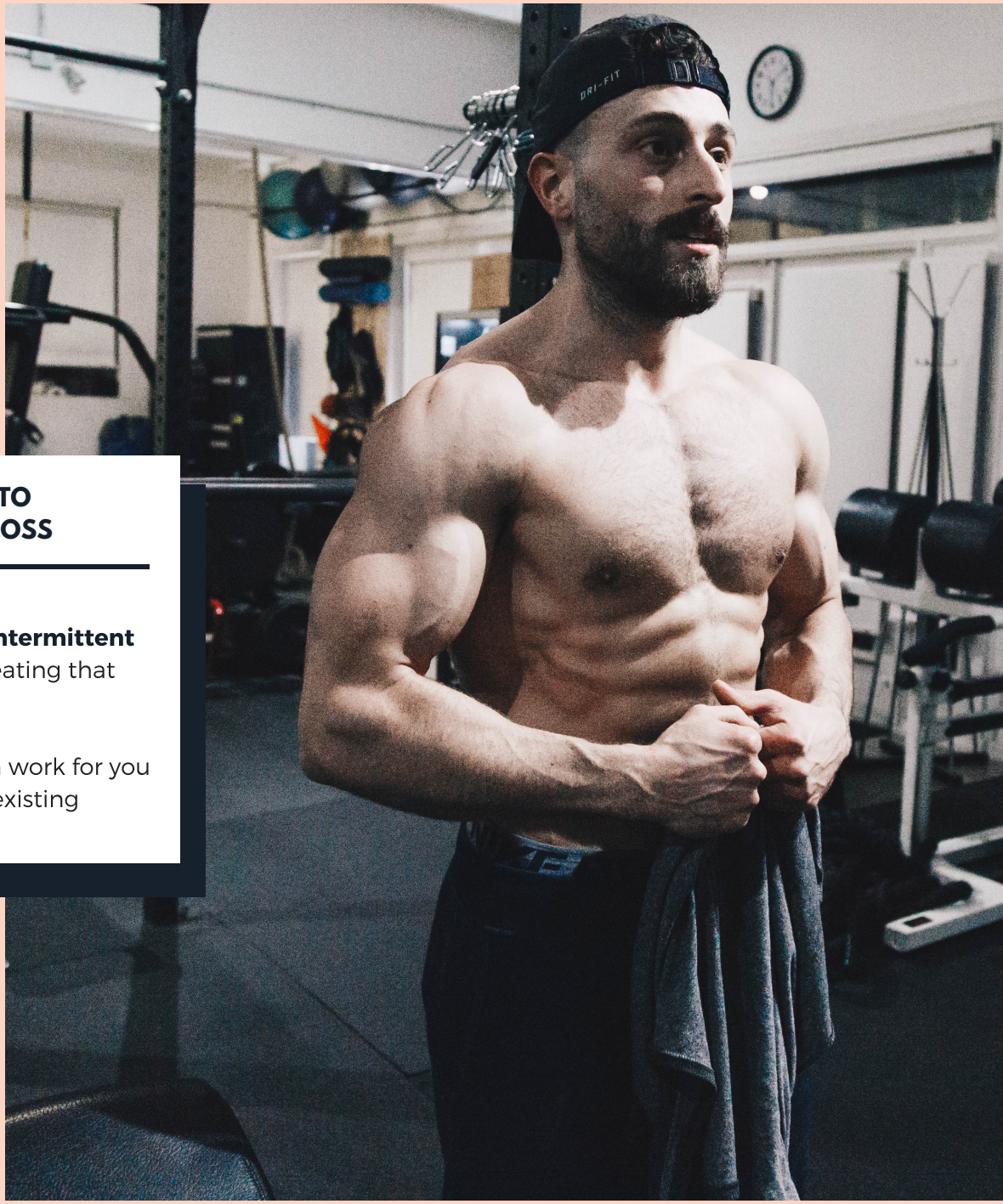
INTERMITTENT FASTING.

The Essential Guide



THE ONE TOOL YOU CAN USE TO OPTIMIZE ANY DIET FOR FAT LOSS

INSIDE

Learn to adapt the concept of **Intermittent Fasting** to any existing style of eating that already works for you.

