

## Lesson 5: BONUS OMAD + the 30/16 Protocol

In today's lesson, I'm going to discuss OMAD, and the 30-16 protocol. Now, what is OMAD? Well, OMAD stands for one meal a day. This means that the individual is elected to just have one meal every single day, at least for the most part.

Now what happens in so many cases is we first start fasting and it's totally overwhelming, right? There's all these things to have, and not to have, and to try to have less of. And there's all these numbers that come up, 16, 18, 24, 30, 36, 42, 48, 66, plus a 48-72. Like the math of fasting can be really overwhelming. And we're coming from eating the standard North American diet. We're coming from a place of eating several times throughout the day. A lot of us understand that we shouldn't be eating several times throughout the day, but the food is everywhere, and it can be overwhelming to start fasting.

So individuals start fasting. They start doing 14 hours of fasting with just three meals a day and no snacks. That's tough enough a lot of the time. Then they graduated to just having two meals a day, and they're doing daily 16 or 18 hour fasts, usually skipping breakfast and just having lunch and dinner. And then they jump into doing the 24 hour fast three times a week. And that over time too starts to become really, really easy. So if you're not there yet, I promise you, consistent practice, it does start to feel really easy.

A lot of people too, when they get to the 24 hour fast and it does become effortless almost, people start to enjoy the freedom of that. Hey, I don't have to worry about cooking and cleaning up in the morning and the afternoon. I can focus on getting all of the to-do's checked off my to-do list. I can actually get ahead in life in general. And I think the freedom that fasting provides is so rewarding and exciting, once you're in a physiological place where the fasting isn't challenging. And the 24 hour fast is the first fasting protocol that you hit from the 16, 18, 24 hour mark. At the 24 hour mark, when people really start to appreciate this freedom.

I mean, think about the number of hours a week you plan your foods, you plan your grocery shopping, you go grocery shopping, you put your groceries away, you do meal prep, you cook, you clean, like doing that three times a day is actually mind blowing. I spent so much time cooking and preparing food and grocery shopping and feeling guilty if I couldn't and then picking up junk food to eat because I had to eat. But we have all this freedom now. Fasting is so liberating. And you get in the mindset of, Oh, like I don't need to eat lunch. I've got plenty of body fat to fuel off of. So I don't feel this guilt, and I can actually get things done. People talk to

me about not just getting caught up at work or getting caught up with their family, but actually being able to do things for themselves for the first time in years. And they just love fasting. And we get that first taste of freedom once the 24 hour fast starts to become really easy.

And at the start of our journeys, we often do see fat loss. We see water loss, we see improvement in blood sugar levels when we start to do the 24 hours of fasting three times a week. Then what individuals do is they strive to do those 36, 42, and 48 hour fasts I discussed in yesterday's lesson video. Why? Well, if you hear people like myself and Jason Fung and other people saying we need to strive to do those fasts more often than not, because they are really therapeutic in nature. Especially if you have stubborn body fat and you have hormonal deficiencies like estrogen, progesterone and testosterone. Testosterone deficiencies affect men and women alike, keeping that belly fat there. And then diabetic issues for type two diabetes and medication dependency. So we tend to have a bit more of a hormonally complicated group that we see come to the Fasting Method. And in general, people do need to fast a bit longer.

So you master the 24 hour fast, and you say, "Okay, I'm going to take Megan's advice. I'm going to try to do these 42 hour fasts three times a week." So you start doing it, but then it is challenging. And a big reason why it is challenging is because our bodies are still full of insulin. That insulin in our body is making us hungry. That insulin in the body is slowing down our fat loss at the start. So you feel like these 42 hour fasts, you're not getting so much results. And you get frustrated, and it gets tiresome, and you really have to mentally prepare to jump into some of these longer intermittent fasts.

And they do have impacts on your social life to a certain extent. Hey, I get it. I've been there. It's tough. And I've worked with so many people who struggled too, because of family demands, life demands, work demands, work travel demands in non pandemic times. It is challenging, I hear you. So people say, okay, this is tough. But do you know what's easy, is that 24 hour fast. That 24 hour fast is actually really easy. So what if, what if here I just do them every single day? Or almost every single day? That's like five or seven days of fasting a week, right? So that's got to be good. And maybe I don't necessarily need to do the 36 and the 42 and the 48 hour fasts. Let me do the 24 hour fast every day.

So people start doing it every day, and for a month or two you lose some body fat consistently, you see some improvement in your blood sugar levels. But after that month or two, most often people run straight into a wall, a brick wall. They don't see any more fat loss. They don't see any more improvement with their blood glucose levels, and sometimes even despite eating a great diet and not literally changing a thing, they start to see weight regain and worsening of their blood glucose levels.

