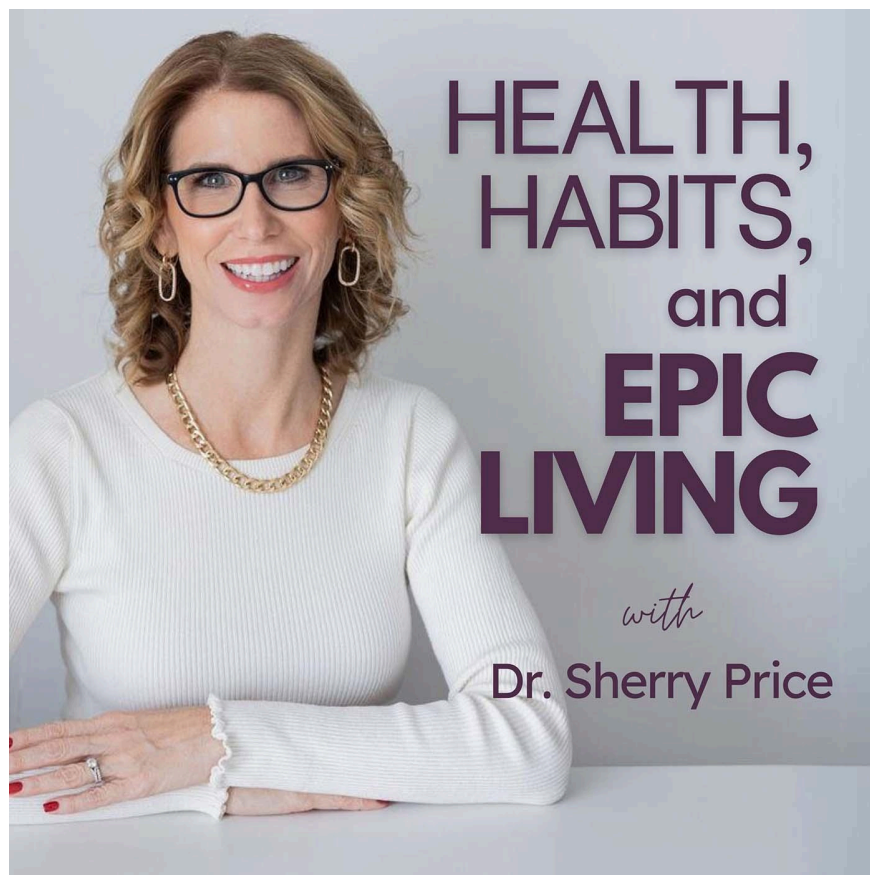


Ep #176: 5 Benefits of Intermittent Fasting



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Dr. Sherry Price

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Welcome to the *Health, Habits, and Epic Living* podcast. I'm your host, Dr. Sherry Price. The goal of this podcast is to educate and enable empowered women to take the next steps towards achieving their health, wellness, and lifestyle goals. Let's get started.

Hello, my beautiful and epic friend. Today I want to talk about how to rock your body. And this came up as I attended a little gathering at a friend's house. It was all women. We were getting together, just chatting about what's going on in our lives and this thing we call menopause and perimenopause kept coming up with the amount of weight women are struggling with and how to lose that weight. And so we were talking about our experiences.

Many of them had gone to physicians talking about this weight gain and how they didn't like it. And they were told, "Well, that's just a normal sign of aging and that's what happens to the female body." And it's kind of like just get used to it. And a lot of them were pretty feeling disgruntled by that as I would too. I had that own experience of mine where I went to a physician talking about weight gain and kind of felt dismissed by it.

And so I really want women to understand that there can be weight gain during the perimenopause, menopausal years. And if you look at the SWAN study, the Healthy Women's Study, it suggests that women on average gain approximately three pounds per year during perimenopause transition. And we know that transition could be anywhere from 10 to 15 years. And that when they hit menopause, by the time menopause is fully reached, the average weight gain for women is around 20 pounds, yes, 20 pounds.

