

101 Goals in 1001 Days

by Marina Martin

Step 1: Brainstorming Your Goals

We'll start by brainstorming as many goals as you can think of - we'll come back and refine the list later.

When most of us look towards our futures, we think that there is a nearly-infinite number of goals we'd like to accomplish in our lifetime. However, when it comes to committing to a list of them, brainstorming 101 unique goals can be harder than it seems.

The following guiding points can help maximize your goal choices. Don't worry about thinking of "too many" goals or writing down the "right" goals...just write down whatever comes to mind.

Use the the Goal Generator form (PDF) to keep track of your brainstorming.

Places to Visit:

- Countries
- Cities
- Landmarks
- Bodies of water
- Attractions
- Restaurants
- Specific concerts or shows

Finances:

- Debt (credit cards, mortgages, car loans, student loans)
- Emergency fund
- Improve credit score
- College fund
- Savings plan
- 401(k)
- IRA

Content to Consume:

- Specific books
- All books by a certain author
- Every issue of a magazine
- All movies with a certain actor/director/producer/writer
- All movies or books on a certain list
- Books or movies of a certain genre
- Types of food or drink

Physical Changes:

- Weight loss
- Waist size
- Clothes size
- % body fat
- Cholesterol
- Blood pressure
- A1c (for diabetics)
- Improve complexion
- Straighten or whiten teeth
- Plastic surgery
- Attain certain fitness level
- Run a marathon
- Increase flexibility
- Increase strength
- LASIK
- Get your tubes tied/vasectomy

New Things to Learn:

- Mathematics
- Economics
- Science
- Nutrition
- Anatomy
- Increase vocabulary
- Languages
- History
- Programming language

Things to Create:

- Quilt/dress/sweater
- Interior design
- New business
- New blog
- New website
- Write a book
- Write an article
- A baby
- Poems
- Demo tape
- Write a play
- Make a video

Skills to Learn:

- Shoot a gun
- How to taste wine, beer, cheese, bread, etc.
- Play games (i.e. poker, scrabble)
- Ride a bike
- Shoot a gun
- Fly an airplane
- Dance
- Crossword puzzles
- Drive
- Ski
- Whistle
- Cooking

Risks to Take:

- Volunteer in a foreign country
- Skydive
- Public speaking
- Admit a crush
- Give up alcohol
- Give up caffeine
- Quit smoking
- Quit your job
- Take a random road trip

Relationships:

- Spend more time with family
- Go on a date
- Get married
- Reconnect with friends
- Go on vacation
- Make new friends
- Attend a reunion

Things to Own:

- Cars
- Property
- Books
- Music
- Antiques
- Memorabilia
- Pets
- Clothes
- Accessories
- Jewelry
- Collectibles

Business:

- Start a new business
- Sell a business
- Get a raise
- Get a promotion
- Telecommute
- Complete a key project
- Increase revenue
- Earn more clients
- Close more deals
- Increase market share
- Earn recognition

Pieces of Paper:

- Associate's degree
- College degree
- Graduate degrees
- Concealed weapons permit
- CPR certification
- Personal training certification
- Join MENSA

Step 2: Using Other Lists for Inspiration

Now that you have a healthy list of goals, I encourage you to read other people's goal lists for even more ideas.

Even better: talk to people in your life about your goals, and ask them to brainstorm with you!

Step 3: Refining Your Goals

Now it's time to whittle your brainstorming list down to the chosen 101, and make sure you define each of your goals in a way that will propel your progress.

When you're choosing and refining your final goals, keep these points in mind:

Challenge Yourself - Sure, copying all of Wikipedia by hand would be hard (if not impossible), but that's because it would require an incredible amount of time, not because it's mentally or physically stimulating. Jump out of your comfort zone. Push your boundaries. Make it your goal to have those student loans paid off in full or that novel in an agent's hands 1,001 days from now.

Be Specific - You could technically check off a goal like "put money in savings" by depositing a penny you found on the sidewalk. How much money do you want in savings? Commit to a figure. "Learn to drive stick-shift" is an okay goal; "parallel park a manual car in Manhattan" is an awesome one.

Make It Measurable - You need an objective way to determine if a goal is completed or not. Don't make it your goal to "wake up early," make it your goal to "wake up at 6am for 30 days in a row." A total stranger should be able to look at your goal 1,001 days from now and be able to tell if you achieved it.

Break Big Goals Into Smaller Ones - Ideally, you want to be able to check off different goals as you go along in order to constantly stay inspired and motivated. Having 101 goals that won't or can't be completed in less than 1,001 days can make for a discouraging few years. For example, if you are \$50,000 in debt, instead of listing one goal of "be debt-free," break it down into a few smaller goals, like "pay off student loan" and "pay off Sears Card," or "put \$10,000 toward debt."

Vary It Up - The Goal Generator Worksheet can be a great help in making sure your 101 goals are spread across a number of areas. A list of mostly financial goals is probably overlooking a number of cultural, physical, or educational goals that are just as important to you in the long run.

Most importantly, when you review your 101 goals, ask yourself:

Will accomplishing this goal make me happier?

Too often, we choose goals for the wrong reasons: to impress someone else, for example, or because we "think we should."

As Tim Ferriss puts forth in his book, *The Four Hour Work Week*, many people decide they want to be millionaires when really they want the experiences that being a millionaire affords, which more often than not doesn't require anywhere near a million dollars at all.

Step 4: Organizing Your Goals

Once you've refined your list of 101 goals, it's time to organize your goals in preparation for your upcoming 1,001 days of flawless execution!

Step 1 - Make a master checklist (PDF) of your 101 goals to keep track of your general progress. If you don't use the sample provided, be sure to leave room to enter a completion date for each goal.

