

How can I Train Myself for Jihad

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"And prepare against them all you can of power, including steeds of war to terrorise the enemies of Allah and others besides whom you may not know, but Allah does know. And whatever you shall spend in the Cause of Allah shall be repaid unto you, and you shall not be treated unjustly." [Quran 8:60]

In commenting on this verse, the Messenger (SAWS) said:

"Indeed, power is shooting, power is shooting, power is shooting." [Sahih Muslim]

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA) that the Messenger (SAWS) said:

"If anyone keeps a horse for Jihad in the Way of Allah, motivated by his faith in Allah and his belief in His Promise, then he will be rewarded on the Day of Resurrection for what the horse has eaten or drunk and for its dung and urine."

[Sahih Al-Bukhari]

After receiving a number of e-mails asking about this topic, we decided to include a small article about this subject. It is broken down into sections, but should be read from beginning to end for maximum benefit.

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1.0 What is Jihad?

Jihad literally means 'to struggle'. In the military sense it is meant in the context, 'to struggle against oppression'. Jihad is therefore an act to liberate people from the oppression of tyrants. Jihad is not illegal acts of terror against innocent people. When tabloid journalism mistakenly informs the masses that Jihad is 'to commit illegal acts of terror', they are revealing the lack of their research and the extent of their unprofessional approach to the subject.

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2.0 Military Training is an Islamic Obligation not an Option

According to the verse above ("And prepare against them all you can of power..."), military training is an obligation in Islam upon every sane, male, mature Muslim, whether rich or poor, whether studying or working and whether living in a Muslim or non-Muslim country. The Prophet (SAWS) explained the meaning of the term 'power' in the above verse during a Friday Sermon by mentioning that power was specifically shooting.

The verse mentions 'what you can...', meaning that the Muslims must prepare to the utmost of their ability and circumstances.

'Steeds of war' refer to the horses that were prepared for battle. In this day and age, the scholars of Islam have explained this term to mean all forms of modern weaponry such as infantry weapons, tanks, artillery, aircraft, etc.

The above verse is a clear evidence that military training of all sorts is an Islamic obligation, not something optional. Furthermore, the obligation is according to one's ability, in that the Muslims must use every means at their

disposal to undertake military and physical training for Jihad.

In Surah Taubah of the Quran, Allah answers those hypocrites who made feeble excuses to the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) so that they would not have to participate in the Battle of Tabuk. The hypocrites came to the Prophet (SAWS) and gave their excuses with the impression that they really wanted to take part in the battle, but difficult circumstances outside their control were preventing them from doing so. Allah's response was:

"And if they had really intended to march forth, certainly they would have made some preparation for it; but Allah hated them being sent forth, so He made them lag behind, and it was said to them, 'Sit you among those who sit at home (women, children, elderly, etc.)'" [Quran 9:46]

These hypocrites had not intended to participate in Jihad from the outset and their lack of preparations was the evidence for this. Had they really wanted to take part in the Jihad, they would have prepared themselves and tried their utmost to join the battle, like the three companions who approached the Messenger (SAWS) before the Battle of Tabuk, requesting horses or mules so they could join the Battle. When the Prophet (SAWS) informed them that he could not provide them with mounts, they turned back with their eyes full of tears that they could not join the battle:

"Nor is there blame on those who came to you to be provided with mounts, when you said, 'I can find no mounts for you,' they turned back, while their eyes were overflowing with tears of grief that they could not find anything to spend for Jihad." [Quran 9:92]

Therefore, those Muslims unable to participate in Jihad at this present time whatever the reason have no excuse before Allah for not training for Jihad. The Messenger of Allah (SAWS) said: "Whoever dies without having fought in battle, nor having the sincere wish in his heart to fight in battle, dies on a branch of hypocrisy." [Sahih Al-Bukhari]

The one sincere to fight in battle is the one who makes suitable preparations for battle. A Muslim that spends a life empty of any physical or military training for Jihad, let alone Jihad itself, should fear dying on a branch of hypocrisy according to the above hadith. True Iman (faith) is manifested in actions and if someone truly wishes to fight Jihad, he will prepare himself in all possible ways.

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3.0 Sincerity of Intention

Training is an Islamic obligation so a Muslim must undertake it for the correct reason otherwise he will neither be blessed nor rewarded by Allah for all his efforts. The correct reason to train is to train for Jihad which is undertaken to please Allah alone. Therefore the Muslim must not publicly display to the people what he is doing, nor must he show off during his training, nor seek fame or reputation in the eyes of human beings during his training. If he wishes to be rewarded by Allah and blessed and helped in his training, all his training must be done to obtain the Pleasure of Allah alone.

