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Megan [00:00:06] Hi, everyone. It's Megan Ramos, and I'm here with my lovely co-host, Dr. Nadia Pateguana, for a new episode today where we're talking about the hot topic of extended fasting. How are you doing today, Nadia?

Nadia [00:00:19] Doing great Megan. How are you doing?

Megan [00:00:21] Good. And I'm happy that you and I are actually on the call together talking about extended fasting because this is something where I'll talk about it and they'll say, "But Coach Nadia said this," or you talk about it and they'll say, "Megan said this." And if you actually read between the lines, we're often saying the exact same thing. So I actually don't think there's anything our Community members would like any more is to hear you and I tackle the topic of extended fasting together.

[00:00:55] But I do have an announcement for today's podcast. So, The Fasting Method team and I have come together and we know that people always struggle in January. We start off the month with these really great ambitions, and it takes a little bit of fumbling in January to really get your footing straight. So we want to take advantage of everybody finding that solid ground again and really do a solid month of consistent fasting and good eating. So The Fasting Method team, we're coming up with Fasting February and, because February starts on a Tuesday this year, we're actually going to start Fasting February on January 31st. We're going to make it a five-week plan. At The Fasting Method, in our Community, what we do is weekly Group Fasting Challenges, but for the month of February, we're going to keep up those weekly Group Fasting Challenges, but we're going to have them really feed off of one another to the big build-up at the end of February, where we're going to support people doing extended fasts.

[00:02:13] Now, the definition of extended fast. If you're new to fasting, that might be doing a 24 or a 36-hour fast. If you've been fasting for a while, it might be a two-day fast, a three-day fast, or a five-day fast. So extended fasting is going to be relative to *you*, but regardless of what your goal is, whether it's a 36-hour fast or even a three-day fast for the end of February, there's lessons that we teach in the Group Challenges from week one, are going to build to week two, we're going to build to week three, and so on and so forth to really help you strengthen that fasting muscle and crush your fasting goal.

[00:02:54] And to help you build your fasting muscle, we're going to be doing a bonus lesson each week on nutritional habits; so things that you can add to your diet to help improve satiation, increase your energy and extend the duration of your fasts. Now, for those of you who don't know, if you're part of The Fasting Method Community, we do a live cooking demo every Tuesday with Coach Larry. And Coach Larry is actually going to be helping with this challenge, not only by creating the nutritional info that's going to go every week to help build your fasting muscle, but every cooking demo is going to be related to that nutrition lesson throughout the month of February. So you can learn why adding these foods to your diet is going to help strengthen your fasting muscle, help you reach your weight-loss goals. And then the day after the lessons release - so the lesson comes out on Monday - the day after, on Tuesday, you can actually cook along with Coach Larry, his lovely wife, Caitlin, and their daughter, Piper. They really make fasting and nutrition fun for the whole household and they're going to show you how to actually utilize these great foods in your regular meals. And they're all quick and easy meals because the cooking

demos, they're one hour long. They cook and they go through a whole process of doing food prep and everything. So it's a meal that you can replicate at home, on the go, one hour for cooking, for prepping, the food, for cooking the food, for getting it all set up and plated and ready to go. So all of the meals are less than one hour, so it's a great, great strategy, great fasting plan - Fasting February.

[00:04:42] And for coaching clients, if you become a coaching member, you get complimentary access to the Community. So if you're working with one of our coaches, you will get access to Fasting February in the Community, and all in our new app. So I'm super excited.

[00:05:01] But Nadia, let's circle back now to extended fasting.

Nadia [00:05:06] I am so excited and so relieved that I finally get to [laughs] deal with my bad reputation of not liking extended fasting, so I get to clear my name. And I'm going to make a mental note right now to use this particular podcast as a resource and reference every time that I hear somebody tell me that I don't like extended fasting. So get us started, Megan.

Megan [00:05:33] Well, I think what has sort of turned this into a hot topic was, it's just our human nature that, if something's good for us, we assume the extreme version of that must be better for us. So I think what Nadia and I saw, going back to 2016, 2017, was that fasting was actually starting to gain a lot of popularity. It was no longer this quiet, hush-hush thing that people were doing. It was now on the cover of weight-loss magazines, you were seeing it on news programs like Good Morning America. It became popular and people were learning about the deeper health benefits of fasting.

