Sukon

Purity in Islam — Wudu, Ghusl & Tayammum

A clear, step-by-step guide to ablution, the ritual bath and dry ablution

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1. Purity is half of faith

> *"Purity is half of faith."* — Sahih Muslim 223

> *"O you who believe, when you rise for prayer, wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows, wipe your heads, and wash your feet up to the ankles."* — Quran, Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:6

Islam joins outer cleanliness and inner purity. Before standing before Allah in Salah, a believer washes the body, and with each drop, small sins are washed away too.

2. How to make wudu

1. Make the intention in your heart and say "Bismillah".
2. Wash both hands up to the wrists three times.
3. Rinse the mouth three times.
4. Rinse the nose three times, sniffing water in gently and blowing it out.
5. Wash the whole face three times, from the hairline to the chin and ear to ear.
6. Wash the right arm up to and including the elbow three times, then the left.
7. Wipe over the head once with wet hands, front to back and back again.
8. Wipe the ears inside and out with the same wet fingers.
9. Wash the right foot up to and including the ankle three times, then the left, cleaning between the toes.

After wudu it is Sunnah to say the shahadah: "Ash-hadu an la ilaha illallah wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa rasuluh."

The four parts that the Quran mentions — face, arms, head and feet — are required by all schools; the other steps are confirmed Sunnah.

3. What breaks wudu

- Using the toilet — urine, stool or passing wind.
- Deep sleep while lying down.
- Losing consciousness.
- Anything else listed by your school, such as bleeding (Hanafi) or touching the private parts directly (Shafi'i) — follow your local scholars.

If you are unsure whether your wudu has broken, the basic rule is that certainty is not removed by doubt; you remain in wudu until you are sure.

4. Ghusl — the full bath

Ghusl is required after marital relations, after the end of menstruation and post-natal bleeding, and for a person who becomes Muslim. It is Sunnah before Jumu'ah, Eid and entering ihram.

10. Make the intention and say "Bismillah".
11. Wash the hands and the private parts.
12. Make a full wudu.
13. Pour water over the head three times, making sure it reaches the roots of the hair.
14. Wash the whole body, right side then left, so that no part remains dry.
15. Rinse the mouth and nose well (required in the Hanafi school).

5. Tayammum — dry ablution

> *"And if you find no water, then seek clean earth and wipe your faces and hands with it."* — Quran, Surah An-Nisa 4:43

16. Make the intention.
17. Strike clean earth, sand or a dusty stone lightly with both palms.
18. Wipe the face once.
19. Wipe the hands and wrists.

Tayammum is allowed when there is no water, when water would cause harm through illness, or when the water is only enough for drinking. It is broken by whatever breaks wudu and by finding water.

A note on this book

This guide is general guidance written to be accepted by the major schools, with differences noted where they matter. For a question about your own situation, ask a verified scholar on Sukon — always free.

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