In practical terms, this would mean avoiding training in the company of people (e.g. women) who might be impressed by the one training, flouting muscles etc. This also means to avoid publicly announcing to everyone that one is going for training or dropping subtle hints such as leaving clothes and equipment in view of the people. The beloved Companions of the Prophet (SAWS) used to hide their good deeds more than they used to hide their sins, for fear of their intention being corrupted. Train only to please Allah and He will help you, reward you and bless you, for there is no benefit in gaining the pleasure of human beings.

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4.0 Training in your Country of Residence

4.1 Physical Training

The basis of all Jihad training is something that can be done in every country of the World: physical training. This requires little or no equipment and is something that one can fit round one's daily routine. This comprises four main areas: stamina, strength, speed and agility. In order to benefit from your physical training, it is important that it is done regularly, ideally at the same time of the day if possible, three times a week, which leaves a rest day between exercise sessions to allow the body to recuperate. Some general suggestions are given below though there are many variations to this type of training. Consult an expert or read books or Internet articles on the topic.

There are books available to the general public of physical training within the Army (US Army Field Manuals and books written by ex-British soldiers). Stamina involves being able to sustain the body at a high rate of activity for prolonged periods of time. Stamina is built up by aerobic exercise in sessions of at least 20 minutes duration. Aerobic exercise is any activity that keeps the heart rate at a level higher than normal for a sustained amount of time. It differs from anaerobic exercise in which the heart rate increases to a very high level but only for short bursts of time. Running, swimming, rowing are some exercises which build up stamina. For the exercise to be of benefit, it must be sustained for at least 20 minutes.

Running by far is the best and most practical form of stamina training for Jihad. Start your session by running for about five minutes in order to warm up. Then proceed to stretch the major muscles in your body by holding them in a stretched position for at least 30 seconds. Avoid 'bouncing' stretching as this can lead to serious injury. After this, run at a steady pace for a fixed period of time. Start easy, e.g. 10 minutes, then gradually build up every session until you can continue running at that pace for 20 minutes, 30 minutes or more. Inhale deep breaths through your nose and exhale through your mouth whilst running. It is better to run in boots as running in boots reflects the reality of running in Jihad. It is also advisable to add shock absorbing insoles into your boots before running, as these cushion the stress on the leg bones and joints. These insoles, e.g. Sorbothane, are available in camping and sports stores. Once you can sustain running at a constant pace for 30 minutes or more, you can add variety into the sessions by running up and down hill, running with ankle weights or running carrying loads, e.g. a bag full of books. Strength training can be undertaken in the form of press-ups, squats, abdominal crunches, etc. or by following a regular routine in weight training at a gymnasium. It is better to go to the gym with another brother if possible, or go at a time when there are as few women as possible. Public gymnasiums are generally un-Islamic places with loud music and improperly dressed men and women. Such an atmosphere is not befitting for the training of a Mujahid. In all cases, learn how to use the equipment properly, start easy and build up gradually and make sure you stretch and warm up enough before each session. Speed and agility can be built up by sprinting, running around obstacles, climbing over walls and similar activities. Practising martial arts is the best way to develop speed and agility.

4.2 Martial Arts

It is vital to join a martial arts club as part of the training for Jihad. In addition to teaching you how to defend yourself and strengthen your body, martial arts develop self-discipline and controlled aggression. In some countries, there are martial arts run by Muslim instructors, but one can join other clubs if there are no Muslim clubs in his area. It is preferable to join clubs that emphasise on street-fighting and self-defence such as kung-fu styles rather than tournament fighting. You would never use high or flying kicks in a real fight but you may in tournaments. As with any activity, regular attendance for a number of months is necessary in order to benefit from martial arts. Many people join martial arts clubs but are unable to stick with them. Joining clubs that teach weapons such as sword or knife-fighting are also good at advanced stages.

4.3 Survival and Outdoors Training

The majority of the time spent in Jihad is learning to cope with harsh, physically and mentally demanding living conditions. It is not about fighting glamorous battles for your pictures to appear on the Internet. Jihad is tough and difficult, which is why the rewards for it are so great. Although survival training is taught at centres in some countries, it is expensive and, in many cases, nothing special that you cannot learn and practise yourself by reading books on the subject. The best way to learn these skills is to go camping into the outdoors with a small group of brothers. Avoid going to a camping site, since these are holiday areas where many facilities are available such as hot showers, gas, etc. The best training is to take some tents, food and water and warm clothes in a rucksack and go on treks lasting 2-3 days at a time. If you do not have an experienced person with you, then start easy and build up gradually. Learn how to purify water, make wudu and istinja in cold water, attend to the call of nature in the outdoors, cook or heat food out in the open, making different types of knots with ropes, setting up tents and other similar activities. Learning how to start and maintain a fire in all conditions, wet or

dry, with and without lighting instruments is one of the most important survival skills.

