

Managing Anger

Tips to Stay in Control

Anger becomes a problem when it takes control, and starts to effect your relationships, health and state of mind. If you find yourself easily becoming worked up, aggravated or furious, it may be time to learn how to stay in control and manage your anger.

TAKE A BREATH

Counting to 10 isn't just for kids. Before reacting to a tense situation, take a few moments to breathe deeply and count to 10. Slowing down can help defuse your temper. If necessary, take a break from the person or situation until your frustration subsides a bit.

ONCE YOU'RE CALM, EXPRESS YOUR ANGER

As soon as you're thinking clearly, express your frustration in an assertive but non-confrontational way. State your concerns and needs clearly and directly, without hurting others or trying to control them.

GET SOME EXERCISE

Physical activity can provide an outlet for your emotions. If you feel your anger escalating, go for a brisk walk or run, or spend some time doing other favorite physical activities. Physical activity stimulates various brain chemicals that can leave you feeling happier and more relaxed.

THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK

In the heat of the moment, it's easy to say something you'll later regret. Take a few moments to collect your thoughts before saying anything — and allow others involved in the situation to do the same.

STICK WITH 'I' STATEMENTS

To avoid criticizing or placing blame (which might only increase tension) use "I" statements to describe the problem. Be respectful and specific. For example, say, "I'm upset that you left the table without offering to help with the dishes," instead of, "You never do any housework."

DON'T HOLD A GRUDGE

Forgiveness is a powerful tool. If you allow anger and other negative feelings to crowd out positive feelings, you might find yourself swallowed up by your own bitterness or sense of injustice. It's unrealistic to expect everyone to behave exactly as you want at all times.

USE HUMOR

Lightening up the situation can help diffuse tension. When using humor, be sure to avoid using any sarcasm, as it can lead to hurt feelings and make things worse.

PRACTICE RELAXATION SKILLS

When your temper flares, put relaxation skills to work. Practice deep-breathing exercises, imagine a relaxing scene, or repeat a calming word or phrase, such as, "Take it easy." You might also listen to music, write in a journal or do a few yoga poses.

IDENTIFY POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Instead of focusing on what made you mad, work on resolving the issue at hand. Is your partner late for dinner every night? Schedule meals later in the evening or agree to eat on your own a few times a week. Anger won't fix anything, and might only make it worse.