



ESL Podcast 813 – Doing Basic Exercises

GLOSSARY

workout – a period of exercise; a period of time spent using one’s body in physically challenging ways to improve one’s health, strength, and/or endurance

* Hal likes to ride bikes during the summer, but in colder months, his favorite workout is to swim in the indoor pool.

gym – gymnasium; a large building where people exercise and play sports, usually with many aerobic machines, weights, and areas to play sports

* This gym has two basketball courts, a swimming pool, and a sauna.

to exercise – to use one’s body in physically challenging ways to improve one’s health, strength, and/or endurance

* Karina tries to exercise at least 20 minutes each day.

calisthenics – exercises that improve strength and flexibility through simple movements like bending or twisting

* This website teaches some simple calisthenics that you can do without leaving your desk.

to stretch – to move one’s body in ways that push or pull parts as far as they can comfortably go

* If you stretch every day, soon you’ll be able to touch your toes without bending your knees.

sit-up – an exercise that involves lying down on one’s back, putting one’s hands behind one’s head, and moving into a sitting position by using the muscles in one’s abdomen (stomach area)

* When you do a sit-up, don’t pull on your head and neck with your hand. Use the muscles in your abdomen instead.

push-up – an exercise that involves lying down on one’s stomach, putting one’s hands flat on the floor, and pushing until one’s arms are straight so that only one’s toes and hands are touching the floor

* If you aren’t strong enough to do a real push-up, try to do it on your knees instead of your toes.

pull-up – an exercise that involves hanging from a metal bar by one’s hands and then pulling up, bending the elbows so that one’s chin reaches over the bar

* The soldiers have to be able to do at least 10 pull-ups without stopping.



ESL Podcast 813 – Doing Basic Exercises

in shape – physically fit; healthy and in good physical condition

* Darci couldn't run for a few months after her knee injury, and then it took her several weeks to get in shape again.

lunge – an exercise that involves a rapid, forward movement with one's body, usually by standing with one's legs apart, one in front of the other, and then quickly shifting one's weight to the forward leg

* To prevent injury from lunges, make sure your knee is positioned over your toes.

squat – an exercise that involves standing and then bending one's knees so that one's bottom and thighs (the part of the leg between one's knees and hips) are close to one's feet, using the thigh muscles to support one's weight

* The dancers are so strong! They're able to hold a squat for several minutes at a time.

free weight – a heavy object held in one's hands to build one's strength, where the heavy object is not attached to or controlled by a machine

* When working with free weights, it's important to carefully control body movements to avoid an injury.

cardio workout – cardiovascular exercise; challenging physical movements designed to increase one's heart rate so that the heart muscle becomes stronger and the body uses a lot of calories (energy obtained from food)

* Certain types of Latin dancing is a lot of fun, and a great cardio workout.

jumping jacks – an exercise that involves jumping to alternate between two positions: (1) standing with one's legs together and one's arms hanging down so that one's hands are the sides of one's upper legs and (2) standing with one's legs apart and one's hands held up above one's head

* It's funny to watch little kids try to do jumping jacks, because they don't have enough coordination to move their arms and legs at the same time.

in place – in one place, without moving to a different place; without movement over a distance

* The marching band often practices its music while marching in place, instead of moving across the field.

to jump rope – to hold a long rope (heavy, thick string) with one end in each hand and swing it in circles over one's head and under one's feet, jumping over it each time it hits the ground

* Have you ever tried to jump rope with two ropes at once?



ESL Podcast 813 – Doing Basic Exercises

to see the light – to suddenly understand that another way is better and begin to do something that way

* Oliver used to have a lot of credit card debt, but a few months ago, he saw the light and now he pays for everything with cash.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of these exercises requires lying on one's back on the floor?
 - a) Sit-ups.
 - b) Lunges.
 - c) Squats.
2. Which of these exercises requires equipment?
 - a) Push-ups.
 - b) Jumping jacks.
 - c) Jump rope.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

stretch

The verb “to stretch,” in this podcast, means to move one’s body in ways that push or pull parts as far as they can comfortably go: “Stretching your neck can sometimes prevent headaches.” When talking about fabric, the verb “to stretch” means for a piece of material to become larger and looser: “I gained weight, so now I have to stretch these pants before I put them on.” The verb “to stretch” can also describe how something covers a distance or time period: “Their land stretches to the end of the valley.” The phrase “to stretch (one’s) legs” means to go for a walk, especially after a long period of inactivity: “Sheila gets out of the office and stretches her legs at least twice a day.” Finally, the phrase “to stretch the truth” means to exaggerate and/or lie: “William speaks some French, but saying that he’s fluent would stretch the truth.”

to see the light

In this podcast, the phrase “to see the light” means to suddenly understand that another way is better and begin to do something that way: “After reading articles about modern farming practices, Lyle finally saw the light and became a vegetarian.” The phrase “to come to light” means for something to become known after it had been hidden: “The truth came to light years after the trial, when the man had already spent more than half his life in jail.” The phrase “to shed/throw light on (something)” means to provide information about something:



ESL Podcast 813 – Doing Basic Exercises

“Who can shed light on why the company was hiding these receipts?” Finally, the phrase “in light of (something)” means considering something as a factor: “In light of recent developments, we have decided to suspend the project.”

