

25 BODY IDIOMS

1

all ears

to be fully listening

Let me finish hanging out the washing and then I'll be all ears!

2

break a leg

to wish someone good luck

I forgot you were on stage tonight! Break a leg!

3

by the skin of one's teeth

to only just, barely achieve something

I passed my driving test by the skin of my teeth!

4

cold feet

(to suddenly feel) nervous about doing something that you had planned to do.

I hope he doesn't get cold feet before the wedding!

5

cost an arm and a leg

very expensive

I bet that coat cost her an arm and a leg!

6

cry your eyes/heart out

to cry a lot

She cried her eyes out when she lost her cat.

7

get something off your chest

to tell someone what's been on your mind

I need to get it off my chest and tell my boss I am unhappy.

8

give/lend a hand

to help someone

If you need any help moving I can lend you a hand.

9

have one's head in the clouds

to be unaware or unrealistic about something

He has his head in the clouds if he thinks he will get a pay rise in this economy!

10

head over heels

to be completely in love with someone or something

She is head over heels with her new puppy!

11

in over one's head

taking on a task that one can't handle.

I am completely in over my head in my new teaching position!

12

keep an eye on

to watch, monitor

Can you keep an eye on my bike whilst I nip into the post office?

13

keep one's chin up

to be cheerful

Keep your chin up! The exam season will be over soon!

14

learn/know(off) by heart

to memorise

I know the Harry Potter books off by heart!

15

let one's hair down

to have fun, relax

She needs to let her hair down! She is always so stressed!

16

my lips are sealed

to not tell anyone information

My lips are sealed! I have no idea how much that dress cost...

17

makes my blood boil

to describe something that makes one very angry

The way that they have underpaid and mistreated you over the years makes my blood boil!

18

over my dead body

to describe something that would be impossible to do until you were not alive to prevent it

Over my dead body! I'll never let you drive my car.

19

pat on the back

to give recognition, thanks

I think I deserve a pat on the back after all of my hard work today!

20

play something by ear

to do something without a plan

I don't know if the weather will be dry enough for a picnic. Let's play it by ear.

21

pull one's leg

to joke or tease someone

Are you pulling my leg? Are you really moving away?

22

rule of thumb

generic, basic rule (not always right/followed)

As a rule of thumb, a cup of coffee contains about 80mg of caffeine.

23

see eye to eye

to agree on something

My parents didn't see eye to eye on our education.

24

sweet tooth

a love of sweet things

My grandma once requested a dinner party of JUST puddings. She has such a sweet tooth

25

wash one's hands of something

to stop dealing with an issue or problem

I'm washing my hands of him. He causes too many problems.

TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING

FILL IN THE GAPS WITH THE BEST-FITTING PHRASE

1. As a _____, each metre of wood weighs 2kg.

- a) sweet tooth
- b) rule of thumb
- c) pat on the back

2. I hope he'll _____ and get through these difficult times.

- a) keep his chin up
- b) pull his leg
- c) see eye to eye

3. We don't _____ on politics and religion, but we get on well.

- a) get off our chest
- b) pat on the back
- c) see eye to eye

4. You want to borrow my best shoes? _____!

- a) Pat on the back
- b) Over my dead body
- c) Play it by ear

5. _____! I hope the performance goes really well!

- a) Pat on the back
- b) Break a leg
- c) Cold feet

6. The way he behaved _____!

- a) let his hair down
- b) has his head in the clouds
- c) makes my blood boil

7. The class passed the assignment _____!

- a) as a rule of thumb
- b) by the skin of their teeth
- c) getting it off their chest

8. I was _____ when she told me she had some gossip to share!

- a) sweet tooth
- b) cold feet
- c) all ears

9. Can you _____ my handbag whilst I nip to the loo?

- a) keep an eye on
- b) keep your chin up
- c) play by ear

10. I think he is _____ - he's not changing jobs!

- a) seeing eye to eye
- b) pulling your leg
- c) playing it by ear

Answers:

10. b

9. a

8. c

7. b

6. c

5. b

4. b

3. c

2. a

1. b

The
End