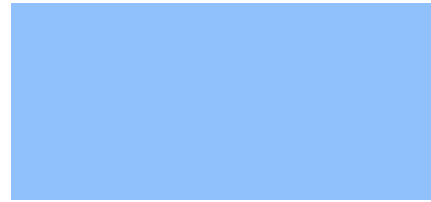




# The Working Muslim in Ramadan



**Employee  
Guide**



"Islam sets out very clearly the need for Muslims to find a balance when they try to fulfil their obligations to themselves, their families, the society and to God. During the month of Ramadan, Muslims face the added challenge of balancing their obligations to worship God more whilst also performing to the best of their abilities for their employers. The Working Muslim in Ramadan guide will be extremely useful in providing employers and Muslims helpful information about Ramadan. I believe this guide is a must for every workplace."

Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra

*Chair, Mosque and Community Affairs Committee, MCB.*

*Community Ambassador, 1st Ethical Charitable Trust.*

*Co Chair, Christian Muslim Forum.*

"I see The Working Muslim in Ramadan guide as a vital tool for enhancing good relations between organisations and their Muslim employees. Fasting is a key tradition within the Christian and Muslim faiths and Ramadan is an important time of reflection and fasting for Muslims. I would encourage all employers and employees to read these guides."

The Right Reverend Bishop Richard Cheetham

*Co Chair, Christian Muslim Forum*

## Acknowledgements

All praise belongs to Allah, the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful.

This guide has been prepared by Saiyyidah Zaidi-Stone, founder of Working Muslim. Established in 2010, Working Muslim is an organisation enabling Muslims to balance their responsibilities to work, faith, family and society.

Saiyyidah is also Development Director for 1st Ethical Charitable Trust. Originally trained as an architect, Saiyyidah has worked in both the public and private sector for over 20 years. Saiyyidah prepared this guide in order to enable Muslims and their employers and colleagues to have the necessary information relating to being a Working Muslim in Ramadan. The aim is for Muslims and non Muslims to have a shared understanding of the etiquettes of Ramadan and working.

Saiyyidah would like to thank Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra, Abu Haleema and reviewers who did not want to be named for their contributions to the development of this guide.



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First Edition,  
1432 AH/2011 CE  
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# What is Working Muslim?

Working Muslim is an organisation enabling Muslims to balance their responsibilities to work, faith, family and society. To contact Working Muslim please email [info@workingmuslim.com](mailto:info@workingmuslim.com) and we will respond to your request in two working days, if your message is urgent please mark it so and we will respond sooner, God willing.

# Why is this guide needed?

With the number of Muslims increasing in the workplace it is important for employees to know how to approach the month of Ramadan when working for an employer. The aim of this guide is to provide some helpful tips on how to deal with some of the things that come up during the month of Ramadan for employees.

A Working Muslim in Ramadan Employers Guide has also been prepared and you can get a copy from [www.workingmuslim.com](http://www.workingmuslim.com) to give to your employers. The Employers guide sets out steps that your employers can take to support you and is very useful in helping your colleagues know how to interact with you appropriately in Ramadan. The aim of the two guides is to ensure that any discussions regarding Ramadan take place openly and that both employer and employee feel safe and secure in the knowledge that they have the right information.

The contents of this guide respond to an international survey undertaken by Working Muslim in April/May 2011.





# Working and Ramadan

Working has a great importance and value in Islam. The importance of lawful earnings is emphasised by the numerous instructions of God in the Qur'an to earn a living through lawful means.

The Prophet Muhammad *sallallahu`alayhi wasallam* taught Muslims that one needs to be balanced and harmonised between their worship and work. Muslims have to remain constant in acts of worship, and also to work hard to earn a living and support their families. Prophet Muhammad made it clear that being in a position to purchase day to day provisions from one's own work is actually a commendable act of worship.

Ramadan should not be used as an excuse for not working to one's usual level of commitment and productivity and it is important to remember one's obligations to employers.



# What shall I do this Ramadan if I am working?

## Should I tell my boss that I am fasting?

It is better to let your colleagues and managers know that you are fasting. They will probably be wondering why you aren't eating; and if you do get a little irritable, which can be natural, why you are not your usual self.

