Introduction to fasting and longevity

Welcome back to the Longevity Summit. I'm your host, Doctor David Jockers, and I'm excited about our interview today. We're talking about how to tap into your innate intelligence for healthy aging and longevity with fasting.

Fasting is an incredible health strategy. It's something I'm extremely passionate about and practice myself. Our guest today is Ben Azadi, and Ben is the author of four bestselling books he wrote. The Keto Flex is the most recent one.

Definitely amazing book to check out the Keto Flex. He's written several other really good books as well, including The Power of Sleep, which is another phenomenal book for healing and longevity.

Ben is the host of a top 15 podcast called the Cato Camp Podcast, which won the Keto Podcast of the year in 20 and 2022 by the Metabolic Health Summit.

Ben has the fastest growing Keto camp YouTube channel with over 150,000 subscribers. He's also big on TikTok. He has over 285,000 subscribers there and over 46 million video downloads.

So putting out a lot of great content. Definitely check out his podcast, Akito Camp Podcast. Check him out on Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, wherever you're at.

Again, it's Keto Camp or Ben Azadi and his book The Keto Flex. And today we're going to talk about the myths and truths of fasting and really the best practices for putting fasting into place so you can get the anti-aging cell rejuvenating benefits.

I know you guys are getting a lot out of this interview. So without further ado, let's jump into it. Well, hey Ben, always great to talk to another fasting evangelist like myself.

You know, I've seen the healing power of fasting, and I know you have as well. And I'm excited about today's talk. I know you had mentioned really trying to discuss how fasting impacts the innate intelligence or how the innate intelligence goes to work when we're fasting.

And can you break that down a little bit? What is the innate intelligence and what happens when we start to fast?

Innate intelligence and the healing effects of fasting

Yeah. Well, I'm grateful to be here with you, David. I love what you're doing. I love this topic of fasting. I do believe it's the best way or one of the best ways to harness that innate intelligence.

So you talk a lot about this, this inner physician. We have the wisdom within the body. And there is an inner physician that God built inside of the body that is self-healing.

And the truth is, there's no pill or surgery or anything external that could replace the healing capabilities of this innate intelligence. And for many years, we thought it was just the DNA nucleus running the show.

We learned that there's something that communicates with the DNA nucleus, and that is the intelligence. That's the cell membrane. It's the integrity of that membrane, the cell wall.

So fasting removes the interference when we're eating constantly, like the average American is eating 300g of carbohydrates plus per day. And that alone is bad.

But they're eating it throughout the entire day, pretty much every waking hour. And they're constantly starting that digestive process. Number one, their content number two is that they're constantly raising glucose.

And so they have these blood sugar roller coaster spikes that eventually leads to leaky gut and insulin resistance, which leads to type two diabetes, which leads to a whole host of other health issues and complications.

So with fasting, it's like nature's reset button. You eliminate the interference, you allow your digestive system to take a break. And I always talk about an analogy to help this make sense.

It's like somebody who works a 9 to 5 job there. Let's say they're a corporate worker and they're working there, but off 40, 60 hour a week, every single week.

And they own a house with a garage. And this garage has compiled all this junk inside of it. But they don't have time. They have no time to clean out that junk because they're constantly working every single week.

But now their boss has given them two weeks off. So they're at home a couple days into this vacation and they're like, oh, I have all this time in my hand.

Let me venture off to the garage and they start fixing things, cleaning up this garage, getting rid of this old junk that was sitting around there for years.

And now you have this beautiful, functioning, incredible garage. And that's essentially what's happening when we fast, the native intelligence goes to work, and it looks for cells that are damaged and inflamed.

It allows the digestive system to take a break and it goes and repairs it. But when we're constantly eating and starting that digestive process, we don't have time for that.

It's like, okay, another project is started. We're going to have to work on that project, and then we're about to complete that project. Another project does come in.

You got to keep working on it. So when you fast, you allow your body to reset, recover, and you allow this inner physician to go to work and take care of the junk that needs to be taken care of.

Yeah, that's so well said. And I love that that idea of the inner wisdom within us, the inner physician within us, going to work and healing and repairing our body.

Now, a lot of people and I used to think this too, growing up, my parents, we they would have us fast. And I didn't start doing this. I was a teenager, but it was like one day out of the entire year we would do a fast and it was for spiritual purposes.

And I thought, that is like the worst thing ever. I thought it was just horrible that I would waste. I would completely waste away. I'd have absolutely no energy at all.

And like in a sense, psychologically, I kind of psychologically set myself up for that. And a lot of people have this idea that if they go more than like 3 or 4 hours without eating, that they're going to have no energy and that they're actually going to lose.

