

# Intermittent Fasting

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For many dieters, the idea of fasting is tempting, but the thought of going days without food is too overwhelming. No one wants to suffer the loss of energy that comes with going on a fast - even if it does eventually make you feel better in the long run.

Intermittent Fasting (IF) is gaining ground as one of the most popular ways to lose weight, gain health and live longer right now. But this isn't a fad that's new - this is something people have done for many years.

## **What Is Intermittent Fasting?**

Intermittent fasting is when you develop an eating pattern throughout your day. For part of the time, you're living on water, coffee or tea. The other time, you're eating healthy, nutritious foods.

Some serious fasters count all calories as off-limits, so that would mean you exist on water only - no coffee, tea or other low calorie drinks. It's up to you how you want to incorporate it into your world.

There are also variations of the fasting where you rotate hours or days where calories aren't forbidden, but limited - versus how they're unrestricted on the days when you're not fasting.

So for example, on a "fasting" day, you might restrict your caloric intake by an extreme amount, eating just 500 calories a day, whereas on a non fasting day, you eat 2,500 or so.

There are different ways to adhere to an intermittent fasting routine. Some people fast for 8 hours and then eat regularly for 16 hours. Others alternate days - one day fasting, one day not.

You can do it any way you like - 10 hours of fasting and 14 hours of eating. Whatever you feel comfortable with. You can start out easy and then increase the amount of hours you spend fasting until you get the hang of it and know how your body will react.

Some dieters count the sleep phase as part of the fasting period, so that you either go to bed while fasting or wake up fasting, eating your calories during the main working hours.

### **What Are the Benefits to Intermittent Fasting?**

Aside from the weight loss benefits, because you're ultimately restricting a certain number of calories, you also gain other benefits when adopting an intermittent fasting regimen.

Some studies show that it might contribute to your longevity. Lab animals have shown that fasting does indeed contribute to a longer life. It wasn't the same for all of the lab rats, though.

Male and female rats have different results depending on how frequently they fast - males fasting on a 24-hour rotation and females fasting once every three days.

Your body actually learns how to better use the calories and nutrition that you give it when you start fasting periodically on a schedule. It regulates your fat storage and insulin usage correctly.

You'll enjoy fasting if you're busy and always on the go because every dieter knows how hard it is to shop for, prepare and cook healthy foods - and fasting eliminates that portion of your day.

It can also save you money! Fasting cuts your grocery bill because you're consuming less food. Dieters typically have to spend much more because they're suddenly buying fresh fruits and vegetables and lean cuts of meat rather than cheap, processed foods.

Some researchers say that intermittent fasting promotes HGH - Human Growth Hormone - production. This helps stave off the aging process and allows you to live longer and healthier.

Some studies are showing that it helps delay or improve symptoms of Alzheimer's too - apparently aiding in the brain's capacity to store and retrieve memories.

You're going to see your triglycerides and bad (LDL) cholesterol improve, your blood pressure achieve a better normal, and the inflammation in your body begin to decrease.

Your cellular repair will be heightened and fat will burn at a rate you haven't seen before. Even your heart will function better because fasting like this provides cardiovascular benefits.

### **What Are the Negative Sides of Intermittent Fasting?**

If you fast for long periods of time right off the bat when your body isn't used to it, then you might feel the effects of not having food to provide energy for you initially.

Some people rely on caffeine and sugar to help them kickstart their day, but if you improve your sleep hygiene and get a good night's rest, you won't be in need of a breakfast crutch to gain momentum.

You might experience hunger when you begin fasting. The sad thing is, most people don't even know what hunger really is anymore. We tend to eat on a schedule, not according to what our bodies are telling us.

Once you start fasting, you'll really start to tune into your hunger cues. This will make it easy for you, when and if you get off of your intermittent fasting routine, to eat when you're truly hungry and not eat calories just because the clock says it's time.

