



Hi everyone. It is finally here, day 14 of our Women & Fasting Masterclass. I'm excited that we got to day 14 because I am certain that you now have with you an arsenal of tools, a guide to help you on your journey to maintenance, which is a topic that I didn't specifically talk about yet, but I will mention a little bit at the end of today's lesson. But I wanted to talk a little bit about how to measure your progress along the way. All of us are very different. We're all individuals. We all have different goals. We all have different ways in which we assess whether we're doing well or not.

Within our community and our program, we actually celebrate progress along the way. I start every meeting by asking people to share their celebrations with us. Because as I often say, I don't consider there to be any big or small celebrations and victories. They are all huge. Sometimes you don't realize how huge they are until you say them out loud. So please continue celebrating your victories. As we've noticed in our community and within our meetings, it creates this very positive ripple effect.

How do you measure success? Well, success for some of us can mean losing weight. Success for others might mean lowering blood sugars. Success for others might mean clothes that fit better, or maybe it's getting a period after many, many months of not having a period, and you should have a period. So if you're a young woman in your reproductive years, getting a period after many months of not having a period is definitely a marker of improved health. Or maybe you're a young woman trying to conceive and you realize that you've started ovulating, this is a wonderful NSV, non-scale victory, and this is a great measure of success.

There's no one right or wrong way to measure progress. I'd like to start by addressing the scale, that lying scale. Maria in our community will often tell us whenever her body changes, something very positive happens, the scale is the last to know. If you've been part of our community for a while, you will definitely have heard Megan talk about throwing out the scale. If you're using the scale or your weight as a measure of progress, that might be very frustrating.

In fact, your weights might not be the best measure of progress after all, even though you may have been told this, maybe every time you go to the doctor, you get on the scale and you dread it so much, or maybe you're doing it to yourself and you're weighing yourself every single day. At times, we let the scale determine how we feel about ourselves. This is obviously very, very negative. In our community, I've learned that especially if you're somebody who has dealt with weight issues for a long time, maybe since you were a child, using the scale as a measure of progress is probably not a good idea. There are probably much, much better ways to measure your success and progress.

Having said that, if you're somebody who just likes numbers, and if you measure progress by not just looking at the scale, but basically every single number you can get your hands on, that's okay, if that works for you. If you're able to have this emotional detachment from the scale, then I think it's perfectly fine. But if you're looking at the scale as a data point, as a number for something, you have to understand how the scale actually works.

For many, many people, including women, especially for women, the scale doesn't always tell us the whole picture. This happens to everyone, men included. The reason being is that what we're trying to do here is not necessarily lose weight. Losing weight is often a byproduct of what we do, but that is not our goal. Our goal is not to lose weight. Our goal is to lower insulin and to reverse insulin resistance and to reverse all the expressions of insulin resistance, including obesity.

So what we're actually trying to do, especially if you're somebody who has obesity as an expression of your metabolic syndrome or insulin resistance, what we're trying to do is burn fat. But while you're burning fat, lots of other things are happening in your body. So scale might move at times and not at others. The journey is never linear. I say this all the time. That's not a negative thing because a lot of times, if you're looking at other measures, you will realize that even when you're not losing weight, there's still a lot that could be going on. There might be a lot of progress that's going on, but if you're only narrowly looking at the scale, you're going to miss this progress.

I never use the scale as a measure for anything, not while I was trying to reverse my condition, and definitely not while I'm in maintenance. I might use the scale at times, very, very rarely, just to confirm something that I already know. If I've "gained weight", I can usually tell by my clothes, by other things. My major concern has always been my health. Your goal is to burn fat, not lose weight. Some people can actually lose fat and gain weight, which is something that for some might sound crazy and quite negative. But for others, it's very, very positive.

We work with a lot of people that are very concerned about their weights because they might be underweight, but they might have diabetes, for example. You can read a blog post that I wrote called considering body composition. I do briefly mention weights and what BMI stands for. BMI is body mass index. Unfortunately, that is the index that's used conventionally most of the time. You'll probably see these huge charts in some doctor's offices, where they check for your weight and height and measure whether or not you are in a good weight place.

If you understand BMI, you will realize that the BMI, the body mass index, is not the most adequate way to measure health and definitely not the best way to measure body composition. A much better way to measure success in progress is figuring out ways to check your body composition. There are various ways to do this. I've shared some with you. Both Megan and I have written on body composition. I encourage you to read about that in the resources.

