

The Benefits of Fasting

Affecting our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects

Can the benefits of fasting really be so broad? Yes, they can, and they are. We are so much more than a physical body and fasting affects every part of our being.

When we cease the over-indulgence that has become so common in our modern world, even for a short while, our lives and our priorities become clearer. Do these "short while"s occasionally, and you have a tool that will greatly add to your life.

Fasting will:

1. rest the digestive system
2. allow for cleansing and detoxification of the body
3. create a break in eating patterns, while shining a spotlight on them
4. promote greater mental clarity
5. cleanse and heal "stuck" emotional patterns
6. lead to a feeling of physical lightness, increasing energy level
7. promote an inner stillness, enhancing spiritual connection

These benefits of fasting are not limited to just traditional fasts like [water](#) or [juice](#), but can be attained through [cleansing diets](#) as well, although the effects will be less pronounced, as they occur over a longer time frame. But they will be there.

[See here for a variety of quotes from doctors, writers, and health professionals about the effects and benefits of fasting.](#)

Physical effects of fasting

"Fasting is the greatest remedy -- the physician within."

~Paracelsus

Fasting has been called the "miracle cure" because the list of physical conditions improved by fasting is long and varied. Cited most often are allergies, arthritis, digestive disorders of all kinds, skin conditions, cardiovascular disease, and asthma. (See [here for more information on the physical health benefits of fasting and specific conditions.](#)) **Because fasting initiates the body's own healing mechanisms, any ailment may show improvement.**

Fasting frees up energy so healing can begin

Fasting is a wonderful antidote for our usual over-indulgences. There's nothing wrong with enjoying our food, but excess food on a continuous basis does create a burden for the body. When it must handle more than is comfortable and appropriate for it, it will suffer.

Imagine at work how you feel when you're handed a huge work load--more than you can handle in your 8-10 hour day, more than is comfortable and appropriate for your job title (or salary level). You're under duress. But you WILL cope. You MUST cope. You must make decisions. You attend to the most important and urgent of matters and set aside those that can wait for another day.

This is what our bodies do when they're overworked; they tuck things away for another day. Whatever tasks can be postponed will be. And more work is dumped on them at every meal- or snack-time, whether they're ready or not. This is why fasting is a beautiful gift you give to yourself. A vacation for your weary, overworked, under-appreciated body.

During fasting, we rest our system from the constant onslaught of food stuffs. We usually think of food as giving us energy, so it can be a new way of thinking to understand how the food we eat actually requires energy.

Digesting, assimilating and metabolizing--these activities require a great deal of energy. **It is estimated that 65% of the body's energy must be directed to the digestive organs after a heavy meal.**

Some Benefits of Fasting

Antiaging effects
Better attitude
Better resistance to disease
Better sleep
Change of habits
Clearer planning
Clearer skin
Creativity
Diet changes
Drug detoxification
Improved senses
(vision, hearing, taste)
Inspiration
More clarity
(mentally and emotionally)
More energy
More relaxation
New ideas
Purification
Reduction of allergies
Rejuvenation
Rest for digestive organs
Revitalization
Right use of will
Spiritual awareness
Weight loss

from *Staying Healthy with Nutrition*,
by Elson Haas, M.D.

Free up this energy and it can be diverted to healing and recuperation. It can detox and repair cells, tissues and organs, eliminating foreign toxins as well as the natural metabolic wastes (which are also toxins) produced even by our healthy cells.

And this is what the body will do during a fast. It will take advantage of that time and energy to do some housecleaning. The overloaded, overworked system, unable to properly handle all the toxins, has been storing any excesses in the tissues where they can be dealt with later. This is one of the great health benefits of fasting in that it offers this opportunity to play "catch up".

Fasting itself isn't necessarily a "cure" for anything. What it does is "set the stage" or create the environment in which healing can occur. Our bodies know how to heal themselves. We just have to "get out of the way", and this means on all levels of our

being. Fasting has a way of rebalancing us on all those levels.

Physically, [fasting is of high benefit to the chronic degenerative diseases](#) that are plaguing our population and that modern medicine is at loss to cure.

Losing weight

Losing weight is, for many of us, one of the greatest benefits of fasting. Due to differences in metabolism and/or body chemistry (or mental patterns), exact results will vary from person to person.

Using [fasting to lose weight](#) can create many opportunities to gain insights into your patterns with food and for making changes to your habits and lifestyle much easier to accomplish.

