

Jonathan Hunsaker: Welcome, everyone, to another episode of Empowering You Organically. I'm joined by my co-host, TeriAnn Trevenen.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Hey, everyone.

Jonathan Hunsaker: And today, we're going to talk about fasting. According to Google trends, searches for the term "fasting" have been on the increase since 2018. I've been doing a lot of playing around with fasting lately, whether it's intermittent fasting, water fasting, juice fasts, I've been doing all kinds of stuff. So, we're going to talk a lot about that. And this is likely going to be a two-part podcast. So, the very first, this first part, we're going to talk about different types of fasting. And yeah, let's get right down to it.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah, so let's talk about first of all, what is fasting? And I think we should talk a little bit about—we're going to talk about different types of fasting, but fasting is the willing abstinence or reduction from some or all food, drink, or broth for a period of time, and absolute fasting, or dry fasting, is normally defined as abstinence from all food and liquid for a defined period. So, why don't you share a little bit? Because I know you're well-read, and you've actually practiced fasting in your life quite a bit. So, why did you get into it? Why do you think that there's such a draw for people in fasting?

Jonathan Hunsaker: Fasting has been around for a long time. It's in most ancient literature, it's in most religions. I mean almost every religion has some sort of fasting ritual that they follow. And so, it's been around for a long time. I mean I got into it for the health benefits. I started reading about it, started learning more about it, started learning more about autophagy, which we won't get into too much here, but autophagy is essentially your body processing the weaker cells, the damaged cells in your body for fuel.

And so, it's kind of survival of the fit for the cells in your body. And yeah, when you lack that nutrient intake, your body's going to find energy from some source. So, what better way than to process the damaged cells that are already in my body and turning that into energy? So, I just started getting—I was fascinated with it.

Now I did some juice fasts, probably four years ago. A lot of people may or may not have seen the movie "Fat, Sick, or Nearly Dead," and that's where Joe Cross does a juice fast for 60 days and loses a lot of weight, gets healthy. So, I would say probably my first fast had to do with weight loss when I first started that journey and I started juicing.

Saw some phenomenal results there. Some of them were temporary, but I did, I did a 17-day juice fast, then I did a 30-day juice fast, and yeah, throughout the last few years, I've just been playing a lot

more with it. Now the one type of fasting that I do consistently is I do intermittent fasting. So, intermittent fasting is where you only eat for a certain period of time during the day. The easiest is probably a 16/8. So, you don't eat for 16 hours, and you only eat for 8 hours. So, that might be only eating from noon until 8:00 at night, and that's it, and then you fast the other 16 hours of the day.

You start getting a little bit into a deeper fast when you do an 18/6, right? And so, that's not eating for 18 hours, eating for six. The one that I generally follow is a 20/4, so I only eat for four hours, a four-hour window during the day, and that generally looks like not eating until 2:00 or 2:30 in the afternoon, and then I'm done eating no later than 6:30, when I have dinner with my daughters.

So, that's intermittent fasting. You hear a lot about that, especially if you are in the ketogenic diet scene. A lot of people talk about that. But you don't need to be eating keto to do intermittent fasting. You don't. If you follow Dave Asprey and the Bulletproof Diet, I mean he actually talks about not being in ketosis a lot, but talks about using fasting, where you kind of get into a light ketosis almost every day.

And we could go down that rabbit hole as well, on what the ketosis does and how it's healthy for your body. But a lot of the studies are coming out now, especially the longevity studies, are showing that caloric restriction is— is showing to be the most effective for longevity. They're seeing it in mice, we're seeing it in all kinds of different studies.

And it's a good way to do caloric restriction in that sense, where you're only eating a certain amount of hours in the day. There's also some other stuff, and I'm trying to think of the book that was put out, *The Complete Guide to Fasting*. I had to cheat, because I'm looking over at my bookshelf right now while we're doing this. But it is *The Complete Guide to Fasting*, and it's Dr. Jason Fung. And he talks about using fasting, the way that our body—a lot of times, we talk about calories in, calories out, and it only matters in terms of calories. And he talks about how your body doesn't necessarily—

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I mean yes, it sees calories, but what's more impactful is that insulin response. And so, when you're eating six times a day, eight times a day, you start following some of these "Body for Life" guides of eating all these times, or all these different things, then your body's constantly releasing insulin. And when your body's releasing insulin, then it can't—you can't go into autophagy, you can't—your existing fuel sources, like fat, for energy and different things like that.

