**10 BENEFITS OF FASTING

Starvation literally means starvation. It doesn’t mean skipping a meal or not eating for 24 hours. Or not eating for three days even. The belief that meal skipping or short-term fasting causes “starvation mode” is so completely ridiculous and absurd that it makes me want to jump out the window. – Martin Berkhan

Is it a good thing to ‘starve’ yourself each day, or a few days of the week? Well, a tonne of evidence indicates that timed periods of fasting are a good thing. Fasting has become increasingly popular over the years, especially among the health community. Whilst most health practitioners are afraid to recommend eating less due to the stigma involved, it still doesn’t alleviate the incredible benefits of fasting when used sensibly.

**1. Fasting Helps Weight Loss**

Fasting can be a safe way to lose weight as many studies have shown that intermittent fasting – fasting that is controlled within a set number of hours – allows the body to burn through fat cells more effectively than just regular dieting. Intermittent fasting allows the body to use fat as its primary source of energy instead of sugar. Many athletes now use fasting as means to hitting low body fat percentages for competitions.

**2. Fasting Improves Insulin Sensitivity**

Fasting has shown to have a positive effect on insulin sensitivity, allowing you to tolerate carbohydrates (sugar) better than if you didn’t fast. A study showed that after periods of fasting, insulin becomes more effective in telling cells to take up glucose from blood.

**3. Fasting Speeds Up The Metabolism**

Intermittent fasting gives your digestive system a rest, and this can energise your metabolism to burn through calories more efficiently. If your digestion is poor, this can affect your ability to metabolise food and burn fat. Intermittent fasts can regulate your digestion and promote healthy bowel function, thus improving your metabolic function.

**4. Fasting Promotes Longevity**

Believe it or not, the less you eat the longer you will live. Studies have shown how the lifespan of people in certain cultures increased due to their diets. However, we don’t need to live amongst a foreign community to reap the benefits of fasting. One of the primary effects of ageing is a slower metabolism, the younger your body is, the faster and more efficient your metabolism. The less you eat the less toll it takes on your digestive system.

**5. Fasting Improves Hunger**

Just think about this, can you actually experience real hunger if you eat a meal every 3-4 hours? Of course you can’t. In fact, to experience the true nature of hunger, this would take anything from 12 to even 24 hours. Fasting helps to regulate the hormones in your body so that you experience what true hunger is. We know that obese individuals do not receive the correct signals to let them know they are full due excessive eating patterns. Think of fasting as a reset button: the longer you fast, the more your body can regulate itself to release the correct hormones, so that you can experience what real hunger is. Not to mention, when your hormones are working correctly, you get full quicker.

**6. Fasting Improves Your Eating Patterns**

Fasting can be a helpful practice for those who suffer with binge eating disorders, and for those who find it difficult to establish a correct eating pattern due to work and other priorities. With intermittent fasting going all afternoon without a meal is okay and it can allow you to eat at a set time that fits your lifestyle. Also, for anyone who wants to prevent binge eating, you can establish a set time in where you allow yourself to eat your daily amount of calories in one sitting, and then not eat till the following day.

**7. Fasting Improves Your Brain Function**

Fasting has shown to improve brain function, because it boosts the production of a protein called brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF.) BDNF activates brain stem cells to convert into new neurons, and triggers numerous other chemicals that promote neural health. This protein also protects your brain cells from changes associated with Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s disease.

**8. Fasting Improves Your Immune System**

Intermittent fasting improves the immune system because it reduces free radical damage, regulates inflammatory conditions in the body and starves off cancer cell formation. In nature, when animals get sick they stop eating and instead focus on resting. This is a primal instinct to reduce stress on their internal system so their body can fight off infection. We humans are the only species who look for food when we are ill, even when we do not need it.

**9. Fasting Contributes To Self-Enlightenment**

Fasting has helped many people feel more connected to life during the practices reading, meditation, yoga and martial arts etc. With no food in the digestive system, this makes room for more energy in the body – the digestive is one of the most energy absorbing systems in the body. Fasting for self-enlightenment, allows us to feel better both consciously and physically. With a lighter body and a clearer mind we become more aware and grateful for the things around us.

**10. Fasting Helps Clear the Skin & Prevent Acne**

Fasting can help clear the skin because with the body temporarily freed from digestion, it’s able to focus its regenerative energies on other systems. **Not eating anything for just one day has shown to help the body clean up the toxins and regulate the functioning of other organs of the body like liver, kidneys and other parts.**