Fasting is Nature’s best surgical procedure

Most religions use periods of fasting as a means of demonstrating faith or penitence, and an opportunity for spiritual reflection. Fasting has also previously been a means to communicate political views and a form of dissent. But metabolically the body when deprived of food will start to break up cells. First to go are the unwanted unneeded cells like extra fat, tumors, etc. if you continue too long or do the fast improper you will start to burn muscle and needed tissue.

Contrary to perception that fasting is akin to subjecting the body to austere measures, it may turn out to be a ‘good treat’ for the body. What is perhaps a rare phenomenon with humans is rather second nature to animals, who instinctively avoid food to ease pain, discomfort or disease.
Some people use fasting as a way to lose weight or to rinse out the body of toxins, even though experts say our bodies are perfectly equipped with organs that already do the job. How fasting is used for weight loss varies by diet. Some fasting diets involve drinking nothing but water or eating only raw foods for a period of one or more days, while others restrict food on alternate days. Certain fasting diets only allow liquids like water, juice, or tea, while others dramatically cut calories but do not eliminate food altogether.

Fasting Helps You Lose Weight

When you fast, your body is forced to dip into energy stores to get the fuel it needs to keep going, so you will lose weight. The big question is how long you will keep that weight off. Because food was often scarce for our ancestors, our bodies have been genetically programmed to combat the effects of fasting. When you eat less food, your metabolism slows down to conserve energy. Then, when you go back to your usual diet, your lowered metabolism may cause you to store more energy, meaning that you will probably gain back the weight you lost and possibly even put on more weight when eating the same calories you did before the fast. But we have an instinct to add weight so we can survive the next famine, so we all must learn to push ourselves away from the table to maintain healthy weight.

As you fast, your body will adjust by reducing your appetite, so you will initially feel less hungry. The hungry hormones will burn out. The feeling of hunger is a good feeling for those who want to lose weight. It is the feeling of your body decreasing the size of the fat cells. But once you have stopped fasting, your appetite hormones will kick back into gear and you may actually feel hungrier and be more likely to binge.

Research has shown that fasting on alternate days can help people lose weight, but not for long. In one study, people who followed an alternate-day fasting diet shed weight, even when they ate all they wanted on the non-fasting days. We must fight the instinct to over eat. Overeating in today’s world is wrong.
Can Fasting Detoxify the Body?

Some fasting diets claim that they can cleanse the body of impurities. However, there is no evidence that fasting detoxifies your body, or that your body even needs to be detoxified. It is naturally designed to remove toxins through the skin (by sweating), liver, colon, and kidneys. Fasting takes away unwanted material from cells and tissues. If these materials are toxic then it is detoxifying.

Could Fasting Help You Live Longer?

Studies of fasting in both rodents and humans appear to indicate a connection between calorie restriction and longevity. In one study of overweight men and women, a calorie-restricted diet improved markers of aging, such as insulin level and body temperature.

Fasting might also improve longevity by delaying the onset of age-related diseases including Alzheimer's, heart disease, and diabetes. One study showed that skipping meals once a month, as members of the Mormon religious group do, reduces the risk of clogged arteries (the build-up of plaque that can lead to heart attacks and strokes). However, it is not clear from this research whether fasting alone or the Mormons' generally healthier lifestyle (they also abstain from coffee, alcohol, and smoking) is responsible for the improved heart health.

Researchers do know that the effects of fasting translate into an actual increase in lifespan. As we age past 30 we need to eat less year by year to maintain weight and to match the gradual loss of base metabolic rate. You should eat 5% less each year. So after 20 years by age 50 you should be eating 90% of what you ate at your maximum from 20 to 30. At age 60 you should be eating 85% of what you ate as a young person. At age 70 – 80%, age 80 – 75%, age 90 – 70%, age 100 – 65%, and if you do this you should live to age 110 to eat 60%. We must fight the instinct to overeat. For weight loss we use a simple safe short term fast. Start with the 24 hour fast. eat a nice meal at 5 or 6 and then no
snacks whatsoever till bed. Only water or spiced up water as we describe later. The next day it is water, tea, dilute juice and no food till 5 or 6 when you ate yesterday. Then take absolutely no, No, NO, NOOOO snacking till bed. The 24 Hour fast, it is simple safe and easy. And once a week as a routine is will help the body to decrease the size of the stomach teach you to deal with hunger, and break up the fat. During any fast praying becomes more intense. When free from the burden of foods the mind works different and more spiritual so a fast even a short fast can be good to open the heart for prayer. Fasting is part of all major religions for this reason.

Next we can go to a 36 hour fats where we skip the 24 hr meal and go to bed hungry and when we wake up in the morning we break the fast with what is known as the breakfast. No snacking the next day just regular meals. Drink lots of water. Don't go to the 48 hour fast or beyond without professional guidance. Physiological and psychological things can get out of hand. With guidance and support it can be done but be careful. when you fast you open the heart and mind to more spiritual things as you lose the chains to material things, the first material thing is food.
**Brief Outline of Different Levels of Spiritual Fast**

**Level 1**
- Abstaining from food, drink, smoking, and marital relationship from break of dawn to sunset.
- Before Ramadhan: A person with a little taqwa in him. This person is completely engrossed in sins.
- During Ramadhan: There is a little increase in level of taqwa in the person.
- New level of taqwa: Slight increase from level 1.