So, for me, it's, on my journey to health, it's been a mental challenge as well, to do the water fasting. I mean it's very interesting. The longer that you wait to eat, and your body is like "I'm starving! I'm hungry!" And most of the time, you're really just dehydrated, you just need some more water. And

once you kind of get through that first 24-hour day, and you get into day two and day three, it really becomes a mental game. After day three, it starts becoming easier. Again, you're, at that point, you're in deep ketosis and your body's really processing fat for fuel. But yeah, I find fasting very fascinating, and I think that there's all kinds of benefits around it.

TeriAnn Trevenen: How'd you feel physically when you fasted for long periods of time?

Jonathan Hunsaker: I felt really good. Now keep in mind, I have an abundance of fat storage that I'm able to use, and I've also played a lot with going in and out of ketosis. So, for those that have not been in ketosis before, your first fast, I would not recommend going super long and doing a five-day water fast. I would recommend just starting with some intermittent fasting, especially for women.

Dr. Jason Fung talks about how long-period water fasting is not as beneficial for women. But definitely, intermittent fasting, or every other day fasting, or things like that. For me, I actually, and a lot of people listening know that I'm training for my first marathon, I ran, and I run fasted every morning, but I did a five-day water fast and I ran 30 miles that week.

I was even doing some two-a-days, where I was doing six miles in the morning, three miles in the evening. I feel really good when I'm fasting. Again, part of that is because my body's used to going into ketosis. So, it can easily start using that fat for fuel. Some of the first-timers, you might start feeling what people call the "keto flu."

And you can feel that, too, when you do a juice fast, you can even feel that when you start going just straight vegan. And a lot of people think, "Well, that's detoxing," whereas your body, really at that point, it's not holding water weight the way that it did. And so, when it's releasing all of this water weight, it's no longer able to hold onto the electrolytes that it needs as well.

So, if you're getting into water fasting, you want to do some intermittent fasting or some—some multiple-day water fasts, the number one thing I can say is make sure you're loaded up on your electrolytes. So, whether you're taking electrolyte pills, for me, I just take a couple potassium pills a few times a day, I take some magnesium a few times a day.

And if you even start feeling any kind of—and it's usually only for the first couple days, if you start feeling any kind of headache come on, even just a couple shakes of pink Himalayan salt in water, just to get your electrolytes back. Again, whether you're keto, intermittent fasting, water fasting, juice fasting, keep those electrolytes up. That will make the biggest difference in your success.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Got it. Yeah, and it is really fascinating. I think that the trend of fasting is on the rise. And there's a lot of benefits to it. But I think you really have to know what you're doing, and I think

you have to really know what's going to work well for you. And there's a lot of research to back it. There's a lot of people who have been looking at this for quite some time.

So, just know what you're getting yourself into. So, we're going to talk about two types of fasting today. Jonathan already kind of touched on one, and that's intermittent fasting, also known as time-restricted eating. So, I'm in a lot—into the health and wellness space through Organixx and through other things I'm doing, but also, I'm big into working out right now.

I have a lot of friends that work out. I know a lot of people who are doing intermittent fasting through time—like the time-restricted eating. And they feel like it really helps them mentally, physically, emotionally, and they feel like it really benefits them from an overall body perspective. It means only eating in a specific time window, like Jonathan mentioned earlier, and not eating the rest of the day.

And one of the cautions is individuals with the following conditions should abstain from intermittent fasting. Just to be clear, fasting is not for everyone, and I just touched on that. You should know whether or not this is going to work for you. If you suffer from diabetes, eating disorders, use of medications that require food intake, obviously, you should not be fasting.

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Active growth stages, such as in adolescence, fasting like this is not good for them. And then pregnancy and breastfeeding. So, as we mentioned, be really careful when you're fasting. Make sure it's right for you, make sure that you can actually participate in fasting, it's not going to impact your health. So, let's talk about the how-tos, and I'll let you kind of cover it, because you're more well-read on this and experience this more than I have.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Absolutely. And I'm going to go back to the cautions with just a little caveat around the diabetes conversation. Now I don't necessarily agree with self-monitoring yourself, if you have diabetes and you start fasting, but there is a—there's a lot of studies coming out to using fasting to beat diabetes.

So, Dr. Fung talks about it a lot in his book. I want to—I don't want to get the wrong name, but my good friend, Jon McMahon, who created a docuseries called *iThrive: Overcoming Diabetes And Obesity*, he did—he went to a clinic and did a—I want to say he did a 41-day water fast, which is pretty extreme. But he lost, I think 60 pounds during that time.

He was morbidly obese and diabetic, and needed to do that. So, fasting really can be good for diabetes, and really monitoring that insulin response. What I will say is, if you're diabetic, don't just go

into it at home without being studied, without having some sort of supervision, doctor's supervision, something to make sure that you're not injuring yourself.

