

## Simplified Speech #087 – Working out at the gym

### Episode description

Gyms aren't just places for body builders. They are also popular with anyone who wants to get healthy and maintain a good body weight. In this Simplified Speech episode, Andrew and Jeremy explore some expressions you can use when you go to the gym.

### Fun fact

Long before fitness centres became popular, Joe Gold opened his first gym in 1965 in Venice Beach, California. Now, Gold's Gym is a chain of gyms with over 700 locations around the world!

### Expressions included in the study guide

- To play pickup
- To warm up
- To end up
- To get toned
- To bulk up
- To cool down



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## Transcript

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Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript. The transcript has been edited for clarity.

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**Andrew:** Hello, everyone. My name is Andrew.

**Jeremy:** And my name is Jeremy.

**Andrew:** And you are listening to Culips.

**Andrew:** Today's episode is a Simplified Speech episode. And this is the Culips series where we have completely natural English conversations, but we speak just a little bit slower than we do in our everyday lives. And today, I am joined by Jeremy, my cohost. Jeremy, hello.

**Jeremy:** Hello there, Andrew.

**Andrew:** Recently, I asked our Instagram followers what kind of topics they would like to hear us talk about, and we got a message from Rafael Farias. I'm probably pronouncing that wrong.

**Jeremy:** Rafael Farias.

**Andrew:** I think he's from Brazil, so it's probably a Portuguese pronunciation, which I don't know how to do, but anyway.

**Jeremy:** Me either. Me either.

**Andrew:** One day, maybe we can learn Portuguese, but not today. Today, we are going to talk about his topic suggestion, which is going to the gym, going to the gym. So it's an interesting topic, and I think we both have a little bit of experience about going to the gym. So we'll talk about that here today.

**Andrew:** But before we get into it, I do wanna let everyone know that there is a study guide available for this episode on our website, Culips.com. And, guys, this is a great way to study along with us and we highly recommend that you check out the study guide for this episode. So just visit our website, Culips.com, and you can do that.

**Andrew:** We also have some listening comprehension questions for you today. So keeping your ears open for the answers to these questions while you listen to our conversation and we'll share the answers with you at the end of the episode, after the ending music.

**Andrew:** Here are the questions:

1. Has Jeremy always gone to the gym or is it a new activity for him?
2. Where do I exercise these days?
3. What did Jeremy try to do for a while last year?

**Andrew:** OK, Jeremy, let's talk about going to the gym. I guess the first question that we should ask is do you go to the gym?

**Jeremy:** Yes, I do. I go to the gym, maybe two or three times a week.

**Andrew:** Wow. OK, fairly frequently, then. Two to three times per week.

**Jeremy:** Yeah, I try to, as much as I can.

**Andrew:** Would you say that you're in good shape?

**Jeremy:** Yeah, I'm in pretty good shape, but I feel like I could always improve.

**Andrew:** That's a good mindset to have. I think a lot of people feel that way. I feel that way about exercise, too. I feel that way about language learning. I feel that way about pretty much anything that I do that is really difficult.

**Jeremy:** It's a never-ending challenge, right?

**Andrew:** Never-ending challenge, yeah. So when you go to the gym, what kind of exercise do you do? Are you strength training or doing cardio? Maybe you're taking a spinning class or an aerobics class?

**Jeremy:** I haven't taken any spin or aerobics classes. Usually I will run, either on the treadmill, or I will play basketball. I **play pickup** basketball with some other people at the gym. And that involves a lot of running and jumping and things like that.

**Andrew:** Right, yeah.

**Jeremy:** And then I also lift weights, usually, free weights and machines. For those who don't know, free weights are the weights that are not connected to anything else. So a dumbbell or a barbell. Those two things, they are examples of free weights. And machines are usually weights hooked up to pulleys and steel or metal cables that allow you to lift that weight with a more complicated machine. So some people only do machines, some people only do free weights.

**Andrew:** Wow. So you are kind of an all-rounded gym member, a little bit of everything.

**Jeremy:** I didn't used to go to the gym. I used to not exercise very much. But these days, having a young child in my house, I need to keep my strength up. And I need to stay in shape to keep up with my little boy.

