

Lesson 38: Health Problems

Rick asks his friend Danny for help in his exercise routine. Listen to their conversation and choose the best answer for each comprehension question:

Listening Comprehension

1. This is Rick's first workout after...

- a. being diagnosed with a disease
- b. having surgery
- c. recovering from a concussion

2. Danny suggests beginning the workout with...

- a. jogging
- b. stretching
- c. weightlifting

3. Rick wants to change his...

- a. appearance
- b. diet
- c. lifestyle

4. Danny warns him that he could get...

- a. dehydrated
- b. frustrated
- c. injured

5. What does Rick want to do next month?

- a. a boxing competition
- b. a marathon
- c. join the military

6. Rick has been taking his pills...

- a. regularly
- b. inconsistently
- c. too frequently

7. He hasn't told his doctor that the medication gives him...

- a. back pain
- b. headaches
- c. stomach problems

8. Danny doesn't want to...

- a. continue with the workout
- b. offend Rick
- c. talk about health problems constantly

Conversation Text

Danny: Hey, Rick! Glad you could **make it**!

Rick: Yeah man, I'm **pumped**! So what are we going to start out with? **Bench pressing**?

Danny: Um, seeing as this is your first workout after your operation... we should probably start with something more **low-key**.

Rick: What do you mean... like **push-ups**? **Sit-ups**?

Danny: Dude – **baby steps**. Let's warm up with a few **laps** around the track. You ready?

Rick: Oh, come on! Jogging around the track? I could have done that at home. I was hoping we could get into something a little more challenging!

Danny: It's important to take it slow, Rick. You don't want to overwork your heart.

Rick: But I can't let my heart condition define me! I'm *totally* ready to change my lifestyle. No more being a **couch potato**!

Vocabulary

make it = come, attend an event

pumped = very excited (informal)

bench pressing = a weightlifting exercise where you lay on your back and push a weight up and away from your chest

low-key = relaxed, less intense

push-ups/sit-ups = different types of exercises for your arms and your abdomen, respectively

baby steps = make small bits of progress towards a goal

laps = a "lap" is one complete journey around a circuit, like a racetrack

couch potato = a lazy person who doesn't exercise or move much

Danny: OK, I **applaud** your enthusiasm – but that's **all the more reason** to **ease into** your new routine. If you **bite off more than you can chew**, you could get hurt – and an injury would put you **out of commission** for weeks or even months. Don't worry – we'll **build up to** the tougher stuff.

Rick: I hope so. I signed up for a **marathon** next month. Hope you can **whip me into shape** in time!

Danny: Wait a minute! A marathon? Are you sure you're ready for that?

Rick: Well, not right *now*, but I should be by next month, right?

Danny: Rick, I wouldn't count on that. In fact, I don't want to **rain on your parade**, but... it's possible that with your heart issues, you may never be able to run a marathon.

Rick: I don't get it. Why are you trying to **undermine** my progress?

Vocabulary

applaud = express approval and praise

all the more reason = an even better/stronger reason

ease into = enter a situation slowly and carefully

bite off more than you can chew = take on too much so that you can't handle it

out of commission = not able to function

build up to = develop into something greater

marathon = an athletic event where you run 26.2 miles

whip me into shape = train me hard and fast so that my physical condition improves

rain on your parade = ruin your plans/happiness

undermine = make something weaker by damaging its base

Danny: I'm just trying to keep things realistic. You *do* have a heart condition, which means you need to do *light* workouts, and take your medication. You have been taking your pills, right?

Rick: Sure... you know, **on and off**.

Danny: What's that supposed to mean?!

Rick: Well, some days I feel a little better than others, so I don't take my **meds**. I save 'em up for the times when I'm feeling **under the weather**.

Danny: What?! Those pills are supposed to **regulate** your blood pressure. You don't just take them whenever you feel like it! I think you should talk to your doctor...

Rick: Aw, doctors don't know everything! They always just wanna prescribe more pills so they get the patient **off their back**. Plus, the medication sometimes makes me **queasy**.

Danny: Have you told your doctor about that?

Rick: I will eventually. When I **get around to** it.

Vocabulary

on and off =
sometimes yes,
sometimes no (not
consistently)

meds = medication

under the weather =
not feeling well
physically

regulate = keep
stable and
consistent, without
letting it get too high
or too low

off their back = stop
bothering them

queasy = feeling sick
in your stomach, like
you might vomit

get around to =
manage to do
sometime despite a
busy schedule

Danny: OK, Rick, I'll just **say it point-blank** – you *need* to take better care of yourself.

Rick: Hey, I'm here at the gym, aren't I? I'm trying to deal with my health problems. What more do you want?

Danny: I'm sorry, but I'm gonna have to **bow out**. You need to **get your doctor's okay** before we go ahead with these exercise sessions.

Rick: But that could be a real **hassle**!

Danny: Maybe, but it's for your own good.

Vocabulary

say it point-blank = say it directly

bow out = remove myself from the situation, not participate

get your doctor's okay = get your doctor's approval

hassle = something that is difficult and complicated

Vocabulary Quiz

Complete each sentence with a word from the box. Three words are not used.

baby steps	hassle	off my back	pumped
build up to	laps	on and off	queasy
ease into	low-key	out of commission	under the weather
get around to	make it	point-blank	

1. There will be a few smaller events during the week to _____ the big show on Saturday.
2. My cousin is an alcoholic, but he's taking _____ towards getting sober. It's slow, but he's making progress.
3. I'd rather not go sailing - I always get _____ when I'm on a boat.
4. It's a _____ to get a new passport if you lose yours while traveling.
5. My car needs a few new parts for the engine, so it'll be _____ for the next few days.
6. Everyone is _____ for the Brazil-Argentina soccer game tonight!
7. My sister's been dating _____ for the past few years, but she hasn't had any serious relationships.
8. I don't really like clubbing. I prefer a _____ get-together like hanging out at a friend's house.
9. Sorry, but I won't be able to _____ to the party. Wish Tim a happy birthday for me!
10. The company's giving me a lot of training, so I'll be able to _____ my new role as chief engineer.
11. My wife's been asking me constantly to clean the garage - I wish she'd get _____!
12. I didn't go to work last Tuesday because I was _____.

Speaking Task

Rick doesn't seem to trust doctors very much. Talk about the health care system in your country. Is it good? Is it free for citizens or do you need to pay? How are the doctors in general; do they treat patients well?

Record your answer at www.speakpipe.com/espressoenglish or send the MP3 to homework@espressoenglish.net for feedback!

Answers

Comprehension Questions

1. b
2. a
3. c
4. c
5. b
6. b
7. c
8. a

Vocabulary Quiz

1. build up to
2. baby steps
3. queasy
4. hassle
5. out of commission
6. pumped
7. on and off
8. low-key
9. make it
10. ease into
11. off my back
12. under the weather