So you might be somebody who has had a DEXA scan done or might know what a DEXA scan is. You get a really good comprehensive sort of look inside and you know what your body fat percentage is versus your lean mass. You might know a bit more. Your body composition test might tell you your metabolic age. If you don't have the ability or access to doing a DEXA scan, you might be able to get a really, really good idea of your body composition by a body composition scale that you can keep in your home. There's a lot of really good ones out there for a very reasonable price and some of these are very, very accurate.

The only thing I would advise is that you learn how to measure consistently. That doesn't mean measuring every day. It just means that when you measure, you have the same consistent parameters around the day and the hour that you measure. So for example, if you measure your body composition at home on your body composition scale first thing in the morning, make sure that the next time that you check and compare that its first thing in the morning. If you're in a fasted state the first time, make sure you're in a fasted state when you compare after that.

Make sure that your hydration status is the same when you check. Meaning, that if you've drank a lot of water just before, or if you've exercised just before, it's important that you're somewhat in the same hydration state so that you don't have misleading measurements and numbers. If you check your body composition the day after a fast, you do that the next day as well. Because a fasting day will, of course, put you in a lower insulin, more of a release mode, and so your hydration status changes as well.

If you don't want to get a body composition scale at home, that's perfectly fine. You might find that you can very easily get your body composition checked either at your gym or through your personal trainer. You will very quickly learn what the ranges are for the adequate body composition for women in your weight range. You can use that as a measure for progress. Again, body composition is not something that changes from one day to the next. So you have to give yourself the opportunity to change and to succeed. You have to create a really good plan for yourself and you have to be consistent in following that plan in order for you to see these results.

Do you need to check blood sugars in order to measure progress or success? Well, that will depend. Will you get any information from measuring your blood sugars if you're not diabetic? The answer to that can be yes or no. So let's first talk about how to measure blood sugars. You could either get it checked when you go in for your lab work at your doctor's office. You can check with a glucometer at home. So that's the little device that you prick your finger and a little drop of blood comes out and you put it on a strip, then you have a meter that reads that, and a lot of diabetics have these and even non-diabetics have them as well.

Or you can acquire a CGM, a continuous glucose monitor. You can get a lot of information from a CGM. The problem is that CGMs are quite expensive and they're not accessible to everyone, unfortunately. But we can learn a lot from people that have a CGM. Luckily for us, a lot of people in our community have had the opportunity of wearing a CGM sometimes for two weeks, sometimes for a lot longer. In our community forum, if you do a search for CGM or FreeStyle Libre, which is the name of a particular CGM, what they learn obviously is that their blood sugar changes depending on what they eat, how they eat, when they eat, their sleep and their stress.

So of course, a reminder once again of our five pillars, not in the exact order, but what we learn is that our blood sugars do change depending on these five pillars. So if their blood sugars change, yours do as well, even if you can't see it. But if you ever get a chance to get a CGM, or if you're curious about getting a CGM, that is a great way to measure how your blood sugars respond throughout the day continuously over the course of 24 hours to different things and different stimulants.

If you don't have a CGM and if you're not diabetic, does it make sense to prick your finger and check your blood sugars? Well, I would say that not if you don't want to. Unless you understand what those numbers are telling you, it's probably kind of like the scale. It probably is not a good idea because you're going to be more confused than anything. So I don't know if that's necessarily the best measure for you. But if you're diabetic, then you probably already check your blood sugars, at least first thing in the morning. Checking your blood sugars first thing in the morning is really a great indication of your insulin resistance.

So seeing that morning blood sugar improve over time is definitely a measure for progress. I am going to put in the resources a blog post that Dr. Fung wrote regarding the dawn phenomenon and explaining why our morning blood sugars are very indicative of our insulin resistance state. So seeing that morning blood sugar improve over time is a definite measure for progress, whether you're diabetic or pre-diabetic. If you're not diabetic, you may still notice a slightly higher blood sugar when you start this insulin resistance healing journey. You might notice that it improves over time. Although your range might be a little bit smaller than other people that are diabetic and pre-diabetic.

I'd like to go back to talking about measuring our body composition and our weight for a second. One very important measure of your progress is checking your waist circumference. So the way to do that is to take a tape measure. Progress means that your waist circumference is getting smaller and smaller over time. So you're looking at the inches and that's a great measure of progress. Based on the conversation that we had about body composition, we know that fat around the abdominal area is usually fat concentrated around your organs.

This is a lot more of a concern when it comes to health than your overall weight or your peripheral fat. So fat around your limbs, like your arms and legs and your behind. That fat we're really most concerned about is the fat around our waist area. So this is a great measure of progress. I would definitely choose to check your waist circumference as a measure of progress over time any day over checking your weight.