**Andrew:** Recently on Instagram, I saw I think it was my cousin's husband was doing push-ups and he had their little toddler on his back. So I'm sure you'll be able to do this for your son, too, give him a ride on your back while you do some push-ups, if you continue your strength training at the gym.

**Jeremy:** I'll try that out after we stop this recording.

**Andrew:** Maybe you could cancel your gym membership.

**Jeremy:** Yeah, maybe, maybe I should do that.

**Andrew:** The toddler gym.

**Jeremy:** Yeah. What about you, Andrew? Do you go to the gym, or what? Do you hit the gym?

**Andrew:** Do I hit the gym? I don't hit the gym anymore. I have in the past. The last apartment that I lived in, before the apartment that I'm in now, had a gym in the basement. So that was really convenient. I could just go down to the basement and it was a pretty good gym. It wasn't maybe as good as a commercial gym. But there were many machines like you're talking about, weightlifting machines. And there were several treadmills and all sorts of exercise equipment. So that was really nice. Now I've moved, so I don't have access to that facility and I've kind of stopped going to the gym, but, to be honest with you, Jeremy, the world is my gym.

**Jeremy:** Well, I know you like cycling and, and running. And those two things are best done outside.

**Andrew:** Yes, I agree. It's painful for me when I have to run indoors on a treadmill. The difference is very tangible. It's very noticeable. It's such an enjoyable experience outside and terrible for me inside. I try to get outside as much as I can to go running or biking. And I do do a little bit of working out at home, as well. I have some kettlebells.

**Jeremy:** Nice, kettlebells are great.

**Andrew:** A kind of free weight. So, you know, to be honest with you, I just kind of toss the kettlebells around when I'm cooking, like, when I'm waiting for a pot of water to boil or something. I'll just pick up my kettlebells and whip them around for a little bit.

**Jeremy:** We should, we should be clear for those who don't know what a kettlebell is. Andrew is not really throwing weights across his apartment.

**Andrew:** No, it just means to lift.

**Jeremy:** To lift, yeah. It's a fun way of saying it.

**Andrew:** Yeah, the, the movement that you do with a kettlebell is a little bit different than, you know, a dumbbell or a barbell, because you do swing them a lot. This is one of the movements. So, when I say swing them around, I actually am swinging them for the most part.

**Jeremy:** Yeah. It's called a kettlebell because it looks like a kettle, which is a pot that is used to boil water. K-E-T-T-L-E. So, yeah, it's kind of like a squat. Would you agree?

**Andrew:** You can do all sorts of things with them. They're a real versatile piece of equipment. So, yeah, you can do squats, you can do swings, you can do lifts, all sorts of stuff to help keep me in shape a little bit, at least.

**Jeremy:** Yeah, I think you're in pretty good shape. I know you run marathons, so.

**Andrew:** As you say, Jeremy, there's always a goal ahead on the horizon that you want to reach, right? You're never satisfied with the current state. I think I feel the same way as you do.

**Andrew:** So I have a question here. And this is kind of a cultural question that I'm sure many of our listeners would like to know about. And that is gym culture in the States and in North America. The first thing I'm curious about is how much a membership costs in your state or in your city?

**Jeremy:** Yeah, it varies a lot. Like, I used to go to the YMCA. YMCA is a very famous, very well-known franchise, or I guess you could say organization, and they have gyms, but there's also usually other facilities. And they also often have things for kids, specifically. So it's a good place for a family to go and work out. And that was \$85 per month here. But the gym I go to now, where children are not allowed, it costs about \$35 per month.

**Andrew:** OK, that's much more affordable. \$85 a month is kind of on the high end. What about if you wanted to hire a personal trainer?

**Jeremy:** Personally, I have never worked with a personal trainer. But I have heard that they can charge anywhere from \$50 to \$80 per hour, sometimes more.

**Andrew:** Wow. OK, so if this whole English teaching thing doesn't work out for us, maybe we can pivot to starting a gym together.

