

Summary

Sometimes a situation or problem is just going to get worse – it might easily go downhill – which is why there is a perfect English expression to describe this and Rob and Feifei are about to explain it. Just watch The English We Speak!

Transcript

Feifei

Hello and welcome to The English We Speak with me, Feifei...

Rob

...and me, Rob.

Feifei

We may sound a little different – that's because we are not able to record in our normal studios during the coronavirus pandemic. Now, Rob, why are you wearing those funny rubber shoes today?

Rob

It's in preparation for today's phrase, Feifei!

Feifei

What? Our English expression today has nothing to do with wearing shoes!

Rob

Ah, but these are special rubber shoes to stop me sliding down any slippery slopes – that is what we're talking about, isn't it?

Feifei

Hmm, well sort of but it's not really about slipping down a slope – only metaphorically.

Rob

Right, so it has got something to do with easily descending downhill into something?

Feifei

Yep. We describe a situation that is getting worse and will end in disaster unless it is stopped, as a slippery slope. Listen to these examples...

Examples

Having a glass of wine with your dinner is a slippery slope – you'll end up finishing the whole bottle by the end of the evening.

Juan was on a slippery slope to getting the sack when he started missing important meetings with clients.

He's on a slippery slope to failure if he keeps missing the deadlines for his assignments.

Feifei

This is The English We Speak from BBC Learning English and we're talking about the expression 'a slippery slope', which describes a situation that is only going to get worse. It's basically a situation or problem that is going downhill!

Rob

OK, so I won't be needing these slip-resistant shoes, then. Hmm, but they are very comfortable – I might keep wearing them.

Feifei

Oh no, Rob – it'll be a slippery slope.

Rob

Why's that?

Feifei

Well, if you keep wearing them without socks...

Rob

...everyone will laugh at me?

Feifei

No – your feet will smell and then nobody will want to sit next to you!

Rob

Charming! Well it's a good job I'm self-isolating! Bye, Feifei.

Feifei

Bye, Rob.

Rob

Bye, Feifei.