

EAT, FAST, FEAST

Heal Your Body While Feeding Your Soul—
A Christian Guide to Fasting

Jay W. Richards

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FIRST EDITION

Designed by Diaham Sturge

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication
Data is available upon request.

ISBN 978-0-06-290521-5

20 21 22 23 24 LSC 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

2018 Fasting Calendar

Legend
Abstain from meat, fish, dairy, eggs, wine, olive oil
Abstain from meat, fish, dairy, eggs
Abstain from meat, dairy, eggs
Abstain from meat

January						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

February						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

March						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

April						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

May						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

June						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

July						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

August						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

September						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

October						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

November						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

December						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Groceries

Natural Fats

Olive oil
Coconut oil
Butter
Ghee (clarified butter)
Lard
Tallow
Avocado oil
Peanut oil
Heavy cream

Meat and Protein

Eggs
Salmon
Sardines
Chicken (including the dark meat and skin)
Pork (including fatty portions)
Sausage (make sure it's low-sugar)
Ground beef (no leaner than 85 percent)
Steak

Vegetables

Spinach
Bok choy
Broccoli
Asparagus
Lettuce
Kale

Celery
Brussels sprouts
Zucchini
Leeks
Peppers
Onions
Watercress
Cauliflower
Green beans
Snow peas
Seaweed
Artichokes
Cucumbers
Tomatoes
Avocados
Olives

Okay, the last four are technically fruits (the seeds give them away), but they're good to have.

Resist the temptation to get the leanest meats. You will be increasing your intake of natural fats, while moderating your protein. If you eat a lot of grilled ground turkey breast, skinless chicken breasts, mahi-mahi, and egg-white omelets, you could very well end up with too much protein and not enough fat. I know this contradicts everything you thought you knew about a healthy diet. Just roll with it for now.

Nuts and Seeds

Macadamia nuts
Pecans

Almonds

Walnuts

Brazil nuts

Hazelnuts

Pistachios

Sunflower seeds

Pumpkin seeds

Secret Weapons

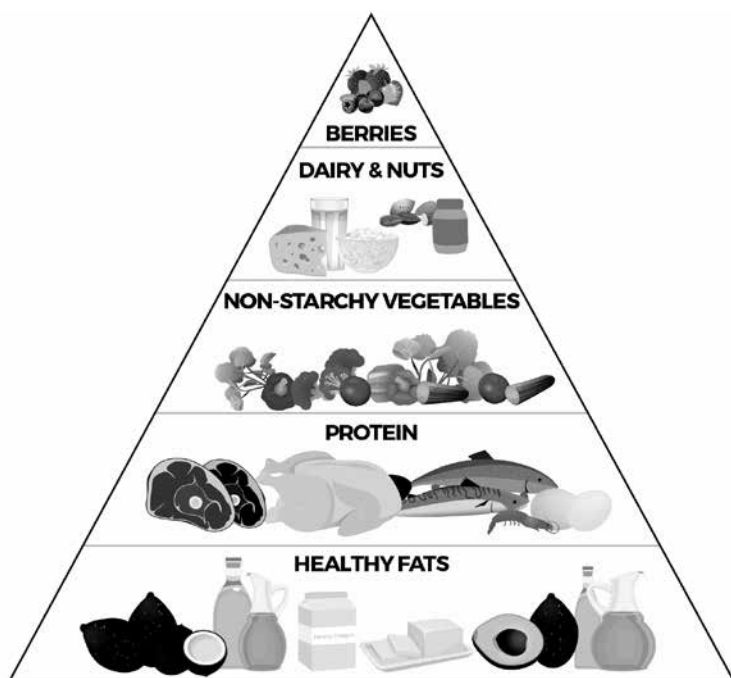
Dark chocolate (85 percent or higher)

Konjac-root noodles

Frozen “riced” cauliflower

Coffee

Tea (black, green, herbal)



Mini-Feast

On day seven, have a mini-feast. Eat throughout the day but keep it within a twelve-hour feeding window. Add in some low-glycemic fruit, such as half of a red grapefruit or a handful of berries. Mix them with whipped cream, either unsweetened or with a bit of liquid stevia or Truvía. Have a dark chocolate fat bomb.

Fat Bomb Recipe

- 1 8½-ounce bar unsweetened chocolate
- ½ cup coconut oil
- 3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2½ teaspoons Truvía or similar sweetener
- ½ teaspoon liquid stevia (we use Trader Joe's brand)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2½ cups unsweetened coconut flakes

Put the coconut flakes on a cookie sheet. Toast them at 325°F until brown and crispy. Melt the unsweetened chocolate bar and coconut oil in a double boiler. Swirl in cocoa powder, sweeteners, and salt, and toasted coconut flakes.

