

Idioms: Exercise & Physical Health

Intermediate (B1-B2)



WARM UP

Part 1. Discuss the following questions.

1. What do you usually do to **get in shape**?
2. Have you ever **hit the wall** while exercising or training? What happened?
3. What motivates you to keep going instead of **throwing in the towel**?

READING ACTIVITY

Part 1. Read the following text carefully.

After spending months at a desk job, Alex realised he needed to **get in shape**. He started going to the gym three times a week and began to **pump iron** to build muscle. At first, he couldn't even **break a sweat** without needing a rest, but he stuck with it. One evening, during a particularly intense session, he really began to **feel the burn** in his legs but kept pushing. Halfway through the session, he **hit the wall** and nearly **threw in the towel**—but with some encouragement from his trainer, he pushed through to the end.

Part 2. Answer the comprehension questions.

1. Why did Alex decide to get in shape?
2. What kind of training did he do at the gym?
3. What does feel the burn describe in this context?
4. What helped Alex continue when he hit the wall?

DEFINITION MATCHING

Part 1. Match each idiom to its correct definition. Can you guess any before looking at the options?

Break a sweat

Feel the burn

Pump iron

Get in shape

Hit the wall

Throw in the towel

1. _____ to do weight training or lift weights
2. _____ to become fit through exercise
3. _____ to stop trying; give up
4. _____ to reach a point where you feel physically unable to continue
5. _____ to sweat from physical effort
6. _____ to feel muscle pain during or after intense exercise



TYPICAL USAGE MATCHING

Part 1. Match the idioms with what they are typically used with.

Break a sweat

Feel the burn

Pump iron

Get in shape

Hit the wall

Throw in the towel

1. _____ in my thighs after those squats.
2. _____ by going for a run every morning.
3. _____ when I tried to do one more lap but couldn't.
4. _____ lifting heavy at the gym twice a week.
5. _____ halfway through the hike, but I kept going.
6. _____ after months of training without seeing results.

SENTENCE TRANSFORMATION

Part 1. Rewrite the following sentences using the target idioms so that the meaning stays the same.

1. We lifted weights together every Saturday.
2. He started to sweat as soon as the warm-up began.
3. She gave up halfway through the class
4. I want to become fitter and healthier this year.
5. I felt like I couldn't go on after 20 minutes.
6. You'll feel your muscles working after a few more reps.

SENTENCE GAP-FILL

Part 1. Use the correct form of the idiom in brackets to complete each sentence.

1. I _____ already _____ (hit the wall) before the final kilometre.
2. She _____ trying _____ (get in shape) for her wedding.
3. We _____ (throw in the towel) after the fourth failed attempt.
4. He _____ (feel the burn) during those last push-ups.
5. I usually _____ (break a sweat) within five minutes of boxing.
6. They _____ (pump iron) all year and it shows.

SPEAKING

Part 1. Answer the questions using the target idioms.

1. What's the hardest time you've ever had trying to **get in shape**?
2. When did you last really **feel the burn** during a workout?
3. Have you ever **thrown in the towel** in a fitness challenge?
4. What exercises make you **break a sweat** the fastest?
5. Do you enjoy **pumping iron**, or do you prefer other types of training?
6. How do you keep going when you **hit the wall**?