We talked a little bit about measuring blood glucose, and sometimes that gets confused with checking blood ketones. Is it one and the same? No, of course it's not one and the same. Although some blood glucose monitors, some monitors check for both blood glucose and blood ketones. Ketones are a byproduct that our body naturally makes when we go into fat burning mode. So when you fast for a period of time and you get into that lower insulin fat burning mode, the byproduct of that that your body produces are called ketones and these are used as fuel within your body while you're fasting instead of sugar.

It's an alternative source of energy for your body. So a lot of people in the fasting community and in the low carb world check their ketones as a measure for success. Is this something that you should do? Well, that depends. Like anything else, I think it's really important that you understand what you're measuring so that you can interpret it. If you like numbers, why not? Go ahead and measure it. But if you're somebody who's just concerned about getting to the point



where you either ovulate in order to get pregnant, or if you're just looking to lower your blood sugars, you don't necessarily have to check each and every single thing out there.

If you don't want to check your ketones, but you still want to understand what checking ketones means and what you can learn from it, go ahead and read my blog post. I will explain there how to measure your ketones and what it means. There's now some other ways to check for ketones as well. You can use a breath meter. You don't have to do a blood meter, so you can look into that as well. For many, many years, people have been using urine strips to check for ketones. Maybe at the very beginning of your journey, that could tell you something.

Or maybe if you're a diabetic, the risk of ketoacidosis, it might be wise to check your urine ketones. But otherwise, I don't find that to be a very useful measure for most people in our community. If you search within our community, you'll find most people will say the same.

All right. Well, what other things might you measure as you're going through your journey? Again, this is all very dependent on what your particular concerns are. If you're somebody, for example, that has a lot of acne because of PCOS, you might notice that as you progress and as you succeed, your acne gets better and better, and eventually it goes away completely. I'm definitely one of these people and a great example of that. I was someone that as a young woman, and even as an adult, had a lot of acne because of PCOS. Well into my thirties, I had a lot of acne.

Now, of course, I don't have acne at all. I don't use a ton of makeup either to hide it, although I did at some point in my life, but I don't have the need to anymore. So I think for me, acne is a huge measure of success and progress. For a long period of time, I stopped fasting, or if I were to eat certain things, it wouldn't be one day or one meal, but if I were to regress, I know I would get quite a bit of acne. So that's a measure for me for sure. It might be a measure for you. So maybe at this point, you have a ton of acne and you're really concerned about that. Well, this is something that you will see improve over time and will be the most wonderful measure of success for you.

As I mentioned before, maybe you're a young woman trying to conceive, and maybe you have PCOS and very, very irregular cycles. Keeping track of your cycles is a great measure of success. Keeping track of your ovulation is another great measure of success. What lab work should you check for measuring success? Again, this is all going to be very, very dependent on your own individual health concerns. If you have health concerns, you will know what to check for. If you don't have any health concerns, then I wouldn't worry too much about it.

You'll likely get your regular blood work done with your doctor, whether it's once a year if you're very young and healthy, maybe it's every six months if you're a bit older and have some health concerns, but you don't necessarily have to add on to the list of labs to check for progress and to check for success. A lot of times people ask us about, should I check my fasting insulin? Well, again, if you understand what that means and if you're going to have the ability to check it on a



somewhat frequent basis, maybe every three months, every six months, yeah, that might give you some measure of success.

But again, checking one number one time, insulin is a very volatile number, it can go up and down, as you know from, for example, if you didn't sleep well the night before, then your fasting insulin might be significantly higher. If you ate later the night before your test, your insulin number might be a lot higher. If you've been fasting for a few days, your fasting insulin is going to be significantly lower.

As we reach the very end of our masterclass, I would like to remind you that your success depends on what your goals are and your goals should be something that you strive to achieve, that you try to consistently get to, even if your journey is not linear, even if life gets in the way. Learning how to implement the right holding pattern, when needed and throwing in the right recovery plan anytime that you need. I want to highly encourage you to stick around in our community and to use these resources and the accountability of our community and the support of our community as much as you'd like.

Please feel free to tag me anytime in our community forum anytime you have questions, concerns. If you just need some help along the way, myself and all the other coaches would be happy to help you. Thank you so much for participating in this masterclass. I look forward to your feedback and to speaking with you further in our community. Take care, everyone. Happy healing, happy fasting and all the best to you.