

Hinduism - Issues for Sport & Physical Activity

Key Facts	
Origins	<p>Hinduism, from the Persian hindu (Sanskrit sindhu) means literally "river." Founded in India approximately 1500 BC. Means "of the Indus Valley" or simply "Indian." Hindus call their religion sanatama dharma, "eternal religion" or "eternal truth."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are few specific issues which may affect a Hindu participating in sport. Those that exist are similar to other religions and relate to diet, dress and observance of festivals.
Theism	<p>Although the Hindu sects are primarily monotheistic they recognise that "God is one, but also many," and that man/woman is also divine in nature. After death individuals are reincarnated according to their behaviour in life - but those who observe the prescribed moral and religious code can attain liberation from the cycle of life and death.</p>
Major sects	<p>Vaishnavism - worships Vishnu as the one supreme God. This is the largest of the Hindu sects and adherents are mainly from India.</p> <p>Saivism - worships Siva as the giver of life. Practised in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia.</p> <p>Saktism - worships Shakti, or Devi, as the Divine Mother, unique among the world religions in being centred on a female deity.</p>
Place of Worship	<p>Temple (mandir) or home shrine. For centuries the Mandir has remained the centre of life for Hindus.</p>
Sacred texts	<p>Vedas - contains hymns and incantations and is the oldest text written in an Indo-European language.</p> <p>Upanishads - the doctrine of karma sets out how a soul can be united with the universal truth.</p> <p>Sutras - a collection of aphorisms, or sayings.</p> <p>Bhagavad Gita - part of the Mahabharata, a sacred text in epic poem form.</p>
Original Language	<p>Sanskrit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hindi. There is a large gujarati population in the UK who speak mainly gujrati and hindi.
Spiritual leader	<p>Guru or sage.</p>



Hinduism and its followers	
Worldwide adherents	With 900 million followers Hinduism is the world's fourth largest religion.
UK population	Britain's 500,000 Hindus are the country's third largest religious group, after Christians and Muslims. The UK Hindu population is the tenth largest in the world.
Faith requirements and holy days	
Diet	<p>Dietary restrictions are governed by the concept of ahimsa, or avoiding harm, suffering and violence. Many Hindus avoid red foods; onions, garlic and tomatoes are not eaten by many Hindus as these are foods which they believe "excite the body."</p> <p>Some foods are regarded as unclean: these are duck, crab and pork. Beef is strictly forbidden, but eggs, milk and (vegetarian) cheese may be acceptable except on religious festival days.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Alternative food, vegetarian or vegan should be available if necessary.</i> ■ <i>Fasting is also practiced by some Hindus. It can be done in many ways including abstaining from certain foods and is linked to some festivals.</i>
Dress	<p>Women Sari or salwar (trousers) kameez (tunic), chunni (shawl).</p> <p>Men Dhoti, kurta (tunic), and chaddar (shawl).</p> <p>Notes Married women wear a bindi (red dot) on the forehead.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Issues respecting modesty should be considered which will allow the head to be covered, or participants to wear long sleeves and trousers should they wish.</i> ■ <i>Other modesty issues should also include the need for single sex provision for both men and women which allows people to participate without the need to associate with people of the opposite gender.</i>
Major festivals	<p>The main Hindu festivals are: Mahashivarati Holi, Ramnavami, Dusserah, Diwali and Navratri</p> <p>Dates of these festivals and many other Hindu festivals follow a lunar calendar and vary from year to year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Events should be planned with the religious calendar in mind, This should take account of festivals and periods of fasting. This can prove difficult as dates for many festivals change yearly due to the lunar calendar, whereas many sports events tend to occur on the same week or day.</i>

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