

VOCABULARY · EPISODE 20

The Need to Stop Is More Important Than Your Need to Run

Key words & expressions · English + Español

Your English Toolbox

1

to burn out

agotarse · quemarse

DEF

to become physically and emotionally exhausted from sustained overwork or stress

Burnout is different from being tired — it is a deep exhaustion where motivation disappears. Common in language learners who study too intensely without breaks.

ES

Quedar física y emocionalmente agotado por el exceso de trabajo o estrés sostenido.

El burnout es diferente del cansancio — es un agotamiento profundo donde la motivación desaparece.

She burned out after six months of studying English for five hours a day.

She burned out after six months of studying English for five hours a day. -> Se quemó después de seis meses estudiando inglés cinco horas al día.

Prevent burnout by keeping your daily study short, consistent, and enjoyable.

Prevent burnout by keeping your daily study short, consistent, and enjoyable. -> Evita el agotamiento manteniendo tu estudio diario corto, constante y agradable.

2

to take a step back

dar un paso atrás · distanciarse un poco

DEF

to pause and create mental distance from a situation in order to see it more clearly

Take a step back is a metacognitive move — you stop being inside the problem and observe it from the outside. Essential for language learners who lose perspective after a difficult week.

ES

Hacer una pausa y crear distancia mental de una situación para verla con más claridad.

Es un movimiento metacognitivo — dejas de estar dentro del problema y lo observas desde afuera.

When you feel stuck, take a step back — you have probably made more progress than you think.

When you feel stuck, take a step back. -> Cuando te sientas atascado, da un paso atrás.

She took a step back from her intense study schedule and realised she needed more fun in her learning.

She took a step back from her intense study schedule. -> Se distanció un poco de su intenso calendario de estudio.

3

to pace yourself

ir a tu ritmo · no agotarte demasiado rápido

DEF

to control the speed and effort you put into something over time so you do not exhaust yourself

Pace yourself is advice from endurance sports — the runner who goes fastest at the start often finishes last. In language learning, pacing is choosing to be consistent rather than explosive.

ES

Controlar la velocidad y el esfuerzo que pones en algo a lo largo del tiempo para no agotarte.

Es un consejo del deporte de resistencia — el corredor que va más rápido al principio a menudo termina último.

Pace yourself — learning a little every day beats studying for six hours on Sunday.

Pace yourself — learning a little every day beats studying for six hours on Sunday. -> Ve a tu ritmo — aprender un poco cada día supera estudiar seis horas el domingo.

The fastest learners pace themselves well; they never study until exhaustion.

The fastest learners pace themselves well. -> Los estudiantes más rápidos saben ir a su ritmo.

4

to recharge

recargarse · recuperar energías

DEF

to rest and recover energy, especially after a period of effort or stress

Like a battery, the brain needs to recharge. Sleep, play, and nature all recharge mental energy. For language learners, recharging is not laziness — it is a required part of the process.

ES

Descansar y recuperar energía, especialmente después de un período de esfuerzo o estrés.

Como una batería, el cerebro necesita recargarse. Dormir, jugar y la naturaleza recargan la energía mental.

Take a weekend off from studying to fully recharge — you will return sharper.

Take a weekend off from studying to fully recharge. -> Tómate un fin de semana sin estudiar para recargarte por completo.

An hour of walking in nature recharges the mind better than an hour on social media.

An hour of walking in nature recharges the mind better than an hour on social media. -> Una hora de paseo por la naturaleza recarga la mente mejor que una hora en redes sociales.

5

a wake-up call

un toque de atención · una llamada de alerta

DEF

an event or experience that makes you realise you need to change something urgently

The literal wake-up call was from hotels — a phone call to wake you at a specific time. Figuratively, it is the moment you suddenly understand something important you have been ignoring.

ES

Un evento o experiencia que te hace dar cuenta de que necesitas cambiar algo urgentemente.

La llamada de despertar literal era de los hoteles. Figurativamente, es el momento en que de repente entiendes algo importante que has estado ignorando.

Getting completely lost in a simple conversation was the wake-up call she needed to start practising speaking.

Getting lost in a simple conversation was the wake-up call she needed. -> Perderse en una conversación simple fue el toque de atención que necesitaba.

Failing that job interview in English was a wake-up call — and the best thing that ever happened to my learning.

Failing that job interview in English was a wake-up call. -> Suspender esa entrevista de trabajo en inglés fue una llamada de alerta.

6

to hit a wall

chocar contra un muro · llegar a un bloqueo

DEF

to reach a point where you can no longer make progress, usually from exhaustion or a lack of new input

Hitting a wall is physical — runners feel it, language learners feel it. It is a plateau so sharp it feels like a sudden barrier. The remedy is usually rest, not more effort.

ES

Llegar a un punto donde ya no puedes avanzar, generalmente por agotamiento o falta de nueva información.

Chocar contra un muro es físico — los corredores lo sienten, los estudiantes de idiomas también.

