

Talk About Health and Lifestyle – Video

In this lesson, you can learn to talk about health and lifestyle in English.

Are you in good shape? Do you have a balanced diet? Is your work-life balance healthy? You'll learn how to discuss these health and lifestyle topics and other questions in this class.

1. Talking About Exercise and Activity

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Healthy-woman-scaled.webp>)

S: Stephanie: What's in this box? It's so heavy!

D: Daniel: I ordered some kettlebells.

S: S: Kettlebells? What for?

D: D: I've decided to start working out.

S: S: You? I never imagined you being a fitness enthusiast.

D: D: I'm not, but I realised the other day that I'm incredibly out of shape. I was running to catch the bus, and I was so out of breath. I didn't even run that far! I think my lifestyle has got more and more sedentary, plus I'm getting a bit flabby.

S: S: Well, good for you! So, what's your workout routine going to be?

D: D: I'm not sure. I want to do a little bit of weight training, and maybe some running, and just get a bit fitter generally. It's difficult at the moment, though. I tried to run 1k yesterday, and I just couldn't.

S: S: Don't give up! Doing anything is better than doing nothing. If you keep trying, it'll get easier.

D: D: You think?

S: S: Sure. When I started running, it was really difficult, but after a month, I could do 5k. Not fast, but still, I could do it.

D: D: Oh? 5k? That seems impossible right now. I guess it's something to aim for, though.

S: S: Go for it!

In the dialogue, you heard some words relating to fitness and exercise

(<https://www.fluentu.com/blog/english/esl-slang-english-health-vocabulary-words/>).

We have a challenge for you. Look at definitions of three words.

1. Do physical training (verb)
2. Describes a lifestyle without much physical activity (adj.)
3. Describes a person who is unfit (adj. phrase)

Can you remember the words and phrases which match these definitions? If you want, you can go back and review the dialogue, and try to find them.

Here are the answers.

1. Do physical training (verb) = work out
2. Describes a lifestyle without much physical activity (adj.) = sedentary
3. Describes a person who is unfit (adj. phrase) = out of shape

'Work out' can include many different types of exercise, but it's mostly used for focused training, for example using weights or doing aerobics. Generally, when you use the verb 'work out', you mean that you follow a routine of different exercises.

Nowadays, many of us have sedentary lifestyles. 'Sedentary' is in the same word family as the verb 'sit'. If you're sedentary, you spend most of your time sitting down.

If someone doesn't do much exercise, you can describe them as 'unfit', 'out of shape' or 'in bad shape'. Be careful: you can use these to describe yourself, but they could be rude if you use them to describe someone else.

All these words have direct opposites: unfit, fit; out of shape, in shape; in bad shape, in good shape.

What about you? Do you work out? What do you do? What can you do to avoid being sedentary if you have an office job? What's the best exercise for someone who's out of shape? Think about how to answer these questions. Pause the video and try to answer them out loud.

Want more practice? Watch this Oxford Online English lesson on describing people's appearance in English (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/describing-appearance>).

Ready? Let's look at our next point to help you talk about health and lifestyle in English.

2. Talking About Diet

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Healthy-food-scaled.webp>)

Daniel: I'm hungry. Shall we order? Pizza?

Stephanie: No, not for me. I'm on a diet.

D: Really? How come?

S: I've just been eating really badly lately. I'm not trying to lose weight; I just want to eat more healthily. It's nothing drastic; I'm just trying to stay off junk food, fried food, get my five a day, and so on.

D: Yeah, I should probably think about that, too. I eat a lot of takeaways and packaged food, and I definitely don't eat enough fruit and vegetables. I doubt it's good for me. I can never stick to a diet, though.

S: I know what you mean. I think it's better to make small changes. That way, you don't have to think about it too much.

D: True, but I have such a sweet tooth. I find it really hard to resist anything sweet: cakes, chocolate, biscuits... If someone offers something like that to me, I can't say no.

S: Another tip that someone told me which works well: plan your meals in advance. It works for me, at least.

D: That's a good idea.

Let's look at some sentences you heard.

1. I'm not trying to -- weight.
2. I'm just trying to -- off junk food.
3. I'm trying to get my -- a day.
4. I can never -- to a diet.
5. I have such a -- tooth.

Can you remember or guess the missing words? Think about it for a moment!

Could you do it? Let's check.

1. I'm not trying to **lose** weight.
2. I'm just trying to **stay** off junk food.
3. I'm trying to get my **five** a day.
4. I can never **stick** to a diet.
5. I have such a **sweet** tooth.

Next, what do these key words and phrases mean?

If you're overweight, you might try to lose weight. The opposite is 'put on weight', meaning to get heavier or fatter. You can also say 'gain weight'.

'Stay off' means something like 'avoid'. It's often used to talk about bad habits that you're trying to give up.

So, you might say 'I'm trying to stay off sweet food', or 'I'm trying to stay off cigarettes', or 'I'm trying to stay off Netflix'.

'Five a day' refers to eating fruit and vegetables. In many countries, health advice is to eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. It's often used with the verb 'get'
(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/use-have-get>), as in 'I don't always get my five a day', meaning that I don't always eat enough fruit and vegetables.

If you stick to something, you continue doing it. It's often used to talk about good habits. So, if you stick to a diet or an exercise routine, then you do it regularly and don't give up.

