

EXERCISE
• WITH STYLE •

INTERMITTENT FASTING FOR WEIGHT LOSS

A-Z Guide To Intermittent Fasting



written for
**Weight Loss | Rejuvenation
Well-Being | Mental Clarity**

Welcome message from Ricky

Awesome to have you onboard and can't wait to share my story in the upcoming emails. You will find motivation, inspiration and actionable tips to improve your health and wellness from me in the future.

Intermittent Fasting was an important step in my weight loss journey. But it wasn't the one thing, it was part of a combination of strategies I used and still do, to maintain my weight and improve my overall health.

I will share all these tips in future communications that will be short, sharp and to the point.

How to get the most out of this eBook?

The last thing I want you to read is a 100 page eBook. We have shorter attention spans today, so I condensed it down for the most valuable and actionable information you can read within 1 hour or less.

Make sure to print it or save it on your phone so you can reference it during your fasting.

If you have any questions feel free to shoot me a message at info@exercisewithstyle.com. I generally respond quickly!

Thank you,

Ricky Zurvas
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What is Intermittent Fasting?

Intermittent fasting (IF), also known as cycle fasting, is all about when you eat instead of what you eat. So don't think of IF as a diet – it's really just a change in the scheduling and frequency of your meals.

With intermittent fasting, you're not crash dieting – in fact, you're typically not cutting calories at all. You also don't have to deal with the headache of counting calories or keeping up with a food diary.

This makes it simpler and less painful than a restrictive diet, so you're more likely to stick with it.

The idea of intermittent fasting has been around for a while. For centuries, different religious groups have practiced fasting, and those in the medical field have also boasted of the benefits of fasting for almost as long.

So IF isn't a crazy fad diet – it's a tried and true method that's been around for a very long time.

But you don't have to take my word for it. Let's take a look at the science behind intermittent fasting and why it works for weight loss.

How does Intermittent Fasting work?

So if you're not cutting calories, how can you expect to lose any weight by fasting? To better understand this, you need to first understand how and when your body goes into a [fasted state](#).

The fed state is when your body is actively digesting food. This state starts when you start eating and lasts for around 3 to 5 hours after you eat.

During this time, your body won't typically burn fat – it's busy doing its digesting thing.

After the fed state, your body goes into the post-absorptive state for about 8 to 12 hours after your last meal.

Then comes the holy grail – the fasted state. During the fasted state, your body can easily burn fat because your insulin levels are low. Here is where the [weight loss](#) magic happens!

Because it takes so long to reach the fasted state, our bodies rarely get there. But with IF, we are intentionally pushing our bodies into the fasted state and burning more fat.

Aside from benefiting your waistline, intermittent fasting also has a whole host of overall health benefits. I'll cover those in a future article, so stay tuned.

What are the different types of Intermittent fasting

There's no one right way to fast – there are actually several different variations of IF, and you can experiment with different options based on your schedule and lifestyle.

Here are a few of the most common intermittent fasting schedules.

But here are some of the most common ones:

The 12-hour fast: The 12-hour fast is one of the easiest types of IF. All you have to do is eat ALL of your meals within a 12-hour timeframe. So, if you eat breakfast at 8:00AM? You would have your last meal at 8:00 PM.

The 16/8 Method: The 16/8 method is similar to a 12-hour fast. But, instead, you take all your meals within an 8-hour timeframe. This can easily be achieved by skipping breakfast. So, for example, if you eat your first meal at 12, you would eat your last meal at 8:00 PM.

Eat-Stop-Eat: Do one or two 24-hour fasts each week. For example, not eating from dinner one day until dinner the next day.

Alternate-day fasting: Alternate-day fasting (ADF) is where you have a fast day where you consume only 25 % of your normal caloric intake. On this day, you avoid sugars or starches and eat only protein, vegetables and healthy foods. You then have a “feed day” in which you can eat whatever you want.

The 5:2 Diet: On 5:2 diet you eat how you would normally do, but only consume around 500 – 600 calories on two days of the week.

Which type of Intermittent fasting is best for a beginner?

Choosing one of these methods can be a hard decision if you're a beginner.

Here's the main thing you have to take into consideration: If you're not already used to depriving yourself of food. Doing one of the harder forms of IF—like the 5:2 diet—is probably a bad idea.

The last thing you want to happen is this:

You can't stop yourself from binge-eating after your fast.

You end up eating way more calories than you actually need. And—as a result—your attempt to fast has the opposite effect: You gain weight. Instead, consider doing one of the easier ways of IF.

Specifically, the 12-hour fast is a great option or 16/8 method fast is great for beginners. Usually, this would mean you only have to stop yourself from eating late in the evening.

Other considerations

It's important to talk to your doctor before you start an IF program if you have any health concerns.

For example, if you suffer from low blood sugar, thyroid problems, or diabetes, you'll need to consult your doctor first to determine if IF is a good fit for you.

Intermittent fasting may not be ideal for those with a history of eating disorders as well.

The powerful benefits of Intermittent Fasting

Lose excess weight fast

Weight loss is a major benefit of intermittent fasting. In fact, it's likely why most people decide to try IF. And it works.

A [study](#) from 2015 found that people lost an average of 7 percent of their body weight and slashed up to 12 pounds of body fat while following an alternate-day fasting schedule.

How does it work? Science.