[00:06:13] So what Nadia and I saw was the shift that, "OK, if one day of fasting is good for us, then 360 days of fasting must be better for us," and we had a whole onslaught of coaching clients who just wanted to do five-day fasts back to back to back for like the end of time. That was what they were going to do for six months or until they lost 100 pounds. And that's just not sustainable. Physically, sometimes people feel awful. There's actual physical consequences sometimes if you're nutrient deficient in the first place, of not replenishing well enough, especially if you're not eating as great real quality foods and getting in those nutrients on those two days of the week that you are eating. And we saw people crash and burn left, right and center. You know, it was kind of a disastrous year for fasting, and it really kind of made us sort of struggle with how do we let people know when it's the right time to do an extended fast? Because there's definitely a time and a place to do an extended fast versus having people make extended fasting their base fasting protocol. So it's so important to remember that, you know, just because one day of fasting is good for us doesn't mean 360 days of consecutive fasting is going to be 360 times better for us.

[00:07:46] And I thought we could start this off by sharing a little bit about our own journeys. So I'm going to go first here. In six months, I lost 60 pounds, brought my hemoglobin A1C from 6.4% to 4.6% (so completely out of that diabetic range). I reversed fatty liver disease that I had had for over 15 years and polycystic ovarian syndrome that I had for 14 years. In six months.

[00:08:16] I started that six-month period doing two weeks of 18-hour fasts, followed by four weeks of 24-hour fasts, three times a week. And then I did a combination of 24

42-hour fasts, three times a week, more often doing two 42s and a 24. I did that for six months and I reached all of those health goals without doing one extended fast.

[00:08:41] Now I did my very first extended fast when we had asked a patient in the clinic to do an extended fast. This patient, she came in, she was gaining 10 pounds a month, she was on 110 units of insulin, she was losing her eyesight, she couldn't bend down to tie her shoes without losing her breath. She was in bad shape. And Jason said to her, "Margaret, let's try to do a seven-day fast." And I thought, "I can't coach Margaret through this unless I know what she's experiencing." So I did it with her, and Margaret actually went on to do another seven days. So my first seven-day fast went to 11 days and I ended it because it was my mother's birthday and we had a big celebratory meal for her birthday. I was pretty convinced I was going to die on the fourth day, but I didn't [laughs], and I ended up making it 11 days.

[00:09:34] But I never did that for my own health journey. I lost the weight, I reversed the disease, not doing extended fasts. So just because you can do an extended fast, doesn't mean that you need to. And that's the intention behind me sharing my journey.

[00:09:53] Now in maintenance, I'm in family planning mode, so my focus has shifted from fasting to micronutrient intake and really focusing on meal timing more so than anything. But until I started this family planning, I would do four extended fasts a year. They ranged from three to seven days, just depending on what was going on in my life at the time. And I always timed it with seasonal cleaning. So if I was doing spring cleaning, summer, fall, winter cleaning around my house, I would always try to do one of these longer fasts and I just thought of it as hormonal cleaning.

[00:10:32] You know, I would fly a lot, change time zones, and we would eat out at restaurants. You think you're getting a steak - that's great. What about the quality of that? Also, is it thrown on the grill that is drenched in vegetable oils that are highly insulinogenic? So even when you think you're doing the best you can when you're eating out, sometimes there are still things that are hidden, that sneak in there. So I would use these extended fasts quarterly to help with my system, and that's when I would use extended fasting throughout my maintenance journey. Nadia, what about you?

Nadia [00:11:05] All right, I'm sure glad that you got us started. But like Megan, so as I joked at the beginning, I do have this bad reputation. I don't even know where it came from, but I have this---I actually do know where it came from. I have this bad reputation for not liking extended fasting because I've often said to people that, for weight loss, people often do better with alternate-day fasting and throwing in an extended fast for the extra punch. So it always sounds to some people like I'm saying that, you know, shorter fasts are better than longer fasts for weight loss.

