

Tips on How to Handle Pornography

It's hard being a teenager and trying to resist the images you're attacked with daily: the hot-looking guy or girl in the magazine; the sexual jokes in movies or the universal pornography and ad banners that pop up while you may simply be checking your e-mail or researching something for school. How do we protect ourselves from all of this?

Below is a list of tips that can help you come out of this In Sha Allah

Tip #1: Know what's Halal and what's not

Remember this rule of thumb: whatever is Haram (forbidden) to do, is Haram to watch.

All scholars of Islam agree that pornography is absolutely Haram and a clear sin.

Some may think, however, that only hard-core pornography is Islamically unacceptable. This is not true. Watching improperly dressed men and women in sexual situations, as well as engaged in various types of foreplay and dirty jokes are also not acceptable.

Tip #2: Surf the Web or Watch T.V. When Others Are Around

The living room or study room are better places to keep the computer since others are nearby and can see what you're looking at. The temptation to sneak a look at dirty pictures or that bikini-clad babe is heightened when you're alone in your room watching television or surfing the internet. Try to avoid late night TV and surfing. Instead, check out the tube or the web when others are around so you can resist the urge to sneak a peek, thinking no one's watching.

It is a good idea not to have a TV or computer in the bedroom anyway.

Tip #3: Remember Allah is Watching You

If no one is watching, Allah is watching you. He is always there. He is Al Baseer, All Knowing and All Aware. He is the One Who has given us life. He is the One Who has told us right from wrong and given us a choice. He loves to see us successful in our test to bless us with the Everlasting life. He does not rest or sleep. He loves to see us do good and has promised rewards for it.

Tip #4: If It Happens, Seek Forgiveness & Don't Insist on doing it

[Good people are those who] when they have committed a shameful deed or have harmed themselves, remember God and pray that their sins be forgiven-for who but God could forgive sins?-and do not knowingly persist in doing whatever wrong they may have done." (Quran 3:135).

Allah loves to see us asking for His forgiveness.

Tip #5: Just get up and leave

If you feel unable to control looking at the screen or the magazine, leave the situation. Get out of the living room, your bedroom where the internet is or where you've been reading the magazine. Take a walk. Just do something to physically get out of the situation.

Tip #6: Remember the Day of Judgment

You cannot assume looking at this stuff is no big deal. Your eyes will testify about what you looked at on the Day of Judgment. God is Most Just and Merciful, and He rewards us for the good and holds us responsible for the bad we do. His angels are around you who love to note down each good deed and hate to watch you do shameful things which they still must report. Every tiny act we do is noted down. May Allah make our accounting on the Day of Judgment easy.

Tip #7: Connect with Your Salah

If you are not praying, start now. Salah actively discourages pornography and fornication. Here is what Allah says about it: [and be constant in prayer: for, behold, prayer restrains man from hateful deeds and from all that runs counter to decency; and remembrance of God is indeed the greatest [good]. And God knows all that you do." (Quran 29:45)

Tip #8: Learn About Haya in Islam

Haya is a beautiful concept in Islam. Sometimes translated as modesty or shame, there is no one word in English that fully describes what it means. It is a quality in character that makes a believer shine. Satan does not want you to have it. Pornography destroys Haya.

Tip #9: Avoid those involved in pornography

If one of your friends is into pornographic magazines, websites, dirty jokes etc. either help him/her change through gentle and sincere advice (see etiquettes of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil) or abandon frequent contact with them. Their addiction might affect you, so it's best to stay as far away as possible, by remembering the danger to yourself and your relationship with God.

Tip #10: Avoid things that lead to sin

Too often, it's easy to dismiss that billboard with the spandex-and-bikini-top-clad blonde girl advertising gum, or the guy in tight leather pants and no shirt advertising perfume. When you see it, remember the omnipresent God, and lower your gaze. Do the same for television and the internet. If you keep doing this, it'll become a habit to avoid looking at these things.

Remember God is kind. An unintentional look is not Haram if you turn away as soon as you realize it.

Tip #11: Develop a More Productive Schedule

Learn to manage your time more productively. Develop a personal plan for yourself. If you don't occupy your mind with good works, Satan will think of something bad for you.

Tip #12: Are You Involved?

Surround yourself with spiritual influences. Join a study circle, volunteer for a good cause, become active in a Muslim youth. Good company is likely to have good influence on you. The involvement will also make good use of your time, sparing little for Satan.

Tip #13: Feeling overwhelmed? Remember Allah

In situations where you feel overwhelmed and can't get yourself to switch the channel, close the browser window or turn your eyes away from the billboard, ask Allah's help. You don't necessarily need any heavy duty, long prayers. Just say La hawla wa la quwwata illa billah (there is neither power nor strength except with God). It is short, simple and reminds you of Who is really in control and can help you out of this.

