

Text 6: Exercise Tailored to a Hijab

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THE first time Julia Shearson rode her bike after converting to Islam seven years ago, her headscarf became stuck in the wheel.

She lost her balance, and by the time she got going again she was met with stares as she whizzed along, arms and legs draped in loose clothing, her scarf billowing in the breeze.

“You have to overcome the looks,” said Ms. Shearson, 43, the executive director of the Cleveland chapter of the Council on American-Islam Relations. “It’s already hard enough to exercise, and if you look different ... it’s even harder.”

As a Muslim woman in the United States, Ms. Shearson has found it difficult to stay fit while adhering to her religious principles about modesty. Islam does not restrict women from exercising — in fact all Muslims are urged to take care of their bodies through healthy eating and exercise — but women face a special set of challenges in a culture of co-ed gyms and skimpy workout wear.

Many pious Muslim women in the United States, like Ms. Shearson, wear hijab in public, loose garments that cover their hair and body, which can hinder movement and add to discomfort during exercise. Women may show their hair, arms and legs up to the knees in front of other women.

Muslim women are often limited in their choice of activity, as well. Some believe that certain yoga chants, for example, are forbidden, as well as certain poses like sun salutations (Muslims are supposed to worship only Allah). For the sake of modesty, working out around men is discouraged.

That modesty can be a benefit and a liability. On the one hand, Muslim women are spared some of the body-image issues that other women face; on the other, that freedom can be a detriment to their physical well-being.

“We don’t have the external motivation that non-Muslim women have,” said Mubarakha Ibrahim, 33, a certified personal trainer and owner of Balance fitness in New Haven, a personal training studio catering to women. “There is no little black dress to fit into, no bathing suit. When you pass through a mirror or glass you’re not looking to see ‘Is my tummy tucked in? Do I look good in these jeans?’ You’re looking to see if you’re covered.”

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After gaining 50 pounds while pregnant with her first child, Ms. Ibrahim studied exercise and nutrition, and became certified through the Aerobics and Fitness Association of America. In 2006 she opened her studio, which offers a safe environment for women to exercise (she says she has more orthodox Jewish clients, who also adhere to rules of modesty).

Ms. Ibrahim said she would like to see exercise become as natural a part of a Muslim woman's life as praying.

In July, about 120 women from around the country attended Ms. Ibrahim's third annual Fit Muslimah Health and Fitness Summit in New Haven. She offered yoga, kickboxing, water aerobics and core conditioning classes alongside workshops on weight loss, nutrition, cancer prevention and diabetes at the two-day, women-only event. She plans to hold another one in Atlanta in February.

“An important part of your spirituality is your health,” said Tayyibah Taylor, publisher of *Azizah*, a magazine for Muslim women, and co-sponsor of the summit meeting. “You can't really consider yourself in good health if all parts of your being are not healthy — your body, your mind and your soul. It's a complete package.”

This is especially true now, during Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting from dawn until sunset. “The Muslim prayer is the most physical prayer — the sitting, bowing, bending,” said Daisy Khan, executive director of the American Society for Muslim Advancement. “The physicality of our prayer forces us to create flexibility in our body.”

But how to mix one's physical and spiritual needs with practicality? Some Muslim-Americans go to women-only gyms like Curves, which has thousands of branches across the country. And some gyms and Y.M.C.A.'s offer gender-segregated areas, hours or days.

Other women, like Umm Sahir Ameer, a 27-year-old student in Shaker Heights, Ohio, take matters into their own hands. Last year, Ms. Ameer started the Muslimah Strive Running-Walking Group so she and 12 of her friends could exercise together.

“I wanted to establish this group as a way to further unite Muslim women in my community while gaining physical endurance,” she said.

Those who do work out in co-ed gyms have learned to make accommodations in their clothing. Loretta Riggs, 40, an educational coach in Pittsburgh, started exercising two years ago after divorcing her husband. She wears a scarf made of spandex, long-sleeved Under Armour shirts and Adidas or Puma pants.

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“Some women don’t think you should be working out in a co-ed gym,” she said, “but I’m around men all the time in my workplace, when I take my kids to the park, when I walk outside.”

She added: “Why would I deprive myself of being healthy because I am a Muslim and I choose to cover? It’s very important to take care of myself.”

Mariam Abdelgawad, 21, a math teacher in San Jose, Calif., said that in high school she played hockey, soccer and ran track and field, all while wearing hijab.

But today she works out at home, since there are no female-only gyms in her neighborhood. Her parents, with whom she lives, have a treadmill, elliptical machine and Pilates equipment, as well as weights. She exercises about three times a week, but said she missed the camaraderie of the gym.

Though working out at home is convenient, she said, it is also very easy to procrastinate and not do it. “I don’t have all the options that a gym would have,” she said.