They're going to waste away their muscles going to waste away, and they're going to feel awful. And so I really want to touch on some of these myths behind fasting.

And so what is your your experience been with that. I used to have the same thought process, especially like during the early days when I got into the health space 2008 or so, and it's still very popular in the fitness space that you will waste away.

You're going to eat away at muscle, go into starvation mode. And yeah, that's debunk a lot of these myths. You

know, with that mindset, sometimes your thoughts could create the reality in the fact.

So we want to go into it knowing that fasting is a healing tool. It's definitely a healing space to be in. And I like to put things in perspective. When somebody is afraid of skipping a meal or going at least more than four hours without eating something.

And I put it into perspective, and I talk about this gentleman named Angus Barberie, who did the Guinness World Record for the longest recorded water fast many, many years ago.

Scotsman. He was 450 pounds. So the man was morbidly obese and he was medically supervised and he had water, some electrolytes, coffee, tea and some nutritional yeast.

But essentially he didn't eat for 382 days and he went from 300 and 450 pounds, excuse me, on day 1 to 180 pounds on day three. 82. And his electrolytes looked great. Bloodwork looked great.

He felt great. Now he had a lot of weight, a lot of energy on his body to to be used for fuel. It's an extreme example, but that goes to show that somebody who's very lean, 10% body fat has tens of thousands of calories on them.

And when you don't eat, you essentially are going to use your body fat.

Myths about fasting, energy, and muscle loss

That's exactly what it is. It's stored energy, and the body is very smart. We talked about this innate intelligence already, but we have this incredible human body that was built for for thriving.

And when we fast, the body is going to raise these counter regulatory hormones as insulin drops, these hormones that run counter to insulin increase. So glucagon, human growth hormone, the sympathetic tone essentially is activated in human growth hormone is one of those hormones that actually preserves muscle.

It preserves lean muscle mass. It actually helps you put the lean muscle mass on. And that's your body's way of protecting your muscle. When you're in a fasted state, your body is going to go for your fat stores, not your muscle.

That wouldn't be a very efficient mechanism. If we automatically tap into muscle and protein, our ancestors would not have survived. They would have withered away.

So we have amazing process that takes place, and there's a lot of research that shows this takes place in a fasted state. There was a once a study that came out, I believe, was 2013 Science Daily that showed a 20 for our water fast resulted in about a two 0% increase in human growth hormone, and a 13 100% increase in women in the 2000 was in men after about 24 hours.

And that's because the body is preserving the muscle, not eating away at it. Yeah. And that's so important to understand is that you get this HGH release, which again, helps you preserve that lean body mass and actually creates an environment that if you do strength training and actually enhance your strength and enhance your muscle tissue, and that's really powerful.

And going back to that ancestral perspective, you know, when our ancestors didn't have food for, let's say, a day or two, they didn't just lay in their beds, instead they actually, you know, in a sense, hunger was like a drive for them to become more creative in their hunting, in their gathering, in whatever the mechanisms they had to, to, to access food.

Right. And so, so they, they actually became harder to kill in a sense. They became stronger, more resilient through that, that experience. And I think all of us have experienced it.

It's like on Thanksgiving we eat a huge meal. We're bringing in all this potential energy. But then how do we feel? Tired. Right. And and so when you start practicing intermittent fasting, you know, it's one of those things you

actually start to notice that you have better energy, better mental clarity.

It's pretty amazing what happens. What are some of the other myths that you encounter that people have when it comes to to practicing fasting? Yeah. And you're exactly right.

You know, when you eat a big meal, like you turn a food coma, that's where the term food coma came from. It takes so much energy from you and resources and blood flow.

And now you're using that for digestion. But when you're fasted, that energy is diverted. You talk a lot about that in your book and your work. Yeah. So another myth would be that men and women should practice fasting the same way.

And that's not true because and we should also classify women in different parts of their life, practicing in different ways as well. Like a menstruating women should practice fasting differently than a woman who's post-menopausal, and then a man should practice it differently than a woman because of different hormone fluctuations.

We have the same hormones, but we have different fluctuations in those hormones. So men have this 24 hour recycling pattern of hormones, kind of like the sun.

Sun comes out. It's it's it rises. It sets 24 hour pattern. We kind of have a similar pattern with some of our sex hormones and etc.. So cycling women have this 28 day pattern where it's more like the moon that comes out after 28 days.

So they have to do it a little bit different. So week by week that would be a little bit different. Fasting schedule for a menstruating women for example, the week before the period would be a week where probably that menstruating women does not want to practice too much fasting because they want to build progesterone.

However healthy monthly cycle the period starts, then it's a good week for the fast to occur and do more aggressive fasting. So there's a big myth that men and women should do it the same.

