
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute English

The health benefits of apples



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Neil

Hello. This is 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English. I'm Neil.

Sam

And I'm Sam.

Neil

English has many **proverbs** – short and well-known phrase giving a piece of useful advice, or common sense. For example, the proverb, “Actions speak louder than words” means that what people do is more important than what they say.

Sam

And the proverb, “Don’t judge a book by its cover” advises people not to form opinions about people based on how they look.

Neil

Proverbs are found in many cultures and languages, and are often passed down through the generations to teach children lessons in life. One famous English proverb is: “An apple a day keeps the doctor away”.

Sam

In other words, eating fresh fruit is good for you. But is it really true? Can eating an apple a day actually have significant health benefits? That’s the question we’ll be discussing in this programme, and as usual, we’ll be learning some new vocabulary as well.

Neil

But before that I have a question for you, Sam. Most proverbs come from a place’s history, and England has a long history of growing apples. Over the centuries, hundreds of different apple varieties have been grown in orchards up and down the country, some with quite unusual names. So, which of the following is the name of a real type of English apple? Is it:

- a) a Taylor’s gold?

- b) a Golden pippin? or
- c) a Black Worcester?

Sam

I don't know but I think it's b) a Golden pippin.

Neil

OK, Sam. I'll reveal the answer later in the programme. But whatever the name of the apple, new scientific research is showing that there really are health benefits to eating apples, especially with the skins on. Apple skins are full of good stuff: fibre, vitamins, and especially flavonoids - a chemical compound known to reduce blood pressure and improve brain and heart health.

Sam

No wonder then, that when Dr Michael Mosley, presenter of BBC Radio 4 programme, Just One Thing, wanted a snack to eat, he reached for an apple.

Dr Michael Mosley

It's early afternoon and I'm a bit **peckish**, so I'm about to grab a delicious snack that could improve my blood flow, boost my brain, and **trim my waistline**. This is not some **exotic** superfood. In fact, it's an apple.

Neil

Dr Mosley wanted something to eat because he was **peckish** - a little bit hungry. He wanted something healthy, but chose an apple instead of exotic superfoods like blueberries or a banana smoothie. If you call something **exotic**, you mean it's unusual and exciting, often because it comes from an unfamiliar place.

Sam

Instead, he ate the least exotic fruit I can imagine - the humble apple. But Dr Mosely thinks apples do have health benefits, and he lists them: apples improve blood flow, boost the brain, and **trim the waistline** - a phrase which means to keep a healthy body weight with no extra fat.

Neil

Yes, one reason apples are so good for us is that the skin is packed with flavonoids which help people lose weight, and have even been linked to a longer life. But that's not all. It's the fact that there are so many different ways of cooking and eating apples which makes them one of the nation's favourite foods. Here's Dr Mosley again explaining how he likes to eat his apples to Just One Thing on BBC Sounds.

Dr Michael Mosley

What I love about apples is they are so **versatile**. I've been snacking on them, grating them into my porridge, and having them sliced with full fat yoghurt as a dessert. But baked apples are one of my favourite ways to consume them. It seems an apple a day really does keep the doctor away, and also keep your heart, gut and even your waistline **in good shape**.

Sam

Dr Mosley eats apples in porridge, sliced with yogurt, and even baked in the oven. He describes them as **versatile** – things which can be used for many different purposes, or in many different ways. What's more, cooking or baking apples doesn't damage those healthy **flavonoids**, so even the occasional apple crumble with custard can be good for you!

Neil

Apple crumble and custard! I'm not so sure that's a way to get **in good shape** – a phrase meaning 'healthy' or 'in good condition'.

Sam

But, Neil, it seems the old proverb *is* true – according to the science, an apple a day really does keep the doctor away! Right, it's time to reveal the answer to your question.

Neil

Yes, I asked you about the strange sounding names given to some varieties of English apple.

Sam

And I said that a 'Golden pippin' was the name of a real apple. So, was I right?

Neil

Yes you were! Golden pippin apples were first grown in Arundel, near the south coast of England, while the other two - Black Worcester and Taylor's gold – are actually types of English pear. Right, let's recap the vocabulary we've learned from this programme, starting with **proverb** – a short sentence or expression giving some well-known, traditional advice.

Sam

If you're feeling **peckish**, you're slightly hungry.

Neil

The adjective **exotic** describes something which is unusual and exciting, often because it comes from a faraway place.

Sam

The phrase **trim the waistline** means to keep your body weight healthy with no extra fat around your waistline – the area of your body above the hips.

Neil

Something which is **versatile** can be used for many purposes, or in many different ways.

Sam

And finally, if someone is **in good shape**, they're in a good state of health. Once again, our six minutes are up. Bye for now!

Neil

Bye!

VOCABULARY

proverb

short sentence or expression giving some well-known, traditional advice or common sense

peckish

slightly hungry

exotic

unusual and exciting, often because it comes from a faraway place

trim the waistline

keep a healthy body weight with no extra fat around the waist

versatile

able to be used for many purposes, or in many different ways

in good shape

in a good state of health; in a good condition