

Talking About Your Daily Routine in English – Video

In this lesson, you'll get some useful words and phrases to help you with talking about your daily routine in English.

What do you do every day? What's a typical day like for you? In this class, you'll learn everything you need to talk about your daily routine, including work, free time (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/free-time-and-hobbies>), meals, and sleep habits.

1. Talking About Your Work Routine

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/work-together.webp>)

Marie: You're working freelance now, right?

Oli: Yeah, that's right. I've been doing it for about six months now.

M: That must be nice. You can work from home; you don't have to deal with bad bosses...

O: It has its pluses, but it's not all fun and games. Obviously, my work is more flexible, but I still have to be disciplined and make sure I stick to a schedule.

M: So, what's your working day like?

O: I like to get an early start, so I get up at eight and I work from eight-thirty to around midday. Then, I take a long lunch break, maybe go to the gym or something like that. Then, I do another three to four hours in the evening, so I finish at seven or eight.

M: That's quite a late finish.

O: Yeah, but it suits me. I get sleepy in the afternoon, so it's not the best time to work.

M: That still sounds much nicer than working a regular job. I have to get up at six-thirty, then my commute takes around an hour, so I have to leave the house at half seven at the latest. I'm at the office from eight-thirty till five-thirty or six, then I don't get home until seven at the earliest.

O: I have to say: working at home has some disadvantages, but I don't miss commuting every day.

M: No, you shouldn't. It sucks!

O: Do you work the same hours every day?

M: More or less. Sometimes I stay late if there's something I need to finish, but I try to leave on time. Otherwise, I don't get any time at home before I go to bed.

Here are some questions for you based on the dialogue:

What's your working day like?

What time do you start and finish?

Do you often work long hours?

Do you take any breaks during the day?

Let's see how you could answer questions like these when talking about your daily routine in English. Let's start with something easy: what time do you start and finish? You could say something like:

I start work at nine, and I finish at five.

Maybe you have a more flexible schedule. You might say:

I'm a freelancer (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freelancer>), so I work different hours every day. It depends what I have to do.

If you're busy, you could say things like:

I often have to stay late at work.

I finish at seven o'clock at the earliest.

I can only take a short lunch break.

If you have a more relaxed working day, you might say:

I take a long break in the afternoon.

I usually finish work by five-thirty at the latest.

I never stay late or do overtime.

The phrases 'at the earliest' and 'at the latest' are useful if you want to talk about extremes. Otherwise, use adverbs like 'often' or 'usually'.

Do you need practice with adverbs? This Oxford Online English lesson can help you: Adverbs in English (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/adverbs-in-english>).

What about you? What's your working day like? Try to make two to three sentences talking about your working routine. If you need to, you can review the dialogue to get some ideas for language you can use. Pause the video and make your answer now. Practise saying it out loud!

How was that? Let's look at our next point for talking about your daily routine in English.

2. Talking About Free Time Habits

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/hang-out-friends.webp>)

O: So, what do you do in the evenings after work?

Marie: Honestly, most days I'm so tired when I get home that I just crash on the sofa and watch TV. I don't like it, but I don't have the energy to do much else. I play tennis on Wednesdays, but that's it.

O: I know the feeling. It's hard to motivate yourself when you've been at work all day.

M: What about you?

O: I'm the opposite. I'm stuck at home all day, so when I'm free, I'm desperate to get out of the house: do some exercise, talk to people... I try to arrange something most evenings.

M: What kind of thing do you do?

O: Lots of stuff! I've started going to a boxing class twice a week, and I also play basketball with a group of friends every Thursday. Then, I'll generally go out with friends for a coffee or a drink on one or two evenings, too.

M: Wow! You're pretty busy.

O: Yeah, but I prefer it that way.

M: I'm more active on weekends, but during the work week, there just isn't the time.

Here's a question: what do you do in the evenings after work? Are you active? Do you like going out and doing lots of different things, or do you prefer to stay at home and relax?

If you're more active, you could say something like:

I like to get out of the house when I can.

I try to arrange something most evenings.

I prefer to stay busy.

If you prefer staying at home, you might say:

I don't have the energy to do much after work.

I just crash on the sofa and watch TV when I get home.

During the work week, there just isn't the time to do much.

It's also useful to say how often you do things when talking about your daily routine in English. Here, you can use adverbs like 'often', 'generally', 'sometimes' or 'occasionally.' You can also use time phrases (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/talk-about-time>) like 'once a week', 'on Wednesdays' or 'every Friday.' For example:

I go out with friends once a week.

I go to the bouldering (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bouldering>) gym on Wednesdays.

I generally go running around the park after I get home.

