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Alternate-Day Diet

James B. Johnson, MD, author of *The Alternate-Day Diet*, has conducted several clinical trials to determine if a "skinny gene" is switched on when calorie intake is restricted every other day. Not only did he find this diet promotes weight-loss, he also noted numerous health benefits such as lower blood pressure, improved insulin resistance, reduced arthritis, and decreased number of free radicals in the bloodstream.

This diet requires every day to be labeled an "Up Day" or "Down Day." Up Days allow you to consume as much as you'd like and Down Days require you to restrict your caloric intake. For the first two weeks of the diet you consume no more than 20% of your usual caloric intake on Down Days.

The first phase lasts two weeks and is said to acclimate the body to intermittent fasting and turn on the "skinny gene." This phase is very restrictive, and dieters have to limit themselves to no more than around 500 calories on Down Days. Often, meal replacement shakes and bars are utilized. On Up Days during this phase, you can eat as much as you like within reason. Participants are encouraged to enjoy Up Days to avoid diet fatigue and boredom.

After the initial phase, the "skinny gene" is said to be turned on, which means a faster metabolism. After the two-week induction period, dieters are free to eat regular food on Down Days, but must continue limiting themselves to 20% of usual calories consumed. Once desired weight is reached, you can eat up to 60% of your normal calorie allowance on Down Days. Some participants have reported weight loss and maintenance, improved metabolism, and a decrease in inflammation.

Foods to include:

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Whole grains
- Meat
- Poultry
- Fish
- Egg whites
- Beans
- Dairy
- Nuts and seeds
- Healthy oils
- Meal replacement shakes

Foods to avoid:

- High salt foods
- High-fat meats
- Sugar
- Trans fats
- Processed foods
- Refined grains

Pros:

- Simple to follow
- Benefits proven true by clinical research
- Improves metabolism

Cons:

- Meal replacement shakes may be lacking in nutrients
- Hunger and fatigue is a concern on Down Days
- Not recommended for those with a history of eating disorders
- Doesn't promote physical activity

Sources:

James Johnson and Donald Laub's *The Alternate-Day Diet: Turn on Your "Skinny Gene," Shed the Pounds, and Live a Longer and Healthier Life*
The Johnson UpDayDownDay Diet www.johnsonupdaydowndaydiet.com [.\(http://www.johnsonupdaydowndaydiet.com\)](http://www.johnsonupdaydowndaydiet.com)