With a spoon, put the mixture in the compartments of a cupcake pan. (We use a twelve-cupcake pan and put in silicone holders to make it easy to remove the goodies.)

Place in freezer for about ten minutes to solidify, then store at room temperature.

HOW TO DETERMINE IF YOU'RE OVERWEIGHT

Different people have different ideal weights. If you're really overweight, though, you know it already, even if you don't know the medical definition. There's no thick black line that distinguishes obesity from overweight, but there are official ways to measure where you are on the spectrum.

The first is your body-mass index (BMI). This is a ratio of your height to your weight. Here's the formula: $W/H^2 \times 703$, that is, weight (in pounds) divided by height (in inches) squared, multiplied by 703. That's hard to remember, but you can Google "bmi calculator" and one will come up. You just type in your weight and height, and it will give you your score.

THE BMI CATEGORIES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Underweight: less than 18.5

Normal weight: 18.5–24.9

Overweight: 25–29.9

Obesity: 30 or greater

Severe obesity: 35.0–39.9

Morbid obesity: above 40

The key virtue of the BMI? It's easy to calculate. You just measure your weight and height and do a little arithmetic. But it has some vices as well. For one thing, it doesn't measure body fat, which is what matters. When we worry about being "overweight," we're not worried about muscle and bone weight. We're worried about too much body fat. The BMI is blind to the difference. A fit, muscle-bound person could register as overweight or even obese.

Take Arnold Schwarzenegger. At his peak, when he won several Mr. Olympia contests, he was 6'2" and weighed

235 pounds during competitions. So his BMI was 30.2, which ranked him as obese, even though he had less than 5 percent body fat! (For comparison, the average competitive marathon runner has around 10 percent body fat.)

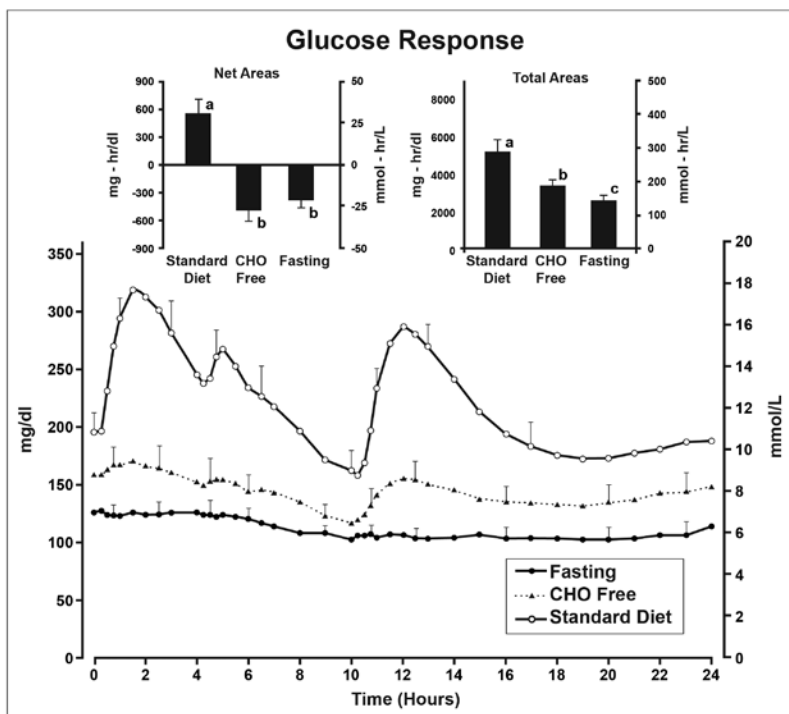
If you're not a professional bodybuilder, though, the BMI is a decent first approximation.

The ideal is to measure body fat percentage. Very roughly, a healthy body fat percentage for most men will fall between 10 percent and 17 percent. (Even elite athletes rarely go below 10 percent.) For women, 21 to 24 percent is considered the normal healthy range, though very fit women may get down to 14 percent.

Notice that it can be unhealthy to be outside the range on *either end*. Extremely low body fat is a serious problem, especially for women—though it's not all that common. Competitive bodybuilders can bring their body fat down into the single digits, but only during competition. At the other end of the spectrum, anything above 26 percent for men and 31 percent for women is defined as obese.

There are several ways to measure body fat directly. The virtue of the methods is that they target what we really want to know. Their vices are cost and complexity. And the more accurate the method, the more complicated and expensive it is.

Fortunately, there's a third method for determining if you have too much of the (wrong kind) of body fat. It's free and easy. You just divide your waist circumference by your height in inches. Your waist should be no more than half your height. If your score is below 0.5, in other words, you're in pretty good shape. If it's above that, then you should lose some body fat for the sake of your long-term health.

