

Myth: Meal timing is less important than food quality.

Truth: When you eat is as important as what you eat.

We all remember when eating three substantial meals a day was the norm. Then we were told that eating six smaller meals was the ideal pattern. Despite our confusion, many of us followed the trend and made the transition to smaller, more frequent meals.

If you are a person who follows health-related headlines, you're probably aware of the current intermittent fasting discussions. If the previous contradictions have left you reluctant to accept that fasting can be beneficial, please continue reading. The truth is, intermittent fasting is one of the most beneficial and easy-to-implement changes you can make for your health at no cost.

Intermittent fasting is an eating pattern that cycles between periods of eating and fasting. The benefits of fasting include, but are not limited to, improving metabolic flexibility (*the body's ability to use whatever energy source is more available at the time – glucose vs. ketones*) and energy efficiency, decreasing inflammation and improving immune system health, increasing autophagy (*a process where the body breaks down old, decayed cells to recycle for energy*), improving genetic repair mechanisms, improving blood sugar, and improving the symptoms of chronic diseases. Click [here](#) to learn more about each of these benefits.

There are different degrees of fasting, but for the purposes of this article, we will discuss a simple 12 hour fast as it is the safest place for an inexperienced faster to start. A 12 hour fast means that you are spending 12 hours of your day in a fed state, also referred to as the feeding window, and the remaining 12 hours in a fasted state.

A simple fast is implemented between the time you consume your last meal of the day and your first meal of the following day. On a simple fast it is important to 1) Allow adequate time between eating your evening meal and going to sleep and 2) Allowing a full 12 hours between eating dinner and breakfast the following day. For example, if you eat dinner around six o'clock in the evening, you should allow 3 hours before going to bed to allow ample time for digestion, and you should not eat again before six o'clock the next morning. It is crucial to avoid going to sleep too soon after eating as this interferes with not only digestion and metabolism, but our ability to reach our deepest, most healing and reparative sleep cycles.

In conclusion, intermittent fasting has many benefits and can be easily implemented into your existing eating pattern. However, there is more to adequate meal timing than just a simple fast. In upcoming articles, we will dive deeper into meal timing and how to continue to structure your eating pattern for optimal health. For now, give the simple fast a try and begin reaping the health benefits that come with it!

References

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