



A Year of Monthly Target Practice

By Samantha Schilke; March 1, 2020

When I began writing all that I wanted to accomplish this year I knew the commitments I was making in my personal and professional goals would have an impact on my healthy day-to-day habits. So I revisited the concept of 30-Day Challenges and designed a different monthly challenge for every month in 2020 to incorporate the routines and lifestyle I want to move towards in bite-sized chunks.

The concept of the 30-day challenge is not new. Matt Cutts does a great job explaining this in his TEDx talk. These challenges are designed to jump-start a new habit by focusing on one thing for 30 days. At TeamStrength, we focus on taking aim and a big piece of this is breaking down goals into baby steps that are achievable, measurable and timely.

Strategies I've found for successful monthly target practice:

1. **Focus on ONE habit at a time.** Make the challenge simple, clear, and easy to measure. My January target to eliminate alcohol was easy to measure and execute while my February target of no processed foods was almost impossible to define clearly and had to evolve.
2. **Find an accountability partner.** This is a great rule of thumb for any goal. For my monthly targets this year, I've shared them with my future husband (and he's joining me on some!). Be vocal and find someone who will hold you accountable to the challenge you pick. If you're brave – publicize it in your office or on your social media.
3. **Evaluate what life looks like after the month ends.** Monthly target practice will not always lead to a bullseye and that's okay. Take a few minutes after the month ends and determine if this is a habit you want to sustain, a challenge you want to revisit yearly or, if it didn't have the impact you were looking for, let the habit go.

My Monthly Targets for 2020:

JANUARY – No alcohol for 30 days (success!)
FEBRUARY – No processed foods (not defined well enough – failure)
MARCH – Run at least a mile every day
APRIL – Write every day for at least 30 minutes (yes, even on my wedding day)
MAY – No coffee for a month (tea is okay)
JUNE – Wake up at 5:45 a.m. every day
JULY – Pay in only cash for 30 days
AUGUST – No social media for 30 days
SEPTEMBER – Meditate for 10 minutes every day
OCTOBER – Take a photo every day
NOVEMBER – Spend 30 minutes every-day learning something new
DECEMBER – Walk 10,000 steps every day

Other ideas – spend 30 minutes outside, learn a new language in 30 minutes a day, watch the sunset every night or spend 30 minutes of uninterrupted conversation with your spouse.

Have a personal or professional goal you're looking to hit this year? Break it down into a Monthly Target you can hit – a 30ish day challenge. You can do anything for one month. Keep it simple, share it with others and be sure to define it's sustainability at the end of the month. Use this target practice to sustain long-term routines in your life that make a positive impact.