

Intermittent Fasting: Benefits, Considerations and How to



Article Source: [Mercola.com](https://mercola.com)

Do you have what, why and how questions about intermittent fasting? Wondering if it's worth a try? According to a convincing body of [research on the topic](#), the answer to the second question is a resounding "yes." Intermittent fasting is a powerful approach to facilitating weight loss and reducing your risk of chronic diseases like Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and cancer. It typically refers to not eating for 14 to 18 consecutive hours a day, which means you are only eating your food within a six-to-eight-hour window.

Benefits of intermittent fasting

Intermittent fasting has a wide range of biological benefits, [including the ability to](#):

- Promote insulin and leptin sensitivity
- Normalize ghrelin levels to result in lowered hunger
- Improve blood sugar management
- Lower triglyceride levels
- Increase human growth hormone production to help build muscle and promote fat loss
- Suppress inflammation and reduce oxidative damage
- Prevent or reverse Type 2 diabetes
- Improve immune function
- Lower blood pressure
- Reduce your risk of heart disease and cancer
- Eliminate sugar cravings
- Improve cognitive function
- Increase longevity

Why intermittent fast?

By no means is that a comprehensive list. Intermittent fasting restores the body to a more natural state that allows a whole host of biochemical benefits to occur. When you eat throughout the day and never skip a meal, your body adapts to burning sugar as its primary fuel, which downregulates enzymes that utilize and burn stored fat. As a result, you start becoming more insulin resistant and start gaining weight. In order to lose body fat, your body must be able to burn fat. Two powerful ways to shift your body from carb-burning to fat burning are fasting or following [a cyclical ketogenic diet](#).

Intermittent fasting Considerations

While intermittent fasting is likely to be beneficial for most people, here are some [points to consider](#):

- Intermittent fasting does not have to be a form of calorie restriction – It's a practice that should make you feel good. If your fasting strategy is making you feel weak and lethargic, you need to reevaluate your approach.
- Sugar cravings are temporary – Your hunger and craving for sugar will slowly subside as your body starts burning fat as its primary fuel.
- It is not advisable to practice intermittent fasting if your daily diet is filled with processed foods – The quality of your diet plays an integral role in your health, especially if you're looking for more than mere weight loss.

How to get started

To start intermittent fasting, try eating later in the morning and increasing the length of your fast until you're skipping breakfast, and lunch becomes your first meal of the day. Remember, you want to keep your eating window between six and eight hours. At night, stop eating at least three hours before you go to bed. This will allow you to fast for 14 to 16 hours each day. Try two days a week to start, then gradually adjust your schedule until you're practicing intermittent fasting every day. Avoid refined carbohydrates, sugar/fructose and grains. Focus your diet on vegetable carbohydrates, high-quality, healthy protein in moderate amounts and healthy fats such as butter, eggs, avocado, coconut oil, olive oil and raw nuts. Don't forget to drink plenty of water!