And so, much of that weight is located in the abdomen area and also in the upper body. So I call that belly fat. I call that bra fat or back fat and that's where it tends to accumulate. And I don't want to go down too much of a rabbit hole, but much of this weight gain is visceral fat. And if you've listened to my podcast in the past, you know that visceral fat is the most dangerous kind of fat. That is the fat that collects around our organs, that is

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the fat that causes inflammation. That's the type of fat that leads to cardiovascular disease, cancer, all sorts of things.

And so that's the type of fat that we don't want. And after listening to the women there, I was like, "I need a podcast on this." Because even though your body may gain weight, there are things you can do to prevent that or burn the fat off. And I don't think enough people are talking about this. And I'm a little agitated over that. I'm a little agitated that we go to extremely knowledgeable people for advice and we aren't given the tools that we need in order to rock our body in the second half of our life.

And I know that this is an issue, particularly this time of year because as we enter February, many people have given up on those New Year's resolutions and they think change isn't possible. And last week I talked about how to become more committed because I don't think giving up on your health should be an option. And I want to give you tools where you don't give up on your greatest health goals and maybe losing fat, staying metabolically fit and healthy is a goal, and that's a very admirable goal.

Not only do you benefit, but your entire family, your community, everybody you interact with, benefits. Because when you are healthier, you can move better, lift better, contribute more, you have more energy, you're happier. And overall you just put out better energy into the world than those that don't. Now, this is not about judging. It's not about shaming. That's not about what I am about. But it's really about empowering you with tools.

And so the one tool I want to talk about today that has so many benefits beyond just losing weight is fasting, particularly intermittent fasting. Now, I could go down a whole rabbit hole about the different protocols of intermittent fasting. So you may have heard there's the 12/12 protocol, 12 hours you don't eat and you're fasting. And then the other 12 hours you are eating or you're opening up your eating window. It doesn't mean you're eating continuously for 12 hours. It just means now that you've opened your feeding or eating window.

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Another popular one is the 16/8, 16 hours, there's no food going in the mouth, you're totally fasting. And then you open your eating window for eight hours. And so in that eight hours you would get in your three meals, you'd get in all the nutrients, all the macronutrients, all the micronutrients, everything that your body needs for optimal health.

Then you may have heard about the OMAD style of fasting, one meal a day. And although this is a popular method, I will say, once women hit perimenopause, I am not a big fan of this and actually I'm not even a big fan of this before you hit perimenopause because there are some downsides to following OMAD.

There is also the 5:2 diet, it's called the 5:2 diet. And there's also the alternate day fasting as well as the Fasting Mimicking Diet FMD, which is quite popular for certain individuals. Now, I don't subscribe to a lot of these styles and protocols just based on the results that I've seen in the clinical trials and in the studies that have been done. So some of them I would not recommend for most women. But it's about what your goals are for doing fasting, and where you're at, and if you have cancer or don't have cancer and what else is going on for you.

So at the end of the day, I'm saying that you want to pick the right regimen for the goals that you have, and then anything else that is unique to you. As I mentioned, we need to consider what conditions or disease states that may be ongoing for you and then select the most appropriate given your goals and where you're at with your health.

So when I am doing intermittent fasting coaching with the women in my IF:45 For Women program or in my EpicYOU program, I am making sure that we are looking at what are their goals. Because there's going to be a different strategy to get to and a different way to fast that may get us faster and quicker to our goals. And some strategies which may just sabotage us. And then there are certain populations where I won't recommend fasting at all and that is particularly women trying to conceive.

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Fasting is a stress on the body. And so we want to make sure that the body feels safe, safe to reproduce, safe to start a new life. And so that is a time in a woman's life and in a woman's journey that I would not recommend doing fasting. So I'm not going to go into all the caveats about the different fasting protocols. But what I do want to talk about is the five biggest benefits that you get when following a fasting protocol.

