

FASTING & AUTOPHAGY

QUICK-START GUIDE



Viorel Simac

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How to Trigger Your Body's Natural Self-Cleansing System
Safely, Naturally, and with Faith

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MEDICAL DISCLAIMER

This guide is for educational purposes only. It does not constitute medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always consult a qualified healthcare professional before starting any fasting protocol, especially if you have existing health conditions. The author is not liable for individual outcomes.

1. A Personal Note

For 23 years, I tried to fast — and failed every single time at the 40-hour mark. I suffered through respiratory infections, chronic fatigue, and eventually a life-threatening urinary tract infection that conventional medicine said could only be treated with antibiotics or surgery.

Out of desperation, and with faith that God designed the human body to heal itself, I pushed past that wall. My first successful water fast lasted 5 days. My fourth lasted 14 days — and the infection that had plagued me for years disappeared completely and permanently.

By 2025, I completed a 40-day water fast at home, while continuing working full-time. That experience, combined with my 12 years as a nutrition researcher, my PhD in Food Technology, and my work as a holistic therapist, forms the foundation of everything in this guide.

This is not theory. This is lived science, grounded in faith, tested in real life. Welcome to the journey.

"Your body was designed to heal. Fasting is not deprivation — it is cooperation with God's design."

— Viorel Simac

2. What Is Autophagy?

Autophagy (from the Greek autos = self, phagein = to eat) is one of the most powerful natural healing processes encoded in your cells. It is your body's internal recycling and cleansing system — activated during periods of nutritional deprivation.

When you fast, your body stops using incoming nutrients to run cellular operations. Instead, it turns inward. It identifies damaged proteins, dysfunctional mitochondria, misfolded molecular structures, and pathogens lurking inside cells — and breaks them down for reuse or elimination.

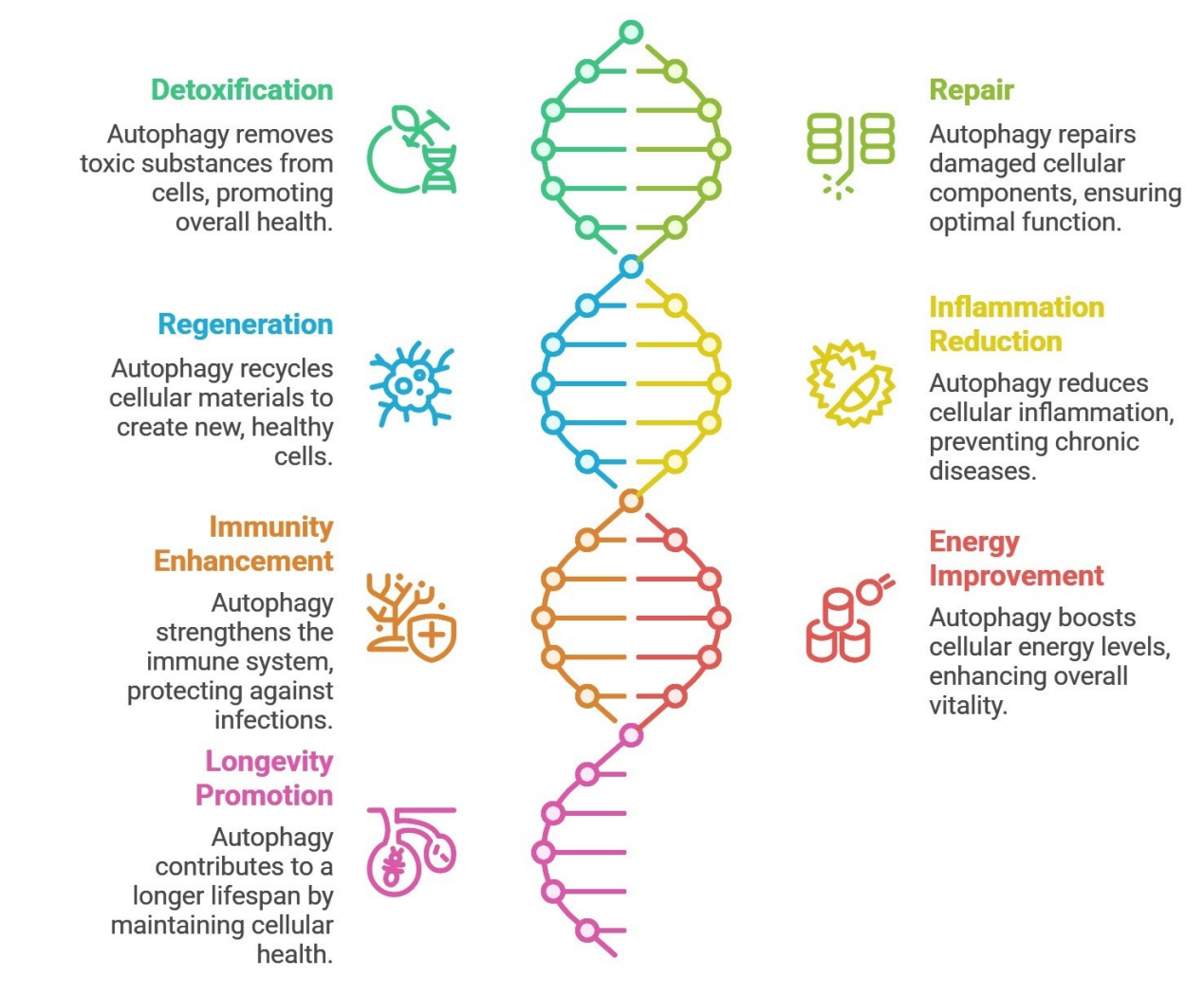
In 2016, Japanese biologist Yoshinori Ohsumi received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his discovery of the mechanisms underlying autophagy. This landmark recognition elevated therapeutic fasting from "alternative health" to mainstream biological science.

