28 Islamic Perspective on Animal Welfare
J&M® halal certified meals use only wholesome ingredients and have NO MSG, NO SOY, and NO ARTIFICIAL FLAVORS OR COLORS. Each meal is fully cooked and is conveniently packaged in either 10 oz. (283 g) microwaveable serving dishes or 8 oz. (227 g) travel and camping pouches. Reheat to eat in minutes.

**LAMB & LENTIL STEW:** Tender lamb joins a medley of tomatoes, lentils, onions, chickpeas, zucchini and red and green sweet peppers. Aromatic herbs and spices invite all to taste and enjoy this truly delicious meal.

**LAMB & BARLEY STEW:** Tender lamb, combined with barley, eggplant, red and green sweet peppers, zucchini and onions, create a true culinary delight! A scrumptious meal with a variety of textures, it is deliciously seasoned with herbs and spices of the Middle East.

**MY KIND OF CHICKEN®:** A favorite combination of chunks of light and dark chicken meat with brown rice, peas and carrots in a mild sauce.

**CHICKEN MEDITERRANEAN:** A hearty chicken meal with the flavors of the Mediterranean region. It has chunks of light and dark chicken meat, tomatoes, potatoes, chickpeas, and black olives in a tangy sauce.

**CHICKEN & NOODLES:** A winning combination with chunks of light and dark chicken meat, homestyle Kluski noodles, peas and carrots in a lightly seasoned sauce.

**CHICKEN & BLACK BEANS:** A scrumptious meal with chunks of light and dark chicken meat, black & kidney beans, tomatoes, potatoes, sweet peppers and corn. Simple spicing brings out its full flavor!

**BEEF STEW:** A satisfying and delicious stew! It has chunks of lean beef, with potatoes, sweet peppers, tomatoes, cabbage, zucchini, chickpeas and carrots in a flavorful sauce.

**OLD WORLD STEW:** Chunks of lean beef, with brown rice, tomatoes, zucchini and pinto beans. The sauce is seasoned with the aromatic flavors of the Middle East.

**PASTA WITH GARDEN VEGETABLES:** This delicious and robust meal has rotini pasta with peppers, mushrooms, zucchini and tomatoes. It is perfectly flavored with traditional Italian seasonings.

**VEGETARIAN STEW:** A meal fit for vegetarian and hearty eater alike! With macaroni, vegetables, potatoes, barley, lentils, peanuts and seasonings, this meal has great taste and a variety of textures.

**CHEESE TORTELLINI:** Cheese-filled tortellini are simply delicious in a well-seasoned tomato sauce, with the added protein and texture of pinto beans.

**FLORENTINE LASAGNA:** A meal influenced by the tastes of Florence. Savor the combination of small lasagna noodles in a tomato sauce with Ricotta and Parmesan cheeses, spinach and pinto bean pieces which add texture and protein.
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Assalaamu alaikum,

Eid Mubarak. We hope you enjoyed the Eid season and if you were fortunate enough to perform hajj this year, may your efforts be accepted and rewarded.

Do you remember the days when flour was either white or wheat? Who knew there were so many different types of flour? If you can’t tolerate one type, try another. Get the scoop in “Alternate Flours.”

Are you a chai latte fan? Did you experience it abroad or get introduced to it here? How did it come to America? Learn about the trend in “Sweet Meets Spicy: Chai Latte!”

Missing a good night’s sleep is not fun, especially when you have a big day ahead, but for some it’s a frequent occurrence. We may even wake up tired after 8 hours of sleep. “Sleep Disorders” discusses some common issues affecting the quality of sleep and how they can be overcome.

Over 30 million Americans are diabetic and over 80 million have prediabetes. That’s a concern for one-third of all Americans. This issue brings a couple of articles that might help manage the disease if you have it or avoid getting it. Check out “Diabetic Diets” and “Insulin Resistance.”

We all know eggs are nutritious and a good source of protein. Some prefer egg substitutes. Check out “Eggs” in this issue for more information on the nutritional value and other facts.

Do animals have rights? If so, which ones? Is it only for pets, those we raise for their flesh, or those we hunt? What about dangerous wild animals? Vegetarians, vegans, and meat eaters may not agree on what rights animals have, but we can all agree they have some rights. “Islamic Perspective on Animal Welfare” gives some of the basics Muslims must practice when it comes to animals.

As fall approaches, the weather is more encouraging for outdoor activities. If you are considering an outdoor exercise, read “Running” for some ideas on technique and equipment.

Enjoy the issue and please share your comments with us. Also, if you have a favorite original recipe you would like to share with our readers, please send it to us. If we print it, you may be eligible to receive a gift. Please send your feedback and ideas, whether via email, Facebook, or Twitter.

Enjoy!

Sincerely,

Roger Othman editor
Assalamu Alaikum,

Veggie burgers have been around for a number of years. These are meat substitutes made from vegetables and though they taste pretty good, they don’t look like real beef burgers. Well, the future is changing that. The next generation of faux hamburgers are being made to look, cook, and taste like real beef burgers. They even bleed! And some are already available in the marketplace.

New startups are also working on commercializing meat that is grown in a factory rather than requiring breeding and slaughtering cattle. Supported by Silicon Valley capital, these startups have already been able to produce these ‘clean meat’ or ‘cultured meat’ burgers, as they are currently known. Now they are working on commercializing the process so the costs are competitive with conventional meat. They are still a few years from that. What’s driving this innovation? They cite global population growth, higher demand for meat, the environmental impact of conventional meat production, animal welfare issues, and the intricacies of religious slaughter of animals as the driving force to grow meat in a factory.

The process is both simple and complicated. Basically it involves taking cells from an animal, say a cow, and growing the cells in the lab to produce meat. The cultured cells can be formulated into a similitude of ground beef patty or a particular cut of beef for that matter. It looks, smells, cooks, bleeds, and tastes like conventional meat.

Beef isn’t the only focus of attention. Others are working on poultry and seafood products.

So would these products be considered halal? On the surface, it may seem the answer is obviously yes; but as a new development with no obvious precedent this requires deep consideration. Where do the starter cells come from, a live cow or slaughtered cattle and which part of the cattle? If slaughtered, was it slaughtered according to Islamic requirements? How will these products be labeled? Will regulations differentiate between these products and conventional meat products? Which federal jurisdiction will be responsible for the inspection of these plants, the USDA or the FDA? One state, Missouri, has already ruled that these products can be considered and labeled as meat.

I will attend and speak at the Good Food Conference in Berkeley, California this month. The conference theme is The Future of Meat and the focus is the commercialization of plant-based and ‘clean meat’ products. Expect to hear more about this in the near future and don’t be surprised if you start seeing more of these products in the supermarket. IFANCA will be discussing these issues with the scholars, industry, and scientists to determine the halal status of these new products.

Sincerely,

Muhammad Munir Chaudry president
As of a year ago, Aliya Durrani* could barely get herself out of bed. She had to force herself every morning and drag through her day in a foggy state. The mother of four from Glen Ellyn, Illinois, attributed her declining energy to missing her daughter, who had recently gotten married.

“I assumed I was suffering from the blues of separating from my daughter,” recalls Durrani. “However, when running simple errands down the street or just getting through the day became extremely cumbersome, I knew it must be something more and had to do something about it.

Durrani consulted a friend who is a physician and was advised to try removing gluten from her diet—a substance that is a mixture of two proteins present in grains, especially wheat, and is responsible for the elastic texture of dough. For someone who grew up in Pakistan with a deep love for wheat-based roti’s (thin and round flatbreads), Durrani found this advice to be very challenging. She was accustomed to eating foods derived from wheat flour multiple times a day. As her symptoms persisted, Durrani was then told to get a test done for Celiac disease, which turned out to be positive.