**Jeremy:** Yeah, let's talk about that.

**Andrew:** OK, and just before we close here, Rafael from Instagram did want us to teach some gym vocabulary. So I brainstormed four kind of basic phrasal verbs that are used really, really frequently when we're talking about exercising or going to the gym, and I thought we should explain them here today. So, Jeremy, why don't we go over them one by one, and the first one is **to warm up, to warm up**.

**Jeremy:** **To warm up.** This is a necessary phrase for anyone who wants to go to the gym and speak English and make sense. **To warm up.**

**Andrew:** Yes, **to warm up**. And I should say here that a phrasal verb, for anyone that's not familiar, is a verb plus a particle like a preposition. So warm is the verb here, to become warm, to warm, and up is the preposition. OK? So, here **warm up** is what you do when you are getting ready to exercise. It's the kind of movement that you do, might be stretching or it might be some light jogging or something, to get your body ready to do some more intense and heavier exercise. So it's very important **to warm up** so that you don't get injured while you're exercising. However, personally, I never **warm up**. I just go.

**Jeremy:** And you told me that before and I said what, how, how do you do that? Don't you worry about pulling a muscle or getting hurt?

**Andrew:** No, I guess not. You know, sometimes before I have to do a race, if I'm racing, then I will **warm up**. I will do some light jogging, but when I'm just casually exercising, I don't bother. I don't go as hard as I can. So I'm not worried about injuring myself, I suppose.

**Jeremy:** I guess. For me, when I play basketball, I have **to warm up** at least a little bit. If I don't, I usually **end up** hurting myself somehow.

**Andrew:** Well, doctors and trainers, everyone will recommend **warming up**. It's very important. I agree. I'm just very lazy.

**Andrew:** The next phrasal verb that I wanna teach everyone is **tone up, to tone up** or sometimes we also say **get toned, to get toned**. **Tone** here is spelled T-O-N-E. **Tone up** and **toning up** is kind of improving your body, getting your body looking better, right? It's maybe not becoming really, really muscular, but a little tighter and—

**Jeremy:** I think it means that your muscles show through your skin a little bit.

**Andrew:** Yeah, yeah.

**Jeremy:** Right?

**Andrew:** Exactly.

**Jeremy:** I think a more intense expression for this, a stronger expression is cut, to get cut.

**Andrew:** To get cut.

**Jeremy:** Wow, he's, he's really cut, he's cut. That means that the muscles can be easily seen through the skin.

**Andrew:** Yeah. So if you're thinking of, like, the classic muscle guy that you might see in a competition.

**Jeremy:** Body builders.

**Andrew:** Body builder, exactly. That's the word I was looking for.

**Jeremy:** But maybe, you know, a yoga instructor might be **toned**.

**Andrew:** Yes, that's a good distinction there. That is exactly the difference.

**Jeremy:** You know, and there's another expression like this one that basically has the same meaning. We say get ripped, get ripped, like, he's ripped. Usually we say he's ripped. Women usually don't exercise to the point that they get really ripped. Women would get very **toned**, usually. There are some women who are very ripped, of course, who have muscles that show very clearly through their skin, very defined muscles.

**Andrew:** Yeah, exactly. I think it's more common to see a guy that's ripped than a woman, but both can be ripped. And another expression that is similar is also shredded. To get shredded, shredded, or to be shredded. I like that word, shredded.

**Jeremy:** It's fun to say, definitely.

**Andrew:** So when you want to get cut, you have to first **bulk up**, **bulk up**. And this is the third phrasal verb that I brainstormed, **bulk up**. B-U-L-K, **bulk up**.

**Jeremy:** I'm sure there are some of our listeners who have heard of the franchise Costco. But Costco is a store that is known for selling products in bulk. So in bulk means you're buying a package of 15 of that thing, instead of just one of those. Bulk is used in that way, as well.

