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Fast Diets

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- Make 50 plus simple and delicious calorie-controlled meals

Dr. Kellyann Petrucci

*Author of Paleo Cookbook For Dummies
and Living Paleo For Dummies*

Patrick Flynn

Coauthor of Paleo Workouts For Dummies





by Kellyann Petrucci, MD, and Patric Flynn
*Authors of *Paleo Workouts For Dummies**



Fast Diets For Dummies®

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Introduction

Welcome to the world of fasting. In fact, fasting is the world's oldest cure-all. Hippocrates, the father of medicine, once said “instead of medicine, fast for a day.” What's more, all animals, except the modern-day human, fast instinctively when sick or injured. The healing power of fasting has been known for all time, of that there is no doubt, but it hasn't been until recently that people in the fields of fitness, health, nutrition, and healing have had the science to back it up.

We wrote this book to bring fasting back to the forefront — as a healing mechanism, as a fat loss booster, as a muscle builder, and more.

Now it doesn't matter whether or not you want to drop a few pounds, heal a disease, fight aging, or enhance vitality, fasting can give it all to you, whether you want it or not. The benefits are enormous and they're inescapable.

About This Book

Fast Diets For Dummies gives you all you ever wanted to know about fasting, which simply means not eating for a while. That doesn't sound too difficult, right? Surely anyone could figure out on his or her own that the way to do so is not to put food in your mouth.

For some reason though, it's not easy. Many people are overweight, unhealthy, and sick. Fasting is a delicate art. Subtle nuances can make or break a fast, and little tweaks can diminish or enhance the positive effects of fasting.

In addition, you can go about fasting in numerous ways. Some of them are more difficult than others, no doubt, but each serves a distinctly unique purpose. For example, some methods of fasting are better suited for putting on muscle, other methods for burning fat.

Fast Diets For Dummies can help you find the best fasting protocol for you, as well as help ease you gently into the process. Fasting can be tough — we're not going to hide that — but know that with disciplined effort, the reward is great.

This book is different from any other available fasting book, because we aren't emotionally (or financially) tied to any one practice or organization. What you have here is an unbiased and honest overview of some of the more popular fasting protocols around today. Our job is to help you sift through the garbage, find the gold, take it, and run.

In this book, we provide two chapters, chock-full of recipes. One chapter provides 500-calorie meals and the other has 600-calorie meals for your one meal that you eat, depending on the fast you choose to follow. (Part discusses the different fasting options.) Here are some general conventions that we use in the recipes:

- ✓ Milk is whole.
- ✓ Eggs are large.
- ✓ Pepper is freshly ground black pepper unless otherwise specified.
- ✓ Butter is unsalted.
- ✓ Flour is all-purpose unless otherwise specified.
- ✓ Sugar is granulated unless otherwise noted.
- ✓ All herbs are fresh unless dried herbs are specified.

✓ All temperatures are Fahrenheit.

If you need to convert the recipes into metric measurements, check out www.dummies.com/how-to/content/dealing-with-metric-measurements.html for help.

Foolish Assumptions

When writing this book, we made the following assumptions about you:

- ✓ You want to improve your general condition or specifically one condition. Perhaps you want to be healthier, leaner, or more productive. Perhaps you want to be all three.
- ✓ You want to lose weight.
- ✓ You have tried diets in the past and been dissatisfied with the results or frustrated with the process.

Fast Diets For Dummies shows you how to lose weight, improve your overall health and well-being, and have more energy, all quickly, safely, and without all the pains of conventional dieting. We want to make this life-changing process as enjoyable as possible.

Icons Used in This Book

Throughout this book, and in true *For Dummies* fashion, you'll run into a number of icons — all of them designed to help you better understand and get the most out of intermittent fasting. Here are the icons you can expect to run into throughout this book:



This icon provides helpful information that you can implement in your fasting.



This icon points out important tidbits that you should store in your mind because you'll probably end up revisiting them in your fasting endeavors.



We don't post warnings often, but when we do, pay attention, because they're enormously important. Don't skip over them unless you want to fall into a potentially harmful mistake.



