



English

Exercise Your Present Perfect

A tense bringing past to present

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Lace up your trainers and get a workout with a challenging English tense.

Key:

"Tutor: xxx" indicates that the tutor should say the sentences aloud to the learner

Brackets [] indicate information to the tutor about how to have a successful session; this should not be spoken aloud to the learner

{Chat: xxx} indicates that the tutor should type the information to the learner in the messaging function

Vocabulary headwords:

- Continuous
- Marathon
- Repetition
- Sweat
- Treadmill

Learning objectives:

- Practice using present perfect and present perfect continuous
- Talk about exercise and exercise routines

Tutor:

Today we're going to talk about exercise. To do that, we'll need the perfect tenses, so we'll go over those as well.

Getting fit, staying fit



Tutor:

First, let's talk about your exercise and physical activity. It could be anything from running every day to walking up stairs. Even dancing.

- What exercise or physical activity do you do currently?

B1:

- Where do you do it?
- What time of day do you do it?
- Do you do it alone?
- Do you need special things for it?
- Does it cost money?

[Avoid asking questions about how often the learner does the exercise, since that is a central aspect of a later discussion.]

B2:

- What do you like about your exercise?
- How did you choose this exercise instead of something different?

- Do you choose exercise based on what your body needs? Or based on what you find interesting or fun?
- Do you ever find it difficult to make time to do it?

C1:

- What do you think are the most popular forms of exercise in your country?
- Would you say people in your country are motivated to stay healthy and fit?
- Is it very common for people in your country to belong to a gym?

How long?



Up to now, from when?

Tutor:

Okay, now, I know what exercise you do. I'd like to understand how long you have done these exercises.

These are exercises that you started in the past, and you are still doing today. Just like this woman in the photo. It looks like she has been a swimmer for many years.

Since you did your exercise in the past, we could use past tense. But you're still doing the exercise today, so it doesn't make sense to use past tense.

- When did you start doing the exercises you do today?
- Are there any other activities that you did as a child, that you also do today?

[Try to obtain 2-3 examples. If learner does not offer workable answers, consider branching out to activities or states of being beyond exercise, such as studying English, living in a certain city or home, working at a certain company or attending a certain school.]

Present perfect



1 - Action isn't over

Tutor:

For situations like this, when something started in the past but is still happening in the present, we have a special tense in English. It's a kind of tense that many other languages don't have.

It's called the present perfect.

What it does is bring the past up to the present. Let me repeat that: It brings the past up to the present.

There are three situations when we use it. Here's the first situation where we use present perfect: The action started in the past, and it isn't over. We usually use it with *for* and *since* to show how long.

Usually it's for actions that just keep going. For example, the actions (or verbs) *live* and *work*. I have worked at this company for [state amount of time]. I have lived in this city since [state year].

Another example is this father who rollerblades with his son. He probably learned it a long time ago, maybe when he was his son's age.

{chat: rollerblade}

[Note: Use of present perfect includes situations and states of being, as well as actions that are considered uninterrupted, such as *study* and *work*. For activities happening now, English speakers generally use present perfect continuous, detailed later in this session]

Sub + has/have + V3



She **has played** tennis for 20 years.

Tutor:

To make the present perfect, we use the subject, plus *has* or *have*, plus the past participle, which your English teachers might have called V3.

{chat: subject + has/have + V3}

For example:

She has played tennis for 20 years. Or, She has played tennis since she was in grade school.

I have ridden a bike since I was a child.

I have been a gym member for five years.

He has rollerbladed since he was a young boy.

So let's practice.

B1:

- [Offer learner the appropriate verbs to use, based on the exercise or childhood activities the learner has mentioned, and ask learner to make sentences about himself or herself. Possible verbs to structure sentence around include:

Exercised

Worked out

Played (basketball, volleyball, ping pong, etc.)

Bicycled

Done (yoga, aerobics, tai chi, taekwondo, kung fu, etc.)

Jogged

Rollerskated or rollerbladed

Lifted weights

Gone (jogging, running, rock climbing, dancing, swimming)

Been (a gym member, a runner, a swimmer)]

B2:

- Tell me about the exercise of some other people you know. For example, friends or family members.

- Are there things other than exercise that you do because they are healthy? How long have you done them?

C1:

- Can you make a sentence about the people in your country, or special groups, such as grandparents or schoolchildren?

Present perfect



2 – Action repeated from past to present.

Tutor:

So now I know how long you've been doing your exercise. Now I'd like to know *how often* you exercise, or how many times in a time period you did something up to now.

This is the second situation where we need to use present perfect: when an action repeats from past to present. This is called **repetition**, and it's a good word to have for both present perfect and for exercise.