[00:11:35] But there's some background to this, and I'd like to share a little bit of my journey, just like Megan said. So just like Megan, I also reversed hypertension, diabetes in prediabetes at some point, and PCOS (had all the expressions of PCOS), and lost the weight by focusing on choosing real foods. Then it was really important to me to master TRE (time-restricted eating), full meals, no snacks. Eventually, I did do some alternate-day fasting and I very quickly got to my goal. So clearly that was a good plan for me, at that time. And it was very, very linear, at that particular time. In three or four months, I was able to---I didn't have a ton of weight to lose, but I had, you know, two-babies-worth of weight to lose. So there was weight. I've never been someone to jump on the scale very much. I've

always shared this in my groups, with my clients, and with everyone else. So I actually don't know how much weight I lost, but it was significant enough and all of these health concerns got reversed by figuring out real food, then TRE, and then alternate-day fasting.

[00:12:40] Like Megan, my very first extended fast, and I have done many and I love extended fasting. I think it is, as I've mentioned, the holy grail of healing. I think it's that extra punch for weight loss, if done appropriately and with the right preparation. I have never done an extended fast as a punishment, or as a healing or a recovery plan of a trip, or anything like that, because it doesn't work for me. First of all, if my insulin is high, meaning if I've eaten certain things, if I've gained weight, if I'm, you know, some health concern, it's very hard to do an extended fast.

[00:13:20] And then when people get into this sort of guilt and reward, I do have an issue with that. And there's a lot of white knucklers out there. You guys can just do it. You can just do these extended fasts. But you haven't addressed your eating, you haven't addressed your snacking, you haven't addressed TRE. So when you finish these extended fasts, you then go back to poor eating and snacking and grazing and then you have no, you know, you have no results to show for---and then, of course, fasting and extended fasting gets a bad rep. I love extended fasting so much that I don't want it to get a bad rep. I want it to be done appropriately.

[00:13:52] So my very first extended fast was actually, once I'd already reversed all of these health concerns---like Megan, I was already working at the clinic with Megan and Dr. Fung. My husband's very first extended fast---I can never talk about extended fasts without talking about my husband [laughter]. My husband's very first extended fast was a 12-day fast. He saw a video that had Megan and Jason talking about fasting. I had either started working with you guys or was about to start working with you guys. And he went, "Really? This is it?" Like it made so much sense to him that he started a fast and he very successfully and very easily. He still, to this day, does a ton of extended fasts, probably more than I wish that he did. And I can talk about that, again, in a little bit more detail in a bit. But that's what he did with my approval, my supervision, Megan's supervision. I think, if I remember this correctly.

[00:14:48] But I did not do any extended fasts until I was already in my reversal, maintenance state. And I do it because, again, I think a 72 is the holy grail and I try to do it as often as it fits my schedule and it makes sense to me. And it, like Megan said, it's usually every three months because I like the seasonal change. And I have to prep for it, meaning I've got to do a fat fast, I've got to really get my eating in order to be able to do an extended fast and to come out of it properly.

[00:15:19] Because what we hear a lot (and this is another, for another time, another topic maybe, and it's been on some Q&As), what we hear a lot is people saying, "Why does extended fasting cause bingeing?" Extended fasting, and any fasting, does not, and cannot, cause bingeing because it puts you in this low-insulin, optimal hormonal state. What causes bingeing is how you break your fast, so the foods that you eat after a fast. And if you go into fasting with this guilt and reward mentality, and if your only plan is extended fasting, then every time after an extended fast you eat poorly, you're going to have this huge insulin spike and that's going to cause binging and grazing. So it's not the fasting that's causing it, it's the eating. So you need to address the eating. As Coach Terri also says, it's a lot of food avoidance when people only do extended fasting. So there's a mindset and behavioral part of this that we all need to work on as well.

Megan [00:16:12] I feel that we could do a whole podcast, like an entire series, dedicated to extended fasting. So we're going to get kick-started with the discussion in today's Hot Topic episode. And what we're going to do now, for the remainder of the episode, is we're going to talk about where Nadia and I have seen extended fasting used wrongly and some side effects that have come out from doing too much of it. And then we're going to talk about when we've seen it used right. So you guys can help get a sense of our boundaries as to why you might hear Nadia or I recommend it to someone and then why you might hear us say, "Don't do it," to another person. It can be so confusing. So we're going to try to break this down for you in the rest of the episode today.

