

**INTERMITTENT
FASTING
(IF)
FOR
WEIGHT MANAGEMENT
AND TO
IMPROVE HEALTH**

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IMPORTANT

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Introduction

Intermittent Fasting (IF) is a dieting technique where an individual eats normally at certain times, and then has a calorie controlled fast at other times. This is an easy and effective way to manage your weight and to improve your general health.

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The Benefits of Intermittent Fasting

Proponents of Intermittent Fasting suggest that not only can weight loss/maintenance be achieved, but other significant health benefits are also manifested:

- Clearing of the whites of the eyes

- Clearing up of Skin conditions
- Elimination of stored toxins as the body breaks down fat reserves to use as energy
- Improved cognitive function
- increased capacity to resist aging
- increased capacity to resist disease
- increased capacity to resist stress
- Increased Cell Resistance (Slowed down ageing process, improved immunity)
- Increased Fatty Acid Oxidation (Body burns more fat as energy, leading to fast weight loss)
- Increased Insulin Sensitivity (Less fluctuation in blood sugar levels, more constant energy & mood levels)
- Increased life-span
- increased mitochondrial energy efficiency
- Lowering of triglyceride levels
- Normalizing of ghrelin levels, this is also known as "the hunger hormone"
- Promotion of human growth hormone (HGH) production, which plays an important role in health, fitness, and the slowing of the aging process
- Protection against conditions such as dementia, Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's disease
- Protection from disease
- Radical improvement of the beneficial bacteria in the gut - this, in turn, improves the immune system so you do not get sick, or get coughs, colds and flu.

Additionally, you will sleep better, have more energy, have increased mental clarity, and will be able to concentrate better.

- Reduced Cancer Cells Proliferation Rate (Reduced incidence of several types of cancer)
- Reduced Cognitive Decline for patients with Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease
- Reduced Cortisol Production (Lower stress levels)
- Reduced Incidence of Heart Disease
- Reduced Inflammation (Faster body healing, repair, and recovery)
- The reduction of cravings for nicotine, alcohol, and caffeine
- The reduction of inflammation and the lessening of free radical damage
- When fasting the body is able to focus its attention on natural healing
- When fasting there is a heightening of all the senses

Additionally, most people start experiencing these benefits within 2 weeks of starting their chosen fasting program.

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Intermittent Fasting Increases Life-span

In 2006 a review of an experiment actually carried out in 1957 in Spain reported that 120 residents of an old people's home were split into two groups (it is not noted whether split was done at random or not). The first group (the control group) ate a normal diet. The second group (the intermittent fasting group) ate a normal diet one day and then a restricted diet (estimated to be around 900 calories) the

next. After three years there were 13 deaths in the control group, and only six deaths in the intermittent fasting group.

One study from the 1940s found that varying amounts of twenty-four hour IFs (every other day, every fourth day, every eighth day, etc) prolonged the lifespan of rats without retarding or stunting the growth (as occurred with calorie restricting them). Female rats responded best to every eight day fasts, while males responded best to every other day fasts.

In the 1930s scientists studied worms on an intermittent fasting cycle, and compared them with a control couple group of worms of similar genetic make-up eating normally. On average, the worms on the intermittent fasting cycle outlasted their counterparts by 19 generations and maintained youthful physiological traits. The life-span extension of these worms was the equivalent of a human living in good health for 600 to 700 years.

Intermittent Fasting prevents Cognitive Decline

A 2006 study involving mice that had been genetically engineered to develop changes in brain tissue similar to those seen in people with Alzheimer's disease reported that the mice on an intermittent fasting diet appeared to experience a slower rate of cognitive decline than mice on a normal diet (cognitive function was assessed using a water maze test).

While the results of such animal tests are very encouraging, further research with human subject will have to be carried out to access the benefits on humans.

Heart Disease

Studies have found compelling links between fasting and a reduced risk of heart disease. One study, published in June 2012, reported that those who fasted regularly had a 58 percent lower risk of coronary disease compared to those who never fasted. Regular fasting was also found to be associated with lower glucose levels, and lower overall body mass index (BMI).

Cancer

Calorie restriction is proven to fight cancer cell proliferation in mice, but researchers found that intermittent fasting was just as effective.

Some researchers are speculating that fasting before and during allopathic cancer treatment should result in reduced morbidity, better tolerance of chemotherapies, and higher cure rates. A preliminary study in human cancer patients found that fasting during chemotherapy also reduced the negative side effects of the treatment. However, the researchers are quick to point out that the results are in no way a prescription for fasting in chemotherapy patients and that controlled trials are needed to change official recommendations. Nevertheless, you are free to experiment.

Autophagy

Fasting turns on autophagy, which is the process by which cells recycle waste material, eliminate or down-regulate wasteful processes, and repair themselves. Autophagy is important because it is required to maintain muscle mass, and inhibiting it induces atrophy of adult skeletal muscle.

Further autophagy reduces the negative effects of aging and reduces the incidence and progression of aging-related diseases. Researchers have determined that autophagy is an essential, if not the essential, aspect of the anti-aging mechanism of fasting.

Without the autophagy that fasting provides, one would get very few of the benefits. Fasting even increases neuronal autophagy which aids in maintaining mental health and function.

Short term fasting is effective and no marathon twenty-four to thirty-six hour fasts are required.

American Journal of Clinical Nutrition

The *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* (Am J Clin Nutr, July 2007 vol. 86 no. 1, 7-13) states that benefits of Intermittent Fasting include:

- A reduction in oxidative damage to lipids, protein, and DNA
- An improvement in insulin sensitivity and glucose uptake
- Decrease in blood pressure
- Decrease in fat mass

(Am J Clin Nutr, July 2007 vol. 86 no. 1, 7-13)

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Side-Effects of Intermittent Fasting

According to the NHS (UK), anecdotal reports of intermittent fasting side-effects include:

- Anxiety
- Bad breath (a problem with low carbohydrate diets)
- Daytime sleepiness
- Dehydration
- Difficulties sleeping
- Irritability

However, they also admit that more formal research is needed to confirm these and any other side-effects.