This text discusses the nitty-gritty and often scientific details about certain concepts. This information isn't essential to your fast, but certainly recommended!



This icon directs you to additional free information you can find online to help you with your fast.

Beyond the Book

In addition to all the information in *Fast Diets For Dummies*, you can find additional information online to help you with your fast. We provide a free Cheat Sheet online at www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/fastdiets. The Cheat Sheet adds a few extra tidbits that you will find interesting. You can also find additional information online at www.dummies.com/extras/fastdiets.

If after reading the Cheat Sheet and online information, you want more, you can then check out our own websites:

- ✓ www.chroniclesofstrength.com: Pat's website is based around the philosophy of fitness minimalism and offers a plethora of unconventional fasting protocols and super-efficient strength and conditioning routines.
- ✓ www.drkellyann.com: This website is your one-stop Paleo Shop, offering you everything you need to know about what to eat when you're not fasting (which is equally important to the practice of fasting itself) and what not to eat.

Where to Go from Here

All you need to start is an open mind. Much of the information you're about to encounter in this book is in stark opposition to conventional wisdom. And because the majority of people aren't yet on board with fasting, it remains a bit controversial.

But just remember what Mark Twain said, “Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it's time to pause and reflect.”

Consider this book a fasting buffet (ironic, we know). Take from it what you will; you don't need to read it cover to cover unless you want a good and thorough understanding on the subject matter. Nor do we require you to memorize anything. After you find what you need, you can let this book sit ready on your shelf for you to pick up anytime you need a quick refresher.

You can start from Chapter and read to the end, or you can flip to the Table of Contents or the index to find a topic that interests you. You can read just the chapters or

sections that interest you. No matter what you read, we wish you luck in your fasting lifestyle change.

Part I

Getting Started with Fast Diets



Visit www.dummies.com/extras/fastdiets for more helpful great Dummies content online.

In this part...

- ✓ Examine the science behind fasting and why your body won't go into starvation mode (or in other words, hold on to body fat and feel lethargic) while you fast.
- ✓ Understand the many benefits of fasting and how fasting can improve, not just your physical health, such as muscle gain, immunity, and fat loss, but also your neurological health, including brain function and productivity.
- ✓ Find out how exercising while in a fasted state is so powerful for burning fat and building muscle.
- ✓ See how having the proper mindset and setting realistic expectations can make your experiences with fasting more successful.
- ✓ Discover techniques that can help you overcome any fasting pitfalls so that you can utilize fasting to its fullest potential.

Chapter 1

Fasting — Nature's Ultimate Fat-Burning Secret Weapon

In This Chapter

- ▶ Discovering what fasting is
 - ▶ Understanding what fasting can do for you
 - ▶ Recognizing who should and shouldn't fast
 - ▶ Determining whether or not fasting is right for you
-

Almost any diet works, for a period of time. Because at root, all diets operate on the same premises — calorie restriction. Though many try to deny this plain and simple fact, it's quite undeniable. If you take in fewer calories than you get rid of, you will lose weight. It's inevitable.

You don't need to eat healthy to lose weight, believe it or not. You need only to eat less. But we don't recommend that you cut your intake of sandwich cookies in half, from ten to five, because being healthy is more than just losing weight. In other words you can be thin and unhealthy.

A good diet is an economical one. It contains no unnecessary foods and no unnecessary meals, which means you're judicious about your food quality and also your food quantity. As a result, you should omit needless foods, which means anything you ingest that that will

either make you more or less healthy. If a food doesn't directly benefit you, then you should omit it. Many good books discuss the importance of food quality. (In this book, we briefly discuss food quality, but our mission is to focus on quantity.)

This chapter (and this book) focuses on the quantity — how to not eat — in other words, how to fast for health, fat loss, and longevity. Not eating, in fact, is darn near one of the healthiest things you can do for yourself that you've probably never thought to do. And you've probably never thought to do it, because all conventional wisdom has led you to believe that skipping meals or not eating for a while is bad for you.

