

## Verb + -ing or to ... 2 (try/need/help)

## A

## Try to ... and try -ing

**Try to do** = attempt to do, make an effort to do:

- ☐ I was very tired. I **tried to keep** my eyes open, but I couldn't.
- ☐ Please **try to be** quiet when you come home. Everyone will be asleep.

**Try** also means 'do something as an experiment or test'. For example:

- ☐ These cakes are delicious. You should **try** one.  
(= you should have one to see if you like it)
- ☐ We couldn't find anywhere to stay. We **tried** every hotel in the town, but they were all full.  
(= we went to every hotel to see if they had a room)

If **try** (with this meaning) is followed by a verb, we say **try -ing**:

- ☐ A: The photocopier doesn't seem to be working.  
B: **Try pressing** the green button.  
(= press the green button – perhaps this will help to solve the problem)

Compare:

- ☐ I **tried to move** the table, but it was too heavy. (so I couldn't move it)
- ☐ I didn't like the way the furniture was arranged, so I **tried moving** the table to the other side of the room. But it didn't look right, so I moved it back again.

## B

## Need to ... and need -ing

**I need to do** something = it is necessary for me to do it:

- ☐ I **need to get** more exercise.
- ☐ He **needs to work** harder if he wants to make progress.
- ☐ I don't **need to come** to the meeting, do I?

Something **needs doing** = it needs to be done:

- ☐ My phone **needs charging**.  
(= it needs to be charged)
- ☐ Do you think this jacket **needs cleaning**?  
(= ... needs to be cleaned)
- ☐ It's a difficult problem. It **needs thinking** about very carefully. (= it needs to be thought about)



## C

## Help and can't help

You can say **help to do** or **help do** (with or without **to**):

- ☐ Everybody **helped to clean** up after the party. or  
Everybody **helped clean** up ...
- ☐ Can you **help me to move** this table? or  
Can you **help me move** ...

**I can't help doing** something = I can't stop myself doing it:

- ☐ I don't like him, but he has a lot of problems. I **can't help feeling** sorry for him.
- ☐ She tried to be serious, but she **couldn't help laughing**.  
(= she couldn't stop herself laughing)
- ☐ I'm sorry I'm so nervous. I **can't help it**.  
(= I can't help **being** nervous)



She **couldn't help laughing**.