Another way to look at fasting is also time restricted eating. What you're doing is just minimizing the hours of the day in which you eat, or you're setting the hours of the day which you are eating. I want to caution not to say minimize too much because I don't want you to think one meal a day is the goal for most people because I feel that strategy doesn't work for most women. So we're just looking at the time of the day where we don't feed the body food and then the time of the day where we open the eating window and allow food. So let's dive into those five benefits of intermittent fasting.

So I started off the podcast talking about how we struggle with weight gain as women, particularly as we age. So one of the biggest reasons women want to do fasting is that it causes weight loss. Now, the scientific research behind fasting and showing that fasting works to reduce weight is staggering. We have lots of data to say that it's very effective and it's particularly effective at losing fat loss. So we know there's ways to lose weight, we can lose water weight, we can lose muscle weight.

And we don't want to lose muscle weight because as we age as women, we are losing our muscle mass. We don't want to be losing our skeletal muscle mass. It supports our bones, it supports our health, it supports our mobility, our agility, it prevents hip fractures. Did I mention stability? It's really important for stability. So we want to preserve our muscle mass.

And so water weight, we can lose weight by. Just think about somebody who gets sick with a food borne illness, stomach bug, they're throwing up, you have diarrhea. You're losing a ton of water weight. But a few days later go by and you've replenished all that water back. You notice that your weight goes up, because that was just water weight.

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Now, a lot of these fasting diets, if you're not careful, you can lose muscle mass. And that's not what we're targeting. We're targeting fat mass that we want lost. So the data supports that intermittent fasting helps people lose weight, and they can even lose a tremendous amount of weight following an intermittent fasting protocol. But here's the thing, it has to be done appropriately and I will talk about that here in a minute. So intermittent fasting works for people who have over 100 pounds to lose, and it also works for people who have just 20 pounds to lose.

However, how you would structure the protocol for those two individuals would be completely different. So one thing I want you to hear over and over and I'm going to be repeating is it's not a one-size-fits-all fasting strategy. And I really want women to hear this because we talk to each other and we're like, "This person's trying this type of fasting protocol." And instantly our brain goes, wow, she's getting results, I should do the same thing. And maybe you should or maybe you shouldn't.

Again, it depends on where they're at, how much they have to lose, what their goals are, any disease states that they may have or conditions. And also you want to do it in a way that keeps the weight off. There is so much damage done to women who lose weight quickly and then gain it all back. It's not just psychological and emotional, but it's also damaging to the body to continue to yo-yo diet.

And one thing I want to point out is that women have different needs than men. So I don't want women to think, I can fast the exact same way as my husband or the exact same way as another male because we are not just smaller males, we are actually females. We have different hormones going on inside of our body. A lot of us may still be cycling and have our menstrual cycle, which will put a caveat into how we should be fasting. And maybe we stopped having our hormone cycles, which means the type of fasting that we do should change based on our hormone status.

And I have to tell you, after becoming certified as an intermittent fasting coach through one of the leaders in the industry, which is Cynthia Thurlow. She has really educated me with the data that exists for women and how

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women should fast differently than men. I used to think that fasting was kind of this one-size-fits-all approach. And before I did her program I used to do longer fasts. I may have even talked about that on the podcast. I endorsed a three day fast. I did a five day fast. I felt fantastic afterwards.

But knowing what I know now and knowing the literature, I would not recommend doing these longer fasts for most women. The amount of muscle mass that you can lose in a short period of time and not really get back, particularly as you age is a concern that I didn't know existed. And so by going through this training, by reading and diving into the literature and really understanding how the female body works differently than the male body and how our hormones play into that.

And look, when I say hormones, I'm not just talking about estrogen, progesterone and testosterone, I'm talking about other hormones. When women go through perimenopause, it's likely their thyroid becomes disrupted, and so thyroid is a hormone and insulin is a hormone and leptin and ghrelin and the things that trigger our hunger. Those are all triggered by hormones. So just understanding how the female body morphs over time is very important because we want to honor the process that our body is going through and support it.

And some of these fasting protocols don't support it and make us feel more tired and less energetic because we aren't giving ourselves the amount of calories that we need and the proper type of calories. So if done appropriately with the proper amount of macros, the proper feeding window, the proper amount of protein you get in a day, the proper amount of healthy fats. I also like to look at added sugars in my clients and their protocol.