Intermittent fasting revs up the fat burning in your body because you're in the fasted state for longer periods of time. Generally it takes 10-16 hours for the body to use fat storage as energy.

When you eat, your body primarily uses glucose as its big energy source and stores the leftovers as glycogen to use as fuel later on.

But when you fast, your body uses up both of these main sources (glucose and glycogen), so it must turn to fat stores for fuel once depleted.

Specifically, intermittent fasting can help reduce belly fat. Ugh, belly fat – it's notoriously hard to get rid of.

And excess fat you store around the abdominal area is [linked](#) to heart disease and type 2 diabetes, so getting rid of that stubborn belly fat has massive benefits.

Your heart will love you

In both the [United States](#) and [Australia](#), heart disease is responsible for around 25 percent of all deaths. But it's not just a problem in these two countries – it's a serious global issue.

According to the [World Health Organization](#), heart disease is the number one killer worldwide.

So here's some good news – intermittent fasting may improve your overall heart health and lower heart disease risk factors like blood pressure, cholesterol, inflammation, and blood sugar levels.

We'll talk about several of these individual health markers later in this article, but it's important to keep in mind that they all contribute to a healthy heart.

Reduces inflammation throughout the body

When you get injured, you experience inflammation because your body is trying to heal itself. However, chronic inflammation can increase your risk of diseases like cancer, obesity, and diabetes.

According to a [2015 study](#), an extended period of night time fasting decreased the markers of inflammation.

Several other studies have shown similar results, which is promising evidence that IF may help fight inflammation.

Significantly improves blood sugar levels

Intermittent fasting is [proven](#) to lower both insulin resistance and blood sugar levels, which in turn lowers your risk of type 2 diabetes.

This implies that IF may be ideal for people at risk of developing this debilitating disease.

Let's do a crash course in insulin and its connection to blood sugar levels.

When you eat carbs, your body breaks them down into glucose (sugar), and insulin grabs on to this glucose and carries it to the cells for energy.

But high insulin levels can prevent insulin from doing its job effectively, so the glucose doesn't make it to the cells – it just floats around in your bloodstream, resulting in high blood sugar levels.

If you prevent insulin from building up, you help it do its job more effectively and keep your body sensitive to the effects of the insulin.

All of this lowers your risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

Anti-aging effects. Live long and prosper

Could intermittent fasting be the famed fountain of youth? No. But [studies](#) do show that it may help you live longer. While this isn't 100 percent proven, it's an intriguing idea and definitely worth a shot.

Because of all the other health benefits of intermittent fasting, such as reducing the risk of deadly diseases, it logically follows that IF leads to a longer, healthier life.

May help prevent cancer

This is another exciting (and potentially ground breaking) development in the research on intermittent fasting, so it's definitely worth noting.

Intermittent fasting could reduce your risk of cancer, or at least slow it down. Several [studies](#) in animals show that fasting delayed the onset of cancerous tumors, but no research has linked fasting with cancer in humans. Yet.

Get your mind right

Like I said, intermittent fasting is good for the body AND mind. Research suggests that IF could improve brain health and keep your mind sharp and focused.

For example, fasting has been [connected](#) to improved learning and memory. Another study [links](#) the anti-inflammatory benefits of IF to the slowing of neurodegenerative disorders like Alzheimer's disease.

It should be noted that most of these studies have been performed in mice, and further experiments are needed to see if these brain-boosting benefits apply to humans as well.

But if the research holds up, this could be huge in helping us lead happier, healthier lives well into old age.

Simplify your life

Stress. Nobody wants it. Everybody has it. And with stress comes a long list of health problems.

So why not simplify your life with intermittent fasting? It's a stress-free diet because it's not a diet at all – you simply eat during the feeding window.

You don't have to worry about counting calories or keeping a food diary or trying to figure out macros. It's like the "easy button" for healthy dieting and weight loss.

How to Start an Intermittent Fast

Always consult with your Doctor

As with any big lifestyle change, it's probably a good idea to run it by your doctor first – there are actually some medical conditions or medications that may not be intermittent fasting approved.

If you haven't had a check up in a while, get some bloodwork done so you can have a point of reference later on to see how much your health markers improve.

Pick the right plan

In my first article, I listed several different intermittent fasting schedules. So now is the time to pick the one that's best for you.

The most effective IF schedule for you is the one that you can stick to! Again, it's all about commitment at this stage.

For beginners, I would recommend the [16:8 \(Leangains\) method](#).

Make small changes and start slow

As with any relationship, it's important to take things slow. Keep it simple and easy so you don't get overwhelmed.

If you jump in too fast, you may suffer from some rather unpleasing side effects, like headaches, dizziness, or just all around "hanger".

So ease into this new eating pattern and listen to your body. Don't worry if it takes you a few days to get into the swing of things.

Track your progress

Most people are used to tracking their weight on a scale, but don't rely solely on that number – take before, during, and after photos, too.

Body composition changes are way more exciting than numbers on a scale.

Also, consider how you feel and how that changes over time. Do you have more energy? Sharper focus?

Write these things down. Nothing keeps you on track more than real progress.

Advice on controlling hunger

Keep a positive attitude. Go back and read this article to remind yourself of all the amazing health benefits of IF.

Whether you want to lose weight or just be healthier in general, keep your goals in mind and stay positive. And remember, if you're hungry, that means your body has moved on to your fat stores.