Celiac disease is a serious autoimmune disorder, where the ingestion of gluten leads to damage of the small intestine. It is estimated to affect 1 in 100 people worldwide.

“One Once I was diagnosed, I had to stop consuming wheat immediately,” shares Durrani. “The first month was quite painful without wheat foods. It’s amazing how many things contain gluten in them, even medications; but if you don’t take precautions, worse health problems can arise like colon cancer.”
The first thing Durrani had to do was change her mindset and realize she was not depriving herself but working to heal herself instead. She quickly found alternatives to wheat flour by using almond flour and making her own chickpea flour as replacements.

Within weeks, Durrani felt a change. She was able to be more active and full of energy again. According to Durrani, she could not have done it without the support of her family as this became a lifestyle change for all of them.

“My youngest is 8 years old and won’t even let me drink from her glass if she has eaten something with gluten,” Durrani says. “I have had to alter our family meals to accommodate my dietary needs, but it is not difficult when everyone is on board. As a family, we also tend to eat out less now to avoid the risk of cross contamination.”

Sandra Zamat of Villa Park, Illinois, is a mother of 3 and also makes it a point to prevent the same risk of cross contamination for her eldest son by almost entirely making foods at home. Her 7-year-old son was having a hard time falling asleep as well as focusing in school, so Zamat tried putting him on a gluten and dairy free diet after doing some research online.

“We saw a change in him within the first week,” says Zamat. “He himself noticed the difference right away. Of course he misses his favorite foods like pizza and mac and cheese, but it’s worth the sacrifice since his sleep and digestion have regulated.”

Zamat uses coconut flour for baking sweets and stirring up batter for breakfast foods like pancake and waffles. For pizza crusts, she uses cauliflower and makes bread out of zucchini.

According to fitness trainer and nutrition specialist Abby Mohammed of Addison, Illinois, there is no nutritional value to processed white (wheat-based) flour. For health purposes, the mom of two makes a conscious effort to avoid processed white flour as it is high in refined carbohydrates, spikes up blood sugar levels, and sparks hunger quickly.

“We end up craving these refined carbohydrates more, since they are not slow-digesting,” informs Mohammad, a National Academy of Sports Medicine-certified personal trainer and founder of Veiled Fitness training for women. “Who doesn’t love bread, but it is not part of my regular diet. I recommend more wholesome grains instead.”

Some alternatives to white flour that Mohammed suggests include almond or coconut flour, but she warns of their high fat content, which can be hard on the digestive system. Mohammad notes that there is also the option of using ground flax seed or oats, eggs, or bananas to sustain the fluffiness quality to baked goods like cakes and cookies. Some trial and error (and a certain finesse) may be required to get the right texture and flavor to most common foods.

That is what educator and mother of two Amira Elamri discovered after she decided to develop a gluten-free diet for her 12-year-old son, who was suffering from recent health issues.

“My son’s health began to decline unexplainably over the last year,” tells Elamri of Newton, Massachusetts. “We started logging what he eats and noticed every time he consumed foods derived from white or wheat flour, he would get sick.”

So, Elamri got creative. “I didn’t want the change to be too drastic for him, so I learned to make his favorite foods with different types of flours like almond or rice flour,” Elamri says. “It’s amazing how much variety is available out there. I’ve even used corn meal to coat chicken and figured out how to make pizza dough with other flours.”

Whether it is for health reasons or improving one’s nutrition, weaning oneself from the usual white or wheat flour is certainly doable. It is important to do one’s own research, read labels, and build awareness to the effects of certain types of flours. Hopefully, with the right flour power, we can fine-tune the foods we are accustomed to eating without having to really sacrifice taste or quality. In turn, it can make us more healthy, energetic, and productive individuals.

Celiac disease is a serious autoimmune disorder, where the ingestion of gluten leads to damage of the small intestine. It is estimated to affect 1 in 100 people worldwide.

“If we go to someone’s house, we take food with us,” notes Zamat. “It was challenging at first as we felt excluded from a lot of foods. However, once we came to terms with it, we learned to accommodate our lifestyle accordingly. There are a lot of flours out there, even restaurants offer more options now.”

According to fitness trainer and nutrition specialist Abby Mohammed of Addison, Illinois, there is no nutritional value to processed white (wheat-based) flour. For health purposes, the mom of two makes a conscious effort to avoid processed white flour as it is high in refined carbohydrates, spikes up blood sugar levels, and sparks hunger quickly.

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Whether it is for health reasons or improving one’s nutrition, weaning oneself from the usual white or wheat flour is certainly doable. It is important to do one’s own research, read labels, and build awareness to the effects of certain types of flours. Hopefully, with the right flour power, we can fine-tune the foods we are accustomed to eating without having to really sacrifice taste or quality. In turn, it can make us more healthy, energetic, and productive individuals.

*Name has been changed for privacy of the interviewee.*
TYPES OF FLOURS:

1. **Buckwheat flour** is derived from a seed that is high in protein, B vitamins, and minerals like manganese, magnesium, zinc, and iron. It is not a grain and does not contain wheat. It has a bold, nutty flavor and is often used in pancake and waffle mixes.

2. **Coconut flour** has a low glycemic index and can keep blood sugar levels down. It is gluten-free and has more fiber than any other alternative flour. It has a light, nutty flavor, is great for coating, and can be used in recipes that require high-heat cooking or baking.

3. **Chickpea flour** is made from ground chickpeas or garbanzo beans. It provides an ideal ratio of nutrients such as magnesium, calcium, and B vitamins. However, it can also cause excessive gas or bloating. It can be used for sweet or savory dishes like pancakes, breads, and soups.

4. **Almond flour** is a nutty, grain-free alternative. It is packed with important nutrients like L-arginine and magnesium and has been found to lower LDL cholesterol. It is good for making cookies and cakes, veggie burgers, or coating foods.

5. **Tapioca flour** is made from the crushed pulp of the South American and Caribbean cassava root. It is not the most nutritious substitute but is free of gluten and sugar and is low-calorie. It works as a thickening agent in batters, soups, and stews. It can also be used for pie crusts and brings a chewy texture to cookies and brownies.

6. **Rice flour** digests easily and is non-allergenic. Brown rice flour is higher in B vitamins than white rice flour. It can be turned into pasta and is great for baked goods like cookies and cakes.

7. **Spelt flour** comes from an ancient grain and has a slightly sweet and nutty flavor to it, creating light and soft baked goods. It still contains gluten but is rich in fiber and digests easier than whole wheat. It works for pizza crusts, breads, and other recipes as a one-to-one replacement for white flour.

8. **Amaranth flour** is an ancient flour originating in Peru and is naturally gluten-free. It has an earthy, nutty taste, is very versatile, and great for baking. It is known to help fight diabetes and support bone health with a high amount of protein.

9. **Sprouted flour** can be made from wheat, spelt, corn, rye, or amaranth. It comes from grains that have begun to sprout or germinate, allowing a potential increase in vitamins and minerals as well as adding more flavor into food from its starch content that breaks down into a simple sugar. It is great for cornbread muffins and other sweet or savory treats like bread, cookies, or crackers.

**TAYYABA SYED** is an award-winning children’s author and freelance journalist. She travels extensively to share her love for reading and writing. Her work has been featured in NPR, and she has written for more than 20 book titles including Encyclopedia Britannica. She lives with her husband and three children in Illinois.
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Sweet Meets Spicy: Chai Latte!

