



## **Intermittent Fasting 101**

**What is it?** An eating pattern that cycles between periods of fasting and eating in either in either daily 16 hour fasts or a full 24 hours, twice per week

**The 16/8 Method:** Skipping breakfast or dinner and restricting your daily eating pattern to 8 hours, for example from 12pm to 8pm. Then you “fast” for 16 hours in between.

**Eat-Stop-Eat:** Fasting for 24 hours once or twice a week, for example by not eating from dinner one day until dinner the next day.

**The 5:2 Diet:** On two non-consecutive days of the week, only eat 500-600 calories. Eat normally the other 5 days.

All methods decrease total caloric intake per week, as long as other meals are not “binge meals”. The 16/8 method may be easiest for beginners.

**How it works:** Fasting makes changes on a cellular and molecular level including:

- Increasing Human Growth Hormone levels for fat loss and muscle gain
- Improving insulin sensitivity and dropping insulin levels, making stored fat more accessible
- Initiate cellular repair
- Changes in gene expression related to longevity and protection against disease
- Changing hormone levels to increase metabolic rate by 3.6-14%
- Causes weight loss of 3-8% over periods of 3-24 weeks, and 4-7% of waist circumference

**What is the benefit?**

- **Weight loss:** Helps lose weight and belly fat without having to consciously restrict calories
- **Insulin resistance:** Reduces insulin resistance, lowering blood sugar by 3-6% and fasting insulin levels by 20-31%, which helps protect against type 2 diabetes
- **Inflammation:** Reduction in markers of inflammation, a key driver of chronic disease
- **Heart Health:** Reduces LDL cholesterol, blood triglycerides, inflammatory markers, blood sugar, and insulin resistance, which are risk factors for heart disease
- **Brain Health:** Increases brain hormone called BDNF and may aid in the growth of new nerve cells
- **Anti-aging:** Has shown to extend life span in rats, living 36-83% longer
- Less time spent meal planning and makes healthy eating easier

Adapted from Kris Gunnars, BSc “Intermittent Fasting 101- The Ultimate Beginner’s Guide”