Hooray!

Drink lots (and lots) of water. Staying hydrated is a great way to stop those hunger pangs. In fact, you may even be mistaking hunger for thirst, so drink up!

Make caffeine another of your best buddies. Black coffee and green tea are both excellent sources of caffeine to keep you feeling full, while also giving you an energy boost.

The majority of your meals should be healthy whole foods – they're more filling and have the nutrients your body needs. But you should also include some of your favorite not-so-healthy foods so you'll feel satisfied and happy.

Stay busy, busy, busy. If you find yourself hanging out on the couch, fantasizing about the refrigerator just a few steps away, get up and go outside instead.

Take the dog for a walk. Find a new hobby.

Just keep your brain occupied and keep those seductive images of food out of your mind.

Steer clear of any mouth-watering temptations that make your knees weak. One moment, you're not feeling hungry at all. Then, you spy a cupcake, and you're suddenly ravenous.

Those pesky temptations will be tough when you first start your fast. But with time, your willpower will become your superpower.

What does a typical day of Intermittent Fasting look like?

Since the easiest way for beginners to commit to intermittent fasting is by following the 16:8 method.

Let's look at a typical eating schedule where you fast for 16 hours and eat for 8 hours.

EVENING OF THE FIRST DAY:

On your first day, eat regularly all day and have dinner around 7 PM. Then, stop eating. If you are one of those people who crave a bedtime snack, try brushing your teeth immediately after dinner.

Who wants to snack on popcorn or a chocolate treat with a minty taste in your mouth?

MORNING OF THE SECOND DAY:

When you wake up the next morning, congratulations! You've already fasted for around 11 hours (depending on exactly when you wake up, of course). Not so bad, right?

Now, just skip breakfast.

Mornings are always chaotic anyway, so just delay that first meal until it's convenient. Once things settle down, you can enjoy your breakfast.

If that's not until 9 AM, then look at you – you've fasted for 14 hours!

FINISHING THE SECOND DAY:

Eat lunch whenever you feel like it. Maybe that's at noon because your body is still stuck in its habits. Or since you had a late breakfast, maybe you don't feel hungry until around 2 PM. Anytime is fine – just eat when you get hungry.

You can snack during the afternoon as well if your body is telling you it needs more fuel. Again, eat dinner by 7 PM.

Then, brush those teeth!

What liquids can you drink while fasting?

Who doesn't love a good relationship hack? Hopefully, you're head over heels in love with intermittent fasting and things are going swimmingly. But if you're on the struggle bus, I'm here with some helpful hacks – just in time to save you from breaking up with your fast!

If hunger or low energy is getting you down, this article will give you some pointers on what you should drink (and not drink) to keep you fasting happily ever after.

Plus, some of these drinks may even make your intermittent fast more effective.

Remember, the goal of an intermittent fast is to let your body enter into a fasted state so that you're burning fat and reaping all the other benefits of fasting. To do this, you can't consume any calories during your fasting window.

So stick with these intermittent fasting approved beverages instead and stay on track with your commitment.

However, in the typical intermittent fasting scenario, you can drink fluids. But these fluids should be calorie-free; at least, if you want to stay in a fasted state.

That means you should avoid drinks like:

- Alcohol
- Almond milk
- Bone broth
- Bulletproof coffee
- Fruit juice
- Kombucha
- Milk
- Sodas
- Sugar-sweetened coffee and tea

Basically, as long as it contains calories, it's best to avoid it. The calories – in particular, the carbs – can break your fast by altering your metabolism and increasing insulin levels.

You should, however, consume enough non-caloric beverages like water. In fact, your hydrational needs actually increase during a fast.

The three reasons you should drink more fluids during a fast

Fasting reduces your insulin levels. This causes your kidneys to excrete sodium from your body, leading to the flushing out of water.[\(1\)](#)[\(2\)](#)

Most fluids are consumed during meals. Since you don't eat during a fast, this might cause you to consume less overall.[\(3\)](#)

Food supplies about 20 to 30% of the total water intake of most people. Since you don't eat during a fast, you won't get that amount of water through your food intake.[\(4\)](#)

For these reasons, it's crucial that you pay attention to your water intake during a fast. Not doing so may reduce the effectiveness of your fast and pose adverse health risks.

The downsides of not drinking enough during a fast

Here are a few of them:

Impaired athletic performance. Dehydration can impair exercise performance, especially if you do aerobic activities like running and jogging.[\(5\)](#)[\(6\)](#)[\(7\)](#)

Worsened cardiovascular health markers. Not drinking enough water during a fast may increase serum cholesterol, LDL (“bad”) cholesterol, and blood lipid levels.[\(8\)](#)

Possibly reduced the benefits of exercise. Dehydration reduces testosterone secretion after strength training while increasing cortisol, which may impair fat loss and muscle growth.[\(9\)](#)

Impaired brain performance. Dehydration of just two percent is enough to impair cognition.[\(10\)](#)

Causation of headaches. Dehydration can also trigger headaches in some people. So, if you’re bothered by them during a fast, it may help to increase your water intake.[\(11\)](#)[\(12\)](#)[\(13\)](#)

Possible reduced human growth hormone (HGH) levels. One of the benefits of fasting is that it increases HGH, something dehydration may impair.[\(14\)](#)[\(15\)](#)

Since your body consists of about 70% water, dehydration impairs almost, if not all, bodily functions. **Thus, make sure that you get enough water while fasting. What follows are five drinks you can consume without breaking your fast.**

H2O

The most straightforward way to hydrate yourself during a fast is by drinking water. But just because it’s straightforward that doesn’t mean it’s ineffective.

