

What is Fasting?

Fasting is an adaptive response to food deprivation

Although we may think of fasting as a detrimental response to a lack of food intake (think starvation), it's actually a supportive response that helps us to remain alive when there is sparse to no food available.

During these periods, we needed a way to survive and optimize our chances of finding food. This evolutionary pressure forced the body to develop a response that conserves energy and triggers stress-resistant cellular pathways that can clean up worn-out intracellular debris, and a whole host of other benefits.

These benefits include things like:

- Weight Loss
- Fat Reduction
- Metabolic Effects

Intermittent Fasting (IF):

Intermittent Fasting (IF) is a habit, practiced by various cultures, that has become an increasingly popular research topic for weight loss, longevity, and overall health.

What It Is:

Intermittent fasting is a strategy that combines periods of eating with periods of fasting into a regular schedule. These eating or fasting "windows" as they're called, help your body to burn fat for fuel while initiating the intracellular (meaning within the cell) clean-up and recycling process known as autophagy. Water, coffee, tea and other non-caloric beverages are typically allowed (and recommended) during these fasts.

Benefits:

With new intermittent fasting benefits being discovered regularly, it's surprising that we were ever recommended to eat 3-5 meals a day. Some of the early findings suggested in research and by ordinary people who practice IF include:

- Fat loss
- Less bloating
- Better digestion
- Less hunger
- Less inflammation
- Reduction in type-2 diabetes symptoms
- Clearer complexion and improved skin
- A better relationship with food
- Mental clarity

Risks:

Though intermittent fasting does have risks, they're mostly limited to people who are unwell, undernourished, or who have eating disorders. (Remember, we all practice some level of intermittent fasting every time we sleep or go without food). Hunger is an imminent risk in fasting. But don't worry- it doesn't last! Studies report less overall hunger when participants adhere to an IF practice. Always be sure to double-check with your healthcare provider for specific and personal advice prior to starting any new lifestyle modification!

Who Should Fast

Before getting started with any type of fasting regimen you should consult with your healthcare provider, and take extra precautions if you have any existing health conditions. It is also recommended that during a fast, you listen closely to your body and know that you have the option to end a fast if you have any health concerns.

When performed correctly, fasting can offer a host of health benefits. Those looking to lose weight, reduce fat, increase energy, sharpen focus, establish healthier eating habits, maintain healthy metabolic markers, and/or support healthy aging should consider a fasting program that will enable them to achieve their specific goals.