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# A glimmer of hope

## Episode description

In this bonus episode, Andrew shares a few stories about what he got up to last week. Plus, in the vocabulary lesson he teaches you about the expression **a grind**.

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Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

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**Andrew:** Welcome to the start of another new week, you're listening to bonus episode number 23 of the Culips English Podcast. I'm Andrew and I'll be your host, and your study buddy for today. Thanks for pressing play and joining me for this English practice session. We begin each new week here at Culips with a bonus episode, where I share some stories from my life, catch you up about what's going on behind the scenes at Culips, and teach you a helpful English expression that I recommend adding to your vocabulary. There's a 100% free transcript for this episode that you can get by visiting our website [Culips.com](http://Culips.com) or by clicking the link in the description for this episode. I hope you'll find the transcript helpful for getting the most out of this episode, and definitely suggest that you check it out. We also have hundreds of podcast episodes that are designed to help you build your English skills. So, if you're interested in taking your English to the next level and are ready to take a big step towards improving your English fluency, then you should check out some of the free study guide samples that you can find on our website to see if Culips membership is a good option for you.

I hope last week treated you well and that you're doing OK. If you listened to the last bonus episode, you'll know that I'm participating in the Sober October challenge where I have to abstain from drinking, burn 500 calories through exercising, and do 100 pushups every day, during the month of October. Well, I'm right around the halfway point right now, and the challenge is going okay, it's going fine, I guess. As I predicted last time, the push ups and the abstinence are easy and haven't really been causing me any problems at all.

By the way, that word isn't too common. Have you heard it before? Abstinence, it might be unfamiliar to some of you. Abstinence means to stop doing something that causes you pleasure. So, to stop doing something that you enjoy, really, we call this abstinence. And you know what to be honest with you, now that I'm saying the word, I think a lot of times we use this word abstinence to talk about consciously choosing to not have sex. That's what it means most of the time. But it's not just about that, it can also be used to talk about consciously avoiding doing anything that gives us pleasure, doesn't have to only be sex. So, it could be avoiding drinking, like what I'm doing during this month, or it could be about going on a diet and avoiding eating some foods that are unhealthy for you. Maybe stopping doing drugs, anything like that. You could even abstain from gambling or abstain from playing video games, any kind of destructive behavior or addictive behavior or something that you think is just not really good for you. If you stop doing that, that is abstaining, or the noun form, we can say abstinence.

Anyway, the drinking abstinence and the push ups have been easy. But now that I'm halfway into the challenge, the daily exercise has become a grind. I've still been able to meet my goal every day, but instead of it being fun, it feels more like an annoying chore. But I'm almost there. There's light at the end of the tunnel, right? We're already halfway through October and just another couple of weeks and I can give my poor legs a rest and I won't have to go running every day.

In other news, the temperature has dipped here in Seoul, especially at night and in the early morning. I actually had a few bad sleeps last week because my wife and I were lazy about taking out our winter comforter and blankets, and winter clothes as well, out of storage. So, we had to spend a couple of chilly nights last week still using our very thin summer blanket, even though the weather is brisk and chilly now. So, over the weekend, we finally got around to performing the twice-yearly ritual of packing up our summer clothes and our summer bedding and unpacking all of our winter clothes and winter bedding. Out of all of the household chores, this has to be the one that I really hate doing. I think it's just because it takes a long time. There are so many steps. First, you have to wash all the summer clothes and summer blankets. And then you have to fold them up. And the next we put the clothes and the blankets and bedding into these special plastic bags that you can make airtight by sucking out all of the air with the vacuum cleaner. Maybe you've seen these bags before. By doing this, the bags become much, much smaller so they're easier to store. And then, we have to do the whole process in reverse with all of the winter clothes and blankets and bedding.

Now we store all of our offseason clothes and bedding under our bed. Our bed is pretty useful because there's a bunch of built-in storage in the bottom part of the bed. This is an absolute must for us because we live in a small apartment, and we don't have too much storage space in the apartment itself. The only thing about under the bed storage is that you have to lift up the mattress to be able to access it, and that in itself is a chore. Because our mattress is really heavy. It's a queen-size bed, we have a big thick, plush mattress, and it must weigh easily 30 or 40 kilograms in itself, if I had to guess. But working together, my wife and I came up with this great system where I lift up the mattress, and then I rest it on my back, kind of like I'm giving the mattress a piggyback ride. It's just much easier to rest the weight of the mattress on my back and use my legs to support the weight, than it is to lift with my arms. I don't have too much power in my arms. But thankfully, I do have more power in my legs. And while I'm resting the mattress on my back, my wife sneaks in to open the storage compartments and put the summer stuff in and take out the winter stuff. So, that was our strategy for doing this chore and we got this big housekeeping chore out of the way over the weekend. And although it was a little

annoying to have to do, I'm really glad and happy that it's done and taken care of. And we don't have to worry about doing it again until next year in the spring.