**Andrew:** Jeremy, one of my favourite stores in my hometown is called the Bulk Barn.

**Jeremy:** Wow, cool.

**Andrew:** And the Bulk Barn is, it's just a discount grocery store. People go there, because you can buy products in bulk and save money, but it's also a zero waste store. So you can bring your own containers. Let's say you want to buy some almonds or something. You can just bring a Tupperware container and fill that container with almonds and then you weigh it and pay for it. And so you don't need to bother with all of the plastic packaging, all that nonsense that's just bad for the Earth. Yeah.



**Jeremy:** That's great.

**Andrew:** And so, yeah, the core meaning here of **bulk** is just quantity or mass volume, right? So if you are **bulking up**, that means you are getting stronger and building muscle.

**Jeremy:** For a while last year, I was trying **to bulk up** and I was eating probably four or five meals a day. I ate as much as I could. I gained about 10 or 15 pounds, but since I started eating more like a normal person, my weight has gone down a little bit. I know that my body is different from most people's.

**Andrew:** I eat usually only two meals a day and I have a problem not putting weight on. If I ate four to five meals a day, I would be really overweight, I think. But, yes, everybody's body is different.

**Andrew:** Jeremy, the final phrase over here that I wanted to mention is **to cool down, to cool down**. So this is actually the opposite of **to warm up**. **Warming up** is what you do at the start of your exercise session. And then when you finish, you need **to cool down**, right? So what is involved with **cooling down**?

**Jeremy:** Well, if you're running, the **cool down** would be running much more slowly for a little while to let your heart rate slow down gradually, right?

**Andrew:** Or it could be stretching or walking.

**Jeremy:** Yeah, or just walking. Usually you don't want to just fall flat on the floor after doing your exercise. So a **cool down** is a nice way to bring your heart rate back down to normal. And, well, also **cool** your body temperature down.

**Andrew:** Right, exactly.

**Andrew:** Thanks again to Rafael for the question. It was fun here to talk about going to the gym with you today, Jeremy. And I'm really curious about our listeners. Guys, if you have anything that you would like to add to the conversation, if you have any questions about gym vocabulary or maybe questions about gym culture in North America, then please get in touch with us.

**Andrew:** You can follow us on social media. We are on Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook. Any social media service that you use, you could probably find us there. Of course, you could also send us an email, as well. Our email address is [contact@Culips.com](mailto:contact@Culips.com). Our website is [Culips.com](http://Culips.com). And that's the place where you can get the study guide for this episode and also listen to our archive of previous episodes. We have hundreds of episodes on [Culips.com](http://Culips.com). So check out our website to hear them.

**Andrew:** We will be back soon with another brand-new episode and we'll talk to you then. Goodbye.



**Jeremy:** Bye, everyone.

**Andrew:** And here are the answers to the comprehension questions. Number 1, Jeremy hasn't always gone to the gym. He said it was a new activity for him. Let's listen to the part of the episode where he says that one more time.

**Jeremy:** I didn't used to go to the gym. I used to not exercise very much. But these days, having a young child in my house, I need to keep my strength up. And I need to stay in shape to keep up with my little boy.

**Andrew:** Number 2, I exercise outside. I said that the world is my gym. Let's take a listen to that part one more time.

**Andrew:** To be honest with you, Jeremy, the world is my gym.

**Andrew:** And number 3, Jeremy tried to **bulk up** for a while last year. Let's listen to him say that one more time.

**Jeremy:** For a while last year, I was trying to **bulk up** and I was eating probably four or five meals a day.

## Detailed Explanations

### To play pickup

Phrasal verb

In this episode, Jeremy talks about the sports he often plays. One of them is pickup basketball. **Playing pickup** means playing a spontaneous game. These games are informal and not part of a league. Imagine you are alone at a basketball court and you are practicing your shooting. Then other people come along and ask you if you want to play a game. That is **playing pickup**. There aren't usually referees, and the rules are often discussed before the game. You can put a pickup game together for any sport, as in **playing pickup** baseball. You can also say you are **playing a game of pickup**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to play pickup**:

