

A Quick Guide to Intermittent Fasting to Lose Weight

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More and more studies show that intermittent fasting can help with weight loss.

Even though it can help with weight loss, intermittent fasting is not technically a diet. **It is a time-restricted eating pattern where you alternate between periods of fasting or eating.**

Common periods of fasting can range from 8 to 12 hours per day. There are also longer, multi-day fasts.

A common misconception about intermittent fasting is that because you fast, you eat less. Because intermittent fasting is a time-restricted eating pattern, **you don't restrict the number of calories you eat.** The number of calories you eat can be the same.

If you're considering intermittent fasting, ensure that you check-in with a physician, particularly if you are underweight or have a medical condition that may make fasting unsafe.

How Intermittent Fasting Works

Our bodies alternate between one of two states: the fed state and fasted state. Intermittent fasting increases the amount of time our body is in a fasted state.

When your body is in a fed state, it burns energy from the food you've recently eaten. After a certain amount of time you do not eat, your body enters a "fasted state."

In that fasted state, insulin levels drop. When insulin levels drop, your body burns stored energy instead of energy from the food you've recently eaten. **With your**

body burning stored fat instead of food for energy, it becomes easier to lose weight.

In addition to burning fat, your metabolism works faster, and your body clears old cells in the fasted state.

Set aside periods of time to fast in order to help your body enter that fasted state.

Other Potential Benefits of Intermittent Fasting

Although intermittent fasting research is in its early stages, current studies suggest that intermittent fasting can have many lasting health benefits:

- Controls insulin spikes
- Decreases fat mass
- Increases lean muscle mass
- May reduce the risk of cancer, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease
- May lead to longer life
- Reduces inflammation
- May increase energy

In addition to those health benefits, **intermittent fasting can be simple to implement.** You simply set aside specific time periods to eat and fast.

Here are various intermittent fasting methods you can implement:

1. **16:8 Method.** The 16:8 intermittent fasting method is when you fast for 16 hours and eat within an 8-hour time window. Some people who skip breakfast instinctively follow the 16:8 method.

- One example of the 16:8 method would be having your first meal of the day at 1 pm and allowing yourself to eat until 9 pm each day.
- Another example of the 16:8 method would be eating breakfast but skipping dinner.

2. **14:10 Method.** An easier intermittent fasting method to follow is a 14-hour fast, which allows you a 10-hour time window to eat.

3. **20:4 Method.** This intermittent fasting method follows a fasting period of 20 hours, giving you a period of 4 hours to eat. In that 4-hour eating window, you can fit in either one large meal or two small meals.

4. **One Meal a Day (“OMAD”).** Also known as the 24-hour fast, the OMAD is simple to understand: you restrict your eating to one meal a day.

5. **5:2 Method.** This fasting method involves five regular eating days with two scheduled fasting days. During the two fasting days, you limit yourself to eat only 500 calories per day.

6. **Multi-Day Fasts.** You can also enter the fasted state for multiple days. Consult a physician if you want to explore longer fasting periods.

An easy way to start fasting is with either the 16:8 or 14:10 method. With these methods, you simply restrict your eating periods by skipping a single meal.

In those cases, a majority of your fasting period would be while you're sleeping.

Intermittent fasting works differently for everyone. But it can be a weight-loss tool without restricting calories. Just don't use fasting as an excuse to load up on junk food!