



Salah Guide

A step-by-step guide to the daily prayer — the five prayers and their times, how to pray one rak'ah, and every recitation in Arabic, transliteration, and translation, marked obligatory or recommended, with a source for each. Print, fold, and pray along.

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What's inside

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This is a companion for the daily prayer — enough to pray by, with every recitation written out and sourced. Learn the shape here, and pick up the finer points hands-on from a knowledgeable teacher.

"Indeed, I am Allah. There is no deity except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance."
— Quran 20:14 (Saheeh International)

How to use this guide. If you're praying for the first time today, start with "One rak'ah, step by step" below — it's the whole shape of the prayer in order. Keep this booklet nearby until the movements and the obligatory recitations are memorized; the *Quick reference* and *Glossary* near the end are there for a fast recap once you know the shape and just need a reminder.

The five prayers

Salah is the second pillar of Islam — the prayer a Muslim performs five times a day, each at its own appointed time, for prayer "has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times." Each prayer has its own number of **rak'ahs** (units):

Prayer	When	Rak'ahs
Fajr	Before sunrise	2
Dhuhr	After midday	4
Asr	Afternoon	4
Maghrib	Just after sunset	3
Isha	Night	4

(These are the obligatory rak'ahs of each prayer; there are further recommended prayers around them — see "A few recommended sunnahs" below.)

Before you pray

Make **wudu** first — the ablution the Qur'an commands before prayer. The *Wudu, Step by Step* poster in this pack walks through it. Then find a clean spot, cover yourself modestly, and face the **qibla** — the direction of the Kaaba in Mecca, which unites Muslims everywhere in a single direction. If you're not sure which way that is,

a qibla-finder app or a compass will show you; most mosques' prayer halls are already aligned to it. Form the quiet intention in your heart to pray this prayer for the sake of God, and begin.

One rak'ah, step by step

A prayer is built from rak'ahs, and every rak'ah has the same shape. Stand facing the qibla, raise your hands, and say **Allahu Akbar** ("God is the Greatest"). This opening *takbir* enters you into the prayer; from here, worldly speech and movement stop. Every posture that follows — standing, bowing, prostrating, and sitting — is an obligatory part of the prayer; the shorter praises said *within* the bowing and prostration are recommended, and marked so.

Standing, recite **Al-Fatihah**, the opening chapter of the Qur'an. It is obligatory in every rak'ah — the Prophet ﷺ said there is no prayer for the one who does not recite it.

OBLIGATORY · STANDING

Al-Fatihah — the opening chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ إِيَّاكَ
نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

Bismi-llāhi-r-Raḥmāni-r-Raḥīm. Al-ḥamdu lillāhi Rabbi-l-'ālamīn. Ar-Raḥmāni-r-Raḥīm. Māliki yawmi-d-dīn. Iyyāka na'budu wa iyyāka nasta'īn. Ihdina-ṣ-ṣīrāṭa-l-mustaqīm. Ṣīrāṭa-lladhīna an'amta 'alayhim ghayri-l-maghḍūbi 'alayhim wa la-ḍ-ḍāllīn

In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful. All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds — the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful, Sovereign of the Day of Recompense. It is You we worship and You we ask for help. Guide us to the straight path — the path of those upon whom You have bestowed favour, not of those who have earned Your anger or of those who are astray.

Recited in every rak'ah — the one recitation the prayer cannot be without.

Quran 1:1-7 (Al-Fatihah)

In the first two rak'ahs, many add another short passage of the Qur'an after it. If you don't yet know a longer one, a short surah like Al-Ikhlās is a good place to start:

RECOMMENDED · AFTER AL-FATIHAH

Surah Al-Ikhlās

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ، اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ، لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ، وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

Qul huwa-llāhu aḥad. Allāhu-ṣ-ṣamad. Lam yalid wa lam yūlad. Wa lam yakun lahu kufuwan aḥad
Say, 'He is Allah, who is One. Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent.'

One of the shortest and most memorized surahs — a good first choice.

Quran 112 (Al-Ikhlās)

Say **Allahu Akbar** and bow (**ruku**), back level, hands on your knees, and stay until you are calm:

RECOMMENDED · WHILE BOWING

Glory to my Lord, the Most Great

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ

Subḥāna Rabbiya-l-'Aẓīm

Glory be to my Lord, the Most Great.

Three times, while bowing.

