

# THE ROLE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN ISLAM AND ITS IMPACT ON HUMAN HEALTH

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## Abstract

The article highlights the significance of physical activity in Islam as both a religious and health-promoting practice. Physical training is viewed as a form of worship and fulfillment of amanah—the responsibility for one's body. Through examples from the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the importance of sports such as running, wrestling, archery, and swimming is emphasized. Islam gives sport a spiritual dimension, linking health care with the strengthening of faith and discipline. Activity aligns with the objectives of Sharia, including the preservation of life and health.

**Keywords:** Islam, physical activity, health, amanah, Sunnah, worship.

## Introduction

Human health is one of the greatest gifts of Allah, for which every Muslim is responsible. In Islam, the human body is considered an amanat (trusted property), for the safety of which he will be asked. Physical activity, including sports, is considered in Islam not just as a means of maintaining health, but as a way to strengthen faith, spirit and discipline. The Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) contain many instructions encouraging the maintenance of physical fitness.

Islam views man as a unity of body and soul. Taking care of one's physical health is a form of worship, because a healthy body is necessary for the full performance of religious duties (salat, fasting, hajj, etc.). The Quran says: **“And do not throw yourselves into destruction...”** (al-Baqarah, 195). This verse is interpreted by scholars as a call not to harm oneself - either physically or spiritually. Harm to health caused by inaction or negligence is considered a violation of amanat.

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) led an active lifestyle. He walked a lot, rode horses, fought in battles, raced, and taught his companions various types of physical training. Aisha narrated: *“I competed in a race with the Prophet (SAW) and won. After some time, when I had gained weight, he challenged me to run again, and this time he won, saying: “This is for that time”* (Abu Dawud, 2578) [4:328]. This incident shows that the Prophet (SAW) was not only active himself, but also encouraged physical activity among his family members.

According to the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW), several sports were encouraged. The Messenger of Allah (SAW) encouraged learning archery: *“The Prophet (peace and blessings*

of Allah be upon him) passed by a group of people who were shooting from a bow and said: "Shoot, O sons of Ismail, for indeed your father was an archer" (al-Bukhari, 3373) [1:833].

He paid great attention to this sport as a means of strengthening strength and concentration.

The Prophet (SAW) participated in horse racing and encouraged horse riding. It develops balance and strengthens the spine and back muscles. It is narrated from Abdullah ibn Umar that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) used to organize horse racing. Trotters would be sent from al-Khafya to Saniyat al-Wada', and young horses would be raced from Saniyat al-Wada' to the mosque of Banu Zureiq. And Abdullah was one of those who took part in these competitions (Abu Dawud, 2575) [4:328]. This hadith confirms that the Prophet (SAW) encouraged horse riding and organized competitions, which indicates the importance of this type of physical activity in the Islamic tradition.

The Prophet (SAW) also encouraged learning to swim: "Everything in which there is no remembrance of Allah is nonsense, a mistake, or a pastime. The exceptions are four things: a man's training in archery; training his horse; his pastime with his wife; and learning to swim" (an-Nasai, 8890) [2:V.8:176]. Swimming develops the respiratory system, strengthens muscles, and improves coordination. Water is mentioned in the hadiths as a source of healing and purification.

It is narrated that the Prophet (SAW) wrestled with a strong warrior named Ruqana and overpowered him. This indicates that wrestling and combat sports (excluding punching in the face) are permissible and even encouraged as long as they are done ethically. It is narrated that in Mecca there was a man named Ruqana who was renowned for his strength and prowess in wrestling. People from all over the region would come to wrestle him, but he would always win. One day, he met the Prophet (SAW), who challenged him to a test of his strength. Ruqana accepted, and the Prophet (SAW) defeated him in wrestling. He challenged him to two more matches, and Ruqana was defeated both times. Impressed, he said, "Your deed is amazing" [3:V.6:250]. This story highlights that the Prophet (SAW) himself wrestled and encouraged this form of physical activity, which is in line with the Islamic approach to strengthening the body and spirit.

Unlike the secular approach, Islam gives sport a spiritual focus. The goal is not just physical development, but the strengthening of character, will, and self-discipline. The Prophet (SAW) said: "Your body has a right over you" (al-Bukhari, 5199) [1:1326]. This phrase is part of a famous hadith where the Prophet (SAW) explains that a person must maintain a balance between worship, work, sleep, and physical care.

Medical research confirms that regular physical activity: reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases; normalizes weight; improves psychological state; prevents diabetes and depression; increases life expectancy. All this is fully consistent with the goals of Sharia (maqasid-sh-sharia), one of which is the preservation of life and health.

If a person's intention is to exercise to strengthen the body for the worship of Allah, then it becomes an act of 'ibadah (worship). Even exercise can be rewarded if it is accompanied by the right intention.

In conclusion, it can be said that Islam is a religion of balance and care for every aspect of human life. Sport in Islam is not just physical development, but a part of the lifestyle designed to strengthen the body, spirit and faith. Following the example of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), a Muslim can make sport a part of his worship and become a strong, healthy and useful member of society.

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