In fact, if you want to fast to give your digestive system a break, water is your best choice. It requires less digestive effort than various other zero-calorie drinks like black coffee.

What’s more, water may be more effective at hydrating you than caffeinated drinks like coffee.

That’s because caffeine functions as a diuretic by increasing urine production.[\(16\)](#)[\(17\)](#)

That said, moderate caffeine consumption is not inclined to produce enough of a diuretic effect to cause an adverse effect. Plus, regular caffeine consumption tends to impair the diuretic effect.[\(18\)](#)[\(19\)](#)

Still, try to make water your primary source of hydration during your fast. It's okay to add small amounts of apple cider vinegar if you prefer, but more about that in a bit.

Black coffee

While black coffee can increase blood sugar levels a bit, most experts agree that you can consume it without breaking your fast.[\(20\)](#)

In fact, black coffee offers unique benefits that support your health and make your fast easier.

Reduced hunger. Since coffee contains caffeine, consuming it may reduce hunger. One review study found a reduction in appetite and energy intake upon consuming caffeine between 0.5 and 4 hours before a meal.[\(21\)](#)

What's interesting, though, is that the hunger-reducing benefits may be gender-specific. Research found that 300 mg of caffeine didn't affect the calorie intake of women while it reduced that of men by 22%.[\(22\)](#)

Improved exercise performance. Coffee can boost muscle strength, increase aerobic and anaerobic performance, ward off morning sickness, and enhance focus and alertness.[\(23\)](#)[\(24\)](#)[\(25\)](#)[\(26\)](#)[\(27\)](#)

It's important to note, however, that caffeine only delivers those benefits if you haven't built up a tolerance to the compound. Thus, coffee won't boost your training if you drink it every day.

That's why, if you want to use caffeine as a performance enhancer, it's best to limit your intake of the compound to, at most, two days per week.

Enhanced health. Contrary to what's often claimed, drinking coffee doesn't tend to be harmful. In fact, coffee is actually good for your health.[\(28\)](#)[\(29\)](#)

The most well-established health benefits include better glycemic control, reduced risk of cancer, and better heart health, which includes a small reduction in blood pressure.[\(30\)](#)

Now, there are potential downsides to drinking black coffee during a fast. Increased anxiety is one of them. Just 150 mg of caffeine (about 1.5 cups of coffee) is enough to increase anxiety under regular circumstances.[\(31\)](#)

Since fasting activates the sympathetic "fight or flight" nervous system, drinking coffee during a fast may be extra anxiety-provoking.

That's why coffee may not be ideal if you're prone to being anxious. Also, to stay in your fasted state, you'll have to drink your coffee black.

That means no sugar, milk, butter, coconut oil, or other additives, although it is okay to add zero-calorie sweeteners, more on that in a bit.

Tea

As an alternative to coffee, tea is also an excellent drink to consume during your fast.

Tea provides similar health benefits but contains less caffeine, which may make it a better alternative for those who are overly sensitive to this stimulatory compound.

Here are a few teas you could drink during a fast:

- Black tea
- Green tea
- Hibiscus tea
- Ginger tea
- Rooibos tea
- Echinacea tea
- Peppermint tea

If you're not overly sensitive to caffeine, it may be ideal to include both tea and coffee in your weekly nutrition plan.

That's because both contain different types of health-promoting antioxidants.[\(32\)](#)[\(33\)](#)[\(34\)](#)[\(35\)](#)

Antioxidants can reduce your risk of various diseases, including heart disease and cancer by helping defend your cells against free radicals.

Zero-Calorie Diet Sodas

Many people say that you shouldn't consume zero-calorie diet sodas during a fast.

The artificial sweeteners supposedly break your fast by increasing blood sugar and insulin levels.

But is that true?

The answer is no. Non-caloric sweeteners don't raise insulin levels or blood sugar, which means **you can drink diet soda during your fast.**[\(36\)](#)[\(37\)](#)[\(38\)](#)[\(39\)](#)[\(40\)](#)[\(41\)](#)

Also, studies have shown zero-calorie sweeteners are somewhat safe if your consumption is within the maximum recommended intakes.

That's especially true for aspartame and sucralose. [\(42\)](#)[\(43\)](#)[\(44\)](#)[\(45\)](#)

The only controlled studies that found adverse effects are animal-based.

In those studies, animals often consume more than a hundred or even a thousand times the maximum recommended intake. (You can compare that to about 1,800 cans of soda per day!)

However, there are two things to consider.

First, saccharin may be a possible exception to the safety of zero-calorie sweeteners.

While most research shows saccharin to be safe, one study found impaired gut health and glucose tolerance. [\(46\)](#)[\(47\)](#)

Now, the study design isn't great. It contains only seven subjects and lacks a control group. But still, you may want to opt for drinks that don't contain saccharin, just to be safe.

Second, drinking zero-calorie diet sodas may increase the desire to eat.

Thus, if you find it hard to manage hunger during your fast, you may want to avoid them. [\(48\)](#)

That said, it can also work the other way around. If you crave something sweet, diet soda may curb that craving, so that you can better maintain your fast.

