

# Ablution (Wudu) of Muslims before Prayers (Salahs)

In Islamic fiqh, the acts of Wuḍū' (ablution) are divided into Farḍ (obligatory) and Sunnah (recommended) acts.

Below is a clear, authentic, and reader-friendly explanation, suitable for both Muslims and non-Muslim readers as well.



## Fard (Obligatory) Acts of Wuḍū'

These acts must be performed for Wuḍū' to be valid. If any one of them is missed, Wuḍū' is invalid.

According to the Qur'an (Surah Al-Mā'idah 5:6)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ  
وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُوا وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَى  
أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِّنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا  
صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ مِنْهُ مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ  
وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهَّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

“O you who believe! When you rise to pray, wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows, wipe over your heads, and wash your feet up to the ankles...”

## The 4 Farḍ Acts (Majority of Scholars)

1. Washing the face once
  - From hairline to chin, ear to ear.
2. Washing both arms including elbows once
  - Right arm, then left arm.
3. Wiping (Masah) over the head once
  - At least a portion of the head must be wiped.
4. Washing both feet including ankles once
  - Right foot, then left foot.



### Important Note:

- These four acts are agreed upon by all schools of Islamic jurisprudence.



## Sunnah Acts of Wuḍū'

These acts were consistently practiced by Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Leaving them does not invalidate Wuḍū', but performing them brings greater reward.

### Sunnah Actions (Authentic Hadith)

1. Making intention (Niyyah) in the heart
2. Saying “Bismillāh” before starting
3. Washing both hands up to wrists (3 times)
4. Rinsing the mouth (3 times)
5. Sniffing water into the nose and blowing it out (3 times)
6. Washing each limb three times

7. Starting with the right side
8. Performing actions in proper order
9. Performing Wuḍū' continuously without long breaks
10. Wiping the ears (inside and outside)
11. Running fingers through beard and between fingers and toes



Hadith Reference:  
The Prophet ﷺ said:

“Whoever performs Wuḍū' as I have performed it...”  
(Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī & Muslim)



### Common Misconceptions (FAQ)

**?** Is saying “Bismillāh” mandatory?

**→** No, it is Sunnah (recommended), though highly encouraged.

**?** Is intention spoken aloud?

**→** No, intention is in the heart, not verbal.

**?** Is washing three times obligatory?

➔ No, once is sufficient for Farḍ; three times is Sunnah.

? Is wiping the entire head obligatory?

➔ Majority say any portion is sufficient, but wiping the entire head is Sunnah.

### 🌸 Final Reflection

Wuḍū' is not merely physical cleansing—it is spiritual preparation for standing before Allah.

Every Sunnah followed increases reward and closeness to Allah.

### Key Notes (For Quick Understanding)

- ✅ Farḍ acts = minimum requirement for valid Wuḍū'
- 🌙 Sunnah acts = extra reward, greater perfection
- 🔄 Washing once fulfills Farḍ; three times is Sunnah
  - 🧠 Intention is in the heart, not spoken aloud

---

### Virtue of Wuḍū'

“When a Muslim performs Wuḍū', his sins leave his body, even

from beneath his fingernails.”  
— Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim

“When a Muslim performs Wuḍū’, his sins fall away with the water.”  
— Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim

## **Tayammum (dry ablution)**

Tayammum is a Shariah-approved substitute for wudu or ghusl when using water is not possible or harmful. It is established by the Qur’an, Sunnah, and consensus of scholars.

---

### Conditions When Tayammum Is Permissible

#### 1. Water Is Not Available

Tayammum is allowed when:

- No water is found after reasonable effort to search for it
- Water is too far away or inaccessible (desert, travel, disaster, etc.)

Qur'an evidence:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْرَبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ وَلَا جُنُبًا إِلَّا عَابِرِي سَبِيلٍ حَتَّىٰ تَغْتَسِلُوا وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَّرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِّنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُورًا غَفُورًا  
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُوا وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَّرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِّنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ مِنْهُ مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُنِيمَ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

“...and you do not find water, then perform tayammum with clean earth...”

(Surah An-Nisa 4:43, Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:6)

## 2. Using Water Is Harmful

Tayammum is allowed if water use would:

- Worsen an illness
- Delay healing (wounds, fractures, burns)
- Cause severe pain
- Be medically unsafe (confirmed by experience or trustworthy advice)

Hadith evidence:

The Prophet ﷺ approved tayammum for a companion who feared harm from using water due to injury.

(Abu Dawood – Hasan)

---

### 3. Extreme Cold With No Safe Heating

If:

- Water is extremely cold
- No way to heat it
- Risk of illness or harm exists

Tayammum is permissible.

Hadith:

‘Amr ibn Al-‘Aas (RA) led prayer after making tayammum due to extreme cold, and the Prophet ﷺ approved it.

(Abu Dawood)

---

### 4. Water Is Needed for Survival

Tayammum is allowed when available water is needed for:

- Drinking
- Cooking
- Preventing death or serious harm (human or animal)

Preserving life takes precedence.

---

## 5. Insufficient Water for Full Purification

If water is only enough for:

- Drinking
- Partial use but not complete wudu or ghusl

Then tayammum is permitted.

---

## 6. Fear of Missing Prayer Time

According to some scholars (Hanafi & Maliki):

- If searching for water would cause the prayer time to end

Tayammum is allowed to pray within the time.

---

## Important Notes

- Tayammum cannot be done if water is easily available and safe to use.
- Tayammum is valid only until water becomes available or the excuse ends.
- Tayammum replaces both wudu and ghusl when conditions apply.

- One tayammum is sufficient for one fard prayer according to some scholars; others allow multiple prayers if the excuse remains.

---

## Sunnah Evidence Summary

“The earth has been made a place of prayer and a means of purification for me.”  
(Bukhari & Muslim)

---