

Ask Leyla: How do I manage morning hunger with intermittent fasting?

written by Leyla Muedin MS, RD, CDN | November 14, 2025



Q: I want to start intermittent fasting (IF), but I'm quite hungry in the morning when I get up—which is early—and especially after my morning exercise. And shouldn't I be eating some protein after a workout? How does IF fit into all this?

A: First, if you're a morning exerciser, it's best to do that fasting. And there is some evidence that the body better utilizes protein to repair the microtears in muscles which occur with strength training if you eat within a 45-60 minute window after exercise.

Some folks simply aren't hungry for breakfast, and that's fine and works well for IF. But it's a mistake to think that IF can only occur with pushing breakfast back to late morning or early afternoon. As with Time Restricted Feeding, you get to decide which block of hours to eat. It doesn't have to be between 11am to 7pm. You could choose to eat between 7am and 3pm, or 8am and 4pm. This works well if you're hungry for breakfast soon upon rising or you work out very early and want to replenish soon after you're through.

You can choose to eat a late lunch or very early dinner. The benefit of that is going to bed on a *truly* empty stomach. You sleep better when you're not busy digesting a late dinner. Interestingly, this is preferred in Tradition Chinese Medicine, as it supports eating during daylight hours only so the digestive system can rest and recover at night.

To your health!

Leyla Muedin, MS, RD, CDN