Swimming also poses problems. Although some Muslim women have been known to hop in the water in their street clothes, this can be cumbersome for a workout. The burqini — a one-piece outfit that resembles a scuba wet suit — has received a lot of attention in recent months (most notably in France, where a young woman was banned from wearing one at a pool), but it tends to be too form-fitting for some women.

“I tried it once, and it sticks to your body,” said Marwa Abdelhaleem, a 26-year-old teacher in Toronto who started a female-only swimming group to avoid the burqini question. “It’s really fitted. I wouldn’t wear it in public.”

Ms. Ibrahim, however, is more focused on the private.

“One of the ideas I promote is that when you are married and you take off your clothing, your husband should not be like, ‘You should put this back on,’ ” Ms. Ibrahim said. “Even if you wear a burqa, you should be bikini-ready. You should feel comfortable and sexy in your own skin.”

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Clauses

Clause ID	Conjunction	Clause	Type of Process
1.		The first time Junia Shearson rode her bike after converting to Islam seven years ago,	Material
2.		her headscarf became stuck in the wheel.	Relational att
3.		She lost her balance	Material
4.	and	by the time she got going again	Material
5.		she was met with stares	Material
6.	as	she whizzed along,	Material
7.		arms and legs draped in loose clothing	Material
8.		her scarf billowing in the breeze.	Material
9.		“You have to overcome the looks,” said Ms. Shearson, 43, the executive director of the Cleveland chapter of the Council on America-Islam Relations.	Verbal
10.		[You have to overcome the looks]	Material
11.		It’s already hard enough to exercise]	Relational att
12.		[to exercise]	Material
13.	and if	you look different	Relational att
14.		it’s even harder	Relational att
15.		As a Muslim woman in the United States, Ms. Shearson has found it difficult to stay fit	Relational att
16.		[to stay fit]	Relational att
17.	while	adhering to her religious principles about modesty.	Mental
18.		Islam does not restrict women from exercising	Material
19.		In fact, all Muslims are urged to take care of their bodies through healthy eating and exercise	Verbal
20.		[to take care of their bodies through healthy eating and exercise]	Material
21.	but	women face a special set of challenges in a culture of co-ed gyms and skimpy workout wear.	Material
22.		Many pious Muslim women in the United States, like Ms. Shearson, wear hijab in public	Material
23.		(hijab) loose garments that cover their hair and body	Material
24.	which	can hinder movement	Material
25.	and	add to discomfort during exercise	Material
26.		Women may show their hair, arms, and legs up to	Material

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		knees in front of other women	
27.		Muslim women are often limited in their choice of activity, as well.	Relational att
28.		Some believe that certain <u>yoga</u> chants, for example, are forbidden, as well as certain poses like sun salutations	Mental
29.	[that	certain <u>yoga</u> chants, for example, are forbidden , as well as certain poses like sun salutations]	Relational att
30.		(Muslims are supposed to worship only Allah)	Material
31.		For the sake of modesty, working out around men is discouraged .	Relational att
32.		That modesty can be a benefit and a liability	Relational att
33.		On the one hand, Muslim women are spared some of the body-image issues that other women face	Relational att
34.	[that	other women face]	Material
35.		On the other, that freedom can be a detriment to their physical well-being.	Relational att
36.		Those who do work out in co-ed gyms have learned to make accommodations in their clothing.	material
37.		[Those who do work out in co-ed gyms]	Material
38.		[to make accommodations in their clothing]	Material
39.		Loretta Riggs, 40, an educational coach in Pittsburgh, started exercising two years ago after divorcing her husband.	Material
40.	[after	divorcing her husband.]	Material
41.		She wears a scarf made of spandex, long-sleeved Under Armour shirts and <u>Adidas</u> or Puma pants.	Material
42.		Mariam Abdelgawad, 21, a math teacher in San Jose, Calif., said that in high school she played hockey, soccer and ran track and field, all while wearing hijab.	Verbal
43.	[that	in high school she played hockey, soccer	Material
44.	[and	ran track and field]	Material
45.	[all while	wearing hijab]	Material
46.		Swimming also poses problems.	Material
47.	Although	some Muslim women have been known to hop in the water in their street clothes	Mental
48.		[to hop in the water in their street clothes]	Material
49.		this can be cumbersome for a workout	Relational att
50.		The burqini, a one-piece outfit that resembles a scuba	Mental

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		wet suit has received a lot of attention in recent months	
51.	[that	resembles a scuba wet suit]	Relational att
52.		most notably in France, where a young woman was banned from wearing one at a pool	Material
53.	But	it tends to be too form fitting for some women.	Relational att
54.		“I tried it once, and it sticks to your body,” said Marwa Abdelhaleem, a 26-year-old teacher in Toronto who started a female-only swimming group to avoid the burqini question. “It’s really fitted. I wouldn’t wear it in public.”	Verbal
55.		[I tried it once]	Material
56.		[and it sticks to your body]	Material
57.		[who started a female-only swimming group to avoid the burqini question]	Material
58.		[to avoid the burqini question]	Material
59.		It’s really fitted	Relational att
60.		I wouldn’t wear it in public	Material

