

## **Body metonymy: American English**

### **Hair**

Hairy eyeball  
Get out of my hair  
Let your hair down  
Longhair  
Blue-haired  
Hair-raising  
Hair's breadth

### **Head**

Bald-head (in reggae, someone without dreadlocks, used in Bob Marley's songs and in others)  
Hot head  
Pot Head  
Egghead  
Keep your head  
Lose your head  
Having a good head on your shoulders  
Keep your head high  
Fat head  
Swelled head  
Meat head  
Big head  
Butt head  
Shit head  
Dick head  
Head (toilet)  
Head (fellatio)  
Head (drug user)  
Talking head (commentator)  
Hangs heavy on my head  
Air head  
Head in the sand  
Head in the clouds  
Keeping a cool head  
Getting a Heads up

### **Face**

About face  
Two faced  
Face off  
Face the music  
Shit faced  
Putting on her face  
Game face

Poker face  
Egg on your face  
Show your face  
Having a long face  
Losing face

### **Nose**

Nose in the air  
Being led by the nose  
Hard nosed  
Keeping your nose at the grindstone  
Nosy  
Having a nose for news  
Keep your nose out of our business  
Brown-nosed

### **Cheek**

Cheeky  
Turning the other cheek  
Tongue in cheek (also see Tongue)

### **Eyes**

Eyeballed  
Sight for sore eyes  
Four-eyes  
Redeye  
Keeping your eyes peeled  
Eye for an eye

### **Hands**

Red handed  
Hand in hand  
Underhanded  
Glad-handing  
Hand in the cookie jar  
Hand in glove

### **Teeth/tooth**

Long in the tooth  
Toothy grin  
tooth and nail  
(ex.: legislation) with some teeth in it

### **Tongue**

Tongue-in-cheek  
Forked tongue

Tongue lashing  
Tongue-wagging  
Sharp-tongued  
Cat got your tongue?

### **Mouth**

Big mouth  
Mouthy  
Mush-mouth

### **Fingers/thumbs/wrist**

Getting fingered  
Giving the finger  
Light fingered  
Sticky fingered  
\* \* \*

Thumbs up  
Green thumb  
Thumbing your nose  
Being all thumbs  
\* \* \*

Limp-wristed  
Wrist-bending

### **Neck and throat**

Redneck  
Roughneck  
Breakneck  
Pain in the neck  
\* \* \*

Hard to swallow  
Frog in my throat  
Heart in my throat  
Choked up

### **Organs n' guts**

Butterflies in my stomach  
Couldn't stomach that  
Gut wrenching  
Stomach churning  
My stomach turned  
Intestinal fortitude  
A gut feeling  
Lilly-livered  
Having a lot of gall

## **Skin**

Thick skinned  
Thin-skinned  
Showing some skin  
Getting the skinny  
Paying some skins  
Skin-deep

## **Legs, feet, and toes**

Hollow leg  
Pulling your leg  
Not a leg to stand on  
Light on his feet  
Having two left feet  
\* \* \*

Flat foot  
Getting cold feet  
Achilles' heel  
Toe the line  
Twinkle toes  
\* \* \*

And by extension:  
Gum shoe  
Soft shoe

## **Muscles & Bones**

Muscled in  
Throwing his muscle around  
Cold shoulder  
Showing some spine  
Weak kneed

## **Hearts**

Having the heart for it (or not having the heart)  
Big hearted  
Soft hearted  
Mean hearted  
Small hearted  
Hard hearted  
Heart in my throat (see Throat)  
Offering your heart

## Body parts in Mandarin

\* Each item is in the order of Chinese pin-yin, literal translation, and free translation.

### Head:

1. san-tou-liu-bi (three heads six arms) ‘superman powers’
2. tou-er (head) ‘leader, chief’
3. tou-mian ren-wu (head face person) ‘a prominent figure’
4. tou-cai (head prize) ‘first prize in a lottery’
5. tou-tiao (head news item) ‘front-page headline’
6. tou-tou-shi-dao (every head makes sense) ‘clear and logical; systematic and orderly’
7. tou-xu (head thread) ‘main threads of a complicated affair’
8. ling-tou-yang (head sheep) ‘the leading person or force’
9. tou-xian (head title) ‘title or rank of professions’
10. tou-mu (head eye) ‘head of a gang’

### Mouth:

1. ren-kou (person mouth) ‘population’
2. xiao-liang-kou (young couple mouth) ‘newly-married couple’
3. zui-lian (mouth face) ‘hideous face’
4. zui-tian (sweet mouth) ‘smooth-tongued’
5. zui-ying (rigid mouth) ‘stubborn and reluctant to admit mistakes or defeats’
6. zui shang mei mao, ban shi bu lao (a man too young to grow a beard tend to make mistakes in fulfilling tasks) “a man too young is not reliable”
7. jie-kou (make use of mouth) ‘use sth as an excuse’