What Autophagy Does for You

Anti-Aging	Clears cellular "junk" that accumulates with age — slowing visible and internal aging processes.
Brain Health	Removes damaged neural proteins; linked to reduced risk of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.
Immunity	Eliminates intracellular pathogens (bacteria, viruses); strengthens immune surveillance.
Metabolic Reset	Improves insulin sensitivity, reduces chronic inflammation, supports healthy weight regulation.
Cancer Prevention	May reduce the accumulation of pre-cancerous cell mutations by clearing damaged cells before they proliferate.

Energy Renewal	Recycled cell components are converted into usable energy, contributing to the clarity and lightness many fasters feel.
Spiritual Clarity	Many people report heightened mental clarity, reduced emotional reactivity, and a deeper sense of spiritual presence during fasting — consistent with centuries of faith-based fasting traditions.

Autophagy's Cellular Renewal



3. When Does Autophagy Begin?

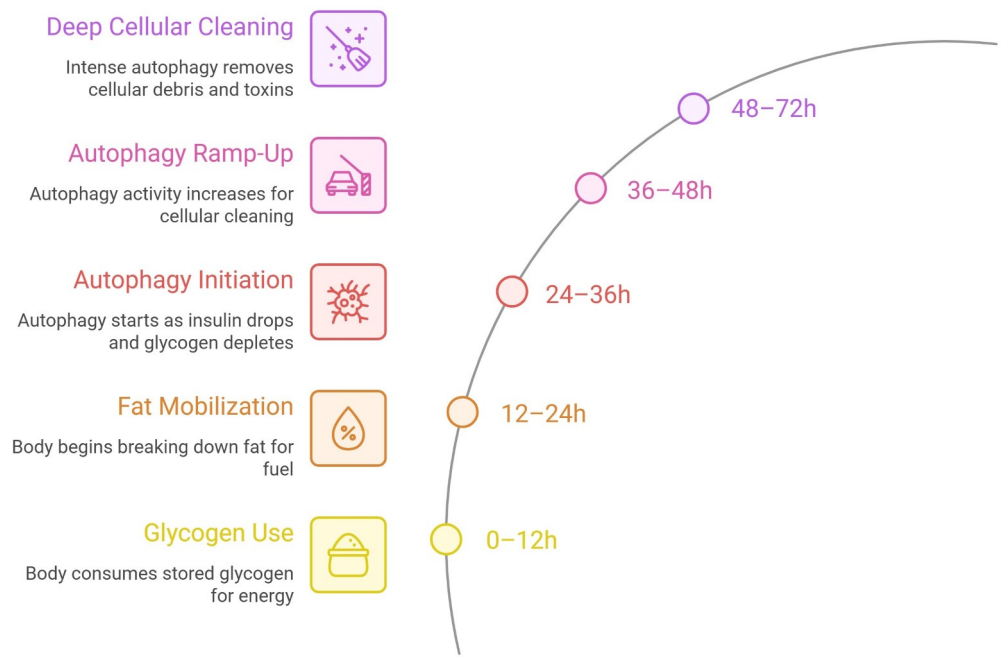
Autophagy is not a switch — it's a dial. It exists at baseline levels in your body all the time, but fasting dramatically amplifies it. Here is a general timeline based on available research:

12–18 hours	Glycogen (stored sugar) begins to deplete. Insulin levels drop. The metabolic shift toward fat burning begins.
18–24 hours	Ketosis begins in many individuals. Initial autophagy signals activate. Hunger may intensify, then paradoxically subside.
24–36 hours	Autophagy markers measurably rise. The body actively begins cellular cleanup. This is when many people experience the first "light" feeling.
36–48 hours	Deep autophagy territory. The immune system undergoes partial reset. Old immune cells are cleared and replaced.
48–72 hours	Peak autophagy in many tissues. Growth hormone rises significantly (up to 5x baseline), supporting muscle preservation and tissue regeneration.
72+ hours	Stem cell regeneration processes activate. The body continues deeper systemic repair — organs, gut lining, immune system, neural tissue.
7–14+ days	Extended fasting research (Valter Longo, MD Anderson) indicates deeper immune regeneration and metabolic reprogramming.
40 days	My personal experience and many faith-based fasting traditions (including Biblical fasting) suggest profound physical, mental, and spiritual transformation — though this requires careful medical supervision.

Important Note on Individual Variation

These timelines are averages. Your metabolism, prior diet, stress levels, gut health, and physical condition all influence when these processes activate. Low-carbohydrate or plant-based diets prior to fasting may accelerate the transition.

Autophagy Activation During Fasting



4. Preparing for Your Fast

The difference between a difficult fast and a successful one is often made in the days before you begin. Preparation is not optional — it is your foundation.

Physical Preparation (3–5 Days Before)

- Transition to a fully plant-based (vegan) diet — eliminate all animal products, processed foods, alcohol, and caffeine
- Eat lighter, easily digestible meals: fresh fruits, steamed vegetables, salads, smoothies
- Hydrate well — aim for 2–3 litres of pure water per day
- Reduce portions gradually so your body is not in a large caloric surplus on the day you begin
- Avoid starting during periods of intense physical stress, illness, or emotional crisis

Mental Preparation

- Set a clear intention: Why are you fasting? What do you hope to heal, release, or discover?
- Write it down. Keep it visible. Return to it on hard days.
- Inform your household so they can support your process and not tempt you with food aromas
- Plan light activities: reading, walking, prayer, journaling, moderate exercises or stretching
- Remove or reduce work obligations where possible, especially for fasts of 5+ days

Spiritual Preparation

- Fasting has been a sacred practice in virtually every major faith tradition throughout history — including Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and many others
- If your faith tradition includes it, consider prayer, Scripture reading, or a period of quiet reflection as a pre-fast habit
- Approach fasting as an act of trust — in your body's design, and in the One who designed it

A Note on Vegan Fasting

My approach consistently combines water fasting with a 100% plant-based (vegan) diet during the eating phases. Plant-based diets are lower in inflammatory compounds, easier to digest during refeeding, and align with the compassionate values at the heart of this work. All meal plans, protocols, and recommendations in this guide reflect this principle.