So, part of the how-to, fasting, fasting is fascinating in the sense that you get to play with it and find what works for you. We've talked a lot on this podcast about there's no one way of eating that works for everybody. There's no one diet that works for everybody. There's no one supplement that's going to work for everybody.

There's no one exercise that works for everybody. You have to find out what it is that your body responds best to and what do you feel good doing, whether that's a workout, the way that you're eating, whatever it is. Fasting is the same way. And there's several different ways to fast. So, I'm going to talk about some of the different patterns.

So, there's the 5/2 pattern, and that's where you eat five days a week, and then two days, you restrict your calorie intake for two days. And those can be consecutive days, or they could be just two random days during the week. You want to really restrict your calories to under 500 calories a day for women, 600 calories for men.

You'll also, it's not going to be—I don't know that it's listed here in our notes, there's also the fasting mimicking diet. And if you Google that, I know there's a gentleman who sells a whole package that does a fasting mimicking diet. And I think it has you at 800 calories day one, and then under 400 the next four days.

You could really mimic a lot of that, too, with just intaking like healthy fats, but not going over 500 calories. So, if you're doing the 5/2, my suggestion is, is fill those 500 calories with healthy fats, like avocado. I think that that's the most effective way, in my opinion, because you will get into a light ketosis there, and having that healthy fat will satiate you more, and it will have you feel more full, and also, the avocados are just—it's healthy for you.

There's another pattern, it's the 6/1 pattern, very similar to the 5/2, but it's only one day of reduced-calorie intake per week. There's the Eat/Stop/Eat, and that's 24-hour complete fast, one to two times per week. And 24-hour complete fasts, for a lot of people, might look like eating dinner Sunday night, and then not eating until dinner again Monday night.

Generally, I don't do that. If I'm going to go a full day without eating, I truly want to go a full day. So, my day fasts are really 36-hour fasts. I'll eat dinner Sunday night, and then I won't eat again until Monday morning. A lot of times, by Monday morning, I'm already in the routine of not eating until 1:00 or 2:00, so I don't eat until Monday afternoon.

But again, start small and really figure out what your body responds to, what you're able to do. What I really challenge you, though, is 99 percent of the time, it's all in your head, right? I do a lot of running now and ask me three months ago about having to run more than 5K, and I think there was no way. And now, I'm running 15-18 miles to train for the marathon, and it's all in my head. It's all in your head to just keep going, and what can you do.

Now I'm not saying to be unhealthy doing all that, I'm not saying to ignore warning signs, but if it's just some hunger pains, drink a glass of water and wait 15 minutes. I bet the hunger pains go away for another couple hours, another few hours. And it's good. It's—we are bombarded with food these days, and there's food everywhere. There's fast food everywhere, there's convenience stores everywhere, and grocery stores everywhere.

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And we have books now that say eat six meals a day, and eight meals a day, and eat, eat, eat, eat. And I personally think it's absurd. We don't need to be eating that often, we don't need that much food to be healthy. And I don't think, biologically, our bodies were designed to constantly eat, either.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah, well, and historically, we're a society that's inside a lot now, so we always have access to food. But historically, people were outside working, doing things. They weren't constantly like, "What am I going to eat next? What am I going to eat next?" Like they would work all day and then eat. It's like we do, we consume so much food, it's a habit, it's an, a lot of times, an unhealthy habit, because we always have access to food, because most of us are inside all the time.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Yeah. I mean there's something to be said for earning your food, right? If we go back thousands of years, as hunter-gatherers, I mean you were hungry, you went out there and you were trying to hunt down food to eat. And what's interesting is, the longer that you go without food, and your body goes into ketosis, and the ketones is actually what your brain prefers as a fuel source.

The more ketones that are in your bloodstream, the more ketones get into your brain, the more alert you get and the less distracted you are. And now, you're like—because now, it's starting to become a survival thing, right? So now, your body is responding to "I haven't eaten in two days. I need to catch this animal," whatever it is.

And you start getting more and more alert and more and more alert. And it's a fascinating journey to go on mentally. And I agree with it. I agree with the idea of almost earning that meal. It's why I like working out fasted. It's why I like running fasted. And then afterwards, having a meal, or something along those lines, because that's how I feel like it used to be. And not that we were always hunting, but again, we were gathering, we were farming, we were doing things like that. But we were outside

working for that meal, we weren't sitting at a computer desk for four hours and snacking all day because we're bored, right? We were out working and earning that food.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yep.

Jonathan Hunsaker: One other pattern, I've talked about this, it's the daily pattern. And 16/8 is the most popular, and that's the time-restricted eating, where you only eat for eight hours a day. I have personal beliefs around that. I don't quite think that a 16-hour fast every day is long enough. I think you should really push to hit the 18-hour mark and only eat for 6 hours. But again, I would encourage you to just build up to that.