Additionally, an Intermittent Fasting diet may not be suitable for pregnant women and others with specific health conditions, such as diabetes, or a history of eating disorders.

Important

Always consult your health professional before embarking upon new weight-loss or exercise programs.

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The 5:2 Diet Plan

The 5:2 diet plan uses an intermittent fasting approach, and in recent years this has become an increasingly popular weight management technique.

The 5:2 diet approach is very easy to follow - in any seven day period (Mon to Sun) you would eat normally for five of the days, and then you would implement a calorie controlled fast (600 calories for men, and 500 calories for women) on the other two days.

However, the fast days do not have to be contiguous, and you choose which days to fast and which to eat normally. It is recommended that you have one non-fast day between the two fast days.

It's Easy

On your fast days you can eat what you like; however, men restrict their calorie intake to 600 calories, and women to 500 calories. That's it.

On your non-fast days, just eat what you normally would.

How many calories do the "average" man and woman need daily?

The "average" **man** needs **2,500** calories daily.

The "average" **woman** needs **2,000** calories daily.

However, this is only a ball-park figure and may need to be adjusted because of the person's age, build, lifestyle, and health, etc.

See what works for you and follow it through.

What a 500-600 calorie diet could look like:

A 500 to 600 calorie diet could consist of:

An apple, a fat free yoghurt, two servings of a low calorie soup, 6 slices of wholegrain "Crackerbread" (or equivalent) or 3 low calorie rice cakes, and a low calorie cottage pie meal (or equivalent).

Additionally, unlimited water, black coffee, and/or green or rooibos tea can be drunk.

There you have it - an easy, a no hassle, no frill approach to weight management - experiment, and see what works for you.

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Conclusion

Does the 5:2 diet work?

Yes, it worked beautifully for the test subjects we observed, and consequently the 5:2 diet is now recommended as part of our program to "Live Twice as Long".

The subjects each lost, on average, 1 to 2 pounds per week, and none of them exhibited any of the anecdotal negative side effects enumerated by the NHS.

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Appendix

Popular Ways of Implementing Intermittent Fasting

5:2 Format - Typically, in a seven day period (Mon to Sun) you would eat normally for five of the days, and then you would have a calorie controlled fast (600 calories for men, and 500 calories for women) on the other two days. However, the fast days are not set, and they do not have to be contiguous.

4:3 Format - Typically, in a seven day period (Mon to Sun) you would eat normally for four of the days, and then you would have a calorie controlled fast (600 calories for men, and 500 calories for women) on the other three days. However, the fast days are not set, and they do not have to be contiguous. Many people fast on Mon, Wed, and Fri. However, because of possible physiological impact, you must closely monitor your body and immediately stop if any ill effects manifest. Also ensure that you are drinking sufficient fluids (1.5 to 2 litres per day).

Alternate day format - for a more rapid weight loss you would have a calorie controlled fast (600 calories for men, and 500 calories for women) every other day. However, because of possible

physiological impact, you must closely monitor your body and immediately stop if any ill effects manifest. Also ensure that you are drinking sufficient fluids (1.5 to 2 litres per day). Once the target weight has been achieved it is recommended that a 1 to 2 days of fasting be adopted for maintenance.

Single Twenty-Four Hour Fast - Some people choose to have a normal evening meal and then fast until the following evening. Other people extend the fast until the following morning. The routine can be applied weekly, fortnightly, monthly, or seasonally, depending upon your preferences and goals.

8-Hour Format - This is a type of scheduled eating plan where you simply restrict your normal daily eating to an eight hour window of time, without cutting calories. Research has shown that this simple plan can significantly modify body composition, including fat mass reduction.

Alternating Day Detox Fasting for Week (or more) - This approach is often used for a deeper cleansing or detox result. This type of fasting can be done once or twice a year, or it can be done on a seasonal basis. During the fast periods it is good practise to drink only water and some teas or small amounts of juices. On the alternate days, you can eat normally, or you can reduce your calorie intake.

Condensed Eating Window - This is when the day's food intake is condensed to within a set number of hours (typically between a 4 and 7 hour window). Time this window to accommodate your personal schedule and preferences; then, the time from your last meal until the next day's first meal becomes your fasting period.

Early and Late - In this case, your day's food intake is balanced between one early meal and one later meal.

One Meal Per Day - The one meal per day plan yields 14-16 hours of net fasting time provided that you have a feeding window of about two hours. However, if you have a feeding window of four hours, you will still have 12-14 hours of net fasting daily. This should be more than sufficient to produce the results that you desire. Some authorities suggest 1 x meal a day - 14+ hours for women, and 16+ hours for men.

Skipped Meal - When we pay attention to our body's responses, rather than blindly following a set program, we will note that we are not always hungry when coming to a set mealtime. Consequently, just let yourself skip a meal when this happens. Alternatively, deliberately plan a meal skip at a convenient time.

Note

During your normal eating phase, irrespective of its duration, don't feel obliged to eat more than you are hungry for (average man - 2,500 calories; average woman - 2,000 calories).

Fasting is a unique opportunity to perceive and understand your body's signals and responses, and it also provides an easy way to prove to your conscious self that you can thrive on an overall smaller intake of food.

However, you must ensure that in any 24 hour cycle you take in the necessary calories and fluids to sustain you for the activities that you will perform.

End

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