



March 2021 NAAFA Newsletter

## Intermittent Fasting: The Meal Skipping Fad

by Paul Ernsberger, Ph.D.



Intermittent fasting (IF) seems to be everywhere. Like so many other diet fads, it started on social media and then jumped to commercial weight loss programs. Unlike most fads, IF made the leap to the

*New England Journal of Medicine* and from there to medical media. Soon we were all hearing about the

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## Video of the Month

wonders of IF from our doctors at every visit.

Where did IF come from? IF is really nothing more than skipping meals. Since the 1950s, the weight loss industry has been united in warning us off skipping meals. Diet books, programs, articles in *Good Housekeeping* magazine, brochures in doctor's offices, all were unanimous that no matter what you did or what kind of radical unbalanced diet you tried, you should always eat three regular meals a day. Don't skip or "You'll get too hungry and end up eating more food and gaining weight."

What changed? Like many fads, it started from a kernel of truth. Nutrition studies have now shown that everyone does not have to eat breakfast. Many people are not hungry in the morning, yet they force themselves to eat because they heard that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. It turns out many people can function just fine fasting until lunch if you dislike breakfast. On the other hand, if you wake up hungry in the morning there is no point in starving yourself simply to follow the anti-breakfast trend. The best approach may be intuitive eating -- follow your body regarding whether to eat breakfast or not.

So it is true that breakfast-haters can skip. On the other end of the day, a bedtime snack might be avoided too, if only because it contributes to acid reflux at night. If you are too hungry to sleep at bedtime, it may mean you need to eat more at dinner time to carry you through the night. If you skip the bedtime snack, then you are not eating from dinner to lunch. Without any deliberate effort, you are following a plan of 8 hours of eating and 16 hours of fasting. This 8 on/16 off pattern may be the most popular IF scheme. There is no reason to set a timer and get the schedule just right. Intuitive eating should serve you fine.

The IF fad really took off when a long and very enthusiastic article was published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (de Cabo & Mattson, 2019). Only a few small term human trials could be cited. We have often seen these studies of a small



[Fighting Back: A year on the COVID-19 frontline](#)

WARNING:  
CONTAINS  
DISCUSSION OF  
ILLNESS AND  
DEATH. INCLUDES  
IMAGES OF  
MEDICAL  
SETTINGS AND  
CLIENTS.

This past year has been unprecedented in most of our lives, and we hope that all of you are safe and well. This newly released video gives us a glimpse into the minds and hearts of those on the frontlines at University Hospitals in Ohio. With the new vaccines and continued precautions on all our parts, we can come through this difficult time strong and resilient as ever.

**Quick Links**

[NAAFA.org](#)

[Facebook Main Members Community](#)

number of enthusiastic volunteers. Such studies showed that eating on small serving plates, keeping a food diary, drinking water before meals, or eating unappealing foods like rice cakes and bitter greens can yield weight loss. Larger studies covering longer test periods and tracking people who dropped out of the study always reveal the truth -- that none of these diet gambits have any lasting effect on weight. History seems to be repeating itself with Intermittent Fasting.

[Read More at the NAAFA Community Blog](#)

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## March Anti-Racism Resources

*by Darliene Howell*

Continuing the theme of National Women's History Month, we are sharing resources that specifically feature women and discuss inequality based on race and gender.

HISTORICAL RESOURCES - Black Women who have changed history:  
[The Struggle for Women's Equality in Black America](#)  
[Between Two Worlds: Black Women and the Fight for Voting Rights](#)  
[These 19 black women fought for voting rights](#)  
[15 Black Women Civil Rights Leaders You May Not Have Heard Of](#)  
[Fat Black Women are Black History, Too](#)

SYSTEMIC RACISM

[What's Policy Got to Do with It? Race, Gender & Economic Inequality in the United States](#)

## Making a Difference

*by Darliene Howell*



March is National Women's History Month. Women have been essential in the history of changing our nation for the better. 2021 saw the largest number of women in Congress in U.S. history. However, women still comprise only 23.6% of the members. We have a long way to go.

Women and nonbinary persons act as advocates and activists in innumerable ways and they need to be recognized for their work and dedication. I wanted to take this opportunity to highlight a few of those leaders who are fat, activists and influencers who continue the charge to change our society. If you haven't done so, check them out!