CULTURE NOTE

Fitness Fads

Americans are often looking for a “quick fix solution” (something that will provide a rapid, inexpensive and easy solution to a problem), especially for losing weight and improving their health. There have been many popular “fitness” (health; well-being) “fads” (something that is very popular for a short period of time), but many of the products have proven to be “ineffective” (not able to do what they are supposed to do).

The “ThighMaster” is one of the most “infamous” (famous in a bad way) pieces of exercise equipment. It has an “odd” (unusual; strange) twisted shape. The user places it between one’s “thighs” (the part of one’s legs between one’s knees and hips) and “squeezes” (applies pressure to the sides, pushing them closer together) repeatedly.

Another example is the “Ab Rocket.” This piece of equipment is an unusual looking chair that promises to strengthen the user’s “abs” (abdominal muscles; the muscles over one’s stomach area) simply by “rocking” (moving from side to side or forward and backward repeatedly) in the chair.

The “Abtronic” takes a different “approach” (method; technique) to strengthening abs. It is a belt that sends electrical “pulses” (short bursts of energy) into the abs, “supposedly” (according to what has been said but has not been proven) “toning” (improving the shape of) the ab muscles.

In recent years, several products have advertised that they can use “vibration” (very small but fast movements) to “burn off” (get rid of) fat. There are several vibrating belts that people can wear and even vibrating “pads” that people can stand on, supposedly burning calories just by having their body vibrate.

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – a; 2 – c



ESL Podcast 813 – Doing Basic Exercises

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 813: Doing Basic Exercises.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 813. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful, and I do mean beautiful, Los Angeles, California.

Our website is eslpod.com. You can go there to become a member of this podcast. Support us, help us, and help yourself by downloading a Learning Guide to this episode.

This episode is a dialogue between Jane and Arnold about doing physical exercises for your body. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Jane: I've just had the best workout at the gym!

Arnold: You don't need to go to a gym to exercise. I exercise right here in my apartment.

Jane: Oh, yeah? What can you do in this small space?

Arnold: Nearly everything I need to do. Before I do my calisthenics, I stretch. And every morning I do sit-ups, push-ups, and pull-ups.

Jane: That's not enough to keep you in shape.

Arnold: I'm not finished. Every other day I do lunges and squats, and I lift free weights.

Jane: But what about a cardio workout?

Arnold: I do jumping jacks, run in place, and jump rope on the balcony.

Jane: I guess you've got it all figured out.

Arnold: I think so. Have you seen the light? Are you going to stop going to the gym?



ESL Podcast 813 – Doing Basic Exercises

Jane: No way! Exercise isn't the only reason I go to the gym, you know. I go for the view.

Arnold: I have a feeling you're not talking about the view outside.

Jane: You've got that right!

[end of dialogue]

Jane – no relation to Jane Fonda, who was a famous actress and activist, political activist, in the United States, she's still alive. She became famous also for doing these tapes, these video tapes, of how to exercise, but this is a different Jane. Jane says, "I've just had the best workout at the the gym." A "workout," one word, is a period of exercise, a period of time that you use your body in such a way as to physically challenge it so you can improve your strength, your health and so forth. The "gym" (gym) is a place where you go to do exercises. Gym is short for the longer word, "gymnasium." Don't confuse the spelling of "gym" (gym) with the name "Jim," which comes from James. That's spelled (Jim). And both of them are different from "gin" (gin) which is an alcoholic drink that I'll be having when I finish this episode.

Arnold says – and this is not Arnold Schwarzenegger, the former governor of California, completely different Arnold! – Arnold says, "You don't need to go to a gym to exercise." To "exercise" is the verb we use for using your body in a way that will help it physically, so when you do a workout or go and "work out" (as a verb), you are going to exercise. Arnold says, "I exercise right here in my apartment."

Jane says, "Oh, yeah? What can you do in this small space?" Jane doesn't quite believe that Arnold can exercise in his apartment. Arnold says, "Nearly everything I need to do." "I can do everything I need to do," he says. He says, "Before I do my calisthenics (calisthenics)" – is, like gymnasium, originally from a Greek word – calisthenics are exercises that improve your strength and your flexibility, but they don't require any typically special equipment. They're basically just moving your body and doing things with your body that could be done anywhere. To "stretch" (stretch) means to move your body in ways that push or pull parts of it so that it helps you with, they say, your flexibility. You're able to move your muscles more easily if you stretch. That's what I'm told.