And last week on Saturday, my wife, my mother-in-law, and I, all three of us, we went to my wife's grandparents' house for dinner. Her grandparents on her mother's side, of course. It was only my second time visiting their house, but we were able to have a nice visit together. If you're a regular Culips listener, then you probably heard when Kassy and I talked about our grandparents back in Simplified Speech episode 128. If you haven't heard that episode before, I do recommend it, I think it's a great one. But if you've heard it already, I apologize if I've told you this information before. But by the time I was born, three out of my four grandparents had already passed away. And my Nana, my dad's mom, she passed away when I was in my early teens. So, I wasn't really able to have a really close relationship with my grandparents at all.

But I think it's great that my wife's grandparents are still with us. Like my wife is 37 years old, and she still has her grandparents. So, that is absolutely amazing, I think. They're both in their 90s, which is also incredible, and they were both happy to see us. And Grandma prepared an absolutely delicious meal for us. We had beef short ribs, along with rice and various Korean side dishes. And I'm not joking when I say it was one of the tastiest meals I've had in a very long time, and I've been joking with my wife that we should go back to their house so that we can learn the recipe because it was a fantastic meal. And there's nothing like a home cooked meal made with love, right? It's the best. So, that was delicious. That was amazing. And then after the meal, we just hung out with them for a little while. And we actually watched a TV documentary about cats and that was funny to hear grandma's comments about the cats as we watched them on TV. After the documentary, we said goodbye and then we made our way home.

Like many Canadians, I love ice hockey. In fact, I think it's my favorite sport. And this week, the 2022-2023 professional ice hockey season officially started up. My favorite team is the Vancouver Canucks and being a Canucks fan is not easy. They have never won the Stanley Cup. And the Stanley Cup is the name of the trophy that the championship team wins. We came very close to winning the Stanley Cup in 1994, when I was only 10 years old, and also in 2011. But we ended up losing the championship game both times. Hockey fans in Vancouver are so passionate that after losing those two championship games, riots broke out in Vancouver. It's actually quite embarrassing, I think, because it was really stupid, and it caused a lot of needless damage and destruction in Vancouver.

But anyways, that's not important. My point here is that I've been a fan of this hockey team my whole life, but I've never got to experience what it feels like for them to be a winner.

Well, with the start of each new hockey season, there's always a glimmer of hope that this year will be our year, a glimmer of hope that means like a small little piece of hope. There's a slight chance that we will be champions this year, you never know, right? There are 32 teams in the NHL, NHL means National Hockey League. 25 of the teams are in the USA and seven of the teams are in Canada. And each team plays 82 games during a season, which lasts from October until April. And then at the end of the season in April, the top 16 teams get to compete in a four-round playoff to determine who is the champion. Well, the Canucks played their first game of the season last week, and they got off to a great start, they scored three goals in the first period alone. But then, they threw it all away, they threw their lead away, and they let in five straight goals over the next two periods. And they ended up losing the game, the first game of the season 5-3. So, not a great start. Not at all. But I don't want to write the team off just yet. It's only the start of the season after all. So, I'm happy that hockey is back and I'm looking forward to watching games on the weekends when I can. So, go Canucks go!

I've got a quick announcement for all Culips Members. We're having our monthly live stream coming up in just a couple of weeks on Tuesday, November 1st at 7:30pm Korean Standard Time. And I hope many of you can join me for it. Just like always, we'll spend some time together hanging out and practicing English. We'll also open the stream to any members who would like to call in and talk with me directly, which always makes my day and is so fun. To participate in the live stream, you just have to log into your Culips account, and follow the link from the dashboard.

