

## Re: "To run is good exercise"?!

---

*Source:* <http://sci.tech--archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2005-04/msg01106.html>

---

- *From:* Tom Breton <[tehom@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:tehom@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* 19 Apr 2005 20:03:24 -0400
- 

[martinphipps2@xxxxxxxxxx](mailto:martinphipps2@xxxxxxxxxx) writes:

> It seems that non-native speakers of English in Taiwan do not realize  
> that "To run is good exercise" is not a good English sentence. A  
> colleague today even said it was grammatically correct. I don't think  
> it is: I would never start a sentence with an infinitive. The one  
> counterexample I can think of would be the song lyric "To know him is  
> to love him" except here the sentence is in the form verb phrase = verb  
> phrase and not the awkward verb phrase = noun phrase as in the previous  
> example.

To believe this is folly. To use an infinitive phrase as a subject is not uncommon. To do so allows the speaker to place the focus on items that otherwise would be difficult to put focus on.

Using a gerundive phrase is equally good in all those examples. For me to give you examples of other types of sentential subjects isn't actually all that hard. Whether they make sense to you is up to you. That you have read to the end of this paragraph is a credit to you.

> The basic problem is that students don't seem to be taught the  
> difference between a gerund and an infinitive. At best they assume  
> that "I enjoy swimming" is idiomatic and "I enjoy to swim" is still  
> grammatically correct. I have counter argued that you can meaningfully  
> say "I watch the Summer Olympics because I love swimming" but not "I  
> watch the Summer Olympics because I love to swim".

True, "swimming" can imply a generic subject while "to swim" cannot (AFAIK).

—

Tom Breton, the calm-eyed visionary

---

- *Follow-Ups:*

Re: "To run is good exercise"?!

◆ [Re: "To run is good exercise"?!](#)

◇ From: Peter T. Daniels

• **References:**

◆ ["To run is good exercise"?!](#)

◇ From: martinhipps2

• Prev by Date: [Etymology of "Macho"](#)

• Next by Date: [Re: Etymology of "Macho"](#)

• Previous by thread: [Re: "To run is good exercise"?!](#)

• Next by thread: [Re: "To run is good exercise"?!](#)

• Index(es):

◆ [Date](#)

◆ [Thread](#)