

## Lesson 6: Extended Fasting, Electrolytes & Fasting Aids

Hi, everyone. So a little bit of a change to our schedule. So today is Lesson 6 and yesterday during my Lesson 5, I mentioned quite a few times that I was going to be talking about intermittent fasting and our menstrual cycles today, but it seems fit that I talk instead about extended fasting with you today since yesterday, I talked about intermittent fasting and all the different alternate day fasting protocols that we recommend for weight loss. So for lesson 6 I'd like to first define the difference between intermittent fasting and extended fasting. EF, Extended Fasting is the therapeutic or the healing branch of intermittent fasting. So extended fasting is under the umbrella of intermittent fasting, but it is of course, the more prolonged fasts. And although I think that extended fasting is a wonderful, very powerful therapeutic and healing tool that many of us can use in our journey during different phases of our journey for many different goals and benefits.

I'd like to start off by inviting you to read a blog post that Dr. Fung wrote called The Number One Rule of Fasting, and there are many other similar videos and blog posts that both Megan and Dr. Fung have written and talked about. Fasting is by no means a sort of new age trendy new thing. It has definitely been around as long as humans have been around, people practice fasting for a number of reasons, both for religious, spiritual and healing. And sometimes just because of life, people are so busy and often people will tell us that they've done fasting for a long, long time, even without realizing they were fasting because of the type of job that they had or while they were intensely studying. I think it's important for us to realize that there's a time and place for everything. Some people do extended fasting very, very easily, much more easily than others.

I often use my husband as an example. When I first started working with Dr. Fung and Megan, my husband's very first fast was a 12 day fast. Now he did not set out to do a 12 day fast. He just wanted to try out fasting for the first time in his life. And his very first fast ended up being 12 days because of how he felt throughout the fast, he felt better and better each day. It actually didn't get harder and harder. It got easier and easier. And also we had the wonderful supervision of Megan and Dr. Fung, and we got a chance to do some lab work as well. And so it was done in a very safe setting and manner. He has since then done many, many extended fasts. I, on the other hand, do very, very little extended fasting. I have done quite a few five day fasts, well planned and prepared five day fast.

And that's based on that experience and of course my clinical experience that I want to talk to you today, but lots and lots of people have not and cannot fathom the idea of doing extended fasting. And I fully understand, I think that the biggest obstacle that people run into when they first start fasting, of course, is skipping meals. So that's the biggest obstacle, but that's something that people often achieve with great success. And so we start working with TRE as I explained to you in the last few lessons and make sure that we're doing it properly. But the biggest obstacle that I find is doing an overnight fast. So going from having one or two meals a

day to having no meal a day and actually going to bed without having a meal. I think that that tends to be the biggest obstacle to many of us.

It is something that most of us manage to do, and eventually it gets easier and easier. There are some people that just cannot or should not do extended fasting. I think that like everything else in life, if you're going to do something like this, you need to be well paired and educated. We have all the resources available to us nowadays, to be able to do that. I do think that a great many of you will find extended fasting to be something that you do quite easily and that you enjoy and that you enjoy the benefits and how you feel when you do it and when you do it properly. If you don't feel well, break your fast. You can always fast tomorrow or the next day or next week or next month. But anytime that you don't have a preexisting concern or contraindication to doing extended fasting and you are knowledgeable and prepared and are well hydrated and are doing it properly and you feel well while you're doing it.

I think that it's something that of course has a really powerful and healing effect. And many of us are at least curious about extended fasting and why we should do it. So an extended fast is considered a fast that is longer than two days. And some people will go on doing fasts as long as five days or 10 days or even longer. So what are some of the benefits of an extended fast? Extended fasting is the therapeutic branch of intermittent fasting. Overnight fasts are considered a therapeutic fast and healing fast. And it is of course, the most powerful and the most accelerated way to lower insulin, to reverse insulin resistance, into reversing all the expressions of insulin resistance like weight loss and diabetes and PCOS and all the other ones that we've talked about, like fatty liver. I often call the extended fast, that extra punch if done appropriately and in a timely manner. There are other religious and spiritual reasons why some people do extended fasting, but in our community, we talk about the therapeutic and healing benefits of extended fasting.

We do know that extended fasting in particular does trigger and accelerate autophagy, induces autophagy, as many will say. So if you're interested in this topic, I highly recommend that you look this up. Autophagy is of course referred to as anti-aging or protein recycling. Some people will refer to it as anti-cancer or prevention of cancer, and in our community, many people talk about the autophagy benefits of extended fasting for saggy skin. So for those of you that lose a lot of weight, this might be a concern that comes up about what to do. Do you need to do plastic surgery? If you lose a lot of weight, do people in our community find that they don't need to do plastic surgery, even though they've lost a lot of weight because of the benefits of autophagy and extended fasting. One other big topic for men and women, of course, when it comes to extended fasting and fasting in general, is this benefit of growth hormone production.

