

Fast Burn!

What's in it for me? A focused approach to losing weight and staying healthy.

If you've spent any time looking into dieting, you know that the latest trend is intermittent fasting. But, with so many different approaches and techniques available, it can be hard to know exactly where to start. Luckily, Dr. Ian Smith can show you the way. These blinks explain the theory and biomechanics behind this doctor's tried-and-true method of intermittent fasting, a dieting technique that involves strategically scheduling meals. You'll learn how this dieting style can fit into your lifestyle, and you'll become skilled at navigating the world of intermittent fasting in a way that gets real results. A little note before we begin. These blinks contain health and dietary advice. You should always consult your physician before making major changes to your diet. In these blinks, you'll discover

what makes some fats better than others; why our ancestors would excel at fasting; and how to make the perfect smoothie.

A healthy body needs the right amount of the right fats.

What do you really know about fat? Sure, you can spot fat in the juicy rim around a pork chop or in the marbling of a fine steak. You probably also know it's hiding in the creamy froth of a milkshake and in the rich sweetness of a chocolate bar. And, of course, you know how it looks and feels on your body. A layer of fat sits under our skin and accumulates around our bellies, thighs, and arms. For some people that might be fine, but for others it may feel like too much. Either way, fat is inescapable – we need it to live. But not all fat is made equally, and knowing the difference is important for any diet. The key message here is: A healthy body needs the right amount of the right fats. Along with carbohydrates and proteins, fat is one of the three macronutrients humans need to survive. Because it's essential for life, our bodies crave it. That's why fat usually tastes so good. And when we eat it, our brains produce the neurotransmitter dopamine, which gives us a sensation of reward and pleasure. But that's just scratching the surface – fat gets even more complicated. There are four different categories of fat. They are monounsaturated, polyunsaturated, saturated, and trans. Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are sometimes called the “good fats” because they bring many health benefits, such as easing inflammation and lowering the risk of heart disease. These fats are found in vegetables, nuts, seeds, and fish along with cooking oils like soybean oil and olive oil. In contrast are the saturated and trans fats. These fats are considered more harmful because they're more difficult to digest and raise the body's levels of LDL cholesterol, sometimes also known as “bad cholesterol,” because of the way it builds up in your blood vessels over time, increasing the risk for cardiovascular disease. Saturated fats are found in meats like beef, poultry, and lamb along with dairy products and rich oils like coconut oil. Trans fats are usually artificial and found in the hydrogenated oils used in many processed foods. When you eat fat, the body either breaks it down to carry out bodily functions or stores it in fat cells as potential energy. If you consume more fat than you need, these cells expand, causing weight gain. The key to managing weight is to take in fewer calories than you burn; this way, your body starts

consuming that stored fat as fuel. So, what's the best way to go about this? We'll examine that in the next blink.

"Increasing energy demand will drive the body to refuel by depleting its fat stores and thus shrinking the amount of body fat."

Intermittent fasting puts the body on a regular eating schedule.

For many people today, food is always available. In fact, it's almost too available. Our fridges and pantries are packed with snacks; restaurants and grocery stores line the streets of every city; and, if you're feeling lazy, you can get a meal delivered to your doorstep with just a few clicks. Now, contrast this bounty to the lifestyle of our early human ancestors. For them, eating depended on hunting and foraging. Food was much less available – or sometimes not available at all. Given this, our bodies actually evolved to regularly experience periods of fasting. In fact, our bodies may function best when food isn't eaten around the clock. This is the theory behind the dietary practice of intermittent fasting. The key message here is: Intermittent fasting puts the body on a regular eating schedule. Intermittent fasting, or IF, is the practice of consciously restricting when you eat. This practice has deep roots in human history and has recently reemerged as a popular method for losing weight and staying healthy. There are many different approaches to IF, and some are more helpful than others. The most basic form of IF is time-restricted feeding, or TRF. Practitioners of TRF divide the day into periods of eating – when nutrients are consumed – and fasting, when nothing is eaten. A common structure for TRF is the 12:12 program, where the feeding and fasting windows both last 12 hours. So, if you have your first bite at 8:00 a.m., you don't eat after 8:00 p.m. Stricter programs increase the length of the fasting window to 14, 16, or even 18 hours. Other forms of IF use different eating schedules. For instance, in the 5:2 model, you eat regularly five days a week, but on two nonconsecutive fasting days, you only consume 500 calories. Other models call for calorie restriction every other day or introduce a full 24-hour fast once a week. Each of these models brings potential health benefits, particularly for weight management. You see, the food you eat gives your body fuel. During a fast, that fuel is missing, so the body must break down stored fat in order to keep functioning. The longer you fast, the more fat your body transforms into fuel. In the following blinks, we'll lay out a detailed intermittent fasting program that could work for you.

