



The Athena Wellness Podcast
Episode 134 – What I Learned From 13 Rounds of ProLon
May 18, 2022

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[00:00:05] Kathy Robinson: Welcome to The Athena Wellness Podcast, the show that invites you to take a seat around the community fire and listen to stories that inspire. I'm your host, Kathy Robinson, author, coach and founder of Athena Wellness, a company that's dedicated to supporting you on your journey to live more wholeheartedly.

[00:00:30] Kathy: Hello and welcome. Thanks so much for joining me for this Wellness Wednesday episode, a little boost to help keep your Warrior Vibe high.

[00:00:40] Kathy: The day this episode goes live is May 18. My birthday when I was younger, if anyone would have told me that I would feel fitter at 58 than 38 or even 28. I would have thought they were crazy. But it's one of the reasons why I'm so passionate about wellness. Our daily lifestyle choices really do add up to big gains.

So health has been on my mind, but not only because it's my birthday. In the last episode, integrative health and nutrition coach, Audrey Zona, talked to us about a five day periodic fasting program called ProLon, which was developed by Dr. Valter Longo, who is a professor and the Director of the Longevity Institute at the



University of Southern California. Dr. Longo has studied the lifestyles of thriving centenarians and found that periodically cutting out food for extended periods can improve a brain process called autophagy, which is the body's way of clearing cell debris.

A decade's worth of research looked promising enough for me to try the program, which I did for the first time in July of 2019. I've done it quite a few times since then, and today, I'll be sharing that journey, along with what I learned, and some tips should you choose to try it for yourself.

Here's what we'll cover:

- What ProLon is and its benefits;
- Why I tried it and have done the fast repeatedly;
- What I learned;
- What to consider if you're thinking of trying it; and
- A special offer for the listeners of this podcast.

So sit back, take a nice long breath to ground yourself in presence and let's get started.

[00:02:42] Kathy: So we'll start with what ProLon is, but before we dive into this topic, it's a good time to remind everybody that while I'm a certified wellness coach, I'm not a doctor and I'm not a nutritionist. So please, consult your health professionals before considering a change in your health and wellness routines.



So what is ProLon? It's a five-day meal program that's fasting mimicking and that means the food combination was designed so the body's cells believe that they're not being fed, shifting the body into fasting mode, so you reap the benefits of a water fast while still eating a limited amount of food. This allows for cellular repair and regeneration throughout the program, along with decreased inflammation and fat loss, especially visceral fat in the belly area.

The food is sent in a box that contains five prepackaged meal kits for each day, plus a 32 ounce bottle to sip fluids throughout the program. Daily meals are a mix of breakfast nut bars, dried soup blends that are prepared by adding water and heating, olives, crackers, a few small dessert bars, and a handful of vitamin supplements.

There are also herbal teas and a glycerol-based drink called L-drink that supports the loss of fat and not muscle, as well as giving you the feeling of fullness. All food is 100% plant-based, gluten-free and non-GMO with no artificial additives.

A few extras are allowed each day including a cup of black coffee, plus decaf coffee and tea, lemon to add to water, herbs for the soup and plain sparkling water. No artificial sweeteners are allowed.

During the five days only the food within the box for that particular day is consumed so there's nothing additional to buy or prepare. The food is low in carbs and protein and high in healthy fats. The macro breakdown is approximately 40% carbs, 10% protein and 50% healthy fat.



While the program does not permit changing the order of the days, or swapping food between days, you can eat what's in the daily box in any order you choose. A menu card is provided as a helpful guide and I find I only make small adjustments to their suggestions. ProLon also has coaches on staff, along with the option of joining daily Zoom calls, hosted by nutritionists, throughout the program for support.

[00:05:45] Kathy: So why did I try it and why do I do it again and again?

Over the last 20 plus years, I've been exploring how to optimize my well-being in mind, body and spirit. This was long before I became a wellness coach. I've conducted what I now call *me-search* instead of research. When a new wellness protocol caught my attention, I'd do some cursory research, but it was more important for me to try it out to see how I felt. Then I'd keep the things that worked well.

When ProLon hit my radar screen in 2019, the focus on longevity was of interest. I watched my father who defied his genetic odds. He was then, in 2019, in his late 90s, and he just celebrated his 100th birthday earlier this year. But his parents died in their 40s and 50s and his older siblings died in their 80s. I believe that his moderate lifestyle and his 20th century meal portions that he still eats today are a big part of his longevity.

And that's why I decided to try ProLon. I was still working in a corporate setting back in 2019, but I did have access to a microwave for my midday meal. The evening soup was prepared at home on the stovetop and everything else from



breakfast to snacks to the drinks are all portable. So it was really easy the first time through.

And here's what I found. Day 1 was the easiest with 1100 calories of food including several bars. Days 3 and 5 have the lowest calorie counts, around 770 a day. But something seemed to click around Day 3, once I was over that proverbial hump. Not only was the end in sight, but I really started to feel the results, including the clear-headedness and the weight loss.

[00:07:59] Kathy: So why have I done ProLon 13 times and counting? Quite simply because I feel amazing by the end of the five days. Every single time.

Not only does it reset my physical body, but it gives me a mental break. I don't have to think about meal preparation for five days and that frees up so much space. I use that time to walk, to journal, to get extra sleep, which renews the connection with my inner wisdom and it renews me spiritually.