What about you? What do you do after work? If you don't work, or you have a different schedule, what do you do with your free time during the day? As usual, try to make two to three sentences about yourself. Use the language from this section to help you. Pause the video and do it now.

OK? Let's move on.

3. Talking About Eating Habits

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/eat-at-a-restaurant.webp>)

Marie: So, do you cook? I mean, you're at home all day, so you must have time.

O: Yeah... My meal habits are all over the place, though.

M: What do you mean?

O: Sometimes I skip meals, or I eat at weird times. I might eat dinner at seven-thirty, or I might not eat until eleven. It depends what I'm doing, and how hungry I am.

M: That's the exact opposite of my situation. I have to eat at the same time every day, because that's the only time I have free.

O: What do you do for lunch?

M: If I'm organised, I'll cook at the weekends so I can take food with me to work. Otherwise, I'll buy a sandwich or something from the bakery.

O: What about in the evenings?

M: Me and my boyfriend take turns cooking. Then, we generally get a takeaway on Friday evening if we're at home.

O: That's a good system. It's hard to motivate yourself to cook when you live alone. I try though, because I don't want to waste money on takeaways and eating out. So, I'll cook a big batch of something, then freeze it and eat it for several days.

Here are some questions from the dialogue which you should be able to answer by the end of this section:

Do you cook?

What do you do for lunch?

Do you eat at the same times every day?

Think about how you could answer these, but first, let's look at some more phrases you heard in the dialogue. Do you know what they mean?

My meal habits are all over the place.

Sometimes I skip meals.

Me and my boyfriend take turns cooking.

I'll cook a big batch of something, then freeze it.

Can you explain what these sentences mean? If you say something is 'all over the place', this means that there's no pattern. So, if your meal habits are all over the place, it means you don't eat regular meals at regular times every day. If you skip a meal, then you don't eat it. If you're busy during the day, you might have to skip lunch. That means you don't eat anything for lunch. If two people take turns cooking, then one person cooks one day, and the other person cooks the next day.

Finally, if you cook a big batch of something, then you cook a lot at one time. You might do this if you live alone, or if you're busy, so that you can freeze the extra food and eat it later.

What about you? Do you sometimes skip meals? Do you buy lunch, or cook at home and take food to work? Do you ever get takeaways in the evening? Make at least three sentences and talk about your cooking and eating habits. Make more sentences if you can! Practise by saying your sentences out loud several times, until you can produce them fluently. Remember that all the language you need is in the dialogue. Go back and review the dialogue if you need some more ideas. Pause the video and make your answer now.

How was that? Could you make a fluent answer? Take more time to practise if you need!

Let's look at one more thing in talking about your daily routine in English.

4. Morning Person or Night Owl?

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/woman-waking-up.webp>)

O: If you could choose, what working hours would you do?

Marie: Is no hours an option?

O: Just imagine you're working freelance like me, and you can set your own timetable. Would you still start early?

M: No way! I'm a total night owl (<https://www.thefreedictionary.com/night+owl>). That's one of the reasons I'm so jealous of you. I really struggle to get moving early in the morning.

O: You see, I'm not exactly a morning person either, but I like to get some stuff finished early in the day. It helps me to feel more productive. Then, sometimes I take a nap in the afternoon, because I often go to bed quite late.

M: I stay up late on weekends, but during the week I'm in bed by eleven. If I don't get seven or eight hours of sleep, I find it hard to focus at work.

O: Seven or eight? I don't think I sleep that much.

M: Why? What time do you usually go to bed?

O: Around one.

M: One?! That's late.

O: Yes and no. I don't have to get up so early, so I can still get a good night's sleep.

In the dialogue, we were talking about sleeping habits.

Here's a question: are you a morning person or a night owl? If you haven't guessed, a 'night owl' is someone who likes staying up late at night, but probably isn't good at getting up early in the mornings. Here are some questions for you to think about:

What time do you usually get up or go to sleep?

Do you find it easy to get up early in the mornings?

How much sleep do you need every day?

Let's look at some useful language from the dialogue which you could use. Think about what these sentences mean:

I really struggle to get moving in the morning.

I stay up late on weekends.

Sometimes I take a nap in the afternoon.

Could you explain the meaning of these clearly? If you struggle to get moving in the morning, it means it's difficult to get out of bed, because you have no energy. If you're a night owl, you'll probably struggle to get moving in the morning. If you stay up late, you go to bed late. Taking a nap means that you have a short sleep during the daytime.

So, now it's time for your last practice! Pause the video and make at least three sentences about your sleeping habits. Make a longer answer if you can. Done? Now hopefully you've seen some useful phrases to help you when talking about your daily routine in English, either in conversation or an exam.

Thanks for watching!