Understand why and how it can work for you with as little disruption to your existing routine as possible.

a NOSUCHTHING® training guide.

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INTRO.

THE DIETARY TOOL THAT WILL HELP YOU GET LEAN AND STAY LEAN WITH LESS EFFORT

JUST DON'T –

It's funny, when you try and take what you're doing right now and replace it with something new it becomes a daunting task.

Alternatively, just leaving something out altogether seems to be much easier. I think this is part of the reason **Intermittent Fasting** has gained so much traction recently as a tool for fat loss. It doesn't centre around a specific food or macronutrient – you're simply skipping meals with the goal of ultimately eating less food.

More recently general health benefits have been attributed to fasting, but you need to keep it in mind that the research that does exist on the topic is still in its infancy and it could easily be another decade before those claims are validated and take hold as a mainstream concept.

For the purpose of what **NOSUCHTHING training** helps people achieve, the only application we're really interested in at the moment is that it's an effective calorie management tool. It's not necessary for fat loss and there aren't any special metabolic or physiological advantages, but it's a tool worth using under the right circumstances.

That's it. Fasting is just a way to budget a smaller amount of calories that is potentially more manageable for most people. Fasting isn't objectively better for losing body-fat, but it can potentially make it easier to lose and maintain a lower body-fat percentage. It can work for you and it's worked for a ton of people, but it's not the magic bullet of fat loss.

We'll jump right into the **Fasting Protocols** that have gained the most popularity and get into the potential pros and cons of **Fasted Training.**

At the end of this guide you can find a section of **Frequently Asked Questions** related to intermittent fasting and a section on **The Potential Downsides of Fasting.**

At the very end, I've included a section on the **General Health Benefits** of intermittent fasting if you feel so inclined to go further down that rabbit hole and are in need of a jumping off point.

Let's get started.

THE FASTING PROTOCOLS.

USE THESE PROTOCOLS AS A STARTING POINT TO GET COMFORTABLE WITH THE APPLICATION OF FASTING

GETTING STARTED

A great place to start when it comes to fasting is with a short-term "trial" fast. In most cases, if you've been overeating for an extended period of time (if you haven't been able to lose fat, this is technically what you've been doing), you've probably lost touch with your hunger cues.

Trial Fasting is a great way to practice the management of your hunger and learn to differentiate between actual hunger and mental hunger – which is a pretty useful skill if you're going to try and lose fat.

For those of us living in the developed world, food tends to be available in abundance and on demand. It's worth acknowledging that you're usually just eating because that's how the day is structured or because you were just reminded of food through advertisements or other cues. Just think of it as an exercise in getting familiar with yourself.

I alluded to this earlier – there isn't one definitive protocol that carries any inherent benefit over another. It's just like training, start small and be consistent in its application. You don't want to go right for a 24-hour fast. You also don't want to be overly rigid with your framework. If you miss one hour of fasting, it's totally fine. If you need to break your fast, you'll be fine as well.

Following a trial fast, I would just experiment first with the framework that seems to disrupt your existing routine the least.

Expect a week or two of adjusting to this and that it will in fact make you feel hungry. Just take a breath and get a handle on your feels – it'll pass. You're trying to lose fat. Naturally, being hungry is just a part of that.

Just try and keep yourself busy and make some productive use of the heightened state of concentration that some people experience while fasting and remember that coffee is your friend. It can help to elevate this focused feeling along with acting as an appetite suppressant while you adjust.

THE TRIAL FAST

Background

Hunger has to do with the hormones epinephrine, norepinephrine, insulin, glucagon, leptin and ghrelin and our organs' response to them. So let's expand on what this means:

Hunger isn't an emergency. It might induce a bit of panic, but nothing bad is going to happen to you. You'll get hungry, you'll sit with that feeling and you won't try to make it go away immediately.

Like I said earlier, there's a difference between physical and psychological hunger. What most people normally experience isn't true physiological hunger but rather the psychological kind. Being able to make the distinction between the two will make you more aware of your body's hormonal signaling. The goal is to gain some point of reference.

