



Hijab: Fabric, Fad or Faith?

Are you Ready? Six Obstacles to Overcome

Thinking about wearing Hijab? Here are some tips to help you overcome obstacles that may get in your way:

- **Yourself** –Not sure if you're ready? Remember that *Iman* (faith in Allah) includes submitting to Allah's will. Research, understand the reasons and talk to girls who have gone through it. Ask Allah to help you put your beliefs into action. Prophet Muhammad related that Allah said, "*if [My servant] draws near to Me a hand's span, I draw near to him an arm's length; if he draws near to Me an arm's length, I draw near to him a fathom's length; and if he comes to Me walking, I go to him running.*" (Bukhari and Muslim)
- **Your Friends** – Worried about how your buddies will take it? Your friends should accept your decision and be proud of your courage. Give them time and be patient. Be conscious of Allah, not the girls or guys.
- **Your Parents** – It's difficult to do things when the people closest to you oppose it. As Muslims, it's our duty to please our parents, unless their wishes go against the command of Allah. As much as your parents do for you, their love and mercy could never compare to that of your Creator. Ease your parents into your decision and pray that it becomes easy for them to understand.
- **At School** –It takes courage to be different. You are likely to hear, "what is that *thing* on your head?" or "who made you do it?" Questions aren't bad. Know your reasons and explain why you *chose* to wear Hijab.
- **At Work** – The United Nations states that, "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion" (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18). Most countries in the world abide by this declaration and have their own laws that protect an individual's freedom of religious practice at work.
- **At the Gym** – What about swimming or basketball for sporty sisters? Obeying Allah and wearing Hijab does not limit your physical activity. Organize sisters-only sports events. This encourages true sports-womanship. When you play, it's about the love of the game, not the glory (or the guys watching!).

For Further Reading & Research:

[Woman's Dress in Islam](#) by Jamal Badawi

[The Lawful and Prohibited in Islam](#) by Yusuf Al-Qaradawi

[Rethinking Muslim Women and the Veil](#) by Katherine Bullock



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"Yeah, I just got on the bus and I'm on my way home. Okay, Mum, *Wa'alaikum Assalam.*"

I slip my cell into my bag. A girl in a yellow tank top and dark blue cut-offs plops into the seat beside me.

"*Ugh*, I hate taking the bus, especially in this heat," she says.

I nod and smile.

She raises her eyebrows at my full-length dress and the cloth wrapped around my head. "Aren't you hot in that?" she asks.

I contemplate my answer. The girl shoots another question. "Why do you wear that thing on your head anyway?"

I fiddle with the clasp on my bag. I wonder what I should say. Why do I wear Hijab?



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Why the Hood?

It's tough to explain, isn't it? Hijab relates to the basic faith that there is only one God worthy of worship. As Muslim women we want to submit to God and obey all His commands. Since Hijab is a clear commandment of God (see Quran 24:31), we *choose* to do it to please Him. If we wear Hijab for any other reason, we may fulfill an obligation without gaining the reward for it.

Aisha (The wife of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) said, **"May Allah have mercy on the immigrant women (from Makkah). When Allah revealed 'that they should draw their veils over their *juyubihinna**,' they tore their wrappers and covered their heads and faces with them."** [Bukhari]

The female companions of the Prophet gave up the traditions and norms of their society and covered up immediately to respond to Allah, before they knew the proper method.

Only a Head Covering?

"And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their *Juyubihinna and not display their beauty except to..."** [Quran 24:31]

The word **Juyubihinna*, according to most scholars, refers to the head, ears, neck and chest. To fulfil the minimum requirements of Hijab, a Muslim woman covers her entire body, except her face and hands. Once Asma, daughter of Abu Bakr, entered upon the Prophet wearing thin clothes. The Prophet turned his attention from her. He said, *"O Asma, when a woman reaches the age of menstruation, it does not suit her that she displays her parts of body except this and this,"* and he pointed to his face and hands. [Abu Dawud].

Proper Hijab means loose and opaque clothes. Clothes should not be alluring or similar to the clothing of men. What about guys? Islam outlines a modest dress code for men and women. The requirements are different based on the obvious physiological and psychological differences between the two genders.

Hijab does not apply only to clothes. It is a state of mind, behaviour, and lifestyle. Hijab celebrates a desirable quality called *Haya* (modesty), a deep concern for preserving one's dignity. *Haya* is a natural feeling that brings us pain at the very idea of committing a wrong. The Prophet said: **"Every religion has a distinct call. For Islam it is *Haya* (modesty)."** [Ibn Majah].



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What's in it for Me? Five Advantages of Hijab

- ◆ **I can't be messed with! Hijab protects me** – Hijab identifies a Muslim woman as a person of high moral standards to reduce her chances of being harassed.

"O Prophet! Tell your wives and daughters and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons: that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested." [Quran 33:59]

As Dr. Katherine Bullock (a Canadian convert and community activist) observes, "The point to covering is not that sexual attraction is bad, only that it should be expressed between a husband and wife inside the privacy of the home. A public space free of sexual tensions is seen as a more peaceful place for human beings, men and women, to interact, do business, and build a healthy civilization."

- ◆ **I am liberated from slavery to 'physical perfection'** – Society makes women desire to become 'perfect objects'. The multitudes of alluring fashion magazines and cosmetic surgeries show women's enslavement to beauty. The entertainment industry pressures teens to believe that for clothes, less is better. When we wear Hijab, we vow to liberate ourselves from such desires and serve only God.
- ◆ **I don't let others judge me by my hair and curves!** – In schools and professional environments, women are often judged by their looks or bodies—characteristics they neither chose nor created. Hijab forces society to judge women for their value as human beings, with intellect, principles, and feelings. A woman in Hijab sends a message, "Deal with my brain, not my body!"
- ◆ **I feel empowered and confident** – In contrast to today's teenage culture, where anorexia and suicide are on the rise, as women attempt to reach an unattainable ideal of beauty, Hijab frees a woman from the pressure to 'fit in'. She does not have to worry about wearing the right kind of jeans or the right shade of eyeshadow. She can feel secure about her appearance because she cares to please only Allah.
- ◆ **I feel the bond of unity** – Hijab identifies us as Muslims and encourages other Muslim sisters to greet us with the salutation of peace, *"Assalamu Alaikum"*. Hijab draws others to us and immerses us in good company.