And that's not true and fascinating. Unfortunately, it's good and bad. It's become very popular and that's a good thing. People are becoming aware to it because it's not new, it's just nuanced.

But with that being so popular, people are saying women should not fast because it wrecks their hormones. And that's like saying women should not exercise because it wrecks their hormones.

They're they're saying fasting is a stress. So it's not good for you, especially women. It's the same thing as saying they shouldn't exercise because exercise is a stress. And you know, there's David.

It's about staying in that zone of stress is very important. You mentioned being harder to kill our ancestors. We want to be harder to kill. And stress is how you do that.

Your body needs to adapt to that stress. But that's the thing. It needs to adapt. So stress is only bad when your body doesn't adapt, but when it does adapt, you get stronger, you get healthier, you live longer, you feel better.

So I kind of threw in a few myths there, but that's the next minute that I would want to cover. Yeah, I think that's so important. I mean, it's kind of like the principle of overload in fitness.

So if you don't train your muscles atrophy or if you train to light, your muscles will atrophy or they won't. You won't get the benefits where you actually have to challenge your muscles in a certain way, where you are challenging them at their peak, in a sense, overloading the amount of resistance that they can put out in order to then adapt.

Right. As long as you have enough nutrients and rest to then get stronger. It's kind of the same with fasting, where you know you have to practice it and you've got to, in a sense, challenge your metabolic system in a healthy way to just kind of gradually bump it or give it a nudge, give your metabolic system a nudge, and then of course, rest,

recover, provide the proper nutrients.

So that way you can recover and get stronger through the stress like you were talking about. So that's so important. Any other big myths that you're seeing with fasting?

Yeah, a lot of people say, you know, the benefits from fasting come from being in a caloric deficit.

Women, hormones, and fasting differences

That might be one benefit, but there is a big difference between fasting and a calorie deficit or cutting calories, because with simply just cutting calories, for example, let's say somebody is cutting calories, but they're eating throughout the day.

They're not getting that digestive reset even though there are calories or cut, versus somebody who may cut their calories to the same amount. But with fasting, they do get that digestive reset.

So there's a difference there with what it does for the gut. But I don't like to focus on calories because I think calories are more of a distraction.

I think the body is much more sophisticated and complex than just calories in versus calories. I do think calories matter, but I don't think they're high on the priority list.

I think they're more of a distraction than anything else, and I had to do a whole 180 with that, because in the beginning, I used to teach all about the science of fat loss and teach people how to calculate their total daily energy expenditure and being a deficit.

And the problem with it is many problems. But one of the main problems is that it works short term and the person thinks, okay, this is working. Cutting calories does work, Ben's a liar, David's a liar.

But over time, what's going to happen? The metabolism needs to adapt to the energy deficit and then the metabolism slows and lowers. And then you got to cut your calories more and you can only cut your calories so much.

So with fasting, it's not necessarily about eating less, it's about eating less often. You could still be in a calorie deficit. But the cool thing about doing it with fasting is that you have the counter regulatory hormones that preserve your metabolism and prevent your metabolism from going into this starvation mode.

Granted, with excessive fasting, not good, but with the right amount of fasting, you talk about that and adapting to it and then getting the nutrients and enough protein during your eating window, you won't have that issue.

The body is very, very smart, and there are studies that show the metabolism actually revs up during a fast, not decreases. And that's because of these counter regulatory hormones.

Yeah that's good. And what are some of the biggest mistakes that you see people making as they start to practice intermittent fasting? One of the biggest mistakes is that they think that they don't look at fasting as a muscle.

And I do look at it as a muscle. You mentioned that as well. So for example, if somebody was a couch potato for ten years and they hear about the amazing benefits of CrossFit or these like berries, boot camp, whatever it is, and they go, they do a full on 60 minute workout that first day.

They are going to hurt themselves. They are going to be sore for a week. They're going to feel awful. Similar with fasting. If you've been a sugar burner, eating every 2 to 3 hours for years, and you go and you hear about the benefits of a 24 hour fast and you say, tomorrow is my day, I'm going to do a 24 hour fast, it's going to look ugly and feel awful because it's a muscle you haven't developed yet.

So it's a big mistake to dive right into fasting. You want to build up that fasting muscle. One of the best ways to do that, and I know you teach the same thing, is to get fat adapted feature body to burn fat instead of sugar.

You do that in 7 to 14 days. Do some variation of keto, a low carb, high fat. Get your body familiar with burning fat instead of sugar. Then you start pairing that with the fasting schedule, and you start building up that window with fasting.

You start extending that window and you're going to notice the you're going to get the results that you're seeking because you didn't go right into it and, you know, shock the body essentially.

