

## Lesson 14: Extended Fasting Strategies

In today's lesson video, we're going to discuss extended fasting strategies.

Now, you've heard me talk a lot about the importance of fasting consistency. And you've heard me say that it's with the intermittent fast that you can really strive to get the most consistency. So, where does that leave extended fasting? Well, I do think there are great benefits of extended fasting for those of us who can, for those of us who have medical clearance from our doctors to do so.

Extended fasting occasionally can help really speed up the recovery from insulin resistance, help us break through really stubborn plateaus, and there's all kinds of wonderful disease fighting, so disease prevention properties, of doing the periodic extended fast. Typically, in our clinic, back in Toronto, we would recommend, for those patients who could, that they would do one to four extended fasts a year, ranging anywhere from three to seven days.

So, it is something we definitely stand behind and it is true we have had patients come through the clinic that have done 10, 14, 21, 28 days of fasting. We have had patients fast for the majority of Lent as well. And the longest fast that we have in the clinic, that was a true fast in nature with 61 days. So, we have had these various fasts of varying extended lengths.

Now, I'll tell you about the 61-day fast, Dr. Fung did medically support but it was not something that we ever recommended. So, just to go back to previous notes, yes, you're going to reach your results faster if you stick with consistent intermittent fasting, because it's impossible to do these extended fasts all the time. But there are benefits of doing an extended daily fast.

Now, let's just briefly look at a seven-day fast and what happens in the body. So, you're new to fasting, you're new to a real food diet, but up until this point, you've eaten more of the standard North American foods. You're also healing from insulin resistance. So this is what a seven-day fast looks like for you.

On day one, most people are struggling with just the mental hunger, just the desire to eat, the habit of seeing the clock strike 12 and going for lunch, or just being irked by those people eating meals around you. But physically, you're okay. Towards the end of day one, you might start to notice increased urination.

Now, on day two, the mental hunger is still there. Physically, you're feeling okay, but you're starting to get tired and fatigued. Increased urination is high, and you might even experience loose stools on this day. And often, we end day two feeling a little bit rough, feeling a little bit depleted.

Then, we wake up on day three. We start the morning okay, but as the day progresses, we often start to feel a little bit rough. It's a sticky day. Come the morning of day four, we start to feel really good, for what seems to make no rhyme or reason as to why we're feeling so good. Day five, we feel excellent, really like we could perhaps fast for even more than seven days. And by our seventh day, we've gotten used to it mentally and physically, and our energy's through the roof. We're often feeling like the Energizer Bunny.

Now, why this trend? Well, for the first two days that you're fasting is when you're going to see the largest drop in your insulin levels. That's going to signal your body to release excess water, and this is where you're at risk for losing electrolytes. This is why it's so important to tackle hydration at the beginning of your extended fast.

But why is day three so sticky? Well, day three is really when we switch on body fat fueling. That's when our body actually has to start burning body fat to fuel us in a substantial amount or substantial quantity. Up until about the 48-hour mark, we don't need as much body fat to fuel off of because we're still burning through stored glycogen, which is stored forms of glucose in the body. But as we completely deplete those, we start to feel really tired, fatigued, and really run down. We know we're taking salts, we know we're taking magnesium. Why are we feeling so just darn depleted?

Well, this is our bodies trying to resist going into fat burning mode. Your body always wants to conserve energy. And eating food to obtain energy is a lot easier than burning body fat to obtain energy. So, your body is sending you all kinds of signals saying, "Eat, eat! We want to be lazy! We want to be lazy! We don't want to have to burn body fat." And you have to fight through it. And once you fight through it and you say, "Hey, body, I'm not budging on this. I'm not going to feed you. You're going to have to feed yourself!" Then your body finally caves as fuel sources get very depleted, and it starts to liberate your body fat.

So, this is why on day four you start to feel good. Your energy reserves are coming back, but this time from your body fat. And day five, six, seven, you're feeling great because you're fully feeling off of your body fat at this stage. So, imagine you have a gas tank, like in a vehicle, and when your fuel starts to run low, your car, in your dashboard, you get all these flashing lights, like "Low fuel, low fuel. Fill up in X number of miles or kilometers." And those headaches, that feeling tired, that feeling lethargic, grumpy, that's just like your dashboard signals. That

grumpiness, that hunger, all of that stuff is "Low fuel. Fill up in five miles. Fill up in 10 kilometers." That's our bodies trying to get us to eat.

But instead of going to the gas station, what we do is we look for our own fuel sources. So, if you have a vehicle, instead of going to fill up with a pump, you go to your garage and you'll empty a gas container into your car, and you'll use the fuel that you already have at home. So instead of going into the refrigerator or the cupboard, we go to our own body fuel and we fill up. There and as we start to fill back up, and we rise from empty to full, then we start to feel even better.