And if they really hit a weight loss plateau, we look at the seed oils and the other things that might be impacting that, their sleep, their hydration, their stress level. Because all of that will determine how successful the fasting protocol will be. So bio individuality is very much a key to being successful with a fasting protocol.

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So if you look at the literature, you will see that intermittent fasting is one of the most effective, safest tools that we can use when done appropriately to lose weight, particularly fat. Not only that, there are a number of studies showing how it's the most effective way to lose fat in older individuals.

In fact, there was a meta-analysis done in 2022, published in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology Metabolism, that looked at a series of different studies and looked at really in these obese 50 and up individuals, what is an effective strategy for losing weight. And they found that intermittent fasting was extremely effective in this population. So this is one reason I am a big proponent of intermittent fasting because it promotes weight loss.

I know a lot of people that are going to Wegovy and Mounjaro and Ozempic. And these drugs are a hot topic right now thanks to all the media they're getting and the celebrities that are using them. And I'm not against them, but really they should be used in tandem with lifestyle modifications, lifestyle interventions that when these individuals come off and they don't implement the proper lifestyle interventions, the weight comes right back on. And that's what we've seen in the studies.

And that's why I think it is critical that women understand how to eat, to fuel their health and their bodies. Because you want to make sure you're taking the best care of your body so you can carry your groceries to and from the car and not throw out your back. So that you can put your suitcase in the overhead compartment. Yes, it's nice when somebody offers to get it down, but that you would be fully independent to be able to do that. So you could get on the floor and play with your grandkids.

And so you can open up a jar of pickles and not feel like you're fumbling and looking for all these tools in the kitchen to help you, but you have that grip strength and you have that ability to do so. And of course, that comes with resistance training and working out. So this first benefit I'm spending a lot of time on because I know it's important to women to lose the right type of weight and the right type of weight you want to lose is fat.

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And if you're to choose between the types of fat you want to lose, visceral fat. Fasting is an excellent strategy to do that. And that's why I teach it to my clients in IF:45 For Women. I also talk about it in EpicYOU. And in the month of February in EpicYOU, the entire month we are talking about how to lose weight. There are many women in the program right now wanting this, so we are talking about that the whole entire month. So if this is something you want, come join us and learn how to fuel your body for optimal health.

The next benefit you get from intermittent fasting is blood sugar regulation. We know in this country that pre diabetes is going up. We know that diabetes is going up. We know that obesity rates are skyrocketing and climbing and blood sugar regulation is one way to prevent that. So diabetes happens, pre diabetes happens, obesity happens when the body is not able to regulate blood sugar. Because when the body has high sugar in the blood, it causes our bodies to release the hormone insulin.

And insulin is a fat storing hormone. So it says, "Okay, there is too much sugar in the blood. Let's move it out of the blood." And since we don't use it because we're not moving, we're not walking, we're kind of sedentary, we're just going to store it in these cells as fat. And so when blood sugar rises, what do we see? We see insulin resistance. We see weight gain, we see inflammation, we see achy joints. We also see dysbiosis and a disruption in our microbiome.

We can see candida in our microbiome, which means we're going to have more sugar cravings. And so by following a fasting protocol, we can reduce this from happening in our body. Now, insulin resistance also happens because we're sitting a lot more. We now know that sitting is the new smoking. So having a sedentary lifestyle, and look, that can mean you go to the gym for an hour, but then if you go to the office and sit for eight straight hours at a desk, that's considered a sedentary lifestyle, because you're mostly sitting even though you exercise that day.

It's about getting in movement sporadically throughout the day. So when we have more insulin, when we secrete more insulin because we have higher

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blood sugar and because of the foods that we're selecting like ultra processed foods, we are going to gain more weight, particularly visceral fat. So we've got to really limit the highly processed foods because that causes a spike in insulin. And so I want you to be empowered with this tool that can regulate blood sugar so well.