By Kelly Crosby
Chai lattes—those yummy, flavorful drinks you can get at any local coffee shop—have been quite popular for many years. While this sweet but zesty drink is a recent favorite among many Americans, it has been enjoyed in the Indian subcontinent for centuries. Chai lattes are based on the famous beverage of chai masala. The word *chai*, in Hindi and many other languages, means tea. *Latte* is an Italian word, usually paired with café latte or “coffee with milk.” So, chai latte is a fancy way of saying tea milk or “tea with milk.”

The ingredients of chai masala are black tea, a mixture of spices, sugar, and milk. The spices that make up traditional masala chai usually include some combination of cardamom, ginger, clove, black pepper, and cinnamon. The sweet creamy taste is made with frothy steamed milk. When traveling throughout India or Pakistan, you’ll see vendors, known as *chai wallahs*, plying their trades; artfully preparing and pouring this trademark staple drink. Many chai wallahs use tea leaves that have been crushed, torn, and curled (the CTC method) with cardamom, milk and sugar, to make chai masala brewed in enormous quantities for their customers.

So how did this drink make its way to America? Emine Saner of The Guardian says, “The history of chai latte in the west could be traced back to the 1960s, in a small way, when explorers returning from the Hippy Trail brought it back with them.” The Hippie Trail was a travel route for those who belonged to the hippie subculture of America who trekked throughout South Asia; mainly through Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and Nepal, during the 1950s to 1970s. Daring and adventurous young Americans, searching for enlightenment and alternative spiritualities also found this drink in great supply. Saner also says, “It wasn’t until the 1990s, when Starbucks launched its own version, that it started becoming popular.” According to Oregon Chai, chai lattes are popular among upper middle age Americans (between 45 and 54) with slightly higher incomes than average.

Chai latte lovers, beware. Today’s commercially available chai latte beverages tend to be sugar-laden. Starbucks chai lattes have 42 grams of sugar, in a 16 oz grande drink. Dunkin’s medium-sized Vanilla Chai contains 49 grams of sugar. The lightly sweetened drink has been made sweeter by corporate coffeehouses for the American consumer. For those used to chai straight from the Asian subcontinent, the American version is too sweet for their palate. Also, the mixing of all sorts of spices into the drink has left chai aficionados unimpressed. Krishnendu Ray, an associate professor of food studies at New York University’s Steinhardt School says, “You would have some spices, like ginger in northern India, especially in the winter, or cardamom. Sometimes fennel, sometimes cloves. But I have never had tea in India with all those spices mixed together.”

To maximize on flavor and while staying health conscious, it’s best to follow a recipe that is sweet and simple. There’s no need for coffeehouse syrups or powdered milks. Save yourself the extra calories and money by making your own. You can purchase your own bags of chai from the local supermarket. Brew the tea bags and add your own desired amounts of milk and sugar. Stevia makes for a great alternative sweetener. For lactose-free options, try making it with almond milk or coconut milk. Serve piping hot or ice cold for a relaxing summer beverage.

**The lightly sweetened drink has been made sweeter...for the American consumer.**

**KELLY CROSBY** is an artist and a freelance writer in Atlanta, Georgia.
In high school, Melodie Monroe's school football team was tied with its rival, and there were just 10 seconds left on the clock. The team managed a win, and she jumped up in excitement with the rest of the school. That exhilaration was too much for Monroe, who has narcolepsy with cataplexy. Her muscles suddenly went weak with the onset of emotion, the result of the cataplexy, and she tumbled down the bleachers.
Monroe was 15 when she was diagnosed, which is in line with the normal statistic for narcolepsy, which often strikes teenage girls. “It hits whenever it wants to,” she laments. “I could be sitting in church, in school.”

While it affects 200,000 Americans, according to the Narcolepsy Network, it’s just one of the sleep disorders that is affecting quality of life for sufferers. Others include bruxism, or grinding teeth; night terrors, which include intense fear, screaming, and can be paired with sleepwalking; restless legs syndrome, an uncontrollable urge to move legs at night; and sleep-eating disorder, which means out-of-control eating or drinking while in a state of unconsciousness.

Dr. Ahmad Nasef, a sleep specialist in Milwaukee, believes that although 15 percent of the population is diagnosed with a disorder, the numbers are actually closer to 40 percent. Rachelle Fanello, who is with the Sleep Center at the Mayo Clinic, says 80 percent of the population has some type of disorder, which is defined as a change in the way you sleep. It can affect overall health, safety, and quality of life, as well as increase risk of other health problems, according to the Mayo Clinic.

Dr. Ahmad Nasef, a sleep specialist in Milwaukee, believes that although 15 percent of the population is diagnosed with a disorder, the numbers are actually closer to 40 percent.

“People are embarrassed to talk about it,” Nasef explains. “They’re embarrassed to say they snore. They try to overcompensate with coffee and caffeine.” Many are also unaware of their actions while unconscious, and if they don’t have a partner who can track their movements, issues can go undiagnosed.

Although people get used to the idea of snoring, Nasef contends it’s not a normal condition; it indicates that there’s some sort of obstruction in the airway. “It may be allergies; it may be nasal passages,” he continues. “All of this could be fixed.”

Sleep deprivation is the most common sleep disorder in the United States, according to Dr. Camilo Ruiz, medical director at Choice Physicians Sleep Center in South Florida. The next most prevalent disorders would be insomnia and obstructive sleep apnea. The former makes it hard to fall or stay asleep. Although medication will help, Nasef also recommends psychotherapy to his patients to discover any psychological roots to the issue. The latter causes breathing to stop and start; the obstructive kind causes throat muscles to relax and block the airway, stopping oxygen flow to the brain.

While apnea is often onset because of weight gain, since extra fat in the neck and chin blocks those muscles from completely relaxing, Nasef explains it could also be because of anatomy, such as a lower jaw that may be pushed back. “When we’re awake we can breathe all right,” he says. “But, when we go to sleep, our muscles have to relax, especially the tongue. It slides backward. If your airway is already narrow, then it’ll block it.”

John Walsh was diagnosed with obstructive apnea in 2006. He wasn’t able to rest the full night and knew something was wrong because he was tired all day. He went through a sleep study on the suggestion of his doctor and was prescribed a mask and a continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) machine, the most effective treatment for apnea. While he now had a solution, that itself proved to be as tough as the diagnosis.

A CPAP machine forces air into the body, and it takes a while to get used to. More troublesome to Walsh, however, was the accompanying silicone mask. It irritated his skin, and he just never felt comfortable until he developed his own masks and started selling them. “My experience was horrible,” he expands. “I just wanted to rip the mask off.”

It was a tradeoff of not getting a good night’s rest because of the apnea with not getting enough slumber because of the mask. However, once he figured out the logistics after several years of tinkering, it was a world of difference. He had gotten so used to not being rested, he didn’t remember what it was like to be refreshed. “This stuff creeps up on you, like gaining weight,” he says.

Doctors and specialists recommend asking a physician or seeking information if you snore, are overweight, have hypertension or heart problems, wake up groggy or with a headache, or are generally tired throughout the day. If someone is recommended for a sleep study, they’ll report to a facility at night and be
hooked up to monitor brain activity, heart activity, eye movement, and snoring.

“Sleepy drivers are way more dangerous than drunk drivers.”

Most disorders have fixes, although something like narcolepsy has no cure. However, after many years of working with her doctor, Monroe has found very effective techniques to control it. Even though she was teased for all of a sudden knocking out in class in high school, she found it was helpful to be around friends who understood her situation and didn’t take advantage of her suddenly passing out. Her teachers found ways to accommodate her: She was given a room to take a nap during the day, she had a note taker in classes, and she was given more time to take tests. Even now at her full-time job, she feels comfortable enough with her co-workers to explain what she needs to remain productive.

