



Article published on June 18th 2012 | [Fitness](#)

In the world of fitness, people are always looking for the next best thing rather than sticking to the tried-and-true methods that have given people solid results for decades. In this article I'll share some of the fitness fallacies that have circulated recently.

Myth #1: Eat 4-6 small meals a day to "boost" your metabolism.

The most widespread myth that people misguidedly stick to is the notion that eating 4-6 small meals per day is better than 3 squares or any other meal plan. The idea is that an evenly spaced feeding schedule will speed up the metabolism, prevent blood sugar drops and stave off hunger, but studies show otherwise.

In one of the more publicized studies covered by the New York Times, researchers stated that as long as total caloric and nutrient intake stays the same, then metabolism, at the end of the day, should stay the same as well. One study that carefully demonstrated this, published in 2009 in The British Journal of Nutrition, involved groups of overweight men and women who were randomly assigned to very strict low-calorie diets and followed for eight weeks. Each subject consumed the same number of calories per day, but one group took in three meals a day and the other six.

Both groups lost significant and equivalent amounts of weight. There was no difference between them in fat loss, appetite control or measurements of hormones that signal hunger and satiety. Other studies have had similar results.

Myth #2: High-protein diets are unhealthy.

This myth has been dying out recently, and rightly so. High-protein diets hold many advantages over low-protein diets.

First of all, protein requires the most energy to be broken down of all the macronutrients; this phenomenon is known as the thermic effect of food (TEF). TEF plays a small but significant role if you're consuming a lot of protein (1 gram per pound of bodyweight), as I recommend.

Secondly, protein provides the greatest satiety (feeling of fullness) of all the macronutrients. This may not be as pronounced with protein powders and bars, but animal protein (meat) provides a high level of satiety which can be valuable in your mind's battle against hunger when dieting. This is a large part of the reason that low-carb, high-protein dieters are statistically more successful in losing weight.

These are only a couple of the benefits of high protein diets. Studies have shown other cognitive, mood, and health benefits.

Myth #3: Fasting tricks the body into starvation mode, thus slowing the metabolism.

This somewhat plays off of Myth #1, but I'll cover it anyway. Think about it from an evolutionary standpoint—the human body developed over time to endure long periods of famine, which is where the mechanism that lowers our metabolism during long periods without food came from. This mechanism is real—when actual starvation is occurring, not when you miss a meal or fast for a day.

The earliest that studies have shown metabolic rate being affected is after 60 hours of fasting, and

many studies have shown that metabolic rate isn't affected until 72-96 hours of fasting have occurred.

Surprisingly, metabolic rate is actually increased in short-term fasting. This mechanism seemingly rises from the hormones being released to encourage a hunter/gatherer to become aggressive and search for food in moments of short-term hunger, and as I covered in the previous two paragraphs, the metabolism-increasing mechanism fades out over a longer period without food. This plays into the evolutionary perspective on metabolism, as an increased metabolism would prove counterproductive as the time without food grew longer and longer. For more on the benefits and methods of intermittent fasting, read my article on it here:

<http://www.nextphasefitness.com/blog/?p=161>

That's if for this week. Hopefully knowing the truth behind these three myths will help you to avoid playing into the mainstream hype.

You can stay connected with my fitness ideas by going here: <http://www.nextphasefitness.com/blog/>

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Article Keywords:

career development, leadership development, success strategies, leadership development, customer service, book of knowledge, online learner, online le

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