

Fasting & Fasts

Origins:

From gothic „*fastan*“ (tightly holding on to, to observe, to watch over)

→ holding on to renunciation, to be sensitive, to watch oneself towards self-awareness

Fasting can mean to reduce/renounce the intake of food or drinks in general, or the intake of only certain substances, especially toxic substances such as alcohol, coffee, sugar or meat, but then it is likely to be named “diet”.

As fasting always is accompanied with elements abstinence or austereness it is a form of asceticism (Greek “*askein*”: *to practice, to apply* a form of teaching oneself, in order to obtain virtues)

General:

Fasting and Dieting is a strong tool for **cleansing, healing and strengthening**.

Fasting is something that is quite natural, since nature has times of growing and times of harvesting.

Fasting/Dieting is not only an effective cleansing and healing process for the physical body but it also can serve the awareness and the healing of our psyche.

Therefore fasting always has been and still is part of many cultures and religions and it is executed in many variations. Fasting has been ritualized during certain times of the year.

However, it is **not recommended to start** a fast **indiscriminately**, and should be **supervised by a doctor or a health practitioner**, at least if you fast for the first time.

Mono diet vs. total fast

In the teachings of Kundalini Yoga we suggest to go on a Mono diet rather than completely eliminating food, especially because of those useful healing properties that certain aliments and foods have, and because it is much safer to do this on your own.

Preparation / Moderation / Supervision for a fast/diet:

(*Preparation*) Prepare yourself before you go on a fast or on a diet and make sure to have the **capacity**, the **time** and **proper health conditions** needed for this special time (*of Moderation*). If you are not clear about your condition you should consult a doctor/healer (*Supervision*).

Start preparations with

- **Changing the diet** 1 or 2 days before the fast into light meals like rice and pasta, light vegetables, fruits instead of foods like potatoes or carrots, etc.
Especially reducing/eliminating the intake of meat/fish before the fast/diet.
- **Eliminating junk food**
- **Mentally tuning yourself in** to another state that will be more sensitive, requires more of your attention and will be just different from what you know as ‘normal’.
- **Tell people** that you are going on a fast. Keep in touch with others

Trial Fast / Diet

- Start with fasting just for one meal or two.
- Whenever you feel comfortable with eating light or fasting/dieting for a day or two then you may consider yourself ready to fast for a longer period of time.

Fasting/Dieting is cleansing

Fasting is a cleansing and healing process for the body, it cleans the stomach, the intestines and therefore enhances the detoxification processes in your physical body.

But fasting/dieting is also always also a mental and emotional purifying. Many people use food to oppress and prevent or to distract themselves from their own feelings.

All kinds of emotions like anger, negativity be released during a fast/diet.

A recommended day to do one-day fast/diet or to start a longer period to fast is the **11th day after new-moon**.

Fasting & Fasts

Breaking the fast/diet

First of all we can recognize that **every breakfast is supposed to be the break of a little fast.** This reinforces the yogic lifestyle of **not eating too late** (after 6 p.m.) in the evening. Then the body can digest the food while still awake and the organs get a chance to rest properly during sleep.

Don't break a fast with a feast!

If you break a long fast, do so very slowly. It requires a lot of self-discipline. Be very kind and gentle to your body; it needs to be awakened from a long abstinence. Maybe it's helpful if you make a quite strict plan that you want to follow to break the fast. Stomach is diminished, intestines don't have the condition that is required for a proper metabolism. Your entire system is very sensitive to any kinds of intake and absorption. Also now you are just more clean and the ability to absorb substances is enhanced. Pizzas or meat can wait until you have gained full capacity to digest again, otherwise you may suffer great pain. There are reports of people in emergency rooms for not breaking the fast properly. Discipline yourself and your body will thank you.

The longer you fast, the longer it will take you to go back to normal nutrition. This may range from one or two days up to a week or two if you return from a very long fast, which could have lasted more than 30 days.