[00:17:03] Now, I'm going to talk about some of the things that I've seen, where just trying to do lots of back-to-back extended fasts has gone south. Once in the clinic, we had a patient who I'm going to title as 'processed food, plant-based'. So this patient ate a non-real-food diet that was all plant-based. So lots of potato chips, ice cream, like junk food, right? All of those things are plant-based. I saw someone on Facebook joke that a can of soda had a 'plant-based' label on it the other day. That's so ridiculous. And Nina Teicholz shared a photo of a bag of popcorn that said, 'plant-based' popcorn. I'm like, Is there non-plant-based popcorn? I don't understand!

[00:17:56] So this person, I mean, she was really trying to learn what her diet was. But at baseline, when she came into the clinic the first time, her skin was gray, absolutely gray. And she had brain fog like you wouldn't believe. And she blamed it all on the insulin resistance. And of course, there's a contributing factor there. But she was hell-bent that her base fasting protocol was going to be a five-day fast every single week. This woman did a five-day fast for like two months on end, every single week. The end result was weight gain. Weight gain. How can someone do 120 hours of consecutive fasting every single week and gain weight? Her body was under extreme stress. This is a woman who was so nutrient deficient.

[00:18:53] So we're dealing with two epidemics here in North America. You know, Jason will always comment how we're so overnourished, meaning that we have plenty of fat for fuel. But we're also suffering from an epidemic of undernourishment, malnourishment because the foods, the processed foods, that we're eating have no nutrients in them, or very little nutrients. So we end up with these vitamin deficiencies and other micronutrient deficiencies.

[00:19:21] So this patient, we ended up doing a bunch of vitamin, mineral tests on her and everything low, low, low - red flags all over the place. So we took two months. We focused on two to three meals a day. We talked about radically changing her diet, supplementing where appropriate, with things like vitamin B12. We're not a huge fan of just taking lots of supplements for the sake of supplements, but there is a time and place for targeted supplementation amongst individuals. So it was really targeted. We built back up her levels. Her skin changed; her skin went from gray to pink. It was just so radical. You know, even her eyes were so glossy in that baseline. But eventually, you could tell she was really connecting; a lot of that mental fog had totally lifted. She was a different person. And then she got into fasting and the weight started to come off. Now we went to those three 42s - sort of that gold standard - where we would work with a postmenopausal women for weight loss and that went really well for her. And then in the future, when she did eventually cycle in some five-day fasts, she lost weight rather than gaining weight.

[00:20:37] Around the same time, an online coaching client I was working with, she was so motivated at the start. She had just got diagnosed with pre-diabetes and she was going to kick that prediabetes to the curb and lose weight. And she had seen, like on Facebook, someone else do a bunch of five-day fasts and get results. And she said, "I am doing this. I'm doing this. This is what I'm going to do." But we've got to understand that motivation comes and goes in waves; it is not dependable. So at the beginning, you know, I talked to her about social times and, you know, it impacting her lifestyle. How are these factors going to affect that? But she was too glossed over with the motivation.

[00:21:19] And I get it. I've been there. You know, I've had my moments of motivation too, where I'm going to sacrifice all of the things to make this one thing work. But it's not sustainable.

[00:21:30] So sure enough, several weeks into trying this, she was crashing, burning, feeling so angry at herself for crashing, burning. Bingeing on junk food because that's how bad she felt about herself and just became so resentful towards fasting. She disappeared for like three months. She came back to me. She was now a full blown diabetic, not a pre-diabetic. She had gained tons of weight and she realized that, "OK, like I just, I took this too far." It really wasn't sustainable after that motivation had subsided.

[00:22:08] So there is a time and a place definitely to do this back-to-back fasting. But to say that's going to be your base protocol, there's other things you need to consider.

[00:22:19] Now, for those of you who are interested in nutrient testing. If you're in North America, there's a company called SpectraCell and they do micronutrient testing, and it's something that I do every year myself. But it's something that, even when I live in Toronto, I would go to Buffalo to do every six months because it's just so insightful as to maybe where you need sort of targeted help. So this way you don't go out and buy a bunch of supplements that can all help with the symptom that you're experiencing, spend thousands of dollars, never be able to be compliant and take them consistently, and maybe suffer from some side effects or long term consequences of taking supplements you don't need. So I'm a really big proponent of targeted supplementation, but you've got to do the lab tests to know what that is. And I think it's a great idea if you're someone who's out there struggling with your fasting journey if you just want to sort of optimize your health, optimize your weight loss. I think it's a good investment to make.

