WRITE ON FITNESS

Client: Las Vegas Athletic Clubs

Intermittent Fasting Benefits (And How to Do a 16-Hour Fast)

Intermittent fasting has exploded in popularity over the last few years and for good reason: it can significantly improve your health and it has science to back it up. Do you want to lose weight, boost your brain, and feel better overall? Intermittent fasting can help.

Let's review the most commonly cited intermittent fasting benefits, and how you can do a sixteen-hour fast starting today.

Top 3 Intermittent Fasting Benefits

Studies over the last two decades have revealed a number of promising intermittent fasting benefits. Here are the top three benefits that have the most research and expert consensus behind them:

Fat Loss

Studies show that intermittent fasting can promote fat loss in a few ways:

It increases the production and release of growth hormone. While synthetic growth hormone might be connected with the world of bodybuilding, natural growth hormone is essential in regulating your metabolism and promoting fat burning.

Intermittent fasting also decreases the production of insulin, which has been shown to improve digestion, nutrient absorption, and overall fat burning. By following a sixteen-hour fasting schedule, you'll naturally eat less throughout the day, supporting a healthy long-term strategy for weight management. (1 – 4)

Cognitive Health

Intermittent fasting has been shown to increase the process of neurogenesis. This is when new cells and nerve tissues in the brain grow, strengthen, and improve. Researchers found that this process is associated with better memory, increased attention and focus, and better overall cognitive performance. (5)

Disease Prevention

Many types of cancer and cognitive diseases such as Alzheimer's have significantly increased in the last few decades. Behind these diseases lies chronic or long-lasting inflammation. Acute or

short-term inflammation is a healthy response to an injury or infection. But when this inflammation is fueled by lifestyle and dietary choices over a long period of time, it promotes the development of a number of diseases.

Intermittent fasting has been shown to lower levels of total body inflammation, improve cellular regeneration, and reduce your risk for the development of inflammation-fueled diseases. (6)

16-Hour Fast vs. 24-Hour Fast

There are several ways to do intermittent fasting, but the two most common methods are the 16 / 8 system or sixteen-hour fast and the twenty-four-hour fast.

It can be challenging to go for a full twenty-four hours without food, and that's why we recommend the 16 / 8 system. You'll get the same health benefits with a better chance of adhering to the fasting schedule over the long term.

How to Do a 16-Hour Fast (16 / 8 System)?

The idea is to refrain from eating or drinking calorie-based beverages for sixteen hours each day. While you can choose your own fasting and feeding schedule, the majority of people begin their fast at 8 p.m. and do not eat until 12 p.m. the following day. Naturally, you can drink water and calorie-free beverages such as herbal tea and black coffee – no sugar or creamer added.

Your feeding window is from 12 p.m. until 8 p.m. It is during this time that you resume your normal diet. While there is no special fasting diet, the Paleo diet (all natural, no processed food) and the ketogenic diet (high fat, low carb) are two popular options to consider.

16-Hour Fast Summary:

- 8 p.m. – Begin fast
- 12 p.m. (following day) – End fast / Begin feeding window
- 8 p.m. – End feeding window – Begin fast
- During fast: No food – Only calorie-free beverages (water, tea, black coffee)

Be Consistent with Intermittent Fasting

If you've never tried fasting before, the first week can be a bit of a challenge. If you find that sixteen hours of fasting is too long, try a twelve-hour fast (8 p.m. to 8 a.m.) then slowly increase

that number by one hour every other week. It's more important to stay consistent with intermittent fasting than to be perfect.

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