

## Intermittent Fasting – The Secret To Losing Weight And Living Well

A word of warning: I'm going to convince you to skip breakfast. Are you ready?

*"Wait what?! Skip breakfast? But breakfast is the MOST important meal of the day!"*

No, it's not.

We've been programmed by food corporations for years to believe that skipping breakfast leads to weight gain, binge eating, and low metabolism. But there's another side to this story.

What if I told you that by skipping breakfast, you can lose **more** weight, gain **more** muscle, and **increase** your quality of life?

Is this even possible?

### Lose weight without calorie restriction



Intermittent fasting is a diet plan that focuses not on **WHAT** you eat, but **WHEN** you eat. It's the practice of limiting meals to a specific time of the day, and "fasting" during the rest. The most popular fasting schedule, which we'll discuss later, involves eating within an 8-hour window and fasting for 16 hours.

Intermittent fasting is based on a practice that our primal ancestors used long ago. During the days of the hunter-gatherers, no one had 24-hour access to food. They often had to go long periods without any food at all (aka fasting). Only after a successful hunt can they feast and eat abundant amounts. Intermittent fasting is part of our DNA.

Before you begin thinking that this is a crazy plot to get you to starve yourself for weight loss, consider this:

You already practice fasting every day. It's called sleep. Supposed you have dinner at 6 pm and eat breakfast at 6 am. You essentially have fasted for 12 hours during sleep!

*"Well, of course I'm going to lose weight! I'm not going to be eating for most of the day!"*

Though it's true that you can easily cut calories using this regimen, the magic of intermittent fasting is in the way your body reacts to fasting by burning fat.

## Intermittent fasting turns your body into a fat burning machine



When it comes to food, your body has two opposing states: Fed and Fasting.

In a fasted state, your body starts burning the excess fat stored in your body. Insulin levels are kept low and your insulin sensitivity goes up.

When your insulin levels are low, your body starts to burn the fat in your body for fuel. This fat is normally inaccessible during a “normal” 3 meals-a-day routine. Even without changing how many calories you eat or how much you exercise, you can still experience dramatic weight loss.

In a fed state, your body releases insulin. This tells your body to start burning the energy from the food you ate and stop burning fat. This is especially true when you eat a diet filled with carbs. Any excess calories will be stored as fat in your cells.

After a meal, digestion usually takes about 6-8 hours. This means that when we eat 3 square meals a day, it’s almost impossible for the body to ever be in a fasted state. With today’s 24-hour access to food, we often find ourselves snacking almost every hour of the day. This makes the fat in our body mostly inaccessible due to the abundant carbohydrates in our system.

**The bottom line:** Intermittent fasting helps you lose weight by allowing your body to burn extra fat as fuel.

## Benefits that go beyond weight loss



Remember when I said that intermittent fasting can increase your quality of life? Here's how it's done:

1. Fasting helps you build muscle.

Eating less can help build muscle... sounds counterintuitive doesn't it? When you are fasting, your body actually secretes [growth hormones](#) into your system. The human growth hormone, HGH, is responsible for both boosting your metabolism AND promoting muscle growth. This is why fasting does NOT hinder athletic performance, but may actually improve it.

2. Fasting promotes brain health

Scientists at the [National Institute on Aging](#) found that fasting twice a week triggers the brain to protect against neurodegenerative disorders like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. Mark Mattson, professor at the John Hopkins School of Medicine says, "As is similar to what happens when muscles are exercised, the neurons in the brain benefit from being mildly stressed. To achieve the right kind of stress, people might benefit from severely minimizing their food intake."

Intermittent fasting keeps the brain engaged through a good type of stress. It wasn't too long ago that our ancestors lacked a steady supply of food. "The individuals who survive the best—the ones whose brains are more attuned to predators and who can remember where food sources are—are the ones who've survived," says Mattson.

3. Fasting may increase your life span

Since the 1940s, [studies](#) have shown that intermittent feeding patterns increase life spans in rats. Calorie restriction, along with the alternate feeding pattern, seems to extend longevity in these animals. Although the evidence in humans is still lacking, the case for its benefits is very convincing.

## How to get started

### The Leangains method

By far the most popular intermittent fasting schedule is the [Leangains](#) method. This method limits the eating window to an 8-hour period and reserves the other 16 hours for fasting.

For example, if you eat dinner at 8 pm, your next meal would be at 12 pm the next day, essentially skipping breakfast. You should eat all of your days' worth of calories between 12 pm and 8 pm, but you cannot consume any calories for the other 16 hours.

This schedule is followed every single day. Try to eat high protein meals and keep your post-workout meal the largest meal of the day. If you keep a constant eating schedule, your body will naturally adapt itself and fasting will become effortless.

### The Eat Stop Eat method

This method, created by Brad Pilon, involves fasting for a whole 24 hours every 2 days.

Suppose you eat dinner at 8 pm. Your next meal would happen the following day at 8 pm. Although this 24-hour method makes fasting a lot harder than 16 hours, your body reaches a very low insulin level and your body would burn fat for an extended amount of time.

### The Takeaway

Intermittent fasting is a great way to lose weight, build muscle, and stay healthy. Fast regularly for at least 16 hours and you'll see results that will change the way you look at food.

Always eat whole, natural foods while cutting out processed junk. The [Ketogenic Diet](#), high in protein and fat, pairs well with intermittent fasting. As long as you eat enough protein, you will be able to exercise regularly and not lose muscle.

**Remember:** Everyone is different and will see different results. Keep track of changes and listen to what your body tells you. Intermittent fasting is a way to put stress on your body for the greater good. If you are not getting enough sleep, are underweight, chronically stressed, or suffer from any health issues, then it's best to consult your doctor before trying this diet.