On the whole however, the fact that you are fasting should not affect your work. By discussing it with your manager you may find that they are willing to consider an early start with an earlier finish, a shorter lunch or something else which is of help to you during the month of Ramadan.

*[Working Muslim has also produced a guide on how to set up a prayer room and should you like advice on the requirements for a prayer facility at your workplace please email [info@workingmuslim.com](mailto:info@workingmuslim.com).*

*You may find that some of your work colleagues want to know why you are not eating or drinking and it is helpful to have a few answers ready. We have produced a factsheet for this at the end of this guide.]*

## How do I stay focused at work while I am fasting?

Obviously, you can't have your usual cup of coffee in the morning, or drink of water to keep you hydrated, so what do you do? Research shows that concentration lasts for about 40-50 minutes and after that a short break is required. If you feel your energy is flagging then try going to the bathroom and washing your face. During the lunch hour, take a short walk outside and raise your oxygen levels. If you are able to, briefly walk around the office every hour for a few minutes. Try and make sure that you are in a space where there is good ventilation so that you have maximum oxygen within your body. Be mindful of why you are fasting, be in the moment now and your focus will increase.





## Dealing with having to work in Ramadan

Employees get a minimum of 20 days annual leave a year in the UK. It is important to think about how this is used. See if you can work a shorter week or take some time off during Ramadan. Planning as soon as possible makes your chance of success greater. If you have Muslim colleagues at your workplace try and meet up with them during lunch or use the time to get away from your workplace where others may be eating. Maximise the time spent travelling to work and increase worship or prepare yourself for the day ahead. A lot of this is to do with mindset and if one approaches Ramadan with a positive attitude one will be able to both work effectively and enjoy Ramadan.

## Waking up for suhur and Fajr

Early wake ups twice are tough! Break down your day into 24 hours and think about what needs to be done and when. If you are able to sleep when you get home from work for a few hours, do that and recharge your batteries before waking up to break your fast. The ideal situation would be to not to go back to sleep after Fajr but this is not always possible especially in the summer when Fajr is at 4:00 am and work starts at 9:00 am. So what do you do? Eating healthily and drinking lots of water [between sunset and sunrise] will help boost your energy and you should be able to either stay awake or if you do go back to sleep wake up with more energy.





## Disrupted sleep patterns

Ramadan brings with it many changes. If your body is not introduced to these changes in a gradual manner, it could react negatively to eating differently or waking up and sleeping at different times. Good time management can be an excellent way to enjoy a more meaningful Ramadan. There are some changes that may take a few days for your body to get used to.

With Ramadan in the summer months, sleeping patterns alter significantly. As you will have a much earlier start to the day it would be better if you gradually introduce your body to this new sleep schedule. Physical activities and a good, well balanced diet are important to avoid feeling tired.

## What to do at lunch time

See if you can negotiate a shorter lunch hour, perhaps 30 minutes instead of the usual 1 hour. Plan what you will do with your time. Some of it will be spent praying, the rest of the time can either be spent in further worship e.g. reading Qur'an. If you need to and you can, try taking a rest. See if you can find a quiet space in which to close your eyes for a few minutes and take a power nap.

