

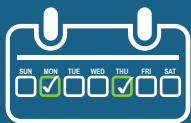


What's the deal with Intermittent Fasting?

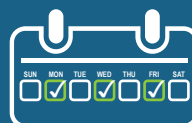
Intermittent fasting (IF), often promoted for weight loss, is a diet that cycles between periods of eating and fasting. There are several variations so it's important to know what type we're talking about.



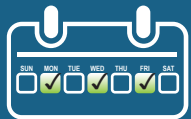
Common variations:



Intermittent energy restriction (IER):
Periods of energy restriction interspersed with normal energy intake.



Alternate day fasting (ADF):
“Fasting days” in which no energy-containing food or beverages are consumed, alternating with days where food and beverages are consumed as desired.



Alternate day energy restriction (ADER): Energy restriction of 60 -70% below estimated requirements, or a total fast on alternate days.



Modified fasting regimens (MFR):
Consumption of 20 - 25% of energy needs on regularly scheduled “fasting” days.



Time restricted feeding (TRF) A.K.A 16:8 diet:
Consuming energy intake as desired within specific time windows (from 10 am to 6 pm, for example), which induces fasting periods on a routine basis.



Religious fasting:
Fasting regimens undertaken for religious or spiritual purposes.

The bottom line:

It is not clear if long-term IF is a safe, effective method of weight control or whether IF provides health benefits to humans at any weight independent of weight loss.

At present, there is insufficient evidence to recommend any IF regimen.

Military personnel should not be on duty in a fasted state as it can negatively affect operational readiness.



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What does the research say?



Weight loss

Intermittent energy restriction (IER) may promote weight loss. However, IER is no more effective than continuous energy restriction (CER). CER means consistently limiting your calories.



Muscle mass preservation

When you lose weight, you lose fat and muscle. Studies suggest the overall protein content of the intermittent fasting and CER diet, rather than the pattern of energy restriction, is what determines how much fat free mass (muscle) you lose.



Daily living activities

It is often difficult to maintain daily living activities suggesting it is hard to follow these specific regimens over time.



Side effects

Intermittent energy restriction is associated with fatigue, stress, headaches, constipation, dehydration, mood variations, and confusion.



Future research

Long-term quality studies are needed to examine weight maintenance after weight loss. Short and long-term quality studies are needed, especially in military populations, to assess the effects of intermittent energy restriction on specific military environmental factors.



Health behaviours

There is a lack of evidence regarding the impacts of intermittent fasting on health behaviours such as diet, sleep, and physical activity.



Considering Intermittent Fasting? Keep these tips in mind:

1. A healthy balanced diet is still important. Ensure you are meeting your requirements for important nutrients like fibre, vitamins, and minerals.

2. For reasons including performance and injury prevention, avoid fasting while on duty.



3. Check with your health care provider if you are concerned about your weight.

4. Stay hydrated.

5. Your health is more important than a number on the scale. Sleep, stress management, and physical activity, among other factors, all contribute to weight management and a healthy lifestyle.

References:

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