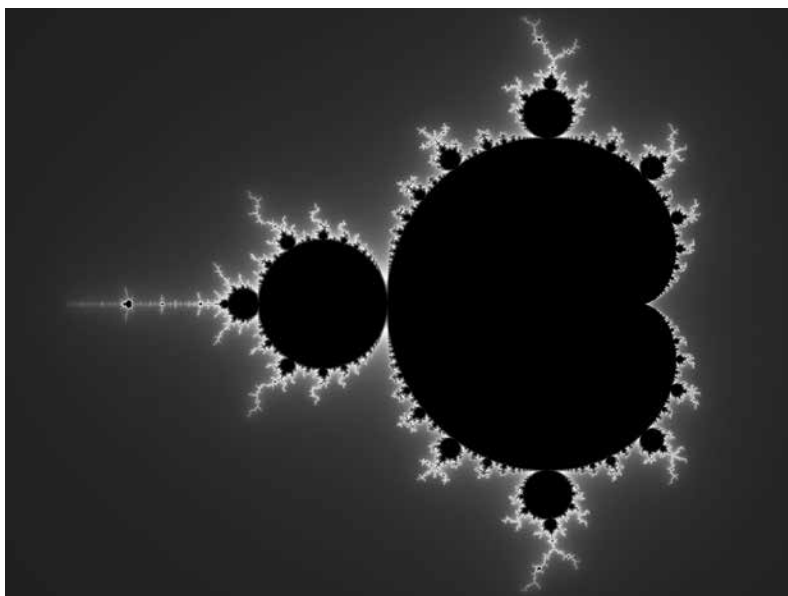


Nutall F. et al., *Metabolism* 64, no. 2: 253–62, “Comparison of a Carbohydrate-Free Diet vs. Fasting on Plasma Glucose, Insulin and Glucagon in Type 2 Diabetes.”

ROBB WOLF'S SEVEN-DAY CARB TEST³

1. Choose a carbohydrate-rich food—apple sauce, chocolate chip cookie, banana, pasta, white rice, white bread, etc.—and measure out fifty grams of effective carbs of this food (that is, total carbs minus fiber.) You'll need to determine how much of the food will get you fifty grams of effective carbs. Do a “food search” for every common food here to get the numbers: <https://ndb.nal.usda.gov/ndb/search/list>.
2. First thing in the morning, eat your test carb. Don't eat any other food, though you can drink calorie-free coffee, tea, or water. If you drink one of these, make sure to do the same each morning you are testing.
3. Write down the carbohydrate you are testing and when you ate it.
4. Set a timer for two hours.
5. Test your blood glucose and record your blood glucose reading.

For more information, see <https://robbwolf.com/wiredtoeat/7daycarbtest/>.



Two-dimensional still of the Mandelbrot Set at one resolution, created by Wolfgang Beyer with *Ultrafractal 3*, Wikimedia Commons, grayscale

APPENDIX 2. THE SIX-WEEK PLAN AT A GLANCE

Week One

Eat a “ketogenic” diet of high natural fat, moderate protein, and very low carbs (below fifty grams not counting fiber) without simple sugars, grains, or starches. Get about 80 percent of your calories from fat, 15 percent from protein, and 5 percent from carbohydrates. Think natural fats—such as olive and coconut oil—and fatty meats. For carbs, focus on green vegetables grown above ground—such as spinach, broccoli, and asparagus. This way of eating allows your body to shift to a state of “ketosis,” in which it draws most of its energy from dietary and body fat. Drink lots of water and increase your salt intake.

Have a mini-feast on Sunday: Enjoy a piece of fruit or some 85 percent dark chocolate.

Week Two

Start to restrict your feeding window to 16/8. That is, every day, fast for sixteen hours (including your night’s sleep) and eat all your daily calories (mostly fat, protein, and vegetables) during an eight-hour feeding window.

Have a mini-feast on Sunday and expand your eating window to twelve hours.

Week Three

Lengthen your daily fast with a 20/4 routine. That is, eat all your meals within a four-hour window of time during the day. You don't need to try to restrict calories. This way of eating helps break the habit of eating at fixed times and amplifies the good effects of the ketogenic diet.

Then, on Sunday, have another mini-feast.

Week Four

For three days this week—preferably Monday, Wednesday, and Friday—eat all your food during a one-hour window. You still don't need to try to restrict net calories. Maintain a time-restricted ketogenic diet on other days.

And enjoy a mini-feast on Sunday.

Week Five

Mimic a real fast on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Consume one-fourth the number of calories that you normally do—five hundred to six hundred calories. (Think two avocados with lime juice and salt.) Continue with a regular, time-restricted ketogenic diet on the other days.

Plus another mini-feast day on Sunday.