We know that growth hormone production does in fact increase with fasting and that the longer you fast, the more growth hormone production. That's one of the reasons why jokingly called the 72 hour fast, the holy grail. I do think a lot of the benefits of extended fasting peak at 72 hours. So that is why I think it's the holy grail. It's one that I know I strive to achieve, a 72 hour fast, whether it's once a month, once every season, or once a year, depending on what's going on in my life. And there are definite benefits to doing a 72 hour fast. Those benefits don't decrease after 72 hours. Most of them probably reach a plateau and the benefits stay high, pass the three day fast. And that's why some people will go on to doing a five day or a 10 day fast.

I personally think that it's always a good idea to weigh the risk and benefit of doing a fast up to 72 and then longer than 72, depending on what your goal is. There are some potential risks that you might want to consider. Dehydration is a very real and potential side effect of fasting. It is one that we address quite easily. Most of us take precautions to prevent dehydration when we fast. If you are getting adverse reactions to fasting such as heartburn or loose stools or constipation, these are very, very common and easily addressed, I think when they come up. How often should you do an extended fast? For example, if you're looking to reverse diabetes, I think that that is the best protocol to do a 72 hour fast weekly. If weight loss is not your primary concern, that might be the way to go.

So you could do a three or even a four day fast once a week. You could do a five day fast about once a month. I don't personally recommend extended fasting, like the five day fast. There is an appropriate time of the month for women to do extended fasting. I think that most women can do a three day fast once a week with some exceptions. I think that most women can do a five day fast once a month, again, with some exceptions. And then anything longer than that, I would save to do maybe seasonally or annually, or maybe get the proper medical supervision. How do you get from eating 10 times a day to fasting for five or 10 days in a row? Well, that's a good question. I have seen it happen to be totally honest. I think that there are people that once they understand and discover fasting, they jump into it head first, like my husband did, and who's very first fast might be a five, 10 day fast. Fasting is practice that our body responds to very, very well.

When you go into this lower insulin fat burning mode, you naturally go into this higher energy clarity, better mood, very productive and of course, fat burning type of state. It is very common and actually not surprising that so many people can go into extended fasting quite easily, but some of us don't find extended fasting to be easy at all. Some of us don't even find intermittent fasting to be easy at all. So I am a big believer and if necessary taking a more of a step by step type of approach. I'm someone for example, who doesn't necessarily go to the gym, when I first start, it takes me quite a while to build that muscle. And the same thing happens with fasting. How do you prepare for an extended fast? I think there's three main steps here. The first one is making that decision. You first have to research and figure out if extended fasting is the thing for you.

And if it is, if you are willing and ready to do it, is it something that you're going to try to do, or is it something that you really want to do and you're going to make it work for you? The second part of this three step approach is to prepare for it. Fortunately for us, we have a lot of good resources and there are ways to prepare for an extended fast. From a food perspective, I explained to you that the food's down at the base of the food pyramid, also known as the fat fast, is a wonderful bridge to prepare people for an extended fast. So if you're looking to do your very first overnight fast, or your very first three day fast, or your very first five day fast, you might find that if you do a few days, two to five days of fat fasting exclusively, so this fast mimicking diet that puts you in this lower insulin fat burning mode, high energy mode a lot quicker. Within these two to five days, you might find that the fast is actually a lot easier.

First of all, when you fat fast for a few days, you will naturally notice that your appetite goes down. You don't feel like eating as much or as often. So you go into the fast a lot easier,

especially if you've decided and you're prepared to fast. The other thing that I think is essential for preparing to do an extended fast is understanding the role of water and electrolytes hydration. As your insulin drops, when you stop eating because every food causes an insulin response. And then of course, on the other side of the coin, when you don't eat, your insulin naturally drops. When you burn fat, you go into this release mode and you will lose a lot of water and a lot of electrolytes. And this is of course felt by people not only by how they feel, but also by the significant weight loss that occurs when you lower insulin.

A lot of that is fluids and inflammation going down, which is a great thing. When people say, well, I just lost water. What they really mean is that they lost a lot of the extra fluid that they were hanging onto, that retention that was causing them a lot of harm. So you do go into this release mode, but as a consequence, you will dehydrate. And some people feel it a lot more than others. It's important that you prevent dehydration. You, especially if you've had some experience may need more water, more electrolytes than somebody else. I personally need a lot of water and a lot of electrolytes. When I fast, I have often felt nauseous when fasting and wasn't properly hydrated. I personally also tend to be of the group of people that get more loose stools when I fast, some people get more constipated when they fast, you'll likely need more water.