Side-effects and some results of fasting/diet

You may want to get away from consuming junk food or unhealthy substances, and stay away from them. For this, fasting/dieting is a great method and support.

Your awareness for food is sensitized and you will not feel the craving for what your body and mind was longing for before you have started the fast. But changes and improvements may come slowly and gradually, so it is possible that you may want to repeat the fast/diet regularly.

Common Diets suggested in Kundalini Yoga

Mung Beans & Rice Diet:

- Suggested time: 30 days:
- Positive effects on kidneys, colon, digestive organs (if you are not able to digest properly)

Green Diet:

- Suggested time: 40 days:
- Eat only green foods: salads, steamed greens, avocados, sprouts, mung beans
- Positive effects: alkalines the body, losing weight, clearing skin, cleanses liver,...

Others:

Fruit Fast, Melon Diet, Banana Fast, Rejuvenating Diet (only fruits, vegetables, nuts)

More results and what fasting can do for you:

- an increased sense of harmony and humility
- a boost of awareness inwardly as well as outwardly
- an enhancement of will power (may prepare you for special challenges).
- May help you during periods of grief because of a death and any other kind of loss.
- May lead to a gain of psychological and social control, power (example of Mahatma Gandhi fasting as a form of protesting, any kind of Hungerstrike)
- Deceleration or slowing down of ageing processes, therefore higher life expectancy.
- A great help to reduce the weight on a sustained basis

Fasting at what age?

- Until the age of 18 years you can/should virtually eat anything. Fasts are not recommended.
- Between the age of 18-36 you still can intake any food but the (undesired) effects will show later.
- Between the age of 36-54 you should reduce your amount of food by 1/3.
- From age 54 on you should again reduce your intake by 1/3. Your metabolism is slowing down significantly.

This means that starting from age 18 on is the optimum time to start practicing fasts/diets.

Fasting & Fasts

Healing Fast:

General:

- Classical healing fast means abstinence of any food, so that there will be no digestion.
- Drinking light drinks like water, tea (no black tea), light juices for a diversion of taste.
>> strict abstinence from coffee, alcoholic beverages, or any drugs/stimulants.
- Living on emergency program, the program which uses the inner supply only from body resources, is a extreme experience and it may change your life.
- A healing fast starts with cleaning the intestines by taking sodium sulfate with water or by using a clyster.

Essentials:

- Good health condition
- Good preparation (learn about it, read about it, be supervised...)
- Set the right goals (start with only a few days, include meditation, see it as sacred act).
- Disciplined and adequate breaking of fast!!

During the fast:

- Take it easy in the beginning, your system needs to adjust to the fast. Take rests
- Life is simple: You just don't eat. No other rules to follow
- Surprise: You won't feel any hunger, and you will have lots of energy available (since you don't have to digest).
- Cleansing of intestines with clyster once in a while (every 3-4 days), otherwise toxication.
- Meditate on your own sacrifice for something that is more than just you.
Use the highly sensitive state.
- Engage in Physical activities, sports: Keep muscle-tone through exercising and instead burn the fat.
- Consciously take rests
- You will have a lot more time available to you because you don't have to deal with:
thinking about what to eat, going shopping for food, preparing the food, cleaning dishes, etc... YOU
MAY WANT TO USE THAT EXTRA TIME WISELY
- Enjoy this most energetic process.
- Don't isolate from the world. Try to stay in contact with others, your family, at work.

Breaking the fast

- Attention: the rule of "not eating" is now over.
- This is the most difficult stage of the fast.
You will feel the craving for food, the body juices are activated again and you go back to normal program of external supply.
- It is very recommended to make a plan for what you want to eat while slowly building up the digestion and the metabolism. Then stick to that plan.
- Go shopping for the foods that you need to break the fast. Get health food, your body and soul will be thankful!

Appendix:

You will find basic information in the internet.

There are many great books written about this topic.

Special classes and fasting courses are provided.

There are certain physicians who recommend and supervise fasts, also there are hospitals specialized in providing special healing fasting cures.