Finally, if you have a sweet tooth, you... Wait, can you guess? What do you think this means?

It means you like sweet food very much.

There are many other useful words and phrases in the dialogue, so we recommend watching it again and finding vocabulary you could use. Can you use the language from the dialogue to talk about your diet and eating habits? Try it!

Next in talking about health and lifestyle in English...

3. Talking About Bad Habits

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Coffee-and-cigarettes-scaled.webp>)

Stephanie: Beer?

Daniel: Oh, no thanks. I'm trying to cut down.

S: Really? I didn't think you were a big drinker.

D: I'm not, but I'm trying to quit smoking. I've tried five times, and this time I'm determined to make it stick. I associate smoking with drinking, so I feel like it's easier not to drink, too.

S: That makes sense. I've heard a lot of people say similar things. So, how's it going?

D: It's been two weeks, which is pretty good. I still get cravings but they're not as strong as they were. I feel much better already, though.

S: I guess I'm lucky that I've never been tempted by smoking. Coffee is my vice. I've tried to cut down, but I could never give it up completely.

D: Well, coffee's not so bad, in moderation.

S: Yeah... Does six cups a day count as 'moderation'?

D: Hmm...

In the dialogue, we were talking about bad habits. Let's look at some key language which you heard.

1. I'm trying to **cut down**.
2. I didn't think you were **a big drinker**.
3. I still get **cravings**.
4. Coffee is my **vice**.
5. Coffee's not so bad, **in moderation**.

Imagine you want to explain these words to someone who doesn't know them. Could you do it? What would you say? Pause the video and try it now. Explain these words in English, and give examples.

Could you do it? Let's check together.

'Cut down' means to do something less than before. For example, if you cut down on sugar, then you try to eat less. It doesn't mean you give it up completely.

'A big drinker' means someone who drinks a lot of alcohol. You can use 'big' in this way with other things, too. For example: 'a big smoker' or 'a big eater'.

A 'craving' is a very strong desire for something. It's often used to talk about addictions. For example, if you smoke, and then you stop, you'll probably feel cravings – a strong urge to smoke.

A 'vice (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/vice>)' is a bad habit. If you say 'coffee is my vice', you mean that you probably drink too much coffee. 'Vice' literally means something immoral, so it has a strong meaning, but it's often used ironically or in a slightly joking way.

Finally, when you use 'in moderation' to talk about health and lifestyle, you don't do something too much. For example, if you drink coffee in moderation, maybe you drink one or two cups a day.

Could you use this language to talk about your life? Do you have any bad habits? Are you trying to cut down on anything at the moment? Pause the video and try to make two or three sentences – or more if you can! – and say them out loud.

When you're making an answer like this, don't forget to repeat it several times, until you can speak fluently (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/speak-english-fluently>).

OK? Let's look at one more topic.

4. Talking About Work-Life Balance

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Man-balancing-on-rock-scaled.webp>)

Daniel: You seem a bit down. Everything OK?

Stephanie: Urgh... I have too much work!

D: You always say that.

S: Yes, but I'm really under a lot of pressure right now. I feel stressed all the time, and I have no time for myself.

D: That doesn't sound healthy. You can't just work all day every day. You'll burn out eventually.

S: I know, but what can I do? Every week there are deadlines, calls, meetings, problems... It never stops.

D: I don't know, but I think work-life balance is really important. Since I moved companies two years ago, I make a lot less money, but I'm much happier. I don't regret it. You only get one life; you can't spend it all in the office.

S: You think I need to change jobs?

D: I don't know, but I think you need to have time and energy for your personal life. Otherwise, it's difficult to feel good about life.

Let's start with an important point which English learners often make mistakes with; look at one of the first phrases from the dialogue.

I have too much work!

Now, look at another sentence.

I have too much work!

I have a lot of work!

What's the difference?

'A lot' is just a fact. If you have a lot of work, you have a large quantity of work. Pretty simple.

'Too much' is different, because it also expresses an opinion. If you have too much work, then you have a lot of work, *and* you aren't happy about it. Maybe it's making you stressed, or you don't have time for anything else...

This is true generally. Whenever you use the word 'too', you're expressing a negative opinion about something. Remember this; although it might seem like a small difference, it's important.

So, let's think about some questions.

1. Do you have a good work-life balance?
2. What happens if you work too hard?
3. What can you do to make your work-life balance healthier?

Think about how you could answer these. Pause the video if you need some time to think.

Of course, there are many possible answers, but let's see one example for each.

Do you have a good work-life balance? Yes, pretty good in general. I work hard, but I make sure I stop at six o'clock at the latest, and I don't take work home with me or work at the weekends.

If you work too hard, you'll feel stressed and miserable, and you won't have time or energy for other important parts of your life.

I think it's good to have a fixed routine, so you start and finish, and take breaks, at the same time every day. Also, it's important to say 'no' to other people sometimes, so that you don't have too much to do.

What about you? Were your answers similar? If you want, you can share your answers to these questions in the comments.

Get more practice with our lesson on talking about routines in English
(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/talking-about-daily-routine>).

That's the end. We hope you got some helpful phrases you can use to talk about health and lifestyle in English! Thanks for watching!