



Guidance for Coaches & Clubs on Ramadan

Inclusion, Safeguarding and Wellbeing at the forefront of our thinking in all we do

We are an equal opportunities employer and actively support human rights and all equality legislation and promote diversity and inclusion throughout the company. Our ethos is to respect and value people's differences, and to help everyone achieve more at work as well as in their personal lives so that they feel proud of who they are and of the part they play in our success.

AS RAMADAN BEGINS, LEARN MORE WITH OUR GUIDANCE FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN

2024 Begins 10 March ends Monday, 8 April

[When is Ramadan 2024? Expected start date for next month of fasting - Birmingham Live \(birminghammail.co.uk\)](https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/when-is-ramadan-2024-expected-start-date-for-next-month-of-fasting-14811111)

We have today published guidance to support participants and employees across the Judo community during the holy month of Ramadan, which begins this week.

The annual guide includes information on how fasting and other lifestyle changes during this period may impact participants across adult and youth Judo, with advice on exercise and nutrition for practising Muslims, as well as guidance for non-Muslim athletes, clubs and staff to ensure their Judo environment is as inclusive and welcoming as possible.

"By sharing information, we can help to support an environment throughout the game where people are encouraged and empowered to be themselves. We acknowledge that Ramadan is the most important time of year for practising Muslims and this guidance aims to raise awareness and encourage increased inclusivity during this holy period."

Guide to Ramadan

[Ramadan 2022 | Muslim Council of Britain \(mcb.org.uk\)](https://mcb.org.uk)

What is Ramadan?

“O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you as it has been prescribed for those before you, so that you may attain Taqwa (God-conscious)”
[Quran 2:183]

Muslims around the world fast during daylight hours, meaning they abstain from eating, drinking or engaging in sexual relations for the duration of their fast. Young children, pregnant women, the old, the sick and travellers are examples of those who are exempt from fasting.

Aside from fasting, Muslims observing Ramadan also increase in spiritual devotional acts such as prayer, giving charity and strengthening family ties. Muslims are also encouraged to share their food with friends, family and neighbours and to reach out to those who may be fasting alone, to share their Ramadan experiences.

Why fast?

Fasting plays an important role in many major world religions and is a central feature in all the Abrahamic faiths: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In Islam, Muslims, who are able to, are required to fast during the month of Ramadan and are recommended to fast at other times of the year too. Fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam. A key objective of fasting increase in *taqwa* (closeness to / consciousness of God), and to engender a sense of gratitude, self-discipline and self-improvement, at both an individual and community level, which Muslims are encouraged to continue throughout the year.

At an individual level, fasting encourages us to feel an affinity with the poor across the world who have little or no food to eat, whilst for our own bodies, scientific studies have shown that fasting provides several health benefits and forms of intermittent fasting have been incorporated into several diet regimes. At a community level, the breaking of fast meal (*iftar*) at sunset encourages families and local communities to share their meal together, whilst charity work in local communities typically increases during Ramadan.

Is Fasting Harmful to Health?

If you are healthy with no pre-existing conditions, there is no evidence to suggest fasting is harmful to your health provided you are adequately eating and hydrating in non-fasting hours.

Some studies suggest there may even be health benefits from fasting. For those who usually drink caffeine through tea or coffee, the lack of caffeine can bring on headaches and tiredness. However, this will reduce as the body adapts to going without caffeine during the day. Due to the timings of meals before dawn

and after sunset, adjustment to new sleeping and eating patterns may also lead to some people feeling more tired than normal.

If you have pre-existing health conditions and would like more information on whether it is advisable for you to fast, please consult the British Islamic Medical Association (BIMA)'s Ramadan Hub: britishima.org/ramadan

Alternatively, contact BIMA on: ramadan@britishima.org

Adapting for Ramadan

If you are unable to partake of communal activities as a family, or simply dealing with time constraints & pressures, for example, consider the following:

- Streaming Islamic lectures or taraweeh in your home, either pre-recorded or live.
- Arranging virtual iftars with loved ones and community members through the many online video calling facilities available.
- Planning your iftar menus in advance so that you can limit multiple shopping trips given social distancing measures.
- Hydrating well for the long fasting days. Dehydration can lead to tiredness, headaches, lack of focus/concentration.
- Eating high energy, slow burn foods for suhoor (starting your fast).
- Remaining energised throughout the workday, especially as we can experience heightened levels of anxiety during these times.
- Taking regular breaks to reflect and take time for yourself. Life can be full, and we try to fill it with more worship during Ramadan. We all want to pray more and this can help with anxiety but it is important to be good to yourself – sometimes it is quality over quantity.