[00:23:21] So Nadia, where have you seen extended fasting flop and fail? I know you mentioned your husband had sort of a journey.

Nadia [00:23:28] Actually, my husband is a very positive story, and I'll get to his story because I do think that that initial 12-day fast (which was very good for him), I think that it triggered and it motivated him to focus on his health to this day. My concern with him is that he likes extended fasting so much that I do think that he does too much of it and not enough of alternate-day fasting for his specific goal.

[00:23:50] But I have seen, I mean I'll, not to add on to these crazy stories you shared, but I mean, there's so many. There is one that, like you said, that one year in clinic, there's this one guy, young guy in his thirties. He comes in and he's like, "Hey, my name is so-and-so, and I'm on a 36-day of a fast," and that started to become like every second person. And I would just go, "Whoa!" And that was my reaction. And this particular guy, young guy, late 30s, had gone to the doctor. Doctor diagnosed him with metabolic syndrome. He had

everything - the guy had hypertension, dia---out of nowhere because he wasn't expecting it because he was so young, but he was overweight. I wouldn't say morbidly obese, but he was definitely obese. And he was Asian, he had hypertension, diabetes, high uric acid, the central obesity, his lipids were out of control, his triglycerides were horrendous. I mean, it was just a nightmare story and the doctor wanted to prescribe---I don't remember what his A1C was, but it was high. And the doctor basically gave him the script of a million medications. And he was a young guy and he got scared. He went online; he found us. Like my husband, he saw a couple of videos and he was sold on fasting. This guy, if I'm not mistaken, was an engineer or something, super smart. I know that he absorbed that information and he thought, "If one day of fasting is good for me, then 360 days of fasting must be better." So when he came to see me for the first time, which was our intake session. It wasn't a coaching session in clinic, it was the first day where we would sign people up, get their medical records, and whatnot. So I didn't have an opportunity to even address this properly. So the guy goes out and he's on the 36th day, I forget how many days he fasted, but we didn't have a chance to really do anything with him. And I know that he then, after that extended fast, he ate for a few days (I don't know what) and then he went on and did another super long fast. And he came to see me. The second time he came to see me, he was not happy because he had done that 30-something-day fast, and then another 18 or 16-day fast, or something crazy like that and unfortunately, he had gout. He developed severe and very painful gout.

[00:26:06] Now, fasting doesn't cause gout. And this is a whole other topic. Even in our forum, we had somebody ask about this yesterday. But of course, it can trigger gout in somebody who has a history of gout or very, very high uric acid levels. So you have to be very cautious about these things because, as you're burning through these fat cells and all this is happening, and this crazy extended fasting that this guy was doing, right, back-to-back, it triggered this. And he'd never had gout before, but he had these super high uric acid levels. It triggered this very painful and scary concern. Of course then, he went from, "Fasting 360 days a year is the best," to, "Fasting sucks," right? And I never saw him again. This is one of those guys and one of those cases where, because by the time he came back the second time, there was so much going on and he was so upset. And we were doing group fasting at the time, so it was a totally different setup. And the guy didn't even do your training day that you did. It was just too much.

[00:27:05] So you can see how extended fasting, if done poorly, can lead, it's rare, but it can lead to some concerning things. And for that reason, I think---you and Jason have written so much about it. Jason wrote that old blog post called 'The #1 Rule of Fasting', I mean, there's a lot of information out there. So I could share a million stories. I actually think my husband's 12-day fast was great. He had such great results. And he lost more weight than he ever had in his life doing anything, and he felt better than he ever had. There was so much goodness that came out of that 12-day fast, to be totally honest. I just wish, still wish (and he's doing more of that now, this year particularly), that he would follow those up with more consistent extended fasts. But he's one of those guys that, once he starts fasting, he just wants to continue. Once he starts eating, he just wants to continue. Like many of you. So this is what we need to address, wouldn't you say, Megan?