Use the four-week Ignition period to adjust to the IF schedule.

Studies have found that intermittent fasting has many potential benefits like weight loss, improved brain function, and reduced inflammation. Sounds pretty good, right? But where do you begin? How about with the Fast Burn program? This nine-week program combines elements of time-restricted feeding, the 5:2 method, and regular exercise into an easy and effective weight management regime. It all starts with a four-week Ignition period designed to acclimate your body to IF. This is followed by a one-week Intermission period and a four-week Acceleration period where the benefits of intermittent fasting really kick in. Now, nine weeks might sound like a challenge – but if

you stick to the program, you'll smoothly transition to an IF lifestyle and see real results. The key message here is: Use the four-week Ignition period to adjust to the IF schedule. The Ignition period of the Fast Burn program is designed to ease you into the IF lifestyle. For the first two weeks, start with a 12:12 TRF schedule – that's a 12-hour feeding window and 12-hour fasting window. During the feeding window, choose your meals carefully, and space them out evenly. And, for the first two weeks, work in 30 minutes of light cardiovascular exercise about four times a week, preferably during your fasting window. By week three, your body should be fully acclimated to the 12:12 schedule, so it's time to turn up the heat. This week, shorten your feeding period by two hours so you're on a 10:14 time-restricted feeding schedule. Also, ramp up your exercise a bit. Try incorporating some more rigorous aerobic workouts such as body weight exercises or Zumba classes. Only take one rest day this week. In week four, continue with your 10:14 TRF schedule. By now, the fasting periods should start feeling more normal. Also, this week is a Jigsaw week, meaning you should alternate your meals between days of normal eating and days that are fully plant-based or vegetarian. This variety will help you take in the right mix of nutrients. Throughout the Ignition period, try to keep your start and stop times as consistent as possible, and aim to wake up at least two hours before your first meal. If you must eat during a fasting period, have a small snack of fewer than 50 calories. Drinking lots of water can also help eliminate food cravings. Make it through this week, and you'll be ready for week five: Intermission.

Use the Intermission week to recuperate and reflect.

Congratulations! You just completed the Ignition period of the Fast Burn program. Over the last four weeks, you've introduced your body to a steady time-restricted feeding schedule and regular exercise routine. Hopefully you're getting into the groove, experiencing fewer cravings, and feeling great overall! Now you may be ready to switch your intermittent fasting regime into high gear. However, it's important not to overdo it – that risks burning yourself out before you see the most dramatic results. So, instead of plowing ahead, week five is the Intermission period. This week is all about giving your mind and body a breather before stepping up to the second, more rigorous half of the Fast Burn program. The key message here is: Use the Intermission week to recuperate and reflect. Intermission week doesn't introduce a lot of new material to your dieting program. Instead, stick to what was working best in the Ignition stage. You can revert back to a 12:12 TRF schedule, or, if you prefer, maintain the more rigorous 10:14 schedule. Either way, you'll want to exercise five times this week, with rest days on day three and six. During this Intermission period, take some time to reflect on your IF experience. What's working? What's not? The full Fast Burn program lays out what to eat each week. While following the guidelines is recommended, there is some room to improvise. Just remember a few key pointers. Specifically, avoid high-calorie junk foods like sodas, white pastas, potatoes, and other items high in sugar and starch. These foods will disrupt your diet even if eaten during the proper eating window. The Fast Burn program also includes detailed exercises, but your workouts can be customized to suit your specific needs. Look back on which workouts you enjoyed, and which ones caused pain or stress. If you have access to a gym, machines like stair climbers, treadmills, and rowing machines make for great tools. Without these options, simple alternatives like jumping rope, jogging, or taking long walks can provide workable alternatives. The important thing is to keep moving. Going forward from here, things are only going to

get more intense – so it’s crucial to listen to your body. Throughout Intermission week, take stock of exactly how you’re feeling so you’ll be more aware of any changes, good or bad, that occur in the final stretch of the program. In the next blink, we’ll step up to the challenge with the Acceleration period – the last four-week push.

Kick your intermittent fasting into high gear with four weeks of Acceleration.