In this chapter we introduce you to fasting to help you understand what fasting is, why it's such a beneficial health practice, and why it's so darn effective for weight loss. We then help you decide whether or not fasting is right for you.

Getting a Better Idea of What Fasting Really Is

The concept of fasting is quite simple. *Fasting* means you don't eat for a while. Although it may sound a bit contrarian, it is, without a doubt, a very safe and very sound health practice. In fact, it's good for your mind, body, and soul.

You may have heard that not eating is a bad idea, because it will slow your metabolism and cause you to gain weight. Well, you've heard wrong. Fasting is not only good for you, but also perhaps the healthiest thing you can ever do for yourself.

Fasting works because it's a hardship. It's short-term deprivation, to be exact. And, to that end, any diet that touts itself as superior because it isn't deprivation-based is not superior at all, but far inferior, to be sure. Any diet that says you can “eat whatever you want so long as you . . . ” or “eat as much as you want so long as you . . . ” is immediately a pile of fatuous nonsense and is to be straightaway ignored.

These sections examine the positive benefits of fasting, explain how fasting works, and discuss how you can fast. The other chapters in Part [I](#) provide more detail about these discussions to help if you want to change your lifestyle for the better and incorporate fasting into your diet.

Identifying the positive effects of fasting

Fasting can help you feel and look better. In addition, here are a few of the positive effects fasting can have on your body. Fasting

- ✓ **Burns fat:** When fasting, the body naturally taps into stored body fat for energy, a process that is severely inhibited when eating frequently throughout the day. Studies have shown that fasting dramatically increases *lipolysis*, which is the fancy term for fat burning.
- ✓ **Boosts energy:** Fasting is slightly stimulatory, because it increases your natural adrenal response. In plain English, it means that while you're fasting, you can expect your productivity to increase and concentration to improve.
- ✓ **Fights disease:** Fasting naturally boosts immunity and allows your body to naturally detoxify itself. While fasting, your body purges unhealthy, damaged, and

polluted cells — as well as spurs the growth of new healthy cells.

- ✓ **Delays aging:** Eating has an aging effect on the body, which happens primarily through *insulin*, which is your body's primary nutrient transport and blood-sugar regulating hormone. When you eat, your pancreas secretes insulin. And the problem with eating too much or too frequently is that insulin speeds up biological aging process. Fasting delays aging by suppressing insulin levels.
- ✓ **Enhances exercise:** Fasting and exercise potentiate each other, meaning they increase each other's positive effects. Exercising in a fasted state can help you to burn more fat, increase vitality, and build muscle more efficiently.

The benefits of fasting are huge, whereas there really isn't a reason why you shouldn't fast on a regular basis. In fact, fasting is also the world's most ancient healing mechanism. All animals, except human beings, fast instinctively when sick or wounded. Chapter [2](#) discusses these benefits in more detail.

Examining how it works

The human body can be either in a fasted state or a fed state; it can't be in between. Therefore, if the fed state is yang, then the fasting state is yin. Fasting provides balance — by adding in more yin to counterweigh all that yang. Fasting basically works in three ways:

- ✓ **It optimizes your hormonal makeup.** When in a fasted state, hormones that are particularly beneficial are permitted free reign, including *glucagon*, which is the yin to insulin's yang. Glucagon, like insulin, is secreted by the pancreas in order to regulate blood

sugar. But rather than shutting nutrients into cells, glucagon pulls nutrients out of cells, including fatty acids, which has earned glucagon the reputation of being something of a fat-burning hormone. However, glucagon can only prevail in a fasted state.

- ✓ **It surges natural growth hormone.** Insulin, the hormone secreted during the fed state, heavily suppresses natural growth hormone. Meaning, the more frequently you eat, the less natural growth hormone your body produces. Natural growth hormone is the closest thing humans have to a fountain of youth. It burns fat, builds muscle, and works to keep the body biologically young and resilient.
- ✓ **It permits the body to cleanse itself.** When in a fasted state, the body disperses its natural house cleaners, which consist primarily of *microphages* (think of these as cells that attack and destroy harmful invaders) and white blood cells that pull toxins out of cells, engulf them, and dispose of them. When constantly fed, this natural detoxification process is hampered. Frequently feeding functions as a one-way escape valve, permitting toxins into the body, but not letting them back out. Not until you enter a fasted state can you flip that valve and allow toxins to pour out of the body.