Sahih Muslim 772 · Sahih

Rise from bowing until you are standing fully upright and still:

RECOMMENDED · ON RISING

Rising from the bow

سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ، رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ

Samī'a-llāhu liman ḥamidah, Rabbanā wa laka-l-ḥamd

God hears the one who praises Him. Our Lord, to You is all praise.

Say the first phrase as you rise, the second once standing straight.

Sahih al-Bukhari 795 · Sahih

Say **Allahu Akbar** and prostrate (**sujood**), with forehead, nose, palms, knees, and toes touching the ground — the seven points of prostration — and stay until you are calm:

RECOMMENDED · WHILE PROSTRATING

Glory to my Lord, the Most High

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى

Subhāna Rabbiya-l-A'ālā

Glory be to my Lord, the Most High.

Three times, while prostrating.

Sahih Muslim 772 · Sahih

Sit up calmly saying **Allahu Akbar**, pause for a moment, then say **Allahu Akbar** and prostrate a second time exactly as before. Rising from this second prostration completes one **rak'ah**.

The tashahhud and ending the prayer

After every two rak'ahs — and at the end of the prayer — sit and recite the **tashahhud**, bearing witness to God's oneness and to the messengership of the Prophet ﷺ:

OBLIGATORY · FINAL SITTING

The tashahhud

التَّحِيَّاتُ لِلَّهِ وَالصَّلَوَاتُ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ، السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ،
السَّلَامُ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى عِبَادِ اللَّهِ الصَّالِحِينَ، أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ
وَرَسُولُهُ

At-taḥiyyātu lillāhi wa-ṣ-ṣalawātu wa-ṭ-ṭayyibāt, as-salāmu 'alayka ayyuha-n-nabiyyu wa raḥmatu-llāhi wa barakātuh, as-salāmu 'alaynā wa 'alā 'ibādi-llāhi-ṣ-ṣāliḥīn, ash-hadu an lā ilāha illa-llāh, wa ash-hadu anna Muḥammadan 'abduhu wa rasūluh

All greetings, prayers, and good things are for God. Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the mercy of God and His blessings. Peace be upon us and upon the righteous servants of God. I bear witness that there is no god but God, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

Sahih al-Bukhari 831 · Sahih

In the **final** sitting, follow the tashahhud with the *salawat* — asking God to bless the Prophet ﷺ:

RECOMMENDED · FINAL SITTING

The salawat (durood)

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، إِنَّكَ
حَمِيدٌ مُجِيدٌ

Allāhumma ṣalli 'alā Muḥammad wa 'alā āli Muḥammad, kamā ṣallayta 'alā Ibrāhīm wa 'alā āli Ibrāhīm, innaka Ḥamīdun Majīd

O God, send blessings upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, as You sent blessings upon Abraham and the family of Abraham; indeed, You are Praiseworthy, Glorious.

Said in the final sitting, after the tashahhud.

Sahih al-Bukhari 3370 · Sahih

Then end the prayer with the **tasleem**: turn your face to the right, then to the left, each time saying *As-salamu alaykum wa rahmatullah* ("Peace and the mercy of God be upon you"). The Prophet ﷺ taught that the prayer "is exited by the tasleem."

Building each prayer

Every prayer is this rak'ah repeated for the right number of units, with a sitting for the tashahhud after each pair and at the very end:

2

Two rak'ahs — Fajr

Rak'ah, then rak'ah. Sit for the tashahhud and salawat, and give the tasleem.

3

Three rak'ahs — Maghrib

Two rak'ahs, then sit for the tashahhud. Stand for one more rak'ah, then the final sitting with the salawat and the tasleem.

4

Four rak'ahs — Dhuhr, Asr, Isha

Two rak'ahs, then sit for the tashahhud. Stand for two more rak'ahs, then the final sitting with the salawat and the tasleem.

In the third and fourth rak'ahs, recite only Al-Fatihah — without a second passage after it.

A few recommended sunnahs

Beyond the obligatory shape of the prayer, a few further practices are well attested from the Prophet ﷺ and widely followed. None of them are required for the prayer to be valid, but they are worth learning early:

- **Raising the hands.** At the opening takbir, before bowing, and on rising from bowing, raise your hands to shoulder height, palms facing forward, then let them fall or fold them again.
- **Right hand over left.** While standing to recite, place your right hand over your left forearm.
- **Saying Ameen.** After Al-Fatihah, say *Ameen*. The Prophet ﷺ taught that when it is said together with the one leading the prayer, it coincides with the angels' Ameen and past sins are forgiven.
- **Voluntary prayers.** Around the five obligatory prayers, the Prophet ﷺ regularly prayed twelve further rak'ahs each day — two before Fajr, four before and two after Dhuhr, two after Maghrib, and two after Isha — and taught that whoever keeps them will have a house built for them in Paradise.