Actually, there are women who join IF:45, and we talk about even monitoring our blood sugars. And some of the women decide to get a continuous glucose monitor and wear that. I have worn one in the past as well because it really gives you data and knowledge about, when I eat this, this is what happens to my blood sugar over the next couple of hours. And so we talk about interpreting that data and what does that mean? Does that mean you are insulin sensitive? Does that mean you're becoming insulin resistant? Because the numbers don't lie?

And I am a data nerd. I am a data geek, so I love knowing how my body responds. And so periodically throughout my life I plan on buying one of these, learning from myself because I know as I age my body's going to change. And how I tolerate certain foods as I age will change as well. And instead of fighting the change, I want to embrace the change. I know my body's going to change and that's okay, but how can I support my body as it changes? And so I want to empower myself with knowledge so I know what to do and how to better care for it.

So remember, if you are secreting insulin and storing fat, your body is in a fat storage mode and it can't be in a fat burning mode if it's in a fat storage mode. So I love teaching women, we might be in fat storage, how do we convert your body to be in fat burning mode? And intermittent fasting is a beautiful way to get your body into fat burning mode. Again, it's all about regulating your hormones. And in this case particularly, the hormone of insulin. Hormones are everything, ladies, not just for our sex life, but for our entire overall health.

And this is also a time where I talk about another hormone, cortisol. Cortisol is our stress hormone and if we are under constant stress because we've got to take care of our elderly parents, our little kids, we've got to

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shuttle them everywhere, we're the taxi service, then we have full-time jobs. And then we've got to get the right meal on the table. And now we've got to worry about macros and how we're feeding ourselves and when to eat and what to eat. All of that can be very stressful. And then we secrete cortisol and cortisol is going to secrete insulin.

And so if we're in a high cortisol state, we are also in a fat storing state. So it's really important when I'm working with clients that I make sure that they are following a stress management, a way to reduce the stress in their bodies so they can allow their bodies to release fat.

So another benefit as I mentioned is, it improves blood sugar, it improves insulin function, it lowers your blood sugar, lowers your risk of type 2 diabetes. Lowers your risk of cardiovascular disease, lowers your risk of cancer and so much more. This one tool is so effective.

The third benefit is autophagy. Fasting activates cellular autophagy. Autophagy is just meaning our cells that are damaged get broken down. The damaged parts get excreted, get eliminated from our body. And the body reuses the good parts that are left. So there's good proteins left over, good cholesterol left over. The body will recycle that. However, if there's any damaged parts, the body gets rid of it. So this is another benefit to following an intermittent fasting protocol because our bodies need a lot of energy to do this process of autophagy.

So if we're feeding our bodies, our bodies are worried about breaking down that food, absorbing the nutrients from it, shuttling the components to where they need to go to and the cells they need to go to. But when we aren't in a fed state and we're just resting, then our body can really work on cleaning up the cellular damage. Now, I want to offer a word of caution here because I don't feel that women should just do fasting and do longer fasts just for the benefit of a topology.

You can get autophagy benefits from other things and other stresses because we know fasting is a stress on the body. You can get autophagy from doing cold plunges. You can get autophagy from sauna use, from

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exercise. And so there's just so many other things you can do to get the benefits of autophagy that I don't think doing a longer fast is what I would recommend for most women just because of the muscle loss that occurs during extended fasts. And so as I mentioned, this is something I recently changed my mind on after becoming certified and looking really at the data of how longer fasts affect women.

So benefit number four is an improved mental cognition or mental enhancement. So when you are fasting, your body does not have available a lot of glucose stores. So it shifts into more ketones or a ketogenic state, and the brain loves ketones as an awesome clean fuel source. Ketones are an excellent brain fuel. And it's also been shown it's excellent even more as we age. When I am in a sugar burning state, I feel okay, but when I am in a fat burning state, my mind and my cognition is on fire. I'm able to focus. I have extreme mental clarity.

