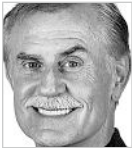


# What is intermittent fasting? Here’s how to get started



**Body Shop**  
Bryant Stamford  
Louisville Courier Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Recently I wrote a column about the benefits of “good” stress and the negative effects of “bad” stress, and I mentioned intermittent fasting along with exercise as examples of “good” stress. When I write about intermittent fasting, I always get a number of emails from readers who want to know more. They also complain that in a column I don’t provide enough information on intermittent fasting, like how to approach it, what are the physiologic/metabolic benefits, how does it help the body lose fat, etc. I realize this and it puts me in somewhat of a bind because each time I mention intermittent fasting, I cannot provide all the background information needed to be well informed. If I did, I would simply be repeating the same information over and over. Thus, I encourage readers to go online and access my many former columns on intermittent fasting to supply all the information you need. In addition, periodically, like today’s column, I will provide reviews and updates on intermittent fasting .

### What is intermittent fasting?

I have been promoting intermittent fasting for the past several years as I have personally benefitted greatly from it, plus lots of folks I have counseled have shown amazing positive effects as well. Thankfully, intermittent fasting is catching on and a 2024 survey indicates that 13% of Americans have adopted intermittent fasting as part of their ongoing lifestyle. What is intermittent fasting? It’s not a diet. Diets dictate “what” you eat and “how much.” In contrast, intermittent fasting emphasizes “when” you eat every day. It’s all about your eating pattern, shifting between set periods of time in which you eat, versus set periods of time in which you fast.

For example, research indicates that a schedule of 18-hours fasting and a 6-hour eating window (an 18:6 ratio) produces excellent results. But you can build toward this gradually, beginning with a 14:10 ratio. Try this for several weeks, adjusting to the discipline of not eating during fasted periods, then gradually add to the length of fasting. Ironically, although intermittent fasting is relatively new to Americans, it’s actually a state that is inherent to the human body. In other words, our distant ancestors lived with food scarcity, always forced to forage or hunt. Eating was unpredictable and in bad times not eating anything could last for long periods. It’s reasonable that those who could survive the worst circumstances passed that ability along and it became an important component of our gene pool. This means we are much better suited for the intermittent fasting lifestyle than we are for our three meals a day plus snacks approach. Our modern day lifestyle causes us to eat because we think “it’s time” to eat, and too often we are not hungry. I have often written that if we ate only when we are hungry we would not be an overweight society. What’s more, our common chronic diseases, including heart disease, stroke, cancer, Type 2 diabetes, etc. would be rare. **How does intermittent fasting work?** When you fast, your body is not taking in any energy and it has to depend on what it has in storage. First, it will tap into the glucose stored in the liver as glycogen. This can provide up to about 12 hours of energy, then the glucose is all used up, and that’s why your fasting period must extend well beyond 12 hours. Extended fasting forces the body to do something really helpful and healthy. It takes stored fat and makes ketones to be used for energy. In other words, you enter a state of ketosis, which reduces stored body fat. When you reduce stored fat, you reduce chronic inflammation in the



Intermittent fasting refers to an eating style where one eats within a specific time period and fasts the rest of the time. UVM MEDICAL CENTER

body, plus your body operates as a much more efficient metabolic machine. A critical consideration is the effect on insulin. Many research studies have shown that intermittent fasting reduces fasting insulin levels. This is important because when insulin is active in the bloodstream it promotes fat storage, whereas the absence of insulin promotes mobilizing fat as fuel. Our three-meals a day and snacking approach to eating stokes blood insulin levels constantly and is a main contributor to our epidemic of obesity. The key to success in keeping your insulin levels in check during fasting is to be “truly fasted” with nothing but water, black coffee, or unsweetened tea. No exceptions! **How do I start intermittent fasting?** A huge selling point initially for intermittent fasting is that you can continue to eat as you always have eaten, the same variety and amount. All you have to do is consume your typical diet in a restricted time frame. Despite not changing your diet, your body shifts to a much different and healthier metabolic state as described above.