Megan [00:28:01] Yeah, absolutely. I'll share an extended fast success story. I'm going to circle back to Margaret. Marge again, she was a patient that Jason asked for the very first time to do a seven-day fast. So the one that I said that I joined. This woman, she came into the clinic and she said, "I don't want to live anymore. Like, my quality of life is so awful. I'm such an awful companion. I'm such an awful mother. I'm just so miserable." She had

been diabetic for over 34 years. And at the time I was 30-years old, so she had been diabetic for longer than I had been alive. She had been on insulin forever and it was just causing so many health issues. She was going blind, she had cardiovascular issues. She spent her entire life going from one doctor to another doctor, and she couldn't enjoy a second of it.

[00:28:56] So here is this woman who had been diabetic for 34 years and who had been on insulin for the majority of that time. And she ended up doing a medically supervised 21-day fast with Jason and I in the clinic. So Jason was monitoring all her medications. We saw her twice a week in the clinic. She did her blood work, she had round-the-clock access to us during this time. And at the end of that fast, she had been off of insulin, all of her insulin, for several days. We stopped the insulin, Jason stopped it around day 14. This woman, she resumed eating again and didn't need insulin. She had slightly elevated normal blood glucose levels. They weren't as low as when she was fasting, but she didn't need it. This was a woman who literally felt like she was on death's door, and here she was, getting her life back.

[00:29:54] And of course, she can't keep up that type of fasting forever. She went to alternate-daily fasting. Her husband joined her, and she's losing weight. Her blood sugars are getting better. Her A1C went from over 13 to under 6. She's coming off her blood pressure medication, she's coming off of oral diabetic medications, her eyesight's improving. Her ophthalmologist, her eye doctor's asking what she's doing and wants to be a patient of ours himself, per her type 2 diabetes. So even though she did that initial bit of fasting, but the diabetes was so severe, and she was literally, her eyesight was hanging on, her kidney function was hanging on, everything was just hanging by a thread. And this longer fast really helped sort of suffocate that insulin so low, break so much of that insulin resistance cycle that was going on, that we were able to stabilize her within a few weeks and were able to make consistent progress doing these intermittent periods of fasting with the alternate-daily fasting plan. And occasionally we would cycle in another five or seven-day fast.

[00:31:08] And typically, you know, it's usually once every four to eight weeks that, if you can do an extended fast, we would recommend that you probably do, if you want to use it on a more regular basis for your fasting protocol. And there has been a period of time where doing a couple of back-to-back five-day fasts, even in my own journey, help someone in that last little bit of weight loss struggle. So like when I was at the last 10 pounds, alternate-daily fasting, 72-hour fasts, it wasn't doing it. And I actually did a few weeks of back-to-back five-day fasts. I planned around it. It was only for an isolated period of time. I wasn't making it my weight-loss program for the whole 80 pounds that I ended up losing. It was just to help me for a finite period of time, drop that last little bit of weight. And it worked. I reached my weight-loss goal towards the end of the second week, and I ended up doing another week or two just to really reset my body-weight set point. And it did the trick.

[00:32:16] So it wasn't something that I aspired to do for a long period of time. Actually, I did it in sort of a month of February, I was back in Toronto. It wasn't a socially happening month. If it had been then maybe I wouldn't have done it. You know, it's important to make sure you're fitting fasting into your lifestyle so you don't end up resenting it. But I had this clear period of time. I had this 10 pounds. I knew that I could drop that in a month. I knew I could obliterate it. So for a short period of time, it worked well. And we replicate this now. For women of all ages and men of all ages, for that last little bit of weight, sometimes doing

a few of these back-to-back extended fasts is just the golden ticket that is needed to really boot those last pounds. But it's a finite strategy.

[00:33:05] So it's a strategy that we'll often use sort of back-to-back if someone is more critical at the beginning, as long as there's medical monitoring there, or it's just really stubborn to get to that weight loss moving and there's no nutritional reason that we suspect why we can't get that needle moving. Or at the end, but it's these short-term strategies. And again, these periodic cleanses like I do, these seasonal cleanses. Jason does an annual one. My lifestyle is a little bit more hectic, so I would do a seasonal one. And that's when we typically recommend extended fasting.

[00:33:44] Nadia, what about you? When do you recommend it to your clients?

