

OPTIMIZING YOUR BODY WITH FASTING



Great news! In addition to several health benefits, fasting makes healthy eating simpler. How? Because you don't need to plan, cook or clean up after as many meals.

Proposed Health Benefits of Fasting

Weight loss
Anti-aging effect
Heart & Brain health
Increased energy efficiency
Increased growth hormone
Improved immune regulation
Increased stress resistance
Enhanced detoxification
Reduced Insulin resistance
Reduced overall inflammation
Reset your gut microbiome
Improved mitochondria efficiency
Hormone optimization
Stimulation of autophagy

When it comes to achieving good health, there's one word we all need to be familiar with: **autophagy**.

Autophagy is the self-cleaning that rids the body of damaged cells, in order to regenerate newer, healthier cells. "Auto" means self and "phagy" means eat. So, the literal meaning is "self-eating."

Fasting is an effective way to trigger autophagy. When you are constantly eating, digestion and assimilation of food is where your body utilizes most of its energy. Fasting refocuses this energy, by concentrating your energy toward stimulating repair & protection mechanisms. Turning on our innate ability to heal.

Fasting also helps kickstart ketosis, the body's natural fat-burning state that occurs when it is deprived of glucose.

Types of Fasts- 3 General Methods

With so many types of fasting to explore, which method is right for you? The answer has a lot to do with your current state of health, lifestyle, and goals.

Time-Restricted Eating This method involves splitting your day between a period of eating and fasting. It includes intermittent fasting (IF). It doesn't specify which foods you should eat but rather *when* you should eat them. It is based on the science of circadian rhythms, which impacts every hormone.

Common time-restricted eating methods include:

- 16:8 (fast for 16 hours: eat within 8 hours) Example skip breakfast and eat from 11–7 p.m. Most popular method.
- 20:4 (fast for 20 hours: eat within 4 hours)
- 23:1 (One-Meal-A-Day) (fast for 23 hours: eat within 1 hour)

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Alternate Day Fasting Concept of fasting one day and feasting another. During the fasting periods, you eat either very little or nothing at all while boosting hydration.

Example: **5:2 Fasting** Eating as you normally would for 5 days and limiting your calories to 500 (women) or 600 (men) calories on two non-consecutive days of the week.

Prolonged or Extended Fasts Fasting for longer than 1 day. This can include water only & bone broth fasts. There are potential benefits & risks with longer fasts.

Example: **Fasting-Mimicking Diet (FMD)** Allows you to eat throughout the day but heavily restricts your calorie intake to 500-800 calories a day for several days. Can give you the benefits of a water-only fast without the struggle.

*Please consult your doctor before embarking on a fasting plan.

Making Fasting Easier

If you're just getting started, 12:12 Intermittent Fasting helps your body acclimate. This is especially important for people with hormonal imbalances, insulin resistance or women who are more sensitive to stress. As you become metabolically adapted, you can add hours to your fast.

A sample schedule for getting started:

Week 1: 12 hours fasting each day (ex. 7 PM to 7 AM)

Week 2: 14 hours fasting on weekdays: 12 hours on weekend

Week 3: 16 hours fasting on the weekdays: 14 hours on weekend

Week 4: 16 hours of fasting every day of the week

Tips for making fasting easier:

Get the support you need. Social and medical support.

Be prepared for food withdrawals. Many processed foods and drinks are addictive so a person may experience withdrawal symptoms as they eliminate them from their diet. Instead of giving up, keep going! Cravings and withdrawals will subside.

Lower your carb intake (particularly refined carbs) to decrease cravings & blood sugar swings. Stick to whole-food-based carbs (ex. sweet potatoes, berries, healthy grains, and beans).

Drink enough water to flush out toxins faster and stay energized. Aim for ½ your weight in ounces of water daily (160 lbs. = 80 oz).

Don't overexert. While fasting, keep strenuous exercise to a minimum. Removing toxins, and repairing damaged cells is a workout for your body. Getting plenty of rest is critical.

Stop eating 3 hours before bed! When you avoid late-night eating your body is able to improve digestion & sleep. When you don't sleep soundly, cravings are more pronounced. Your circadian clock influences the production of hormones for restorative sleep. Eating three hours before bed can work against hormonal balance.

