

Honestly, I'm Not Great, Actually

Four ways to say you're not fine, without ruining the party.

| Learn one phrase per page.

| Play **phrases.mp3** and say each phrase out loud. You'll hear it twice.

| Try the quick check at the end.

Honestly, not okay

You drop the polite “fine” and say honestly that you are struggling. It sounds serious and can surprise people who only expected a quick, cheerful answer.

Examples

- Honestly, I'm not okay. I haven't slept in three days.
- You asked, so honestly, I'm not okay right now.

You can also say

- To be honest, I'm really struggling.
- I'm not doing well at all.

People usually expect “fine,” so this answer can turn a casual chat serious. Say it when you want the other person to listen.

I'm not great

A mild, gentle way to say you are doing badly. It admits there is a problem without giving details, so the other person can ask more if they want.

Examples

- I'm not great today. I barely slept last night.
- I'm not great, to be honest. Work has been stressful.

You can also say

- I've been better.
- I'm not doing so well.

It sounds mild because it understates things. The problem could be small or serious, so add a detail if you want people to know how bad it is.

It's been tough

A difficult situation has lasted for a while, not just one bad day. People say it to show sympathy or to describe their own hard time.

Examples

- It's been tough since I lost my job in March.
- I know it's been tough for your family lately.

You can also say

- It's been a hard few weeks.
- It's been really rough.

Use "been" for a long stretch of time. "It's tough" talks only about right now.

I'll manage

You are saying you can handle it alone, so please don't worry or offer more help. It often closes the topic.

Examples

- Thanks, but I'll manage. You should go home and rest.
- It's a lot of work, but I'll manage.

You can also say

- I can handle it.
- Don't worry, I'll be fine.

It can sound a little closed-off. If you really want help, say something like "That would be great" instead.

Quick check

1. Honestly, I'm _____ right now, so I need some help.
all good / not okay / totally fine
2. I'm _____ today. I have a bad headache.
not great / so great / very lucky
3. The last six months have _____ for us.
been tough / gone tough / made tough
4. Thanks for offering, but please don't worry. I'll _____.
borrow / manage / rescue

Answers: 1 not okay, 2 not great, 3 been tough, 4 manage

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