Nadia [00:33:48] I, surprisingly enough, recommend it quite a bit because there are amazing and unparalleled type of benefits that you get from extended fasting, but again, at the right time and right place. I work with women a lot, and so I teach women how to fit extended fasting into their menstrual cycle, if they're premenopausal, and how to fit it into their monthly calendar if they are post-menopausal. And so this conversation comes up---at some point, people do want to learn and prep to doing some extended fasts. So whether that's a three-day fast, a five-day, even a seven or ten-day fast on occasion.

[00:34:23] So for premenopausal women, I often recommend, once they have learned all about TRE - full meals, no snacks - once we've talked about the right time of the day to eat, once we've talked about food, sleep and stress management are very big, especially in the female community. So once I feel like that's all sorted out, people are usually eager to talk about what's the best protocol for weight loss? So I'll share then that alternate-day protocols that I like. And these are based on a 60:40 percentile split between eating and fasting most of the month.

[00:34:54] But for premenopausal women, within your cycle, you will notice (if you've had a bit of experience) that the first half of your cycle (so once your period starts till about halfway through), which is about when women ovulate (if you're premenopausal), that it is easier to fast. And so if you're going to throw in an extended fast, that's the time of the month. It's not only easier to fast pre-ovulation, it is also safer because, if you're premenopausal, you may or may not be trying to conceive. And so, if you're trying to conceive, as Megan mentioned earlier, if you're in that family planning stage, then no, you don't want to do overnight fast or any type of extended fasting post ovulation. If you're not trying to conceive, it starts to get a little bit more challenging anyway to do extended fasting post ovulation because of your hormonal levels changing. So half of your cycle, you're more estrogen dominant. The other half of your cycle, you're more progesterone dominant.

[00:35:46] So you want to sort of not only fit fasting into your life, but you want to fit it into your cycle to make it easier for yourself. So I usually recommend extended fasting during the first half, if you're going to throw that in. And I always remind people, it's that extra punch. Some months you might be able to do it, some months you might not. The important thing is that you follow that up with a proper balance between eating and fasting for the remainder of the month. And that's what I wish my husband would do.

[00:36:08] For postmenopausal women and for men, I just think, if you want to do an extended fast once a month, you could do a three to five-day once every three months.

There are people that do even longer once a year. There are people that do it even longer. Again, you may or may not need medical supervision, depending on what's going on. I won't repeat what Megan already said. You know, how many times did I see this in clinic, with Megan and Jason? Somebody would come in and you just look at their history, look at their trials with diet. They were just in such a place, where fasting was, extended fasting was the only way to go. And how many times did I see Megan and Jason say to this person, train them appropriately. They got to come into our lab and do lab work. They were medically supervised and they would just say, "Just start a fast." It was the only way to get the ball rolling for some of these people.

[00:36:54] But in my case, I am not in that setting anymore. I recommend an extended fast at the beginning of a woman's cycle, followed up by alternate-day. For postmenopausal women and for men, fit it into your schedule. Look at your calendar, pick a week of the month, prep for it with some fat fasting. I talk about this a lot with premenopausal women, during the week of PMS (premenstrual week), the week just before your period, do some fat fasting. Don't feed that insulin beast. I know you're probably craving and more likely to want to graze. That's the time where you have to learn about the insulin beast and how to tame or starve that beast, so fat fast. And that fat fasting, once your period starts, is a great prep. You're going to feel like it's so much easier to fast. So that's what I - in my daily practice, in my daily community with women - that's what I usually recommend.

Megan [00:37:45] Awesome. Thank you, Nadia.

[00:37:48] So we want to wrap up today's podcast by giving our top extended fasting tip. And I had one planned and, now that we've been talking about this, I actually have two. So I'm sorry, everybody. [laughs]. But, two.

[00:38:05] The first one is, you hear us say so often that it's not how you eat between Christmas and New Year's, but how you eat and fast between New Year's and Christmas that matters. It's great when you do these periodic extended fasts. If you can, you probably should. But they're not necessarily doing a great job at moving the needle significantly towards your goals. So while it's great that you do these extended fasts, what really counts is the fasting that you do in between. Those consistent alternate-daily fasts. Those are the ones that propel you towards your goals. We've seen it time and time again. Someone starts the year. They're going to do their extended fasts all of the time, and then they end the year no healthier than at the beginning versus someone who commits to a solid alternate-daily fasting protocol that uses extended fasts here and there. So just because you're someone who does do an extended fast every four to eight weeks, or so on and so forth, it's really what you do in between those extended fasts that's going to determine your success. So sticking with some of these alternate-daily fasts, shorter intermittent fasts, longer intermittent fasts, consistency with those is really what's key.