Now, let's talk about variations and implications of this trend. Sometimes people experience that delayed stickiness for reasons that we're not quite sure. They're much more slower to burn out of their glycogen stores. So, typically we see them fairly depleted within the first 36 hours, 36 to 48 hours. But there's the odd individual for metabolic reasons, and we're not quite sure exactly why this is the case, but they don't experience that stickiness until day four day five.

But what we do notice is, over time with a good real food diet, especially one that's lower in carbohydrates, lower in fruits especially, well, with consistent fasting and a consistent diet that sticky day moves up in the journey. So, instead of it happening on day five or day four, it happens on day three and even day two, over time. And then also, another trend, too, is if you are someone that is on a real whole food diet and that diet is low in carbohydrates or lower in carbohydrates, you're not snacking and you're fasting and consistently, instead of experiencing that stickiness on day three, you might experience it on day two, or even on day one in some cases.

And once some of us have been following this great lifestyle and have been consistent with our diet and fasting for a significant period of time, the good news is that we might experience any low points during our extended fast because our body has become so familiar with accessing our fat stores. So, they've got the message that they can't be lazy. They've got to access our fat stores. Think of it like a teenager. I know there's a lot of great teenagers out there, I was a great teenager, but I had my moments of laziness. And at some points, I realized that my parents meant business and I couldn't push those boundaries. I just had to suck it up and do certain chores around the house.

And that's what happens with the body. It's like a teenager, it wants to conserve energy, it doesn't want to have to do these things. But with your consistent fasting and your consistent dietary habits, you're letting your body know, "Hey, I mean business. This fat burning, that's an activity you need to do and you need to keep on doing it." So, once the body gets that message, it's almost a flawless transition into being able to access your fat stores. So, just keep that in

mind. That is really what is happening in the body at a physiological level. We need to get the body to be better at performing burning body fat, getting the signal it needs to do so more often. And that is a sign of our bodies becoming fat-adapted, meaning that they've become used to fueling off of dietary or body fat. So, it's a great thing to strive for, absolutely.

Now, another symptom of our fuel stores running low is feeling cold. That is a sign that we are depleting and the body does want us to fill up our fuel reserves. Now, this is very common with fasting, so I just want to take a minute to discuss it on its own. Now, this coldness that can be associated with fasting often goes away. At the start, people might find that they're wearing sweaters in the middle of the summer, but by the time winter rolls around, you're comfortable going outside to your car in a t-shirt to grab something. So, it is something that also gets better as we become more accustomed to fueling on body fat.

Now, there are certain circumstances where people just tend to have low particular types of neurotransmitters where their body just doesn't necessarily feel that warmth, even once they become experts at fat burning. And we've actually found that drinking black coffee once or twice a day can actually help increase the production of certain neurotransmitters that can help keep us warm during your fast. So, that's something that you might want to play around with if you have been struggling with this and you've been sticking to your fasting consistently and your diet and you're still feeling that bitter coldness.

So, this is for individuals experiencing that bitter coldness six, eight, nine, 12 months into their fascinating journey. But it can take a while for the body to be fully trained at burning body fat. So, for individuals who are still struggling with coldness, even up to the six-month mark, I would say it's still our bodies acclimating. But, of course, add in the coffee if you think it might help.

Now, we discussed previously about intermittent fasts such as the 24-hour, the 30/16 protocol, the 36, 42s, 48s. Let's jump into some extended fascinating strategies. So, there's ones that are very common. There's a three-day fast, there's a five-day fast, seven, 10 days, 14 days. These seem to be more popular trends for extended fasts. And we've discussed what happens in the body during these extended fasting periods.

A note that I would like to make about three-day fasts, in particular, is that a lot of women find alternate daily fasting to be very difficult. This is because our primary hunger hormone, in general, tends to run higher in females than men. But when women start fasting, between that 36 to 48-hour mark, we really see a dramatic drop in our primary hunger hormone, ghrelin. And between that 48 and 72-hour mark, well, hunger firstly is non-existent to us.

So, while females, while we do see our hunger hormones run higher in general than our male counterparts, we actually see a greater reduction in our production of hunger hormone once we start fasting, compared to our male counterparts. So, men's hunger tends to run fairly moderate, nothing substantial but nothing very minimal. And this is why men tend to just start intermittent fasting strategies with a lot of ease most of the time. Not all the time, but most of the time.

And this is why women tend to struggle with always starting the beginning of their fast and they think that there's something wrong with them. But it's really just hormonal, and that's how females are wired for a whole hormonal cascade of reasons. So, we start off our day one with hunger that's really high. But by the end of the day, we're starting to feel good, and the next morning we feel like we could carry on. But hey, we're supposed to stop our fasts in a few hours from now or later on in the day. And that's frustrating for a lot of ladies.

