

The PureFasting Beginner's Guide

A plain guide for adults who want to understand intermittent fasting. It explains terms, example schedules, drinks, hunger, and how a daily fast usually ends.

This is education, not medical care. It does not diagnose anyone. It does not claim that fasting cures, treats, or prevents disease. It does not say that a schedule is medically right for you. Nothing here has to be followed. Reading it is enough.

Safety

People who are pregnant, breastfeeding, under 18, have an eating disorder or a history of one, have diabetes or hypoglycemia, take medication, or have a heart, kidney, or other medical condition should talk with a healthcare professional before fasting. Stop a fast and get help if you feel faint, confused, or unwell.

If you are in one of those groups, use this guide as background for a conversation with a clinician, not as a plan to start on your own.

What fasting means here

Fasting, in this guide, means a stretch of time when you do not eat. Intermittent fasting means that stretch repeats, with a clear time when you do eat. The daily version is often called time-restricted eating.

The Mayo Clinic describes intermittent fasting as a pattern of eating based on time limits. Research on longer-term effects is mixed. This guide describes the topic as an eating pattern to understand. It is not a treatment and not a program with a promised result.

You do not need a product to start. You do not need to tell anyone you are fasting. You can stop at the definitions.

Words that keep the clock clear

- **Eating window.** The hours when you eat.
- **Fasting window.** The hours when you do not eat.

- **16:8.** About 16 hours fasting and an 8 hour eating window. The numbers add up to 24. In the names used here, the first number is the fast.
- **Intermittent fasting.** A repeating pattern of those windows, not a single long fast and not a cleanse.

Write down the time of your first bite and your last bite on two ordinary days. The gap overnight is your current fasting window. Many adults already land near 12 hours without naming it.

Example schedules

These are illustrations. None of them is assigned to you. A longer fast is not a better grade.

- **12:12.** Twelve hours eating, twelve hours fasting. Often this is dinner, sleep, and breakfast. It is the reference point.
- **14:10.** Fourteen hours fasting, ten hours eating. A modest step if a 12 hour gap already feels easy on paper and in real life.
- **16:8.** Sixteen hours fasting, eight hours eating. The example articles mention most. Noon to 20:00 is one picture. 10:00 to 18:00 is another. Put the window around a meal you do not want to lose.
- **18:6.** Eighteen hours fasting, six hours eating. Read this only after shorter windows feel familiar. Many people never need to use it. Six hours can fit two planned meals. It fits poorly with a late dinner you care about.

Patterns that cut calories sharply on whole days, sometimes called 5:2, are a different project. This guide does not set calorie targets.

If a window collides with sleep, work, family meals, or medicine that must be taken with food, the window is the thing to move. Not the medicine, and not the people.

Before you change anything

Decide whether fasting is even a topic for you. Use the safety section. If you need a clinician's view, get it before you move a meal that is tied to medication or to a medical condition.

Pick one change, not five. Do not start a new hard workout, a new sleep plan, and a new food rule list in the same week you try a longer gap.

Choose the meal you most want to keep. Put the eating window around it. Then see how long the overnight gap becomes. If that gap is 12 or 14 hours, you are looking at the gentler

examples. If it is 16, you are looking at the common article example. If it is 18 or more, pause and read the shorter ones again.

Write the drinks you will count as part of the fast, using the next section, so the clock means what you think it means. Plan the first meal before you are hungry. Ordinary food you can sit down for is the whole requirement.

What people commonly drink

During a fasting window, people commonly drink water, plain black coffee, or plain tea. Still or unsweetened sparkling water fits that list. Coffee and tea are plain: no milk, cream, sugar, or sweetener.

Anything with calories may end the fast for many people who want a zero-calorie window. A splash of milk in coffee is a common example. You can drink it. You would count that time as eating. Sweeteners, including non-caloric ones, also lead many people to call the fast over, because they want a visible line. That line is a convention, not a medical rule.

Juice, soda, broth, and alcohol are not fasting-window drinks in this guide. Alcohol on an empty stomach is a poor plan. Diet soda starts an argument: it can have no calories and still break a "nothing sweet" rule. Pick one definition and keep it.

This guide does not recommend salt drinks, electrolyte packets, or flavored drops. If you feel unwell, stop the fast and get help. Do not look for a powder first. If a clinician has limited your fluids, follow that advice.

Hunger

Hunger during a fast is common. It often arrives near a usual mealtime, rises, and may ease if you are otherwise well. That wave is not proof that a schedule is working. It is also not a test you have to pass.

If you feel well and you are close to the time you planned to eat, you can wait, or you can eat. Both are allowed. Water, a short change of scene, or a task away from the kitchen can take the edge off a habitual cue. Those are practical notes for a well person, not treatments.

Feeling faint, confused, very shaky, or unwell is different. Stop. Eat something ordinary that you can keep down. If you do not feel better, or the feeling is severe, get medical help. Do this even if a timer still has time left.

Stronger hunger on a longer clock is a reason to shorten the clock. It is not a badge.

How to end a fast

Eat. For a daily window, the first meal is a normal meal: sit down, use a plate or a bowl, and eat at a pace where you can tell when you have had enough. Eggs and toast, rice and beans, yogurt and fruit, soup and bread, or last night's leftovers are all valid examples. None of them is required.

You do not need a special drink to break a fast. You do not need to mark the moment.

People sometimes regret a very large, greasy, or sugary first meal when they arrive overly empty. If that happens, make the next meal smaller and plainer, and consider a shorter fast. Standing at the counter because a timer hit zero is unnecessary. The timer is a clock.

After 12 or 14 hours, breakfast can simply be breakfast. After a longer gap, plan the meal earlier so you are not choosing it while ravenous. This guide does not cover multi-day fasts. Do not use it for those.

Mistakes that waste the experiment

- Starting at 18 hours because it sounds more serious. A long window is not progress.
- Ignoring the safety section because the page is calm.
- Letting a milky or sweetened drink happen and still counting the hours as a fast. Reset the window. The notes are only useful if they match the day.
- Forgetting water, or the opposite: forcing large amounts of water or salt because a forum suggested it.
- Weighing yourself over and over. This guide does not promise weight change. One morning on a scale is a poor teacher.
- Rushing the first meal, or delaying it past the point of feeling well so a streak can survive.
- Stacking a new workout on a new long gap. Keep movement familiar and moderate. Stop a session if you feel faint, confused, or unwell.
- Keeping a harsh week going. Irritability, dread, or constant food thoughts are reasons to make the window gentler or to stop. There is no streak you owe anyone.

A short list of questions

Do I have to fast every day? No.

Is there a best schedule? No. Gentler examples exist because they are easier to understand and often easier to live with.

Will this change my weight? This guide does not promise that. Meals, sleep, stress, medication, and health conditions are all outside a clock.

Can I exercise? Many people keep their usual moderate activity. Do not pair a brand-new hard workout with a brand-new long fast. Eat if you need to before you feel safe to train.

What if I want a tool? A paper note is enough. If you use a timer, remember it does not know how you feel.

If you want to keep reading

PureFasting publishes longer guides on the same topics: what intermittent fasting is, 16:8, 18:6, schedules, drinks, hunger, breaking a fast, mistakes, exercise, and a FAQ. The site also has a timer, a schedule drawing, a checklist, and a 7-day set of reflection prompts. Those tools are examples. They are not personal advice.

You do not need to buy an app, a book, or a course to use this guide.

Safety, again

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PureFasting at purefasting.org. Educational only. Not a clinic.