### Hair:

1. fa-zhi (hair up) ‘hair bristles up with anger’
2. fa-qi (hair wife) ‘first wife’
3. tou-fa chang jian-shi duan (hair long, knowledge little) ‘Women who wear long hair have little knowledge’

### Eyes:

1. fan-mu (turn over eyes) ‘(good friends or couple) fall out’
2. hong-yan (red eye) ‘jealous’
3. bai-yan (white eye) ‘scornful’
4. ji-yan (anxious eye) ‘feel anxious’
5. ming-yan ren (a bright eyed person) ‘a person with a discerning eye; a person of good sense’
6. zheng yi-zhi-yan bi yi-zhi-yan (open one eye and close the other) ‘turn a blind eye to sth; wink at sth’
7. kai-yan (open one’s eyes) ‘widen one’s view; broad one’s mind’
8. wang-yan-yu-chuan (keep gazing anxiously till one’s eyes are strained) ‘have long been looking forward with eager expectation’
9. bu-ke wang-qi-xiang-bei (cannot see one’s neck and back) ‘far from being competent with sb.; cannot be a fit to sb.’

**Nose:**

1. bei ren qian-zhe bi-zi zou (dragged by others on the nose) ‘be controlled by sb.’

**Ear:**

1. yao er-duo (bite one’s ear) ‘whisper in sb’s ear’

**Face:**

1. hei-lian (black face) ‘bad guy’
2. bai-lian (red face) ‘good guy’
3. fan-mian ren-wu (opposite face person) ‘villain’
4. mian-shi (face interview) ‘interview’
5. mian-shou (face instruction or face-to-face tutoring) ‘personally instruct sb’
6. mian-mian-xiang-qu (look at each other’s face in blank dismay) ‘gaze at each other in speechless despair’

**Teeth:**

1. yi ya huan ya, yi yan huan yan (use teeth to return teeth, use eyes to return eyes) ‘treat sb. with what he/she treats me’
2. yao-ya-qie-chi (gnash one’s teeth) ‘be enraged’
3. yao-jin-ya-guan (clench one’s teeth tightly) ‘endure with dogged will’
4. chun-wang-chi-han (if the lips are gone, the teeth will be cold) ‘if one (of two interdependent things) falls, the other is in danger’

**Hand:**

1. san-zhi-shou (three handed) ‘pickpocket’
2. shou mang jiao luan (hand busy, feet chaos) ‘be in a dreadful rush’
3. shou jiao (hand feet) ‘trick, underhand method’
4. shou qi (hand gas) ‘luck at gambling, card playing’
5. shou zhang xin (the center of palm) ‘control’
6. shou zu (hand feet) ‘brothers’
7. da-shou da-jiao (big hands big feet) ‘extravagant, wasteful’
8. ji-shou (sting hand) ‘something is troublesome’

**Wrist:**

1. tie wan (iron wrist) ‘an iron-handed person’
2. shou wan (hand wrist) ‘trick; skill, tactics’

**Legs:**

1. gou-tui-zi (dog leg) ‘lackey’
2. ge-bo niu-bu-guo da-tui (arms are no match for thighs) ‘the weaker can’t contend with the stronger’
3. liang-tiao tui zou-lu (Two legs walk) ‘Learn two skills or work in two directions will help a person to succeed’

**Feet:**

1. jiao cai liang-zhi chuan (feet straddle two boats at the same time) ‘have a foot in either camp to benefit from both’
2. jiao zheng bu-pa xie wai (a straight foot is not afraid of a crooked shoe) ‘an upright man fears no gossip’
3. shan-jiao (mountain foot) ‘bottom of a mountain’

4. jiao-zhu (foot note) ‘foot note’
5. san-zu-ding-li (three feet of a tripod stand simultaneously) ‘triangular balance of power’

**Heart:**

1. xiao xin-yan (small heart eye) ‘narrow-minded, mean’
2. xin-zhao-bu-xuan (heart thinks alike but without speaking out) ‘have a tacit understanding’
3. xin-yan (heart eye) ‘a person’s mind; intention’
4. xin-ji (heart scheme) ‘thinking, scheming’
5. xinfu-zhihuan (a disease in heart and gut) ‘danger from within’
6. xin-gao-qi-ao (heart high and gas proud) ‘be ambitious and proud’
7. xin-kou-bu-yi (heart and mouth do not match) ‘do not say what one thinks’
8. xin-kuan-ti-pang (heart broaden and body fit) ‘carefree and contented’
9. xin-huai-gui-tai (an evil in one’s heart) ‘have evil intentions’
10. san-xin-er-yi (three hearts) ‘be half-hearted’

**Gut:**

1. hun-shen shi dan (whole body is gall) ‘be every inch a hero’
2. ying-xiong hu-dan (heroes have a tiger gall) ‘Heroes are as brave as tigers’
3. zhi chang-zi (straight guts) ‘a straightforward person’

**References:**

Beijing Foreign Studies University (Eds.). 1997. *A Chinese-English Dictionary (Revised Edition)*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Teaching and Research Press.