Learning how to walk long distances carrying loads up to one-third of your bodyweight, walking over difficult terrain at night without the use of torches and navigational skills using a compass/ map or the stars are also useful skills. Many of these skills can be learnt from books and then practised out in the outdoors.

4.4 Firearms Training

Firearms training differs from country to country. In some countries, possession of firearms by the public is illegal, in other countries it is legal. In some countries of the World, especially the USA, firearms training is available to the general public. One should try to join a shooting club if possible and make regular visits to the firing range. There are many firearms courses available to the public in USA, ranging from one day to two weeks or more. These courses are good but expensive. Some of them are only meant for security personnel but generally they will teach anyone. It is also better to attend these courses in pairs or by yourself, no more. Do not make public announcements when going on such a course. Find one, book your place, go there, learn, come back home and keep it yourself. Whilst on the course, keep your opinions to yourself, do not argue or debate with anyone, do not preach about Islam and make Salah in secret. You are going there to train for Jihad, not call people to Islam. Useful courses to learn are sniping, general shooting and other rifle courses. Handgun courses are useful but only after you have mastered rifles.

In other countries, e.g. some states of USA, South Africa, it is perfectly legal for members of the public to own certain types of firearms. If you live in such a country, obtain an assault rifle legally, preferably AK-47 or variations, learn how to use it properly and go and practice in the areas allowed for such training. If you cannot get someone to teach you, you can purchase books about shooting technique and practise shooting stationary targets at different distances, with a partner. You can also practise running a distance, e.g. 1km, then shooting targets from a distance. Again, there are many variations and unless you have an experienced, trained person to learn from, you will be able to do little more than perfect your shooting technique at different ranges. Under NO circumstances should you play or experiment with firearms. NEVER EVER point a firearm at anyone for a joke, whether loaded or unloaded. Keep firearms unloaded and out of reach of children. If you feel that you will be unable to control a firearm or your temper, do not purchase one.

Respect the laws of the country you are in and avoid dealing in illegal firearms. One can learn to operate many arms legally, so there is no need to spend years in prison for dealing in small, illegal firearms. Learn the most you can according to your circumstances and leave the rest to when you actually go for Jihad.

4.5 IMPORTANT NOTE ON LIVE-AMMUNITION JIHAD FIREARMS TRAINING WITHIN THE UK

Recently we heard many reports circulating in the British media about certain Muslim personalities claiming the presence of Jihad training camps in the UK in which firearms training is given with live ammunition before sending the trainees for Jihad. We would like to inform both Muslim and non-Muslim readers of this article that there are NO such training camps within the UK. Rather, statements such as these are made by Muslim personalities and individuals propped up by Western Intelligence agencies in order to frighten the local population from Muslims. We would also like to inform Muslims in the UK that if anyone, Muslim or non-Muslims, approaches you offering training of this type in the UK, it is a trap, you should stay away from that person and warn other people against that person because he might be an undercover agent. British National Intelligence MI5 does employ 'practising' Muslims to live amongst Muslims as agent provocateurs and entice them into traps such as these. Generally, these agents are amongst the most popular and influential members of the community. The Muslims are fooled by them because they fail to check up their background (where they came from, their history etc.) One can obtain almost any type of military training in some countries of the World, legally, so there is no need to risk going to prison for years just for learning how to use a single firearm illegally.

4.6 Military Training

Although sometimes it is difficult to obtain comprehensive military training in one's home country, it is very easy to do plenty of background reading using freely-available books and CDs, before one actually goes abroad.

The US Army has produced a number of military field manuals on CD on all topics from light weapons, tanks and artillery to mines, military fieldcraft and combat medicine. The full set is available on CD for less than US\$100 and many field manuals are also available on the Internet. One source of availability is <http://www.chqsoftware.com/> or by searching for the term 'US Military Field Manuals CD' or just 'US Military Field Manuals Online'. Even though the US Army Field Manuals contain information specific to US Weapons, they still contain a large amount of useful information applicable in all circumstances. It is useful to get a full set of CDs for your mosque or Islamic society that everyone can use.

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Some topics to read up about include:

Physical fitness training

Ammunition

Sniper training

Mine/ Counter-Mine Operations and Recognition of Different Mines

Mortar

AK-47 and other Soviet weapon Operating Manuals

Terrain Analysis

Map Reading and Land Navigation

Camouflage and concealment

Survival

Combat skills of the soldier

First Aid for Soldiers

Cold Weather Training

5.0 Jihad Training Abroad

There are some countries where one can obtain Jihad training but we are not in a position to comment on the suitability or insuitability of any particular country. Contact individuals you know and trust and they will be able to advise you better. If you are true to Allah, Allah will be true to you and He will find you a way to do what you want to do.