

Consider This Method Before You Begin to Fast

Do you want to fast but don't know where to start? You're not alone.

Consider intermittent fasting. Intermittent fasting is not a fad; it aligns with how God designed us for seasons of feast and seasons of famine using fat as fuel during famine.

Intermittent fasting provides a much-needed break from food, and it's a great way for the beginner to begin fasting. For example, if your last meal is early evening, then you wouldn't eat again until lunch the following day. This gives the digestive tract close to 16 hours of rest and may change insulin levels enough to affect health in a positive way.

Remember, increased insulin and good health don't necessarily go together. Think of all the oxidative stress that you'll be avoiding with intermittent fasting when you miss breakfast consisting of unhealthy bacon and eggs or other harmful foods.

By fasting for at least 16 hours, stored sugar is burned, and the body may begin to use fat for fuel depending on how many carbohydrates have been stored. Most of your muscle is spared because the body switches to protein sparing during this time. Unless you have been limiting carbohydrates for a few days prior to the fast, ketosis (fat used as fuel) usually doesn't begin until at least 16.

I fast this way, especially on weekends before preaching. I also try to fast for at least a week every four or five months.

Don't focus on length just yet. Simply step out in faith. Begin with a meal or two, educate yourself and seek medical advice if needed. You may want to tell your physician what

you're doing and ask if he or she can review blood work and monitor vitals if you decide to go over three days of water only.

It can be motivating to see the benefits of fasting in a before and after blood panel. Pray and ask God for direction and encouragement. I have included helpful sermons and resources at the end of this article; it was actually a sermon I heard six days into a fast that kept me from quitting.

If you truly start feeling sick and can tell something is off (as opposed to feeling tired, grumpy, lightheaded, dizzy or hungry), that may be a good indication to drink some juice or eat a light meal. Then get back on track. While fasting, there are boosts of energy followed by big letdowns, though becoming sick can be something different. Many have fought through these feelings, but it's an area where wisdom is needed.

The body often retraces past problems in order to heal them. If you had a cold some time back, for example, you might see those same symptoms again while the body is healing. Experts are divided on whether you should push through feeling sick and flu-like or take a small amount of food.

In my case, I press through as long as it is not intense and if my scheduled commitments allow for it. Self-control and willpower are two key components of fasting. *There's no way around it—the power of the made-up mind tilts the scale in your favor.*

For many years, I thought I was hypoglycemic, so I had a good excuse not to fast. I learned later that I was just addicted to sugar. Be patient; health is a lifestyle, not a short-term fix. Fasting success is largely a mental state. Your body has been conditioned to eat at certain intervals, not to mention having addictions that want to be fed often.

Fasting is not starving in a physical sense; it's the removal of food for a season. The body switches from burning glucose

as fuel to burning ketones when fat is broken down and converted to energy—just like God designed us.

We are designed to fast for spiritual, physical and emotional benefits. Mental clarity and brain function are heightened as well. Instead of dying, we are repairing. Rarely does anyone in America die of fasting, but millions die because of overeating. *Fasting is not the problem; feasting is.*

Subscribe to my YouTube page to view many short clips that answer fasting questions, such as: Will I lose muscle? How long should I fast? And many more. You can also download a free copy of my new book, *Feasting and Fasting*, here. Some links do charge, but some, such as Barnes and Noble, do not.

The key is to fall forward. On all of my fasts over the years, I never did it perfectly each time. If you blow it and eat a meal, just get back on track. God doesn't measure success by perfection, but by faithfulness. {eoa}

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