“I still have a 30-minute nap time I’m allowed to take,” she adds. “Between 1 and 2 pm, no matter how much medication I take, that’s when narcolepsy hits me.”

Her co-workers and family also recognize what it looks like if an attack is about to hit her. Her eyes roll back, and her speech gets slurred. “Once my family became more aware, now they’re my support system,” she says.

However, it took some time to find that balance. Monroe’s mother was scared to let her get a driver’s license, so she didn’t have one until the age of 21. She now recognizes all the symptoms of when an attack may hit and pulls over so she’s not putting anyone in danger. She had to explain all the nuances and dispel myths of narcolepsy when she met her now-husband. Her children, when they were younger and couldn’t understand the reasoning, would get angry at her for getting drowsy while helping with their homework.

Now, 23 years later, she’s on a steady regimen of medication to keep her awake in the day and other pills to help her rest at night. “If I don’t take medication, it affects my mood and attitude,” she expands. “I get jittery and start lashing out.”

Although Monroe’s diagnosis is on one extreme of the spectrum, most Americans have some form of a disorder. They’re just used to the idea of working through drowsiness, but it can have a detrimental effect.

“Sleepy drivers are way more dangerous than drunk drivers,” Nasef warns. Adequate rest, in both time and quality, also promotes healthy bodily functions, immunological healing, cognition, and memory, adds Ruiz. “When you’re sleep-deprived, you don’t allow these internal processes to occur,” he expands. “It can lead to decreased longevity and poor health in the long term.”

It’s easy enough to talk about needing 8 to 9 hours of good quality slumber a night. However, Ruiz recognizes that the lack can come from necessity of working multiple jobs or caring for children. It can become the simplest thing to cut out with a busy schedule. It’s also not an easy thing to make up for. One late night can be corrected with longer naps the next day. However, “when you have chronic sleep deprivation, that leads to difficulty replacing that time downstream. It’s harder for people to recover,” Ruiz says.

For those doing shift work, it’s recommended to take a 20-minute nap prior to starting to stay more alert through the shift. Nasef also recommends a 10-20 minute nap during the day, similar to European siestas. “If you’re tired, it will increase performance,” he explains. “You will hit a deep sleep right away if you’re so tired, and it will improve the productivity of the worker.”

Sticking to good habits can also combat sleep deprivation. The same tactics that are used to retrain insomniacs can also be applied to others who don’t have those exact symptoms. Light from devices, such as televisions and cell phones, throws off the body’s circadian rhythm. Keep the bed to just sleeping. Any reading, eating, or watching TV should be kept out of the bedroom space. It also helps to have the same routine before bedtime, and there should be an effort to fall asleep and wake up at the same time every day.

Both Monroe and Walsh are content now that their disorders have been diagnosed and they’ve found the best techniques to control them. It was a relief to know what was causing their issues and be able to tackle them head-on. “I’m stable, and I like my stability,” reflects Monroe.
Insulin Resistance

Maryam Funmilayo
Our bodies work miraculously. Every cell, tissue, organ, and system plays a role in the perfect functioning of the human body. The collaboration and networking that occur in our bodies would never happen without the command of God because He is our Creator and the maker of all living things. The way the human body works and functions is humbling.

With the plethora of foods all around us, come side effects that never occurred many years ago. Food allergies are on the rise and food-related diseases are among the top chronic diseases in the world today. Genetics also play a role when it comes to chronic diseases. For example, type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease due to the inability of the pancreas to produce insulin.

According to Diabetes.co.uk, ‘insulin resistance occurs when cells of the body do not respond properly to the hormone insulin. Insulin is a hormone in the body that allows cells of the body to take in glucose to be used as fuel, or stored as body fat. It helps control blood glucose levels by signaling the liver, muscle, and fat cells to take in glucose from the blood.’ This helps cells take in glucose to be used as energy. When the role of insulin collapses, glucose is not distributed evenly around the body. Instead, it builds up in the blood and this can lead to too high blood sugar levels. When the body becomes resistant to insulin, it tries to cope by producing more insulin and this can lead to hyperinsulinemia.

Insulin resistance can be caused by several factors such as being overweight, inadequate physical activity, unhealthy eating habits (high carbohydrate, high calorie, high sugar diet), taking steroids over a period of time, Cushing’s disease, polycystic ovary disease, and chronic stress.

At first, being insulin resistant might not be visible because there are no obvious symptoms. When the body starts to experience a high blood sugar level, then symptoms like hunger, unusual tiredness, poor concentration, weight gain, high cholesterol levels, and high blood pressure start to appear.

According to Sanaa Bhatti, a Registered Dietitian in Lewisville, TX, “insulin resistance is sort of a warning sign from the body to make changes before the development of more progressive conditions such as diabetes and heart disease.” She recommends seeking out support to help with weight loss, as even a slight reduction in weight can significantly improve insulin resistance. She said learning about nutrition to manage blood glucose levels, as well as incorporating more exercise and activity into one’s life, can produce positive changes and renewed form of energy.

The remedies for insulin resistance start by focusing first on eating smart and moving more. Choosing to eat a variety of healthy foods in moderation and staying physically active is a great way to fight insulin resistance. Reducing sugary foods, snacks, and drinks and substituting with whole fruits, vegetables, and grains, builds up immunity in the body and keeps the blood glucose stabilized. These low-calorie diets, coupled with adequate physical activity, help to reduce the body’s need for insulin and help people to lose weight.

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When the body starts to experience a high blood sugar level, then symptoms like hunger, unusual tiredness, poor concentration, weight gain, high cholesterol levels, and high blood pressure start to appear.

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Intermittent fasting has been shown to improve insulin sensitivity. According to www.healthline.com, anything that reduces insulin resistance should help lower blood sugar levels and protect against type 2 diabetes. Thus, intermittent fasting helps lose weight and belly fat, which in turn, enhances hormone function. If this is the positive result that comes from intermittent fasting, then surely, the body is going through some great metabolism when we fast twice a week or three days a month. Fasting helps the body take a break from the extra glucose in the body. In conclusion, insulin resistance can be reversed with a healthy eating habit, consistent physical activity, and fasting, as long as your registered dietitian or physician give you the go ahead.

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MARYAM FUNMILAYO is a freelance writer and a certified food literacy educator. With a background in public health nutrition and health promotion, she is always fascinated with the Qur’anic and prophetic teachings regarding food, health, and nutrition. She is the CEO and co-founder of Scholarship Plaza.
Eggs

By Nazima Qureshi, RD, MPH
Whether they are being eaten on their own for breakfast, or as an ingredient in a recipe, eggs are a staple in the kitchen for many households. Eggs play a major role in people’s diet as a versatile source of protein.

Nutrition Profile

Eggs provide a variety of vitamins and minerals and are a nutrition powerhouse at an affordable price. They are a source of protein, Vitamins A, D, E, and B12, as well as iron, riboflavin, selenium, and folate. The egg yolk contains fat and dietary cholesterol, while the egg white does not contain fat but still includes a source of protein.

Here is the nutrition profile of one whole large egg:

- Calories: 70
- Protein: 6g
- Carbohydrates: 1g
- Cholesterol: 183mg
- Sodium: 63mg
- Vitamin A: 96mcg
- Vitamin D: 29 IU
- Vitamin E: 1.22mg
- Vitamin B12: 0.8mcg
- Iron: 0.7mg
- Riboflavin: 0.2mg
- Selenium: 17mcg
- Folate: 27mcg

Common sources of protein include animal protein such as chicken or fish, but eggs are a more affordable option that can be included in a balanced diet. Since eggs provide approximately 6g of protein per one large egg, they are a great addition to a meal or snack. Protein not only provides satiety but also helps build and maintain muscle.