Let me add that even though eating less is not your goal, the fasting lifestyle will probably cause you to reduce food intake, but you won’t be aware of it. This is much different from a typical diet in which you severely deprive yourself and sit around all day thinking of nothing but food. Eventually, over the initial weeks of adjustment to the intermittent fasting lifestyle, and gradually increasing the length of your fasting period, your health will improve and your body fat will shrink. What’s more, the changes can be greatly accelerated if you shift toward healthier foods and add some exercise to your lifestyle. In closing, always proceed with caution. There may be reasons why intermittent fasting is not for you. For example, intermittent fasting is not recommended for pregnant or breastfeeding women, young children, Type 1 diabetics, folks with a history of eating disorders, etc. With this in mind, it’s always a good idea to discuss lifestyle changes such as intermittent fasting with your doctor. *Reach Bryant Stamford, a professor of kinesiology and integrative physiology at Hanover College, at [stamford@hanover.edu](mailto:stamford@hanover.edu).*

## Abbey

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Mayor Mike Moore. “Abbey Road on the River brings people together, fills our city with joy, and gives us something to be proud of. It’s part of who we are now, and I’m thrilled it will continue for another decade.” Here’s what to know about the 2025 Abbey Road on the River music festival: **When and where is Abbey Road on the River?** The 2025 festival is planned for May 22-26 and will be at Jeffersonville’s Big Four Station Park. **Who is performing at Abbey Road on the River?** The 2025 festival will feature more than 200-plus acts including The Love Concert, Classicstone, The Jukebox Beatles from Puerto Rico, The LSB Experience, and Grammy winner and lead Guitarist for Wings, Laurence Juber.

### How much are tickets to Abbey Road on the River?

Single-day tickets start at \$35 and are available at [arotr.com](http://arotr.com), or at the SoIN Visitors Center, 228 Spring St., Jeffersonville, Indiana.

### What is the 2025 Abbey Road on the River schedule?

Here’s the daily schedule for the 2025 Abbey Road on the River festival:

- Wednesday, May 21: Free preview party, 6-11 p.m.
- Thursday, May 22: Gates at noon; music from 1-11 p.m.
- Friday, May 23, Saturday, May 24 and Sunday, May 25: Gates at noon; music from noon to midnight
- Monday, May 26: gates at noon; music from 1-11 p.m.

### What is new at the 2025 Abbey Road on the River?

This year’s highlights include a Beatles vs. Stones showdown, a theatrical, full-album performance of the LOVE album by fan-favorite band Classicstone, and an intimate concert by Grammy-winning guitarist Laurence Juber, formerly of Paul McCartney’s Wings. Attendees can also enjoy a “Baby



Crowds gather at the Belvedere to watch bands perform hits from the Beatles during the Abbey Road on the River music festival on May 22, 2015. MATT HERP/SPECIAL TO COURIER JOURNAL



Beth Iwanicki danced to the Pre-Amps at the 2024 Abbey Road on the River at the Big Four Station in Jeffersonville. SCOTT UTTERBACK/COURIER JOURNAL

you can Drive My Car Show” on Saturday and Sunday featuring vintage Mustangs, Chevelles, and GTOs from the

meayard, 115 W. Chestnut St., on Wednesday, May 21, from 6-11 p.m.

### What else can I do at Abbey Road on the River?

Attendees can join group sing-alongs, free guitar lessons and interactive art installations like the Abbey Road crosswalk replica and the colorful “Peace Tree.” There’s also a vendor market offering classic rock memorabilia, vinyl records, and original artwork. There are also 15 local food trucks and restaurants at the event, offering everything from smash burgers and burritos, to cold lobster sandwiches, BBQ, corn dogs, Asian dishes, Caribbean favorites, vegan options and even breakfast sandwiches.

### Where can I find more information on Abbey Road on the River?

More information on the 2025 Abbey Road on the River festival can be found at [arotr.com](http://arotr.com). *Reach features reporter Kirby Adams at [kadams@courier-journal.com](mailto:kadams@courier-journal.com).*