

Verb + *-ing* or *to* . . . (2) (*try/need/help*)

A

Try to do and try doing

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 a test." For example:

- These cookies 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 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 use **try -ing**:

- **A:** The photocopier doesn't seem to be working.
- **B:** Try **pressing the green button**. (= press the green button – maybe 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.

B

Need to do, need to be done, need doing

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

- I **need to get** more exercise.
- He **needs to work** harder if he wants to make progress.

Something needs to be done = someone needs to do something:

- The batteries in the radio **need to be changed**.
- Do you think my jacket **needs to be washed**?

Sometimes we use **need doing** instead of **need to be done**.

- The batteries in the radio **need changing**.
- The tire **needs changing**. (*or* The tire **needs to be changed**.)

C

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** . . .

There is also an expression: **can't/couldn't help doing something**. I **can't help doing it** = I can't stop myself from 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 from laughing)
- I'm sorry I'm so nervous. I **can't help it**. (= I can't help being nervous)

Exercises

54.1 Make suggestions. Write sentences using *try* + one of the following suggestions:
 call him at work change the batteries take an aspirin turn it the other way

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. I have a terrible headache. I wish I could get rid of it.
4. I can't reach Fred. He's not at home. What should I do?

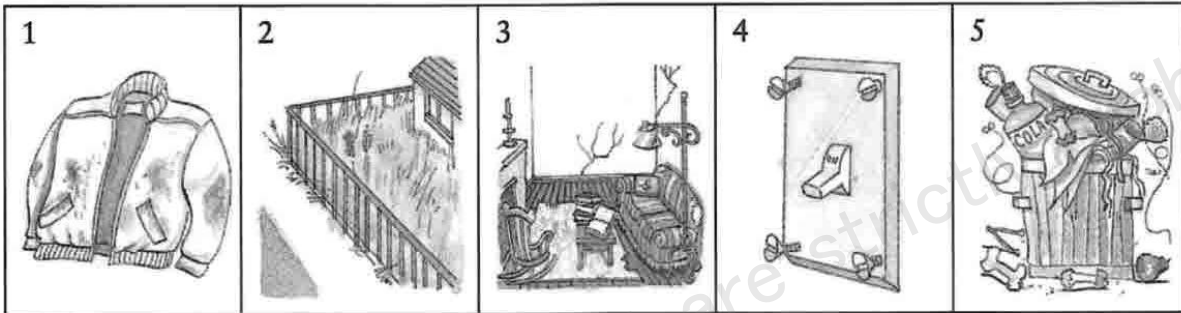
Have you tried changing the batteries?

Try _____ .

Have you _____ ?

Why don't you _____ ?

54.2 For each picture write a sentence with *need(s)* + one of the following verbs:
 cut empty wash redecorate tighten



1. This jacket is dirty. *It needs to be washed.* OR *It needs washing.*
2. The grass is very long. It _____ .
3. This room doesn't look very nice. _____
4. The screws are loose. _____
5. The garbage can is full. _____

54.3 Put the verbs 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 _____ (knock) on the door, but there was still no answer.
 c) We tried _____ (put) the fire out, but we were unsuccessful. We had to call the fire department.
 d) Sue needed to borrow some money. She tried _____ (ask) Jerry, but he was short of money, too.
 e) I tried _____ (reach) the shelf, but I wasn't tall enough.
 f) Please leave me alone. I'm trying _____ (concentrate).
2. a) I need a change. I need _____ (go) away for a while.
 b) She isn't able to take care of herself. She needs _____ (take) care of.
 c) The windows are dirty. They need _____ (wash).
 d) You don't need _____ (iron) that shirt. It doesn't need _____ (iron).
3. a) They were talking very loudly. I couldn't help _____ (overhear) them.
 b) Can you help me _____ (get) dinner ready?
 c) He looks so funny. Whenever I see him, I can't help _____ (laugh).
 d) The nice weather helped _____ (make) it a very pleasant vacation.