Over the past few years, eggs have been scrutinized as a food source that may raise blood cholesterol levels. However, research has shown that blood cholesterol levels are not directly impacted by dietary cholesterol. Rather they are affected by other factors such as consumption of saturated fats, trans fats, and lifestyle factors.

Regardless of this information, many people may choose to consume only egg whites as a perceived healthier option. However, whole eggs can be a part of a healthy and balanced diet that includes adequate amounts of vegetables, protein, and whole grains. An average healthy person can consume one whole egg per day or seven whole eggs per week. If someone is currently living with high blood cholesterol, heart disease, or diabetes, they should limit their consumption to two whole eggs per week.

Since eggs provide approximately 6g of protein per one large egg, they are a great addition to a meal or snack. Protein not only provides satiety but also helps build and maintain muscle.

Amanda Saab, past contestant on Masterchef and founder of Butter Bear Shop says there are many ways to prepare eggs such as scrambled, sunny side up, over easy, boiled, and poached. When making eggs in a pan, use a small amount of oil to limit extra fat and calories. Boiled and poached eggs are a good way to prepare eggs without adding extra calories since they are prepared in water.

Egg Substitutes

While eggs can be a nutritious option, they aren’t a mandatory aspect of a healthy diet, especially for those that are vegan or have an egg allergy. The allergy is a reaction to the protein found in eggs (mostly egg whites) and results in symptoms such as rashes, digestive issues, or skin irritation.
Saab recommends making a flax egg as a replacement for egg in baking. This is made by mixing 1 tablespoon ground flaxseed with 3 tablespoons of hot water.

Another egg replacement is chickpea water in canned chickpeas, also known as aquafaba. Three tablespoons are equivalent to 1 whole egg and two tablespoons are equivalent to 1 egg white. Aquafaba can be whipped and act as egg whites in baking, something that the flax egg is unable to do.

If you are following an egg-free diet, you want to be mindful of eggs in packaged products by reading ingredient lists. Eggs also play an important role in baked goods as well as sauces. Saab uses eggs when baking soufflés, cakes, cookies, macaroons, and breads like brioche. Eggs act as a stabilizer to form an emulsion in sauces such as mayonnaise, aioli, and hollandaise sauce. When purchasing ready-made items or eating out at restaurants, it is important to check labels and ask which items may have eggs. With vegan diets becoming mainstream, egg-free options are becoming an easy option to find at local supermarkets.

Types of Eggs

Saab explains that eggs come in a wide variety, which may make it overwhelming to know which type of eggs to purchase. Here is a breakdown of how eggs are classified:

Size: Eggs come in different sizes including small, medium, large, and extra large. Most recipes call for large eggs and selecting a smaller size would not only impact the recipe but also how much protein you are consuming per serving.

Color: Eggs can be either white or brown. The color is primarily influenced by the color of the hen. The color of the egg does not impact the nutritional value.

Free-Range/Free-Run: Hens are allowed to roam. Free-run hens are allowed to roam in an enclosed space while free-range hens are allowed to roam outdoors. While this may not significantly impact the nutritional value of the eggs, for those that want to eat ethically raised food, free-range hens have access to outdoors while conventional hens are caged with limited space to move.

Organic: These hens are given feed that is certified organic, without any pesticides or hormones. The hens are also raised in a free-range environment. Since the hens’ feed impacts the nutrition of the eggs, the eggs produced are also organic in addition to being sourced from ethically raised hens.

While the most common type of egg in the grocery store are hen eggs, there are other varieties of eggs from other birds such as duck eggs and quail eggs.

Omega-3: These hens have flaxseed added to their feed, which is a source of omega-3 fatty acids. This makes the eggs a source of omega-3 fatty acids. The hens’ feed largely impacts the nutrition of the egg. Hen feed includes a variety of grains and water and the addition of flaxseed improves the nutrient profile of the eggs. Since omega-3 fatty acid is a required form of fat in a healthy diet, omega-3 eggs may be a good dietary option.

When at the supermarket, eggs may fall into multiple categories listed above. For instance, you may find brown large omega-3 eggs. Spending some time reading the labels will help you make an informed choice regarding
which type of eggs you should buy. Factors that influence what type of eggs you want to buy include how the hens were raised and treated, nutrition profile of eggs, and price. Free-range organic eggs often come from hens that are ethically raised and treated but are also the most expensive option.

While the most common type of egg in the grocery store are hen eggs, there are other varieties of eggs from other birds such as duck eggs and quail eggs. Saab prefers quail eggs for mini toasts. These types of eggs are often available at local farmers’ markets. Since they are not widely available, you can speak to the farmer directly at the market to get more information on how the birds were treated and raised, the bird feed, as well as storage recommendations to maintain freshness.

Eggs are a versatile and affordable source of protein that can be enjoyed on their own or as an ingredient. Next time you are at the supermarket, see how many different types of eggs you can find.

**NAZIMA QURESHI** is a Registered Dietitian, writer, speaker, and founder of Nutrition by Nazima, which aims to help Muslim women live healthier and happier lives. She provides evidence-based nutrition information through individual e-counseling, workshops, partnership opportunities, written communication, and recipe development.

As one of the largest private label and co-pack manufacturers of shelf stable cheese sauces in an assortment of easy packaging options, we have the product innovation, quality, and expertise you need to bring your concepts to life.
Diabetes is a deadly, disabling disease that occurs when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin (Type 1 diabetes), or when the body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces (Type 2 diabetes). It is one of the top chronic diseases in the world and it has become an epidemic affecting both developed and developing countries.

According to the Mayo Clinic, a ‘diabetic diet is a healthy-eating plan that is naturally rich in nutrients and low in fat and calories. Recommended foods that make a diabetic diet rich in nutrients include a variety of fruits, vegetables, legumes (beans, lentils, peas), heart-healthy fish (tuna, salmon, mackerel), nuts (almonds, pecans, walnuts), and whole grains (barley, quinoa, millet, freekeh, bulgur). Simply put, a diabetic diet means a meal that contains the healthiest foods in moderate
amounts. Mayo Clinic also suggests that sticking to regular mealtimes should be a routine for diabetic diets. The ADA has stated that many types of fruits are loaded with vitamins, minerals, and fiber that are good for diabetics. The fiber contained in fruits help regulate blood sugar levels and decrease one’s risk of developing type 2 diabetes, according to the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Most fruits are naturally low in calories, fat, and sodium, and high in essential nutrients such as potassium and folic acid. However, when it comes to fruits, caution should be taken because of the natural sugar found in whole fruits. Whole fruits that are suitable for diabetic diets include apples, apricots, berries, and citrus. In addition to being high in fiber, they help fight inflammation. Other ways of adding fruits to a diabetic diet are juicing whole fruits, having a fruit salad bowl, or simply whipping up a diabetes-friendly smoothie. Fruit juices (even 100% fruit juices), syrups, or any processed fruits with added sugar should be avoided in a diabetic diet. The reason being that none of them has all the natural fiber, minerals, and vitamins found in whole fruit.

Diabetes, heart disease, and stroke, are all related. Diabetes has a tendency of increasing one’s risk of heart disease and stroke by speeding up the development of clogged heart arteries. Thus, reading and understanding food labels is key to creating a healthy diabetic diet.

