

A watercolor illustration of a woman with long, dark, wavy hair, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt. She is shown in profile, drinking water from a clear glass bottle. The background features soft, abstract watercolor washes in shades of green, blue, and brown, suggesting an indoor setting with light coming through a window. The overall style is artistic and soft.

# Chapter 3: My Intermittent Fasting Routine

A structured, week-by-week guide to building a sustainable fasting practice — starting with a 20/4 schedule, eliminating sugar, and progressing toward a calorie deficit for steady, lasting results.

WEEKS 1-2

20/4 PROTOCOL

NO SUGAR

# Why Fasting?

The primary goal of this fasting protocol is to support **autophagy** — your body's natural cellular cleanup process. During autophagy, the body identifies and removes damaged or dysfunctional cells, recycling their components for energy and repair.

- 📘 Autophagy typically increases after **16–24 hours** of fasting, making extended fasting windows especially powerful for cellular renewal.

By committing to a 20/4 fasting window, you spend the majority of each day in a fasted state — giving your cells the time and conditions they need to clean house and rebuild stronger.

## The 20/4 Window

**Fast:** 7:00 PM – 3:00 PM

**Eat:** 3:00 PM – 7:00 PM

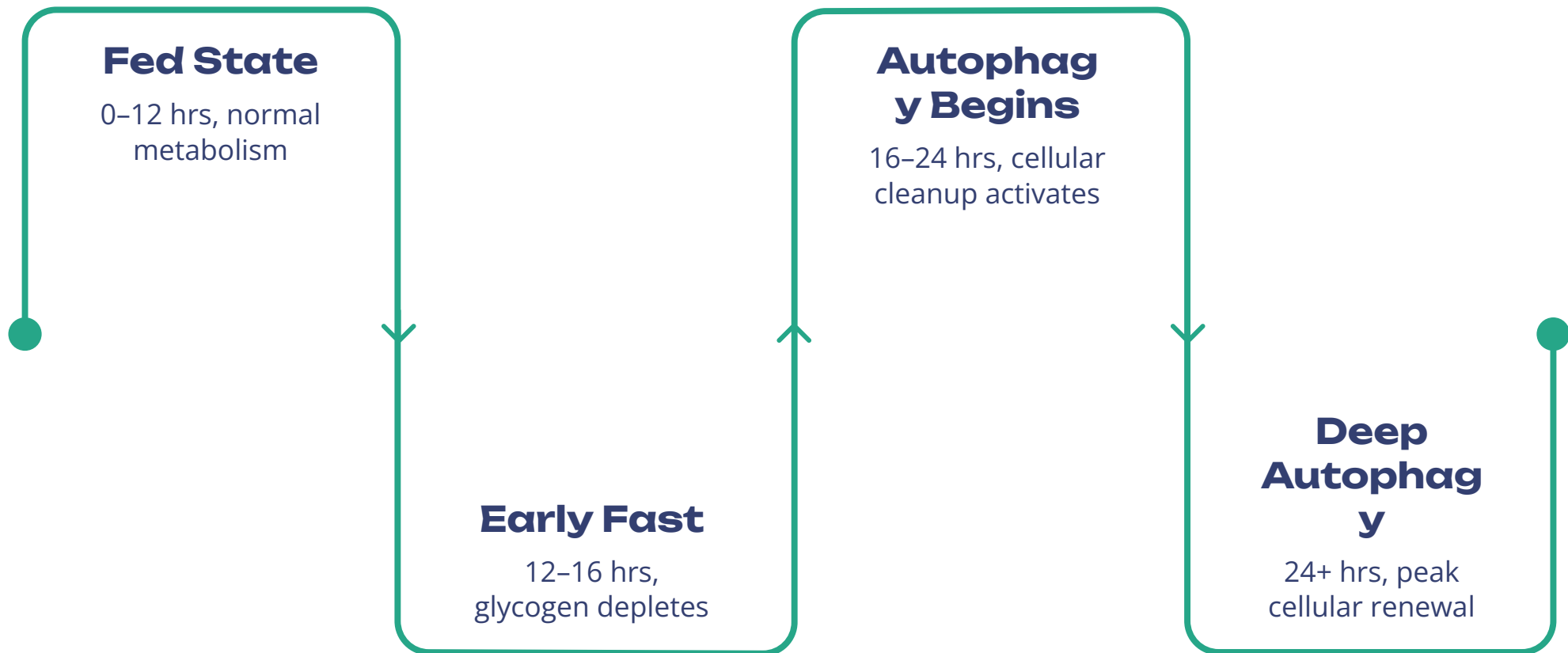
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## Core Rules

- No sugar during the eating window
- Consistency every day of the week
- Stay hydrated throughout the fast

# How Autophagy Works

Understanding the science behind fasting helps you stay motivated through the harder hours of your fast.



