

Goal Setting and Periodised Training Programmes for Dummies



SMART Goal Setting

To develop a well structured training programme first you need to establish the “Long Term Goals” of a performer. This could be as grand as winning an Olympic Gold Medal or something a little less ambitious like being able to ski powder.



Once long term goals are identified and agreed they can then be broken down into more manageable medium and short term goals that, like stepping stones, lead you towards your ultimate goal.

The well established and proven method for structuring goals uses the SMART acronym:

Specific:

All goals should be well defined. Vague goals like are not good enough to enable the process to work effectively. It is preferable to establish a goal like “I want to be able perform 20 short swings controlling my speed of descent over a distance of 20 metres from the top of the slope” rather than “I want to short swing better”. Not only is the former much more defined it also easily measurable.

Measurable:

A critical part of the process is having the knowledge of when you have achieved your goal. Ideally goals should be measurable. In addition it is also preferable if goal achievement, as far as possible, remains within the athletes’ control. For instance, it is better for a sprinter to set a goal of getting their 100 metre time under 10 seconds rather than trying to beat another performer. The former is entirely down to the individual in how they train and perform where as in the later the athlete has no control over how their competitor trains and performs. Time and time again you will hear elite sportspeople saying that they do not concern themselves about their rivals, they only focus upon what they do and have control over.

Agreed:

All goals set should be agreed by the athlete. This is critical to motivation and ultimate goal achievement. If the performer has not signed up to a goal then they are unlikely to have the commitment to follow it through.

Realistic:

It is important that performers set goals that are within the bounds of possibility & that they believe can be achieved.

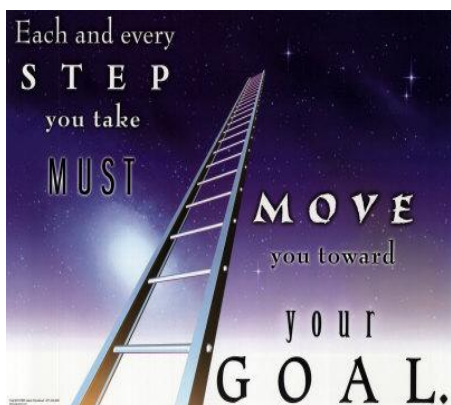
Time Bound:

Setting time scales for goals is important for motivation. They help athletes commit time and effort towards goal achievement. Generally short term goals may be timed over days or weeks, medium term goals over months and long term goals can be over years.



Specific Components for Short & Medium Term Goals

To enable an athlete to achieve their Long Term Goals, Short and Medium Term Goals can be divided into specific areas:



Technical Goals: Anything that develops & improves specific sport skill (Edge control, pressure control etc.)

Mental Goals: Developing mental strength and strategies (Anxiety/activation levels, mental imagery etc.)

Physical Goals: Improving specific components of physical and skill related fitness (Strength, coordination etc.)

Performance/Competition Goals: Elements to help improve approach to competition (Course inspection, race focus etc)

Short term and long term goals should be relevant to Long Term Goal.

Planning and Periodisation

"A method of organising training for sport in blocks, periods or phases, each with its own definite and specific aim for skill and fitness"

(Davis, Bull, Roscoe & Roscoe - 'PE & the Study of Sport')

Periodised training schedules are used by performers to enable them to plan their training and competition year. This would be in done in combination with the athletes' specific goals. Periodised training programmes are ideally suited to those performers who are more "serious" about their sport and who have at least moved into the Training to Train stage of LTAD (generally 11 – 12 years upwards).

Periodised training plans are usually structured into 3 phases, most commonly **preparation, competition & transition**.

Month	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Phase	1				2		3		4	5		6
Period	Preparation						Competition					Trans

Single Periodised Year

For sport with single competitive season



Preparation Phase

This can be split into two parts:

- General preparation – fitness, technical, mental
- Specific preparation – fitness, technical, mental, tactical, competition

Usually the general preparation is the longer of the two phases. This preparation phase is focused on making sure the athlete is prepared for the competition phase and can peak at the right time.



Competition Phase



This can be an ongoing seasonal competition like Formula 1 or specific events such as the Olympics.