Tip #14: Less TV is better

Although actors in a TV program may be "dressed," if the show is about playing sexual games in public, is it worth watching? Less TV is always better. A few broadcast channels are better than cable or satellite. Watching together as family is better than watching alone. Choosing through a TV guide what to watch is better than channel surfing.

Tip #15: Satan is the Enemy: Seek refuge in God

Satan lured you into this mess. He is the big part of our tests in this life. Seeking refuge in Allah will help you resist him and his whisperings to continue looking at the material.

Tip #16: Remember others will Follow You

If you have younger brothers and sisters, think of the bad example you're setting for them. What message are you sending them if they barge into your room and catch you watching Temptation Island or flipping through Playboy magazine?

Tip #17: Look for alternative entertainment

Playing sports is better for your health than watching. We have become way too dependent on electronic entertainment. It is unhealthy and leading our nation to obesity and health problems. Let's stop being couch potatoes. Let's build our bodies through sports and outdoor activities.

Tip #18: Surround yourself with the Quran

Make the Quran a part of your bedroom decor. Put paintings of your personal selection of these beautiful verses from God. Maybe commission a calligrapher to scribe your favorite verses in Arabic and English. I had one drawn with pencil and it sits in front of my desk. One of my daughters asked me to write one for her and she hung it up in front of her laptop.

How many copies and translations of the Quran do you own? Buy more. Become a collector.

If you are into listening the Quran on audio, keep changing your reciter of the Quran. It breaks the monotony and brings focus back to the words of God.

Tip #19: Remember your Mom and sister

Disgusting right? Exactly. No one in his right mind would look at his mom or sister the way pornographic magazines and websites depict women. Remember your mom and your sister, and that may help you stop.

Tip #20: Have someone watch over you

If you really feel you're becoming addicted to this kind of material, try to watch TV, surf the internet with someone else. You don't have to tell them why you're doing this, but this method can perhaps keep you in check and help you avoid looking at pornography or other similar material. After all, Satan tempts us most easily when we're alone. Sitting in the company of a family member or trusted friend will help.

Tip #21: Fasting helps

The Prophet Muhammad advised us to fast to cool passions. This should be a method we use to handle the desire aroused by pornography and similar material. Peace and blessings of Allah be upon the Prophet.

Tip #22: Life is full of tests

We human beings are weak people. We sometimes make mistakes. We are not perfect. When you fail, don't despair. You can get away from sin by defeating a Satanic suggestion the next time around. Sometimes we don't mean to watch but end up doing it anyway. But as soon as a thought comes to your mind that you are doing wrong, stop right there. If you persist, that will become a sin which you have chosen intentionally.

Don't feel guilty if you did not plan to watch it. Sometimes the web and email technology force this filth on you. Just move away as fast as you can.

Tip #23: Get Married

Yes. You heard me right. Get married. The real thing is better than the fakeness of pornography which destroys you mentally, physically, and spiritually. In Muslim families, we see many younger people getting married while they are still in school. Texas law allows persons as young as 13 to get married with parental consent and a judge's order. Other states require at least 16 years of age for a marriage license. Talk to your parents. I am personally against very young people marrying, but it is certainly better than them having sinful relationships with each other or with the fictional characters brought to them through the web, magazines and films. There is no shame in talking to your parents and Imams about it.

Marriage helps you overcome the destructive directions of a blessing of God called sex.

Tip #24: Use technology to help

There are many filters and spam stopping technologies which are available through different internet providers as well as for your email client. Use technology to close doors for pornography, a heinous crime against humanity.

Tip #25: It is not a Sin if you did not mean it

Sometimes we are just surfing the internet and something else pops up. It may show up in emails despite all the filters. As long as you did not mean to watch and move away immediately it is not a sin. Thank God, Alhamdulillah. He does not hold us accountable for unintentional things.

Tip #26: Do Tauba, Repent and Return to Allah

He loves to see us come back. If you do end up watching the bad stuff, repent to Allah. Seek His forgiveness, reaffirm your faith in Him, and do good deeds to compensate for what you've done. He is All-Forgiving as long as you are sincere.

Tip #27: Repent Again and Fine Yourself

If you lapse, repent again. Allah is All-Forgiving as long as we mean it. But then you need to discipline yourself by promising that if you do it again, you will pay this much in charity or fast for a day.

The message is: don't give up on yourself. Keep trying. Struggle is life. Satan can get you down, but you can and will beat him with God's help if you are serious about changing.

Tip #28: Pray, Pray and Pray

Never underestimate the power of prayer. Dua is the essence of worship. You connect to God through prayers. Talk to Him. He listens. While there, pray for this author and Sound Vision as well.

Tip #29: Fight Against Pornography

You will be blessed in your struggle if you speak and fight against pornography. It is not one person's problem. It is a problem that is hurting many people.