

Coping with Anger

Anger is a natural and healthy emotion. Authentic anger is “clean” and allows us to verbalise how we feel with clarity and focus. Example: “I am really disappointed that you did not pay me back on the due date. I trusted you and I need that money back.”

However our society often combines violence and/or fear with anger. Example: Violence, revenge, name calling.

These techniques are intended to help you cope with the physical reactions to anger and calm your mind. There are three golden rules for emotional release. Please always keep these in mind:

Three Golden Rules of Emotion Release:

No Harm to Self

No Harm to Others

No Harm to the Environment/Places/Things

Suggestions for releasing Anger:

Focus on the physical sensations of anger. While it may seem counter-intuitive, tuning in to the way your body feels when you're angry often lessens the emotional intensity of your anger.

Physical movement is important when coping with anger. Anger generates adrenalin in the body. Adrenalin does not leave the body easily unless physical exertion/movement is used. Please be aware of your safety when exercising while angry. Anger can be very distracting and you want to be sure you are not injured in any way.

Exercise: Go to a gym, jog or take a brisk walk around the block is a great idea. It releases pent-up energy so you can approach the situation with a cooler head. Exercise also encourages BREATHING. Oxygen is a helpful chemical to release adrenalin.

Stretch or massage areas of tension: Roll your shoulders if you are tensing them, for example, or gently massage your neck and scalp. Use your hands or a mechanical massager.

Slowly count to ten: Focus on the counting to let your rational mind catch up with your feelings. If you still feel out of control by the time you reach ten, start counting again.

Foam bat: Beat a punching bag, pillow or mattress. Do this while **kneeling** – NOT standing up. You may feel dizzy and lose your balance.

Yell/scream into a pillow: Do this **sitting down**. While people may feel uncomfortable with this option – this is a great release.

Music: play music and sing along.

Use a large sized stress ball: Place the stress ball in your hands and squeeze at least 10 times. Repeat using your other hand.

Phonebook: rip up a phone book or another thick book. Recycle the paper afterwards.

Place yourself in a seated position and stomp your feet.

Look at your watch. Let the second hand sweep around the dial for at least 2 minutes before you take any action. By then, you'll have had time to think and you can act in a more appropriate way.

Picture a red stop sign in your mind: whenever you find your anger beginning to boil.

Take a cooling-off period: Take an extended time-out for hours or even longer. Retreat to a calm setting to lower your stress level. Reduce external stimulation. Dim the lights. Listen to soothing music. Meditate.

Use Healthy Distraction: Distractions can be a useful way of coping with stressful thoughts or feelings that seem overpowering. Distraction may take the form of reading a book, talking to a friend, taking a bath, watching a movie (although make sure the movie does not have any triggering images in it), or exercise.

Write About Your Feelings and Thoughts: This has been found to be very helpful, especially in expressing and organizing your experience surrounding a stressful event. In addition, writing can be a positive experience because you have control over how much information you want to disclose and how far you want to go. If you do not have anyone to read your writing crinkle it up or rip it up when you are finished.

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. Laughter is also a great release.