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The only diet that you will ever need



Picture: STOCKPHOTO

Top nutritionist AMANDA HAMILTON introduces the 48 Hour Diet, the Daily Express's exclusive weight loss plan



THIS won't be the first diet plan you've read. Yet it could be the first that gets results without compromising your health, while keeping you calm and costing nothing. Best of all it allows you to eat plenty of good, healthy food for five days of the week. As its name suggests this revolutionary weight-loss plan restricts your calorie intake for just 48 hours. On those two days you fast. It may sound drastic but fasting is not starvation. It means simply extending the time between small, nutritious meals and it is something that we humans have been practising since we first walked the planet. In fact it's only in recent times that we've had access to high-calorie, high-fat foods all day long. Before then we typically went for longer periods without eating.

WHY FAST?
Fasting has a fascinating effect on the body. Lab research has

shown that calorie restriction and intermittent fasting can extend life. Sounds crazy doesn't it? After all we are much more used to hearing we're going to "waste away" if we go a few hours without a meal. Not only does fasting add years, it also results in a marked degree of regeneration and rejuvenation. It gives your body a break and a chance to catch up on its inner "to-do" list. If you're a busy, on-the-go person and don't give your body the best conditions to rest, digest and ultimately heal, ill-health will catch up with you sooner or later. The over-arching theory is that fasting helps to destress the body. You might think that fasting will make you feel faint and weak. Don't worry. The key is to keep your body feeling fuller for longer. It's about understanding how to manage hunger so you eat less, naturally, more of the time and your blood sugar levels stay constant, providing your brain and body with all the energy they need. Please note, I don't say eat less *all* of the time. Over-indulging now and again at special events is good for the soul. What I love about fasting is its simplicity. It's much easier to stick to something that is more about watching the clock than counting every calorie.



Yes, when you begin you will feel hungry at your usual meal times. Yet the peaks and troughs of hunger start to level out. Listen to your body, though. If it just doesn't feel right adjust your approach or stop. In tandem with a good diet overall, fasting can be used to retrain your appetite without the need for dodgy suppressants or supplements. It is a simple answer in an industry that has become over-complicated and downright ridiculous. The nutritional rules and fasting plans you'll find in The 48 Hour Diet are rooted firmly in healthy eating principles. I don't recommend cutting out carbohydrates and I believe the right kinds of fat (such as the essential type found in oily fish and walnuts) in the right amounts can help you to feel fuller for longer.

WHAT CAN I EAT?
On the 48 Hour Diet you eat normally (three meals and two snacks) for five days a week. On the other two days, which must be separated by at least a day, you're restricted to two small meals adding up to a total of 500 to 600 calories. If you're eating fewer calories,

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THE FACTS ABOUT FASTING

- Fasting is just as effective as traditional diets for losing weight but might be easier to stick to and less likely to slow your metabolism. It's perfect if you want to lose that last 10lb.
- If you are stressed and troubled by weight around your middle shorter fasts may be better at tackling that belly fat than longer spells of fasting.
- Which ever fasting format you choose it's likely to reduce inflammation which is good news for conditions such as eczema, asthma and arthritis.
- Fasting may help adults concentrate. It could even build new brain cells.
- Forget what you have been told about regular meals boosting your metabolism

AMANDA'S GOLDEN RULES

- If you are going out for an indulgent evening then instead of having to control calories simply don't eat until noon as this is another style of fasting that can be used ad hoc alongside the 5 day/2 day plan. The calories you'll save from not eating until noon will let you enjoy the evening without any concern about undoing all your hard work.
- Hunger will come in waves during your 500 calorie days so be prepared to distract yourself. I try to be out of the house as I find it harder when the kitchen is a few feet away. Coffee takes the edge off my hunger so that works well as long as you don't overdo it. Activities such as yoga or gentle exercise are great as you don't use too much energy and they often have a calming effect.
- If you can, stick to a pattern of set fasting days. This will depend on your schedule although many people choose to fast on a Monday to get a boost at the beginning of the week. Getting one day under your belt often makes the mental challenge feel less daunting.
- If you keep the benefits of fasting in your mind and make it personal it helps you to keep motivated. That might mean carrying around a photo of yourself in younger days or a celebrity who has a body you admire. Some people put the image on the fridge door. It works!

● To order Eat Fast Slim: The Life-Changing Fasting Diet For Amazing Weight Loss And Optimum Health (Duncan Baird, £8.99) with free UK delivery call 0671 988 8367 (10p/min from BT landlines) with your card details or send a cheque payable to Express Bookshop to: PO Box 200, Falmouth, TR11 4WJ or order via expressbookshop.co.uk

● For more information on fasting visit amandahamiltondiet.com Use the code "dailyexpress13" at the checkout before May 31 to receive 20 per cent off all weight loss packages.