A lot of this is mental, not physical in nature. You'll be used to eating, so you'll miss it. If you have habits of stopping by for a morning Starbucks or a donut, you'll feel hungrier when you're fasting because the habit's been broken. But that will go away over time.

Some people who are against skipping breakfast will argue that it can wreak havoc on your body's ability to manage insulin levels. But whether you're fasting because you're asleep, or because it's scheduled during the day, you still can use the end of a fasting period to help manage your insulin levels.

### **The Importance of Your Non Fasting Nutrition**

Because you're now limited your food intake, it's more important now to make sure you get the proper nutrition for the times when you are going to consume calories.

Eat foods that your body needs during that time. You certainly don't want to burn up your non fasting time with poor nutrition and empty calories that won't make you feel full for long.

You don't want to crash early - you want to feel satiated for a long period of time. You still want to eat healthy, using foods such as:

- Lean meats
- Eggs
- Yogurt
- Milk
- Cheese
- Nuts
- Beans
- Fruit
- Whole grains
- Vegetables

This kind of nutrition will ensure your body is getting the proper nutrients, and that you feel full longer - more energetic for the fasting period when you're consuming low or zero calorie options.

### **Exercising on an Intermittent Fasting Regimen**

Whenever most people go on a typical fast, their energy is drained dramatically, so they wait to exercise until they're on the non fasting portion of their routine again.

But many advocates of the intermittent fasting routine say that the best time to work out is at the end of your fasting period - right before you start consuming calories again.

If your body has used up all of its glycogen stores, then it will burn pure fat while you exercise. At first, it might be hard to get used to this routine, but it gets easier the more you work the habit into your day.

You still want to maintain a healthy mix of cardio and strength training exercises. Some people mistakenly believe that by fasting, you'll be losing muscle - but it's not muscle that gets burned off - it's fat - so you become leaner and stronger if you adhere to an exercise routine.

Don't go insane trying to initiate an intermittent fasting regimen paired with the P90X right out of the gate. You should probably start with light exercise at first and work your way up to more intense movement.

### **Should You Try Intermittent Fasting?**

This type of plan isn't for everyone. There are many conveniences, though - so unlike other tedious diet plans, this one simplified your life more than it adds stress to it.

You will learn how to be more in touch with your hunger cues, and how to schedule your eating so that you burn as much fat as possible during hours when it seems effortless.

It achieves the same results as some other diet methods, so if you find that fasting isn't for you, you can try a more traditional approach to things, such as scheduled meals and calorie reduction.

Much of what fasting entails is mental. You have to suddenly learn how to drown out your inner voice that is screaming for food because "it's time to eat!" You won't starve to death going without a meal in 6 hours.

You might feel uncomfortable at first, realizing there are true hunger pangs that exist when you hadn't felt them in forever. But nothing horrible is going to happen to you because of fasting.

You already fast when you sleep, and this is just an extension of that. Most Intermittent Fasting participants say you shouldn't go over the 36-hour window of fasting. That's when you begin to feel suffering instead of benefits.

You might experience waves of hunger as you first get started with this type of fasting. It will ebb and flow, and during the times when it's strongest and you feel like panicking, keep yourself occupied and busy until it passes.

You might be a little moody as your eating habits start to adjust. People aren't chipper when they lose sleep, have to skip a meal, or have their routine disrupted in any way.

### **Make Intermittent Fasting a Portion of Your Self Care Routine**

Fasting is a great time to initiate an entire self care routine. On the days and times when you're fasting and you're not busy doing other things, work in some pampering for yourself.

It could be a massage or spa day - but it can also be something as simple as meditation or deep breathing techniques that you do on your own.

Those are things that don't cost a penny - and it can heighten your experience with intermittent fasting.

Fasting is different for everyone. Some are using it as a form of spiritual awakening. Others use it for weight loss or better health. Regardless of your goals, make sure that you fast according to what you can handle and enjoy because if it become tedious, it ruins the process and can do more damage putting stress on you than benefits.

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