

## Anger Management

Statistics from the Mental Health Foundation suggest that 1 in 3 of us have a close friend or family member who has trouble controlling their anger and 1 in 5 of us have ended a relationship or friendship with someone because of their behaviour when angry.

People often come to us with anger management issues when they realise that they want to change and find new ways of dealing with stress. The good news is that there are many things you can do to help.

Here are 7 top tips to improve your anger:

1. **Learn to relax.** Relaxation is actually a skill that needs to be learned. Anger is the result of the body's fight or flight system, which is activated when we are stressed or scared. By learning to unwind and relax, our adrenaline level drops and we can think more clearly.
2. **Watch what you drink.** Alcohol is often implicated in anger problems, so modifying how much we drink can help. See [www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk) for free advice. However, drinks with caffeine can also increase our stress levels and make us more prone to anger. Drinks like tea, coffee, coca cola, Irn Bru, red bull etc. all contain caffeine. Trying to cut down can help.
3. **Exercise.** A great way of letting off steam is to keep physically active. Going to the gym, riding a bike, going for a jog or even power walking can help burn off excess energy. We can sometimes do our best thinking when exercising, so problems are solved more easily.
4. **Learn your triggers.** Each of us is unique. Some people will remain completely calm in a crisis, but can explode in anger when one of their buttons is pressed. The key is to recognise your own triggers and be prepared. For example, if people being late for meetings gets you angry, then when you next go to a meeting, instead of looking for the first person to be late, anticipate that this might happen and tell yourself that it is not important and there might be a good reason for someone to be running late. If you get defensive when criticised, try to invite constructive feedback from people before they have a chance to criticise. Learning your own triggers can be a great help.
5. **Find short term ways to defuse the situation.** You might have heard of the technique of counting to 10 or going for a walk. Do what works for you.



6. **Learn the art of re-framing.** We're not talking picture frames here, but rather, looking at a situation in a different way. If we suffer road rage because when another driver overtakes us we assume it's because they are accusing us of driving too slowly, we could pause and think about it another way. Perhaps they are in a hurry to get to a hospital appointment or are picking up a child from a carer. Perhaps they are stressed and the problem is therefore theirs, not yours.
  
7. **Talk to a professional.** Understanding ourselves better by talking with a professional can help us identify techniques that will work for us. A trained psychologist can help explain how anger works and what to do about it. However, just talking about the issue is also a great release for many people, and it helps to realise that we're not alone and it is a very common issue.

*Article written by David Craigie, a Chartered Occupational Psychologist, Registered Coaching Psychologist and co-founder of the Craigie Partnership.*

We hope you will find these tips to be helpful. If you would like to make an appointment with David Craigie then contact the Craigie Partnership on 0131 215 1066 or email [info@craigiepartnership.co.uk](mailto:info@craigiepartnership.co.uk)

This article is part of a series of self-help articles written by Psychologists at the Craigie Partnership. The full series includes:

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