

THE FLATMATES

Language point:

Expressions with 'hand' 3



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BBC Learning English – The Flatmates

The Flatmates – Expressions with 'hand' 3

You can see this language point online at:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/flatmates/2009/02/090217_flatmates_184_ip.shtml

Background

There are lots of English expressions, idioms and proverbs which refer to **hands** and **feet**. For example, Alice says Khalid and Tim were "**waited on hand and foot**" by Tim's mum. She meant Tim's mum did everything for them, they didn't have to do anything for themselves.

Here's a selection of some common expressions using **hands** and **feet**.

Hands

hand in glove

working together, often to do something in a dishonest way

The politician had to resign when the newspapers found out he was working **hand in glove** with the construction companies which built the hospital.

sleight of hand

hiding of the truth so that you can gain an advantage

By some **sleight of hand** with economic figures, the government has managed to make it look like the economy is improving.

lose / make money hand over fist

make or lose money very quickly

During the hot summer months he sells ice-cream on the beach and makes money **hand over fist**.

count on the fingers of one hand

something that happens very rarely or exists in very small numbers

You can **count** the number of times he's offered to buy the coffees **on the fingers of one hand**.

have someone eating out of the palm of your hand / have someone in the palm of your hand

have complete control over someone and to be able to make her /him do anything you want

She delivered such a great speech, she had us all in the palm of her hand.

tip your hand

say what you are going to do or what you believe

Even though everyone is sure the two stars will be getting married soon, this major Hollywood star film star refused to **tip her hand** about her wedding plans.

Feet

my foot

used to mean that you don't believe what someone has just told you

She says she can't afford to come out with us this evening. Can't afford it **my foot!** She just doesn't like us, that's all.

from head to foot / toe

covering your body completely

It started raining during the children's football match and before long both teams were covered in mud **from head to toe**. They loved it!

put your best foot forward

try as hard as you can

Don't worry about the interview. Just **put your best foot forward** and if you don't know the answer, don't be afraid to tell them you don't know. I'm sure you'll do fine.

put your foot down

use your authority to stop something happening

I didn't mind giving her a lift now and again, but when she started saying she needed to borrow the car, I just **put my foot down**.

not put a foot wrong

not make any mistakes or do anything wrong

He's the golden boy in the office. No matter how rude he is to the rest of us, as far as the boss is concerned, he **can't put a foot wrong**.

Vocabulary:

Don't gives us a hard time

Don't make things difficult or unpleasant for us

A city boy like you? Don't make me laugh!

You're from the city. I can't take what you said seriously (here, that you were able to work on the farm)

Don't mock

Don't laugh at me. I'm being serious

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