You will need some salt and you will need some Magnesium. We get all of our central electrolytes and a lot of water from our food as well besides the water that we drink. But when we don't eat, we don't get any water from the food because we're not having any food and we don't get any salt and Magnesium and other electrolytes from our food. So we need to replace these. So not only are you not getting any from your food, you're also releasing the electrolytes in the fluid that you already have in your body. So you need to replace that. When you're doing an alternate day type pattern, as I explained before, you get an opportunity to rehydrate every time that you eat. And then even if you dehydrate during your fast, you will then rehydrate again. I still recommend that people, when they're doing alternate day fasting, that they get their electrolytes right.

And that they make sure that they get enough on their eating days and on their fasting days. On their eating days, you're getting most of your electrolytes from your food. You may need some extra Magnesium in the evening to prevent cramps on the days that you're fasting. And most of us do take about a 400 milligram supplement of Magnesium on both eating days and fasting days. So on average, people are drinking about two to three liters of water a day when they're fasting, maybe a little more, maybe a little bit less. Most of the time, water to thirst. But when you're fasting, you have to account for the fact that even if you're not thirsty, you might dehydrate and or you might already be dehydrated. When it comes to salt and Magnesium on your fasting days, again, you might just follow the recommendation of 400 milligrams of Magnesium on both eating days and fasting days, but you might need a lot more.

We do know people that are having upwards of 1200, 1800 milligrams of Magnesium for a number of reasons. Some people just need more Magnesium. Magnesium deficiency is not uncommon. So you might need a lot more. You might also supplement with topical Magnesium like Epsom salt baths and foot baths and Magnesium sprays and creams and lotions. I actually recommend that if you're going from an eating day to a fasting day, that you do increase your

Magnesium a little bit, especially in the evening, because it is a muscle relaxant. It is going to help you feel better. It's going to make that overnight fast a lot easier as well. If oral Magnesium gives you loose stools, you may need to switch your type of Magnesium. So for example, Magnesium citrate, which is used quite commonly, is a form of Magnesium that can cause loose stools in some people and most people in fact. Instead of Magnesium citrate, you might take glycinate or bisglycinate.

There's also other types of Magnesium salts that you might want to look into. And Magnesium is usually taken in the evening because it is a muscle relaxant. There are some forms of Magnesium that might be taken a little bit earlier. So this is definitely something that you might have some questions about. So please reach me in the forum or send me your questions to answer in our Q and A session. Salt is the gateway electrolyte. It is the electrolytes sparing agent, as I like to call it, because in order for you to absorb the Magnesium that you're taking, in order for you to retain the other essential electrolytes that you already have in your body, and you don't want to lose too much of when you're fasting, you need to make sure that you're taking enough salt. And again, a lot of people need a lot more salt and a lot of people might find that they need a lot less salt.

You have to find where you are in there in between. I am definitely somebody who tends to need a lot more salt than other people. And I know this from experience, I've fasted without salt, and I've fasted with a significant amount of salt. And I do feel a lot better. How much salt do you need and how do you take salt when you are fasting? When you're eating, you're getting most of your salt from your diet. When you're fasting and doing one meal, you might only need about half a teaspoon of salt to compensate, but when you're doing no meal, you might need somewhere around a full teaspoon of salt. That's probably how much salt you're getting on your eating day. The concern here is that not only are you not getting salt from your foods, but you're also losing a bit of salt. So you might need to replace it with a bit more. So about one teaspoon of salt throughout the day.

It is not recommended that you take all that salt at once. If you ever tried, you would quickly realize that that was a really bad idea because you'll either get loose stools, very loose stools, it's called salt flush, or you might get very nauseous and throw up. So I do recommend that you take your salt throughout the day. So from morning to night, very, very slowly in order to ensure that your body actually absorbs it. My preferred way to get salt into you while fasting is to get rock salt under your tongue. So I usually have my little salt container with me. And in this salt container, I have rock salt. So when I am fasting, I take one rock of salt and I place it under my tongue. And I do that about once an hour. By the end of the day, I have taken in about a teaspoon of salt.