{chat: repetition}

Repetition is the noun form for the verb *repeat*. When an action repeats, or happens again, from past to present, we use present perfect.

For example, drinking a bottle of water is an action. Let's say this man has drunk three bottles of water at the gym today. He has repeated the action three times.

By the way, there's another word I want to make sure you know. We drink a lot of water when we exercise because we **sweat**. Our bodies get wet, from a liquid that comes out our skin.

{chat: sweat}

A couple things about the word, *sweat*. First, it's both a noun and a verb. You sweat when you run, and you get sweat on your body. Second, you can use it as regular or irregular. That is, the past tense and past participle are *sweat* or *sweated*, your choice. Finally, you can use the word to talk about any kind of effort, not just exercise. For example, *The students are really sweating over the English exam.*

Also, we have another word for the same thing, and that's *perspire*. That word is more formal.

{chat: perspire, perspiration}

You go, girl!



She **has done** six reps.

Tutor:

Here's the other place we would use the word *repetition*.

Let's say this woman has lifted the barbell six times. And she's going to do it ten times. Those are called *reps*, which is short for *repetition*. She's going to do ten reps, and she's done six reps. Notice that's present perfect: *She has done six reps*.

{chat: reps}

Notice that when you use the present perfect for repetition, the repetitions aren't over. She's not done, and is still doing reps. If she finishes, and does 10 reps, then in English you would say, *She did ten reps*. That's simple past.

Let me give you some examples from my life. [Give personal examples, preferably involving exercise, such as, *I have exercised two times this week*, or, *I have walked my dog 15 times this month*, etc. Additional examples are below.]

So let's talk about you. Can you give examples from your own life?

B1:

- This week or this month, how many times did you exercise? Can you make present perfect sentences?

[If learner does not have exercise examples that include repetition, expand the field of discussion to include other possible repetitions. You can ask any question beginning with *How many* that includes a time period. For example:

Number of fruits eaten this week

Number of cups of coffee drunk today

Number of times gone to work this week

Number of movies watched this month

Number of books read this year

Number of emails received today]

B2:

- Besides weightlifting, what other exercises can you think of where you do reps?

Have you ever done those exercises?

- Do you like exercise where you do reps, or do you find it boring?

C1:

- Are you interested in measuring your performance, such as how many reps you do, or how far you go, or how long it takes?

- When you exercise, do you focus mostly on your heart and lungs, or on your muscles? One is called cardio, the other is called strength training.

Present perfect



3 – Action in past, time unimportant/unknown.

Tutor:

Now let's talk about the third use of present perfect.

In this situation, the action is in the past. It's over. It's done. So we would normally use the simple past.

The reason we don't use the simple past, is the time of the action isn't known, or the time of the action isn't important.

When a native speaker uses simple past, they almost always want to show when it happened. For example, *I watched a movie last night. We had a quiz last weekend. I took piano lessons in high school.* All of those examples have a specific time included.

Here, you don't use when it happened. Either it's not important, or you don't know.

Let's use an example. Do you know what a **marathon** is? A marathon is a really long running race. It's over 26 miles, and over 40 kilometers.

{chat: marathon}

Let's say I want to run a marathon. But I want to talk to someone about it first, because it's so long. Maybe it's a bad idea. So I need to find someone who ran a marathon.

So I'm talking to you, and I want to know if you ran a marathon, at any time in your life. Because if you did, then I can ask you questions about it. So I ask, *Have you ever run a marathon?* I mean, *In your life, did you ever do this?* And you can say, *Yes, I have run a marathon.*

So if you say yes, then I know you did it, so now I can ask you questions about running marathons.

Here's the key. It doesn't matter *when* you ran your marathon. The main question, and the only thing important to me, is, *Do you have the experience of doing it?* The action is in the past, but the time doesn't matter. You have the experience, so I can ask questions about that experience.

So this is the third situation where we use the present perfect. When the action is in the past, it's finished, but the time is unknown or unimportant.

Have you ever . . . ?



Tutor:

Let's practice this use a bit.

B1:

[Learner should answer, *Yes, I have*, or *No, I haven't*.]

- Have you ever surfed?
- Have you ever been in a bicycle race?
- Have you ever injured yourself while exercising?
- Have you ever exercised in rain or snow?
- Can you make sentences about yourself with the word *never*?

Other words we use with this are *yet*, *still*, and *already*. For example, if you ask me, *Do you want to go to lunch?* I can say, *Sorry, I have already eaten*, or I can say, *Sure, I haven't eaten yet*.

- What are some things you have already done today?

B2:

- Can you ask me questions, for example about whether I've done some unusual sports, or outdoor activities like windsurfing or camping?
- Can you tell me about your family members or friends, and things they've done, or things they've never done?