5. How to Trigger Autophagy Safely

Core Rules of Water-Only Fasting

Water Only	Drink 2–3 litres of pure, filtered or distilled water per day. Sip throughout the day rather than drinking large quantities at once.
Herbal Tea optionally	Plain, unsweetened herbal teas are permitted (optionally). No sweeteners, flavourings, or added ingredients of any kind.
No Calories	Even small caloric intake (fruit juice, broth, honey) will interrupt insulin signalling and suppress autophagy. True fasting means no calories.
No Caffeine	Avoid coffee, energy drinks, and all stimulants. They place unnecessary strain on the adrenals during a period of healing.
No Supplements	Most supplements introduce compounds your digestive system must process. Exception: electrolytes if experiencing severe symptoms (see Section 7).
Rest First	Walking and moderate exercises are fine. Avoid intense exercise. Your body is doing profound internal work — honour it with rest.
Sleep More	Extended sleep is natural and beneficial during fasting. It is when much of the cellular repair work intensifies.
Track Simply	Keep a simple journal: how you feel, energy levels, any symptoms, your emotional and spiritual state. Patterns are revealing.

What "Pure" Water Means

Not all water is equal. Tap water in many regions contains chlorine, fluoride, and other compounds that place a small but real burden on the body during fasting. Where possible, use:

- Filtered water (reverse osmosis, or quality carbon filter)
- Distilled water
- Quality still mineral water with low mineral content
- Avoid sparkling water if it causes discomfort

Fasting guidelines

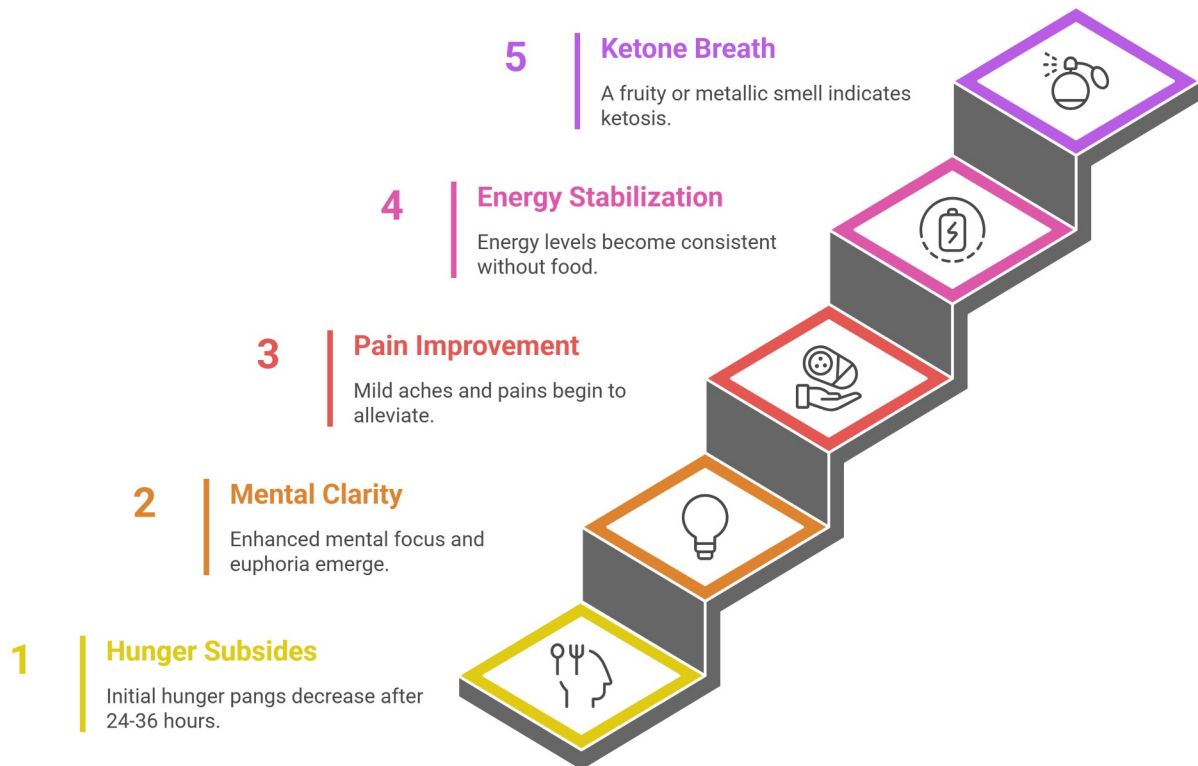


6. What to Expect: A Day-by-Day Journey

Every fast is unique — but there are consistent patterns that most people experience. Knowing what is coming transforms fear into preparation.