The bottom line is that if you want to consume something sweet during your fast, it's fine to drink a diet soda.

Just because you can drink artificially sweetened diet soda during your fast, doesn't mean it's good for your overall well-being and should be limited or avoided altogether due to the controversy surrounding artificial sweeteners.

Apple Cider Vinegar

Apple cider vinegar does contain calories. So, technically speaking, you shouldn't drink while fasting.

However, owing to apple cider vinegar's minimal caloric values, moderate consumption won't hurt your fast.

Here are the nutritional values of apple cider vinegar per tablespoon (14.9 grams):

Calories: 3 kcals
Fat: 0 grams
Carbs: 0.1 grams
Sugar: 0.1 grams
Protein: 0 grams

There are benefits to consuming moderate amounts of apple cider vinegar during a fast. One of them is that it can increase feelings of fullness.[\(49\)](#)

That's why drinking this compound – such as, by mixing one or two tablespoons with water – might help you manage cravings during your fast. What's more, apple cider vinegar can also improve insulin sensitivity and aid blood sugar control.

This is especially beneficial before a meal because prolonged fasting can impair insulin sensitivity (although it takes over fourteen hours before those effects occur).[\(50\)](#)

So, feel free to drink a glass of water with a few tablespoons of this household staple, especially before your meal.

The optimal way to break a fast

The end of your first fasting window is approaching – you're salivating at the thought of donuts and pancakes (or maybe that's just me anytime I hear “break” and “fast” in a sentence?).

But wait – it's your first time! Do you know how to optimally break your fast?

If not, don't just wing it! Diving headfirst (or mouth first) into a meal at the end of your fast will stress your gut and digestive system.

Nobody wants an angry belly to interfere with an otherwise happy, healthy relationship with intermittent fasting.

So for your first time, slow down, take it easy, and make sure your body is ready before you get busy (busy eating, that is).

Plus, depending on your overall goal in fasting, you'll want to eat foods that optimize results.

Want to know what foods give you the biggest bang? I'm sharing all the secrets in this article!

Breaking your fast: Step-by-step guide

A quick note before we get started. The amount of time you've spent fasting has a huge impact on how you break your fast.

This guide is aimed primarily at anyone whose fasting period lasted 24 hours or less.

Step one

As you approach the end of your fasting window (about 30 minutes to one hour before it's time to get your grub on), you should drink something that gently gets the digestive system going but that doesn't necessarily have calories (so it won't cause your body to release insulin).

Apple cider vinegar is my go-to beverage choice for this.

As I mentioned in my previous article, apple cider vinegar keeps your pH levels balanced and stabilizes your blood sugar levels as well, making it a great drink during your fast.

But it's even better at this stage as you approach the end of your fast.

Here's my recipe for the secret sauce. Stir 2 tablespoons of apple cider vinegar into hot water, along with a squeeze of lemon and a pinch of sea salt.

You can add a dash of cinnamon as well if you need a little more flavor. This combination will get your gut going and ready to digest food again. And it's lip-smacking good!

While apple cider vinegar is a great boost for any type of fasting, there are other food and drink hacks you need to know to reach your goals.

Keep reading – I'll talk about this a little later.

Step two

Time to wait. Give your gut about 30 minutes to absorb the nutrients and get to work creating digestive enzymes. It's the final countdown...

Step three

Hallelujah, it's time for food! Ok, I got you excited. My bad. You actually don't want to gorge yourself – a massive meal will cause an upset stomach.

Give your system a little time to get back to normal, or you may experience stomach cramping or nausea. Ideally, you should aim for around 500 calories for that first meal.

What should you eat for your first meal? Again, that will depend on what you're trying to achieve by fasting. Keep reading – I've got you covered.

Step four

The first time you break your fast, begin with small meals every 2 hours or so.

Then, you can gradually progress toward larger meals that are more spread out.

This will give your body time to adjust and get back in the digestive groove.

Again, this also depends on the length of time you've been fasting – the longer you fast, the slower you go with your eating.

Breaking your fast for optimal weight loss

If you're fasting to shed unwanted pounds, break your fast with MCT oil to extend the fat burning even longer.

MCT oil contains fast-acting fatty acids that zoom through your body and straight into your bloodstream. This signals to your body that it should keep using fat for fuel.

Consume around 3 tablespoons of MCT oil immediately after your fast to optimize the fat burning benefits.

An easier option is using [AMP-V from ATP Science](#) to break your fast and continue burning fat.

This supplement offers a powerful combination of essential fatty acids and Omegas to help you burn fat more effectively and give you an energy boost to boot.

For weight loss, your first small meal should include a combination of protein and fats. This will also help extend the fat burning.

Salmon is an awesome combination of protein and healthy fats, Avocado, nuts, or seeds are a few great healthy fat options.

Breaking your fast for optimal muscle growth

A lot of people worry about losing muscle while fasting, so I'm here to tell you – stop worrying!

You can actually gain muscle with intermittent fasting if you choose the right carbs at the right time.

For optimal muscle growth, you want to break your fast with high glycemic index carbs – or carbs that get the sugar into your bloodstream quickly.

For example, a rice cake is an ideal snack to get sugar to your cells as fast as possible and shut down any breakdown of muscle.

