

Intermittent Fasting – Does it work?

Weight loss is a sensitive topic in our society today. Our culture is so obsessed with losing weight and being “in shape.” There are hundreds of fad diets, programs, supplements and influencers out there that push “5 Easy Steps for Weight Loss” or “Try This and Watch the Fat Melt Away” or “Be Skinny in Just 3 Months” or whatever their slogan is to entice you to buy their product. With so much misinformation and differing opinions out there, it can be hard to know who or what to trust. How do people even lose weight in the first place? Is it even possible? What does the scientific research show about obesity and weight loss anyways?

In this article, I’ll be explaining my own journey and struggle with weight loss, what I’ve learned from scientific research on the subject, and some tried and true methods of achieving weight loss. Stick around to hear the truth about weight loss from your very own Maple Grove chiropractor.

My story of trying to lose weight really began in January 2020. I’ve struggled with my weight ever since I was a little kid. I was bullied by kids at school who called me fat and was always known as the “fat” one in my family. And no matter what I had tried over the years to lose the weight, nothing seemed to work.

But that year, I was challenged by a friend to not to eat wheat for 30 days. At first, I thought this was impossible. After all, wheat is in so much of our day-to-day food. From bread to pasta to pastries to pancakes to flour to oats and more, I wasn’t sure how I’d manage to eat anything without including wheat.

Yet I somehow found the willpower to succeed in this challenge. And at that end of January, I was feeling the healthiest, most energetic, and alive that I had felt in a long time. This gave me the confidence to keep going on this path. I started counting my calories (like most people who begin trying to lose weight) and by the end of 2020, I had lost 55 pounds. In a year that was filled with so much confusion and chaos and fear, I was embolden by this amazing success in my personal life.

Then it all came to a stuttering halt. Even though I was only eating 1900 calories a day (quite a caloric deficit for me), I could not lose any more weight. I couldn’t keep counting my calories, I couldn’t keep starving myself, I just couldn’t continue the mental stress and pressure of trying to lose weight this way.

About this time, I came across a YouTube video by Dr. Jason Fung. In the [video](#), he explained that counting calories works only about 6-12 months. In this time, people see incredible results but then hit a sudden and devastating plateau where they just can’t lose any more weight. He explained that this is because our bodies start to adapt to the lower caloric intake as we eat less and less in an attempt to lose weight. Our bodies get so used to eating so little that they automatically lower our metabolic rate (how many calories you burn during the day) way below what we’re eating in order to conserve the fat to keep us alive. Our bodies are in survival mode, just trying to keep us alive and healthy because of the strict diet we’re on. Most diets do, in fact,

work in the short term. You eat less, you lose weight. But as soon as your body shuts down or you start eating normally again, all that weight comes rushing back.

Sound familiar? Well, that's exactly what happened to me.

I was feeling pretty discouraged until I started watching more of Dr. Fung's YouTube channel (check out his channel [here](#)). On his channel, Dr. Fung promotes something called "intermittent fasting" as a way to lose weight. After delving into more of Dr. Fung's research, I was so convinced that I finally bought his book: *The Obesity Code*.

In the book, Dr. Fung explains that weight gain and being overweight isn't a mindset at all, but rather, it's actually a hormone problem caused by *type* of food we eat and *when* we eat them. This hormone is called Insulin. Insulin is the hormone that opens up our cells to allow Glucose (our energy hormone) to enter our cells and give us energy.

When we eat, Insulin goes up so that we can digest our food and get energy from it, and once our food is digested, Insulin goes back down. Think of it like a graph. When we eat, Insulin spikes up and then goes down, then spikes up, then goes down. Let me assure you that this is a completely normal process that happens to everyone. Insulin in itself isn't the enemy. We need it to survive. Too *much* Insulin is the problem.

That's because Insulin also regulates where extra calories go. These calories can either go into the liver for quick energy retrieval or into fat cells for future retrieval. If a person has a high amount of insulin in their blood, the extra calories will be put into fat cells, and it will be almost impossible to take that fat out again.

