

Phrasal verbs with “wear” (*wear/wore/worn*)

The verb “**wear**” in English is used to describe the use of clothes. For example:

- What are you **wearing** tonight?
- I think I’ll **wear** my blue suit.
- At work I usually **wear** a polo shirt.
- At weekends I like to **wear** t-shirt and shorts, and my wife usually **wears** the same.

There are 7 phrasal verbs with “wear”, and they relate to “usage” and “condition”.

1. wear away
2. wear down
3. wear in
4. wear off
5. wear out
6. wear thin
7. wear through

Most of these phrasal verbs can be “split” by a pronoun or a noun.

- 1) **to wear away**: remove or erode gradually from a surface (usually used in the passive voice)
 - The lawn has been **worn away** by people walking across it every day.
 - I can’t read the tyre size, it’s been **worn away**.
 - The cliffs have been **worn away** by wind and rain over centuries.
- 2) **to wear** (something/somebody) **down**: make weaker or thinner
 - His will-power and persistence is **wearing down** the opposition.
 - Her kids really **wear me down**!
 - My brake pads are **wearing down**. I need to replace them.
- 3) **to wear** (something) **in**: use something until it is comfortable (usually clothes)
 - It took a few weeks to **wear in** the stiff leather of his new shoes.
 - His shirt collar was so stiff that it took many weeks to **wear it in**.
 - A: Why are you walking like that? B: I’m **wearing in** my new boots.
- 4) **to wear off** (1): disappear after a period of time (usually used in the passive voice)
 - We need to repaint the garden bench, the paint has **worn off**.
 - The colour of his toy cars has **worn off** as they are very old.
 - I loved my car when I bought it, but now the novelty has **worn off**.
- 5) **to wear off** (2): stop having an effect (cannot be split)
 - The effects of the medicine will **wear off** after about 2 hours.
 - When I got home, the anaesthetic **wore off** and my tooth started hurting.
 - The analgesic started to **wear off** and the headache returned.
- 6) **to wear** (something) **out**: use something until it is not useable or it stops working
 - If you wear the same shoes every day, you’ll **wear them out**.
 - She watched the same film so many times that she **wore** the tape **out**.
 - The doctor says my knees are **worn out** from too much sport when I was young.

7) **to wear (somebody) out**: make somebody very tired

- Her three kids are so energetic - they **wore** me **out** last night.
- I'm **worn out**! I'm going to bed!
- *Student to Personal Trainer*: Can we stop? You're **wearing** me **out**!

8) **to wear thin**: reduce a human characteristic

- My patience is **wearing thin**.
- His resolve is starting to **wear thin**.
- Her determination to continue has **worn** a little **thin**.

8) **to wear through**: create a hole due to prolonged use or friction

- The constant rubbing of the rope caused it to **wear through** and snap.
- Joe kneels a lot in his job and he has **worn** his jeans **through** at the knees.
- If you don't cut your fingernails, you'll **wear through** your gloves.

Exercise. Choose an appropriate phrasal verb to complete the following sentences. Sometimes there is more than one option.

1. Being a parent is hard! The baby really _____ me _____.
2. After months of fighting, the army was _____ _____.
3. I've just bought a pair of leather boots. It's going to take weeks to _____ them _____.
4. I need to replace the tyres on my car as they're _____ _____.
5. Please stop shouting – you're _____ my patience extremely _____.
6. I use my keyboard so frequently that most of the letters have _____ _____.
7. This deodorant is useless! It always _____ _____ after about an hour!
8. Please stop walking across the grass – you're _____ it _____.
9. My son has worn the same pair of jeans every day for years – they are _____ _____.
10. My boss criticizes me every day – it's really _____ me _____.
11. Nail polish usually _____ _____ after a few days.
12. The doctor says that my hips are _____ _____. I need two new hips!