

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. |

