

Meal timing

The frequency at which we eat our meals holds some sway in relation to our energy, digestion, and weight loss. It was long believed in the fitness/diet industry that we needed to eat little and often to 'stoke' the metabolic fire.

This is not true, at least not for dieters or anyone who wants to work on losing some weight. If you really think about it, the more times you are eating during the day, the more potential there is for over-eating.

Typically I see a lot of women eating like this (see table) especially if working in the office where lots of 'junk' food tends to be easily accessible. We won't go into food choices today, if you want more information on this please download:

1. The meal builder
2. Nutrition guidelines
3. The pantry

Aside from the food choices being questionable (*high carb, low protein, low on vegetables*), the eating frequency is just a little too high.

Breakfast	Snack	Lunch	Snack	Dinner	Snack
08:00:00	10:00:00	12:00:00	14:30:00	18:00:00	20:00:00
Cereal	Cookie	Sandwich	Doughnut	Pasta meal	Chocolate

How to break it down

We DO need to consider OVERALL caloric intake as a concept* alongside how this intake is distributed throughout the day into our meal and snack timings.

**(but this beyond the scope of this PDF – please drop me a line if you want to discuss your personal overall intake goals)*

It is now clear that having small-moderate gaps between your meals is a better way to establish a healthy weight loss state for your body. We can call these periods, 'fasting' and this simply means 'taking in NO calories from food or drink'. Most of us do a fast every day – your overnight sleeping time is a fasting period, so you're not unfamiliar with this concept, you've probably just never considered it before because we've done this for our whole lives.

Overnight, ideally we want to be aiming for 10-14 hours of fasting which could be as simple as dinner 6.30pm and breakfast at 7.30am (13 hours) or dinner at 7.30pm and breakfast at 8.30am (13 hours) – you can work this out for yourself to fit into

your lifestyle in the best way that suits you (*remember that individualisation is the best approach for your nutrition – it's your life – make it work for you!*)

This does not have to be the same every day. If your diary fluctuates and changes on a regular basis, you may need to have worked out a few different options to suit you. Again – MAKE IT WORK FOR YOU

Once we have established a dinner time that suits you, and a breakfast time that suits you, we can fill in the middle of the day. Ideally look to observe 3-5 hours between your meals – the actual gap you choose, again, is up to you and your preferences.

Examples

Breakfast	Gap	Snack	Gap	Lunch	Gap	Dinner
7.30am	3 hours	10.30am	3 hours	1.30pm	5 hours	6.30pm
Overnight fast – 12 hours						

Breakfast	Gap	Lunch	Gap	Snack	Gap	Dinner
8.30am	4 hours	12.30pm	3 hours	3.30pm	4 hours	7.30pm
Overnight fast – 13 hours						

Breakfast	Gap	Lunch	Gap	Snack	Gap	Dinner
8.30am	5 hours	1.30pm	3 hours	4.30pm	3 hours	7.30pm
Overnight fast – 13 hours						

Breakfast	Gap	Lunch	Gap	Snack	Gap	Dinner
7.30am	5 hours	12.30pm	4 hours	4.30pm	4 hours	8.30pm
Overnight fast – 11 hours						

There are numerous ways of making this work for you, but do try to observe the gaps between your intakes to allow your body to REST and DIGEST so that your appetite restores itself to a regular and reliable indicator for when you need to eat (vs when you are bored).

If you feel stuck, please do send me an email and talk me through your lifestyle so that we can work out the best options for you.

And finally, like always.....these are not HARD rules! They are guidelines to aim for 80% of the time. This gives you 20% of play to allow for times when you have a late night meal, or when your appetite gets the better of you.

If you deviate from this concept a little bit THAT'S FINE, try not to worry about it. Get back on track and observe your eating timings more closely the next day.