So that's a big mistake. People just do too much too soon. Yeah, that's super important. And so you talked about getting fat adapted. Can you expand upon that.

And so you can do it in about 7 or 14 days? I know you're a huge advocate of a ketogenic diet. You have the great podcast, Keto Camp and your book Keto Flex, where you teach people really how to do that, how to get into a fat adapted state.

Let's talk about the importance of that and how somebody goes about getting into that. Yeah, absolutely. And I do see it as a really important first step for somebody who's burning.

Let me explain what that means. The average person, as I mentioned, is consuming 300g of carbs plus per day and eating frequently. They're constantly burning sugar and glucose.

They're they're in this sugar burning state. And when we think about the $70 sales or sale inside of the body, we have two major pathways for energy sugar or fat, in other words, glucose or ketones.

The majority of people in some studies, the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill came out with that study in 2018. That said, about 88% of American adults are essentially metabolically unhealthy, and I would categorize them as being a sugar burner.

So what we want to do is teach these individuals to switch energy sources, to burn fat and use ketones. And as we how we do that, it's pretty straightforward.

We want to gradually decrease our total carbohydrates. So if that if you are listening to this, watching this, and you are consuming 300g of carbs per day, let's gradually decrease that every single day until we lower that under 50 total grams of carbs per day.

Calories, metabolism, and fasting mistakes

Some people need to go lower, but we'll say 50g of carbs per day. And as you're doing that, you're increasing healthy fats, saturated fats, mono unsaturated fats.

You're increasing healthy dietary protein as well. And in about 7 to 14 days and keeping your electrolytes up at the same time, which is very important in about seven, 7 to 14 days, your body is going to make that switch where now you're burning body fat.

Those fatty acids are now being sent to your liver. Your liver is using it and producing ketones. And you talk all about this in your work and books, David.

So that is somebody who's fat adapted at that point. And you could test, by the way, your blood ketones, if it shows 0.5 or higher, milli moles per liter, you're essentially in Katowice and you are fat adapted.

And you can do that in 7 to 14 days. And once you achieve that, then I would start pairing in some fasting schedules with that. So how would you recommend somebody get started with that to get fat adapted?

Like should they start by intermittent fasting? What's kind of like your first steps without the first step would be the carbohydrate decrease and then remove the snacking.

Have your three meals per day instead if you're doing six meals a day. So let's say you're doing three meals and three snacks. It would just three meals.

And then every day, track your macros in terms of your carbohydrates and keep lowering those carbs until you get to under 50 total grams of carbs per day.

I also talk about the 2222 rule, which I got actually from a mutual friend of ours, my mentor Doctor Pompa. And this is a good strategy for a beginner, and you want to hit this rule every day for until you get into ketosis and get fat adapted.

So it's two tablespoons of olive oil and avocado oil every day, two tablespoons of grass fed butter or grass fed ghee every single day, few tablespoons of coconut oil or MCT oil every single day.

And then two teaspoons of sea salt every single day as you lower the carbs. Hit that two, two, two, two rule. And then once you verify that you're in ketosis, then I would maybe eliminate the breakfast and have lunch and dinner, which you're doing like a 16, a fast or the opposite way.

You could have breakfast and lunch and eliminate the dinner, whatever works better for your schedule. Yeah. That's great. That's how I teach it as well.

I think, you know, that's kind of an easy way to to gradually move into it as your body gets fed, adapted, you have less, you have less hunger and cravings.

You know, I always say like, I very rarely am actually hungry. Usually I don't actually notice hunger until I start eating and then my body. It's eating time, right?

Yeah. It's like, okay, I need to get my calories now. And that's when you don't you don't have to think about calories because your body's going to give you the right, the right idea as far as how much you need to consume.

And, you know, there are some people that when they start practicing fasting, they have a tendency to overeat a little bit, and they might notice symptoms like their energy goes down a lot after they eat or they have digestive issues, things like that.

And so that would be a sign, hey, maybe cut it down just a little bit. Right. And so we kind of have to listen to the feedback that your body is getting.

Are there any tips that you give as people are reducing the amount of meals they're consuming and and consolidating. They're, they're, they're eating window and maybe consuming a little bit more calories in their meals because they're only eating maybe 2 or 3 times a day.

So they're eating a larger amount when they do eat. Are there any tips that you give to help improve digestion, to help improve energy between meals, or like right after their meal?

Yeah, I like focusing on protein as the main macronutrient with those meals, and I would say aim to get about 40g of protein, at least two of those meals, and you should be in good shape.

Protein is so important. The amino acids are essential amino acids, right? There are essential facts, essential amino acids. There's no such thing as essential carbohydrates.