And then this leaves them feeling broken and totally defeated, because they've seen these unicorns on social media or in their friends circle get all these great results doing OMAD, one meal a day. And you get ticked off. Like, am I this broken? I mean the whole system, the way it is now, like the standard of care is designed to make us feel broken. They give us diets that don't work. Every single diet is the same thing, just repackaged differently. Everything that you've tried is just the same diet packaged differently. It's calorie restriction with a different name and a different label and a different bow on it, but is the exact same thing. So we're set up to fail, right? And insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

But the media tells you it can be different. Your doctors tell you it can be different. The government tells you it can be different. So what happens when it's not different? They blame us. They blame us. It's our fault, we don't have enough willpower. What a disaster our current standard of care is when it comes to fat loss. So a lot of people then take that shame they felt from past diets, or just even shame from watching people go through their weight loss struggles. And now you're struggling with your own, and you have flipped that shame on yourself because it just stops working.

But doing a 24 hour fast every single day, it often leads to adaptation. And when your body adapts to what it is that you're doing, well, then it becomes adapted and it stops engaging the hormonal cascade that actually makes intermittent fasting so very, very special and gives us all these great benefits from intermittent fasting. Like human growth hormone secretion that can help us gain lean mass and gain strong bone mass is excellent, right? We want that human growth hormone, especially as we get older and we're at risk for losing more muscle mass and muscle atrophy, and we're at risk for seeing decay in bone mass and developing osteopetrosis. That's just awesome.

And then [neurodrenaline 00:09:37] is one of these hormones that's produced. And the neurodrenaline, well, that enables our fat cells to free up free fatty acids and generate ketones for our bodies to fuel off of our own body fat. So we definitely want that noradrenaline. And because that noradrenaline does liberate that energy from body fat, well, that helps maintain our resting metabolic rate. So these are really cool hormones that are produced when they're fasting.

So when our bodies identify that we're in a fast state, what it does is it engages our sympathetic nervous system to a slight degree. Now our sympathetic nervous system is our flight or fight nervous system. And the opposite of the sympathetic nervous system is the parasympathetic nervous system, which is our rest and digest nervous system. Now you might think engaging flight or fight is not necessarily good, right? Like do I want to be putting my body in that type of stress? But there are different degrees of stress. There are minor stressors and there's

significant stressors. And then there's a duration of time that you're experiencing that stress. So if you have a significant stressor, and you're experiencing that for days, weeks, months on end, that's bad for your health. But if you're experiencing a minor stressor periodically, we actually call that hormesis. And hormesis is the concept that a little bit of stress periodically actually helps us grow and thrive. It makes us more resilient. So we absolutely want to inflict some stress on ourselves.

And we know this from the gym. We know that if we lift weights that aren't strong enough, we're not going to gain any muscle mass. We know if we lift weights that are too heavy, we're going to hurt ourselves. So we need to find that balance where that weight that we're lifting is just challenging enough. So maybe those 15 pound dumbbells, too easy. You could lift them up and down, do bicep curls a hundred times, well, you're not going to gain any muscle mass. Maybe those 25 pound dumbbells, geez, you can barely lift them off the floor. Can you imagine doing a bicep curl with them? What about those 20 pound dumbbells? They start to feel really heavy on that fourth and fifth rep, but you can get in some good reps before they start to feel challenging.

And it's that in between, that inflicts mild stress on the body and pushes itself a bit. You're not going to try to do 50 reps of those 20 pound dumbbells, but you're going to do a good six to 12, depending on how challenging they start to feel. And we know that that is what's helped us generate our muscle mass. So we do want to inflict some stress on the body, and fasting is that mild stressor that just produces a good amount of human growth hormone, a good amount of noradrenaline, and leads us to burn our body fat, maintain our lean mass and actually develop lean mass. So fasting actually does a great thing by activating this flight or fight nervous system.

So this is the magic. This is what we want to do. We want to engage that sympathetic nervous system so it produces these hormones, which are called counterregulatory hormones. So we want this to happen. And this only happens if the body feels that there is a challenge coming on. Now if we do the same thing every day, your body is going to lose the challenge. It's going to adapt. It's absolutely going to adapt if you do the same thing day in and day out.

So what happens is so many of these individuals just do the same thing every single day, day in and day out, which is one meal a day. Well, the body starts to adapt, and then you don't get this sympathetic nervous system engagement. You don't get those counterregulatory hormones, so you don't get the neurodrenaline that burns body fat. You don't get the human growth hormone that helps you with lean mass, you don't get any of that stuff. So then it starts to almost mimic calorie restriction.

So when you think of a calorie restricted diet, you reduce your calories, say by 30%. And when you first start to reduce your calories, 30% reduction in your energy expenditure, you're going to overspend for a few days. But over time, your body learns to adapt to this new energy budget, and it cuts costs and cognitive function, reproductive function, respiratory function, cardiovascular function, you name it. It starts to cut costs from different parts of your body, your different bodily symptoms or systems.

This is very similar to us seeing our 30% reduction in our salary. It happens, sometimes we have to take significant pay cuts. So imagine after 10 years you take a 30% pay cut at work. Well, let's just say you probably have very well established spending habits at that point. So a 30% reduction is significant reduction, and you're likely to overspend for a month or two as you adapt and figure out how to try it to cut costs. So you might have to downsize your home. You might have to sell a car and start taking public transport. You might have to start looking for food that's on sale rather than perhaps just buying what you want. Regardless, you'll have to investigate and figure out how to cut back on expenses.