Plus, your cells will be primed and ready to absorb protein, the building block of muscle.

Breaking your fast for optimal health

Health rejuvenation fasting should be broken with bone broth or collagen protein.

I should note here that bone broth and collagen are great for ANY type of fasting, but they're especially effective when it comes to maximizing health benefits.

Bone broth is high in collagen, which helps protect the lining of your gut and primes that lining to absorb nutrients when you start eating.

Check out [this bone broth from Meadow & Marrow](#) – it contains 10 times more collagen than anything you can buy in the store!

Just can't stomach bone broth? Or looking for a more convenient option?

Then you're in the same boat as me. I prefer to take a supplement as a quick and easy alternative, and my go-to collagen protein is [Noway Protein from ATP Science](#).

Important tips on breaking your fast

Make a meal plan to keep yourself on schedule – and to keep you from grabbing junk food when your tummy starts to rumble.

Meal prep your first 1 or 2 meals to make sure you're on track with a nutritious meal right off the bat.

Don't break your fast with highly processed sugars, lactose, cruciferous vegetables or fruits.

While you fast the intestinal tract loses some of the mucosal protective layers temporarily, these foods ferment in the gut and cause excessive gas or irritate the gut.

Another important factor is processed sugars and fruits should be avoided because your cells are most receptive after fasting and the body may try and store as fat.

Avoid combining carbs with fats in your first meal. Pair either carbs and protein (especially beneficial for muscle growth) or fat and protein (if your goal is weight loss).

This approach prevents your body from absorbing both the carbs and fats at the same time due to carbs causing an insulin spike.

At this point the cells open and are very receptive to retrieving what you consume, signalling the body to possibly store as fat.

Chew your food really well. Sounds weird, I know, but it helps immensely with digestion.

Add live enzymes and bacteria (the good kind) to your gut. You can take probiotics for this or focus on eating fermented foods like yogurt or sauerkraut.

Don't go for a ton of variety when you first break your fast. Stick to basic, nutritious foods that are easy to digest. I know the temptation will be to go wild, but you'll regret it!

Over time, you can add in more variety, but for now, simplicity is the name of the game.

Through this whole process, it's super important to listen to your body. If you're moving too quickly, your body will let you know (read: angry belly) that it's time to pump the brakes, killer.

As I mentioned before, your first meal should be relatively small – unless you just finished a workout (spoiler alert: I'm covering working out while fasting in my next article!).

I'll say it one last time – the length of your fast affects how you break your fast. For longer fasts, you'll want to set aside a significant amount of time to break your fast and ease your body back into regular eating habits.

How to optimize your workouts when Intermittent Fasting

Can you get your sweat on while intermittent fasting? Absolutely! In fact, I encourage it.

Any beneficial fasting relationship should include a little hard work and a lot of sweat to get the best results possible.

If you're looking to optimize your workout results and achieve a banging body, then this article is for you.

There are good, better, and best approaches to training during an intermittent fast, and I'm spilling the tea on all of it.

The best time for fasted training

So, what is the best time to work out when intermittent fasting? While there are a lot of factors at play here, the optimal training time is **first thing in the morning**.

To understand why this is prime fat burning time, you need to nerd out and get a basic understanding of some sciency stuff.

The Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS)

Maybe you've never heard of the [sympathetic nervous system](#) (SNS), but you have heard of "fight or flight". It's the same thing.

When you're in a fasted state, your SNS is on alert, which means it's getting you focused and ready for action. That means your body is mobilizing and burning fats at an accelerated rate (this is why we love the fasted state, right?).

So, if you train while in a fasted state, you're getting all the benefits of the SNS firing on all cylinders.

The Human Growth Hormone (HGH)

The human growth hormone (HGH) is responsible for all sorts of things in your body, but for our purposes, you need to know that it boosts muscle growth and exercise performance. For big results, you need to [optimize your HGH levels](#) and train when HGH levels are highest.

Now what does all this have to do with early a.m. workouts? Well, your HGH levels are typically highest first thing in the morning.

So, to optimize your results, you should get your workout in early.
All this science simply means one thing – rise, shine, and hit the gym!

But what about post-workout meals?

You may be worrying that your body won't get enough macros to support muscle growth if you're working out on empty. Isn't protein the key to muscle growth?

You're right. Protein is essential for muscle growth.

But if you're getting in all your macros during your feeding window, you'll be fine – especially if you stick to the best type of fasted training, coming up in the next section!

The best type of fasted training

Not only should you pay attention to when you work out, you should also focus on the optimal type of training to get the biggest impact.

It's the age-old rivalry: cardio vs. weight training.

Is cardio a go or a no?

In a fasted state, cardio becomes very effective. Your insulin levels are super low, so your body is relying primarily on fat for energy.

Because of this, you should get your cardio on when you're as deep in the fasted state as possible (this probably means right when you wake up if you started your fast from the afternoon before.)

After your workout wait several hours before breaking your fast so that the fat burning extends as long as possible, or what you can handle.

If you're a beginner you may need to slowly work your way up to longer fasting schedules and plan your start and finish to your fast.

It's extremely important to stick to your plan. If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail!

As a bonus, fasted cardio allows for more blood flow to the abs and targets stubborn belly fat – score!

So fasted cardio is a GO – most experts agree that it's the best type of fasted training for weight loss.