## Flagging energy mid afternoon

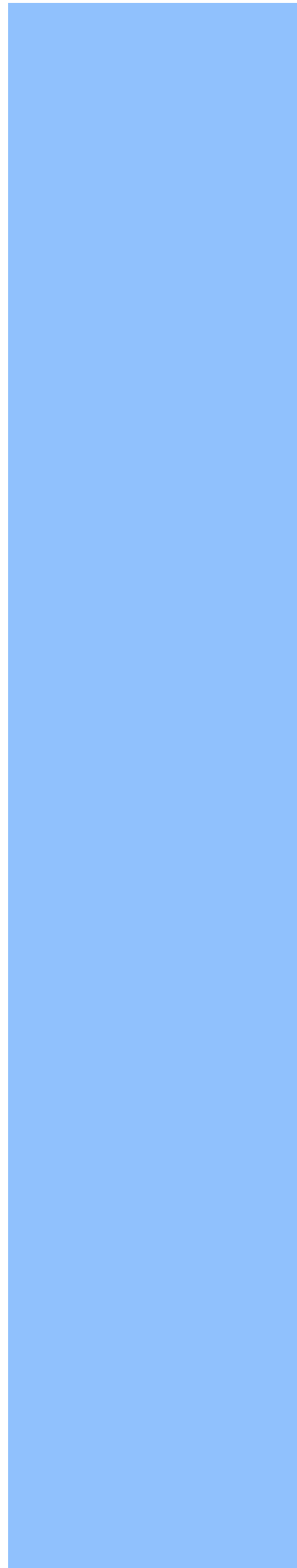
The late afternoon is always the hardest part of the fast. This is when the rumbles of the stomach become more persistent, nerves start to wear and time slows. A short nap or a short walk can help boost energy levels. The key is also to plan the tasks that you enjoy the most around this time so you have something that will keep you occupied and take your mind off fasting.

# Eat properly- don't resort to take-aways

The Qur'an states: "Eat of the good and wholesome things that We have provided for your sustenance, but indulge in no excess therein." [20:81].

As well as not following the Sunnah, not eating suhur and iftar properly may make you irritable, or ill. Work out your personal Ramadan meal plan and stick to it. Cook as much in advance as you can. Consider extended family cooking rotas if possible. Choose healthy, easy-to-make recipes so you are not rushing for something to eat at the last minute. Always have an emergency iftar pack on hand- a few dates and a small bottle of water, that way you know you will always be OK.

Eat a balanced diet with complex carbohydrates that release energy more slowly during the hours of fasting and fibre rich foods that are digested more slowly, especially for suhur. Avoid foods that are processed and contain refined carbohydrates [such as sugar, cakes, chocolate]. If you are able to try and reduce caffeine intake to it will help stave off those caffeine withdrawal headaches.





# 9 Tips for the Working Muslim in Ramadan



If work is simply the place where you earn your money and punch in your hours, why not redefine it this Ramadan? Here are some ideas that can help you share Ramadan with your boss and colleagues this year:

1. **Begin informing people about it as soon as possible.** Start telling bosses, supervisors and colleagues about Ramadan now. Bring it up in the course of conversation casually. In terms of when Ramadan starts and ends, just give the projected date 1st or 2nd August 2011.
2. **Post it up on your office or department bulletin board.** Put up a factsheet on Ramadan, with a short introduction of yourself and which department you are from. Do not just give the facts, but also include a few sentences about what Ramadan means to you [i.e. spiritual growth, closeness to God, being more generous, etc.].
3. **Write About Ramadan in Company Newsletters.** In a healthy workplace where workers know one another very well, issues on religion will be topics of discussion in mutual respect. Use the opportunity of this month to educate your co-workers on the subject of Muslim fasting and the needs of fasting Muslims in workplaces.
4. **Create a “Ramadan corner” at your desk.** If you have your own desk at work, dedicate a corner of it that is accessible to passers by the “Ramadan corner”. Put information on Ramadan or maybe a small frame with eye-catching Islamic calligraphy on it.
5. **Exemplify the Spirit of Ramadan.** In both your work ethics and dealing with people, exemplify noble values by being honest, fair, committed and diligent. It is important to know that fasting is about more than just not eating and drinking. Muslims must also refrain from things such as verbal abuse, gossiping, eavesdropping, backbiting, lying and slander as these acts severely reduce the worth of a fast. In essence Muslims must try to be model human beings during the fast with the aim of retaining these virtuous qualities thereafter. It is hoped that having performed these ‘Ramadan Work Ethics’ for a whole month they will become habits for life.