Interesting, right? Not that we're saying you should never have carbs. I'm just saying they're not essential. The body can manufacture glucose from protein and fat, which is super cool.

But yeah, focus on protein. And now let's say you're eating more protein, but it's kind of sitting in your gut. That's a sign of low stomach acid. And you want to build up the stomach acid.

And you could do that with taking some CL supplementation or some apple cider vinegar. So that's a sign that it's more of a problem with breaking down protein if it sits in the gut.

If you get more loose stools. And David, you talk about this, if you get more diarrhea loose stools, that's more of a problem breaking down fat. And that's where you want to support the liver and the livers ability to produce bile.

So maybe incorporate more bitters. Maybe take an ox bile supplement, maybe do some things like a Castro oil pack or coffee animals, but that'll signal more liver support.

And one more thing I would recommend. Keep your electrolytes and your your minerals up, especially during the fast, because as you fast, your body is going to lower insulin, which is a good thing for especially for a lot of people.

And as you lower insulin, you release all this extra body weight and you shed extra body weight, which is really good. You're going to feel lighter and look lighter.

But the kidneys also will shed some electrolytes too. And sometimes if it happens to aggressively, you might get a headache, your energy levels might drop.

So just keeping those minerals and electrolytes up during the fasting window is going to be very important. Yeah, I think that's a really important caveat.

Most people out there have heard salt is bad, and especially if they have like a tendency towards maybe they have a family history of high blood pressure or cardiovascular disease.

A lot of times just preventative.

Getting fat adapted with keto and electrolytes

Their doctor will put them on a low salt diet, and a low salt diet can be helpful if you have insulin resistance, because when you have high insulin, you retain sodium.

But as you are getting fat adapted and doing intermittent fasting, you're actually getting insulin sensitive and your overall insulin levels go down, which is, like you mentioned, extremely healthy.

And this is what most people out there, you mentioned 88%, you know, so almost nine out of ten people on our side, you actually need to lower the amount of insulin in their blood.

When they do that, you start to excrete sodium. And that's what you were talking about. So replacing that, getting the sea salt you mentioned two teaspoons.

Two teaspoons each day right. Yeah. Two teaspoons. Yeah. The salt. Yep yep. So making sure you're getting enough of that getting enough trace minerals right.

And there's a lot of good trace mineral rich foods that we both love that we talk about a lot in our books. And when we're doing that now we're replacing those.

And that's going to help you with energy. A lot of times when people are going through this fat adaptation process and they don't feel good, a lot of it's because they don't have the salts right there.

They're actually electrolyte and sodium deficient. And that will cause a condition called keto flu, right? Where you actually feel really awful. And I know you've probably seen a lot of people experience this.

Yeah, exactly. And it really is more of like carbohydrate withdrawal symptoms. But that's exactly what the major cause of it is. It's a dramatic decrease in those electrolytes.

So day one keep the sea salt up. Keep the electrolytes and minerals up. And you don't have to go through the suffering. You don't have to experience the keto flu as long as you do this the right way.

Yeah for sure. And you mentioned protein and getting 40g of protein. And I know I'm a huge advocate of that as well. I'm usually eating two meals a day, sometimes three with like a third one, and I'm always getting 40, 50 plus grams of protein in all of my meals.

Really helps me feel great, takes away any sort of cravings. I feel really mentally clear, great energy after my meals and I just feel fantastic. I'm stronger now at at 41 than I, you know, it ever was.

Really, honestly, even in my early 20s, I feel better than ever. And really, dialing in the protein has been key with that. However, in the longevity world, protein can have a, you know, there's kind of this bad rap.

You know, people will look at bodybuilders and they'll say, well, you know, they're they're amplifying this pathway, mTOR, this kind of growth pathway in the body.

And they're doing it too much. Right. And so how does kind of this sort of nutrition plan, where we're prioritizing protein when we're eating, but also we're taking breaks away from food.

How does that help us with our mTOR and keeping mTOR under control? It's a great question. And you're right. You know, that is a problem. We look at bodybuilders.

I think I was reading a stat that showed the average bodybuilder lives about 12 years less than the average person, and people blame that on mTOR and enter this mechanistic target of rapamycin, this anabolic growth pathway, it's very important in spurts, very healthy in spurts.

But when you're constantly in a growth pathway, the sensor this turned on all the time. It's going to signal growth growth growth. And sometimes it could signal growth to cells.

We don't want to grow and duplicate. So that's the problem with too much mTOR. The opposite of mTOR is autophagy which is more catabolic and repair. And you get that with exercise you get that with fasting.

