



recovery

STOP STOP STOP STOP STOP

Putting the Brakes On: Tips for controlling your anger

Feeling angry is the way your body prepares for a fight. When you get angry, adrenaline and other hormones are released into the blood stream, so your blood pressure rises and you are ready for “fight or flight.”

Hostility is the state of being ready for a fight all the time. Feeling hostile keeps your blood pressure high and may increase your risk for heart attack and other illnesses. Being hostile also isolates you from other people.

The way you express your anger can affect many areas of your life. Your anger can help you make positive changes in your life - or it can get you into trouble. Your anger and hostility don't have to cause you problems. There are ways you can keep these feelings from controlling you.

Notice when you are getting angry. Many people deny or ignore the fact they are angry. Ignoring anger doesn't make it go away. Instead, unexpressed anger shows up as physical problems such as headaches and stomach aches, or emotional problems such as depression and anxiety.

Don't let anger and hostility build up. Some people notice when they're angry, but choose not to do anything about it. Unfortunately, the anger doesn't go away. It builds until a person “blows up”, often over something minor.

Pinpoint the cause of the anger.

Try to understand what is making you angry and make that your focus. If you're angry at your boss, don't take it out on your family.

Forgive and forget. Disagreements are a normal part of relationships, but holding a grudge doesn't help anyone. Once you've let go of your anger, forget about it and move on to more positive feelings. Forgiving the other person helps lower blood pressure and ease muscle tension, so you can feel more relaxed.

Read books on anger and how to handle it. Much has been written about anger. Many books offer tips and exercises to help you identify your anger and express it appropriately. Your library or community mental health center can provide you with resources.

Understand the real feelings behind the anger. Some people turn other feelings into anger. Guilt, insecurity and sadness may show as anger. Unless you recognize the feelings behind your anger, you can't deal with the real issues.

Learn healthy ways to express anger. It usually isn't the anger that gets us into trouble, but rather, the way we express it. Here are some suggestions for expressing anger appropriately:

- Before you blow-up, count to ten. It gives your body and emotions a chance to calm down.

