



VERB PATTERNS: TRY/NEED/HELP

Try to ... and try -ing

Try to do = attempt to do, make an effort to do:

- I was very tired. I tried to keep my eyes open, but I couldn't.
- Please try to be quiet when you come home. Everyone will be asleep.

Try also means 'do something as an experiment or test'. For example:

- These cakes are delicious. You should try one. (= you should have one to see if you like it)
- We couldn't find anywhere to stay. We tried every hotel in the town, but they were all full. (= we went to every hotel to see if they had a room)

If try (with this meaning) is followed by a verb, we say try -ing:

- A: The photocopier doesn't seem to be working.
- B: Try pressing the green button.
(= press the green button – perhaps this will help to solve the problem)

Compare:

- I tried to move the table, but it was too heavy. (so I couldn't move it)
- I didn't like the way the furniture was arranged, so I tried moving the table to the other side of the room. But it still didn't look right, so I moved it back again.

Need to ... and need -ing

I need to do something = it is necessary for me to do it:

- I need to take more exercise.
- He needs to work harder if he wants to make progress.
- I don't need to come to the meeting, do I?



Something needs doing = it needs to be done:

- The batteries in the radio need changing.
(= they need to be changed)
- Do you think my jacket needs cleaning?
(= ... needs to be cleaned)
- It's a difficult problem. It needs thinking about very carefully. (= it needs to be thought about)

Help and can't help

You can say help to do or help do (with or without to):

- Everybody helped to clean up after the party. or
Everybody helped clean up ...
- Can you help me to move this table? or
Can you help me move ...

I can't help doing something = I can't stop myself doing it:

- I don't like him, but he has a lot of problems. I can't help feeling sorry for him.
- She tried to be serious, but she couldn't help laughing.
(= she couldn't stop herself laughing)
- I'm sorry I'm so nervous. I can't help it.
(= I can't help being nervous)

Make suggestions. Each time use **try** + one of the following suggestions:

phone his office

move the aerial

change the batteries

turn it the other way

take an aspirin

- 1 The radio isn't working. I wonder what's wrong with it.
- 2 I can't open the door. The key won't turn.
- 3 The TV picture isn't very good. What can I do about it?
- 4 I can't contact Fred. He's not at home. What shall I do?
- 5 I've got a terrible headache. I wish it would go.

Have you **tried changing the batteries?**

Try

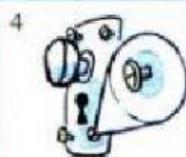
Have you tried

Why don't you

Have you

For each picture, write a sentence with **need(s)** + one of the following verbs:

clean cut empty paint tighten



1 This jacket is dirty. **It needs cleaning.**

2 The room isn't very nice.

3 The grass is very long. It

4 The screws are loose.

5 The bin is full.

Put the verb into the correct form.

- 1 a I was very tired. I tried **to keep** (keep) my eyes open, but I couldn't.
b I rang the doorbell, but there was no answer. Then I tried **to knock** (knock) on the door, but there was still no answer.
c We tried **to put** (put) the fire out but without success. We had to call the fire brigade.
d Sue needed to borrow some money. She tried **to ask** (ask) Gerry, but he was short of money too.
e I tried **to reach** (reach) the shelf, but I wasn't tall enough.
f Please leave me alone. I'm trying **to concentrate** (concentrate).
- 2 a I need a change. I need **to go** (go) away for a while.
b My grandmother isn't able to look after herself any more. She needs **to look** (look) after.
c The windows are dirty. They need **to clean** (clean).
d Your hair is getting very long. It needs **to cut** (cut).
e You don't need **to iron** (iron) that shirt. It doesn't need **to be ironed** (iron).
- 3 a They were talking very loudly. I couldn't help **to overhear** (overhear) what they said.
b Can you help me **to get** (get) the dinner ready?
c He looks so funny. Whenever I see him, I can't help **to smile** (smile).
d The fine weather helped **to make** (make) it a very enjoyable holiday.