



337369 - What is the ruling on working as a swimming instructor?

the question

I work as a swimming instructor; is this job halal or haram? Is the payment I receive for it haram or halal? I hope that you will explain this matter, because this is my only source of income, and this job is the thing through which Allah grants my provision and which for the rest of my life will be my source of income that will enable me to get married and do other things.

Summary of answer

It is permissible to work as a swimming instructor for men, if they make sure to cover their `awrahs. It is also permissible to teach young children who are below the age of discernment how to swim, so long as there is no risk of temptation. It is not permissible to teach young women how to swim, even if they wear clothing that covers the entire body, because that will definitely lead to temptation. But if the girls who are learning how to swim are seven years old or thereabouts, there is nothing wrong with teaching them how to swim, unless the instructor fears that he may be tempted and his desire may be provoked.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Swimming is an important sport

Swimming is an important sport and there is the hope that the instructor, if he intends to benefit the Muslims thereby, will be rewarded for that, even if he gets paid for teaching it.

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Everything in which there is no remembrance of Allah is an idle pursuit and waste of time or negligence except four things: a man's walking between two targets [that is, practising archery], training his horse, playing with his



wife and learning how to swim.”

Narrated by an-Nasa'i in *Kitab `Ushrat an-Nisa'*; and by at-Tabarani in *Al-Mu`jam al-Kabir*. Classed as authentic by al-Albani in *As-Silsilah as-Sahihah*, no. 315.

Reservations about working as a swimming instructor

There are two reservations about working as a swimming instructor:

1. Seeing people's `awrah [the part of the body that should not be uncovered or looked at by others]. The `awrah of a man is the area between the navel and the knee, because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “What is between the navel and the knee is `awrah.” Narrated by at-Tabarani, ad-Daraqutni, Ahmad and Abu Dawud; classed as sound (hasan) by al-Albani in *Irwa' al-Ghaleel*, no. 271.

Ahmad (15927) narrated from Zur`ah ibn Muslim ibn Jarhad that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) saw Jarhad in the mosque wearing a burdah that left his thigh uncovered, and he said: “The thigh is `awrah.” Classed as sound (hasan) by the commentators on *Al-Musnad*.

If you insist that the learners wear clothing that covers the `awrah, then this reservation is resolved, otherwise looking at this `awrah is prohibited.

Ahmad (1849), Abu Dawud (3150) and Ibn Majah (1460) narrated that `Ali said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said to me: “Do not show your thigh, and do not look at the thigh of anyone, living or dead.” The commentators on *Al-Musnad* said: It is authentic because of corroborating evidence. Ahmad Shakir classed it as authentic.

It was narrated that Abu Sa`id al-Khudri said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “No man should look at the `awrah of another man, and no woman should look at the `awrah of another woman.”

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in *Sharh Muslim*: This indicates that it is prohibited for a man to look at the `awrah of another man and for a woman to look at the `awrah of another



woman, and there is no difference of scholarly opinion regarding that.

Similarly, it is prohibited for a man to look at the `awrah of a woman and for a woman to look at the `awrah of a man according to scholarly consensus. The Prophet's stating that a man should not look at the `awrah of another man indicates that it is more appropriate for it to be prohibited for a man to look at the `awrah of a woman. This prohibition does not apply to husbands and masters. As for spouses, each of them may look at the entire `awrah of the other. End quote.

See: *Fat-h al-Bari*, 9/338, 339.

2. The second reservation, which is more serious than the first, is: teaching young women to swim. This is prohibited even if they wear clothing that covers the entire body, because of what it involves of certain temptation which may overwhelm a person and lead to a great deal of mischief and evil, so how about if, in addition to that, they uncover their hair and parts of their bodies during lessons, when what is known about swimwear is that it is worse than all of that!

If you can restrict your job to teaching men with their `awrahs fully covered, there is nothing wrong with that.

Working as a swimming instructor for children

There is also nothing wrong with teaching young children who have not yet reached the age of discernment, so long as there is no risk of temptation.

It says in *Kashshaf al-Qina`* (1/2659): The `awrah of a man – that is an adult man, even if he is a slave or a ten year old, free or slave – is the area between the navel and the knee... that is also the `awrah of a free female, whether she is an adolescent or a child who has reached the age of discernment.

And it says (5/14): With regard to a nine-year-old girl with a man who is her mahram, her `awrah is also the area between the navel and the knee, because her `awrah is different from that of an



adult woman... It is not prohibited to look at the `awrah of a boy or girl below the age of seven or to touch their `awrah – as was stated by Imam Ahmad – and it is not obligatory to cover the `awrah of a boy or girl, so long as there is no risk of desire being provoked, because Ibrahim, the son of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), was washed by the women [in preparation for his burial].

In the case of a girl between the age of nine and puberty, it is permissible to look at what usually appears of her, such as the head, face and arms.

In the case of a girl between the ages of seven – which is the age of discernment – and nine years, it is obligatory to cover the area between the navel and the knee.

For more information, please see the answer to question no. [43485](#).

The issue of teaching or instructing is more serious than merely looking, because it involves touching, close contact and spending time with the learner, and because swimwear sticks to the body and shows the person's charms, so it does not cover properly.

So if the girls who are learning how to swim are seven years old or thereabouts, there is nothing wrong with you teaching them, unless you fear that you may be subject to temptation and provocation of desire because of close contact and spending time with them.

As for adult women and girls who are nine years old and above, you should not teach them.

Prof. Dr. `Abdullah at-Tayyar (may Allah preserve him) was asked: I work as a swimming instructor and earn my income through this work. I recently became a practising Muslim, but I cannot leave this job, which involves teaching young children who have not reached the age of puberty, but most of them uncover their `awrahs, such as the area between the navel and the knees, and so on, except for the most private part. Sometimes the girls are seven or eight years old at most. What is the ruling on this job? For your information, I looked for other work after I became a practising Muslim, but no one would accept me because I do not have academic qualifications. Please advise me, may Allah reward you.



He replied:

Blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah. To proceed:

Firstly: you must show gratitude for the blessing that Allah has bestowed upon you by guiding you and opening your heart to the light of faith, after you had been deprived of that. This is the confirmation of the verse in which Allah, may He be Exalted, says: {Praise to Allah, who has guided us to this; and we would never have been guided if Allah had not guided us} [Aal-A`raf 7:73].

Secondly: you must look for another job that does not involve anything dubious, so that you can maintain your religious well-being and Allah will grant you provision. Remember the words of Allah, may He be Exalted: {And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out, And will provide for him from where he does not expect} [At-Talaq 65:2-3] and { And whoever fears Allāh - He will make for him of his matter ease } [At-Talaq 65:4].

As you have not yet found a suitable job in which there is no sin or possibility of sin, there is no blame on you if you continue in this job so long as you need it, but you must avert your gaze and try to look for work that will bring permissible income. Turn to Allah constantly and beseech Him, and offer a lot of supplication to Him, in the hope that He will bestow His bounty upon you.

May Allah make things easy for you and grant you good and lawful provision; may Allah send blessings and peace upon our Prophet Muhammad.([Shaykh's website](#)).

And Allah knows best.