6. Maintaining Physical Health

Individuals with an illness or health condition where fasting could be detrimental to their health are exempt from fasting. The British Islamic Medical Association (BIMA) have created a [peer reviewed document that brings together a range of literature reviews around how medical professionals can advise patients whether to keep or terminate their fast](#). Please note, clinicians must exercise discretion based on each individual patient's circumstances.

A wealth of resources for Muslims and the medical community on issues pertaining to health during Ramadan, are available at: britishima.org/ramadan.

Also available for medical healthcare professionals and patients is the MCB's [Ramadan Health Factsheet 2022](#)

[MCB-Ramadan-Health-Factsheet-2022.pdf](#)

Helpful Guides from other Sports:

Football Association:

[20210412-ramadan-2021-guidance-notes.pdf](#)

TIPS FOR MUSLIM COLLEAGUES AND PARTICIPANTS IN FOOTBALL

With this in mind and if you are a Muslim member of staff, player, coach, referee or other football participant, Ramadan may have an effect on you, particularly physically.

This is mainly due to the fasting required, so maintaining good physical health requires additional thought and preparation. Fasting is difficult because the body has to adapt to not receiving food and fluids throughout the day.

Not having regular quick energy provided by frequent meals during the day means the body has to rely on what it can store and then change the way it works. Dehydration is the biggest issue. It causes fatigue which slows down many of our bodily organ functions.

Here are tips we hope you'll find useful and at the foot of this page are some links to more detailed information.

EXERCISE TIMES

The best times to exercise are in periods that limit losses in fitness or strength. With daylight fasting in mind, the ideal exercise time is therefore around midnight. That's because it's a few hours after you have broken your fast in the evening meal (iftar) and allows enough time thereafter for your body to digest any food, clear the stomach and direct blood to the exercising muscles.

In addition, after you've exercised around midnight and before you go to bed, you also have time to consume sufficient fluid and glucose to enable you to replenish muscle glycogen* stores after exercise.

* Glycogen is an energy-giver made from glucose in the food you eat. It is mainly stored in your liver and muscles. From these storage sites, your muscles can quickly mobilise stored glycogen as fuel.

SUGGESTED RAMADAN DIET

The dietary suggestions below are aimed at active football participants. If you have, or are likely to have, any health issues during fasting, you should seek appropriate medical advice before starting any major dietary changes.

After sunset meal (iftar):

DO:

- Eat a small amount of quick-release carbohydrates (e.g. dates, fruit, smoothies and pasta);
- Drink a whey protein shake to help with muscle regeneration and recovery.

DON'T:

- Eat big meals at this time, or the body goes into 'storage mode' and will make you feel lethargic and not want to exercise later.

Before dawn meal (suhoor):

DO:

- Focus on carbohydrates that release energy slowly (e.g. non-starchy vegetables like spinach and kale; sweet potato, pasta, nuts, fruit, oats and porridge) combined with foods that will release energy in the short/medium-term (e.g. bananas, eggs and apples);
- Drink plenty of isotonic fluids as opposed to water – ideally between two and four litres;
- Gain extra electrolytes from a soluble tablet to help with the water absorption.

DON'T:

- Skip suhoor. Getting more sleep might sound appealing, but breakfast really is the most important meal of the day and is even more important during Ramadan to get you through the fasting period;
- Eat rich, greasy, fried and sugary dishes. Aside from the unhealthy weight gain, consuming fatty and sugary foods also cause sluggishness and fatigue;
- Add too much salt, as it will increase your thirst during the day.

THE PHYSICAL BENEFITS OF FASTING

Fasting poses a challenge to your body, but it can have the following benefits:

- Weight loss;
- Improved blood sugar control;
- Improved cholesterol levels;
- Reduced inflammation within the body, leading to reduced risk factors for diabetes and cardiovascular disease;
- On a personal level, it teaches you control and self-restraint.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND READING:

- Much of the advice above is drawn from an article by Dr. Zafar Iqbal, Head of Sports Medicine at Crystal Palace FC. You can read the full article [here](#).
- Strategies for maintaining fitness and performance during Ramadan, [Journal of Sports Sciences](#)
- Ramadan fasting and the goals of sports nutrition around exercise, [Journal of Sports Sciences](#)
- [A healthy Ramadan](#), the British Nutrition Foundation.

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