

Here is a short list of some of the scientifically backed cognitive benefits of fasting:

THE BENEFITS OF INTERMITTENT FASTING

Why doctors believe this method could lead to improved health



COGNITIVE PERFORMANCE

Studies discovered that intermittent fasting augments associative, spatial and working memory in animals, as well as verbal memory in adults.

CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH

Blood pressure and resting heart rate are just two of the cardiovascular factors improved through intermittent fasting.

PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE

Young men that fast for 16 hours lost fat while maintaining muscle mass, while mice who maintained alternate day fasting displayed superior running endurance.

DIABETES & OBESITY

In animal studies, intermittent fasting prevented obesity. Six short studies of obese adults show that intermittent fasting is effective for weight loss.

TISSUE DAMAGE

In animals, intermittent fasting limits tissue damage and improves surgical outcomes.

For more information check out our website:
www.hopkinsmedicine.org/newsroom

Short-term fasting induces profound neuronal autophagy (e.g., “self-eating”), which is how cells recycle waste material, down regulate wasteful processes, and repair themselves. Brain health is dependent on neuronal autophagy. Another study shows that interference of neuronal autophagy prompts neuro-degeneration. Simply put, without the process of autophagy, brains neither develop properly nor function optimally.

Fasting increases levels of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), a protein that interacts with neurons in the hippocampus, cortex, and basal forebrain (the parts of the brain that regulate memory, learning, and higher cognitive function—uniquely human stuff). BDNF helps existing neurons survive while stimulating the growth of new neurons and the development of neuro-synaptic connectivity. Low levels of BDNF are linked to Alzheimer’s, memory loss, and cognitive impairment.

Evidence suggests that low BDNF is related to depression. Indeed, antidepressants increase BDNF levels. Thus, many doctors believe fasting can reduce depression. Fasting reduces the likelihood of having a stroke.

Fasting reduces the oxidative stress, mitochondrial dysfunction, and cognitive decline that normally results from brain trauma. Research has found that a 24 hour (but not a 48 hour) fast was neuro-protective against trauma to the brain like a concussion.

Fasting reduces cognitive stressors that bring about aging, cognitive decline, and chronic diseases.

Fasting reduces your risk of cancer.

Fasting increases your longevity and lifespan.

Fasting enhances learning and memory.

Fasting elevates your ability to focus and concentrate.

If you've fasted before, you can attest to the radical mental benefits of fasting. If you haven't, please start a regular practice of fasting. Over a period of time, you'll be startled by the cognitive results.

Other scientifically backed health benefits of fasting including:

Fasting can reverse binge eating disorders, and help those who find it difficult to establish a correct eating pattern due to work and other priorities.

Fasting can clear your skin from acne, allowing you to have a healthy vibrant glow.

Fasting "reboots" your immune system from free radical damage, regulating inflammatory conditions in the body and killing-off cancer cell formation.

Fasting improves blood pressure levels.

Fasting improves cholesterol levels.

Type 2 diabetes has become commonplace in our unhealthy culture. Fasting has been shown to strongly support insulin resistance and lead to an impressive reduction in blood sugar levels.

Similarly, blood levels of insulin drop significantly, which facilitates fat burning.

The blood levels of growth hormone may increase as much as 5X. Higher levels of growth hormone assist fat burning and muscle gain, and have numerous other benefits.

Not only will your body functioning improve as you fast, but your decision-making regarding your health and fitness will improve.

16:8 Intermittent Fasting Schedule Example

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Midnight	Fasting Window	Fasting Window	Fasting Window	Fasting Window	Fasting Window	Fasting Window	Fasting Window
4am							
8am							
Midday	Eating Window	Eating Window	Eating Window	Eating Window	Eating Window	Eating Window	Eating Window
4pm							
8pm							
Midnight							

Research has found that age-related declines in cognitive and motor abilities (such as physical balance) can be reduced by fasting.

Research has found that a 16-hour fast can reset your sleep cycle. Other research has found that fasting can improve the overall quality of your sleep.

Interesting, research at Yale has found that being on an empty stomach helps you think and focus better. Hence, many people, such as Malcolm Gladwell, purposefully “skip” breakfast so they can better focus on their creative work.

Fasting stabilizes your emotions. This happens by detaching from the emotional dependence on food, in addition to removing over-stimulating foods like caffeine, processed sugars, recreational drugs, tobacco and trans-fatty acids—all of which negatively effect our emotions.

Research confirms that being in a fasted state improves focus, memory, and ability to comprehend information. Put most simply, fasting improves brain efficiency and effectiveness.

How to fast?

Try eating an early dinner or late breakfast. It may be difficult at first, as you likely have an emotional, not physical, dependency on food. The idea is to eat within a 6–10 hour window each day, and allow yourself the rest of the day to recover. If you eat meals high in protein and healthy fats, you'll be satiated, or full, for several more hours than if you're eating carbs, particularly sugary carbs.

If daily doesn't make sense, try a weekly fast where you either go 18–24 hours on a particular day.

Between meals, as long as we don't snack, our insulin levels will go down and our fat cells can then release their stored sugar, to be used as energy. We lose weight if we let our insulin levels go down. The entire idea of **IF** is to allow the insulin levels to go down far enough and for long enough that we burn off our fat.

<https://medium.com/the-mission/intermittent-fasting-explained-plus-5-tips-to-get-the-most-out-of-your-fast-9d3d990bd3eb>

Happy Fasting!