TeriAnn Trevenen: The second type of fasting is water fasting. It's also known as a water cleanse. It's a type of fasting in which you consume only water for a set period of time. Many cleansing diets are referred to as fasts, but in water fasting, you take in zero calories. It's distinct from caloric restriction in which a person's daily caloric intake is reduced by 20-40 percent. So, you're literally not taking in any calories.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Absolutely. And this is one, and I apologize for those listening if I've kind of gone back and forth between intermittent fasting and the water-only fasting in my talks about it, but I've done five-day water-only fasts. I think my longest is seven days. I think I probably—I know I could go beyond that. I'm trying to think of the reason I broke that fast. I also don't—and you'll see, there are people that do 20-day water fasts, and 30-day water fasts.

I don't know that that's necessary, either. I've seen studies and I've seen things where the efficacy starts dropping off after day five. So, my suggestion would be, is if you're looking to do a longer water fast, build up to it. One day, two days, three days, hit five days. But I don't know that you need to go beyond five.

What you may want to do is then refeed for a few days, and then go back and do another five-day water fast if that's what—if you're trying to get into apophagy, or if you're trying to lose weight. I mean quite frankly, there's no simpler way to lose weight than not eating, right? How did we get fat? By overeating. So, how do we stop being fat? Is by not eating as much.

Again, you have to monitor yourself, and don't jump right into it. I like going a little bit more extreme and jumping straight into doing some three and five-day water fasts, but I don't think that that's necessarily the healthiest. The other thing that I want to give some advice on, if you are going to go into an extended water fast, is take a couple days to get into ketosis. Ketosis, and it might take longer than a couple days, but even just start eating based off of a ketogenic diet.

Now ketogenic does not mean you have to go out there and eat a bunch of meat and bacon and all of that. It's been glorified to no end that that's the way you do it. You can get into a ketogenic state by eating salads and avocados, right? You don't have to eat any animal products. It's just the lack of sugars, and refined sugars and flours, that really helps you get to that state. So, my suggestion would be, if you're going into a longer water fast, to really prepare yourself for a couple days by just eating vegetables, avocados.

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If you're into eating meats, you can have some meats as well. But trying to get into a more ketogenic state, that's going to have it be an easier transition when you really get into deep ketosis. I also encourage you to follow that same eating style when you come out of a water fast. The reason being, is—and I felt it day three, like “I just want to eat a whole pizza.” And you don't want to break that water fast and then go down a large pizza or go eat a bunch of junk food. Even though like everything looks delicious at that point.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Don't go to the grocery store.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Don't go to the grocery store, absolutely not.

TeriAnn Trevenen: It's so dangerous.

Jonathan Hunsaker: But if you just put some guidelines on yourself, like “I'm only going to eat a ketogenic diet afterwards,” or “I'm only going to eat salad,” or “I'm only going to eat vegetables,” it will allow you to refeed in a much more conscious way, to not just have you go gorge and get sick.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah, after you finish your water fast, like a lot of people say, “I want to know what you did,” like a lot of people say just eat like a light snack, and then eat a meal later, because your body's not used to eating. Is that how you've broken your water fasts?

Jonathan Hunsaker: Yeah, I learned the hard way. The first, I think five-day water fast, I broke by pigging out.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Did you?

Jonathan Hunsaker: Yeah, and I was—

TeriAnn Trevenen: Brutal.

Jonathan Hunsaker: I was running to the bathroom within 30 minutes to—yeah, just not feeling well. And so, what I learned from trial and error and reading, really what worked best for me was like a handful of cashews or almonds, or nuts, doing that, and then waiting an hour or two, and then I could have a normal meal. Just the fats that were in it really helped my body transition back into having food again. So yeah, breaking the fast matters.

And again, I can't stress enough the importance of electrolytes and how much better your body will feel and how much more successful you'll be, whether intermittent fasting, whether you're doing a 5/2, a 6/1, a three-day water fast, make sure you get your potassium and your magnesium, your sodium, even if it's just some pink Himalayan salt in water. Keep those electrolytes up and it will make a world of difference.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Well, and another thing, too, that's talked about a lot, because you talked about, and I want to touch on this really quickly, you talked about working out while you're fasting, but if you're doing a long, extended water fast, like they actually say to rest a lot and get really hydrated. Most people's bodies cannot handle a lot of exercise and things like that when they're fasting. But did you exercise a lot while you were water fasting?