Professionally supervised fasts may be the best for serious obesity. They offer both medical and psychological support during the process and guidance toward [healthier eating habits](#) after the fast.

Those who have the best luck "going it alone" are usually fasting to "get healthy" rather than to "lose weight". The change in mentality can be the trick.

Sometimes a short 3-day fast is used to "jump start" a new healthy diet plan, because fasting will change your tastes toward more natural and wholesome foods. It will also give you a new perspective on your relationship to food; why and when you eat what you do, what your mental and emotional attachments are, and [offer an opportunity for you to heal these issues](#).

Fasting can give you more energy

When you've progressed past the stage of dealing with detox symptoms, a fast will have you feeling lighter, more energetic, more enthusiastic, and requiring less sleep.

Mental and emotional benefits of fasting

Because fasting improves mental clarity and focus, it can become a tool in your life to give you greater freedom, flexibility, and energy to get done the things and projects that are important to you.

Many experienced fasters find it helpful to fast whenever they need an additional boost for a major project or deadline, e.g. writing a paper, preparing for a big presentation, getting ready for a long trip. Artists and writers often talk of foregoing food during great creative inspiration; that it helps to keep the momentum going. (Although, beginners must be warned that this won't be the case at first. Don't fast for a big event until you are more knowledgeable about your fasting reactions, and you're sure you won't get a "detox headache" or such.)

Emotionally, you will feel calmer, clearer and happier. Fasters often report that depression lifts, goals begin to feel more obtainable as obstacles are put into proper focus. Doctors have reported patients experiencing improved concentration, less anxiety, sleeping better and waking more refreshed.

Sometimes it's hard to tell the difference between our emotional and mental aspects, where one begins and the other ends. Am I sad because I had this thought? Or did I have the thought because I've been feeling sad? Fasting has a way of clarifying those issues. Your awareness can focus in more accurately and determine the source of some unpleasantness, that then snowballed into a mess. Once the source is identified, it's easy to see how overblown everything else was that came after.

In other words, you see things from a clearer, more appropriate perspective. See [Emotional Benefits of Fasting](#) for more details on the emotional cleansing that can occur.

Spiritual benefits of fasting

And let's not forget the powerful effects of fasting on our spiritual connection. Another one of the benefits of fasting is that it promotes we take our attention inward, that we listen, become quiet. And that quiet quality time, you with you, will also allow, if you are willing, a greater sense of kinship with your Inner Being.

Without the continual addition of heavy foods into the system (and after any major detox symptoms have passed), the body takes on a lighter, less dense, feeling. This helps to create a subtle separation from ordinary physical reality and all its worldly things, and instead you begin to sense the presense and power of things beyond this world.

Meditation or prayer become clearer, higher states easier to attain, messages or guidance from higher realms clearer. Knowing you are loved and supported every minute of your day and of your life is something you begin to intuitively feel. Recognition that there truly is a higher plan or purpose will become more real as it is intuitively experienced rather than just intellectually understood.

Your experiences will be deeply personal and unique. Sometimes, subtle too. You have to pay attention to the little things, you have to be quiet enough internally to pick up the nuances in a changed attitude or perception.

Begin to experience the benefits of fasting

You can start with simple, short-term fasting ([see here for a one day apple fast](#)). Even short fasts will help you enjoy the many benefits of fasting, allowing the body, digestive tract and organs a chance to rest and repair and heal, and you to begin the process of rebuilding your inner connection to your physical body, as well as your inner spirit.

The benefits of fasting reach into all areas of our lives. And whether you want to fast for increased health, or increased mental clarity, you will get them both--only maybe not all in the first day. Fasting is an ongoing practice, that grows and deepens over time, delivering more and more meaningful benefits.

Further information on the benefits of fasting...

[Emotional Benefits of Fasting](#) allow for the release and healing of long-held

patterns and beliefs, with little effort on our part. Gain insight into this process.

[Chronic Degenerative Diseases and Fasting](#) Understand the limitations of conventional medicine and when it is appropriate to pursue alternative therapies -- such as fasting.

[Physical conditions that are known to respond well to fasting](#) - Fasting is known to promote natural healing in many cases. See the compiled list here.

[Quotes on Fasting](#) reveal the effects and benefits fasting promotes. Read what doctors, health professionals, and religious figures have to say.

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