

Intermittent Fasting: How to Get Started

What is intermittent fasting?

Intermittent fasting is a way to get healthier by eating less, but based on when you eat, not what you eat.

What are the benefits?

It is easy to do, and can be done in combination with other lifestyle changes. Intermittent fasting helps reduce blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, weight, and body fat. It also helps memory, mood, and mentation.

How do you do it?

There are several methods of intermittent fasting:

1. Alternate day fast (ADF)

This involves a total fast from food two to three days per week or every other day.

2. 5:2

Eat normally five days per week, but reduce calories to 500 (for women) or 600 (for men) two days per week. Typically, these are set days, such as Tuesday and Thursday, but the program can be tailored to each individual's needs. You can eat two to three small meals, two smaller-than-normal meals, or one meal per day.

3. Time-restricted feeding or fasting (TRF)

The most common example of this is 16:8, which is eating (or feeding) for eight hours per day and fasting for the other 16 hours. An easy way to do this is to skip breakfast or dinner.

Water, coffee, and tea are allowed. Minimal to no calories should be consumed during the fasting period (avoid sweet tea, sugar in coffee, etc.).

Sample Plans

	Alternate Day Fasting (ADF)	5:2	Time-Restricted Feeding or Fasting (TRF)
Initial	Fast 1 day/week	Reduce to 1,500 calories/day, 1 day/week	12 hours fasting 5 days/week
Month 2	Fast 1 day/week	Reduce to 1,000 calories/day, 1 day/week	14 hours fasting, 5 days/week
Month 3	Fast 2 days/week	Reduce to 1,000 calories/day, 2 days/week	16 hours fasting, 5 days/week
Target Goal	Fast 2-3 days/week	Reduce to 500 calories/day, 2 days/week	16 hours fasting, 6 days/week