Just remind yourself that if you even get to experiment with fat loss, you're living in a privileged part of the world. A huge chunk of the population has to fast involuntarily everyday and suffers from food insecurity. Not to be a downer, but that's just reality.

Application

- Establish the window of time you're going to fast that day – make sure it works with your current routine
- Pay close attention to how you feel in response to the fast

THE 5:2 DIET – FAST DIET BY MICHAEL MOSLEY

Background
The basic framework of the 5:2 Diet is to have five "high" calorie days each week with two days of an aggressive deficit created by fasting.

Remember, that fasting is simply shifting your calories around in a way that suits your current routine. If the goal is ultimately to lose fat, in the bigger picture, you'll still be under-eating over a 7-day period.

Keep in mind that you can't over-eat and put yourself into a surplus of calories during your feeding window – this negates the purpose of fasting for fat loss.

It's a good idea to take time off of training on your low days. The extreme nature of your low days can be really stressful for some people, but if you want to lose fat without the rigidity of tracking calories, this could be the solution for you.

Application

- Males –
  5 x Maintenance Calorie Days +
  2 x 600 Calorie Rest Days/Week
- Females –
  5 x Maintenance Calorie Days +
  2 x 500 Calorie Days Rest Days/Week

ADF – ALTERNATE DAY FASTING BY KRISTA VARADY

Background
With the ADF iteration of intermittent fasting, you're once again cycling between high and low calorie days.

You're looking at utilizing the same lows outlined for each respective gender in the 5:2 Diet, but instead you're alternating between low and high days all week.

Having more fasted days spread out over the week makes your low days a bit less intense and potentially more sustainable for you as a long term solution. Again, any explicit framework can become rigid overtime making it difficult to adhere to.

One other thing to consider is that because of the frequency of low days, this diet can definitely have a negative impact on **Muscle Protein Synthesis –** the driving force behind adaptive responses to training (your ability to gain and retain muscle mass.)

Application

- Males –
  D1 – Maintenance Calorie Day
  D2 – 600 Calorie Rest Day; Repeat
- Females –
  D1 – Maintenance Calorie Day
  D2 – 500 Calorie Rest Day; Repeat

16:8 – LEANGAINS BY MARTIN BERKHAN

Background
The general outline here is to fast for 16 hours and eat all of your calories in 8 hours. Your time spent sleeping is included in that 16 hour window, so this approach is not that extreme at all. It was also designed by someone who lifts and had muscle retention in mind.

The structure of 16:8 can also add some structure to your day in general, which can increase adherence long-term.

One potential downside is the fasted training, which is especially difficult to pull-off if you lift in the evenings.

Application

- Track your total sleep time
- Subtract that number from 16
- Continue to fast until you've made up the rest of that 16 hour window
- Eat for the next 8 hours
- Sleep, repeat

THE WARRIOR DIET BY ORI HOFMEKLER

Background

Now we're progressing to the extreme side of fasting. The Warrior Diet includes 20 hours of fasting followed by a 4 hour feeding window. What this means is one big-ass meal in the evening. The idea behind this one is to imitate the life of an "ancient warrior".

The rules state that you can consume fruits, vegetables, and protein as snacks on this diet. The upside with this is that there's an emphasis on eating whole, nutrient dense foods which will reduce your calories to such an extreme that you're bound to keep them under control and lose weight.

This works really well if you're someone who doesn't get too hungry during the day and you find it easier to fast at the beginning of the day. The downside is that this framework isn't practical for everyone. If you like to not eat all day, then this may be for you.

Application

- Track your total sleep time
- Subtract that number from 20
- Continue to fast until you've made up the rest of that 20 hour window – use strategic snacking throughout
- Eat for the next 4 hours
- Sleep, repeat

EAT STOP EAT BY BRAD PILON

Background

You've officially lost your mind and want to try fasting for a full 24 hours. You can try this 1 or 2 times each week and then try to stay around maintenance for the rest of the week. The upside to this is you'll probably never need to count calories. The obvious downside is ZERO fucking food two days out of the week.

Definitely align your rest days with your fasted days if you try this one. Like I said earlier, this shouldn't be your first exposure to fasting!

