

The Physical Benefits of Salat



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Salat is one of the five fundamental requirements that a Muslim is obligated to perform. Salat is given the highest priority in the Holy Quran. There are many benefits of Salat described in the Book of Allah. It says, *innassalata tanha anil fahsha'i*, Surely Prayer restrains one from indecency. (29:46) In chapter Luqman, We read that when Hadhrat Luqman was giving advice to his son, the first and foremost on his mind was to remind his son, *ya bunayya aqimissalat* "O my dear son,! observe Prayer." (31:8)

According to a Hadith the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) is reported to have said, *inna fissalati shifa'a* " verily there is cure in salat ". According to a Muslim scholar, as reported in monthly Urdu magazine, *Tahazibul Akhlaq*, Aligarh, India, a Muslim who offers salat regularly has very little chance of getting arthritis as we exercise our bones and joints while we offer salat.

In the light of this Hadith we shall endeavor to describe some orthopedic benefits of salat in this short note.

1. Regular exercise reduces cholesterol in the body. Cholesterol causes heart failures, strokes, diabetes and many other ailments. It is a known fact that people in professions where exercise is required have less amount of cholesterol in their bodies.
2. Salat is an excellent form of exercise to prevent indigestion. In the morning when stomach is empty, a Muslim is required to offer fewer number of *Rak'aat* whereas in the evening after the dinner we offer an extra number of *Rak'aat*.

3. By offering *Takbir* at the beginning of salat, we move hand and shoulder muscles thereby increasing the flow of blood towards torso. *Akamat* performs a similar function.
4. The most important function in salat is *sajdah* where we touch the ground with our forehead. This posture increases fresh supply of blood to our brain. Needless to say in certain forms of yoga some adherents stand on their heads for the same purpose.
5. In *tashah'hud* position, our hip, elbow, knee joints, backbone, wrist joints move in a way that it provides a form of relaxation to our entire body. Pressure is applied on the body parts as if it was a kind of massage which releases tension.
6. Heart is the most important organ in the body. It supplies fresh blood to all body tissues. These body movements performed during salat are an excellent source of exercise for our heart as well. According to a *Hadith* of the Holy Prophet, "There is an organ in the body, when it is healthy, the whole body is healthy, and when this is sick, the entire body becomes sick". It is the heart.
7. A remarkable tissue in our body is cartilage. It is unique in being a living tissue with no direct blood supply. The only way it receives nutrients and oxygen is by movements of the joints. The pumping effect forces blood into the joint area which would otherwise be bypassed. Those who sit at the terminals are in greater danger of ending up with dead cartilage tissues that will subsequently wear away. This will leave us with arthritis, painful joints and paralysis. Bacteria and viruses find safe haven in joints for this reason as no blood cell can get at them and in most cases neither can antibodies. Salat therefore, has many orthopedic benefits for all Muslims. Next time you offer salat, thank Almighty Allah that He made you a Muslim. Indeed, **there is cure in salat.**