So for the first couple of months, you might overspend and get into some debt, but then you adapt and you're able to make your monthly budget. You have no choice, you have to adapt. It's the same thing. We give our body this energy, it develops an energy budget. And if we take away from that energy budget, at first it will overspend, so you'll see some fat loss. But then it will adapt. And this is why people start to feel so terrible in calorie restriction diets. You get the mental fog because their cognitive function is not working great. They have reproductive issues, they have other organ health issues if they stick with it for too long. And then you feel terrible, and you're not losing weight. You might be even gaining weight. So this is why we're not a huge fan of this particular strategy. The very odd person it works exceptionally well for. But I will tell you for the majority of people it's very counterproductive.

Now, there is a caveat. When you are very metabolically healthy, when you're at your ideal body composition, when you have an incredible glucose response and you have great metabolic markers and you're feeling awesome, doing one meal a day is a fantastic strategy for longevity. Because calorie restriction in the long-term is actually really great for longevity, but only calorie restriction to a certain extent. And it will vary on individual and it will vary between lifestyles. Dr. Fung talks a lot about this longevity solution with Dr. James DiNicolantonio. So there is a place for that in our journey once we achieve good metabolic health and as we look to optimize our longevity.

So you're probably thinking, "Oh dear, these longer fasts, these 36, 42, 48 hour fasts, geez, they sound really daunting. I'm just not there yet. And I've fallen into this one meal a day pitfall and I don't know what to do. And I don't know, is there an in-between step?" Well, there is. And this

is what we call the 16-30 fasting protocol. Now with the 16-30 fasting protocol, you are eating one meal a day, but you are eating different meals every day. So Monday you would eat lunch, Tuesday you would dinner. Wednesday you would eat lunch, Thursday, you would eat dinner. Friday you would eat lunch, Saturday, you'd eat dinner, and Sunday is kind of like a freebie day. You could eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner, lunch and dinner, and breakfast and lunch. You could do a 24 hour fast. Sunday is that freebie day. But for Monday to Saturday, you're eating just one meal, but you're alternating that meal. So you're creating great variation in your fasting protocol, even though you're still having one meal a day.

So when you have lunch on Monday and you fast until dinner on Tuesday, that's a 30 hour fast. And when you go from dinner on Tuesday to your lunch on Wednesday, that's roughly 16 to 18 hour fast. And the same thing, Wednesday lunch to Thursday dinner, that's another 30 hours. Thursday lunch to Friday dinner, 16 hours. Friday lunch to Saturday dinner, another 30 hours. So you are creating great fasting variability. And this is variability, because some days you're fasting for half the time that you are on other days. And that is enough change to keep your body guessing, to keep it confused, to prevent it from adapting. And it's a great way to keep all of the magical hormonal changes that happen because of fasting still going.

So I love the 30-16 hour protocol as a stepping stone to help you transition into a longer fast. And you can even use that as a base fast. Even if you're in maintenance mode, people love this as a base fast. And it can be challenging, because our bodies do like to adapt. And so what happens is, lunch, dinner, lunch, dinner, lunch, dinner, well, geez, that is not letting your body adapt. Our bodies like to know when to expect food, but because it is mentally challenging, that means it's also physically challenging, even though it's not hours and hours and hours of fasting. So it's exceptionally effective for that reason. And I just love it. I think it's a great way to keep things changed up, while still giving people a bit of control and navigating their way into doing those longer fasts if they need to do them.

And actually sometimes if people have been doing weeks on end, a 42 and 48 hour fast, and they hit a plateau, sometimes instead of doing more fasting, we want to do a bit more eating. That's an alternative strategy to doing more fasting in some cases. So in those cases where someone says to me, "Hey, Megan, I don't want to do a longer fast." Well guess what? Let's try to eat more. And they think, "What, how does that make sense?" Well, it's all about changing it up. So instead of doing the 42s and 48s, we'll go and we'll do a week or two of the 30-16. And that is just so confusing for the body it gets weight loss going again. It gets things revved up and you moving in the right direction. So I love this protocol. I love it as a base protocol. I love it as a plateau buster. I love it as a bridge to go from shorter fast to longer fast. There's so many great uses of this 30-16.



Now I have described it as alternating between lunch and dinner, but you could also do breakfast and lunch, or you could do brunch and earlier dinner, whatever works best for you, whatever times you prefer to eat, you can absolutely do it, but you just kind of want to make sure that you're getting in roughly those 16 and roughly that 30, and that you are staggering the meals.

So I hope this is an interesting strategy for you. I found it to be just so effective for people who are starting their journey with fat loss and type two diabetes, metabolic issues. I've seen it be so successful for people with maintenance, who just really like getting into that one meal a day groove, but still want to change things up and experience some of that human growth hormone benefit from fasting. So it's a really cool strategy, and one that I hope we talk more about.