And Antofagasta is such an incredible process. Again, the innate intelligence going to work and looking for cells that are not working properly and trying to fix those cells.

And if it has determined a cell is not functioning at all, this a senescent zombie cell, it'll send a signal to get rid of the cell altogether via apoptosis, and then go another step and create a stem cell, which is amazing.

All this is happening during the fast. So with the protein, if you're having your right amount of protein during your eating window, and then you're going and pairing that with a fasting schedule, you're getting a proper balance now of mTOR growth in spurts and then a top of G catabolic repair.

So that is the magic. It's it's delicate dance between both these pathways and tours. And they have an inverted relationship. So if mTOR is activated autophagy is deactivated and vice versa.

So we don't want to much and too much fasting. And we don't want too much m torn to much growth. That's where pairing an intermittent fasting schedule with the feasting schedule with enough protein is where the magic happens.

Yeah. Great explanation. And I think that's, you know, that's the advantage of the way that I teach you, the way that you teach it in your keto Flex book is we are getting the benefits of both, because there's a lot of people in the longevity space that really, really prioritize autophagy.

And I totally understand why autophagy is an amazing mechanism. And most people in our society are autophagy deficient, meaning their body is not undergoing this this process of cellular healing and repair.

And so most people need to prioritize that for a certain period of time. But too much autophagy is just as bad as too much mTOR. Your body wastes away.

And we know that as people age, a big condition they deal with is sarcopenia, where they lose muscle tissue, bone tissue. And if we are overdoing the autophagy, we're wasting our system away.

And I think one of the most important things we can do is build lean body tissue and then do everything we can to keep it and to keep it functioning at a really high level.

And I think what you're talking about there, where it's like this feast famine cycle. Right. And I know you call it Keto Flex, where we're undergoing this period of autophagy, and also periods where we are elevating mTOR so we can build maintain muscle mass.

I think that really works perfectly with giving us kind of the what our goals are, which is to have great health, great, great, great functioning brain lean body tissues so we can pick up our our, you know, great great grandchildren when we're 94 years old, right.

And, you know, do all the things we want to do and live into our 90s without any medications. Yeah, that is the ultimate goal right there. And the balance is very, very important.

Protein, digestion, and balancing mTOR with autophagy

We the problem is this. And I was guilty of this when I first started to get into fasting in 2013. You feel so good when you fast. At least I do. And you fall in love with it.

You hear about all the benefits of a G and what it does for the gut, and for fat loss, and for the brain and body and f and and you want more and more is not necessarily better.

Right. So you got to balance it out. Feast. Famine, cycling. David, you nailed it right. That is what our cells are hardwired to do and how to how our selves thrive.

There's a time to fast. And when we fast, we fast at a time to feast. And when we feast, we feast. We get enough protein, healthy food. It's important to balance out both.

And I don't know. I ask you this question, David. With fasting being so popular, I have found in my community, I'm telling more people to feast versus before I was telling them more so to fast.

Have you found the same thing? Yeah, I think that is important a lot. Like you said, a lot of people will go overboard with this. I mean, I did too. I remember, you know, I felt so good.

I was doing 224 hour fasts a week and I felt great, like brain function. I felt like the best I had ever felt. I felt so good. And I did this for a year and a half, and I was kind of in my second year of doing this, and I'm like, I don't like with my workouts.

Towards the end of my workouts, I was just feeling really fatigued, taking, having to take longer periods of time between sets and I'm like, I don't feel like I'm maximizing my strength potential.

And I stopped doing that and I only do it once a week now, which I think for me works perfectly, a 124 hour fast a week. In fact, I just did it from lunch Wednesday to lunch Thursday, finish it with a workout, and actually I'm exercising.

I'm working out more and feeling amazing. Recovering better. My sleep scores are better. I've added like 7 pounds

of muscle feeling really, really good.

So I think all of us, you, you do feel so good when you get fat adapted. And I think that's something that the listener really to understand. When you practice this the right way, you're going to feel good and sometimes you're going to press into it because you are feeling so good and you know, you've got to you always have to have a radar and be listening to the messages your body is giving you and experiment with different things.

I think that's important to understand that perhaps there was a certain approach that you took that that helped you feel great, but you might need to tinker it.

It doesn't mean like a radical change, but even just kind of small changes and constantly listening to the feedback that your body is giving you to really, you know, find the best approach for you, at least at this period of time in your life.

I know, like for example, when we had when we have babies. So my wife and I were done having children now, but we had four children, four and five and a half years, including twins in the beginning, and I was working out seven days a week when we first started.

And with the twins, it was like I was getting like 4 or 5 hours of sleep at night, and it was not good sleep, and I just was so overtrained and I was feeling inflamed all the time, having trouble focusing, concentrating, just massive fatigue at times.