After three months of rapid progress, she hit a wall — nothing seemed to improve for weeks.

After three months of rapid progress, she hit a wall. -> Después de tres meses de rápido progreso, chocó contra un muro.

When you hit a wall in learning, try switching from active study to passive listening for a few days.

When you hit a wall in learning, try switching from active study to passive listening. -> Cuando chocas contra un muro en el aprendizaje, intenta pasar del estudio activo a la escucha pasiva.

7 to run on empty

funcionar sin energía · ir al límite sin reservas

DEF

to continue working or functioning even though you have no energy, motivation, or resources left

Run on empty is a powerful metaphor from cars running out of fuel. It describes the dangerous state of pushing yourself beyond your limits — exactly what leads to burnout. Key for anyone who studies English intensively without rest.

ES

Seguir trabajando o funcionando aunque no te quede energía, motivación ni recursos.

Metáfora poderosa de los coches sin combustible — describe el peligroso estado de empujarse más allá de los límites.

If you study English for four hours without a break, you'll be running on empty by the third hour.

If you study English for four hours without a break, you'll be running on empty by the third hour. -> Si estudias inglés cuatro horas sin descanso, estarás funcionando sin energía a partir de la tercera hora.

She kept recording podcast episodes even when she was running on empty — and the quality showed it.

She kept recording podcast episodes even when she was running on empty — and the quality showed it. -> Siguió grabando episodios del podcast incluso cuando iba al límite sin reservas — y la calidad lo demostraba.

8 to take stock

hacer balance · evaluar la situación con calma

DEF

to pause and carefully assess your situation, progress, or resources before deciding what to do next

Take stock comes from stocktaking in a shop — counting what you have before restocking. In life and in English learning, it means stopping to honestly evaluate where you are. Needed before every new learning plan.

ES

Hacer una pausa y evaluar cuidadosamente tu situación, progreso o recursos antes de decidir qué hacer.

Viene del inventario en tiendas — contar lo que tienes antes de reponer. En el aprendizaje, significa detenerse para evaluar honestamente dónde estás.

Before starting a new English course, take stock of what you already know and what still confuses you.

Before starting a new English course, take stock of what you already know and what still confuses you. -> Antes de empezar un nuevo curso de inglés, haz balance de lo que ya sabes y lo que todavía te confunde.

Sometimes the most useful thing you can do is take stock and realise you've made more progress than you thought.

Sometimes the most useful thing you can do is take stock and realise you've made more progress than you thought. -> A veces lo más útil que puedes hacer es evaluar la situación con calma y darte cuenta de que has progresado más de lo que creías.

9

to wind down

ir disminuyendo el ritmo · relajarse progresivamente

DEF

to gradually relax or reduce activity, especially after a period of intense work or stress

Wind down is the opposite of powering up — it's the process of letting tension and effort gradually decrease. Critical for learning: the brain consolidates information during rest, so winding down after study is actually part of learning.

ES

Relajarse gradualmente o reducir la actividad, especialmente después de un período de trabajo intenso o estrés.

Lo opuesto de ponerse en marcha — el proceso de dejar que la tensión y el esfuerzo disminuyan gradualmente.

After an intense study session, wind down with something gentle — a walk, some music, or a calm podcast.

After an intense study session, wind down with something gentle — a walk, some music, or a calm podcast. -> Después de una sesión de estudio intensa, relájate progresivamente con algo suave — un paseo, un poco de música o un podcast tranquilo.

Martin winds down each evening by speaking ten English sentences quietly to himself before bed.

Martin winds down each evening by speaking ten English sentences quietly to himself before bed. -> Martin va disminuyendo el ritmo cada noche pronunciando en voz baja diez frases en inglés para sí mismo antes de dormir.

10

to crash

desplomarse · hundirse de agotamiento

DEF

to suddenly and completely lose energy, motivation, or ability to continue functioning — to collapse physically or mentally

Crash (used metaphorically) is what happens after you've been running on empty for too long. It's sudden and complete, unlike gradually winding down. Knowing the warning signs before you crash is key to sustainable learning.

ES

Perder de repente y completamente la energía, la motivación o la capacidad de seguir funcionando — desmoronarse física o mentalmente.

Lo que pasa después de funcionar sin energía demasiado tiempo — repentino y total, no gradual.

After three weeks of daily four-hour study sessions, she completely crashed and couldn't open her textbook for a month.

After three weeks of daily four-hour study sessions, she completely crashed and couldn't open her textbook for a month. -> Después de tres semanas de sesiones diarias de cuatro horas, se desplomó completamente y no pudo abrir su libro de texto durante un mes.

If you push too hard without rest, your motivation will crash — and it's much harder to recover than to prevent.

If you push too hard without rest, your motivation will crash — and it's much harder to recover than to prevent. -> Si te fuerzas demasiado sin descanso, tu motivación se hundirá — y es mucho más difícil recuperarse que prevenirlo.