**Gary:** You don't look too good. Are you OK?

**Tim:** I hurt myself **playing pickup** the other day.

**Gary:** Did you warm up properly?

**Tim:** Not really.

**Gary:** Does that mean you can't go out with us tomorrow?

**Tim:** Yes. I don't think I should go out this time. Sorry.

**Colin:** You play a lot of sports, right? Which one is your favourite?

**Jerry:** Definitely hockey.

**Colin:** Cool. I love hockey. Do you play in a league?

**Jerry:** No, I just **play pickup**. I show up at the outdoor rink near my house and play with whoever is there.

## To warm up

Phrasal verb

In this episode, Andrew and Jeremy talk a lot about working out and the English phrasal verbs that are most often used when talking about working out. The first of these is **to warm up**. **To warm up** is to prepare your body for the exercise you want to do by doing a lighter version of that exercise. For example, if you want to sprint, you might want to start with light jogging first. You are getting your heart to beat faster so you can better do your exercise later. It can also be turned into a noun. The period when you **warm up** your body is called a warm-up. This is similar to how singers **warm up** their vocal chords before a show or a lecturer goes over their material backstage before giving a speech.

Here are a couple more examples with **to warm up**:

**Crissy:** What time is our game today?

**Kim:** It's at 3:00. Can you make it?

**Crissy:** I think so. It's too bad, though. I won't have enough time **to warm up**.

**Kim:** You're taking the subway, right? Just do squats and stretches in the subway.

**Crissy:** No way. I can't do that there. I'll just have to start playing cold.

**Frank:** I checked the schedule. The race starts at 9 a.m.

**Maggie:** Sweet. What's your pre-race routine?

**Frank:** I like to show up early. I need **to warm up** for at least 15 minutes any time I run. How about you?

**Maggie:** I do the same thing. How about we met up at about 8:30? We can do a few laps around the track together.

**Frank:** Good idea.

## To end up

Phrasal verb

When talking about the importance of warming up, Jeremy mentions that he usually **ends up** getting hurt if he doesn't warm up first. **To end up** refers to the result of something. **To end up** is similar to expressions such as in the end and eventually. Often you **end up** somewhere or doing something without planning it. For example, you might have gone to the store to buy cheese, but you **ended up** buying peanut butter instead. Similarly, Jeremy doesn't plan on getting hurt, but it sometimes **ends up** happening if he doesn't warm up before playing basketball.

Here are a couple more examples with **to end up**:

**Liz:** Did you meet up with your friend on Friday?

**Jesse:** I did. It was nice.

**Liz:** Because I called a couple of times and you didn't answer.

**Jesse:** Oh, sorry about that. We initially just wanted to meet for coffee, but we **ended up** going out all night. Then we bumped into other friends. I didn't check my phone all night.

**Liz:** That's OK.

**Jihyun:** I heard your parents were diplomats. You must have moved a lot when you were younger.

**Louisa:** We did. I went to many international schools. We lived mostly in Asia.

**Jihyun:** Is that how you **ended up** here in Korea?

**Louisa:** Actually, this is my first time living here. The company I work for just happened to have an opening here, so I took it.

## To get toned

Phrasal verb

When talking about improving the way your body looks through fitness, Andrew and Jeremy mention a few phrasal verbs you can use. One of them is **to get toned**. That means to make your muscles firmer and shapelier. If you see someone who clearly looks like they work out a lot, you can say they are **toned**.

Andrew and Jeremy also mention three other similar expressions: to get cut, to get ripped, and to get shredded. The difference is how defined your muscles are—that is, how easily they can be seen through your skin. **To get toned** is the least extreme of the four and means that your muscles show through your skin a little bit.

Here are a couple more examples with **to get toned**:

**Jamie:** Wow, have you been working out?

**Paul:** Actually, I have. I'm glad you noticed.

**Jamie:** How long have you been at it?

**Paul:** About 3 weeks now.

**Jamie:** Just 3 weeks? Seriously, you're pretty **toned** already.

**Paul:** Thanks.

**Jamie:** In 2 months, you'll be ripped!

**Evan:** Hello, my name is Evan. I will be your trainer today.

**Sandra:** Hello, Evan. I'm Sandra.

**Evan:** First off, I want to know your workout goals.

**Sandra:** OK. I'm here because I want **to get a little more toned**. Nothing crazy, just less round fat, more shapely muscle.