However, if a person has a low amount of insulin in their blood, then fat can more easily be taken out of the fat cells and used for energy. Almost all foods cause insulin to be released. But some foods raise more amounts of Insulin than others. Sugar and refined carbohydrates are the two main nutrient categories that raise the most amount of Insulin. Refined carbohydrates are basically any box food with contains wheat, pasta, bread, potatoes and etc.

So, what foods or nutrients raise the least amount of Insulin? The answer might surprise you: fat. Fat does not raise Insulin levels. As contradictory as that might sounds, eating foods that are high in healthy fats such as monosaturated and polysaturated fats (not saturated fats or trans-fat) are actually the most effective at helping your body burn the fat that Insulin is storing up in your body. This is because once your body adjusts to eating more fat, it will adapt to *burning* fat instead of refined carbohydrates and sugar. So, all that fat Insulin has stored up in your body's cells, will be used for energy instead of storage.

Isn't that amazing news? It was for me, at least, and changed my entire approach to eating and weight loss.

The other problem to losing weight, I learned, is time. If your Insulin has been chronically high for years due to eating large amounts of sugar and refined carbohydrates, our bodies will adapt to become something called "insulin resistant." Insulin resistance is when our bodies are so

accustomed to high amounts of Insulin in our blood stream that they no longer can convert glucose to energy. Insulin resistance is the very cause of Type-2 Diabetes and Metabolic Syndrome.

Another doctor I follow is Dr. Richard Johnson. In his book *The Fat Switch*, he explains insulin resistance in such great detail. When we become insulin resistant, our cells shut down their insulin receptors and glucose can no longer enter into the cell to provide energy. When this happens, our bodies need to produce more insulin to keep the cell open to receiving glucose. This cycle only keeps getting worse if our diet keeps insulin high through consuming sugar and refined carbohydrates.

My experience with insulin resistance is that my blood sugar dropped so fast that within 2 hours of eating, I became *hypoglycemic*. Hypoglycemia is when your body can't process glucose anymore. It causes irregular or rapid heartbeat, pale skin, numbness of lips, tongue or cheek, and sweating. To get out of all these symptoms, I would eat again. So, for years, I stayed in a 2-3 hour eating cycle, perpetuating my insulin resistance.

Table sugar (sucrose) is the worse nutrient that keeps insulin high and causes insulin resistance. Sucrose is one part glucose and one part fructose. Glucose raises the level of insulin in the blood and fructose is a major cause of insulin resistance. Fructose is the type of sugar you find in fruit and high fructose corn syrup. Now fruit isn't so bad because fruit also has tons of fiber in it that helps balance out the sugar. But high fructose corn syrup is in many refined carbohydrates which have little to no redeeming qualities.

The last piece of this I want to touch on in this article is time. It's easy to know what *not* to eat, but what about *when* to eat? According to Dr. Fung, longer periods of time without eating is vital to reverse insulin resistance. For example, he explains that in the 1960s and 1970s, when sugar was entering into our diets, there was no weight gain. This is because people were still only eating 3 meals per day with no snacking.

They had an eating window of 12 hours and fasted for the other 12 hours. This allowed insulin to go up then down again and not create insulin resistance. Insulin resistance mainly occurs when our eating window is greater than our fasting window. This could look like continual snacking, eating six meals a day, etc.

This is why Dr. Fung recommends intermittent fasting as a way to increase the non-eating window. By practicing intermittent fasting, our bodies don't adapt to a lesser intake of food (the way it does by counting calories), and it doesn't cause your body to lower its metabolic rate below your caloric intake either. This doesn't mean we can eat anything during intermittent fasting. Trust me, I tried, and it didn't work. But intermittent fasting *is* a proven, reliable way to lose weight and keep it off without counting calories or starving yourself. That's a win in my book.

So, now that you know what causes weigh gain and why it's so hard to lose weight, be sure to stay tuned to my next newsletter to learn more about how to properly practice intermittent fasting, the solution to insulin resistance, and what *you* can do to welcome back your health!

Sources:

Dr. Fung, Jason. *The Obesity Code*. Vancouver/Berkley: Greystone Books, March 2016.

Dr. Johnson, Richard J. *The Fat Switch*. United States of America: Mercola.com, 2012.