Praying in congregation

Where possible, pray with others. Congregational prayer is twenty-seven times more rewarding than praying alone. One person leads as **imam**; everyone else follows a half-step behind, matching each movement only after the imam begins it — never ahead of him. Stand shoulder to shoulder in straight, unbroken rows: the Prophet ﷺ taught that straight rows are part of a correct prayer. If you arrive after the prayer has already started, join the row quietly and simply follow along from wherever the imam is; make up whatever you missed once he finishes.

After the prayer

When you have given the tasleem, the prayer is complete. Many Muslims stay a moment for the short remembrances of God that follow it — the *Morning & Evening Adhkar* cards in this pack carry a set, each with its source. There's no need to rush off afterward: a quiet moment of reflection, or a personal dua in your own words and

language, is welcome too. God hears both the Arabic you've learned here and whatever you say from the heart.

Notes and common questions

- **A missed prayer** is made up as soon as you remember it: pray it, then carry on with the prayers of the day.
- **If you're sick or unable to stand**, pray sitting; if you can't sit, pray lying on your side. The Prophet ﷺ taught this to a companion who could not stand for prayer.
- **New to Arabic?** Learn Al-Fatihah first — even slowly, sound by sound. The rest of the prayer's wording can follow with time; the transliteration in this guide is there to help you start today.
- **Obligatory or recommended?** The postures themselves — standing, bowing, the two prostrations, and the sittings — are all obligatory, along with reciting Al-Fatihah, the final tashahhud, and the tasleem. The shorter praises said within the bowing and prostration, and the salawat after the tashahhud, are recommended: rewarded, but the prayer is still valid without them.
- **Schools differ** on small details of posture and wording. Use this guide to learn the shape of the prayer, and learn the specifics hands-on from a knowledgeable, trustworthy teacher.

Common mistakes to avoid

- **Rushing through the postures.** Settle calmly in each position — standing, bowing, and prostrating — before moving to the next. Rushing was the flaw the Prophet ﷺ corrected most often when he watched someone pray.
- **Praying without valid wudu.** If you're unsure whether it's still valid, make it again; the prayer isn't valid without it.
- **Guessing the qibla.** If you're travelling or somewhere new, check the direction before you begin rather than guessing.
- **Treating the recommended parts as unimportant.** They were the Prophet's ﷺ constant practice — aim to include them, not just the bare minimum.

Quick reference: the obligatory core

Once you know the prayer, this is all you strictly need for it to be valid:

Step	What's obligatory
1	Stand facing the qibla; say the opening takbir
2	Recite Al-Fatihah, standing
3	Bow (ruku)
4	Stand up straight again
5	Prostrate (sujood) — twice, with a brief sitting between them
6	Sit for the tashahhud — after every two rak'ahs, and at the end
7	End with the tasleem

Everything else in this guide — the tasbih, the salawat, raising the hands, and the rest — is recommended, not required.

Glossary of terms

A quick lookup for the Arabic words used throughout this guide:

Term	Meaning
Rak'ah	One unit of the prayer
Ruku	Bowing
Sujood	Prostration
Tashahhud	The sitting testimony of faith
Tasleem	The greeting of peace that ends the prayer
Qibla	The direction of the Kaaba, faced in prayer
Wudu	The ritual washing performed before prayer
Niyyah	The intention to pray, made quietly in the heart
Fard	Obligatory — what a valid prayer requires
Sunnah	Recommended — the Prophet's ﷺ constant practice
Imam	The person leading the prayer
Jama'ah	Praying together, in congregation
Adhan	The call to prayer, announcing that its time has begun
Iqama	The second, shorter call, said just before the prayer begins
Khushu'	Attentive presence and humility in prayer
Dhikr	Remembrance of God, often through short recitations

That's the shape of the prayer. Keep the obligatory parts secure, and build up the rest — the recommended words, the etiquette, the confidence — over time. It gets easier with repetition, not with getting it perfect on day one.



Every dua and every claim in this guide is cited to the Qur'an or authentic, graded hadith.

Full sources: journeyintoislam.com/pocket-guides/salah-guide

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