Plan meals wisely. Unlike calorie restriction diets, fasting allows a person to eat until full. This conditions the body to know food is coming soon and to not go into starvation mode. The key is to enjoy healthy, nutritious meals when food is eaten. Avoiding sugar, and processed food is essential to reaping the benefits of a fast.

Don't expect too much from fasting alone. Results can stall if you have an unhealthy diet, high stress, poor sleep & high toxic load.

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Break longer fasts carefully. When coming off a fast, slowly incorporate healing foods back into the diet one at a time (ex. bone broth, blended soups and smoothies). The body (especially the digestive tract) is extra sensitive after a fast. It's an ideal time to determine foods sensitivities. Smell food, chew well, eat small portions of cooked soft foods, not raw.

Avoid eating too frequently, even in a shortened window. Snacks count as meals.

Experiment with adding fat to your coffee or tea. Start with a teaspoon of MCT oil to see how your body tolerates it and then work up to a tablespoon if you're feeling good.

Differences Between Men & Women

Men's and women's bodies do not function the same way. Men tend to do better with longer fasting periods.

Women by nature are incredibly cyclical beings. Following menstrual cycle alone is a great way to use diet variation to support the needs of your body as it transitions through the month. It's generally the week leading up to menstruation that the body craves more carbohydrates. The body actually requires more insulin to make hormone conversions, so this is the right time to provide your body with higher carbohydrate foods. Fasting and eating low carb are not recommended the week before menstruation.

Crescendo Fasting for Women Not all women need crescendo fasting. But this gentler approach helps the body more easily adapt to fasting. Especially for women with adrenal, thyroid and blood sugar issues.

Rules of Crescendo Fasting:

1. Fast on 2–3 nonconsecutive days/week (ex Tues, Thurs, Sat)
2. On fasting days, do yoga, stretching or light cardio.
3. Ideally, fast for 12–16 hours. If you can't tolerate with blood sugar, do liquids like fresh vegetable juice or bone broth.
4. Eat normally on your intense exercise days.
5. Drink plenty of water. (Tea and coffee are okay, without added milk or sweetener)
6. After 2 weeks, feel free to add one more day of fasting.

Diet Variation: A Key to Results

When we change our diet, the body undergoes an adaptation period. Like cross-training, it's the new challenge that incites change. Once the body adapts to the change, however, we often see a plateau when it comes to benefits if the routine remains the same. The key to prevent plateau's is quite simple: keep the body guessing. Being stuck in feast mode with the same type of diet requires no adaptation. Adaptation through diet variation can produce amazing results.

Cycles can be based on **weekly, monthly, or seasonal rotation.**

Diet variation is, varying the diet using a low carb (ketogenic) diet, and incorporating at least one feast day, and at least one famine day, per week. A feast day can be an increase of carbs, or of protein, or even just a general increase in calories. A 'famine day' is one meal or a day of total fasting. There are different versions of diet variation, which you can tailor to your individual needs and also change over time as your body adapts and gets more metabolically flexible. A bonus is that our microbiome adapts to diet variation too.

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Weekly variation example:

5-1-1: five days of ketosis, one big carb refeed day and one 24-hour fasting day per week.

3-2-2: three days of ketosis, two higher carb days, and two 24-hour fasting days per week.

Monthly variation example:

3 weeks of relatively low-carb to a keto diet, followed by an entire week of carb refeeding. Woman can include the high-carb week just before/during their monthly menstruation.

It is important to note that feasting and extra carbohydrates does not mean junk food. It's about real, whole, nutritious foods.

Seasonal variation example:

Summer: Plant-Based Foods

Fall: Higher Carb Foods

Winter: Low-Carb/ Keto

Spring: Longer Fasting Blocks

How it Might Work for MS

Intermittent fasting might bring down inflammation and prevent the immune system from releasing chemicals that harm myelin.

Changing the microbiome may help treat many diseases, including MS. One method to alter the microbiome is fasting.

Fasting Precautions

Fasting is not recommended while pregnant or breastfeeding, if you are underweight or have an eating disorder, are fighting an infection, are taking insulin or have other special medical conditions. Consult with your physician before fasting.

Disclaimer: This information is designed for educational purposes only. You should not rely on this information as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

Message to Remember

This process is about exploration, not deprivation. Discover what makes you feel best and apply that knowledge to your long-term lifestyle. Enjoy the journey!

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