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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## The English We Speak

### No leg to stand on

The logo for BBC Learning English, featuring the letters 'BBC' in a white box above the words 'LEARNING ENGLISH' in white capital letters, all on a teal background.

*This is not a word-for-word transcript.*

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#### **Feifei**

Hello and welcome to The English We Speak, where we explain expressions used by fluent English speakers so that you can use them, too! I'm Feifei, and I'm joined by Georgie. How are you?

#### **Georgie**

Well, I was a bit ill earlier this week, but I'm feeling much better now. How about you?

#### **Feifei**

I'm very well, thank you. And I'm glad to hear you're better. So, Georgie, what are we learning in this programme?

#### **Georgie**

We are going to learn the idiom 'no leg to stand on'. So, I'm going to give an example, and our listeners can try to guess what it means. So, my friend recently bought a dress, and she wore it to a party and spilt food all over it. She then tried to return it at the shop. The shop assistant said, "Absolutely no, you can't do that". And really, my friend had no leg to stand on.

#### **Feifei**

No, she didn't. So, if someone has no leg to stand on, it means they don't have a good argument or support for what they're doing or saying.

#### **Georgie**

Exactly. It's often used in discussions or arguments when someone's explanation falls apart. I think we should hear some examples from our BBC Learning English colleagues.

#### **Examples**

I'm sorry I forgot your birthday, even though it's in my diary. I have no leg to stand on.

I was complaining to my husband about the mess in the house, and then I realised most of it was my fault. I haven't really got a leg to stand on.

I said I'd done the work, but I hadn't. And if they check, I haven't got a leg to stand on.

**Feifei**

OK, now let's talk about how to use it. The phrase 'no leg to stand on' can follow 'have' or 'have got'. For example, 'They have no leg to stand on' or 'He's got no leg to stand on'.

**Georgie**

Yes. And a related phrase that you can use is that an argument 'has no legs', and that just means that the argument is weak.

**Feifei**

Yes. Time to recap. We learned the phrase 'no leg to stand on'. If you've got no leg to stand on, it means what you're doing or saying can't be supported.

**Georgie**

Thanks for joining us. Goodbye.

**Feifei**

Goodbye!