Jonathan Hunsaker: Yeah. Maybe it's the masochist in me, or something, but I do like—

TeriAnn Trevenen: I think that's what it is.

Jonathan Hunsaker: I do like to push myself and find my limits and find what I can do and what I can't do. And like I said earlier, I mean this was earlier in my running, I was doing—I think I had my longest running week ever on a water fast, ran 30+ miles, I think that week, I think I even ran some eight-mile runs in the morning and four-mile runs in the evening, all on water.

Now I did, I did learn, I mean there were definitely some times I started feeling a little lightheaded, so my pace wasn't as fast, my pace was slowed down trying to keep my heart rate under control. But there's a lot of studies, too, I mean that people have done fasted. And there's some misconceptions out there that your body is going to start burning muscle for fuel, and that you're going to lose a lot of muscle as you get into doing fasting, water fasts.

And it's simply not true. Your body can actually burn fat much easier, and your body's going to go into ketosis and burn fat. And even if you were to lose a little bit of muscle mass, what actually happens is your body releases a lot more human growth hormone while you're doing a water fast, and especially coming out of that fast. So, what may happen is your body may break down some of the weaker deteriorated muscle for some fuel, but then, when you rebuild, you have higher levels of human growth hormone.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Interesting.

Jonathan Hunsaker: You're actually rebuilding stronger muscle afterwards. And so, and it's just a misconception out there that you're going to end up scrawny and lose all this muscle mass, where you really won't.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah. Well, and another thing, too, first of all, we've talked about it previously in this podcast, but make sure that, if you have any health issues or you're worried about anything, that you consult your natural health practitioner, your doctor, whoever you see. The other thing, too, I think it goes back to, is getting enough sleep. If you're going to go through something like this and still exercise, like we talk about how sleep restores our body and helps us to recover and heal. I mean if you're water fasting and working out, your body's probably even more tired and needs more rest, and things like that.

So, make sure you're getting good sleep. And the other thing, too, is staying really hydrated. Like you would think, like "Oh, I'm drinking water. I'm fine." But a lot of our water intake during the day actually comes from the food that we get. So, making sure you drink more water than you probably think you need, because you're going to become dehydrated if you're not consciously thinking about that.

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Jonathan Hunsaker: As you get into a ketogenic state, if you're doing an extended water fast, even doing your intermittent fasting, your body does not store the water the same way. Your inflammation levels go way down, so you're not holding as much water. And so, by not holding as much water, I mean you have to continue to consume that water and keep yourself hydrated.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah, and you think you're on a water fast, but you can actually dehydrate your body being on a water fast.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Absolutely. You just need to drink a lot of water, and I think that's a rule of thumb every day, anyway. But especially on a water fast, keeping yourself hydrated.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yep, awesome. Well, I think that's covered some really good tips there today, and I think you've been through the thick of it. I think that people, the one thing to take away from this, there are health benefits to fasting, but you need to know what's right for you and what works for you. Between water fasting and intermittent fasting, testing it out, like you said. You've tried different things; you've worked through different things.

And then, just making sure, seriously, if you have any health issues or you're concerned about any health issues, don't just go out and fast and think, like "Oh, I can. I've got this." Like do your research, do your homework, talk to experts. It's something that can improve your health, but this is one place where you don't want to mess around with testing something out and have it be detrimental in what you do.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Take it slow, take it easy and find out what your body likes and doesn't like and responds to. And also, be highly conscious of is your mind just playing tricks on you and trying to rationalize you into eating when you don't need to, if you're trying to push yourself a little bit there.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yep. And in a follow-up podcast, we are going to talk about—we talked about how to fast, but we're going to talk about the reasons why you should fast. What are those health benefits and why are people going and doing intermittent fasting, why are they doing the water fasting, and how it can benefit your health?

Jonathan Hunsaker: Absolutely. So, listen, there's going to be a lot of resources on our website, EmpoweringYouOrganically.com. You can get all of the show notes, the transcripts from today's podcast. There will be resources, there will be links to *The Complete Guide to Fasting*, with Dr. Jason Fung, and many other resources there to go and do your research. There's a lot of YouTube videos out there on fasting, there's a lot of information out there.

So, get a little bit more educated, don't just listen to this podcast and decide you're going to go do a five-day water fast. Learn a little bit more about it, understand why you should be doing it, understand some of the things to look out for if you're not doing it right, or some ways to really ease into it. But I personally love fasting. I love water fasting. It's made a big difference in my life. So, thank you guys for listening. EmpoweringYouOrganically.com, Organixx.com for all the supplements that you need. And thank you, TeriAnn, for joining me.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Thank you.

Jonathan Hunsaker: See you guys next time.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Have a great day, everyone.