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## INTERMITTENT FASTING

12:12

14:10

16:8

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Intermittent fasting has gotten a lot of attention as a way to lose weight and feel healthier overall. All types of intermittent fasting (also called time-restricted eating or interval eating) adhere to the same overarching concept: eat only during a certain period every day. For the rest of the time, you don't consume anything besides water or calorie free drinks.

One of the most popular types of intermittent fasting is called the 16:8 diet, where you limit your food intake to an 8-hour eating window and go 16 hours without eating any food. Some people call it the 16:8 diet or 16:8 fasting. Here's what you should know about it—and whether it can really help you lose weight.

The 16:8 diet is a version of intermittent fasting that restricts eating to an 8-hour window. During that time, you're allowed to eat and drink what you want with no calorie restrictions. During the 16-hour fasting period, you can (and should) drink plenty of water. Black coffee and tea are fine, too.

What time period works best? Keeping your eating window earlier—say, from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.—seems to be the most beneficial. The body's biological clock is primed to eat earlier in the day, explains Courtney Peterson, PhD, assistant professor of nutrition at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. "In most people, blood sugar control is best in the morning and gets worse as the day progresses. You also digest food faster in the morning. So there's a metabolic advantage to eating earlier in the daytime," she says.

But if that timeframe seems unrealistic, don't worry. Recent findings suggest that bumping your eating window just a little bit later, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., could also be effective for weight loss.

Going for longish periods without eating seems to send the body into fat-burning mode and limit blood sugar spikes. "Those two factors combined mean that you're reducing the blood sugar highs and lows that make you hungrier," Peterson says. Time-restricted eating also keeps your appetite in check by lowering the hunger hormone ghrelin, she adds.

There's another reason why 16:8 dieters might end up eating less. "I think participants found it difficult to eat all of their regular meals and snacks within the 8-hour timeframe," says Kristina Varady, PhD, associate professor of nutrition at the University of Illinois Chicago and a co-author of the *Nutrition and Healthy Aging* study. If trying to eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. seems like a squeeze, you'll likely end up cutting out a meal or shrinking your portions.

The best diet is one that you can stick with, and that means finding a plan that fits into your daily routine. If you already tend to eat dinner on the early side, the 16:8 diet could be great.

But for some people, stopping eating by 6 p.m. could have a negative impact on their social lives—dinner or drinks with friends could get trickier. (Still, there's always weekend brunch!) It might impact things at home too, if your family tends to eat on the later side. “People should choose the diet that best fits with their lifestyle and weight loss goals,” Varady says.

On the other hand, an intermittent fasting-style diet just might feel simpler than trying to follow a more complicated eating plan—and that can count for a lot. “The idea of having a simple rule to follow may make it easier for people to avoid any mindless eating,” Peterson says. “I have had some people tell me that intermittent fasting made it easier for them to eat healthfully.”

Just remember: While you don’t have to track your calories during your eating window, you shouldn’t let things turn into a free for all. “It’s smarter to still eat moderately,” Peterson says. Stick with mostly healthy, minimally processed foods like lean proteins and plenty of vegetables. As for portions? Eat until you’re satisfied, not stuffed.

# 16:8 Intermittent Fasting

## SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE FOR INTERMITTENT FASTING PROGRAM

### Wake Up-12pm



Hydrate—Drink plenty of water and other calorie-free drinks such as tea or coffee



### 12pm



First Meal—Make sure to get plenty of nutrients by eating whole foods



### 4pm



Second Meal—Continue to eat a variety of healthy, nutritious foods



### 8pm



Third Meal—Focus on eating a meal that will keep you full during the upcoming fast



### 8pm-Bedtime



Begin Fast—Stay hydrated with water and other calorie-free drinks as desired

