

# Life in the Fasting Lane

by Tom Swan

I started fasting in January this year, one day a week, for a simple reason. I wanted to lose weight faster than was coming off on my vegetarian diet alone.

It worked. Really well. Maybe too well. People keep asking me if I'm sick.

Nope. Just thinner.

In addition to trimming fat, fasting has given me renewed energy and a proud sense of accomplishment. Better still, I'm benefiting in two unexpected ways as I explain in this article. And I discovered the key secret that has made it possible for me to continue fasting successfully, now for over six months straight, without ever once feeling too horribly hungry.

Following, then, is a brief account of my Life in the Fasting Lane — or, *How I Learned to Love Starving Myself Once a Week for Fun and No Profit*.



It's not strictly true that I go completely without food on fasting days. To settle my stomach, especially in the morning when I take my vitamins, I allow myself a single rice cake and maybe I'll have another later on. With the cakes, which amount to practically nothing calorie-wise, I no longer feel nauseated as I first did. After a must-have morning cup of coffee, I drink only water and herb tea throughout the day. That's my total intake for 24 hours.

## You Go Fast

Fasting is as easy as pie — or rather, *no* pie, or anything else, for whatever time period you want, usually at least a day. So, no instruction manual required. Wanna fast? Just do it. Don't eat.

But don't do what I did at first. On my first day, I did what seemed logical: I started fasting when I got up in the morning. When I went to bed that night, I was famished. It was all I could do to force myself to continue this business until morning when I could *break fast* for real. And I wasn't thinking just a bowl of flakes. By that time, I was dreaming of a four-egg omelet, toast, hash browns, a pot of strong coffee, and a couple of oranges and bananas.

I seriously doubt that my resolve to fast regularly would have survived long if I had to go to bed that hungry every night once a week. (Sad it is that there are those in our world who have little other choice.) But then I discovered the secret that has made it possible for me to fast successfully now for over six months straight and not feel too hungry on the *big day*:

### *The Secret*



My secret is the realization that, if I'm not planning to eat breakfast, then a day's fasting actually starts the night *before*. And so, before bed, I now make a mental note of the time when I last ate — even if only a snack. Say that's 9:30pm. I then do not eat again (except for my rice cake) until that *same* time the next night. Then I prepare and gobble my reward for a successful fast — a peanut butter and jelly open-faced sandwich. (I rarely have one at other times, so it's a treat.) Thus, by following my schedule, I can go an entire day without food, totaling a full 24 hours, but I don't ever have to go to bed hungry. Problem solved!

## Unexpected Benefits from Fasting

I believe that fasting has indeed helped me to lose weight, and as I mentioned before, I also seem to have more energy (especially on fasting day and the day after). Those pluses alone would be enough to keep me on the fasting fast track, but during the past several months I have realized two other unexpected and attractive benefits from fasting regularly.

### *Freedom from Eating and Cooking*

When I wake in the morning, and I suddenly realize that today is a fasting day, I feel a tremendous surge of happiness and freedom. I think: 'Great! Today I don't have to eat! Even better, I don't have to cook!' With those thoughts in mind, I fly out of bed and I'm soon hard at work on whatever project is in the making.



Eating and cooking, while normally enjoyable tasks for me, and I hope for you, can sometimes seem like drudge work. Who hasn't wished they didn't have to cook supper after a tiring day? Who hasn't skipped breakfast when time runs short? Well, by fasting, you get a day off from eating and cooking once a week. That fact alone gives me an electric charge.

### *Caloric Credits*

Think of it this way. At the end of this year, I will have gone about two months without eating. And that means, in just over six years, I will have gone an *entire year without food!*

Whoa! That sounds appalling! If even possible.

But imagine the calories I am not consuming this way. After six years, I should be able to drink a battleship of beer and I won't gain an ounce!

Yeah, if only things worked that way, right? But I do think that I'm getting a reduction of calories overall that amounts to a daily savings of maybe 200 calories more or less. But the danger in that knowledge for the highly indulgent me, I have found, is that I tend to want to "spend" my accumulated caloric credits. They're mine. I claim the right to use them! Unwisely if I choose!

In other words, I reasoned: 'A beer every evening would be a wash, so why not have one?' But, of course, I didn't stop there, and soon I realized that the reason I wasn't losing weight was not because of nor in spite of fasting, but because I was cheating on other days — eating more because I subconsciously reasoned that I had already saved up as much in caloric credits from fasting days.

That's just the self-defeating human in me directing the show, I guess. So I cut out the nightly beer while keeping my other vice — wine with supper. I'm still happy and the pounds started coming off again. Now six months later, I feel great and my weight is actually a bit under my target.

So, will I continue fasting? Absolutely yes! With all the benefits I am realizing, I am as eager to continue fasting once a week as I was when I first began. It's life in the fasting lane for me from now on baby.

[Top of Page](#)

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