

How To Cool Off When You're Angry



Please note: this post includes suggestions for people dealing with anger issues that affect others in their lives, not just their intimate partners. Keep in mind that anger management programs are not recommended for abusive partners, as abuse is not the result of anger issues but rather the desire to control an intimate partner.

Anger is one of those electrical emotions that all of us experience — some more often or more easily than others — and different things provoke us and rile us up. It can be a healthy emotion up to a point. For instance, anger about a cause, an injustice or a political issue can motivate us to act for good. A lot of the most influential movements and changes in our country began with a feeling of anger or frustration.

But anger can also be very dangerous. Anger can get out of control and have negative effects on yourself and others, depending on how you deal with it and express it. The emotion manifests itself in different ways, and if you find yourself getting angry frequently and intensely, you can probably begin to notice physical symptoms first. Your heart beats faster, your breathing rate increases, your muscles tense up, and more.

If you feel yourself getting angry, what should you do?

- Tell yourself to calm down. Slowly repeat gentle phrases to yourself like “take it easy,” “cool off,” or whatever works for you.
- Force yourself to leave the situation. Take a time out, walk away, and avoid coming back too soon. Take a walk or go for a run.
- Use visualization to calm down. Close your eyes and picture yourself in your favorite place.
- Count to 10 (or 50... or 100) if you feel like you're about to do or say something harmful. It's a quick, easy way to

separate yourself mentally from the situation.

- Splash some cold water on your face.
- Slow down and focus on your breathing. Conscious breathing involves taking slow, deep breaths in through your nose, and slowly out through your mouth.
- Phone a friend. Do you have a supportive friend or family member who can lend an ear and calm you down?
- Try to replace negative, angry thoughts with positive, rational ones. Even if you're feeling upset, remind yourself that getting angry isn't going to fix the way that you're feeling.

Now what?

Make time for yourself to de-stress and focus on an activity that makes you happy, whether that's reading, spending time with friends, or whatever else. Getting enough exercise weekly can also help alleviate stress.

Practice relaxation techniques such as listening to soothing sounds or songs, or doing meditation or yoga.

Keep a journal or log about your anger. Record the feelings you experienced, what factors contributed to your anger and how you responded to it. Try to write down the thoughts that were going through your mind and the time, and then reflect on these instances and see if there's any sort of pattern to your anger.

Think about the consequences that come with angry outbursts. Is your anger causing strain on your relationship? Scaring your children? Take time to reflect on how your anger could be affecting those around you.

Try to note any other emotions you're feeling alongside anger. Are you feeling depressed? Frustrated? Confused?

Learn about communicating with others in a **healthy** way. Being able to talk rationally and calmly when you start to feel angry can be an important part of relieving anger.

Consider taking an anger management course or **going to counseling**.

Further Reading

- Do you think your anger might be getting the best of you? Try this **online quiz** to determine how well you handle your anger.
- Check out Huffington Post's article on **how to break your anger habit**.

- Take a breather. TIME Magazine has **six different breathing exercises** that will “help you relax in 10 minutes or less.”

If you're taking out your anger on your partner, give us a call at 1-800-799-SAFE(7233). You can speak confidentially with a non-judgmental advocate about these behaviors and discuss steps for getting help.

Answers shouldn't be hard to find.

 **We're here to help!**

“Can I Save Them?”



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National Domestic Violence Hotline
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Austin, Texas 78709
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