Arnold says, "And every morning I do sit-ups, push-ups, and pull-ups." A "sit-up" is an exercise where you lie down on the ground with your back against the ground, you put your head on the ground, you put your hands either behind your



ESL Podcast 813 – Doing Basic Exercises

head or on the side of your head, and then you sit up from that position, either with your knees up (your legs up), or your body flat. A “push-up” (push-up) is an exercise where you’re lying on the ground, but you’re lying on your stomach, this time with your face forward. Then you put your two hands flat on the floor and you push up with your arms and you raise your body up. “Pull-ups” (pull-ups) are exercises that involve having a bar, usually a metal bar (it could be a thick wooden one), and you grab onto it with your hands (so you’re below the bar, typically), and you grab onto it with your hands, and you pull your whole body up using your arms to do so. So, we have sit-ups, push-ups and pull-ups.

Jane says, “That’s not enough to keep you in shape.” To be “in shape” means to be physically in good condition. We might say physically “fit” (fit). Arnold then says, “I’m not finished. Every other day I do lunges and squats, and I lift free weights. A “lunge” (lunge) is an exercise that is done by standing with your two legs apart, one in front of the other, and then you bend one knee or you walk forward bending your knees as you go far down. A “squat” is an exercise where your two feet, you’re on your feet, but your two feet are parallel. Your legs are parallel. You don’t have one in front of the other. You then bend your knees so that your butt, your bottom, is almost touching your feet and then you stand up again. Often people put weight on their shoulders to make the squat more difficult. It’s very good for your leg muscles. Arnold says he also “lifts free weights.” To “lift something” is to take it in your hand and lift it up in the air. “Lifting weights” means going and taking very heavy objects and moving them up and down with your arms or legs. Free weights are weights that are not attached to any machine. It used to be that all weight lifting was free weight lifting. Now, they have different machines that you can lift weights with.

Jane says, “But what about a cardio workout?” “Cardio” (cardio) comes from cardiovascular. It refers to your heart. A cardio workout is one such as riding a bike, running, jogging, walking quickly, where you get your heart rate up. Your heart starts to beat much faster. That’s a cardio workout. Arnold says for his cardio, he does jumping jacks. “Jumping jacks” which used to be very popular during the middle of the 20th Century in the ‘50s and ‘60s and ‘70s – I don’t know how popular they are now in schools – but a jumping jack is where you stand with your feet together and then you jump up, and you put your two feet at a distance from each other. You separate them. You take your two arms and you raise them above your head, often clapping your hands above your head, and you do all this quickly. And that’s a jumping jack. It’s kind of funny, you can see kids do this. It’s an exercise that used to be very popular in grade schools for young children.



ESL Podcast 813 – Doing Basic Exercises

Well, Arnold is no child, but he does jumping jacks. He also runs in place and jumps rope on his balcony. To “run in place” means not to move. You go through the motion of running, but you're not going anywhere. You're standing in one place. To “jump rope” is to take a long piece of rope and hold each end in each hand, you then swing it or move it in a circle so that it goes under your feet and then over your head, and you continue to do that and, of course, in order for it to go under your feet, you have to jump up, and that's why we call it “jumping” rope.

Jane says, “I guess you've got it all figured out.” I guess you understand it all. Arnold says, “I think so.” Then he asks Jane, “Have you seen the light? Are you going to stop going to the gym.” The expression “to see the light” means to understand something. Usually, you come to this understanding quickly or suddenly. It's often about something very important in your life. Sometimes people use this expression for people who have religious conversions, so it's a serious, deep change in your thoughts and your beliefs. But Arnold isn't really talking about anything that serious. He's saying to Jane that maybe now she will see that it's not necessary to go to the gym to do exercises.

But Jane says, “No way!” No, she doesn't agree. “Exercise isn't the only reason I go to the gym, you know.” She says, “I go for the view” – what she can see there and, of course, she can see other people, perhaps other attractive people. She won't see me there because I don't go to the gym and I'm not very attractive. (Yeah, I know, I know.)

Arnold says, “I have a feeling you're not talking about the view outside.” That is, he's saying I'm guessing you're not talking about things you can see outside of the gym or from inside of the gym to the outside. You're talking about the people in the gym. Arnold is no fool. Jane says, “You've got that right.” That expression, “you've got that right” means simply yes, you are absolutely correct.

Now let's listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

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ESL Podcast 813 – Doing Basic Exercises

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[end of dialogue]

You can exercise your English by listening to the wonderful scripts by our wonderful scriptwriter, Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. We hope that you'll come back next time here on ESL Podcast.

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