

Watch Out for the Arrow!

7. **Avoid visiting malls and parks alone.** Always try to go out with a family member or a good friend, whose company may help you avert your eyes from the objectionable billboards and inappropriately clothed people. In summer, step out only when you have to.
8. **Surf or Watch TV when others are around.** The temptation to sneak a look at dirty pictures is heightened when you're alone in your room watching TV or surfing the internet. *Shaytan's* primary target is always a lonely person! Try to avoid late night TV and internet surfing.
9. **Never have 'nothing to do'!** *Shaytan* loves 'bored and idle' people. If you are feeling bored, do the dishes, or take out the garbage, or read some book. Allah says, "*Do not throw yourself into destruction with your own hands.*" [2: 195.]
10. **Volunteer for Islamic Organizations.** Your *Jihad* against immorality in the society is one reason for you to join Muslim youth groups in your community. Your involvement with such activities, along with the love of helpful brothers or sisters struggling for a good cause, will keep your mind, energies, and thoughts focused away from the *Haram*.
11. **Read, Read, and Read!** Yes, read as many Islamic books and articles as possible. Reading keeps your mind and eyes busy! It keeps you motivated to live your Islam and strengthens your relationship with Allah.
12. **Always remember that the beauty of this world is temporary** and the life hereafter is everlasting.
13. **Observe voluntary fast** to strengthen your willpower and to cool your passions. The Prophet (pbuh) strongly recommended the youth to make it a habit.
14. **If you are able and responsible then get married for the sake of Allah.** It may be one of the most effective, yet challenging, defense mechanisms against such temptations.
15. **For Brothers, remember your Mom and Sister.** Disgusting right? Exactly! No sane person would look at his mom or sister the way many of us examine the girls on TV shows or stare at our Muslim sisters in social gatherings. This thought should sicken you enough to stop, *In-sha-Allah*.
16. **Remind yourself of the Death and Hereafter often.** "*Remember often the terminator (or destroyer) of all the pleasures [i.e. death],*" the Prophet (pbuh) once reminded us. (*at-Tirmidhi*.)
17. **Increase your Good Actions.** Try following the advice of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): "*Remain conscious of Allah and fear Him wherever you are. And follow a bad deed with a good deed which will wipe it out, and behave well towards people.*" (*at-Tirmidhi*.)
18. **Repent and Return to Allah.** Allah is All-forgiving and loves those who return to Him, promising not to repeat their sins. "*Ask forgiveness from your Lord, then turn towards Him in repentance; He will loosen the sky over you in abundance, and He will add strength unto your strength.*" [11: 52].

For further information on this topic, please read the following articles:

"The Virtue of Lowering the Gaze" by Imam Ibn al-Qayyim

"Tips for Teens on How to Handle Pornography" by Sound Vision

"Watch out for that Arrow" by Morshed Abul Ala

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Oh, what a beautiful day: Twenty-two degrees Celsius; a clear sky; the sun passionately declaring its warmth to the land below. I put on my cap and decide to go out for a walk. Moments later, I come across two scantily dressed girls, "enjoying" the wonderful weather. Nervously, I look down towards the cement sidewalk and walk past them. I look up, only to encounter a couple, rollerblading towards me in the most fashionable, spandex exercise gear.

I fidget with my cap using it to shield myself from obscenity and continue walking. With my head down and cap covering my view, it was bound to happen some time: I walk into a lamppost and hit my head! As I lay on the sidewalk recovering from the accident, I hear a male voice asking me, "Are you alright?" As I open my eyes to figure out what is going on, I see a bare-chested man, jogging in position, offering his hand to help me get up. *Subhan-Allah*, what a day! I get up, run home, go to my room, and close my door. How am I expected to survive in such a filthy environment? Am I supposed to isolate myself from the society to escape such temptations?

No. Obviously, with every trial and difficulty Allah always provides us practical defensive tools. Keep in mind, though, that the command to control our eyes is not just a 'fatwa' of some 'conservative' scholar 'from the East'. It is explicitly expressed in the words of Allah and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

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What's Wrong With A Lustful Gaze?

Many of us who are used to watching Sinbad or Temptation Island, or are addicted to Bollywood movies, or enjoy the company of people of opposite gender, may wonder what's wrong with lustfully staring at the attractive features of the opposite gender? Perhaps one saying of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) sums it all:

"The furtive glance is one of the poisoned arrows of Shaytan, on him be God's curse. Whoever forsakes it for the fear of Allah, will receive from Him (Great and Gracious is He) a faith, the sweetness of which he will find within his heart." (al-Haakim.)

