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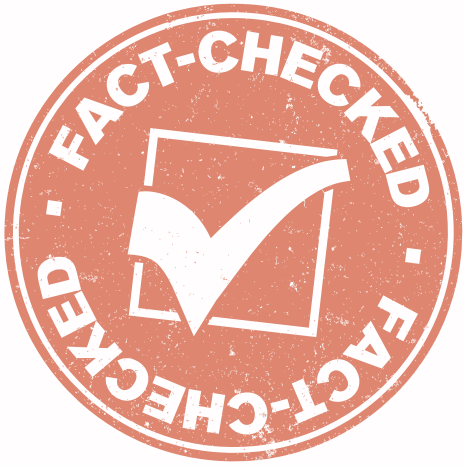
FASTING MYTHS

Fasting Myths

As is the case with diets and nutrition, intermittent fasting too has its share of myths and misconceptions.

Read on and do not fall prey to them.



Fasting Myths: Breakfast is the most important meal of the day!

When you first wake up in the morning, your insulin level is quite low and most people are just starting to enter the fasted state, 12 hours after eating the last meal of the previous day.

The worst thing you could do is to eat food, spiking insulin and glucose and immediately shutting off fat-burning.

A much better choice would be to push the first meal of your day out at least a few hours, during which you can fully enter the fasted state and burn stored body fat.

The VERY WORST would be to eat a high carbohydrate breakfast, spiking insulin and glucose as high as possible; in addition to shutting off fat-burning for likely 12 hours, this will drive as many calories as possible into fat stores as well as providing further reinforcement of the burning of glucose rather than fat.

Fasting Myths: Breakfast is the most important meal of the day!

Also, high spikes of insulin and glucose always lead to large drops in glucose a few hours later, which triggers HUNGER (if you want to have hypoglycemia or low blood sugar and ravenous hunger, just eat a breakfast of pure carbohydrates and then wait 2-3 hours to see how you feel).

Interestingly, many properly fat-adapted* people aren't very hungry in the morning and have no problem skipping breakfast.

This is appropriate, as throughout our evolution humans have always been hunter-gatherers and rather than eating a large breakfast first thing in the morning we would hunt and gather throughout the day, having a larger meal later in the day.

*Fat adaptation is a long-term metabolic adjustment to ketosis, a state in which your body burns fat for fuel instead of carbs.

"Your metabolism slows down when you are fasting"

This is completely false.

A number of studies have proven that in fasting up to 72 hours, metabolism does not slow down at all and in fact might speed up slightly thanks to the release of catecholamines (epinephrine or adrenaline, norepinephrine, and dopamine) and activation of the sympathetic nervous system.

Sympathetic nervous system is often considered the “fight or flight” system, while the opposite is the parasympathetic nervous system or the “rest and digest” system. [25][26]

It makes sense that this fight or flight sympathetic nervous system would be activated during the daytime, when hunter-gatherer humans are most active and in the fasted state (looking for food), followed by parasympathetic “rest and digest” mode in the evening after eating a large meal.

Intermittent Fasting Will Slow Down Your Metabolism

When you fast, or your body goes without receiving nourishment, your metabolic rate is lowered as a survival technique to prolong survival. It's important to keep in mind that this only happens when you go without food for more than a week.

In fact, another study [21] revealed that in subjects that fasted for three days, there was no slowdown in their metabolism.

Plus, Intermittent fasting does not involve fasting for that long, therefore, thinking that your body and metabolism will grind to a standstill is unfounded. Understandably, this worry is logical because a slower metabolism is every dieter's worst nightmare.

However, as already explained, such worries and fears lack basis, because fasting is not dieting.

Intermittent fasting is a form of starving

One of the most common contentions against intermittent fasting is that it's a way of killing and depriving your body of food, which shuts down your metabolism and hinders fat-burning.

Although it's true that prolonged weight loss can decrease the number of calories burned, this is common to weight loss regardless of the method you use.

It has not been proven that this is more associated with intermittent fasting than with other weight loss techniques. As a matter of fact, there is substantial evidence that short-term fasting can improve the rate of metabolism due to a dire surge in norepinephrine levels in the blood.

Intermittent Fasting is a Form of Starving

The bottom line is, fasting, especially for short periods, does not send the body into starvation.

Rather, for fasts lasting up to 48 hours, metabolism is boosted by the fast.

Women Should Not Undergo Intermittent Fasting

There is no evidence that intermittent fasting is dangerous for women. Additional studies have shown that while individual women display negative reactions to such a fasting state, it works just fine with other women.

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It is simply a question of the individual constitution and willpower, and of course, not all nutrition choices, no matter how beneficial, work equally well for everyone.

No matter what your gender, you can, with the right mindset, manufacture an intermittent fasting schedule that works for your body and health needs. Whether you're a woman is not the question at all.