
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

Cabin Fever



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This is not a word-for-word transcript

Feifei

Hello and welcome to The English We Speak with me, Feifei...

Roy

...and me, Roy.

Feifei

We may sound a little different – that’s because we are not able to record in our normal studios during the coronavirus outbreak. There’s been a lot of discussion about self-isolation and staying at home, and today we have an interesting expression to talk about the stress you may feel in that situation.

Roy

That’s right Feifei. Today, we’re going to talk about ‘cabin fever’.

Feifei

Exactly. Cabin fever is the reaction to feeling trapped or isolated in a building for too long. It can be really stressful. This expression probably comes from people being trapped and not able to leave a small wooden house known as a cabin. The may not have been able to leave due to extreme weather conditions like a snowstorm, as these buildings are often found on mountains or hills.

Roy

People can become sad, restless and even lack concentration. They may also get food cravings, which in turn may lead to weight changes.

Feifei

That’s right. It’s a really serious thing, and it can cause you to suffer from anxiety.

Roy

Which is why we’re going to tell you some things that experts say you can do to help you cope with cabin fever.

Feifei

Yes, we'll let you know right after these examples using the words 'cabin fever'.

Examples

I started to suffer from cabin fever after I was stuck at home for two weeks.

Some scientists think that cabin fever is linked to the feeling of claustrophobia – the fear of being in closed places.

He said he felt really anxious and that he was suffering from cabin fever after not being able to leave his house. He also said he had gained weight.

Feifei

This is The English We Speak from BBC Learning English and we're talking about the expression 'cabin fever', which is the feeling of stress from isolation that some people experience when they stay in a building for an extended time.

Roy

But apparently there are some ways that you can cope if you're suffering from cabin fever, aren't there Feifei?

Feifei

That's right. One of the first things they say to do is to set regular meal times, so kind of a routine – much like you would have if you were going to work.

Roy

Yes, this helps regularity and limits binge eating and weight issues. Also, it's important to try and stimulate your mind.

Feifei

Things like television are OK for distraction, but they don't overly stimulate you. Something like reading a book may be more interesting and keep your mind active.

Roy

Yes, and doing things like puzzles or crosswords can also help. I really enjoy doing quizzes online. Also, you should make sure your friends and family are coping if they are in the same situation.

Feifei

Absolutely. A phone call to someone to check on them may really help them, and you can also give them the same advice we're giving you now. Finally, it's important to set goals. Try to achieve things in your day to keep you focussed. You could even make weekly goals depending on how long your isolation will be for.

Roy

Hey, why not try writing a book?

Feifei

That's an idea. Bye, Roy.

Roy

Bye.