Food labels have nutritional information known as nutrition facts, which are relevant to one’s health. All foods can be part of a balanced, healthful diet. However, when it comes to a special diet, in this case a diabetic diet, it is necessary that a food label meets certain nutrient criteria such as the serving size, the ingredients listed on the label from most to least, the calories, as well as minerals and vitamins.

Label words like ‘fat free’, ‘low fat’, ‘cholesterol free’, ‘low cholesterol’, ‘sodium free’, ‘low sodium’, and ‘calorie free’, should be monitored while food shopping for a diabetic diet. Foods to avoid include those that are high in saturated fats such as hot dogs and sausage; foods high in trans fat such as processed snacks, baked goods, margarines, and shortening; and foods high in cholesterol such as liver and other organ meats. Mineral salt use should be minimized or avoided. Monitoring one’s diabetic diet starts by accepting that a healthy-eating plan is the best way to keep the blood glucose level under control to prevent any complications. Again, learning how to inculcate the keys of balancing, adding variety, and eating in moderation, turns out to be a lifesaver for many diabetic patients.

MARYAM FUNMILAYO is a freelance writer and a certified food literacy educator. With a background in public health nutrition and health promotion, she is always fascinated with the Quranic and prophetic teachings regarding food, health, and nutrition. She is the CEO and co-founder of Scholarship Plaza.

A Sample Diabetic Meal Plan

By Maryam Funmilayo

Planning for a diabetic diet can be as simple as planning for a regular meal, with guidance and suggestions from your Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and/or physician. As a reminder, consider the three key factors of balance, variety, and moderation when creating a diabetic meal plan. In addition, take into account your size and activity level. Here is an example of a diabetic meal plan:

For breakfast: A small or medium-sized baked potato, ½ cup of cooked beans, 1 cup of berries, and 1 cup of yogurt.

For lunch: 1 cup of cooked lentils in a fresh tomato sauce, 1 banana, a small bowl of freekeh salad made up of 2 tablespoons of toasted pine nuts and ½ cup of olives, 1 teaspoon of dry basil leaves, 1 teaspoon of grated lemon zest, and 1 cup of water.

Dinner: Salmon, veggie pasta, and banana and berry smoothie with added black seeds and quinoa.

Snack: Fruit salad and 1 cup of low-fat milk.
Veggie and Egg Scramble
By: Meriam Jabali

Servings: 2

INGREDIENTS

- 2-4 tablespoons of olive oil
- 1 small onion, diced
- 2-4 cloves garlic, chopped or minced (optional to taste)
- 1 large tomato, diced
- 1 head broccoli, chopped small
- 4 large eggs, lightly beaten
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 tablespoons parsley, roughly chopped

DIRECTIONS

1. In large skillet, put 2 tablespoons olive oil, heat a couple of minutes on medium heat, then add onions and garlic. Sauté about 5 minutes till tender.
2. Add tomatoes and broccoli. Continue sautéing on medium for an additional 10-15 minutes.
3. Add lightly beaten eggs, salt, and pepper and as they cook gently fold them in with veggies till they are fully cooked.
4. Divide delicious veggie eggs into 2 plates, garnish each plate with parsley. Serve with sliced avocado and or 2 slices of melon.
By: Minar Shehadah

Taco Salad

INGREDIENTS

1 pound halal ground beef or halal ground turkey
1 avocado, peeled and diced
1 tomato, diced
1 red pepper, diced
1 green pepper, diced
1 can of black beans, rinsed and drained
1 cup of halal shredded cheddar cheese (Cabot)
½ cup black olives

Tortilla chips for garnish
1 tablespoon of Thousand Island dressing (optional)
3 cups lettuce, shredded
1 teaspoon garlic powder
½ teaspoon cumin powder
½ teaspoon paprika
Sea salt to taste
Black pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat a medium saucepan on medium heat. Add the halal ground meat, garlic, cumin, paprika, salt, and pepper and combine until the meat is completely browned.

2. In a large bowl, combine the cooked meat, avocado, tomato, peppers, black beans, halal cheddar cheese, black olives, and dressing. Toss the ingredients together and when ready to serve, crush tortilla chips onto the taco salad.
Quinoa Tabbouleh
By: Deena Anne

Servings: 8

INGREDIENTS

1 cup cooked Quinoa, follow packaged directions
½ red pepper, diced small
½ cucumber, diced small
½ cup diced scallion, both white and green
2 celery ribs, diced small
¼ cup grated carrot
¼ cup raisins or fruit sweetened cranberries
¼ cup frozen peas
¼ cup lemon juice
¼ cup chopped parsley
¼ cup chopped mint
½ teaspoon salt
Fresh cracked pepper
½ teaspoon curry powder
5 cherry tomatoes
Full circle squeeze of honey
Dash of coriander
Lesser lightest dash of cumin

DIRECTIONS

1. Add all ingredients together in a bowl and mix to combine. Check for flavor and adjust seasoning to taste. Feel free to add in diced asparagus or any other vegetables you like.
2. Refrigerate any unused portion in a sealed container.
Microwave Omelet
By: Roger Othman

Servings: 1

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons Organic Valley Lactose Free Fat Free milk
- ¼ orange bell pepper
- ½ medium tomato
- 1 tablespoon cooked corn or other vegetable
- dash of Cajun spice
- 2 slices rye bread
- 4 slices Cabot Extra Sharp Cheddar cheese

DIRECTIONS

1. Dice ½ of the orange bell pepper.
2. Dice 1 slice of the tomato.
3. Crack eggs into microwave egg cooker and scramble them.
4. Add diced pepper and tomato and mix.
5. Add cooked corn and mix.
6. Add dash of Cajun spice and mix.
7. Place microwave egg cooker in microwave and microwave 3 minutes on high.
8. Carefully remove omelet from container. Be careful, the container will be hot.
9. Serve with remaining tomato, pepper, cheese, and bread.
Islamic Perspective on Animal Welfare

By Asma Jarad
According to Census of Marine Life scientists, there are an estimated 8.7 million living species on earth, and yet the Quran teaches us that humans are the highest of creation. With this elevated status comes an elevated responsibility. This responsibility encompasses not only how we treat our own bodies, actions, and interactions with each other, but also how we treat other creations such as animals. Yes, animals have rights and a legitimate place in Islam. The Quran refers to animals as independent communities to be acknowledged and respected: “And there is no creature on [or within] the earth or bird that flies with its wings except [that they are] communities like you. We have not neglected in the Register a thing. Then unto their Lord they will be gathered” (Quran 6:38).

At the same time, many animals serve numerous purposes; some of which are for our direct beneficial use, consumption, and companionship while others are part of the circle of life and benefit us indirectly. Regardless of whether we gain any benefit from the animals around us, the Islamic perspective on animal welfare includes treating all animals as independent communities sharing this earth, finding the balance between respecting their independence while at the same time enjoying their benefits and friendship as God intended, all the while avoiding any type of cruelty toward animals.

Despite not having the free will or brain power that is bestowed upon humans, animals nonetheless live their lives the way God created them to obey His laws and follow the natural cycle of the earth. We are reminded in the Quran, “Do you not see that God is exalted by whomever is within the heavens and the earth and [by] the birds with wings spread [in flight]? Each [of them] has known his [means of] prayer and exalting [Him], and God is Knowing of what they do.” (Quran 24:41). This verse shows us that animals have duties and connections with the larger world, including praising God. Hence, we must respect their independent existence without infringing on their rights and responsibilities.

