

Summary

What has presenting this programme got to do with Feifei's hands? When Neil says she's 'an old hand' at doing it, is he insulting her - or is he paying her a compliment? Listen and find out if she gets to present the programme standing on her head!

Transcript

Feifei

Hello and welcome to The English We Speak. I'm Feifei.

Neil

And I'm Neil. Hey Feifei, shouldn't we be celebrating?

Feifei

Why?

Neil

Haven't we presented a hundred of these The English We Speak programmes together?

Feifei

A hundred? Oh no, we've done way more than that. I could present these programmes standing on my head!

Neil

That I would love to see!

Feifei

Not literally. I mean do it easily - without difficulty.

Neil

I know that Feifei – but you probably could present this programme standing on your head because you're an old hand at this.

Feifei

Excuse me? I may have presented this programme for many years but I do NOT have old hands. How rude!

Neil

Don't worry, I wasn't referring to your hands – they look lovely. If you are an old hand at doing something, it means you are very skilled and experienced. It was a compliment!

Feifei

Oh right. Thanks. Let's hear some examples of this phrase in action...

Examples

Let's get Mike in to solve our IT problem, shall we? He's an old hand at fixing computers.

Miguel is an old hand at map reading, so let's make him the leader on our mountain trek.

I can see you're an old hand at project management; it would have taken me days to create a spreadsheet like that!

Feifei

This is The English We Speak from BBC Learning English and we're learning about the phrase 'an old hand', which describes someone who is skilled and experienced at doing something.

Neil

It's a handy phrase, isn't it! But come on Feifei, as you are such 'an old hand', why not have a go at really presenting standing on your head?

Feifei

OK Neil, as you're paying me a compliment. Here goes... give a hand...

Feifei

Ouch!

Neil

Are you ok? I think you should stick to doing what you are most skilled and experienced at.

Feifei

You mean not listening to your silly suggestions.

Neil

I'm an old hand at making silly suggestions, Feifei!

Feifei

Hmmm, let's forget our celebration shall we! Bye!

Neil

Bye.