

## Grammar – Can a gerund be used after ‘to’?

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It's important to remember this basic grammar rule:

**for + noun**

**to + verb**

**\*for & to are NEVER used together!**  
~~I use a hair dryer for to dry my hair.~~

**\*for is NEVER used before a verb:**  
~~I use a hair dryer for dry my hair.~~

HOWEVER, there is always an exception to the rule in English! Normally, ‘to’ goes with a verb (as part of the infinitive form), not a noun. If, however, the ‘to’ is a *preposition* that is part of a **combination**, then it is OK to use a gerund after **to**.

Here are three situations in which you can use a gerund after the preposition **to**:

### 1) If the to is part of a phrasal verb or verb + preposition combination:

*I look forward to meeting your parents tonight!*

*He confessed to killing his next-door neighbour.*

*She adjusted to living on her own.*

*He objects to spending so much money on a T.V.*

*Mother Theresa devoted her life to helping the poor.*

(Remember, not every verb + preposition combination is a phrasal verb! A phrasal verb is when the preposition *changes* the meaning of the verb.)

## 2) If the to is part of an adjective + preposition combination:

*I am **addicted to watching** soap operas on T.V.!*

*She is **committed to improving** the education system.*

*I am **opposed to increasing** taxes.*

*Many of the nurses and doctors in the hospital are truly **dedicated to making** life better for the patients.*

*Mother Theresa was **devoted to helping** the poor throughout her life.*

*He's not **used to driving** on the left-hand side of the road!*

## 3) If the to is part of a noun + preposition combination:

*His **addiction to gambling** has caused a lot of stress for his family.*

*Her great **dedication to teaching** inspires her students.*

*Mother Theresa's **devotion to helping** the poor brought her worldwide acclaim.*

*Her **reaction to winning** the Oscar was priceless!*

## NOTES:

\*Remember, you can use **to + gerund**, but the **to** MUST be a *preposition* that is part of a combination. You CANNOT say:

*X I want to going shopping.*

*X I like to listening to music.*

\*Also note that in the above combinations, you could NOT use **to + verb**. You CAN'T say:

*X He objects to spend so much money on a T.V.*

*X I am opposed to increase taxes*

\*As you may know, gerunds can be use after prepositions. This does NOT mean that gerunds must *always* be

used after prepositions. Verb / adjective / noun combinations could also be followed by any noun or noun phrase:

*I'm looking forward to her party tonight!*

*He confessed to the murder of his next-door neighbour.*

*I haven't adjusted to the time change yet.*

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Now, I'm sure your next question is: how do I know what **verb / noun / adjective combinations** include **to**? Unfortunately there is no easy answer. You can memorize lists, or you can do as much reading and listening as possible in English so that you get used to seeing and hearing these combinations! The purpose of the post was just to make you aware that there are certain, specific circumstances when you can use **to + gerund**.