Here are a few things that I learned on my first fast. As with anything in life, mindset is everything. I set the intention that my first fasting experience would be one of exploration, connection and insight. I thought of it as an investment in myself.

And it did feel like a wellness investment, even like a luxury, like a spa in a box or an at home retreat. ProLon is packaged beautifully in a sleek white box. It contains a large water bottle and all the food that's needed in boxes numbered from one to



five for each day. Along with simple instructions and suggestions. It just feels good, like giving yourself a gift.

The physical benefits were as expected: more energy, a feeling of lightness, slimmer waistline, looser clothes, and a loss, for me, of about six pounds. I did have to work through a mild caffeine withdrawal headache, though, for those first few days. And I did find myself craving fresh fruit and vegetables.

But looking back, I can say the first time was definitely the hardest. But not because of any physical hardship. It was more about getting over the mental hurdle of being on a fast – that feeling of, “Can I do this? Can I make it to the end?”

I was most surprised at how often I *thought* about food throughout the day, as part of my *routine* versus my *hunger*. I would get impulses to go get a cup of coffee or to eat an apple. Every few hours, I was reaching for something out of habit. That mindfulness helped me understand the difference between true hunger, which I didn't experience that often, and perceived hunger. And that's when I really needed to either get a drink of water or get up and take a break from whatever I was doing.

[00:10:51] Kathy: When I came to the end of that first fast, I knew I'd try it again. I felt that good. And it was absolute euphoria having that first meal on Day 6, which was cubed fresh fruit with homemade almond milk and a cup of coffee. It tasted amazing.



That first fast helped me create new habits. I bought a few boxes of Fast Bars, which are the breakfast bars from the fast, and I began having those for breakfast, which extended my natural intermittent fasting periods. My food portion sizes also became smaller naturally. And I became more tuned into my body, now having the discernment to know when I was truly hungry or when I was reaching for food out of habit.

Here are some lessons learned from subsequent fasts. There's something nice about giving yourself a pause from your routine from time to time. Each fast gets easier to complete. And I'm always proud of myself at the end of the five days. And I still enjoy getting a break from being in the kitchen.

And even though I normally stay within five to 10 pounds of my ideal weight, I have routinely lost six to eight pounds during the ProLon fast, all around my midsection. This makes ProLon a great tool for me whenever I find my weight begin to trend up a bit. It keeps me in a comfortable weight range.

Having been through the fast multiple times, it also allows me to enjoy the process, especially the clear-headedness that gives me a deep sense of energetic calm. I love taking a break from my CrossFit and running routine and just enjoy taking long walks instead. I also sleep really well during the fasts.

My end of fast celebration is to go food shopping on the last day of the fast for the transition day, which is Day 6. That's when you can eat your normal diet again. But you need to be careful not to hit your body with too much food.



I find that I'm so in tune with my body, the last thing I want to do is overeat. In fact, that's been a great byproduct of repeatedly doing the fast. I no longer like the feeling of over-indulging. This has been a huge mind shift for me and I credit the ProLon process for getting me there.

[00:13:39] Kathy: If you decide to try ProLon, here are some considerations and suggestions:

- Take advantage of the free virtual ProLon coaching services or find a buddy to do it with. It's much more fun in community.
- Minimize your exercise during those five days. But do get out and walk or stretch each day.
- Get sufficient sleep.
- If you drink caffeine, consider tapering off before the fast so you don't get withdrawal headaches. I find it helps to gradually switch to decaf about a week before.
- Keep a journal to capture your learnings, especially what trips you up when you're not fasting and how you might address that as you move forward.
- Use the last day of the fast, which is Day 5, to plan for your transition.
- And on Day 6, enjoy that first sip of coffee or that first meal. It will taste unbelievably amazing. You'll feel nothing but gratitude for the food that you're about to enjoy.

Depending on your goals, you can complete this program safely once a month and then transition to whenever you feel that you need it again. Back in 2019, I did



the fast for a few months in a row and then every other month before switching to a seasonal approach, right after New Year's, springtime, and early fall.

[00:15:15] Kathy: [As I mentioned, I have a special offer for the listeners of this podcast.](#) The price for a ProLon box for five days is normally \$249. [But with the Athena Wellness discount,](#) the price ranges from \$189 for a one-time purchase to \$179 for multiple purchases – or about \$35 a day.

Currently, this includes a free box of Fast Bars, a virtual consultation with a registered dietician or nurse practitioner, and daily group coaching calls throughout your fast.

[You can use and share this link repeatedly to take advantage of this discount when ordering ProLon or Fast Bars.](#) More information is available on the Athena Wellness resources page and [I've linked that up in the show notes to receive the best discounts that are currently available.](#)

And [by using this affiliate link,](#) you'll support the podcast without any additional cost to you, which we really appreciate.

So I hope you found these last two episodes on the ProLon Fasting Mimicking Program helpful. However you choose to care for yourself, I hope you find ways that help you reset from time to time. You deserve it!

[00:16:45] Kathy: Thank you so much for joining me today. I know there are many ways you can spend your time, thank you for choosing to spend it with me. Until our paths cross again, be kind to yourself and show your Warrior Spirit some love.



If you know anyone who could benefit from today's episode, please pass it on. And many thanks for supporting the show by subscribing and leaving a review. It means a lot and it helps others find their way to our circle.

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Until next time, be well!

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[00:17:45] [END OF AUDIO]