And I realized I'm way overdoing it. I'm not recovering well enough. I need to dial down the exercise. So if we're under extreme amount of stress, we might feel good when we're fasting, and then all of a sudden we hit a really stressful season of our life.

We might need to dial it back a little bit because again, fasting is a stressor. And so the more stress we're under, you know, we can only handle so much amount of stress on our system.

We might need to dial it back. We might be overtraining. So we always have to watch for feedback from that. And you're right. In our communities we tend to we tend to get people that start this.

They have a great experience with it. And that's one of the reasons why they love following us. And they keep pressing into it because they're hearing about all these great benefits.

And they in some cases, they're doing too much of it. It's exactly what I did, you know, because you're right. You feel so good. But you got to listen to the body like you did. David.

You felt inflamed and yeah, seven days a week getting 4 to 5 hours of sleep. Of course, you're not going to be able to recover and adapt to those stressors.

One of the things I personally use and what I teach my students, is a good gauge to know if you're fasting too much or not. Number one, like you said, pay attention to the clues and the signals your body is giving you.

Number two, I like looking at heart rate variability. That's a good gauge to see if my nervous system is to challenge, right? I love I have the ordering. I think you do too.

Right? Yeah, yeah. So when I see my heart rate variability tank, I know that I applied to much stress. It could have been mental stress. It could have been too much of a fast physical stress.

And that's a day for me not to apply a lot of stress. So it'll be more of a feast day, more light activity versus a heavy training session. So I look at Harvey, but if I see my Harvey increase or, you know, hit baseline for me around 65in like my baseline this morning I woke up and it was 72.

So it was actually a little bit higher than my baseline. So today I did a good workout in a fasted state. I did sprints, I

did some bench press because I saw that and I felt good and I used that as a good gauge.

But if I would have saw my Harvey tanked like 42 and I would have probably felt off as a result, I wouldn't have done the same workout or the same fasting schedule.

Yeah. So you're getting that feedback. And again, not only do you can you just listen to your body, but also you can actually look at your heart rate variability like you were talking about.

The aura rings are great, great instrument to use. Just a ring that you wear at night. It will actually track your deep sleep, your REM sleep. It will look at your heart rate variability like you mentioned, which is kind of like the gap between the heartbeats.

And a lot of people think, well, it's that gap between the heartbeats. The space between the heartbeats should be the same all the time. It's actually not true.

You're you're adaptability and resilience. One way to measure that is the heart rate variability actually should be very variable. Should be should be highly variable.

And that's a sign of better adaptation. It's really interesting. Yeah exactly. And that's such a good gauge right. If we think about the nervous system and even you study this in school right.

Recovery, heart rate variability, and biohacking

They never system is so important. Those two primary branches that sympathetic branch which is that fight or flight very important in spurts just like mTOR.

And then the parasympathetic more rest digest very important in spurts. A lot of people, including myself was I was I was locked into sympathetic and I was doing a lot of fasting.

I was doing I had a cross for my own several years ago, and that's not good. It needs to be balanced with more parasympathetic. And that heart rate variability is giving you that gauge, that score.

If you are adapting to the stressors, everybody's going to have a different average and a different baseline. So don't compare. You know, I shouldn't care compare my HR to David's and vice versa.

But you find your your average your baseline for maybe seven days. And then you work on building it up over time. And if you have days where it's tanked, it doesn't necessarily mean it's a bad thing, by the way, because you could have done a good workout and then it lowered the HR.

But if that's a day for recovery and then over time, it actually could pull it back up because of that stressor. So look at it as a gauge and pay attention to your body.

And those are going to give you some good clues to whether or not you're fasting too much or you're in a good sweet spot. Yeah, a really good point. What are your top recovery strategies for people to practice?

Oh good question. Number one is my favorite supplement in the world called vitamin G. This supplement is anti-inflammatory helps with oxytocin and Gaba.

I mean I found studies that show vitamin G lowers A1, C lowers blood pressure. I looked at some of Doctor Joe Dispenza work, and he's done some brain scans, and he's seen 1200 chemical reactions take place when participants take vitamin G.

So vitamin G you can't get at Amazon or your supplement store. It's the practice of gratitude, and it really acts like a vitamin A supplement because it's so anti-inflammatory and it's going to put you in a parasympathetic state soon as you feel the gratitude, not a checklist.

Meaning don't treat it like a checklist. You probably won't get the same benefits. But feeling the gratefulness, feeling the gratitude. What an amazing way to instantly put your body into a recovering parasympathetic state.

So some simple ways to do it. If you have trouble digesting food, as you sit there and look at your food, think about all the things that went into getting that food right in front of you.