Each hour you extend your fast beyond the 16-hour mark, your body deepens its cellular repair process. The 20/4 protocol is specifically designed to consistently hit this sweet spot every single day.

# Weeks 1-2: 20/4 Fasting Tracker

Use this tracker daily to log your fasting completion and sugar-free status. Consistency is the foundation of results.

Day	Fast Completed (7PM-3PM)	No Sugar	Notes
Monday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Friday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sunday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

- ✔ Tip: Check off each box at the end of the day. Seeing a full row of completed checkmarks builds momentum and reinforces the habit.

# Weeks 1-2: Weekly Reflection

At the end of each week, take a few minutes to reflect on your experience. Honest self-assessment is what drives real progress.

## Energy Level This Week

Rate your overall energy from low to high. Did you feel more alert during your fasting window, or more sluggish? Note any patterns — many people report a surge in mental clarity after day 3.

My rating: \_\_\_\_\_

## Hunger Level (1-10)

1 = barely noticed fasting. 10 = extremely difficult. Most people find hunger peaks around days 2-3 and then subsides significantly as the body adapts to the new eating window.

My rating: \_\_\_\_\_

## What Did I Learn?

Capture your biggest insight from the week. Did you discover a trigger food? A time of day when hunger spikes? A strategy that helped you push through? Write it down — these notes become your personal fasting playbook.


My insight: \_\_\_\_\_

Consistency is key. Two full weeks of adherence rewires your hunger hormones and sets the stage for everything that follows.

# Week 3: Reintroducing Fruit

## The Focus

Week 3 introduces a meaningful shift: **natural sugars from fruit** are welcomed back into your eating window, with a strong preference for **berries** — blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, and blackberries.

 Processed sugar remains completely off the table. The goal is to distinguish between natural, fiber-rich sugars and refined sugars that spike insulin and disrupt the fasting benefits.

## Why Berries First?

- Low glycemic index — minimal insulin spike
- High in antioxidants that complement autophagy
- Rich in fiber, which slows sugar absorption
- Satisfying sweetness that curbs cravings naturally

**Small improvements matter.** Adding fruit is a reward for two weeks of discipline — enjoy it mindfully.

# Week 3: Daily Tracker

Continue logging your fasting window while adding a new column to track fruit inclusion. This builds awareness of how natural sugars affect your energy and hunger levels.

Day	Fast Completed	Fruit Included	Notes
Monday	■	■	
Tuesday	■	■	
Wednesday	■	■	
Thursday	■	■	
Friday	■	■	
Saturday	■	■	
Sunday	■	■	

## ✓ Still No Processed Sugar

The core rule from weeks 1-2 remains in full effect.

## Berries Preferred

Choose low-glycemic fruits whenever possible.

## Note How You Feel

Track energy changes after eating fruit vs. not.

# Week 5+: Entering a Calorie Deficit

Once your fasting habit is established and your body has adapted, it's time to layer in intentional calorie reduction for steady, sustainable weight loss.



## My Personal Numbers

My Maintenance Calories: \_\_\_\_\_

My Daily Calorie Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

## Why 500 Calories?

A 500-calorie daily deficit creates a **3,500-calorie weekly deficit** — the approximate energy equivalent of one pound of body fat. This rate of loss is considered safe, sustainable, and unlikely to trigger muscle loss or metabolic adaptation.

- ❑ Combined with your 20/4 fasting window, a 500-calorie deficit becomes significantly easier to maintain — the compressed eating window naturally limits intake.

# Week 5+: Calorie Deficit Tracker

This tracker adds a third accountability column: staying within your daily calorie goal. All three habits working together — fasting, no processed sugar, and calorie awareness — create a powerful compound effect.

Day	Fast Completed	Stayed in Calorie Goal	Notes
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

- ✓ By week 5, most people report that fasting feels automatic. The mental energy that once went into resisting hunger can now be redirected toward food quality and calorie awareness.

# Your Fasting Journey at a Glance

Every phase of this protocol builds on the last. Here's the full progression from day one to long-term results.



Small improvements matter. Every completed fast, every sugar craving resisted, every calorie tracked is a vote for the person you are becoming.

✓ CONSISTENCY

🌱 AUTOPHAGY

📄 CALORIE DEFICIT