



Breaking Plateaus and Fasts

Breaking a Plateau

You've likely plateaued if your body fat percentage or waist size hasn't budged over a two-week period. You'll notice that your clothes more or less fit the same way. The scale is a relatively poor measure because it measures both lean and fat mass and that is why taking measurements and photos is so important to track your progress.

A plateau does not mean your body is broken or that fasting does not work. It just means that your body has adapted to your new way of eating at a level you are not happy with. The best way to break through a plateau is to change up the fasting routine. We've talked about this in Lesson #5 Common Mistakes.

In addition to changing up your fasting routine, you can also change up your diet to break through that plateau. These changes do not need to be permanent.

Try reducing net carbohydrates to under 30 total grams per day keeping protein intake moderate. This type of diet is called a ketogenic diet.

If you are already following a ketogenic diet, try a high-protein, moderate-fat, and low-carb diet for a few weeks to mix it up. This works very well for many post-menopausal women, and vegetarians who have plateaued.

Try carb cycling with natural, unprocessed starches for a few weeks. Add some sweet potatoes, steel cut oats, or other natural starches during one or two meals.

Try a carnivore diet – that is, eating animal products only – like meat, seafood, shellfish, eggs and butter. You can always eat a carnivore diet through the weekdays but add vegetables on the weekends. A trial period of four to six weeks can be very beneficial for getting through a stubborn plateau.

Breaking a Fast

The word breakfast is literally the first meal of the day, which breaks your fasting period. In the 15th century it came to mean the meal consumed soon after waking. But actually, you may break your fast at 6:00 pm just as easily as can break it at 6:00 am.

When we fast, we don't produce digestive enzymes and fluids. If you eat too large a meal soon after a long fast, you may experience a dull stomach ache. It's not serious, and it's a mistake that most of us have made at some point, myself included. In some cases, people also experience diarrhea, gas pains and bloating. To prevent these problems, there are some simple guidelines for breaking a fast.

Generally, the longer you fast, the more gently you should break that fast. It is usually not an issue for fasts under 36 hours. Eat as normally as possible after fasting. If you normally eat one serving, for example, at dinner, keep that to one serving. Don't try to increase to two servings after a fast in anticipation of being hungrier. Remind yourself that you've actually fed yourself on your body fat during the fasting period so you don't need to compensate by eating more.

The most common foods people notice difficulty digesting after a fast are: raw vegetables, eggs, and nuts, nut butters, seeds and seed butters and dairy products. Avoid alcohol. If you have trouble breaking a fast try the following tips.

1. Add one tablespoon of psyllium husk to one cup of water and let it sit for 10 to 15 minutes. Drink this before you eat.
2. Start your meal with a cup of tomato and cucumber salad with parsley and a little bit of extra virgin olive oil.
3. For protein, choose a small portion of chicken about the size and the thickness of the palm of your hand.
4. Fill the rest of your plate with non-starchy vegetables cooked in a natural fat like butter. Finish with an avocado if you're still feeling hungry.