If you prefer slow steady state cardio you can learn what cardio equipment burns [the most calories per hour](#). Better bang for your buck, or time.

What about weight training?

Weight training for bigtime muscle growth is optimal just a couple of hours before you break your fast.

That way you can take advantage of those early morning HGH level bumps (grow, muscles, grow!), while also getting in protein relatively soon after.

Why pick just one?

You can combine high-intensity cardio with lighter weights in one powerful workout.

In my experience, a high-intensity interval training program is the absolute best type of fasted training when you're deep in your fast.

Other training tips

What if I can't work out first thing in the morning?

I get it – you have a life. Not everyone can hit the gym in the wee hours before work. If your schedule doesn't allow for an early morning workout, try to train immediately before breaking your fast.

And if that's not an option either, then you're just being difficult. Just kidding. You can absolutely work out at the end of the day if that's the only time that works with your schedule.

In the end, the best time to workout is the time that works for you! If you choose a time that you can't stick to and end up skipping training altogether, then you're in for trouble.

For optimal results, workout deep in your fast, first thing in the morning. For results PERIOD, train whenever your schedule allows for it.

What if my body is telling me no?

It's important to listen to your body when you're combining fasting and working out.

Do you feel tired and sluggish on that treadmill? Pull back and slow down.

Do you feel weaker than normal when pumping out a few bench presses?

Drop the weight until you get into the groove. Give your body time to adjust, and you'll be powering through all your training sessions in no time.

Hunger is also a big factor of training while fasted, so listen to that growling tummy as well. Is that early a.m. workout leaving you ravenous?

You may need to adjust either your feeding schedule or your training schedule to accommodate, at least until your body gets used to your new habits.

Otherwise, you may fall off the wagon.

It's best to monitor your personal results and keep an eye on how your body reacts. Everyone is different, so pay attention to your body and tweak your schedule as necessary to optimize your individual results.

What's the next step?

You can read my [7-Day Intermittent Fasting Exercise & Meal Plan For Maximum Weight Loss](#) article for an example to get you started immediately!

In the next section you can read about strict and loose fasting that I use all the time.

I won't spoil it here but, I know you'll find it useful as many people don't know what they can eat or drink while fasting and you will see my concept of choosing between a strict fast or a loose fast.

Ultimately they both work for weight loss. Strict fast provides a better fat burning state while a loose fast provides some comfort while fasting and works in a way of reducing your eating window and by the end day you'll be in a calorie deficit to lose weight. (If you eat to your macronutrient profile)..

INTERMITTENT FASTING LIQUID HACKS

HARD & FAST RULES

For What to Drink While Fasting



Weight Loss Edition

EXERCISE
• WITH STYLE •

Strict Fast

During a strict fast, you're only allowed to drink water. (An exception is if you do a dry fast, a form of strict fasting during which you also abstain from water consumption.)

In other words, you avoid all foods and beverages other than pure water. Thus, no coffee, tea, diet soda, kombucha, bone broth, apple cider vinegar, milk, or lemon water.

Strict fasting is excellent for you if you fast for health and longevity because it stimulates autophagy, the body's way of cleaning out damaged cells to regenerate healthier ones.(1)

Most other types of fasts, however, don't offer that benefit. That's because even a small spike in insulin, which you induce by eating, is enough to impair autophagy.(2)(3)

In addition to fasting for autophagy and longevity, strict fasts are often also used for spiritual, medical, and religious reasons.

Loose Fast

While you shouldn't take in calories during a fast if you want to stimulate autophagy, that consumption is less of a problem if you fast to lose weight. You can consume a small number of calories without hurting fat loss.

The reason is that energy balance determines changes to the number on your scale. And consuming a tiny bit of calories during your fast won't interfere with that.

In fact, by allowing yourself to consume low-calorie drinks like lemon water or water with apple cider vinegar, it may be easier to adhere to your fast and thus to maintain a calorie deficit over the course of the day.

Therefore, if you find it hard to do a strict fast, you may want to do a loose fast if your goal is to lose fat. During such a fast, you can consume up to twenty calories per day.

Basically, you'll be good to go as long as you keep your energy intake during your fast below twenty calories.

This means you should avoid higher-calorie drinks like alcohol, fruit juice, soda, fruit teas, cordial, milk, kombucha, bulletproof coffee, almond milk, bone broth, and so forth.

Beginner Friendly

Can You Consume Artificial and Natural Sweeteners?

It depends on the type of fast you're performing.

You're not supposed to consume sweeteners during a strict fast, even if they're calorie-free. Doing so can alter your metabolism and cause you to miss out on the benefits of autophagy.

But during a loose fast, it's okay to consume sweeteners, although I would recommend you only consume those that are calorie-free. Calorie-free sweeteners don't break your fast because they don't raise insulin levels.(4)(5)(6)(7)

Examples of calorie-free sweeteners are saccharin (Sweet'N Low), acesulfame, aspartame (Equal), neotame, and sucralose (Splenda). You can consume drinks that contain these artificial sweeteners during a fast.

Now, based on the available literature, artificial sweeteners appear to be safe. There are, however, some contradicting studies. So, it's good to keep your intakes within the maximum recommended amounts or avoid artificial sweeteners altogether which is what I recommend.(8)(9)(10)(11)(12)

Stevia is a better natural sweetener. Not only is stevia low in calories, but this sugar substitute is also safe to consume and can benefit glycemic control (no insulin secretion).(13)

Monk Fruit, Xylitol is natural sweeteners and is ok in small amounts during a loose fast.