Day 1 (0–24h)	Hunger comes in waves. Energy may dip after meals you would normally eat. Mild headaches are common, especially if you were caffeine-dependent. Mood may be irritable. This is normal — you are starting a major physiological shift.
Day 2 (24–48h)	This is the most critical threshold for most people — the 'wall.' Nausea, headache, weakness, and dizziness often peak around hours 40–48. This is the point where 90% of people quit. See Section 7 for how to navigate it.
Day 3 (48–72h)	Many people report a dramatic shift: hunger quiets, mental clarity arrives, energy stabilizes. This is the ketosis turning point. The body has adapted to fat metabolism. Many describe feeling lighter, calmer, and more spiritually sensitive.
Day 4–5	Deep healing territory. The body is now in full repair mode. Sleep may deepen. Dreams may intensify. Emotional material sometimes surfaces — old pain, old patterns. This is often a healing response, not a crisis.
Day 6–7	Most people experience sustained energy, mental focus, and a surprising sense of wellbeing. The challenge is now primarily mental and social, not physical. Hunger has largely subsided.
Day 8–14	For those continuing beyond one week: extended immune reset and stem cell regeneration begin. Spiritual sensitivity often deepens. Many report this period as profoundly transformative. Medical supervision is strongly recommended.
Day 14+	Advanced fasting territory. Requires significant experience, preparation, and ideally professional support. I recommend building your capacity gradually across multiple fasting cycles before attempting extended fasts.

Achieving Autophagy Benefits



7. Breaking Through the 42–48 Hour Wall

The 42–48 hour window is the hardest gate — and the most important one to pass through. Most people who fail at fasting fail here. What they don't realise is that this crisis is temporary, predictable, and navigable.

What is happening biologically: your body is completing its glycogen depletion and making the final transition into ketosis. Toxins stored in fat cells are being mobilised and released into the bloodstream for elimination. The detox load peaks.

Three evidence-informed adaptation techniques can help you pass through this gate:

Technique 1: The Fruit Juice Bridge

When to use: Extreme weakness, nausea, or dizziness between hours 40–48, when you genuinely fear for your ability to continue safely.

How: Take 3–4 small sips of fresh fruit juice (no added sugar — grape juice or apple juice are ideal). Wait 60–90 minutes. Symptoms typically ease significantly, allowing you to continue.

Why it works: The small quantity of natural sugars provides a brief metabolic bridge — stabilising blood sugar just enough to allow the body to complete its transition without a complete collapse.

"For 23 years, I believed using fruit juice was cheating and failure. When I was finally motivated by a life-threatening infection, I tried it — and broke through for the first time. That small, pragmatic adaptation saved my fast, my health, and eventually my life. Wisdom is knowing the difference between a principle and a rule."

— Viorel Simac

Technique 2: Emetic Release (Induced Vomiting)

When to use: Severe nausea, intense headache, or overwhelming malaise that will not subside with rest or hydration alone.

How: Drink 1–2 glasses of warm water. Allow your body to vomit naturally, or gently encourage it if needed. The material expelled is typically light yellow to greenish — mobilised toxins from the liver.

Why it works: During fasting, the liver and intestinal walls actively dump accumulated toxins into the digestive tract for elimination. When this process outpaces elimination, nausea occurs. Vomiting accelerates clearance, typically providing relief within 5–10 minutes.

Use this technique only when symptoms are genuinely extreme. Do not use it routinely. If you are vomiting more than 3 times per day, or vomiting all water immediately after drinking it, stop the fast and seek medical attention.

Technique 3: Electrolyte Support

When to use: Severe cramping, extreme fatigue, heart palpitations, or persistent lightheadedness — especially during longer fasts.

How: cold herbal mineral infusion (nettle, horsetail, raspberry leaves or others), plain herbal tea or chelated

(organic-form) electrolyte supplements.

Note: I have completed extended fasts without added electrolytes. Individual needs vary significantly based on prior health status, sweat rate, and metabolic condition. Use your judgment and listen to your body.