**Evan:** All right. We can do that.

## To bulk up

Phrasal verb

Another expression our hosts talk about is **to bulk up**. This means to build a lot of muscle and to appear bigger. However, it is different from to get cut or to get shredded. Generally, to get cut or to get shredded, you need to have a small amount of body fat, so that your muscles can be visible. When you **bulk up**, you are putting on muscle regardless of how much body fat you have.

Here are a couple more examples with **to bulk up**:

**Sergio:** I know you're trying to do some body building, but this is your second protein shake today. What kind of diet are you on?

**Victor:** Obviously a high protein diet!

**Sergio:** I can see that. Is there a reason why you are taking so much?

**Victor:** I want to **bulk up**. Usually how it works is that you **bulk up** first, like you put on more muscle. After that, you try to reduce your body fat. **Bulking up** and reducing body fat are really hard to do at the same time. So you have to do one before the other.

**Malcolm:** Why are you only lifting 10 kilos? You can do much more than that.

**Shawn:** I know. But I don't want to **bulk up** too much.

**Malcolm:** Don't worry about that. Nobody just **bulks up** overnight. It takes years of nutrition and lifting weights.

**Shawn:** Yeah. I guess I won't be in danger of doing that. I don't like the gym at all.

**Malcolm:** You should definitely go to the gym. Just take it easy when you're there. It's not a competition.

## To cool down

### Phrasal verb

Since our hosts use the expression to warm up, it is only natural to use **to cool down** as well. In a way, they are bookends to your workout. **To cool down** is to do light exercise after the physical activity you did. This makes it easier for your body to transition into recovery. As Jeremy mentions, you don't want to fall flat on the floor after a workout. Fitness experts generally encourage you to gradually reduce your heart rate and body temperature. You can also use this expression as a noun, as in a **cool down** or a **cooling down** period.

Here are a couple more examples with **to cool down**:

**Wesley:** Hey, Kathleen, can you come to the restaurant tonight?

**Kathleen:** I don't know. I have a workout scheduled between 6 and 7 p.m.

**Wesley:** That's perfect. We'll be there around 7 p.m.

**Kathleen:** Oh, but I also usually **cool down** for about 30 minutes after my workout. I might be really late.

**Wesley:** I see. Well, contact us when you can and see where we are. Have a good workout!

**Coach:** Next, I want you to run 400 metres at 80% top speed. Then 600 metres at 70%. Got that?

**Camille:** Sure, Coach.

**Coach:** After that, you should **cool down**.

**Camille:** What do you want me to do for that?

**Coach:** Walk around the track fairly fast for about 8 to 10 minutes. When your heart rate is almost back to normal, practice is over. Good luck!



## Quiz

### 1. What does to play pickup mean?

- a) to pick up garbage after your game
- b) to play in a league
- c) to play a spontaneous game
- d) to play a new sport

### 2. Which of the following should you do before a match?

- a) warm up
- b) cool down

### 3. What does to get toned mean?

- a) to become more tan
- b) to make your muscles firmer and shapelier
- c) to listen to music at the gym
- d) to gain weight

### 4. What does to bulk up mean?

- a) to lose muscle mass and maintain body fat
- b) to gain a lot of muscle
- c) to shop at a bulk store, like Costco
- d) to lift weights

### 5. Which is of the following does NOT mean to end up?

- a) to finish
- b) in the end
- c) ultimately
- d) to postpone

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## Writing and Discussion Questions

1. When you do exercise, what kind of warming up do you do? What kind of cooling down do you do?
2. Have you ever had a gym membership? Did you use it often?
3. If you were to go to the gym, what kind of exercise routine would you do?
4. Do you ever play pickup games?
5. If you could take a magic pill and get really toned, would you take it?

## Quiz Answers

1. c   2. a   3. b   4. b   5. d

### Episode credits

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