Text 6. Transitivity System of Exercise Tailored to a Hijab

Material process								
Clause ID	Conj.	Actor	Process	Goal	Scope/Range	Beneficiary		Circumstance
						Recipient	Client	
1.		Junia Shearson	rode	her bike				the first time (time), after converting to Islam seven years ago (time)
3.		she	lost	her balance				
4.	and	She	got going					by the time, again (time)
5.		She	was met					with stares (means)
6.	as	she	whizzed					along (duration)
7.		Arms and legs	draped					in loose clothing (matter)
8.		Her scarf	billowing					in the breeze (matter)
10.		You	have to overcome	the looks				
12.			to exercise					
18.		Islam	does not restrict	women				from exercising (matter)
20.			to take care					of their bodies (matter) through healthy eating and exercise (means)
21.	but	women	face		a special set of challenges			in a culture of co-ed gyms and skimpy workout wear (place)
22.		Many pious Muslim women, like Ms. Shearson	wear	hijab				in the United States (place), in public (place)
23.	that	(hijab) loose garments	cover	their hand and body				
24.	which		can hinder		movement			
25.	and		add to		discomfort			during exercise (duration)

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26.	and	woman	may show	Their hair, arms, and legs up to knees				in front of other women (place)
30.		Muslims	are supposed to worship	only Allah				
34.	that	other women	face					
36.		Those who do work out	have learned	to make accomodations				in co-ed gyms (place) in their clothing. (matter)
37.		Those	who do work out					in co-ed gyms (place)
38.			to make		accomodations			in their clothing (matter)
39.		Loretta Riggs, 40, an educational coach in Pittsburgh	started exercising					two years ago after divorcing her husband (time)
40.	after		divorcing	her husband				
41.		She	wears	a scarf made of spandex, long sleeved				under Armour shirts and Adidas or Puma pants.
43.	that	she	played		hockey, soccer, and ran track and field			in high school (place),
44.	and		ran		track and field			
45.	all while		wearing	hijab				
46.		Swimming	also poses	problems				
48.			to hop					in the water (place) in their street clothes (means)
52.	where		was banned	a young woman				from wearing one (matter) Most notably in France (place), at pool (place)
55.		I	tried	it				once (frequency)
56.	and	it	sticks to	your body				
57.	who		started	a female-only swimming group				to avoid the burqini question (cause: purpose)

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58.			to avoid	the burqini question				
60.		I	wouldn't wear	it				in public (place)

Verbal process									
Clause ID	Conjunction	Sayer	Process	Quoted	Reported	Verbiage	Target	Receiver	Circumstance
9.		Ms. Shearson, 43, the executive director of the Cleveland chapter of the Council on America-Islam Relations.	said	"You have to overcome the looks,"					
19.	In Fact,		are urged		to take care of their bodies through healthy eating and exercise			all Muslims	
42.		Mariam Abdelgawad, 21, a math teacher in San Jose, Calif.,	said		that in high school she played hockey, soccer and ran track and field, all while wearing hijab				
54.		Marwa Abdelhaleem, a 26-year-old teacher in Toronto who started a female-only swimming group to avoid the burqini question.	said	"I tried it once, and it sticks to your body,"; "It's really fitted. I wouldn't wear it in public."					

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Mental process					
Clause ID	Conj.	Senser	Process	Phenomenon.	Circumstance.
17.	while		adhering to	her religious principles	about modesty (matter)
28.		Some	believe	that certain <u>yoga</u> chants, for example, are forbidden, as well as certain poses like sun salutations	
47.	Although	Some Muslim women	have been known	to hop in the water in their street clothes	
51.		The burqini, a one-piece outfit that resembles a scuba wet suit	has received	a lot of attention	

Relational Attributive process							
Clause ID	Conjunction	Carrier	Process	Attribute	Attributor	Beneficiary	Circumstance
2.		Her headscarf	became	stuck			in the wheel (place)
11.		It	is	already hard enough to exercise			
13.	and if	you	look	different			
14.		It	is	even harder			
15.		it	has found	difficult to stay fit	Ms. Shearson		
16.			to stay	fit			
27.		Muslim Women	are	limited			in their choice of activity, as well. (accompaniment)
29.	that	certain <u>yoga</u> chants, for example, as well as certain poses like sun salutations	are	forbidden			
31.		working out around men	is	discouraged			For the sake of modesty (cause: reason)
32.		That modesty	can be	a benefit and a liability			
33.		Muslim women	are	spared some of the body-			On the one hand,

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				image issues			
35.	On the other hand	That freedom	can be	a detriment			to their physical well-being (cause: reason)
49.		This	can be	cumbersome			for a workout (cause:purpose)
50.	but	It	tends to be	too form-fitting			for some women (cause:benefit)
53.	that		resembles	a scuba wet suit			
59.		It	's	really fitted			