Chapter [2](#) delves deeper into the science of fasting.

Understanding the best way to go about it

You may be surprised to hear that you can go about fasting in several different ways. Some of them include longer fasting periods (up to 24 hours at a time), whereas others include short fasting periods (12 to 16 hours). Some methods include strict fasts (nothing but

water) and others include controlled fasts (limited caloric intake).

In this book, we discuss four common fasting options. These options are as follows:

- ✔ **Intermittent fasting:** Intermittent fasting is when you fast for 24 to 36 hours (typically once or twice a week). This method is a simple way to introduce fasting into your life because you only need to take a break from eating for a day. This works exceptionally well to reduce overall calorie intake without having to worry about making many other changes on your nonfasting days. Check out Chapter [4](#) for more details.
- ✔ **5:2 Diet:** The 5:2 Diet, also known as the Fast Diet, is the gentlest introduction to fasting, because it simply requires that for two days out of the week you only eat two meals (500-calorie meals if you're a woman and 600-calorie meals if you're a man). This method is perhaps the best way for most people to get acclimated with fasting, before perusing some of the more intensive efforts. Chapter [5](#) gives you the lowdown on this method.
- ✔ **Micro-fasting:** Micro-fasting is a daily fasting regimen. Think of it as the no breakfast diet. This idea flies in the face of conventional wisdom, but for good reasons (all of which we explain in Chapter [6](#)). Micro-fasting has you fasting for 16 hours each day, compressing the time you eat into an eight-hour window. Micro-fasting is both easy to implement and enormously beneficial. Head to Chapter [6](#) for how to incorporate micro-fasting into your diet.
- ✔ **The Warrior Diet:** The Warrior Diet, made popular by the book of the same title, is similar to micro-fasting in the sense that it condenses the time you're allowed to

eat into a small window (about four hours), but different in a few other regards. The fasting period is less strict, and more of a controlled fast, where you're encouraged to consume certain live/raw foods throughout the earlier parts of the day followed by a fairly intense overeating phase later in the day. The Warrior Diet is unconventional, effective, and satisfying. Chapter [7](#) explains the ins and outs of the Warrior Diet.



Understanding the best way to fast is simply a matter of preference. All fasts work, and each has its unique benefits. Our job, in this book, is to explain and to review these four popular and effective fasting protocols and then to help you select the one that best fits your lifestyle. The best fasting method for you is the one that you will stick to. The method you choose is little concern of ours. We just want you to choose one and then stick to it.

Tapping into the roots of fasting: No carrots involved

Fasting goes back thousands and thousands of years to ancient Greece. The Greeks were fond of fasting for its ability to clarify the mind and purify the body. Hippocrates, the father of western medicine, advocated fasting as a preventive measure as well as a prescription to remedy all serious ailments.

The famous Greek historian Plutarch once wrote, "Instead of medicine, rather, fast a day."

Many other wise men of days long past recognized fasting's amazing restorative abilities. Plato and Aristotle also encouraged fasting to enhance physical well-being and boost mental prowess.

Great men also practiced fasting from other cultures. Buddha liked fasting. And so did Jesus.

If only humankind knew now what it did back then, which is the simple notion that the body thrives under hardship. The difficulties in life don't kill, but the pleasures — drunkenness, idleness, and gluttony to name a few — do.

Figuring Out Why People Should Fast

Fasting is something you should do from time to time, even if you're not trying to lose weight. The general health benefits of fasting are simply too enormous to ignore.

People who fast regularly experience the following:

- ✓ A lower risk of diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer, Alzheimer's disease, and Parkinson's disease
- ✓ Improved cognitive function
- ✓ A leaner physique

Quite plainly, fasting is, before anything else, a practice for health and longevity. And to know whether or not you should fast is merely a matter of answering the question “Do I want to live longer and healthier?” If the answer is yes, then you should fast.

