

Anger management and Keeping Cool

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Anger is "an emotional state that varies in intensity from mild irritation to intense fury and rage. Like other emotions, it is accompanied by physiological and biological changes; when you get angry, your heart rate and blood pressure go up, as do the levels of your energy hormones, adrenaline, and noradrenaline.



Expressing anger

The instinctive, natural way to express anger is to respond aggressively.

Anger is a natural, adaptive response to threats; it inspires powerful, often aggressive, feelings and behaviors, which allow us to fight and to defend ourselves when we are attacked. People use a variety of both conscious and unconscious processes to deal with their angry feelings. The three main approaches are **expressing, suppressing, and calming**.

- Expressing your angry feelings in an assertive—not aggressive—manner is the healthiest way to express anger.
 - Anger can be suppressed, and then converted or redirected. This happens when you hold in your anger, stop thinking about it, and focus on something positive.
 - Unexpressed anger can create other problems. It can lead to pathological expressions of anger, such as passive-aggressive behavior (getting back at people indirectly, without telling them why, rather than confronting them head-on) or a personality that seems perpetually cynical and hostile.
 - Finally, you can calm down inside. This means not just controlling your outward behavior, but also controlling your internal responses, taking steps to lower your heart rate, calm yourself down, and let the feelings subside.



Causes of anger

Stress

Stress related to work, family, health and money problems may make you feel anxious and irritable.



Frustration

You may get angry if you fail to reach a goal or feel as if things are out of your control.



Fear

Anger is a natural response to threats of violence, or to physical or verbal abuse.

Annoyance

You may react in anger to minor irritations and daily hassles.

Disappointment

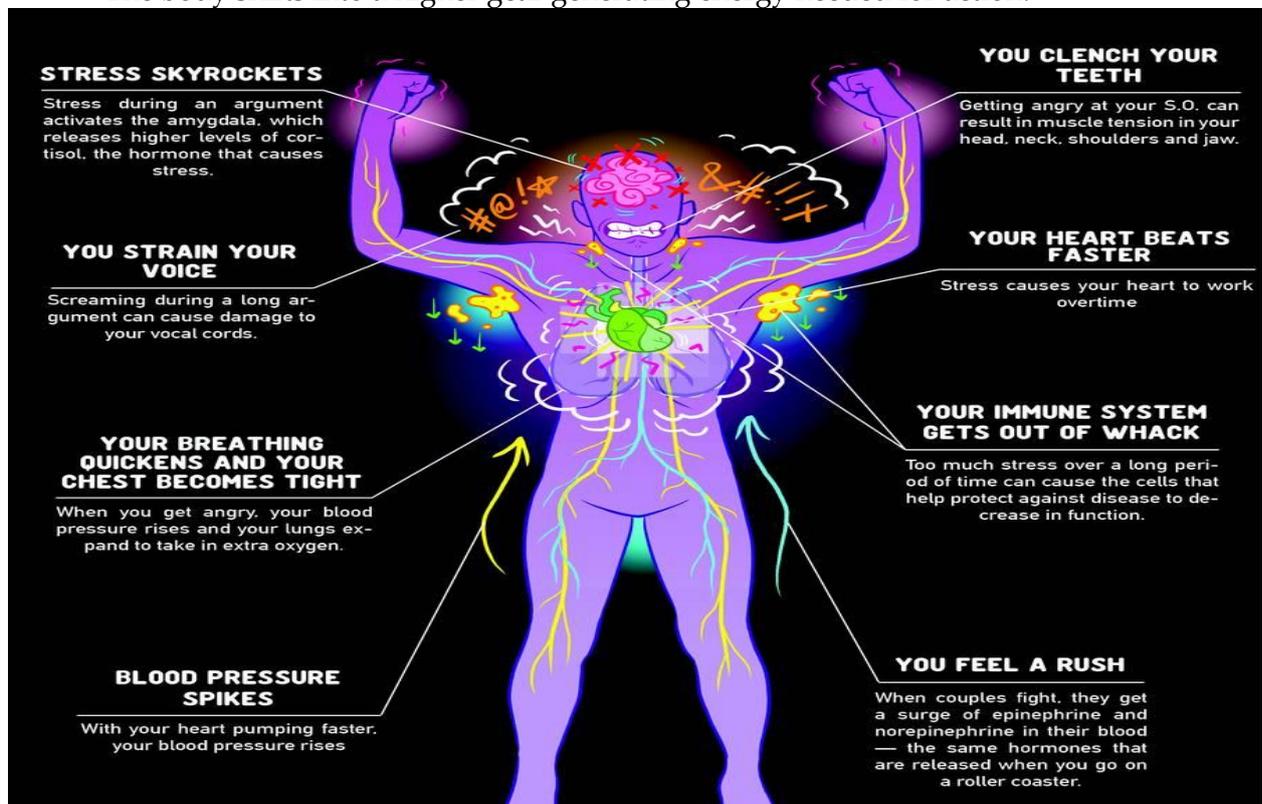
Anger often results when expectations and desires aren't met.