6. **Balance Your Workday.** Reserve the morning hours for meetings, intellectually demanding work, or tasks that require concentration, and save the routine tasks for later in the day.
7. **Negotiate your lunch hour with the boss.** Discuss options with your employer regarding lunch breaks- can you exchange your lunch hour in order to reach home earlier for iftar. Since you are not eating lunch, you can work straight through it- and take the hour off at the end of the day when your attention starts to fade a bit. [Bear in mind that employee legislation requires that all employees working more than 6 hours take a 20 minute break]. Please note that employers do not have to allow time off or changes to the usual routine if it would adversely affect the business.
8. **Have an iftar gathering at work, depending on the hours you work.** Invite Muslim and non-Muslim colleagues to a snack of dates and fresh fruits at iftar time. At least once, have a more formal meal ready for everyone.
9. **Fundraise for a needy cause.** Many non-Muslims will do a sponsored fast during Ramadan to raise money for a local or international cause. Why not get them to join you for a day? For your colleagues this could involve giving up food and water, or just giving up something for the day.

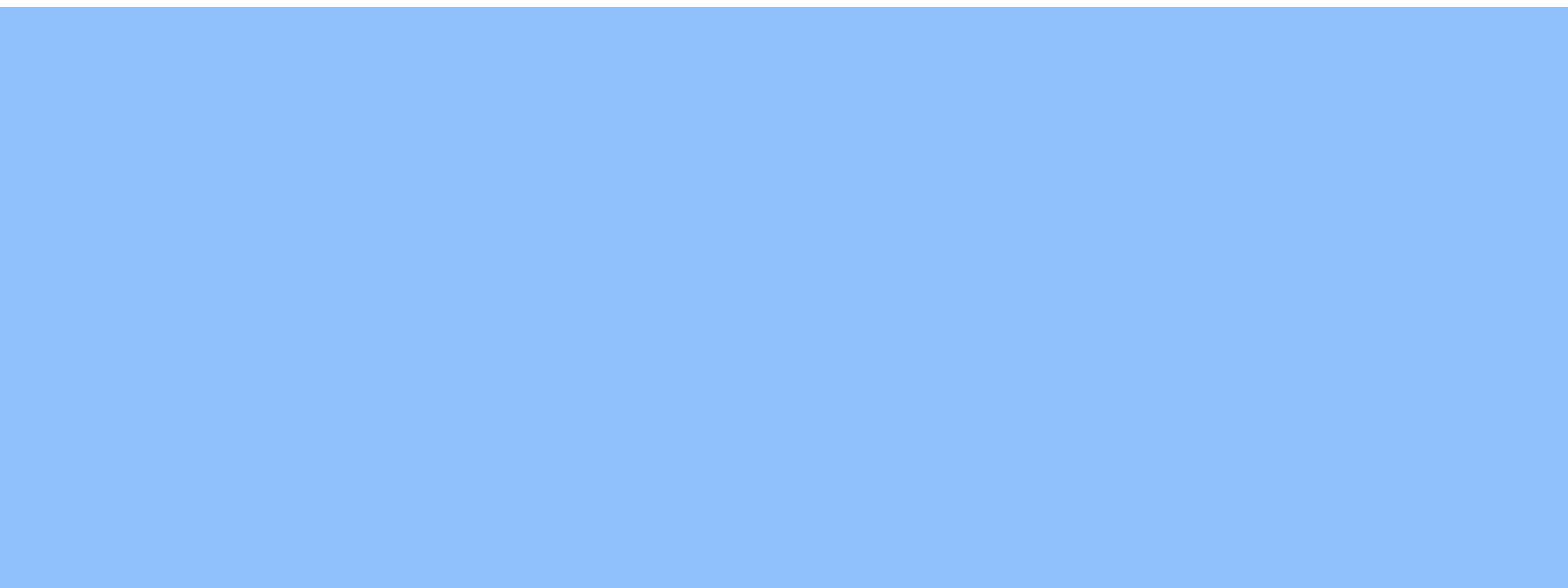


# Any further questions?

If you have any questions relating to this guide please email [info@workingmuslim.com](mailto:info@workingmuslim.com) and we will do our best to respond. Please note we will only be able to answer questions relating to Working Muslim. For all your other questions on the rulings of fasting etc, we encourage you to ask your local `ulama' /` alimat.

Working Muslim wishes you the best of success during the month of Ramadan.

If you would like a copy of the Employers version of this guide please email [info@workingmuslim.com](mailto:info@workingmuslim.com).



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