

# Anger Management



## Tips and Techniques for Getting Anger Under Control

Are you famous for your short temper? Do you have a short fuse or find yourself getting into frequent arguments and fights? Anger is a normal, healthy emotion. But it's unhealthy when it flares up all the time or spirals out of control. Chronic, explosive anger has serious consequences for your relationships, your health, and your state of mind. The good news is that getting anger under control is easier than you think. With a little insight into the real reasons for your anger and some effective anger management tools, you can learn how to express your feelings in healthier ways and keep your temper from hijacking your life.

### In This Article:

- Understanding anger
- Why learning to control your anger is important
- Explore what's really behind your anger

- Be aware of your warning signs and triggers
- Learn ways to cool down
- Find healthier ways to express your anger
- When to seek help for anger management
- If your loved one has an anger problem
- Related links

## Understanding anger

The emotion of anger is neither good nor bad. It's perfectly healthy and normal to feel angry when you've been mistreated or wronged. The feeling isn't the problem—it's what you do with it that makes a difference. Anger becomes a problem when it harms you or others.

If you have a hot temper, you may feel like it's out of your hands and there's little you can do to tame the beast. But you have more control over your anger than you think. You *can* learn to express your emotions without hurting others—and when you do, you'll not only feel better, but you'll also be more likely to get your needs met. Mastering the art of anger management takes work, but the more you practice, the easier it will get. And the payoff is huge. Learning to control your anger and express it appropriately will help you build better relationships, achieve your goals, and lead a healthier, more satisfying life.

## Myths and Facts about Anger

**Myth: I shouldn't "hold in" my anger. It's healthy to vent and let it out.**

**Fact:** While it's true that suppressing and ignoring anger is unhealthy, venting is no better. Anger is not something you have to "let out" in an aggressive way in order to avoid blowing up. In fact, outbursts and tirades only fuel the fire and reinforce your anger problem.

**Myth: Anger, aggression, and intimidation help me earn respect and get what I want.**

**Fact:** True power doesn't come from bullying others. People may be afraid of you, but they won't respect you if you can't control yourself or handle opposing viewpoints. Others will be more willing to listen to you and accommodate your needs if you communicate in a respectful way.

**Myth: I can't help myself. Anger isn't something you can control.**

**Fact:** You can't always control the situation you're in or how it makes you feel, but you *can* control how you express your anger. And you *can* express your anger without being verbally or physically abusive. Even if someone is pushing your buttons, you always have a choice about how to respond.

**Myth: Anger management is about learning to suppress your anger.**

**Fact:** Never getting angry is not a good goal. Anger is normal, and it will come out regardless of how hard you try to suppress it. Anger management is all about

becoming aware of your underlying feelings and needs and developing healthier ways to manage upset. Rather than trying to suppress your anger, the goal is to express it in constructive ways.

## Why learning to control your anger is important

You might think that venting your anger is healthy, that the people around you are too sensitive, that your anger is justified, or that you need to show your fury to get respect. But the truth is that anger is much more likely to damage your relationships, impair your judgment, get in the way of success, and have a negative impact on the way people see you.

- **Out-of-control anger hurts your physical health.** Constantly operating at high levels of stress and tension is bad for your health. Chronic anger makes you more susceptible to heart disease, diabetes, high cholesterol levels, a weakened immune system, insomnia, and high blood pressure.
- **Out-of-control anger hurts your mental health.** Chronic anger consumes huge amounts of mental energy and clouds your thinking, making it harder to concentrate, see the bigger picture, and enjoy life. It can also lead to stress, depression, and other mental health problems.
- **Out-of-control anger hurts your career.** Constructive criticism, creative differences, and heated debate can be healthy. But lashing out only alienates your colleagues, supervisors, or clients and erodes their respect. What's more, a bad

reputation can follow you wherever you go, making it harder and harder to get ahead.

- **Out-of-control anger hurts your relationships with others.** It causes lasting scars in the people you love most and gets in the way of your friendships and work relationships. Chronic, intense anger makes it hard for others to trust you, speak honestly, or feel comfortable—they never know what is going to set you off or what you will do. Explosive anger is especially damaging to children.

### **Anger control and management tip 1: Explore what's really behind your anger**

If you're struggling with out-of-control anger, you may be wondering why your fuse is so short. Anger problems often stem from what you've learned as a child. If you watched others in your family scream, hit each other, or throw things, you might think this is how anger is supposed to be expressed. Traumatic events and high levels of stress can make you more susceptible to anger as well.

### **Anger is often a cover-up for other feelings**

In order to get your needs met and express your anger in appropriate ways, you need to be in touch with what you are really feeling. Are you truly angry? Or is your anger masking other feelings such as embarrassment, insecurity, hurt, shame, or vulnerability?

If your knee-jerk response in many situations is anger, it is very likely that your temper is covering up your true feelings and needs. This is especially likely if you grew up in a family where expressing feelings was strongly discouraged. As an adult, you may have a hard time acknowledging feelings other than anger.

### **Clues that there's something more to your anger**

- **You have a hard time compromising.** Is it hard for you to understand other people's points of view, and even harder to concede a point? If you grew up in a family where anger was out of control, you may remember how the angry person got his or her way by being the loudest and most demanding. Compromising might bring up scary feelings of failure and vulnerability.
- **You have trouble expressing emotions other than anger.** Do you pride yourself on being tough and in control, never letting your guard down? Do you feel that emotions like fear, guilt, or shame don't apply to you? Everyone has those emotions, and if you think you don't, you may be using anger as a cover for them.
- **You view different opinions and viewpoints as a personal challenge to you.** Do you believe that your way is always right and get angry when others disagree? If you have a strong need to be in control or a fragile ego, you may interpret other perspectives as a challenge to your

authority, rather than simply a different way of looking at things.

If you are uncomfortable with many emotions, disconnected, or stuck on an angry one-note response to everything, it might do you some good to get back in touch with your feelings. Emotional awareness is the key to self-understanding and success in life. Without the ability to recognize, manage, and deal with the full range of human emotions, you'll inevitably spin into confusion, isolation, and self-doubt.

To learn more, visit [Emotional Awareness: Managing and Dealing with Emotions and Feelings](#).

### **Some Dynamics of Anger**

- We become more angry when we are stressed and body resources are down.
- We are rarely ever angry for the reasons we think.
- We are often angry when we didn't get what we needed as a child.
- We often become angry when we see a trait in others we can't stand in ourselves.
- Underneath many current angers are old disappointments, traumas, and triggers.
- Sometimes we get angry because we were hurt as a child.
- We get angry when a current event brings up an old unresolved situation from the past.
- We often feel strong emotion when a situation has a similar content.

words or energy that we have felt before.

Source: [Get Your Angries Out](#)

### **Anger control and management tip 2: Be aware of your anger warning signs and triggers**

While you might feel that you just explode into anger without warning, in fact, there are physical warning signs in your body. Anger is a normal physical response. It fuels the "fight or flight" system of the body, and the angrier you get, the more your body goes into overdrive. Becoming aware of your own personal signs that your temper is starting to boil allows you to take steps to manage your anger before it gets out of control.

### **Pay attention to the way anger feels in your body**

- Knots in your stomach
- Clenching your hands or jaw
- Feeling clammy or flushed
- Breathing faster
- Headaches
  
- Pacing or needing to walk around
- "Seeing red"
- Having trouble concentrating
- Pounding heart
- Tensing your shoulders

Get help any day of the year, at any hour, day or night by call any of our 3 locations.

- Merryville: (219) 736-5990
- Hammond: (219) 933-7990
- Valparaiso: (219) 548-9444