Application

- Outline your training split
- Determine where your days off will be
- Fast on those days
- Start with one day per week; progress to two

FASTED TRAINING.

TRAINING ON AN EMPTY STOMACH? YOUR GAINZ ARE SAFE, BRO.

I'M ANABOLIC... I'M CATABOLIC... I JUST DON'T KNOW WHO I AM ANYMORE!

Fasted training basically means that you're training on an empty stomach after a certain period of fasting. From my own experience, a good chunk of people tend to perform poorly when training fasted with some even being known to respond with hypoglycemia (low blood sugar). Personally, I usually find myself training fasted and haven't experienced any issues in terms of performance or general health. The best thing you can do is read this section, weigh out the potential pros and cons that you find relevant and then experiment with it.

When you're actively trying to lose fat your goal should be to also retain as much muscle as possible. Your performance in the gym is going to be a key factor in muscle retention. If your performance falls off, you're much more likely to risk muscle.

In comparison to fed training, fasted training is technically catabolic in nature. This is due to the potential for decreased levels of amino acids flowing through your body. At the same time, a post-workout feeding of a carbohydrate and protein mix actually causes the fasted training to yield an even greater intracellular anabolic response than fed training. I read information like this and it basically tells me: stop worrying about these kinds of details and just get to lifting and managing my calories in the most convenient way possible. I'd suggest you do the same. Focus on the elements of training and dieting that will yield the greatest return on your time investment and save yourself the headache.

There are a few commonly held myths in relation to fasted training that we should also clear up. While you may possibly burn more fat in a fasted state, this doesn't necessarily equate to an increase in total fat loss. Just because you theoretically burn a certain amount of fat during a workout, doesn't mean you won't eat it back later on or that it's even necessarily body-fat as opposed to intracellular fat.

There is also a belief that training fasted actually boosts muscle growth, which simply isn't true. What's actually happening is something called a biological rebound. Your body is restoring muscle lost from the fasted period. You're not boosting muscle growth, you're just getting back anything you've lost. So the net effect in both situations is basically neutral.

At the end of the day the most important variable is going to be your total daily macronutrient intake instead of the timing of these nutrients themselves.

If you're in a surplus and of a higher body-fat percentage (>12% for males; >20% for females) you'll probably still have a strong session regardless of fasting or not. The higher the body-fat percentage and the larger the surplus of calories, the longer the fasted window before training can be without expecting any detriment to your performance.

As you get leaner and your diet persists, gym performance may suffer from taking place in a fasted state – think of someone sitting at <8% body-fat for males; <15% body-fat for females.

Like I said, experiment. If you feel shitty during your workouts and you don't think sleep and recovery is the culprit that day, play around with your feedings. Just be aware of how close they take place to your workout because poor digestion or hypoglycemia may also result from eating too close to your workout.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.

IS FASTING SAFE?
Yes. Humans have fasted in some form or another for our entire existence. Sleeping is technically fasting. If you're a generally healthy individual, don't sweat it. If you have other health considerations such as low blood sugar, you should consider consulting your doctor first or avoiding this altogether.

DOES FASTING ACTUALLY WORK!?
It depends on what you're trying to do, but yes it does something. Generally speaking, fasting can improve your insulin sensitivity which would create an environment of better glucose utilization (stored carbohydrates and sugar) and give you a lower chance of developing Type II Diabetes.

Fasting has also shown that it aids in cellular repair. While fasting, the body undergoes a repair process that removes any waste and toxic material from your cells. This probably explains the improved brain health and cognition. While all of that is great, it's probably just due to the fact that by losing fat, you're improving your body composition.

Another plus mentioned earlier is the potential for more awareness surrounding your hormonal response to hunger.

Fasting also generally helps to build some discipline and mental resilience, helping you learn to control impulse. This skill will obviously pay dividends in the realm of lifting and getting lean. Over time consistent fasting can also help to suppress your appetite.

So you can see – yes fasting works, on many levels, it just depends what you're going for. All of that being said, the one fully proven purpose of fasting is that it's an effective calorie management tool that will only work if you're still under-eating on a broader scale. Unfortunately, calories still count.