Therefore, a secret lustful look at a person of opposite gender has been compared by the Prophet (pbuh) to an arrow from *Shaytan* that:

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| 1. poisons our hearts | 7. sometimes leads to sleepless nights |
| 2. ruins our intentions | 8. renders our heart weak for continuous <i>Shaytanic</i> attacks |
| 3. gives rise to false hopes and desires | 9. promotes hypocrisy |
| 4. distorts our perception of 'reality' | 10. weakens our memory |
| 5. deprives us from enjoying and concentrating in Prayers | 11. eventually leads to <i>Zina</i> (adultery) |
| 6. gives rise to constant feeling of guilt and depression | 12. above all, diminishes our love for and fear of Allah |

Allah commands us: "***Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their private parts; that will make for greater purity for them...***" [24:30.] In the verse following this one, Allah commands "***the believing women***" in the similar manner.

5 Secret Benefits Of Jihad Against Temptation

- Perhaps the greatest secret reward of resisting the temptation is the increase in your Faith (*Iman*), the sweetness of which could only be sensed by you! This empowering force of renewed *Iman* will help you suppress the desires in unimaginable ways.
- Right when you are urged, if you remember Allah's mercy, commandments, and displeasure, He will make it easy for you to get out of the situation without regrets, stress, or pain. Allah reassures us: "***And the one who fears Allah (has Taqwa), He will make a way out.***" [65: 2.]
- It will also have a remarkable impact on your character, since the heart is like a mirror and the base desires are like rust upon it. When the mirror is polished and cleansed of the rust, it reflects the realities as they actually are. Your family and friends will see the difference!

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- Frequent gazing at unlawful scenes of sexuality tire and wear down both the heart and the eyes. The heart becomes 'bored' and depressed after a while. However, when your eyes are prevented from looking around, the heart finds relief from the arduous task of vainly desiring something it does not possess.
- As the Prophet (pbuh) once said to his Companion: "***By Allah! Whosoever gives up something for the sake of Allah, Allah will replace it with something better than it!***" If you remain patient in this world, Allah will bless you with joys in ways you could never imagine!

18 Ways To Survive In Temptation Island!

Yes, it's hard, especially when you're constantly bombarded with obscene images: that hot, scantily clad guy or gal in the magazine luring you; or the persistent emphasis on sex in the movies (even Toy Story or Spider Man!); or the pervasive links to pornography while you may simply be checking your e-mail. How can you protect yourself from all of this?

- Don't forget the power of Allah's Remembrance (*Dhikr*)!** It is the most powerful of all the defenses. Regular reading of prescribed *Du'as* will develop your *Taqwa* (consciousness) and keep you mindful of what thoughts you entertain.
- Remember your Accountability to Allah.** In Islam, you're fully accountable as soon as you understand and feel such temptations. Your eyes will testify about what you looked at on the Day of Judgment.
- Always walk with your gaze lowered.** But make sure not to bump into a hydro post! Lowering the gaze does not mean that you cannot have any 'eye contact' as you walk or during a conversation. It means that you keep your eyes under control.
- Take the Right Seat!** In a public place (e.g. café), choose a seat that minimizes your view-frame and avoid mixed-crowds. It is precisely about such comfortable gazing at the attractive features of the passers-by that the Prophet (pbuh) advised 'Ali ibn Abi Talib: "***Ali, do not let a second look follow the first. The first look is allowed to you but not the second.***" (*Ahmad, Abu Dawud, at-Tirmidhi.*)
- Hangout with those known for noble character and modesty.** When you are around good people, they can remind you to abstain from that which Allah dislikes. As the Prophet (pbuh) said, "***A person is likely to follow the faith of his friends, so be careful about who you make your friend.***" (*Ahmad.*)
- Avoid friends that are into immoral movies, music, dirty jokes etc.** Such activities are the tools of *Shaytan* that promote the idea of 'love based on looks' or 'love at first sight'. Such friends would take you into an artificial world of fantasies and false hopes, away from reality, before it's too late! Therefore, either you help your friends change through gentle advice, or abandon frequent contact with them. As Allah warns us: "***If anyone withdraws himself from Allah's remembrance, Most Gracious, We appoint for him an evil one to be his intimate companion.***" [43: 36.]