Week Six

For the first few days of the week, prepare for a fast longer than twenty-four hours. Shoot for thirty-six to seventy-two hours. Then sometime on Wednesday through Saturday, observe your fast. By this time, you should be “fat-adapted” and much more metabolically flexible. You’ll have felt the benefits of fasting.

Enjoy a proper feast on Sunday.

APPENDIX 3: HOW TO PROVE YOU'RE BURNING FAT FOR FUEL

If you're like me, you'll want to confirm that the strategy is working—that you really are switching your body into fat-burning mode. It would be nice to measure insulin directly, but that's hard and expensive. Second best is to measure whether your blood sugar is staying on the low side of normal and your body is converting fat to ketones and burning them for fuel. The good news is that there are some inexpensive ways to do both.

Urine Strips

The easiest and cheapest tool to test for ketones is a urine strip. A box of 150 strips costs no more than ten dollars. You just pee in a cup, dip the business side of the strip in your urine, pull it out, wait forty seconds, and look at the color change.

If the tip stays tan, that means you're excreting hardly any ketones. Light pink means there are trace amounts. Mauve to purple means there are plenty of ketones in your urine.

If you've just been at this for a few weeks and are following the protocols, the strip should change color. But this method has its limits. The strips detect only one of the three ketones

your body produces, called acetoacetate. And it doesn't detect the ones you're *using*, but rather the ones that you're *excreting* through your urine.

As your body becomes more "keto-adapted," it gets better at using ketones for fuel. That means that the urine strips will show fewer and fewer ketones the longer you eat a ketogenic diet. I've been at this for a while, and even when I know I'm in ketosis, the urine strips don't change color for me. To see what's happening for the first month or so, however, urine ketone strips are still the easiest choice.

Blood Tests

If you want to detect ketones and glucose in your blood, you'll need to get a blood testing meter. There are several on the market, but I use the DSS Precision Xtra by Abbott. The kit comes with a digital detector and a little thingy called a "lancet device" that you use to prick your finger. You just pull back a knob, put the other end on the tip of a finger, and push the button. Don't worry. It makes only a tiny prick, enough to render one drop of blood.

You'll also need to buy glucose test strips and ketone test strips. If you buy the meter kit, plus thirty glucose and thirty ketone strips, it will cost you about a hundred dollars. Shop and compare prices on Amazon or other online stores to find the best deals. Buying the strips in bulk will save you money.

Costs would get out of hand quickly if you did these tests every day, since the ketone strips cost over a dollar a piece.

But there's no need to do the test that often. For now, you just want to know if you're producing ketones and lowering your blood sugar.

I recommend doing the same test every few days, or once a week, at a fixed time. Just remember to compare apples with apples. Blood ketones and glucose go up and down throughout the day. Don't compare a test you took right after you had a giant meal at 7:00 p.m., with a test you took first thing in the morning on an empty stomach. Be systematic and write down the numbers.

The blood ketone test tells you the concentration of beta-hydroxybutyrate (BHB) in your blood. That's the ketone your brain really likes to run on.

So, What Should I Look For?

If you're in ketosis, the meter should give you a reading of at least 0.5 mmol/L. (Don't worry about the units. Just look at the number.)

Ideally, you'd like to see it between one and three mmol/L sometime during the day. This is the range that low-carb researchers Jeff Volek and Stephen Phinney call nutritional ketosis.¹

If you take the test at different times and get readings larger than one, you're fine. If you never get a reading of even 0.5, that means you're not getting into ketosis. The likely culprits? Too many carbs, and maybe too much protein.² You may be insulin resistant. In that case, you'll need to drop your daily net carbs to under thirty or even twenty grams a day to kickstart your

fat-burning system. Everyone is different. Just keep tweaking your intake of carbs and protein until you hit the sweet spot.

The “normal” blood sugar range for non-diabetics is from seventy to one hundred mg/dL. It will be on the lower end of that range when you’re fasting, and on the higher end after you’ve had a meal. (My fasting blood glucose is around seventy, lower if I’m in nutritional ketosis.) The main thing to check for now is whether both your fasted and fed glucose levels go down as you become more keto-adapted and fit for fasting. Assuming you’re otherwise healthy, the trend, not isolated numbers, is what you want to watch.

If you’re healthy and you’ve been on a ketogenic diet for a couple of months, your blood sugar may go well below the normal range. Mine often does. If a doctor were to test my fasting blood sugar when I’m in ketosis, he might think I’m dangerously hypoglycemic, and wonder why I’m not lightheaded. But a lower blood sugar is okay as long as your body is using ketones for fuel.

Things can get more complicated long term³ when blood sugar can be higher in the morning than you might expect, but don’t worry about that now. Just stick with the basics. (If you really want to dive into the details, see the link in this endnote.)⁴ Ideally, you will enter ketosis before the end of the first week. So it’s helpful to verify that this is happening.