



Welcome To The Fasting Method

Welcome to The Fasting Method. Hi, I'm Megan Ramos and I'm Dr. Jason Fung. Together we will guide you step-by-step through our comprehensive program to implement time-restricted eating and fasting into your lifestyle.

We developed the program in 2012 to help patients lose weight and control their blood sugars. As people reached out from all over the world to learn about fasting, we created The Fasting Method online program.

Today we'll do a 'quickstart' guide to fasting, but don't worry, we'll cover all the details in later lessons.

What is fasting?

Fasting is merely any time that you are not eating, which can be a few hours to a few days or even a few weeks. If you eat dinner at 7 pm and breakfast at 7 am, that is a 12-hour fast. That's precisely where the word breakfast came from – the meal that breaks your fast. In that sense, fasting is part of everyday life. It's the opposite of feeding, where you are taking in food energy. Fasting is where you digest and use that stored food energy.

Is it starvation?

No. Fasting is the voluntary abstinence from food for health, spiritual, political or any other reason. Food is available, but you choose not to eat it. Starvation is the involuntary absence of food. It is neither deliberate nor is it controlled. Starving people have no idea when or where their next meal is going to come from. The main difference is control. During fasting, you are always in charge of the process. You can start it and you can stop it at any time you like.

Why should I fast?

There are many spiritual, religious and political reasons to fast, but here we focus on the health benefits of this ancient practice. The most common reason people fast is to lose weight, which translates into many other health benefits, such as reduced blood sugars, reduction in medication, and improved polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. Many health benefits of fasting are also present even without a loss or change in

weight. Fasting activates autophagy, a cellular recycling process, which may have very important disease prevention and anti-aging benefits.

How does fasting work?

When we eat, we ingest more food energy (calories) than we can use at the time. The hormone insulin goes up and that tells our body to store some of that food energy, either as sugar in the liver (glycogen) or body fat.

When we don't eat (fasting), the process goes in reverse, and we burn some of the food energy we've stored, both the sugar and the body fat.

So you see, it's really a natural cycle – feeding and fasting. Fasting and feeding. You are either storing food energy, or you're burning that energy, but you don't do both at the same time. You cycle between one or the other. If we spend more time feeding, we store energy (body fat). If we spend more time fasting, we burn more body fat.

The bottom line is very simple. When you do not eat, you force the body to generate its energy from its stores – which is mainly body fat. By giving the body more time in the fasted state, you burn more body fat. There is nothing unnatural about it. Body fat exists almost solely to provide energy when we have nothing to eat. So, we are using that body fat for exactly what it was designed for.

What can I eat during the fast?

Nothing. No fruit. No crackers. No yogurt. No nuts. The point is to eat nothing so that your body will use some of the stored food energy – body fat.

On the other hand, don't worry if you accidentally eat a little something during your fast. You won't negate all the benefits or have to start all over again. Your body will use that little bit of calories, and then go right back to burning body fat again.

A classic fast only allows water. However, there are many variations of fasts that allow certain drinks, and even some that contain calories, such as coffee with cream or bone broth. These variations can work almost as well as the classic water fast. So, don't worry about whether something is allowed or not. See if you are getting the results you want. If you are, don't worry about it.

What can I drink during the fast?

Water – any kind, plain, carbonated or sparkling. You may add a squeeze of lemon or lime or apple cider vinegar to flavor. All types of tea are great, and we recommend green tea

particularly. Some of the chemical compounds in green tea called catechins help suppress hunger. Coffee is OK. You can add a bit of heavy cream, but no sugar. Broth can be used for longer fasts.

No juice. No sugared soda. No diet sodas. No artificial flavored drinks. No artificial sweeteners. A bit of sugar-free gum is acceptable, but not too much.

Make sure you stay well hydrated. Sometimes, if you are lightheaded or have some cramps, some salt in water is helpful.

How do I Start?

Step 1 – Talk to your doctor – This is especially important if you are diabetic or taking any medications, as they may need to adjust those medications to make sure you are doing it safely. Any time you change your diet, it is important to talk to your doctor. You can see the attached letter template (available in the Handouts) on how to speak to your doctor.

Step 2 – Eliminating all snacks. Go back to basics by eating three meals a day and no snacks. Eat only at a table, not at a desk, not in front of the TV, not in the car. Focus on eating mindfully.

Step 3 – Slowly increase the fasting to a 16-hour fast by eliminating breakfast or dinner. This is also called Time Restricted Eating. As it becomes easier, you can increase that into a 24-hour fast.

That's it! You're on the way to a healthier life.

What can I expect as I start?

It can take time for your body to adapt to fueling on your own body fat instead of food. Most symptoms improve as you get used to fasting. Over the first week or two, you might feel a little weak, like you have the flu. This is sometimes called the Keto Flu. Headaches are common and drinking more water and increasing salt intake might help. Diarrhea, constipation and insomnia are also common but they also tend to be self-limited to the first one or two weeks.

Fasting is very much like exercising a muscle. The more you do it, the easier it gets. Aim for progress, not perfection. But fasting is flexible, too. You can fast more on some days and less on other days according to your own life's schedule. This is part of what makes it such a powerful tool for weight loss.

The Fasting Method Program

Each lesson provides education about fasting and proper nutrition to lose weight and regain your health. You can go at your own pace, or have each lesson emailed to you once a week. In addition, there are two other very important pillars of change, which are easy to find from our Membership Home Page.

Resources

We've provided a number of useful tools to help you on your journey. In the FAQ section you'll find video answers to the most common questions that people have. The Handouts (Quick Guides) section contains all our easy reference materials for you to print out or look at in case you forget. The Expert Series are guest experts who have produced a video series for more education.

Community

This important pillar is where we all get together to help each other out. You can ask each other questions, give each other stories, give each other tips and help keep each other motivated. We have a community forum where you can jump on a thread and talk to each other. We have group fasts. You can change it up. You can go at your own pace, if you are not that advanced then you can do something a little bit simpler.