The Fast Burn intermittent fasting program isn’t a sprint – it’s more like a marathon. And, just like a marathon, completing the second half is more challenging than the first. It takes more stamina, more determination, and more focus. But this final four weeks, the Acceleration period, is also when you’ll see the most dramatic results. By stepping up the duration of your fasting and paying more attention to what you eat, you’ll reorient your metabolism toward burning through your fat stores. This period also includes elements of 5:2 fasting, which will really push your body to reach its potential. So, are you ready for the final stretch? The finish line is in sight! The key message here is: Kick your intermittent fasting into high gear with four weeks of Acceleration. The four-week Acceleration period is the most rigorous portion of the Fast Burn program. It takes what you’ve learned in the previous five weeks and pushes it further. It starts with week six: the Reload phase. This week, you get back into the IF mindset by maintaining a 10:14 TRF schedule. Continue exercising by dedicating 30 to 45 minutes to working out each day, with only one day of rest on day six. Week seven is another Jigsaw week, so the focus is once again on varying the foods you eat. During these seven days, continue adhering to a 10:14 schedule, but aim to include more plant-based meals in your diet. Munch on lots of leafy greens like kale, spinach, and chard, and fill up on whole grains like quinoa, farro, and brown rice. If you’re craving something sweet, berries and dried fruits make a great snack. Next up is week eight, the Stretch week, where things really get tough. If you can, tighten your TRF even more to have an eight-hour feeding period and 16 hours of fasting. This week also includes the Daily Double: two days this week, aim to eat only half the calories you do the other five. If you start to feel faint, don’t worry. Each day, if you need it, you get a Floating Bonus Snack of 100 calories. Finally, week nine brings it all home. If you’re feeling brave and healthy enough, this is the week you can tighten your TRF schedule to have just six hours of feeding and 18 hours of fasting. It won’t be easy, but at this point, your body will be ready. By the end of these nine weeks, you may even be ready to continue an IF lifestyle indefinitely.

Optimize your eating periods with fresh, healthy meals.

When it comes to intermittent fasting, most people get too caught up in the fasting side of the equation. But can you blame them? Going long stretches without meals or snacks is a dramatic change that does require a bit of willpower and determination. Still, fasting is only one half of the Fast Burn program. While it’s important to adjust when you eat, it’s just as crucial to consider what you’re eating. If you spend your feeding window gorging on sweets, starches, and highly processed foods, all that fasting will be for nothing. Now, the full program advises exactly what to eat each day. But, to get started, it helps to know a few simple recipes. The key message here is: Optimize your

eating periods with fresh, healthy meals. Two hours after waking up in the morning is the ideal time to begin your feeding window. A great way to break your fast and start the day right is the Burner Smoothie. Make this signature drink by blending a three-fourths cup of apple juice, water, or milk with one teaspoon apple cider vinegar, one teaspoon coconut oil, a cup of blueberries, an apple, a banana, and a handful of baby spinach. Top it off with a squeeze of lemon and some ice, and you've got one healthy drink! For lunch, try a Greek Energy Bowl for four. Start with two cups of cooked brown rice or quinoa. Season two six-ounce pieces of skinless chicken breast with salt and pepper, pan-fry in a couple tablespoons olive oil, and then cut into strips. Crumble a cup of feta cheese, and chop up some avocado, grape tomatoes, and cucumber. Assemble the bowls by layering the ingredients and topping with olives and a couple spoonfuls of balsamic vinaigrette. When dinner rolls around, end your feeding period with a cheesy chicken quesadilla. For this simple recipe, start by sautéing two six-ounce cuts of skinless chicken until golden brown. Then, wrap the chopped meat in tortillas along with shredded Monterey Jack and Cheddar cheese, some diced onions, and half a cup of salsa. Brush the wraps with olive oil, then bake at 400 degrees for five to eight minutes. These are just a few options for making the most of your meals. Crafting the right diet is an essential component of the Fast Burn program. While it may be difficult at first, following the program's recommendations will give you the right mix of vitamins, minerals, and nutrients to stay healthy. You'll also learn valuable cooking skills that will last you a lifetime.

Final summary

The key message in these blinks: Intermittent fasting is a dieting practice that divides the day into feeding periods, where eating is allowed, and fasting periods, where eating is forbidden. This schedule encourages the body to begin seeking energy by breaking down stored fat. Adhering to an IF program that includes time-restricted fasting, a diet of nutritious meals, and regular exercise can help you manage your weight and live a healthier lifestyle. Actionable advice: Skip the booze! While there's nothing inherently wrong with alcohol, it doesn't always blend well with a dieting program. During your intermittent fasting, it may be wise to cut drinking out of your diet entirely. But, if you'd like, one glass of wine or one light beer per day is an acceptable alternative - as long as you have your drinks during your feeding window. Got feedback? We'd love to hear what you think about our content! Just drop an email to with Fast Burn! as the subject line and share your thoughts!