So, there are many individuals that say, "Hey, when I get into fast, I just like to stay in that fast. Can I please, please, please stay in that fast?" And the answer is absolutely. As long as you have your doctor's permission, you can absolutely lump all three days of your fasting together. So, instead of doing three 36 or 42-hour fasts, you could do one 72-hour fast. And this could be actually a weekly-based fasting protocol for those who enjoy doing it this way.

Now, the one caveat is that people often feel really heavy and weighed down when they do this strategy because they have four consecutive days of eating after or around their 72-hour fast. Now, what a lot of people will do is they'll throw in another fast, a 24, a 36, a 42, perhaps sometimes occasionally a 48 just to mix things up so they don't have four consecutive days of eating in a row. A lot of people find if they have more than two consecutive days of eating, they can sometimes get into Pandora's Box and they really see their hunger go up, and it's just not great.

I myself tried this strategy once I became a lot more comfortable with fasting and I would fast from Sunday evening until Wednesday evening, just because I found it so easy to fast after the weekend. So, Monday/Tuesday was a breeze, and then Wednesday, hump day. It's a busy day, so you can get through the day, but it's nice to eat at the end of the day. And that worked well for me.

But like many women, eating Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, boy, that was a lot of eating. So, I'd often do a 24, a 42-hour fast on Friday, still a work day. If I had a social event, I would just do 24 hours. If I didn't, I would jump in and fast until Saturday and do a 42. And that was a really good strategy that served me very well and serves a lot of other women well, also.

Now, shorter bursts of fasts, I wouldn't necessarily call it an intermittent fasting strategy, is the 66-hour fast. And this is something that gained a lot of popularity in the fasting method community last year. So, what is a 66-hour fast? So, with a 66-hour fast, for example, you eat Sunday, you start your fast Sunday evening, you would fast until Wednesday. You would eat lunch and dinner on Wednesday. So, you're not necessarily fasting for three days, you're fasting for two days. So, you're getting in that full day, Monday, and that full day, Tuesday fast, but instead of breaking your fast on Tuesday at lunch or dinner like with the 42s and 48s, you take it to Wednesday at lunchtime. So, it's just shy of doing the 72-hour fast, but it does permit two meals on Wednesdays.

Now, often, people will also combine this 66-hour fast with another fast after Wednesday. So, either Tuesday or Thursday or Friday, people will do a 24, 36, 42, 48, sometimes they might even do an additional 66-hour fast. So, they fast from Sunday until Wednesday, eat lunch and dinner on Wednesday, fast from Wednesday until Saturday, eat lunch and dinner on Saturday, and eat lunch and dinner on Sunday. So, a lot of the time people will double up on the 66's if they want to do extended fasts but just can't fit the extended fasting into their lifestyle.

Now, I think these combinations of mini bursts of fast, like a 66 or a 72-hour fast, with some of these intermittent fasting strategies, they are great ways to get in longer periods of fasting that can really help you break through plateaus without having to do any mega-extended fasting. And they're also a great way to build up to doing extended fasting if that's your goal. So, we often work with people on bridging their fasts, as a strategy that we use to help people get to doing five and seven-day fasts, who have that desire but are struggling to get there.

So, step one of a bridging fast is to fast for 48 hours at the start of the workweek and at the end of the workweek. So, you would fast from Sunday night until Tuesday night, eat Wednesday, fast Wednesday night to Friday night, eat Friday night, eat Saturday and Sunday. So, you're doing two 48-hour fasts a week. That's step one for working your way up to doing a five-day fast.

Then, step two would be to increase the duration of the fast at the start of the week. Why? Because we tend to eat the most on the weekends, which helps get us through the fast at the start of the week. Whereas at the end of the week, we tend to be just really tired and fatigued from work and life in general, and it makes it more difficult to load up that fast at the end of the week.

So, we do a 48 and a 48, and then what we would do is do a 66 and a 48. So, we would increase the duration of the fast at the start of the week from 48 to 66 hours. Then, step three would be to increase that 66-hour fast to a 72-hour fast. So, you go from Sunday dinner to Wednesday dinner, and then from Wednesday dinner, you'd be fasting until Friday dinner. And then, step



four is just jumping in and doing a five-day fast. So, we'll start off with two 48s, a 66 and a 48, a 72 and a 48, and then a five-day fast. And so we have sort of this four-step process for helping people condition their fasting muscle, strengthening it, so they can achieve these five-day fasts.

All right, everyone. That is my lesson on extended fasting. I look forward to seeing you in the Q&A session for this week's Q&A on our Masterclass. Thanks, everybody.