

# The Fast diet 5:2

The diet involves low calorie consumption for two days a week and allows normal eating for the other five days. Although the number of calories consumed on the two days a week is restricted, it is up to the particular dieter to decide how to divide them throughout the day; men can consume 600 calories and women 500. A typical fasting day may consist of a breakfast of 300 calories, such as two scrambled eggs with ham, water, green tea, or black coffee, and a lunch or dinner of grilled fish or meat with vegetables, amounting to 300 calories.

Dr. Michael J. Mosley, largely responsible for popularising the diet after he featured in a BBC2 Horizon documentary *Eat, Fast & Live Longer* in August 2012, went on the diet for at least six weeks. He tested himself on the first Friday and discovered that he had lost 2 pounds of body fat, his blood glucose levels had fallen dramatically. He lost 14 pounds (6.4 kg) and 25% of his body fat in six weeks on the diet, with improved cholesterol and blood sugar. A 61 year-old retired physician (not Mosley), very sceptical of extreme dieting, said of the diet, "I've been trying it for five weeks now and I've lost about a pound a week. It's a weird diet because it's both really easy and really hard. On my fast days, I eat two very small meals, and I find it very hard sometimes not to give up and snack. But then, the rest of the week I can eat what I like – so I don't feel guilty if I treat myself to a cake or have a biscuit. I think I'll probably do this for the rest of my life."

Some people find it hard to sleep when they are hungry and for them a 7pm to 7pm method might be easier. That way you never go to bed hungry. Again weight loss will be slower.

In *The Fast Diet* book, you'll find plenty of menu ideas for your fast days. Fasters tend to come in two varieties – those who like to keep things simple and stick to very basic foodstuffs during a fast, and those who like to create taste sensations to keep their fast days full of flavour.

The former group tend to develop fasting habits – naked poached eggs for breakfast; a heap of straight-forward steamed veggies for supper. The others like to experiment. If you're in this group, here are some ideas to inspire you this week. Each dish should clock in at around 250 calories or less, though these are inspirations rather than recipes, so I haven't counted every calorie, as we have in the book. For precise figures, please weigh your ingredients and check a calorie counter. And add your comments too – variety is the spice!

Fast Day menu ideas from Mimi Spencer - see the book "The Fast Diet" by Michael Mosley and Mimi Spencer

## DAY ONE

Breakfast: Chive Scrambled Eggs with a hint of Nutmeg

An easy one, this. Everyone knows how to scramble an egg, and how they like it done. The idea here is simply to lend extra flavours and dimensions to a classic – on other days, you might want to add a scant grating of parmesan (a little goes a long way), some shards of smoked salmon, a handful of fresh coriander. I like a little tomato and chilli relish on the side... Forego the toast. You can have that tomorrow.

Supper: O'Kelly Fish

The dish is wholesome and hearty, great for gangs of people, but with no carbs. This should make enough for a family of four.

Blanch a packet of green beans and a pack of thin asparagus for a minute or so in boiling water. Broccoli works too. Drain and place in an oven-proof pan.

Put 20 cherry tomatoes on top, add a little olive oil, salt, fresh-ground pepper and plenty of lemon juice. Plenty. Maybe two lemons. Chuck in the husks. If your calorie count allows, throw in some black olives.

Place a fillet of seasoned salmon per person on top of the veggies. Add any herbs you fancy – coriander is nice; chilli flakes are a good idea.

Oven roast at 200 degrees for 20 minutes or until fish is just cooked.

The tomatoes and lemon will have made a wonderful juice, to spoon over the fish once served.

## DAY TWO

Breakfast: Porridge with Fruit

3 tablespoons of porridge oats with half a cup of milk (or to your chosen consistency). Two to 2.5 minutes in the microwave should do it. Perhaps add mandarin segments or chopped kiwi or pomegranate. Most berry fruit works.

Supper: Spinach Soup with Tapenade Toasts

Fry half a chopped onion, a small chopped potato and a clove of chopped garlic in a little oil. Add a grate of root ginger and nutmeg and a pint of vegetable bouillon (from a cube or your own veg stock). Bring to the boil and simmer until the potato is softened. Add 250g – or more – of washed spinach, and simmer till the leaves are wilted. Puree and serve with a crisp, thin slice of toasted ciabatta spread with green-olive tapenade (or pesto) and a swirl of low-fat crème fraiche. The soup will keep in the fridge for two or three days.

Some other ideas:

#### Spring vegetable soup

1 small onion, finely chopped

1 stick celery, finely chopped

1 tsp olive oil

1 bay leaf

1250ml vegetable stock – homemade will give the best flavour, though a stock cube will do

150g peas, fresh or frozen

150g broccoli, cut into little florets

100g mange tout

Generous handful of herbs – mint, coriander, parsley

2 spring onions, finely chopped

1 tsp soy sauce

Squeeze of lemon

Chilli flakes to taste

Pepper and salt to taste.

Gently sweat celery and chopped onion in a pan with the olive oil. Once translucent, add stock and bay leaf and bring to a gentle simmer. Add vegetables. Cook for 2-3 minutes until tender. Remove pan from heat and add herbs, spring onion, soy and lemon juice (plus chilli flakes if using). Season and serve. This makes enough for four and has a calorie count of around 100 calories a portion.

#### Mr L's carrot, red pepper, tomato and lentil soup with rosemary, thyme and chilli

Servings: 6

75g dried red lentils, rinsed

2 onions, peeled and left whole

3 red peppers, split and seeds out

fresh tomatoes about 5-6 med depending on size (mine were cherry toms and I used about 15)

2 chillis (more or less or none!)

3 garlic cloves, unpeeled

6 carrots, peeled and sliced

spray or teaspoon max olive oil

2 pints chicken or veg stock

a sprig of fresh rosemary and 1 of thyme chopped or you could use fresh parsley instead but put that in at the end

Directions:

Put all veg in a baking tray spray with oil or drizzle a little on and mix to coat and roast in hot oven for about 45 mins until all is done. I didn't need to cover mine but you don't want the liquid to evaporate so you might need to after a while, or take it out before the carrots are quite done as I did.

Simmer the lentils in a little water (just to cover) until tender.

Add the stock, the herbs and the roasted veggies (I leave all skins on except for the garlic cloves).

Simmer together for 15-20 mins depending on how done your carrots were..

Blend (I use a stick blender), and puree the soup until no lumps remain,

Season with salt and pepper or soy sauce to taste.

Works out at around 149 calories a big bowlful depending on how much oil (these calories are for 10ml oil) and is very satisfying. You can make it without the lentils for 109 calories per bowl. If you use spray oil its even less.