



Tips For Healthy Fasting

By: Asia Parkar

Fasting has been practiced for centuries by many cultures for religious and spiritual purification. When done correctly fasting can also be beneficial to establish healthy habits, give your digestive system a break, promote detoxification, improve cognitive function, and lower cholesterol.

However, often many of us adopt unhealthy eating habits during Ramadan which makes us feel worse, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. It is important to respect and make the most of this month by respecting and taking care of our bodies so that we can worship Allah (God) better.

A healthy fast should leave you energetic and alert, without feeling constant pangs of hunger or bloating.

This Ramadan try incorporating some of these tips below to make your fasting a healthy experience, while maximizing all the spiritual and physical benefits associated with it.

Plan Ahead

- Have a strong intention as to what you want to achieve and this will help you stay focused on your goal and keep you motivated.
- Keep it simple - be easy on yourself and try to avoid elaborate dishes.
- Make a meal plan and prep ahead for your meals i.e. dicing, chopping, slicing, boiling, or baking.
- Fill your pantry/cupboard and fridge with good quality nourishing food so you are well equipped and won't reach for the unhealthy/not so good stuff.
- Get support - before you begin, discuss with members of your household about the benefits of healthy fasting and get everyone on board to support you.

Start Healthy (Suhoor)

- Don't skip the breakfast meal, even though it is very early. Breakfast is important to keep you energized and nourished throughout the day. Always include lean proteins, healthy fats, high fiber foods, and some complex carbs for a powerful start.
- Foods to include are eggs, beans, chicken breast, salmon, veggies such as sweet potato, spinach, broccoli, whole grains, quinoa, [overnight oats](#), porridge topped with berries and nuts, flax seeds, chia seeds, avocado, apples, pears, or protein smoothies. Our favorite suhoor is [blueberry chia pudding](#). For additional Suhoor recipe ideas click [here](#).
- Drink lots of water. Our body is mostly water and therefore needs water to perform many functions. It is recommended to drink at least half of your body weight in water in ounces. You can also add some fresh lemon juice for flavor, to improve digestion, and to boost your immune system.
- Limit or avoid caffeine if possible as it is proven to cause dehydration, irritability, heartburn, disrupted sleep and can make you feel sluggish all day. Try weaning off from caffeine before you start fasting to overcome any withdrawal symptoms. It might take a day or two to get used to but your body will adapt. Drink green or white tea, decaf tea and coffee, or herbal tea to decrease your cravings for caffeine. My favorites are peppermint, dandelion root , ginger, fennel , or chamomile tea.

End Nourished (Iftar)

- Break your fast with water. Stay as hydrated as you can by drinking water as your main source of fluids. Besides water, you can meet your daily water requirements by consuming water-filled foods such as fruits, vegetables, milk, yogurt, kefir, and soup.
- Include fresh [fruit salad](#) to get all the nutrients and fiber. This will also help in preventing constipation.
- Avoid sugary and caffeinated drinks as they act as diuretics and deplete fluids from the body, and will only lead to more thirst.
- Avoid or limit fried food as much as possible. Deep-fried and oily foods can cause indigestion and acid reflux. Try baking your favorite recipes instead of frying. Check out my baked [pakora recipe](#).
Tip: You can try including fried foods only for the weekend or if you really cannot avoid fried food then just make less of it and enjoy it as a snack instead of making huge amounts which can lead to overeating. Also make sure to fry your foods in good quality oils or use an air fryer if you have one.
- Make an effort to include lots of green leafy vegetables in your meal. Aim to fill half your plate with veggies.
- Avoid having sugary treats or desserts every day. If you do crave something sweet; then have a some of grapes, enjoy a frozen fruit slushy, make homemade chocolate covered strawberries, date and nut bar, a piece of dark chocolate, or try this [avocado pudding](#).
- Don't overstuff everything in one go when you open your fast. Instead eat small portions at a time and space out your meals. Break your fast with something small (such as water and dates), go pray your Magrib prayer, and then come back to finish your meal. Chances are you won't be as hungry as you thought you were.

Keep Moving

- You can easily incorporate some form of movement while fasting as long as you have nourished yourself with hydrating and filling foods. Tip: I try to incorporate my daily [walking](#) about an hour before ending the fast or do 10-15 min low impact workout at home. Just do whatever you can manage.
- Another option might include waking up half an hour early and working out right before you begin your fast. Explore and see which time works best for you.

Get Rest

- Try to get at least 7-8 hours of sleep so that you are well rested and have energy throughout the day.
- Take a short nap when you feel tired. Even a short 20 minute nap will give you boost of energy and also keep your mind off of food.
- Avoid caffeine at least few hours before bedtime.
- Switch off or keep electronic devices out of your bedroom.
- Do some breathing exercises or sip on caffeine free herbal teas.

You Can Do It !

Healthy living is a game of decision-making and mindset shifts. By committing to win this game, you can achieve and maintain your health goals in every situation. Listen to your body and add in these recommendations to have a healthy Ramadan. Your body and soul will thank you for it.

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Thank you for downloading this e-book!

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