek support so that someone can help you stick with your goal. [See paragraph #6]

7. Based on the passage, why would imagining crossing a finish line be likely to help someone reach their goal of running a race?

Suggested answer: Imagining yourself crossing the finish line helps someone stay motivated, which is important to achieving a goal like running a race. [See paragraph #4 & #6]

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Some people may get frustrated and quit before they reach their goal, _____ it is important to set smaller goals that make it seem possible to reach.

- A but
- B because
- C so
- D after

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Ashley reached her goal of running a half-mile in 3 minutes by running regularly.

Who? Ashley

(did) What? **reached her goal of running a half-mile in 3 minutes**

How? **by running regularly**

10. ReadWorks recommends that you teach this vocabulary word to the whole class out loud using the four steps listed below.

Vocabulary Word: motivation

Step 1: Introduce the word

- a. Teacher writes the word on the board and divides it into syllables: (mo-ti-va-tion)
- b. Teacher says: "This word is motivation. What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "motivation."]

Step 2: Provide a child-friendly definition

- a. Teacher says: "Motivation can make you feel determined to do something, especially if it is challenging."
- b. Teacher says: "In the passage, motivation can help someone achieve a difficult goal, even when it becomes very hard at times. For example, if you're training to run a race, you may need to see yourself crossing the finish line as motivation."
- c. Teacher says: "What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "motivation."]

Step 3: Practice the word

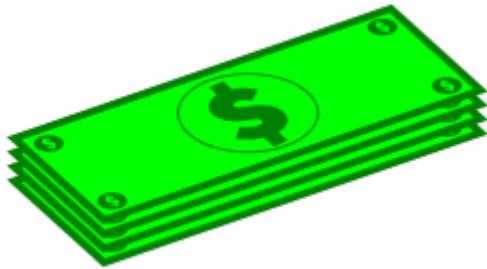
Teacher provides examples and additional opportunities to repeat the word. Read the 1st sentence out loud to your students. Begin reading it again and when you come to the vocabulary word prompt students to say the vocabulary word out loud. Then, finish reading the sentence out loud to your students.

- 10a.**
1. Sam put a poster of his favorite basketball player on his wall as motivation to make the basketball team next year.
 2. When I'm feeling tired, it helps to remember my goal as motivation to go to the gym and exercise anyway.
 3. I like to exercise with a friend, because the motivation keeps me on track to achieve my goal.
 4. If you share your goal with people you care about, their support can be a good motivation.
 5. I imagine myself scoring a winning goal as motivation for when I get tired during soccer practice.

Step 4: Check for student understanding

This step can be completed as a whole class activity or as an independent practice.

- 10b.** Which photo below best would serve as motivation for cleaning your room?



- 11.** What would you suggest as motivation for someone who wants to be a professional athlete?

Suggested answer: It would be good motivation for that person to read about how their favorite athletes achieved their goals, and what they did to become a star today.

Suggested Additional Vocabulary: courage, stamina, accomplishment, frustrated, ultimate, motivation, triumphant, daring, achievers