The Mental Architecture of Success

Old Mindset (leads to failure): "I must do a perfect water fast, or I have failed."

New Mindset (leads to healing): "My goal is healing. If my body needs a small adaptation to continue safely, that is wisdom — not weakness. A 10-day fast with one small adaptation is infinitely more powerful than quitting on day 2 out of rigid perfectionism."

8. Signs You Are Fasting Well

Not all discomfort is bad. Here is how to distinguish healing responses from genuine warning signs:

Positive Signs (Healing in Progress)

Hunger Subsides	After the initial 24–36 hours, hunger typically quiets significantly. This is a sign the body has successfully switched to fat metabolism.
Mental Clarity	Many people report a sharp improvement in focus, creativity, and calm thought — the 'fasting clarity' is a well-documented phenomenon.
Lightness	A sense of physical and emotional lightness is common as the body releases cellular debris and inflammatory burden.
Ketone Breath	A slightly fruity or metallic smell on the breath is a direct indicator of ketosis and active fat metabolism — a good sign.
Improved Sleep	Deeper sleep with vivid dreams is common, especially from day 3 onwards. The body is doing significant repair work overnight.
Spiritual Sensitivity	Heightened sense of prayerfulness, gratitude, and spiritual openness is frequently reported during extended fasting.
Reduced Pain	Mild chronic pain — joint discomfort, tension headaches, sinus pressure — often decreases as inflammation drops.

9. When to Stop — Non-Negotiable Warning Signs

Your safety is always more important than completing the fast. There is no courage in pushing through these symptoms:

STOP THE FAST IMMEDIATELY and seek medical attention if you experience:

- Chest pain or irregular heartbeat / palpitations that do not resolve with rest
- Persistent vomiting (5+ times per day) or inability to keep any water down
- Extreme dizziness, loss of balance, or fainting
- Severe, persistent abdominal pain
- Mental confusion, disorientation, or difficulty speaking coherently
- Blood in vomit or stool
- Severe, unresponsive headache unrelated to caffeine withdrawal
- Extreme muscle weakness or inability to stand

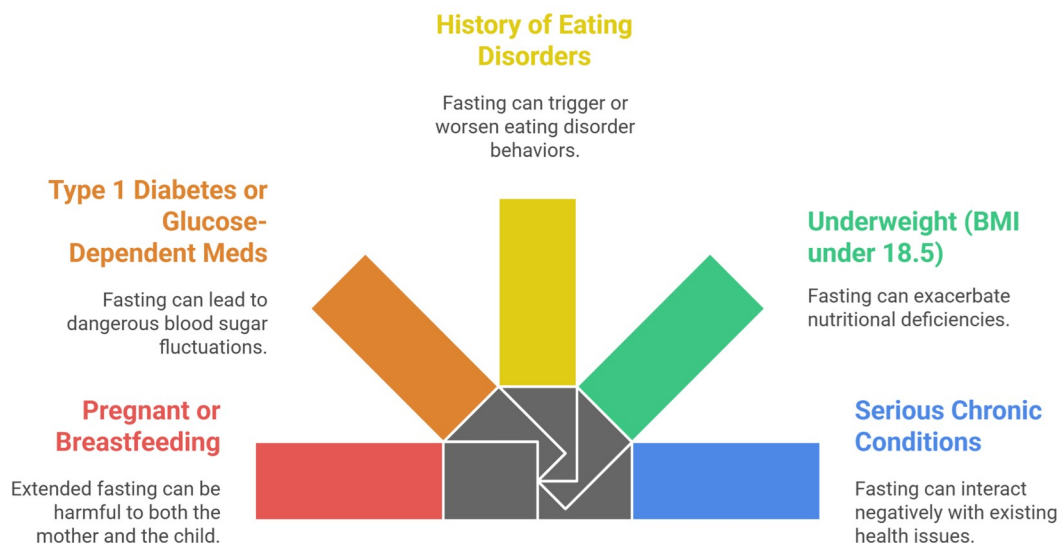
10. Who Should Not Fast Without Medical Supervision

Extended water fasting is a powerful intervention. It is not suitable for everyone without guidance. Consult a physician before beginning if any of the following apply:

- Pregnant or breastfeeding women
- Children and adolescents under 18
- Type 1 diabetics or anyone on glucose-dependent medications
- Individuals with a history of eating disorders (anorexia, bulimia, orthorexia)
- Underweight individuals (BMI below 18.5)
- People with serious cardiac, renal, or hepatic conditions
- Those currently recovering from surgery or acute illness
- Anyone on prescription medications whose levels are food-dependent

If you fall into any of these categories, this does not mean fasting is impossible for you — it means you need proper professional support before and during the process. I offer personalised fasting consultations for complex cases.