Resentment

You may feel angry when you've been hurt, rejected or offended.

How does body react to anger????

- Adrenaline and other chemicals enter your bloodstream.
- Your heart pumps faster.
- Your blood flows more quickly.
- Your muscles tense.
- The body shifts into a higher gear generating energy needed for action.



Managing anger

The goal of anger management is to reduce both your emotional feelings and the physiological arousal that anger causes. You can't get rid of, or avoid, the things or the people that enrage you, nor can you change them, but you can learn to control your reactions.

Are you too angry?????????

Some people really are more "hotheaded" than others are; they get angry more easily and more intensely than



the average person does. People who are easily angered generally have what some psychologists call a low tolerance for frustration, meaning simply that they feel that they should not have to be subjected to frustration, inconvenience, or annoyance. They can't take things in stride, and they're particularly infuriated if the situation seems somehow unjust: for example, being corrected for a minor mistake.

A number of things. One cause may be **genetic** or **psychological**: There is evidence that some children are born irritable, touchy, and easily angered, and that these signs are present from a very early age. Another may be sociocultural. Anger is often regarded as negative; we're taught that it's all right to express anxiety, depression, or other emotions but not to express anger. As a result, we don't learn how to handle it or channel it constructively.

Research has also found that family background plays a role. Typically, people who are easily angered come from families that are disruptive, chaotic, and not skilled at emotional communications.

Strategies to keep angry at bay

Relaxation

Simple relaxation tools, such as deep breathing and relaxing imagery, can help calm down angry feelings. Some simple steps you can try are:

- Find a quiet place. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Sit or lie down.
- Close your eyes. Take slow, deep breaths.
- Concentrate on a single word, object or calming thought.
- Don't worry if other thoughts or images enter your mind while you are doing this. Just relax and return to what you were focusing on.
- Continue until you feel relaxed and refreshed.
- **Deep-breathing exercises**
- These can help keep anger from getting out of control. Follow these steps:
- Sit comfortably or lie on your back.
- Breathe in slowly and deeply for a count of 5.
- Hold your breath for a count of 5.
- Breathe out slowly for a count of 5, pushing out all the air.
- Repeat several times until you feel calm and relaxed.
- Picture your breath coming up from your "gut."
- Slowly repeat a calm word or phrase such as "relax," "take it easy." Repeat it to yourself while breathing deeply.
- Use imagery; visualize a relaxing experience, from either your memory or your imagination.
- Non strenuous, slow yoga-like exercises can relax your muscles and make you feel much calmer.



Practice these techniques daily. Learn to use them automatically when you're in a tense situation.

Cognitive Restructuring

Simply put, this means **changing the way you think**. Angry people tend to curse, swear, or speak in highly colorful terms that reflect their inner thoughts. When you're angry, your thinking can get much exaggerated and overly dramatic. Try replacing these thoughts with more rational ones.

- Instead of telling yourself, "oh, it's awful, it's terrible, everything's ruined," tell yourself, "it's frustrating, and it's understandable that I'm upset about it, but it's not the end of the world and getting angry is not going to fix it anyhow."
- Be careful of words like "never" or "always" when talking about yourself or someone else. "This !&*%@ machine never works," or "you're always forgetting things" are not just inaccurate, they also serve to make you feel that your anger is justified and that there's no way to solve the problem.
- Remind yourself that getting angry is not going to fix anything that it won't make you feel better (and may actually make you feel worse).
- So use cold hard logic on yourself. Remind yourself that the world is "not out to get you," you're just experiencing some of the rough spots of daily life. Do this each time you feel anger getting the best of you, and it'll help you get a more balanced perspective.
- As part of their cognitive restructuring, angry people need to become aware of their demanding nature and translate their expectations into desires. In other words, saying, "I would like" something is healthier than saying, "I demand" or "I must have" something. When you're unable to get what you want, you will experience the normal reactions – frustration, disappointment, hurt – but not anger.



Problem Solving

Sometimes, our anger and frustration are caused by very real and inescapable problems in our lives. Not all anger is misplaced, and often it's a healthy, natural response to these difficulties. There is also a cultural belief that every problem has a solution, and it adds to our frustration to find out that this isn't always the case. The best attitude to bring to such a situation, then, is not to focus on finding the solution, but rather on how you handle and face the problem.