Step 2 - Set a start date. Today works best, but giving yourself a few days to prepare is okay as long as you pick a date now and commit to it. No excuses allowed!

Step 3 - Make a master project list for each goal, listing the action steps necessary to get from where you are today to where you want to be at the end of the goal.

Yes, this is a lot of paper. Are you really going to let 101 measly pieces of paper stand between you and your dreams?

I didn't think so.

As I was saying...

Here's where some "Getting Things Done" principles come in. Each project needs to be broken down into multiple, sequential actions. Each action should be small enough that you can check off progress regularly, without being so minute that it takes you longer to plan for the goal than it does to execute it.

For example, if your goal is to complete a specific calculus textbook, you would not list "finish calculus book" as an action. Instead, you would list each chapter as a single action step. Depending on the book, you may want to list "read chapter X" and "complete problem set for chapter X" as separate items.

Think of each project list as a moving walkway. As soon as you finish one task, you want to be able to flow right into the next one without having to stop and think about it. This builds momentum and prevents procrastination.

It's okay if you don't know every step from A-Z for all 101 goals right at the start. Just make sure you have at least one action step for each goal, even if your sole action for a goal is to research what it will actually take to achieve it.

Don't leave any goals without an action plan. If you have a goal like "visit Italy" and you don't think you have the funds and/or time available right now, make your first step compiling a list of must-see attractions and must-do activities for your trip. Then, you'll want to determine the least amount of time and/or money you could spend while incorporating those priorities. As another step, you'll want to determine what preparations you can handle beforehand, like getting a passport — and then researching passport requirements, compiling the paperwork and photo, sending it in, and checking on your application's progress.

Planning for 101 goals can seem overwhelming at first, but without the right scaffolding beneath you, you won't go anywhere near as far as you would if you had to stop after every single step and reevaluate your path. Not having a clear plan is why you haven't achieved these 101 goals already!

Step 5: Executing Your Goals

Now that you've brainstormed, refined, and organized your 101 goals, it's time to execute!

To continue building on Getting Things Done, we're going to keep your 101 project action lists in a binder, with your master 101 goal list serving as your master project list (PDF).

Next we're going to create a Next Action list. Initially, this list should be populated with at least 101 "To Do" tasks that you can do right now — one for each goal.

Review this list constantly. Read it over a few times a day. Since it only has tasks that can be done right now, you have the freedom to choose which one(s) you are in the mood for, and which ones you aren't. This is the beauty of organizational freedom.

You should also keep a “Waiting On” list. As you move through your goals, you will find many of your projects will be on hold for various lengths of time because you are waiting on something out of your control, such as your passport back from the government or a response back from someone. At any given time, every goal should have at least one task on either the “Next Action” list or the “Waiting On” list.

At least once per week you’ll want to do a Weekly Review. (I do mine on Sundays at 6:45pm.) During this review, you’ll want to:

- Review your Next Action list to check off items that were already done and move items you’re waiting on to your “Waiting On” list.
- Review each goal’s action list to check off completed items and look for or identify new items to add to your Next Action list
- Review your Waiting On list for items that have already been received (like a passport) or to follow-up on items that you’re still waiting on

The weekly review is key. By checking in on your progress each week, you ensure that none of your goals fall by the wayside, and that — even if you’re waiting on more time or money to complete a particular goal — you’re working toward completion.

Sample Goals

The following are suggested steps (in order) for achieving these goals. For maximum impact, be sure to read about how to get started with your goal project.

GOAL: Watch Every Edward Norton Film

1. Search for existing list on Lists of Bests
2. (If no list) Create list on Lists of Bests using IMDB
3. (If list) Add current list to my list of lists
4. Check off progress so far
5. Add unwatched films to Netflix queue

GOAL: Watch 50 Cold-War-Era Eastern European Films

1. Browse Netflix “Eastern Europe” genre for pre-1990 films
2. Add all these films to Netflix queue
3. Count total films added
4. (If <50) Search Google for local independent video store
5. Browse local video store for relevant films
6. Count total films available at local video store
7. Add Netflix films + local video store films
8. (If still <50) Research further film sources via Google. Don’t forget local libraries!

GOAL: Have a Lucid Dream

1. Search Google for lucid dream information
2. Read lucid dreaming website
3. Purchase new Moleskine
4. Put new Moleskine on bedside table with pen
5. Add “Write down dreams” to morning routine checklist
6. Add “Review lucid dream information” to tickler in two months

101 GOALS GENERATOR

Places to Visit

(i.e. Hungary, the Rodin Museum, New England in autumn, Akibahara)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Financial Milestones

(i.e. pay off a specific credit card, start a college fund for your niece, save \$10,000)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Content to Consume

(i.e. everything by Albert Camus, all Matt Damon films, 30 new kinds of tea)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Physical Changes

(i.e. 17% body fat, size 32 waist, braces, LASIK, get your tubes tied, rhinoplasty)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

New Things to Learn

(i.e. string theory, Calculus IV, 200-level German, name of every human bone, C++)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Things to Create

(i.e. publish an article, paint a portrait, make a demo tape, launch a blog, write 50 poems)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Skills to Learn

(i.e. finish a quilt, complete Wine 101, ski an expert slope, parallel park a manual car)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Risks to Take

(i.e. skydive, quit your job, confess a crush, gamble in Vegas, go on a random road trip)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Relationships

(i.e. get married, read to your baby nightly, have lunch with spouse twice a month)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Things to Own

(i.e. a convertible, a rental home, a first-edition book, a diamond necklace)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Business

(i.e. get a promotion, start a company, double earnings, signup 500 new clients)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Pieces of Paper

(i.e. Master's degree, join MENSAs, apply for CCW, get CPR certification)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____