[00:39:19] Now, my tip that I came in here to say is about hydration. Most people think that during an extended fast, they don't need to worry about anything for the first two days of the fast. And, you know, day three is usually the day where a lot of people will start to physically struggle, more so than mentally struggle. And then they start breaking out the fasting tools and aids and start paying attention to how much salt and magnesium that they're having. If you want to avoid that third-day, feeling-sluggish period, it's best to focus on the sodium and magnesium starting on day one. Like that morning, you wake up on day one of your fast, put a pinch of salt in your water, make sure to take your magnesium. that night before you go to bed. By doing that before, you're going to prevent feeling awful on

day three and it's going to make it so much easier for you to do these longer fasts. When you start the fasts, those first three days is when your insulin is going to drop the most. And when your insulin drops, your body will release excess water that that insulin that you once had in your system was retaining. And through that water loss, you're going to lose a lot of the sodium and magnesium. And that's why you often feel like garbage come the third day of your fast and you can't sleep at night. So if you want to avoid that, start replenishing from the moment you start losing.

[00:40:45] What can make or break an extended fast for me, even though I've done now dozens of them, is how I do in those first 48 hours with my salt and magnesium. So be more mindful about it at the start. And if you are, you'll actually require less of it as your fasting goes on, not more of it. So people don't do that at the start, then they try to overcompensate, and then they feel awful for a few days till their system catches up. It's just not worth the headache. Start it from day one. Keep feeling good the whole time. Keep making sure you're doing everything you can to get a good night's sleep through an extended fast, and it will make your life a lot easier when you do them.

[00:41:25] So Nadia, what's your top tip?

Nadia [00:41:27] All right. So now that you've said all of that, which is extremely important about hydration and whatnot. I want to say that, if you can safely do an extended fast, do it, so long as you feel well, keep going.

[00:41:41] But my tip is, start planning how you're going to break that fast. When you're fasting, especially when you're doing extended fasts, you naturally go into hunting mode. It's normal to be hungry at times. It's normal to start thinking about food. It's normal to start looking up recipes. That's hunting mode, right? I mean, this is our way of hunting. After, especially if you're doing extended fasts, after day three, this day that Megan just talked about, you do start to feel a whole lot better. And the funny thing is that your appetite seems to change; you now start to crave real food. A lot of people report craving or desiring steak and vegetables. And so all of these things that you maybe didn't desire even all that much before, your cravings do (for sugar and processed food) seem to go away.

[00:42:36] So how you break your fast is going to determine, as I mentioned earlier, how you feel after that fast, how the next few hours are going to go, how the next few days are going to go. So plan accordingly. Remember that, after an extended fast, any food is going to taste great. So don't reward yourself, quote-unquote, with processed stuff, high-sugar, high-carb, high-insulin foods because that's going to create that spike that we talked about before, that binging, and you're just going to lose all the gains of that amazing fast. So if you can do it, go for it, but plan how you're going to break your fast appropriately. That salad, or whatever it is that you choose to eat, that steak if you eat meat, it's going to taste like the best food you've ever eaten, that salmon, whatever that is. So choose wisely. Break your fast appropriately. That's what I want to leave you guys with for today.

Megan [00:43:29] Thank you, Nadia, and thank you to everyone who's listening. If you're a TFM member, Community member, or a coaching client, we do have pre-group meetings. We have over 30 of them a week and we offer meetings dedicated to extended fasting strategies, with Coach John and Coach Lisa on our team. So if you're in the Community, make sure you take advantage. Hop into those group meetings, ask your questions, hear the strategies other people are doing. Make sure that you're getting organized for your

extended fast, you have a good breakfast plan. Coaches Lisa and John will be able to guide you towards what it is that you need to do and answer your questions.

[00:44:11] And again, if you're a coaching client, you have access to the Community and can join those meetings. And well, we look forward to seeing everybody in the Community for Fasting February, as we build up our fasting muscle this month.

[00:44:23] So thank you, everybody, and happy fasting.

Nadia [00:44:25] Bye, everyone.