

Anger management tips: Tame your temper

“Anybody can become angry - that is easy; but to be angry with the right person, and to the right degree, and at the right time, and for the right purpose, and in the right way - that is not within everybody's power and is not easy.”

- Aristotle

Controlling your temper isn't always easy. But these effective anger management techniques will help give you the upper hand.

If your outbursts, rages or bullying are negatively affecting relationships with family, friends, co-workers and even complete strangers, it's time to change the way you express your anger. You can take steps on your own to improve your anger management.

Anger management tips

Here are some anger management tips to help get your anger under control:

- Take a "time out." Although it may seem cliché, counting to 10 before reacting, or leaving the situation altogether, really can defuse your temper.
- Do something physically exerting. Physical activity can provide an outlet for your emotions, especially if you're about to erupt. Go for a brisk walk or a run, swim, lift weights or shoot baskets.
- Find ways to calm and soothe yourself. Practice deep-breathing exercises, visualize a relaxing scene, or repeat a calming word or phrase to yourself, such as "take it easy." You can also listen to music, paint, journal or do yoga.
- Once you're calm, express your anger as soon as possible so that you aren't left stewing. If you simply can't express your anger in a controlled manner to the person who angered you, try talking to a family member, friend, counselor or another trusted person.
- Think carefully before you say anything so that you don't end up saying something you'll regret. Write a script and rehearse it so that you can stick to the issues.
- Work with the person who angered you to identify solutions to the situation.
- Use "I" statements when describing the problem to avoid criticizing or placing blame. For instance, say "I'm upset you didn't help with the housework this evening," instead of, "You should have helped with the housework." To do otherwise will likely upset the other person and escalate tensions.
- Don't hold a grudge. Forgive the other person. It's unrealistic to expect everyone to behave exactly as you want.
- Use humor to release tensions, such as imagining yourself or the other person in silly situations. Don't use sarcasm, though — it's just another form of unhealthy expression.
- Keep an anger log to identify the kinds of situations that set you off and to monitor your reactions.
- Practice relaxation skills. Learning skills to relax and de-stress can also help control your temper when it may flare up.

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