When Prophet Noah (Peace Be Upon Him [PBUH]) built his ark, he was not only commanded to save the believers among his tribe, but also to preserve the existing animal species by collecting a pair of each. This shows us the importance and value of animals within our living cycle. In the Quran, it says, “[So it was], until when Our command came and the oven overflowed, We said, ‘Load upon the ship of each [creature] two mates and your family, except those about whom the word has preceded, and [include] whoever has believed.’ But none had believed with him, except a few.” (Quran 11:40).

In addition, many animals provide us with food, fertilize our plants, as well as inedible, yet similarly valuable products, such as wool, fur, and leather. These benefits are mentioned in the Quran: “Do you not see that God has made subject
to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth and amply bestowed upon you His favors, [both] apparent and unapparent? But of the people is he who disputes about God without knowledge or guidance or an enlightening Book [from Him].” (Quran 31:20). An important piece of information here is that despite the overwhelming benefits we gain from animals, God has commanded us to nonetheless share the earth with all living creatures. Therefore, although we gain many benefits from animals, we must remember that we are obligated to care for them and treat them as blessings and with compassion, for the Prophet (PBUH) said, “Anyone who shows mercy, even to an animal meant for slaughtering, will be shown mercy by God on the Day of Rising.”–Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, Book 20, Hadith 10.

According to the Prophet’s (PBUH) teachings, farmers and caretakers must abide by certain guidelines when dealing with animals:

• Provide appropriate food and fresh water
• Provide safe and comfortable shelter
• Separate them from aggressive behaviors of each other
• Allow males and females to mate during mating seasons
• Not to harvest them for food faster than their ability to breed
• Not to overburden them
• Not to neglect them, especially in sickness and advanced age

These Islamic directives came to us over 700 years ago. Similarly, in more modern times, we have what is internationally known as the Five Freedoms outlining five aspects of animal welfare as developed in the United Kingdom in 1965 and formalized in 1979 by the United Kingdom Farm Animal Welfare Council. Subsequently, these Five Freedoms were adopted by internationally prominent animal welfare societies, including the World Organization for Animal Health and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The Five Freedoms are:

1. Freedom from hunger or thirst by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigor
2. Freedom from discomfort by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area
3. Freedom from pain, injury or disease by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment
4. Freedom to express normal behavior by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal’s own kind
5. Freedom from fear and distress by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering

When most people in the West hear the term, “animal protection from cruelty,” they may think of domestic pets such as dogs and cats with little to no regard for livestock, birds, and wild animals. It seems that these types of animals are held in less esteem since most of the time we see them not as living, breathing creatures, but as butchered pieces, packaged for sale, or hung up as hunting trophies. In Islam, we are taught that all animals—livestock, birds, pets, and wild—must be treated kindly and respectfully. Even the animals we slaughter have rights. It was narrated by Shaddad bin Aws that the Prophet (PBUH) said: “Indeed God has decreed Ihsan [responsibility to obtain excellence in worship] in everything. So when you kill, then do the killing well, and when you slaughter, then do the slaughtering well. Let one of you sharpen his blade, and let him comfort his animal (before slaughtering)”–Jami at-Tirmidhi, Vol. 3, Book 14, Hadith 1409.

The provisions of respect and anti-cruelty also extend to animals that we do not consume. In some ways, hunting wild animals can be seen as a form of corruption since these animals are not hunted for sustenance, but for amusement and arrogance. It was narrated from Abdullah bin ‘Amr, who attributed it to the Messenger of God (PBUH), who said, “There is no person who kills a small bird or anything larger, for no just reason, but God will ask him about it.” The companions then asked, “O Messenger of God, what does ‘just reason’ mean?” He replied, “That you slaughter it and eat it, and do not cut off its head and throw it aside.”–Sunan An-Nasa’i, Chapter 42, Hadith 4450. Indeed, killing an animal for no beneficial reason, or
treatment is a sin and a violation of their rights. Even birds that are killed unjustly will come beseeching God for justice on the Day of Judgement. It was narrated that Amr bin Sharid heard the Messenger of God (PBUH) say, “Whoever kills a small bird for no reason, it will beseech God on the Day of Resurrection saying: O Lord, so and so killed me for no reason, and he did not kill me for any beneficial purpose.”–Sunan An-Nasa’i, Chapter 42, Hadith 4451.

In another instance, it was narrated that Abdullah bin Ja’far said, “The Messenger of God (PBUH) passed by some people who were shooting arrows at a ram. He denounced that and said: ‘Do not disfigure animals (by using them as targets).’”–Sunan An-Nasa’i, Chapter 42, Hadith 4445. Indeed, cruelty against animals for the purpose of sports and entertainment is forbidden. Islam teaches us to be careful and respectful to our animals. There is great reward for treating them kindly and great punishment for violating their rights. For example, it was narrated from Abu Huraira, that the Prophet (PBUH) said, “A prostitute was forgiven by God, because, passing by a panting dog near a well and seeing that the dog was about to die of thirst, she took off her shoe, and tying it with her head-cover she drew out some water for it. So, God forgave her because of that.”–Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 4, Book 54, Hadith 127. Despite her lifestyle, her mercy toward the dog elevated her in the eyes of God, as He rewarded her with forgiveness from her sins.

All living creatures are created to survive and communicate under certain guidelines and ethics; this most prominently includes the wide array of animals who function seamlessly in a circle of life. Before the boom of human civilization, animals and other living habitats did not have to suffer from overfishing, hunting, destruction of habitats, human agriculture, urbanization, and the use of toxins such as pesticides and herbicides. Animal extinction is an unfortunate side effect of our own sprawling existence. Despite all of this, many animals learn to adapt and even thrive. By God’s grace and wisdom, He continues to show us our elevated status among living things by having other species adapt to our continuously evolving lifestyles. Therefore, it is our responsibility to return not with arrogance and a sense of superiority, but with compassion and deference to our fellow creatures.

In the end, animal welfare is not only a valid topic of discussion, but a serious issue we must address and ponder within our lifestyles. Just as we are created on this earth to serve a purpose, so have animals, plants, and all other known and unknown living species. We must take our place in this circle of life and try to leave it behind a little better that what we inherit.

ASMA JARAD is a freelance writer, an editor, and a YouTube creator at Sami & Amro Reading Time.
Running

By Asma Jarad
In a recent issue of Runner’s World magazine is a story profiling 50 ordinary people who turn their lives around through running. Before becoming runners, they suffered from obesity and numerous other medical, physical, and mental ailments. At some point in their lives, they decided to transform their lives for the better through running. Indeed, running is known to improve your life—physically, emotionally, and mentally. With the proper knowledge, basic attire and tools, anyone can take on this sport at any stage of life and reap the benefits.

I’ve always known that running is a transformative sport, and I’ve always admired those who could lace up their gym shoes early every morning and run for miles. Those runners look tired and worn out with sweat soaking their clothes, but they were also easily recognizable as highly motivated, healthy, and accomplished individuals. Indeed, many studies have revealed that running stimulates brain activity, increases lean muscle while decreasing fat, and makes a body physically stronger. Stronger bodies give you increased metabolism, better bone density, keep your hormones in balance, allow your muscles to increase their capacity to create energy, and bolster your heart health. At the same time, running is not for the faint of spirit. It takes a strong mindset and commitment to the sport in order to excel and see the best results. But ask any runner, and they will surely tell you that it is worth the effort.

Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him [PBUH]) told his followers that, “The strong believer is better and is more beloved to God than the weak believer, although both are good. Strive for that which will benefit you, seek the help of God, and do not feel helpless.”–Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 1, Book 1, Hadith 79

Take Stephanie Hall for example. Stephanie is currently a healthy twenty-four-year-old, but for many years, she suffered from obesity until she decided to make a change. Now, she runs five times a week. Stephanie started her running journey to lose weight, but soon found much more satisfaction than simply shedding pounds. “The feeling after you finish your run is amazing to me,” she says. “The point where you feel like you can’t go any further and you prove your body wrong by pushing through. I always feel so accomplished afterward. I use running as a stress reliever. It is very therapeutic.” Indeed,
Stephanie’s positive feeling after a run is known as “runner’s high,” which is a euphoric feeling a person gets after an aerobic workout such as running because the brain releases the “feel good” endorphins into the body.

Over the years, extensive research on running found that it provides numerous benefits to overall health and cognitive function. Carl Cotman from the Institute for Brain Aging and Dementia in the Department of Neurobiology and Behavior at the University of California says, “It is now clear that voluntary exercise can increase levels of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) and other growth factors, stimulate neurogenesis, increase resistance to brain insult, and improve learning and mental performance.” Thankfully, these benefits are not limited to non-Muslims.

A healthy lifestyle is a central part of a Muslim’s existence. Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him [PBUH]) told his followers that, “The strong believer is better and is more beloved to God than the weak believer, although both are good. Strive for that which will benefit you, seek the help of God, and do not feel helpless.” –Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 1, Book 1, Hadith 79. Although some will argue that the Prophet (PBUH) was referring to strength of faith, many scholars also concur that physical and mental strength are substantially valuable to a Muslim’s life. For those who are blessed with physical health, they must use this blessing to promote goodness in themselves and for the surrounding communities.

Although we cannot always prevent illnesses and ailments, running is an optimal way to achieve overall well-being in less time. According to Trisha McNary, a writer specializing in health and fitness, a person would need to walk about 2.3 to 2.8 miles to burn the same calories as running 2 miles. In comparison with another cardio exercise, biking, she says that, “Biking is low-impact exercise that is easier than running for people with knee problems because body weight is supported. Regardless of weight, in 24 minutes—the same time it would take to run 2 miles at 5 mph—you can burn an equal number of calories by biking at a moderate pace of 13 mph. To match the calorie burn of a run at a faster pace of 10 mph, you’d have to cycle for 12 minutes at a pace of 20 miles per hour.” Finally, when compared to swimming—one of the lowest impact forms of cardio—”In 24 minutes—

Whether you run indoors on a treadmill, or outside in nature, experts agree that having a regular exercise routine is most important. Jason Fitzgerald, a certified running coach, encourages beginners to start easy. He says, “If you’ve never run before, and don’t have much experience recently with other sports that involve running like soccer or basketball, you should start gradually. Your first run should be 1 to 3 miles at most. The goal isn’t to “get fit” or run fast, but rather to see how your body responds to running with the smallest risk for running injuries.” With time, he encourages runners to slowly, but gradually increase distance and speed. Keep in mind the popular rule among runners, known as the, “10 Percent Rule.” According to this rule, runners should never increase their distance more than ten percent week over week. This helps stave off injuries while improving performance.

A person would need to walk about 2.3 to 2.8 miles to burn the same calories as running 2 miles. In 24 minutes—the same time it would take to run 2 miles at 5 mph—you can burn an equal number of calories by biking at a moderate pace of 13 mph...

In 24 minutes—the time it would take to run 2 miles at 5 mph—a 125-pound person will burn about 72 calories swimming moderately and 120 swimming vigorously. A 185-pound person will burn about 106 calories swimming moderately and 178 swimming vigorously.

For those runners who choose to run outside, another important factor to take into consideration is the climate. In colder climates, runners will experience a slowing of
pace due to reduced muscle contractions, increased carbohydrate use, and difficulty maintaining core temperature mainly in the extremities of hands and feet. In warmer climates, one must be cautious of the increased risks for hyperthermia and dehydration. Heat and humidity may cause a runner to feel fatigue and muscle soreness, therefore it is essential to keep hydrated and listen to your body’s needs. Joanna Zeiger, M.S., Ph.D., a professional triathlete from 1998–2008, seven-time Olympic trials qualifier in three sports, and Master’s runner, has personal experience in running under various climate conditions. Based on her experience, she found that each runner has their own ideal comfort zone when it comes to climate. "The median "perfect" temperature from a large study of marathon runners was 44°F for women and 43°F for men," she continues, “My marathon PR (personal record) was set on a day that started out just below 40°F and ended up in that sweet spot of 44°F, and my half marathon PR was on a day that hovered just around 50°F...My iCOMz [ideal comfort zone] seems to be in the 40-50°F range when it comes to optimal race performance, but when it comes to pure weather enjoyment, I would have to say that I like it a little warmer than that.”

For Muslim runners, another important aspect is to abide by Islamic modesty in dress. We must remember that rules of modesty apply to both genders. However, since women are instructed to cover more parts of their bodies, they tend to require a more specialized clothing line that may not be commonly found in local department stores. Nonetheless, in 2018 there is no shortage of availability and variety of Islamic wear for female athletes. Furthermore, there are many Muslimah athletes who not only dress according to Islamic guidelines, but also excel in competitive running. For example, Roqaya Al Gassra from Bahrain made history as the first Muslimah in a hijab to run in the 2004 Olympics. In 2006, she won a gold medal in the 200-meter Asian Games in Doha. After her win she said, “Wearing traditional Muslim dress has encouraged me. It’s not an obstacle, it’s quite the opposite. I feel very special to be in this situation, and I don’t feel any pressure by it.”

In addition to abiding by an Islamic dress code, there’s a plethora of gear and tools available to help runners enhance their game. The most important gear to have is a proper pair of running shoes. The ‘running shoes guru,’ which is a team of ten runners who test and analyze running shoes—filter shoes by type: cushioning, lightweight, minimalist, motion control, racing, stability, and trail. Each type of shoe has its own advantages based on running style and physical needs. According to the guru testers, “Cushioned running shoes make up one of the largest segments of the running shoe market. Most cushioned shoes fall somewhere in the middle of the spectrum of available options: more cushioning than minimal models, but without major support or corrective elements. Meant for runners that have little to no pronation [the way your foot rolls inward for impact distribution upon landing], cushioned running shoes provide protection and shock absorption with little to no additional support for strong pronators or issues like exceptionally high or low arches.”

In the end, running is a beneficial sport for the body and mind, but it is important to remember that as with anything else in life, moderation is key. Overtraining can lead to fatigue, crashing, and painful injuries. Trainers caution not to let the excitement of running make you impulsively add more mileage than your body can handle. Remember to take a balanced and steady approach so your body can adapt and gain the most long-term benefit. Also, it is important to keep in mind that running should not infringe on your other obligations such as religious duties or family time. Running can be a family sport where even the youngest member of your family can be strapped in their stroller while the rest of the family jog alongside. Make sure your intentions are pure in that you want to be fit and healthy not only for your own personal benefit, but also so that you can be the best Muslim possible for the community.

Finally, we know from the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), that he and his companions were physically fit. Naturally, a person who is active and energetic is able to perform more good deeds and help others. Based on the 5 pillars of Islam, 3 require physical activity and strength: daily prayer, fasting in Ramadan, and the hajj to Makkah (and visiting Madina). These are clear signs for us that being healthy is very important. Whether you’re running on a treadmill or on God’s green earth, you will appreciate the benefits with every pace. Adopting a running routine now helps us fulfill a healthy mind, body, and spirit that will carry us throughout our lives. As renowned playwright, George Bernard Shaw, once said, “We don’t stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.” In similar terms, don’t think that as you grow older that you should stop exercising; rather you should keep exercising so that you can continue to feel healthy and live your best life.

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**ASMA JARAD** is a writer, an editor, and an aspiring long-distance runner chasing after that runner’s high.
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