

How Does the Sick Person Pray?¹

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Firstly: It is compulsory upon the one who is sick to pray the obligatory prayer standing, even if this meant bending (over) or leaning against a wall or a stick that was needed for support.

Secondly: If unable to stand, then they should pray sitting, and that which is better is that they pray crossed legged when in the place (of performing) Qiyaam (standing) and Rukoo' (bowing).

Thirdly: If unable to pray sitting then they should pray whilst lying on their side facing the qiblah, and lying on the right side is better. If unable to face the qiblah they should pray in the direction they are facing and his prayer would be correct and he would not have to repeat it.

Fourthly: If unable to pray on their side then they should pray with their feet pointing in the direction of the qiblah. And that which is better is that they should try and lift their head a little as to make it face the qiblah, and if they are not able to pray so that their feet are facing the qiblah they should pray how they are and the prayer would not have to be repeated.

Fifthly: It is obligatory upon the sick to perform rukoo' (bow) and sujood (prostrate) in the prayer. If unable then they should signal their performance by moving the head and they should make (their head) lower for sujood than they would for rukoo', and if capable of performing rukoo' but unable to make sujood then they should suffice by performing ruk'oo and signal with their head for sujood. And if they are capable to perform sujood but unable to make ruk'oo then they should perform sujood and signal for rukoo'.

Sixthly: If unable to signal with the head when performing sujood and rukoo, then they should signal with their eyes, so they should shut them slightly for rukoo' and shut them a bit more for sujood.

As for pointing with the finger as practiced by some of the sick then I do not know of any origin for this in the Quraan, Sunnah and the sayings of the scholars.

Seventhly: If unable to signal with the head or eyes then they should pray with their heart, so he should make takbeer and read (the necessary surahs from the Quraan) and make the intention for rukoo, sujood, standing and sitting with the heart, "Every person will have that which they intended."

Eighthly: It is obligatory upon the sick to pray the prayer in its rightful time and fulfil everything which they are able. If it is difficult to pray each and every prayer in the rightful time then they can join dhuhur with 'asr and 'ishaa with magrib, either Jamu' At-Taqdeem (which means) performing 'asr at the time of dhuhur and 'ishaa at the time of maghrib or Jamu' At-Ta'kheer (which means) delaying the dhuhur prayer until the time 'Asr and maghrib until 'ishaa depending on what is easier.

The fajr prayer on the other hand cannot be joined with that which is before or after it.

Ninthly: If the sick is a traveller being treated in other than their land, then they should shorten the prayers which are four rak'aat so dhuhur, 'asr and 'ishaa would be prayed as two rak'aat until they return to their land regardless of whether the journey lasted a short or long period of time.

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Taken from Fatawa Arkaanil Islaam p. 378