If you are exercising, if you're very active, if you're sweating, if you're outdoors a lot, if it's the summer months, you might find that you need a bit of extra salt. So even more than that one rock under your tongue. My preferred way is the sublingual way. So under your tongue, which goes directly into your bloodstream, it bypasses your gastrointestinal system. So you shouldn't get any loose stools or nausea with it. Then another way to get salt into you is to put fine salt or ground salt into your water bottles, and to sip that water that has salt very, very slowly throughout the day. So for example, you could put a quarter of a teaspoon of ground salt into a

water bottle and sip that over the course of about three hours. If you multiply that by four, then you're getting a full teaspoon of salt over the course of 12 hours.

Some people do use salt capsules, and maybe even some electrolytes supplements. Electrolyte supplements that have a mixture of components. It's going to be very hard to get the right amount that you need for each of these individual components. I personally only recommend salt and Magnesium besides water on your fasting days and in between meals, if you need it. I recommend that if you're supplementing with any other electrolytes, especially Potassium that you speak with your doctor first. Potassium is a very critical electrolyte. You should not increase or decrease your potassium levels significantly because that is a serious medical concern. If you take a salt capsule and if you chug it all at once, that's a whole lot of salt that's going to go right through you at once. It might all go to your intestine at once. You might get loose stools, you might not absorb most of it.

It might get right through you. So that might not work for you. So I just ask that you check if that works for you or not. You might find that some fasting drops and salt drops might be helpful. If you put these in your water and if you sip the right amount appropriately and slowly throughout the day. So whether you're doing this alternate day fasting pattern of two meals, one meal or two meals, no meal on your fasting days, make sure you're taking the appropriate amount of electrolytes that you need. And if you're doing an extended fast, I think that's going to be one of the key components to extended fasting, into how you feel during the fast. Your body does need a certain amount of water and electrolytes, but it doesn't necessarily need to eat for a few days because you have enough reserves.

You will get the appropriate amount of fuel. And that is not what is going to make you feel like you need to break a fast. Hunger comes and goes in waves and you might find that you can overcome that very, very easily, as long as you are well hydrated, you will likely feel very well when you're fasting. People often say they have a lot of mental clarity. They have a lot of energy. They're very, very active at work. Some of the things that you might struggle with are things like sleep when you're doing extended fasting. So I definitely recommend that you work on your sleep, as I said, daily. And especially on your fasting days that you go to bed a lot earlier, that you take a little bit more Magnesium and that you work on your cortisol lowering techniques. But what people most often find is that when they're fasting, they feel a whole lot of energy.

And even if they don't sleep as much as usual, they feel a lot of energy the next day. And the last thing I want to talk to you about when it comes to preparing for an extended fast is fasting aids. Do you need fasting aids? Yay or nay? I wrote a blog post called exactly that, that you might want to look up. Fasting aids are like crutches or training wheels. You use them when you need them and you get rid of them when you don't. If you do partake in a fasting aid, that is something that's going to actually aid you in fasting, it's going to make the fasting easier and not harder. I'm very particular about the fasting aids that I recommend. I definitely don't think that most of the things that people are often using for fasting are actually aids. They're usually a hindrance. So I don't actually recommend that you use things like dairy, like creamers and heavy cream or any kind of milk, nut milk, or otherwise when you are fasting.

These are things that you should only be bringing into your eating windows, your TRE if at all. There are three fasting aids that I recommend. Anytime you need it, as long as you need it, bone broth or vegetable broth. If you're more plant-based it is something that you can look up a recipe for. We have lots of options out there on the Internet for great bone broth recipes. And even within our program, bone broth is something that you can have once, twice or even three times during your fasting a day. Bone broth is something that might make you feel better when you're fasting. It also has some amino acids, of course, and it also has a little bit of electrolytes, and you can even add a little bit of extra fat and a little bit of extra salt to your bone broth.

So I definitely think that this is a great training wheel or fasting aid for those that need it when starting out. You may feel like you don't need fasting aids at all. And if you don't, then stick to your water in electrolytes, like any other fasting aid and like any other eating day. If and when you have it, you have it in a very short window, you have as much as you need and you walk away. Make sure you're not nursing that bone broth or any other fasting aid throughout the day. So the other fasting aid that I would recommend if you need one is a Bulletproof coffee. So the original Bulletproof coffee is made with either coconut oil and or butter or ghee. You can also try cocoa butter. I have used organic cocoa butter in my coffee and you blend that up and it gets nice and creamy and frothy.

And it's something that smells wonderful. It even tastes wonderful, but it's not something that you'll have a whole lot of, because it is just pure fat. And so not only does it not have a huge insulin response, it's not something that you feel like having over and over again, because you do get very full and very satiated with it. And when you're fasting, you're usually not very hungry. So you usually just feel like something either because you're dehydrated. And that's the one thing that you have to address preventatively, or you might be a little bored. My favorite fasting aid, that's not part of these three, in fact, is distraction. Distraction is the best fasting aid. Make sure that when you're fasting, you're nice and busy. You'll have a lot of energy so you can use that to do a whole lot of things, both at work and at home. A lot of people find that when they're fasting in their home, they do a great job cleaning up and organizing their house.