I get so much more done in such a short period of time, so it increases my productivity. My learning is quicker, my memory is better. And when women are in the IF:45 For Women program, I talk about, "How is your cognition?" And most of the women in there, report that, oh, my gosh, I am so much more productive. I am getting so much more done. My brain fog is gone and I just am feeling like I am so on fire.

So I love it when women connect the dots of how we feed our bodies and how we fuel our bodies is going to determine how we feel and what we're able to get done and achieve. And I'm not about getting more done. I'm about being efficient of what we've got to get done, get it done so we have more time to rest, more time to de-stress, more time to relax for ourselves. And you can even plan these days.

When I am a guest on a podcast, or I am recording a podcast, I make sure that I'm setting myself up cognitively and mentally to be my sharpest and to be my best. And so those are days I will alter what I eat and alter my fasting protocol to meet the needs that I want, to get the goals that I want.

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Here's another thing. We know that certain types of Alzheimer's is being called diabetes type 3. Why is that? Well, when our blood sugar rises, we know that that's affecting the brain because the vasculature in the brain also has more blood sugar in it. And over time the brain becomes unable to respond to the insulin. It becomes insulin resistant. And when that happens, it starts to impair our memory and our learning.

Also, when we become insulin resistant in the brain, it leads to an aggregation of those toxic amyloid beta plaques, tau hyperphosphorylation and reduced autophagy. So going back to what I said about a benefit of fasting is that it regulates blood sugar, not only in the body but also in the brain. And it's going to prevent neurodegeneration. It's going to reduce the risk of this type of dementia.

And a lot of women really want to feel cognitively sharp for as long as they can. And so that's another reason I love intermittent fasting when done appropriately with the right type of macros and the right eating window.

The last one is, intermittent fasting helps banish sugar cravings. And this makes sense, because when you fill your plate with the correct macros, you will be burning fat. You won't be accumulating sugar. And when the body accumulates sugar, it's just like alcohol, it hits the reward center. The brain wants more. We want more sugar.

And so if we're fueling our bodies with ultra processed food, cakes, cookies, cereal bars, cereals and all these sugary snacks then we're also changing the gut microbiome. And it's going to be secreting things that are going to cause more sugar cravings. Just like having more alcohol causes more cravings for alcohol, having more sugar and ultra processed food is going to create more cravings for itself.

And so when you learn the macros you should be eating for your body weight and your goals, which is what I walk women through. You will have the benefit that not only will you feel full and satiated, you will feel full and satiated for longer periods of time and your microbiome begins to change

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and you start to notice that you don't have sugar cravings, so those cravings for sugar subside?

So, ladies, I just discussed five important benefits of doing a properly managed intermittent fasting protocol and the benefits that the body gets. I think this is one of the most effective tools women can embrace to lose body fat, to lose bra fat, to lose belly fat, to reduce their risk of insulin resistance, to decrease their risk of diabetes and heart disease and cancer. To become more productive, to improve their cognition and protect their brain health and to manage their sugar cravings.

And when I learned about this, I was like, "How can I not institute this healthy protocol into my lifestyle, and make it a lifestyle, not something, I'm on the wagon and off the wagon. But really instituting it in small steps, meeting myself where I'm at along the way to get better and keep improving."

And if you want my help, IF:45 For Women is still open. We just got started this week. Come join us over there if you feel called. I teach you exactly how to set up a protocol and the macros you should be eating for the goals that you want. Plus there's live calls, plus there's daily training, plus you get access to the workbooks and all of that is listed out on my website.

Or you can even come into EpicYOU. In that membership we are talking about how to lose weight the entire month. I am doing office hours this month inside of EpicYOU because I really want women to understand their bodies and what they should be doing no matter what their health goals are. And I know for a lot of women in the program right now, they are really wanting to lose fat. And so come join us. We'd love to have you. Alright, my friends, great seeing you this week and I will see you next week.

Thanks for listening to the *Health, Habits, and Epic Living* podcast. If you are ready to take the next step to improve your health, wellness, and lifestyle goals, head over to www.epicyou.com to check out my programs and to sign up for my free newsletter. Again that's E-P-I-C-Y-O-U.com.

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