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# English Idioms: From to Throw Cold Water on to Beat the Air/Beat the Wind

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## To Throw Cold Water On

- To discourage, to remove hope, and deter Steve wanted to expand the business into China, but his boss threw cold water on the idea, and told him to focus on the domestic business. Cutting my year-end bonus poured cold water on my loyalty to the company. Hearing about the outbreak of cholera threw cold water on our plans to visit Bolivia.
- This term, with its image of putting out a fire with water, at one time meant “defame” or “slander” : the modern meaning dates from about 1800.

## To Bear the Brunt Of

- Put up with the worst of some bad circumstance it was the secretary who had to bear the brunt of the doctor’s anger
- This idiom uses brunt in the sense of “the main force of an enemy’s attack,” which was sustained by the front lines of the defenders. [Second half of 1700s]

## Tied to Apron-Strings Of

- Wholly dependent on or controlled by a woman, especially one’s mother or wife. At 25, he was still too tied to her apron strings to get an apartment of his own.
- This expression, dating from the early 1800s, probably alluded to apron-string tenure, a 17th century law that allowed a husband to control his wife’s and her family’s property during her lifetime.

## To Move Heaven and Earth

Exert the utmost effort I’d move heaven and earth to get an apartment here. This hyperbolic expression was first recorded in 1792.

## To Blow One’S Own Trumpet/Blow One’S Trumpet

Vast in a boastful, self-promoting manner, brag about oneself within two minutes of meeting someone new, Bill was blowing his own horn. [Late 1500s]

## **To Rest on One'S Laurels**

- Rely on one's past achievements, especially as a way of avoiding the work needed to advance one's status. Now that Julian's in his eighties, he's decided to rest on his laurels and let some of the younger agents do the work.
- This term alludes to the crown of laurels awarded in ancient times for a spectacular achievement. [Late 1800s] .

## **The Ruling Passion**

- An interest or concern that occupies a large part of someone's time and effort
- Tower of strength
- Someone who can be relied on to provide support and comfort.

## **The Tip of the Iceberg**

The tip of the iceberg is the part of a problem that can be seen, with far more serious problems lying underneath

## **Turn Someone On**

To create feeling of excitement, interest, lust, pleasure etc

## **Turn Someone Off**

To create feelings of dislike, repulsion, disgust etc

## **Turncoat**

- One who goes to work/fight/play for the opposing side, traitor that turncoat! He went to work for the competition - Sears.
- Ahmed is Turncoat and we should not relied upon him

## **To Bring Grist to the Mill**

- Something that you can use to your advantage is grist for the mill.

## **To Draw the Long Bow**

If someone draws a long bow, they lie or exaggerate.

## **To Send a Person to Coventry**

To ostracize, or systematically ignore someone

## **The Acid Tests**

An acid test is something that proves whether something is good, effective, etc, or not.

## **Throw Someone for a Loop/Throw for a Loop**

- Knock down or over with a feather; knock sideways, overcome with surprise or astonishment the news of his death knocked me for a loop. Being fired without any warning threw me for a loop. Jane was knocked sideways when she found out she won.
- The first two of these hyperbolic colloquial usages, dating from the first half of the 1900s, allude to the comic-strip image of a person pushed hard enough to roll over in the shape of a loop.
- The third hyperbolic term, often put as You could have knocked me down with a feather, intimating that something so light as a feather could knock one down, dates from the early 1800s; the fourth was first recorded in 1925.

## Take Someone to the Cleaners

- Take or cheat one out of all of one's money or possessions her divorce lawyer took him to the cleaners.
- That broker has taken a number of clients to the cleaners. [Slang; early 1900s]
- Drub beat up He didn't just push you — he took you to the cleaners. [Slang; early 1900s].

## Taken Over

- Assume control, management, or possession of the pilot told his co-pilot to take over the controls.
- there's a secret bid to take over our company. [Late 1800s]

## To Fall Back on Something/Fall Back Upon

- Rely on, have recourse to I fall back on old friends in time of need.
- When he lost his job, he had to fall back upon his savings

## To Fall Through

- Fail, miscarry the proposed amendment fell through.
- I hope our plans won't fall through. [Late 1700s]

## Turn to Account

- Use for one's benefit He turned the delay to good account, using the time to finish correspondence.
- This idiom, first recorded in 1878, uses account in the sense of "a reckoning."

## To Beat the Air/Beat the Wind

- Continue to make futile attempts, fight to no purpose the candidates for office were so much alike that we thought our vote amounted to beating the air.

- These phrases call up a vivid image of someone flailing away at nothing. [Late 1300s]

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