Most Frequently Questioned Products

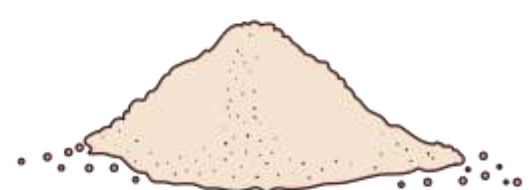


Stevia Kombucha

You can consume kombucha during a loose fast. But only Stevia Sweetened Kombucha or long fermented Kombucha as the sugar content will be less. Nexba Kombucha has 6 kcal per serving 330mls. Make sure to check nutrition labels.

Stevia

My go-to natural sweetener is Stevia. It does contain small amounts of calories and should be the first option when loose fasting. I choose natural cola drinks, other carbonated drinks or Kombucha that is sweetened by stevia. They generally contain very few calories per serving and can be consumed on a loose fast. In some people, stevia may trigger hunger, avoid these drinks if this is the case for you.



Natural Flavor Soda

There is a naturally flavoured cola sweetened with Stevia leaf extract and is calorie free. Zevia Soda is a popular alternative to diet soda and has many natural flavours to choose from. Zevia Soda is calorie free and can be used during a loose fast.



Mineral Water

Highly recommended during longer fasts as Mineral Water helps replace electrolytes and loss of minerals, which is common during a fast. Free from any calories and can be consumed during a loose fast.

Apple Cider Vinegar

Health guru's claim apple cider vinegar is nil in calories. Unfortunately it isn't.. But contains very little calories and can be consumed on a loose fast. Generally contains 3-5 calories per serving. There are benefits to consuming moderate amounts of apple cider vinegar during a fast. One of them is that it can increase feelings of fullness.(21) That's why drinking this compound – such as, by mixing one or two tablespoons with water – might help you manage cravings during your fast. What's more, apple cider vinegar can also improve insulin sensitivity and aid blood sugar control.



Most Frequently Questioned Products



BCAAs

Not recommended if you fast for longevity because even a small amount of BCAAs can stop autophagy. But if you do a loose fast for weight loss and go for longer than sixteen hours without food, BCAAs can be helpful. It prevents muscle degradation, especially if you train in a fasted state.(14)(15)(16).



MCT OIL

MCT oil isn't suitable for consumption during both a loose and a strict fast because it scores high in calories. If you want to consume MCT oil, it's better to do so in your feeding window.



Black Coffee

Black Coffee can be consumed during a loose fast and a strict fast. Since coffee contains caffeine, consuming it may reduce hunger. One review study found a reduction in appetite and energy intake upon consuming caffeine between 0.5 and 4 hours before a meal.(22) Cold brew coffee is another option. Using a French Press is a great way to cold brew your coffee over 12-24hrs. Cold brew coffee also reduces the acidity of coffee, which is gentler on your stomach. The caffeine concentration is much higher than hot brewed coffee so make sure not to overdo it.



Coconut Oil/Other Oils/Butter

Although coconut oil doesn't trigger an insulin response, it is high in calories and cannot be used in a loose fast. Perfect to use with Ketogenic diet as it contains healthy saturated fats that provide fast energy boosts to your brain and body after a fast.



Almond Milk

Great alternative to dairy, however even unsweetened Almond Milk will break your fast and can't be used during a loose fast as too many calories.

Most Frequently Questioned Products



Heavy Cream/Half & Half Cream

Although unsweetened heavy cream has 20 kcal per serving. It's ok to use in a coffee if you really need something, however it puts you at the maximum allowance on a loose fast and I recommend choosing something less in calories. Not to be used on a strict fast.



Milk

Milk contains natural sugar lactose and will break your fast and spike your blood sugar levels. Not to be used on loose fast.



Bone Broth

Broth will technically break your fast due to the protein and carbs. You can have bone broth during a loose fast. Preferably find bone broth low in calories like Zoup Chicken Broth. 1 cup or 240 ml of Zoup chicken bone broth has 14 calories and 4 grams of protein.



Collagen Powder

Collagen should be avoided while fasting as it's protein based and will break your fast.



Lemon Juice

Although contains natural sugars, 1 teaspoon added to cold water is fine on loose fast. But I recommend cutting a slice of lemon and placing it into the water without squeezing the juice. Will add slight lemon flavour to the water



Coconut Water

Due to the high levels of sugars coconut water should be avoided while fasting.

Most Frequently Questioned Products



Diet Soda

Packed with artificial sweeteners and technically doesn't contain any calories. You can drink these on a loose fast. Just because you can drink artificially sweetened diet soda doesn't mean it's good for your overall well-being and should be avoided anyway.

Research References

- (1) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3106288/>
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INTERMITTENT FASTING PLANNER

NAME

DAY

TYPE OF FAST

GOAL WEIGHT

START

AM/PM

FINISH

AM/PM

EXERCISE

- ☐ SQUATS
- ☐ DUMBBELL PRESS
- ☐ DEADLIFTS
- ☐ DB SHOULDER PRESS
- ☐ PULL UPS

MEAL 1

MEAL 2

3X RICE CAKES, AVOCADO &
LOW FAT COTTAGE CHEESE

MEAL 3