

LIST OF IDIOMS WITH THE VERB KEEP

idiom	meaning	example
keep a stiff upper lip	be brave and not reveal your emotions during difficult times	Stewart kept a stiff upper lip even though he didn't get picked for the team.
keep an eye on	watch closely	I've got to keep an eye on my brother at school. I think he is being bullied.
keep an eye out for someone/something	watch carefully for something to appear	My earring fell out in the bathroom, keep an eye out for it please.
keep at arm's length	avoid being too close or friendly with someone/something	There is something not quite right about Jeffrey, I'm going to keep him at arm's length.
keep at bay	keep at a distance	The ewe kept the wolf at bay whilst her lambs escaped.
keep in the dark	unaware, uninformed	Why are they keeping me in the dark? I want to know how serious the accident was.
keep it zipped	keep your mouth closed, remain silent	Stop answering back, keep it zipped or you'll be grounded for a month.
keep mum	remain silent, don't tell the secret	United are keeping mum about the possible transfer of Wilson
keep one's chin up	try and stay positive during a difficult time	Tell Harry to keep his chin up, things can only get better.
keep one's ear to the ground	listen for information or gossip	I'm not sure when the tickets go on sale, I'll keep my ear to the ground.
keep one's eye on the ball	stay focused	We need to keep our eye on the ball, our final exams start in a month.
keep one's eyes peeled	watch carefully, be alert/vigilant	My earring fell out somewhere in the kitchen. Keep your eyes peeled.
keep one's feet on the ground	remain calm and sensible after becoming successful	My multimillionaire dad still sees his school friends and drinks cheap wine. He keeps his feet on the ground.
keep one's fingers crossed	hope for good luck/a good outcome	Good luck with your driving test tomorrow. I've got my fingers crossed for you.
keep one's head above water	survive in difficult times, especially with money	The first part of the year was difficult, now we're keeping our heads above water.
keep one's nose clean	stay out of trouble, behave	Lewis has kept his nose clean since becoming a father.
keep one's nose to the grindstone	continuously work hard	You've kept your nose to the grindstone all year. You deserve a juicy bonus.
keep one's shirt on	stay calm/patient, don't get angry	Tell Dwayne to keep his shirt on, it's only a game.
keep someone in the loop	inform someone of the latest news/plans/details etc.	As long as I'm kept in the loop, I don't mind how you run the project.
keep someone on their toes	be alert, focused, concentrate or ready for anything to happen	The CEO is coming on Tuesday, you all need to be on your toes.
keep someone posted	regularly give someone the most recent news	Maria has gone into labour, we'll keep you posted.

idiom	meaning	example
keep something under one's hat	keep the secret	Trish is pregnant, keep it under your hat for now until she puts it on Facebook.
keep something under wraps	keep something a secret	My sister is pregnant. She's keeping it under wraps for a few more weeks.
keep tabs on	monitor or watch carefully	I'll keep tabs on my bank balance this month, I don't want to spend too much.
keep the ball rolling	maintain the momentum/progress	Ernie founded the charity before he passed. It's up to us to keep the ball rolling.
keep the wolves at bay	fight to stop some sort of trouble reaching you	I managed to pay the bailiffs £200, that should keep the wolves at bay for a bit longer.
keep your hair on	tell someone not to get angry or upset	Keep your hair on, we still have 50 minutes before the concert starts.
keep your trap shut	don't say anything, keep the secret	My brother broke the TV. He told me to keep my trap shut or he would kill me.