CAN I DRINK WATER IN THE FASTED WINDOW?
You can actually drink any calorie free beverages. If it contains calories it technically will break the fast.

I'VE HEARD FASTING CAUSES METABOLIC DAMAGE?
This myth stems from a misrepresentation of The Minnesota Study and a more recent study of drinking only water for 3.5 days. The short answer is your metabolism will rebound. Any consistent under-eating for extended periods of time has the potential to slow your metabolism one way or another, but not to the extent that you need to be concerned with any meaningful damage.

I'M SO HUNGRY, WILL I DIE?
Hunger isn't a bad thing. It's actually the natural state of man. Get used to it. By the way – it's a huge part of losing fat.

WON'T FASTING CAUSE ME TO LOSE ALL OF MY MUSCLES?
If you're providing your body with the stimulus of lifting weights, you won't lose muscle. Lifting and lifting consistent loads signals to your body to keep that shit around. Fasting forever and a day will increase your chances of fucking up but that's about it. The human body is resilient!

DO BCAAS BREAK YOUR FAST?
Technically, yes. BCAAs still cause an insulinogenic response, but who cares, it's not a big deal. It's about calorie management at the end of the day.

GENERAL HEALTH BENEFITS.

There's all kinds of hype behind intermittent fasting right now. Though I'm providing the information in this guide in the context of dieting for fat loss, I felt it worthwhile to quickly touch on everything else that's been noted so that you can dig a little bit deeper if you are interested.

Fasting has been shown, in some capacity, to contribute to:

REDUCED

- Blood Lipids
- Blood Pressure
- Markers of Inflammation
- Oxidative Stress
- Risks of Cancer

INCREASED

- Cellular Turnover and Repair
- Fat Burning
- Growth Hormone Release
- Metabolic Rate

IMPROVED

- Appetite Control
- Blood Sugar Control
- Cardiovascular Function
- Chemotherapy Effectiveness
- Neurogenesis and Neuronal Plasticity

Wow, intermittent fasting is magical! (sarcasm)

Keep this in mind: simply sleeping for 12 hours and not eating can deliver some of these benefits as well. Improving your body composition is more than likely the true cause of the listed benefits.

More recently studies have shown that intermittent fasting and the manipulation of mitochondrial networks may increase your lifespan. The theory is that manipulating mitochondrial networks inside of cells through the use of dietary restriction may increase lifespan and promote general health.

The declining ability of cells to process energy over time leads to aging and age-related disease and has been found to be mitigated through the intervention of fasting. We're only beginning to understand the underlying biology of this.

PROBLEMS WITH THE EXISTING RESEARCH

Most of the existing research has been done on animal models. This is convenient but not perfect at predicting human response patterns. Human experiments are limited and when they do exist they're often using poor experimental control groups. With the available research we're not working with much to be totally honest.

The other issues is that fasting is often compared with "normal" eating. Meaning garbage, general population consumption of food – this obviously stacks the cards in favour of fasting. It becomes a comparison of over-eating and under-eating instead of fasting vs. an already healthy diet. All calorie controlled studies generally show improvements in a wide spectrum of health and body composition markers, especially when you lose weight and fat.

Consider that most food in the North American diet consists of processed macronutrients, chemical additives and environmental pollutants. Getting someone to stop eating for extended periods of time is not only calorie restriction but also limits the intake of health degrading chemicals in general.

Maybe not eating garbage for extended periods of time would have a similar effect to fasting? So it kind of makes intermittent fasting inconclusive at this point. Right now it's equally plausible that eating less food in general and eating a diet in less processed foods, chemicals and pollutants will offer the same benefits as fasting. Is it the fasting or the negative energy balance?

THE POSSIBLE DOWNSIDES.

Long periods of fasting can be stressful to the point of inducing headaches, constipation and dehydration. The dehydration is probably responsible for the headaches and I would attribute the constipation to a lack of fibre due to caloric restriction. It's definitely not for everyone, people with impaired glycemic control shouldn't fast – this causes a poor glucose response. It also goes without saying that you should avoid fasting if you're pregnant, already underweight, under the age of 18, or have a history of disordered eating. Try and practice some common sense here.