

Q: If I do fasted cardio before a kettlebell workout, will that help me lean out?

A: Fasted cardio, or simply put, exercising on an empty stomach, can be a great way to burn excess fat. When exercising, the body uses up excess sugar in the bloodstream first. It then goes to the fat stores and converts excess fat to sugar for more fuel/energy. When exercising on an empty stomach, there will be less sugar in the blood stream, which means the body can tap into the fat stores sooner than when food is consumed prior to exercise. **HOWEVER**, this only works well if you keep the following in mind:

1. **Start your exercise within an hour of waking up**, and ideally about a half hour after waking up. Essentially, this means you roll out of bed, go to the bathroom, have a drink of water, brush your teeth (I have to have clean teeth before I exercise), put on your workout clothes and start exercising.

If you wait any longer than one hour to eat after you have woken up, whether you are exercising or not, your blood sugar will start to drop, which sets the stage for increased cravings. You may notice cravings a few hours after waking up or later in the day, but they will come.

2. If you have longer than an hour between the time you wake up and the time you start exercising, you will want to eat something to keep your blood sugar level balanced and prevent it from dropping, which will decrease your energy and make the workout harder than it needs to be. How much you eat will depend on the length of time before exercise and how well you digest food prior to exercise. Regardless of the amount, it should be a balanced meal, meaning it contains some carbohydrates, protein, and fat. This is one of the places I like to use protein powder because it is so easily digested. Something like:

½-1 cup unsweetened applesauce (homemade tastes awesome!)

½ -1 serving of New Zealand whey isolate protein powder

1 tbsp chia seeds

Let sit for 30 minutes or overnight in refrigerator.

works really well before a workout. It is quick and easy to eat. It slides down easily, does not sit heavy in the stomach, provides a little bit of carbs for energy and contains protein and fat to keep the blood sugar level balanced.

3. If you are exercising within the first hour of waking up and **DO NOT have excess fat to lose**, you may find you need to take in a little bit of sugar to give you an energy boost during your workout so you can work harder and burn more calories. When this is the case, I find ½ to 1 medjool date works well. You could also use raisins or some other dried fruit, all of which are high in natural sugar. It is best to use organic dried fruit to avoid the sulphites that are typically added to conventional dried fruit as a preservative. **Timing is crucial!** Consume 20 minutes and no more than 30 minutes before you start exercising. If it is consumed too soon, it will cause the blood sugar to spike. If you have already started exercising, this is no problem, because the body will readily use the available excess sugar. If you haven't started exercising, the blood sugar, and your energy, will crash, likely in the middle of your workout, which will create a lousy workout.

Too often we are conditioned to believe we need to stop eating or limit what we are eating to reach our goals. When, in actual fact, we need to fuel our body properly in order to achieve the results we

desire to achieve. Quality, balance and timing are everything. If we have addressed these three things, quantity isn't so much of an issue.