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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## The English We Speak

### Bust a gut



*This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Neil**

Hello and welcome to The English We Speak. I'm Neil and joining me is Feifei.

**Feifei**

Hi everyone.

**Neil**

In this programme we have an expression which means 'to make a great effort to achieve something'.

**Feifei**

Neil, why are you wearing that running gear in the studio? I'm not sure that shorts and a vest are appropriate for the workplace! As for those sweatbands...

**Neil**

Well, Feifei, it's because I'm desperate to get fit. You see, I'm running a marathon at the end of the month and I've barely started training. I'm really going to have to bust a gut to be ready on time.

**Feifei**

Yes, you really do need to start training but surely busting a gut is not going to help!

**Neil**

I'm not going to bust my gut literally! To bust a gut means 'to make a huge effort to achieve something'. Imagine working so hard your stomach – or gut – actually breaks!

**Feifei**

Urgh! Here are some examples of the expression 'to bust a gut':

#### **Examples**

We're going to have to bust a gut to get this report done by tomorrow. We're only half-way through and it's already 7pm.

The problem with today's millionaire footballers is they're not prepared to bust a gut for their national team.

There are train strikes and the traffic is terrible. I had to bust a gut to get here on time today.

**Neil**

To bust a gut – to make a great effort to achieve something.

**Feifei**

As you can see from the examples, we can use 'to bust a gut' to talk about non-physical activities as well.

**Neil**

Yes so come on Feifei. We need to bust a gut to get this programme finished so I can go out for a training run.

**Feifei**

Alright, alright, we're done now – go and bust a gut.

**Neil**

I'm off – bye!