The animals that fed off the earth, the transportation, the company. It was delivered to your house. However it got there, like all the moving parts for you to feed and on that food and to thrive in your life and feel that gratitude like that puts you in a parasympathetic state and actually helps with digestion.

And then right before bed is another really good time to practice vitamin G, because the subconscious mind is really highly impressionable. So vitamin G number one, I have some more, but I don't know if you wanted to add to that. David.

No, I love that. I mean vitamin G, just that gratitude. If you could bottle that up, that would be blockbuster. You know, that would be the the the single best drug that that pharma has ever created.

Ever. Right? Yes. So true. But you can't bottle it up and it's free and it's free and you can choose to choose it at any time. You choose it at any time. And you can't overdose.

There's no upper limit. So that's number one. Number two would be something that's very important for health is to live a life on purpose with your purpose.

Find out what your highest values are. I know Doctor John DeMartini is somebody that I freaking loved. Have you studied Doctor John DeMartini? Yeah I have, yeah, I've heard of him.

Yeah, yeah. He's incredible. He talks so much about your highest values and the Greeks call it your telos. And there's a whole study on this called teleology, the study of purpose and highest values.

And when you are living in congruent with what's important to you, you are in a healing state. And so many people are doing things because it's what's expected of them.

That's an inflammatory state. It's very hard to feel happy and healthy when you're doing things that are you're not designed to do. So finding a life of purpose is very important.

I know that's outside the scope of this conversation, but I have to throw that in there. But some practical things in terms of like biohacking, red light therapy, big fan of red light therapy.

I've got a panel here. I've got two panels upstairs. So yeah. Photo by modulation. Again, more is not better. Find a good sweet spot for red light therapy grounding, which could also be called vitamin G which is simply your bare feet on the sand, the dirt, the grass on Earth essentially just grounding.

It's really important. It's like taking a handful of antioxidants. I utilize a p f mat, which is similar to the benefits of grounding as well. Funny movies, things that get oxytocin going.

Great for recovery and sleep quality, deep sleep and REM sleep. Like I aim to get at least an hour and a half of each each night are very important for recovery.

Yeah, all really great strategies. I also like just, you know, if you have a family, significant other, a pet, just cuddling, getting that oxytocin release super powerful really helps you heal and recover.

Getting out in the sun. You know, you mentioned red light and infrared. I know for me I feel best when when I'm getting like 30 minutes of good quality sun on a daily basis just helps so much.

So I think that's another great strategy. Some people will do, you know, infrared sauna. I think that's fantastic. I do it

from time to time as well. You can do that as well, especially if you got it really cranked up and really hot.

And same with with with cold plunges, cold showers, things like that. I think it's very helpful. It's something I practice but again can be overdone, you know, and we have a society where, you know, there's some people that are that it's interesting because in our society, some people are very adverse to doing anything that's uncomfortable.

Gratitude, purpose, and closing thoughts

And then there's other people that are like, oh, it's uncomfortable, give me more. Right. And so it's like, got to find the right balance. Yeah. So true. It's just an important point.

And the biohacking space it's the latter right. Give me more. Give me more. Yeah. If you ask the average cold plunge coach or whatever you want to call them, breathwork coaches would do a lot of cold plunging.

You ask them, all right, how long should I do it for? I'm not going to tell you that. Most of them are going to tell you three minutes. And that is not the right answer.

Like somebody who's really challenged with their mitochondria and their health. Yeah. Should not do three minutes. Right David. They maybe they should do 30s and then build their way up.

I think the most important thing to ask yourself is how did you feel the rest of the day after that sauna, after that red light, after that cold plunge, after that fast after that workout, whatever it was, if you felt better and more energized, you found a good rhythm. You found a good length, a good duration.

But if you feel more depleted, you did too much. Yeah, amazing. Amazing interview mazing stuff. Really great tips. Ben. This has been awesome. Guys, check out his book Keto Flex and also his podcast Keto Camp.

Really, really good stuff that he's putting out. Ben, any last words inspiration here for audience? Yeah, no thank you David. I've been a huge fan of your work for so many years and it's honored to call you a friend.

I love what you're doing with the summit. So important. My last bit of advice would be, you know, believe the body was built to be self-healing. It really is.

And if you believe, you'll create that fact. But if you believe it wasn't, you're also right. We choose where you want to put your energy into and where you put your energy into.

Expand. So faith and fear both demand for you to believe in something you cannot see. You choose the choices you are. So I encourage you to choose faith and believe that your body is built to be self-healing.

And fasting is one of the ways to harness that self-healing mechanism. Love that. Ben, thank you so much. You're an inspiration.