The third fasting aid I'd like to recommend is chia seeds in water. And I make a chia seed pudding with a small bowl of water, a tablespoon of chia seeds. And you let that gel for a few minutes, and then you can save that in the fridge. And you can have one or two tablespoons of that mixture, whether you need to take a particular medicine or supplements, or if you have heartburn while fasting, like I have in the past, or if you have very loose stools when fasting. And if that feeling of hunger really bothers you, that empty stomach feeling, then chia seeds in water will be very helpful. A lot of people enjoy and actually celebrate that hunger feeling in their body because you know, it's something that will likely go away very quickly within a few minutes, probably 20 minutes. If you use the distraction of the fasting aid, you'll go away a lot quicker.

At least you won't notice it. But also once that happens, once that hunger wave goes away, you do get a surge of energy. And you know that your body is gone into a little bit of a deeper fat burning mode. Let's talk about how to break a fast and when to break a fast. The number one rule of fasting states that whenever you don't feel well, you break your fast. So let's say you didn't hydrate properly for whatever reason, or you dehydrated quicker than your ability to rehydrate during a fast. And you really don't feel well. Then it is necessary that you break your

fast. Even if it isn't the time that you predetermined to break the fast. If you have decided that you're going to fast for three or five days and the time has come and you want to break your fast, then you break your fast.

I want to leave you with the idea that how you break your fast is ultimately going to determine how you do the whole rest of the week and likely a few more days to come. When you're fasting, even though your hunger comes in waves, when you're hungry. After a few days, at least, you are hungry for real food. You likely will notice that the first couple of days of fasting the first day or two, you might be craving, especially if you've eaten a higher carb meal, the days before you might be craving more processed, higher carb type foods. But if you come from a lower carb, more real food type diet, you will likely notice that after three days or so of fasting, you don't crave junk food at all, or processed food at all. After about three days, you start to think of only animal products and plant-based type products, very real foods, whole foods.

So you might start craving steak. That's very, very common for when people are fasting after three days or something like that. I have heard many clients joke that after breaking a fast with a salad, it was the best tasting food they've ever had. If they fasted long enough, you would welcome any food. All food will taste great. And so you want to prepare to break your fast appropriately. If you break your fast with processed higher carb foods, this is going to be problematic for you because you are going to have a huge insulin spike. And then you will go into this fat storage retention type mode. Your regain of weight will be much, much bigger. You will feel very bloated and have a lot of retention if you break your fast with more processed, higher insulin producing food. So I don't recommend it at all. Putting yourself into that high insulin state right after a fast is likely going to put you into this hormonal state that makes you feel like binging.

And so you will think that it's the fasting that's causing the binging, but in fact, it's how you broke your fast. If you have issues with digestion, when you break your fast, please reach out to me in the forum or send me your questions and I will address those as well individually. If you've done an extended fast, like a five day fast, what are you supposed to do the next few days after an extended fast? Some people will claim that you should eat for as many days as you have fasted. So for example, if you fasted for five days, then you should eat for five days in a row. Well, I don't necessarily believe this to be true. If you're using extended fasting as an extra punch for your weight loss or for your healing journey, I think that the most appropriate thing for you to do is of course, to break your fast, appropriately, depending on whether you break your fast with one meal that day, or whether you break your fast with two meals, that will help you to determine what you do the next day.

What I mean is, if you decide to break your fast toward the end of the day, and you only have one meal the day that you break your fast, and many people do this to extend their fast, a little longer, or because they're really not hungry enough to have two meals, then they plan to break their fast sometime in the afternoon and they have one meal. Then I recommend that you eat two meals the next day. And that's for that right balance between fasting and eating as this will still be a continuation of your fast. And then you need a full eating day the next day. If you were practicing an alternate day fasting pattern before you extended fast, and you're hoping to continue on your weight loss journey, I highly recommend that you break your fast this way and





that the next day after that you go into your alternate day fasting pattern that you have chosen for that week or that you are accustomed to doing.

Well I hope you enjoyed today's lesson. And I look forward to getting the questions from you in the forum or the questions that you send into [Masterclass@TheFastingMethod.com](mailto:Masterclass@TheFastingMethod.com). I will try to address them in the forum or in our next Q and A session. I look forward to tomorrow's lesson, where we will talk about intermittent fasting in our menstrual cycles. Take care.