Many people may want to consider fasting with the intention of losing some weight, so these sections examine why fasting is a no-brainer if you're looking to get leaner.

Losing weight equals calorie restriction

In order to lose weight, you have to take in fewer calories than you use. All diets — low-fat diets, low-carb diets, whatever diet, at the end of the day — all aim to achieve the same objective — a calorie deficit — which explains why just about any diet will work for a period of time. How fasting and all the other diets differ is that fasting is perhaps the safest, healthiest, and quickest way to assume a calorie deficit.



Not all diets are healthy, as you probably know, and being healthy is a lot more than just losing weight. A good, healthy diet is a balanced diet comprised of high-quality food sources, including meat, seafood, nuts, vegetables, and fruit. A healthy diet avoids heavily processed or man-made food sources, because even though they may cause you to lose weight, they pollute your system with harmful additives and chemicals.

Chapter [8](#) identifies the healthful types of foods you can eat, no matter whether you're on a fast or during your off-fast times.

Why so many Americans are obese

Realizing what causes obesity — and what keeps people from reaching their weight goals — is simple. It's all about the complete and total *overabundance* of food. People have just too much food available and they eat too much of it.

According to several studies conducted in 2012 and 2013, you can easily see the overabundance of food that abounds in the United States today, as well as the poor effects it has on health:

- ✓ The food industry produces nearly 4,000 calories of food per person per day.

- ✓ The average American consumes more than 2,500 calories per day, which is a 20 percent increase over consumption levels in 1970.
- ✓ The average American also eats more than 30 teaspoons of sugar and sweeteners each day, which is three times the recommended amount.
- ✓ More than 73 percent of US adults are overweight or obese and already more than 20 percent of children unfortunately are as well.
- ✓ The cost of obesity-related medical expenditures in the United States runs upward of \$150 billion per year.
- ✓ Twenty percent of Americans report that they're currently on a diet to lose weight.

Intermittent fasting can cut back on your interaction with this overabundance by simply saying “No thanks” one or two times a week.

Burning calories becomes easier

Fasting is at root all about creating a calorie deficit. And fasting makes it easy. Fasting takes large chunks out of your weekly calorie intake. And it does so fairly painlessly too. For example, say right now you consume about 2,000 calories to maintain your current weight, which is 14,000 calories a week. If you implement one full 24-hour fast once a week, your weekly caloric intake is reduced to 12,000 calories.



Will reducing your weekly caloric intake by 2,000 calories cause you to lose weight? Of course! The best part is that you didn't need to worry about counting calories or changing anything else. All you had to do was take a break from eating for a day. If you eat the Paleo Diet (see Chapter [8](#) for more details) on your nonfasting days, which we highly recommend, you will not only be able to reduce caloric intake further, if you choose, but you'll also take solace knowing that you're fueling your body

with the foods you were designed to eat, the foods that promote health at a cellular level.

What makes fasting so powerful is that it does what other diets aim to do (reduce calories) quicker and with far less torment. Yes, skipping meals is still the best way to go about losing weight — always has been, always will be. There is no easier way to assume a calorie deficit than fasting.

Just remember that fasting won't make up for an otherwise terrible diet. You should use fasting in combination with a sound, healthful diet, such as the Paleo Diet, for maximum effects. For more on the Paleo Diet, please check out our other book, *Living Paleo For Dummies* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.).

Determining who should and shouldn't fast

Fasting has been known to help alleviate and reverse many chronic health conditions, such as inflammation, Type-2 diabetes, and hypertension. However, fasting may not be right for everybody right away.



Before you start any fasting protocol, consult your doctor. If you have any health issues that you think may be aggravated by fasting, be sure to discuss them with your doctor as well. And feel free to bring this book to your next visit and discuss the various fasting options with your doctor, so that he or she can also help you to decide if fasting is right for you, and if so, which fasting course is the best fit for you.

The following lists different categories of people and whether fasting may or may not be right for them: