

A photograph of a dining table setting. On the left, a white ceramic plate is partially visible. To its right, a silver spoon and a silver fork are laid out on a wooden surface. A woven, textured placemat in shades of brown and pink is placed under the plate and cutlery. The background is a dark wood table.

GUT HEALTH QUEST

PART 1

Fasting Protocol

Part 1: The Fasting Protocol

A BRIEF INTRO TO FASTING

Over thousands of years, human beings have evolved into wildly complex, intelligent organisms. This constant evolution is a direct result of responding positively to stress.

We know that exercise is a form of physical stress, yet, over time, consistent, and diligent exercise improves our overall physical performance and health.

Our immune system actually strengthens and becomes more robust when exposed to a greater diversity of environmental factors, even foreign invaders that can make us sick.

And exposure to extreme temperatures, both hot and cold, causes our bodies to release “shock proteins” that have been shown to reduce risk of disease, reverse aging, and speed up healing and recovery.

Fasting, or time restricted eating (TRE), is another form of “stress” that when exposed to it, the body responds positively by reducing chronic inflammation, healing and repairing itself at the cellular level, and reducing bio-markers of most diseases.

Fasting kickstarts autophagy, puts your body into a state of ketosis, and helps proliferate the diversity, and overall numbers of your gut microbiome. These healthy byproducts of fasting all have a very positive impact on your overall gut health.

Let's discuss these benefits in more detail.

AUTOPHAGY

This is a process that takes place wherein cells go through a deep cleansing and repair process by removing old, damaged proteins, and then replacing them with new ones. Some studies have shown that during times of extended fasting (48+ hours), your organs will shrink to about 70% of their normal size while cleansing themselves, and then return to normal size once autophagy is fully complete. After 72 hours, studies have shown that autophagy has the ability to completely rebuild your immune system. Autophagy has been shown to reverse the signs of aging on the body, increase overall longevity, reduce chronic, total body inflammation, and improve overall metabolic function.

CONTROLLING BLOOD SUGAR

Variabilities in blood sugar variability and spikes in insulin can lead to a number of conditions such as obesity, poor circulation, and Type II Diabetes, among others. Maintaining stable blood sugar levels is critical for your metabolism to function efficiently, and fasting has been shown to lower overall blood glucose levels along with improving insulin sensitivity.

INCREASE IN NATURAL ENERGY

We all know what that mid-day crash feels like right after we eat lunch, especially if it is filled with insulin spiking carbohydrates and processed foods. You feel sluggish, brain fog rolls in, and a nap suddenly seems like the most appealing thing in the world. The fact of the matter is, digesting food, especially unhealthy food, bogs us down. Intermittent Fasting (IF) (daily fasting of 12-22 hours) has been shown to improve levels of ketosis, turning our bodies into energy fueled, fat burning machines.

IMPROVED BODY COMPOSITION

Fasting and Intermittent Fasting have been shown to be easy, natural ways of restricting calorie consumption. Furthermore, the longer you fast, or fast intermittently with consistency and diligence, you increase fat oxidation, which jumpstarts ketosis in the body. Finally, studies have shown that Time Restricted Eating (TRE) or Intermittent Fasting (IF) naturally improves overall body composition when compared to individuals consuming the same amount of calories, but over a much more extended "feeding window".

RESTORING GUT HEALTH

Studies have shown that extended fasting, especially 24 hours and beyond, will improve the overall diversity of gut microbiome, along with speeding up the proliferation of your overall numbers of healthy microbes. Furthermore, fasting allows more time for the reduction of inflammation and subsequent healing to take place in the gut and intestines, which is critical for improving symptoms and issues related to leaky gut.

1 INTERMITTENT FASTING

This is the fasting protocol that is recommended as a key part of 'The Gut Health Quest' after the initial extended fast (36-72 hours) is complete. Intermittent Fasting (IF) is a daily fasting protocol where you restrict calorie consumption for an extended window (12-22 hours), and then introduce a "feeding window" where you introduce calories into your diet for a shorter period of time (2-12 hours). An Intermittent Fasting protocol is based on a 24 Hour, repetitive window that is usually done with consistency.

Types of Intermittent Fasting:

Strict

This is generally considered the standard approach to IF. In "Strict" IF, you choose a daily window of fasting (12-22 hours) and a daily window of feeding (2-12 hours). Your fasting and feeding Windows should be perfectly inverted based on a 24 Hour window, so if you choose a 16 Hour fasting window (which is generally viewed as most ideal), you will conversely have an 8 Hour feeding window.

This type of fasting will be more effective for those looking for a more consistent healing and repairing process to take place during 'The Gut Health Quest'.

Feast/Famine

A "Feast/Famine" IF protocol is more ideal for those looking to maximize body recomposition and/or improve overall performance during 'The Gut Health Quest'.

In a "Feast/Famine" protocol, you will adhere to a "Strict" IF protocol for 5 days (Refer to the above segment "Strict" to dial this in). On the sixth day you will fast for 24 hours. After the 24 Hour fast is complete, you will then move into a 24 Hour "feast" window, where you load up on calories (while still adhering to your 'Gut Health Quest' Nutrition protocol) before returning back to your 5 day "Strict" IF window.

2 NO TO LOW CALORIE LIQUID FAST

This is the first option for the first part of the Fasting Protocol of 'The Gut Health Quest', which is an Extended Fast.

During a “No to Low Calorie Liquid Fast”, you will consume no solid foods, and only consume liquids with no calories, such as spring water, mineral water, and black coffee or tea, or liquids with very little calories like an exogenous ketone supplement, or coffee or tea with some MCT oil in it.

This is the most ideal fast to maximize both autophagy, ketosis, and the fat burning and metabolic boosting benefits of doing an extended fast.

3 FASTING MIMICKING

This is the second option for the first part of the Fasting Protocol of ‘The Gut Health Quest’, which is an Extended Fast.

A “Fasting Mimicking” approach allows you to consume a small amount of calories, about 25% of what you would normally eat, or 300-500 calories in a day. You want to keep the meal focused on a more ketogenic (high fat/low to no carb/moderate protein) approach so that you are not eating anything that will adversely affect blood sugar levels and be potentially stored as glycogen.

This approach is ideal for those committed to doing the fast, but are doing an extended fast for the first time, and/or are concerned about how doing an extended fast will affect them.

You will still receive almost all of the anti-aging benefits of autophagy, along with most of the fat burning and metabolic boosting benefits of ketosis.

4 DRY FASTING

DISCLAIMER: This is a form of fasting for those experienced in fasting, and you should proceed with caution. Consult a physician if you have any questions or concerns.

A “Dry Fast” is a fast where you consume no water or liquids whatsoever. In fact, it is recommended that you don’t expose your body externally to water because your skin is extremely absorbent, and if restricting all water, will soak up as much water as possible when exposed to it.

In a “Dry Fast”, autophagy is sped up dramatically. In fact, studies have shown that dry fasting speeds up autophagy 3x faster than normal, allowing you to cleanse and repair your cells at a much higher rate.

LEVELS OF EXTENDED FASTING

36 HOURS

After 24 hours, your gut bacteria begins to proliferate and increase in diversity. This gives you 12 hours in this key window. Ketosis has also kicked in at this point and autophagy is running deeper within the cells.



48 HOURS

At this point, much of the inflammation from your gut and body has been neutralized, and true healing is taking place. Deep, intracellular autophagy has taken place.



60 HOURS

You've just gotten a full night's rest in a state of maximum healing and restoration. After 48 hours, your body will actually begin to replace weakened cells with brand new, healthy cells (an amazing response to "stress") in a process called apoptosis.



72 HOURS

After 72 hours, you've most likely completed the full process of apoptosis. At one point, your internal organs shed as much as 30% of its weakened, unhealthy cells, and have now replaced them with healthy cells, full of vitality, and your internal organs have returned to their normal size, just much healthier. Also, at 72 hours, new stem cells begin to activate.



BEYOND 72 HOURS

New stem cells have begun to activate, energy levels should begin to increase.

CHOOSING YOUR 'GUT HEALTH QUEST' FASTING PROTOCOL

There are two parts to the Fasting Protocol:

The Extended Fast & Intermittent Fasting

You will be provided with a worksheet called "Your Gut Health Quest", where you will put together your entire personal Quest, beginning with the Fasting Protocol.

You will first choose your extended fasting option that best suits your needs and desires from the fast.

Your options will include: 36 Hours, 48 Hours, 60 Hours, 72 Hours, and 72+ Hours.

You will also have an option to select whether or not you will be "Dry Fasting" for any period of your extended fast. This will be a simple "Yes" or "No".

If you select "Yes" for "Dry Fasting", you will then select the time frame in which you plan to Dry Fast. Options will include: 12 Hours, 16 Hours, 24 Hours, and 36 Hours.

****This of course is just a plan to help you map out your Quest and analyze your goals. If at any point of a Dry Fast, you feel the need to break it and consume water, by all means, do so, and just note when you broke the Dry Fast.*

After you have chosen your options, thus laying out your plan for the Extended Fast, you will choose your Intermittent Fasting protocol.

You will begin this by selecting whether you will be doing "Strict Intermittent Fasting" or "Feast/Famine Intermittent Fasting".

Once selected, you will choose your daily fasting/feeding window. It will be based on a ratio of hours fasted:hours feeding. Options include: 12:12, 14:10, 16:8, 18:6, 20:4, and One Meal a Day.