

Islam - Issues for Sport & Physical Activity

| Key Facts | |
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| Origins | Islam is derived from Arabic and literally means 'submission'. Founded in Arabia approximately 600 CE. Adherents are known as Muslims, "one who submits to God." |
| Theism | <p>Islam is monotheistic. Allah (God) revealed the Qur'an to his final prophet, Muhammad. Muhammad is seen not as the founder of a new religion, but as the prophet who restored the original faith of Moses, Jesus and other prophets. The central tenets of Islam are the Five Pillars:</p> <p>Shahadah (profession of faith), Salat (prayer), Zakat (alms giving), Sawm (fasting) and Hajj (pilgrimage)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As prayers fall at different times during the day Muslims need a clean, private area for worship. They also need facilities for cleansing themselves prior to prayer. There is a need for Muslims to take time out during Friday (12-3pm) to attend the <i>jum'ah</i> congregational prayer. Fasting during the month of Ramadan means refraining from both food and drink from dawn to sunset, which may result in dehydration if taking part in sport and impact on low sugar levels. The Fasting period lasts for 30 days and dates move forward each year. |
| Major sects | <p>There are three main sects which have slightly different interpretations of Islam. They include Sunni, Shi'a and Sufism.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are variations between sects. Some Muslims may be stricter than others in conforming to their faith. It is therefore important to determine which sect you are working with and to identify any issues they may have before you plan events or programmes. |
| Place of worship | <p>Masjid (mosque). Prayers take place five times a day. The Friday prayer is known as <i>Jum'ah</i>. Every able-bodied Muslim who can afford to go is required to perform <i>hajj</i>, a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisations who are organising events where attendance by Muslims is important should avoid planning any events on a Friday. Prayers during the day are normally performed in a clean private area at their stated times. Where people decide to go to <i>hajj</i> often 3 weeks is required off work. |
| Sacred texts | <p>Qur'an – believed by Muslims to be the final revelation of God, revealed to Muhammad by the angel Jibril (Gabriel).</p> <p>Sunna – the words and deeds of the prophet Muhammad.</p> <p>These texts are the source of Shari'ah law.</p> |



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| Original language | Arabic. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Muslims are from a variety of countries and various languages are spoken in England including Urdu, Punjabi, Gujrati, Bengali, Somali etc. Sports clubs and organisations need to ensure that they know which languages the groups they are working with speak.</i> |
| Spiritual | A Mullah is an Islamic Scholar who is an expert in the Qur'an and Shari'ah law. An Imam is usually the mosque and/or community leader. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Advice is often sought from religious leaders on matters relating to many things and it may be useful to consult further in matters of fasting when doing sport at international events etc.</i> |
| Islam and its followers | |
| Worldwide adherents | Islam is the world's second largest religion with 1.5 billion followers. |
| UK population | Britain's Muslims are the country's second largest religious group. According to the UK Census 2001 the UK Muslim population numbered 1,176,603. |
| Faith requirements and holy days | |
| Diet | Dietary restrictions are described as haram (unlawful) or halal (lawful). The practice of ritual slaughter is called zabihah and meat is only eaten when it is slaughtered in this way. Pork, Gelatin and alcohol are forbidden in Islam. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Halal or vegetarian food should be provided.</i> ■ <i>When people are fasting it would be more appropriate to provide a separate room for eating.</i> |
| Dress | Most women wear the 'hijab' (headscarf) which is worn in the presence of men and some may also choose to wear the 'niqab' which covers the face. Some women choose to wear the 'jilbab' (longer outer garment) which covers the whole of the body other women will dress modestly. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Clothing for sport should make allowances for the wearing of a hijab, which should be tucked in for safety reasons. Similarly if a person wishes to, they should be able to wear long sleeves and trousers to respect issues of modesty.</i> ■ <i>Other modesty issues include the need for single sex provision for both men and women which allows people to participate without needing to associate with people of the opposite gender. There is a strong need for women coaches, particular in sports such as swimming to allow clubs to run female only sessions enabling muslim women to participate.</i> ■ <i>Design of sports buildings should include the ability to segregate areas so that there is no view into the sporting area.</i> |
| Major festivals | The main festivals include; Ramadan (month of fasting from dawn to dusk), Eid al Adha , Eid al Fitr and Ashura . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Events should be planned to take into account festivals and periods of fasting.</i> ■ <i>Islam follows a lunar calendar and dates of religious celebrations vary from year to year.</i> |

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