

# Setting and Achieving Meaningful Treatment Goals

Your doctor will assess your axial spondyloarthritis (axSpA) symptoms and aim to reduce your level of disease activity, for example, pain and stiffness. However, it can also be helpful to think about things in your life that you would like to achieve and to create your own personal goals. Identifying goals that are important to you and fit with your lifestyle can help you to bring meaningful improvement to your well-being and quality of life.

Click or scan the QR code to learn how disease activity is assessed in our infographic.



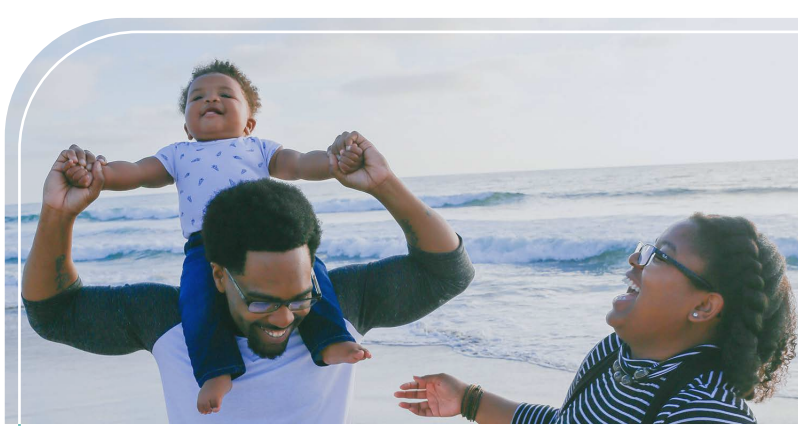
## Create personal treatment goals that fit with your lifestyle

Consider setting a personal goal by thinking about what is important to you, what type of life you want to get back to or what would improve your quality of life. Making sure your goals truly matter to you is more likely to keep you motivated.

Keep in mind that your goals should be achievable. They may vary depending on a range of factors, including how controlled your disease is, where you live, who you live with, or what responsibilities you have.

### Some examples of lifestyle goals are:

- Attending a music concert with friends
- Independently cooking homemade dinners
- Picking your children up from school
- Going on holiday with your family
- Attending swimming lessons
- Loading the washing machine and hanging the washing up without support
- Practising meditation and mindfulness



Aiming for goals that are **meaningful**, **achievable** and **sustainable** is important. Think about whether there are smaller milestones you can achieve on the journey to your main goal – don't be afraid to start small and build up over time.

## How do I stay on track to achieve my goals?

One way to create achievable goals is to make them **measurable**:

1

### Can you plan when and how often you will complete your goals?

*"I will attend a swimming class once a week for 1 hour."*

2

### When do you want to achieve your short- and long-term goals by?

It is helpful to use shorter-term objectives as steps on the path to your main goal.

*"1. I will attend a swimming class every week.*

*2. I will swim 50 m without stopping within 6 months.*

***Main goal:** I will swim 100 m without stopping within 1 year."*

3

### How will you know whether you are moving closer to achieving your goals?

Evidence suggests that you are more likely to achieve your goals if you **track your progress**.<sup>1</sup> You can do this by:

- Writing it down
- Telling someone about your goals, such as your friends or family. They can support you on your good and bad days and keep you on track when you need a bit of extra motivation

*"I will use a calendar or notes app to monitor the lessons I have attended."*

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Remember, it is normal to have days where things don't go as planned. Don't let this discourage you from achieving what you want and celebrate small achievements along the way to stay motivated.

## Should I discuss my goals with my doctor?

It can be useful to discuss your objectives with your doctor. They could help you assess whether your goals are achievable. A physiotherapist may also be able to give you advice about exercise or movement that could help you to be successful.



### To get the most out of your discussion:

#### Be prepared

Think about your goals before your appointment and what information your doctor might be able to help you with.

#### Ask questions

Clarify anything that can help you feel more confident to achieve your goals, for example, asking if it is safe to start an exercise class.

#### Discuss your lifestyle

This can help your doctor to tailor their guidance to your needs, for example, if you follow a particular diet or have ongoing commitments to family at certain times of the week.

Discussing your goals with family and friends can be helpful. They may be able to offer more regular, personal advice as well as practical and emotional support.

**Reference:** 1. Harkin B, Webb TL, Chang BPI, Prestwich A, Conner M, Kellar I, Benn Y, Sheeran P. Does monitoring goal progress promote goal attainment? A meta-analysis of the experimental evidence. Psychol Bull. 2016;142(2):198–229. doi: 10.1037/bul0000025.

**Abbreviation:** axSpA: axial spondyloarthritis.