And now it's time for this week's vocabulary lesson. I wrap up each bonus episode with a vocabulary lesson where I teach you a useful English expression that I think is good for English learners to know. And that will make your English sound more natural and also help you with understanding the English that you hear when you're talking with native speakers or when watching movies or listening to podcasts even. Today, I'm going to teach you about the expression a grind. A grind, a grind. You may be familiar with the verb to grind. To grind, which means to make something into a powder using a machine. Like you could grind coffee beans into a powder with a coffee grinder and then brew a cup of coffee with that coffee powder, right? That is to grind. It can also mean to make something smooth by rubbing it against a hard surface. So, for example, you can grind a knife against a special stone to make the knife blade sharp and smooth. But what about the word grind as a noun? What is a grind? Well, it has a completely different meaning. If something is a grind, then it means that it's difficult, or that it takes a long time to do, or that it's boring to do. Earlier in the episode, I said that doing the Sober October challenge has become a grind. Did you hear when I said that? If not, don't worry, because I'm going to play that part

of the episode for you again right now. So, let's take a listen.

Now that I'm halfway into the challenge, the daily exercise has become a grind. Now that I'm halfway into the challenge, the daily exercise has become a grind.

So, when I said that the daily exercise part of Sober October has become a grind, I meant that it has become difficult, annoying, and tedious to do. At the start of October, it was OK, it was fine. It was actually a little bit fun. But now that we're halfway through the month, I'm starting to get tired and doing the daily exercise portion of the challenge is becoming difficult to do. So, in other words, it's becoming a grind. Like always, I've prepared some example sentences that will help us to learn how to use this expression in a natural way. So, let's take a listen to those three example sentences now. Here we go.

## **Example sentence number one**

I love my job, but the three-hour commute to the office and back each day is a grind. I love my job, but the three-hour commute to the office and back each day is a grind. Let's break that example sentence down.

In that sentence, the speaker said that he loves his job. Something that he doesn't like though, is his daily commute. He has to travel three hours round trip from his home to his office. So, I guess one hour and a half to go to the office, and another hour and a half to come back home. He says that part of his day is a grind. It's difficult. It's tedious. It's no fun. And it's just something that he doesn't enjoy.

## **Example sentence number two**

This week's been a grind. I can't wait for the weekend so I can relax and catch up on some sleep. This week has been a grind. I can't wait for the weekend so I can relax and catch up on some sleep. Let's break this example sentence down.

In that example, the speaker says that this week has been a grind. That means that this week has been very difficult for him, maybe he has been stressed, or busy, or just had a lot of work to do. So, because this week has been a grind, he's looking forward to the weekend when he can relax. And in fact, guys, this is a great expression to use when you're talking about a busy or difficult week, or even day. You could say, "Oh, today was a

grind. I'm so tired." And that just means that you worked really hard and had a busy difficult day.

### **Example sentence number three**

Building my own home was a stressful grind, but I'm 100% happy with the results. Building my own home was the stressful grind, but I'm 100% happy with the results.

Let's break down today's final example sentence. In this example, the speaker said that building his own home was a stressful grind. OK, so now it's not just a grind, it's a stressful grind. The speaker intensified the meaning of grind by using the adjective stressful in coordination with it. So, it was a stressful grind. You could do this, you could say something is a stressful grind, a difficult grind, a tough grind. Anything like that is totally fine. So, as you can imagine a stressful grind means a very difficult time, a very difficult experience. And building your own home, I can imagine, I've never actually done it, but I can imagine that it's a very difficult thing to do and that it's very stressful. So, we could describe building your own home as a stressful grind. But thankfully, the speaker in that example sentence is very happy and satisfied with the finished project. So, that stressful grind was 100% worth it.

Congratulations on making it to the end of another episode and thank you for studying English with me today. I hope that you learned something new, and I hope that you can use today's English practice session as motivation for the rest of the week. Remember that the key to success with English is making it a part of your lifestyle. It's not a chore, or a task that you do each day. It's something that you make a part of your life. And the best way to do that is to spend time with English, listening, or watching, or reading content that you'd like that is in English. If you make that a part of your lifestyle, you'll learn natural English in a fun and time efficient way. And, of course, if you need help with that, that's exactly what we do here at Culips. All of our podcast episodes are designed to help you create an English-immersion environment for your English lifestyle. And we've got hundreds and hundreds of episodes that you can use to build your English fluency on our website, Culips.com. Have a great week this week. Happy English learning, and I'll talk to you again soon, goodbye.

## Episode credits

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