Should I consult a doctor before starting an extended fast?



11. Breaking the Fast — The Refeeding Protocol

How you break a fast is as important as how you conduct it. Refeeding syndrome — a potentially dangerous shift in electrolytes when food is reintroduced too quickly after extended fasting — is a real risk that proper refeeding prevents entirely.

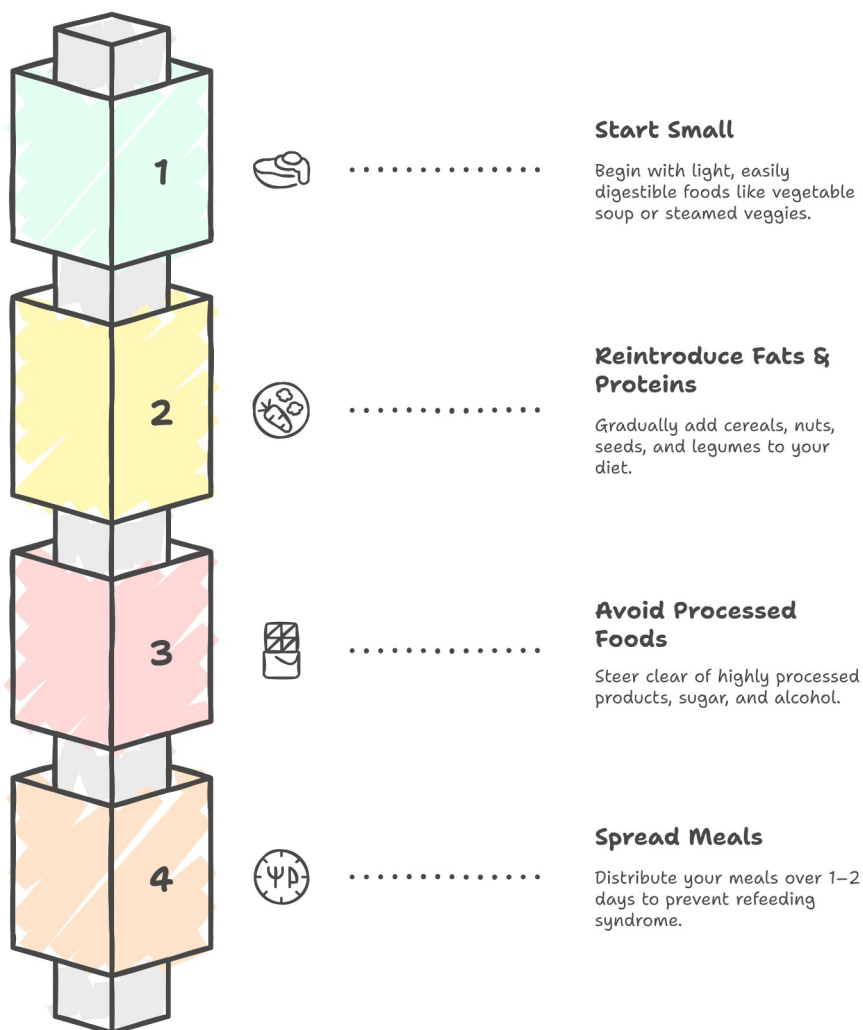
Refeeding Timeline (Plant-Based)

Day 1	Small green salad or plain vegetable broth (without salt, oil or dressings). Chew slowly until a uniform semi-liquid mixture is formed. Your digestive system is waking up — do not rush it.
Day 2	Continue with green salad with lemon juice only, plain vegetable broth and lightly steamed vegetables. No oils or heavy dressings.
Day 3	Introduce small portions of cooked cereals (oat porridge, rice). Continue with vegetable salad, may add small quantities of salt, oil or light dressings. Small amounts of soft fruits. Legume soups (well-cooked, soft).
Day 4–5	Gradually return to your normal plant-based diet. Add nuts and seeds in small quantities. Still avoid processed foods, sugar, alcohol, and heavy fried foods.
Beyond Day 5	For long fasts (10+ days), extend the refeeding period proportionally. A 40-day fast requires a multi-week careful refeeding process.