**Level 2**
- To abstain from the sins of the tongue and eyes [1+2]
- Heart darkened due to sins of sensual organs
- Effect of blocking two channels of organ of the body
- Disease entering the Heart is blocked, this minimizes the effect
- Due to the darkness still entering the Heart through the physical organs of the body

**Level 3**
- To engage all the organs in acts of worship and fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted and His creation in addition to no.4
- Purified Heart with all the channels of evil blocked off
- One by one the streams of disease of darkness of sin are blocked. So the Heart remains clean and the effect of dhikr and prayer begins to show itself

**Level 4**
- To make your mind & heart fast abstaining oneself from intentionally planning or thinking about a sin [+5]
- Evil whisper enters the mind
- The person uses their will power and seeks refuge in Allah the Exalted, thus refraining from sinning with the mind
- Slowly a shield starts to develop to protect mind from being corrupted with evil thoughts

**Level 5**
- To engage the mind & heart in the remembrance and thoughts of death, life hereafter, day of judgement, paradise and hell [inc no.6]

**Level 6**
- To become completely annihilated in the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted in such a way that it becomes the dominant factor in your life
- The person reaches the highest attainable level of taqwa through the fast (level 7-8)

**Level 7**
- Graph showing relationship between taqwa and fast

**Level 8**
- Increase of taqwa by fasting
When fasting bad cells are destroyed and fat cells are reduced in size.

Water the Forgotten Nutrient How to Spice up your water for the Fast

When you’re thirsty what is the first drink that you take? Fruit juice, Slurpee, coffee, tea, or something sweet, the options are numerous for us to choose from.
Many of us have probably heard or come across the essentials of water, and how it is beneficial for our body system. However despite these positive claims, some people (especially myself) may find it hard to drink around 6-8 glasses of water on a day to day basis. The requirements of water intake will most likely differ for each person and may depend on age, weight and level of activity.

- People may feel reluctant to meet their water requirement because.
- They might forget to drink water, and forget to carry a bottle of water.
- Water is too boring and lacks flavors like fruit juices, soft drinks and other beverages.

This link ( ) explains very well the physiological functions of water and signs of dehydration which is not only subjected to feeling thirsty. I highly recommend reading this link, in order to get an even better understanding of the roles of water in our bodies.

For those who find it a bit challenging, here are some ideas, such as flavoring water, which can help create a positive attitude in regards to increasing water intake.

**Ginger:** A great idea from Wise bread, If you like spices, ginger is a great way to add a “zing” to your water. If it is added to boiling water it is also a great way to clear your throat and sinuses during a cold.

**Herbs** – Another great idea from Wise bread, Mint, lemongrass, and parsley are great for adding aroma and a hint of green to your water. If you want to release the flavor you can crush the plants a little bit before putting them into your water.
**Cucumber**: very refreshing drink and pleasant aroma.

**Berries**: Blueberries and strawberries have distinct flavors that could be soaked up by water. All you have to do is cut or crush a few of the berries into your water.

**Citrus fruit**: Lemons, lime, oranges, grapefruit. Flavor is just a squeeze away!
**Flower Petals:** Flower petals in your water will spice up the taste, smell and visual appeal.

**Tea:** Believe it or not but tea bags work just as well in cold water as it do in hot water. And yesterday’s tea bag can give a small little kick to water.

**Mixed fruit:** Orange, lemon, lime, strawberry’s, and cucumber go well together

**Mix flowers:** mix the flower petals like rose and your guests will be amazed at your genius and style.

**Peaches and Hint of Aloe Vera gel juice:** Personally I find this combination quite nice, thanks to Aloe Vera therapy.

**Unsweetened fruit juice** –Let me suggest cranberry or pomegranate juice. Just add a splash or two to a glass of water. Zing!

Here are a few more ideas which include double combinations, which may be the ideal drink for anyone to make and enjoy.

**Ginger and lemon:** Great for winter!!

**Strawberries and mint**

**Cubed honeydew melon with cucumber:**

**Sliced cucumber and lemons**
Sprouts can also be used with wonderful results.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Suggested Pattern</th>
<th>Acceptable range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>1500ml/day</td>
<td>600-1500ml/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea, coffee (unsweetened)</td>
<td>800ml/day</td>
<td>0-1200ml/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low fat milk and soy milk</td>
<td>500ml/day</td>
<td>0-500ml/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-calorically sweetened soft drinks</td>
<td>0 ml/day</td>
<td>0-900ml/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caloric beverages with nutrients - fruit juice, vegetable juice, full fat milk, sports drinks</td>
<td>120ml/day</td>
<td>120ml/day</td>
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<tr>
<td>- alcoholic beverages</td>
<td>0ml/day</td>
<td>0-2 drinks/day for women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0-2 drinks/day for men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calorically sweetened soft drinks</td>
<td></td>
<td>0-250ml/day</td>
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Making these small changes, takes time and commitment. Depending on your goal you may want cut back on 1 soft drink and replace it with 1 or 2 glasses of water, or diluting your fruit juice by ½ to ¼ or even something else. The table above shows a rough guideline of beverage intake.

As we grow old we lose the instinct to drink and gain the instinct to over eat. We must teach our bodies to drink more water and to eat less food.