Training will be focused on keeping healthy, maintenance of fitness and dealing with specific issues.

Transition Phase

A period of time post competition to promote:

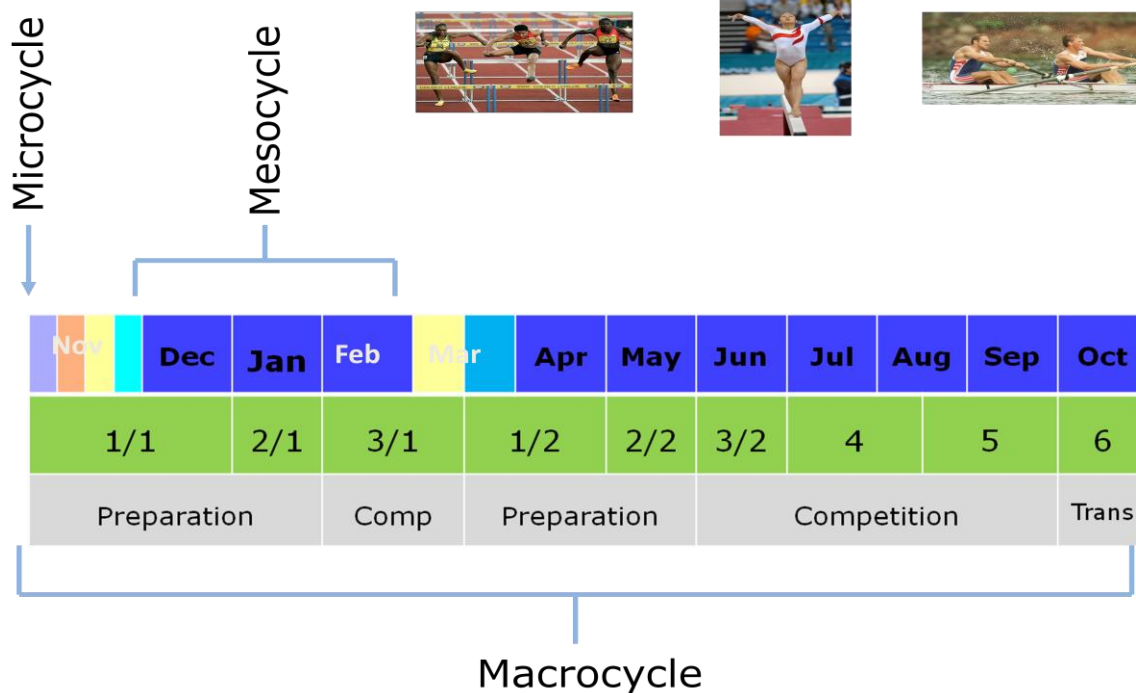
- Psychological rest and relaxation
- Biological regeneration
- Maintain general physical fitness

This phase lasts between 3 – 4 weeks (maybe longer) but should not exceed 5 weeks under normal conditions.



Periodised Time Cycles

Each phase can be broken down into “Time Cycles” termed **Microcycles**, **Mesocycles** and **Macrocycles**



Macrocycle (Large cycle)

- Can be up to 1 year +
- Dependent upon what is being prepared for
- Has specific aims to develop skill and fitness

Mesocycle (Intermediate Cycle)

- Usually around a 4 - 8 weeks training period
- Has specific aims to develop skill and fitness
- Within the Macrocycle comes a number of Mesocycles which can be weeks to months

Micro Cycle (Small Cycle)

- Usually a 1 week training period
- Has specific aims to develop skill and fitness
- Within each Mesocycle are a number of Microcycles which are usually periods of 7 training days

Double Periodised Plans

Some sports may have 2 or more competition phases throughout the year and as a consequence will be broken down into multiple preparation and competition phases. Below is an example of how a double periodised year may look.

Month	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Phase	1/1		2/1	3/1	1/2		2/2	3/2	4	5	6	
Period	Preparation			Comp	Preparation			Competition			Trans	

Double Periodised Year
For sport with two competitive seasons



This document has been written only as a basic introduction to the concepts of Goal Setting & Periodised Training.