Critical Refeeding Rules

- Never break a fast with heavy, dense foods (meat, dairy, bread, nuts) — even if you feel extremely hungry
- Eat slowly, mindfully, and in small quantities — your stomach has contracted
- Avoid alcohol entirely for at least 2 weeks post-extended-fast, ideal forever
- Your first meal after a long fast should feel like a gentle greeting to your body, not a reward for deprivation

Safe Refeeding Process



12. The Spiritual Dimension of Fasting

Throughout human history — across virtually every major religious and wisdom tradition — fasting has been understood not merely as a physical practice, but as a spiritual one. The body's clarity during fasting creates the conditions for deeper inner work.

- In the Christian tradition, fasting is a practice of humility, dependence on God, and spiritual preparation. Moses, Elijah, and Jesus all fasted for 40 days. The body's emptying creates space for divine filling.
- Physical fasting and spiritual fasting reinforce each other. When the body is not occupied with digestion, the mind becomes quieter. In that quiet, clarity arrives.
- Many of my clients — and myself — report that the most significant transformations during fasting are not physical but inner: releasing long-held grief, experiencing forgiveness, finding renewed sense of purpose, and deepening prayer life.
- This guide does not impose any particular theology. But it does acknowledge that ignoring the spiritual dimension of fasting is ignoring one of its most powerful dimensions.

A Practice to Try During Your Fast

Each morning of your fast, before drinking your first water, spend 5 minutes in silence. Ask yourself: What am I releasing through this fast? What am I making space for? Write your answer, however brief, in your journal.

At the end of each day: write one thing your body communicated to you today. One thing you are grateful for. One prayer, intention, or word of trust.

13. Building Your Fasting Capacity — A Progressive Approach

My journey from 0 days to 40 days took decades of patient, progressive practice. I don't recommend beginning with a 10-day fast. Here is the path I recommend:

Stage 1	Intermittent Fasting (16:8 method): fast 16 hours per day, eat within an 8-hour window. Practice this for 4–6 weeks until comfortable.
Stage 2	One-day (24-hour) water fast, once weekly. Maintain for 4–6 weeks. Notice how your body responds and adapts.
Stage 3	Two-to-three day water fast. This crosses the critical 42–48 hour threshold for the first time. Apply the adaptation techniques from Section 7.
Stage 4	5–7 day water fast. First entry into sustained autophagy territory. Prepare your environment and schedule carefully.
Stage 5	10–14 day water fast. Extended immune regeneration territory. Medical consultation strongly recommended before this stage.
Stage 6+	Beyond 14 days requires significant experience, support, and ideally professional supervision. The rewards are profound — so are the responsibilities.

Between each stage, allow full recovery and healthy refeeding. Never rush to the next stage. The goal is not a record — it is sustainable, deep healing.

14. Your Next Steps

Ready to Go Deeper?

This guide is your foundation. The full transformation — personalised protocols, step-by-step fasting coaching, and a supportive community — is available through the Holistic Regeneration platform.

What I offer:

- Full Water Fasting Video Course — structured modules covering science, stages, emotional support, and spiritual preparation
- Personalised Fasting Protocol — tailored to your health history, goals, and timeline
- Biological Age Calculator — discover your body's true biological age and your personalised improvement roadmap
- 1-on-1 Coaching Sessions — direct support from me, before, during, and after your fast
- Vegan Meal Plans — optimised for pre- and post-fasting refeeding
- Book: "The Healing Fast" — my comprehensive guide to water fasting (coming 2027)

Visit: www.HolisticRegeneration.com

Stay strong. Stay hydrated.

Your body was designed to heal.

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