C1:

- Can you think of anything that you've done, that you think I haven't done? Can you ask me about those?
- What are some unusual sports in your country? Can you ask me whether I've done them?

[If time permits, conversation can be expanded to include experiences outside exercise. You can encourage the learner to make sentences about countries visited, unusual foods eaten, famous people met, animals ridden, popular movies seen, or other categories.]

Tutor:

Notice that after you say that you have an experience, for example *I have run a marathon*, if you keep talking about it, or give any more information about it, you will probably switch to simple past.

[A common error learners make when practicing this third use of present perfect is to attempt attaching a time frame to the use, for example, *I have run a marathon in high school*, or, *I have seen a great movie last week*. Since this shows a misunderstanding of the purpose of the tense, make a point to stop and correct any learner errors of this nature.]

Present perfect

- Action isn't over
- Action repeated past to present
- Action in past, time unimportant/unknown

Tutor:

So, to summarize, here are the three uses of present perfect.

[Go over bullets with learner, giving personal examples that previously arose in the conversation, or from below, with each use.

She has played tennis for twenty years.

He has drunk three bottles of water today.

He has run a marathon.]

Present perfect continuous



She **has been running** for 20 minutes.

Tutor:

Okay, one more thing. If an English speaker want to say what action is happening now, they would just use present **continuous**. Your English teachers and books might've called it present progressive—they're the same thing. For example, *I am sitting. We are talking. You are studying English.* Those are all present continuous.

Continuous is an adjective. It means something goes on without stopping or interrupting.

{chat: continuous}

Sometimes you want to show *how long* an action that is happening now went on for, how much time it went without stopping or interrupting.

For example, if you want to show how long the action of *sitting* has been going on, you would not use present continuous. You would use a different tense: present perfect continuous. That's because it started in the past, and it's going up to now. Again, we're bringing the past up to the present.

To make it, you use the subject plus *has/have*, plus *been*, plus the verb in the *ing*

form. And then you have time.
{chat: sub + has/have + been + V + ing}

Here are some examples.

She has been running for 20 minutes.

She has been using the treadmill since 11:30.

I have been chatting with my friends since dinner.

There's another new word for you. The machine the woman is on is called a **treadmill**. That's an exercise machine you see in a gym.
{chat: treadmill}

We also use the word *treadmill* for any action when we don't feel like we're moving forward. We say, *I'm on a treadmill with this project* or *Their relationship is on a treadmill*. It's stuck in the same place.

B1:

- How long have we been talking? Start with *we*.
- How long have you been learning English?

B2:

- How long have you been wearing the shirt you have on now? Start with *I*.
- Think of actions that friends or family members are doing right now. Maybe it's working, or sleeping, or studying, or watching television. Make sentences saying how long they've been doing it.

C1:

- When you exercise, do you keep track of the time? Do you say, *I have been doing this for X minutes*?
- Do you enjoy timed exercise?

Exercise your present perfect: important vocabulary

- continuous
- marathon
- repetition
- sweat
- treadmill

[For each of the five words, follow these four steps:

1. Tutor says the word
2. Learner repeats the word three times
3. Tutor (or learner) reads the definition
4. Tutor says a sentence containing the word (below)]

Jahee's training has been **continuous**, without interruption, since summer.

She is training for the longest race of her life, a 26.2-mile **marathon**.

The gym trainer asked Jahee to do twenty **repetitions** of the barbell exercise to build strength.

She worked so hard she began to **sweat** all over, and had to wipe off her body.

Later she got on the **treadmill** machine and ran five miles.

Interview at the gym



Tutor:

Okay, let's say I am a trainer at a gym, like this man here. And you come to me because you need an exercise routine.

Well, I want to know what kind of experience you have with exercise. I want to know everything. Because I need to know what you already know how to do, and what I need to teach you.

So you're going to tell me about now. But you're also going to tell me about your past.

So, use the present perfect to tell me about all your exercise and athletic experience. This includes things you did in the past, though the time may not be important, and things that you started in the past but are still doing today. You might say, for example, *I have used a treadmill a little bit, or, I have played a lot of basketball.*

Okay, I'll start. *Welcome to the Fabulous Gym and Workout Facility. We're glad you chose Fabulous for your place to exercise. In order to put you on a suitable exercise program, I'll need to know what your experience and comfort level are.*

[Structure conversation around something other than time. You could structure it by focusing on outdoor sports, then indoor; team/individual; exercise/play; equipment used; etc. Try to use the words *repetition*, *sweat*, *treadmill* and *marathon* in your questions.

[After learner has provided sufficient examples of correct present perfect, consider asking questions beginning *How long* to elicit present perfect continuous. Wrap up by stating that you can put the learner on a program that will get them to peak performance in no time.]

Thanks for working out with me today!