- Make a plan, and check your progress along the way.
- Resolve to give it your best, but also not to punish yourself if an answer doesn't come right away.
- If you can approach it with your best intentions and efforts and make a serious attempt to face it head-on, you will be less likely to lose patience and fall into all-or-nothing thinking, even if the problem does not get solved right away.



Better Communication

Angry people tend to jump to—and act on—conclusions and some of those conclusions can be very inaccurate.

- The first thing to do if you're in a heated discussion is slow down and think through your responses. Don't say the first thing that comes into your head, but slow down and think carefully about what you want to say.
- Listen carefully to what the other person is saying and take your time before answering.
- Listen, too, to what is underlying the anger. For instance, you like a certain amount of freedom and personal space, and your "significant other" wants more connection and closeness. If he or she starts complaining about your activities, don't retaliate.
- It's natural to get defensive when you're criticized, but don't fight back. Instead, listen to what's underlying the words: the message that this person might feel neglected and unloved. It may take a lot of patient questioning on your part, and it may require some breathing space, but don't let your anger—or a partner's—let a discussion spin out of control.
- Keeping you cool can keep the situation from becoming a disastrous one.



Using Humor

"Silly humor" can help defuse rage in a number of ways. For one thing, it can help you get a more balanced perspective.

- When you get angry and call someone a name or refer to them in some imaginative phrase, stop and picture what that word would literally look like.
- If you're at work and you think of a coworker as a "dirt bag" or a "single-cell life form," for example, picture a large bag full of dirt sitting at your colleague's desk, talking on the phone, going to meetings. Do this whenever a name comes into your head about another person.
- If you can, draw a picture of what the actual thing might look like. This will take a lot of the edge off your fury; and humor can always be relied on to help unknot a tense situation.

There are two cautions in using humor.

- ♣ First, don't try to just "laugh off" your problems; rather, use humor to help yourself face them more constructively.
- ♣ Second, don't give in to harsh, sarcastic humor; that's just another form of unhealthy anger expression.

What these techniques have in common is a refusal to take you too seriously. Anger is a serious emotion, but it's often accompanied by ideas that, if examined, can make you laugh.



Changing Your Environment

Sometimes it's our immediate surroundings that give us cause for irritation and fury. Problems and responsibilities can weigh on you and make you feel angry at the "trap" you seem to have fallen into and all the people and things that form that trap.

- Give yourself a break.
- Make sure you have some "personal time" scheduled for times of the day that you know are particularly stressful.
- One example is the working mother who has a standing rule that when she comes home from work, for the first 15 minutes "nobody talks to Mom unless the house is on fire." After this brief quiet time, she feels better prepared to handle demands from her kids without blowing up at them.



Some Other Tips for Easing Up on Yourself

Timing: If you and your spouse tend to fight when you discuss things at night—perhaps you're tired, or distracted, or maybe it's just habit—try changing the times when you talk about important matters so these talks don't turn into arguments.

Avoidance: If your child's chaotic room makes you furious every time you walk by it, shut the door. Don't make yourself look at what infuriates you. Don't say, "well, my child should clean up the room so I won't have to be angry!" That's not the point. The point is to keep yourself calm.



Finding alternatives: If your daily commute through traffic leaves you in a state of rage and frustration, give yourself a project—learn or map out a different route, one that's less congested or more scenic. Or find another alternative, such as a bus or commuter train.

Some useful thoughts... ..

- ♣ The key to anger reduction is knowing yourself.
- ♣ Do important job now before they become urgent.
- ♣ When you make mistakes learn from them, rather becoming angry.
- ♣ Don't criticise, condemn and complain because it makes you angry.
- ♣ Choose a job you love and you will not have a day of anger in your working life.
- ♣ Most problems are really the absence of ideas. Think ahead. Anticipate. Do it or get done. Even if second best you will be less angry.
- ♣ Organise your mind and organise your desk for 5 minutes every hour.
- ♣ Accept what you cannot change and change what you cannot accept.
- ♣ Say sorry at the right moment you to reduce the anger of others. For every 10 minutes you are angry you lose 600 seconds of happiness. A little pot soon hot.
- ♣ Never get angry to a person who has nothing to lose.
- ♣ Never reply to a letter/ email when you are angry.



- ♣ Never go to bed with an argument unsettled.
- ♣ Expectation breeds frustration. Frustration breeds anger.
- ♣ Work is the best remedy for all angers. People who do not know how to fight anger die young.
- ♣ You cannot change others as easily as you can change yourself.

Exercise

Emotions wheel.

Check your weekly emotions and draw the emotions wheel if possible and assess which emotions rule your week. Make necessary changes. Repeat the process and check your emotions wheels of the week in a month. Do you see any changes??? Gain control of your emotions, definitely you will succeed in life.