- Stacy Abrams (she/her), Founder of [Fair Fight](#), [instagram.com/fairfightaction](https://www.instagram.com/fairfightaction), [facebook.com/FairFightAction](https://www.facebook.com/FairFightAction)
- Black Mamas Matter Alliance (BMMA) Empowering black mothers, [@blackmamasmatter](https://www.instagram.com/blackmamasmatter), [facebook.com/BlackMamasMatter](https://www.facebook.com/BlackMamasMatter)
- Melanie Campbell (she/her), President/CEO of the [National Coalition on Black Civic Participation](#), convener, Black Women's Roundtable [instagram.com/explore/tags/nationalcoalitiononblackcivicparticipation](https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/nationalcoalitiononblackcivicparticipation), [facebook.com/NCBCP](https://www.facebook.com/NCBCP)
- Ragen Chastain (she/her), Board Member of the [Council on Size and Weight Discrimination](#), Fat Activist, Writer, Fathelete, [danceswithfat.org](https://www.danceswithfat.org), [@ragenchastain](https://www.instagram.com/ragenchastain), [facebook.com/ragenchastain](https://www.facebook.com/ragenchastain)
- Tracy Cox (she/her), co-Founder of [Angry Fat People](#), opera singer, [instagram.com/explore/tags/angryfatpeople](https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/angryfatpeople), [facebook.com/AngryFatPeople](https://www.facebook.com/AngryFatPeople)
- Johnetta Elzie (she/her), a leader in the activist group [We The Protesters](#) and co-editor of the Ferguson protest newsletter, *This Is the Movement*, [@nettaaaaaaa](https://www.instagram.com/nettaaaaaaa), [instagram.com/explore/tags/wetheprotesters](https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/wetheprotesters), [facebook.com/We-The-Protesters-109456817215550](https://www.facebook.com/We-The-Protesters-109456817215550)
- Chaya Milchtein (she/her), Automotive Educator, Journalist, Influencer, [mechanicshopfemme.com](https://www.mechanicshopfemme.com), [@mechanicshopfemme](https://www.instagram.com/mechanicshopfemme),



[facebook.com/cmilchtein](https://facebook.com/cmilchtein)

- Monica Simpson (she/her), Executive Director of [SisterSong](#), [@sistersong\\_woc](#), [com/SisterSongWOC](#)

## NAAFA Chronicles 62

As part of our monthly NAAFA Chronicles feature, enjoy NAAFA's 62nd newsletter, [Summer 1985](#).

For more, check out the "Chronicles" page of NAAFA's website, <https://naafa.org/chronicles>

## Media and Research Roundup

*by Bill and Terri Weitze*

January 25, 2021: A study concludes that a higher BMI is not related to differing immunological responses, unfavorable respiratory mechanics, or impaired outcome in COVID-19 patients requiring mechanical ventilation. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41366-021-00747-z>

February 26, 2021: Embracing HAES (Health at Every Size) has convinced UK doctor Natasha Larmie that the practice of weight-neutral medicine is the best approach to promoting healthful behaviors. <https://pharmaphorum.com/patients/health-at-every-size-making-medicine-weight-inclusive>

March 2021: A new library of HAES health sheets on various topics provides blame-free, shame-free explanations of common medical conditions. <https://haeshealthsheets.com>

March 1, 2021: A study finds that eating up to five servings of fruit and vegetables a day (not including starchy vegetables and fruit juices) is associated with a lower mortality risk. <https://doi.org/10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.120.048996>

March 1, 2021: *U.S. News'* feature focuses on Paula O. Lockhart, a fat black woman who used theater to come out of her shell and weightlifting to find peace with her body. Lockhart offers suggestions on how to make the gym a more inclusive and diverse place. <https://health.usnews.com/health-news/blogs/eat-run/articles/weightlifting-for-power-and-healing>

March 5, 2021: Ragen Chastain explains why the reporting on COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness for fat people is misleading and premature at best and encouraging fatphobia while possibly decreasing fat people's willingness to be

vaccinated at worst.

<https://danceswithfat.org/2021/03/05/is-pfizers-vaccine-really-less-effective-for-fat-people>

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.02.24.21251664v1>

March 5, 2021: Part of a series for *Good Housekeeping*, Alyssa Jung goes to experts to find out what exactly the term "fat and fit" means and whether it is achievable.

<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/health/diet-nutrition/a35058950/can-a-person-be-fat-and-fit>

March 6, 2021: Virginia Sole-Smith explains how fatphobia influences obesity research, the forms it takes, and the problems it causes.

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/in-obesity-research-fatphobia-is-always-the-x-factor>

March 10, 2021: Ragen Chastain discusses the study that led to the headlines claiming it is not possible to be fat and fit. This Fat Old Lady (the second link) puts in her two cents on the same study.

<https://danceswithfat.org/2021/03/10/does-that-study-really-say-you-cant-be-fit-and-fat>

<https://thisfatoldlady.com/2021/02/20/this-fat-old-ladys-fat-friday-is-fat-and-fit-possible>

<https://doi.org/10.1093/eurjpc/zwaa151>

March 12, 2021: The CDC claims that higher BMI is associated with greater risk for severe COVID-19 disease, requiring intensive illness management and vaccination prioritization. The second link is to supplementary tables for the report.

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/pdfs/mm7010e4-H.pdf>

[https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/103732/cdc\\_103732\\_DS1.pdf](https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/103732/cdc_103732_DS1.pdf)

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*Founded in 1969, NAAFA, the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance, is a non-profit human rights organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for fat people. NAAFA works to eliminate discrimination based on body size and provide fat people with the tools for self-empowerment through public education, advocacy, and member support.*

On the web: <https://naafa.org>

Comments: [pr@naafa.org](mailto:pr@naafa.org)

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