

# 10 Time-Tested Tips to Tame Your Anger

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Ever feel like you're about to explode when a teacher tells you to do something that you *really* don't want to do? Or maybe your heart starts racing every time you get an assignment that feels impossible to do? Yeah, we've all been there. Though anger and frustration can often feel like very intense and overwhelming emotions, are completely normal; and believe it or not, as long as they are handled in a productive way, they can actually be healthy!



On the other hand, not handling our anger and frustration constructively can not only be detrimental to our mental and physical health, but it can mess up our relationships, and even negatively affect our performance. So it is extremely important for us to learn to tame our anger and frustration; and here are 10 tips to start.

**Say nothing & do nothing** - When you're really mad, it's easy to blurt out stuff you'll later regret. So, if you're boiling over, the first thing you should do is nothing. Take a timeout to breathe. Take a deep breath (or even ten!). Inhale. Fill your lungs with air. Then exhale slowly. Taking a timeout will give yourself and the other person time to cool down, which will keep the situation from getting worse.

**Express your feelings appropriately** - After you've calmed down a bit, you will be able to think more clearly. This is the perfect time to talk to someone about how you feel. Maybe ask the other person for a private chat. Tell them what's bugging you in a calm but clear way (more on this in #6). Say what's on your mind without picking fights or being mean.

**Move** - Sometimes calming down is HARD. Physical activity can be extremely helpful. Go for a walk or run. Knock out some push-ups or even do some jumping jacks if you can. Moving helps burn off those stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol, which will, in turn, help to calm you down.

**Comply first, negotiate later** - If you're asked to do something you really hate, do it first and then talk about it later. Following orders right away (as long as they're lawful!) makes it easier to get what you want when you negotiate afterward.

**Identify possible solutions** - Instead of staying mad about what happened, focus on solving the problem. Look for ways to fix things instead of dwelling on what made you upset. It helps settle those angry feelings.

**Stick with 'I' statements** - Blaming others just makes things worse! Use "I" statements to express how you feel without sounding accusative: "I'm upset because I have 30 math problems" is better than "You always give us too much work!"

**Don't hold a grudge** - Forgiveness is like magic! Holding onto grudges only makes you bitter and makes you feel more stressed out. On the other hand, focus on moving forward; and let bygones be bygones.

**Try humor or even music** - Lightening up can be super helpful. Cracking jokes or listening to some calming tunes can turn things around entirely! When joking, be sure to avoid sarcasm. Sarcasm might offend the other person, which is likely to hurt the situation more than help it.

**Practice relaxation skills** - Try techniques like deep breathing or imagining peaceful scenes when anger and frustration hit you hard. Repeat calming phrases to yourself like "I'm okay" or "Take it easy" can promote relaxation. Even yoga poses can help!

**Seek help** - Managing strong emotions isn't easy. If calming yourself gets too tough, ask for support from a teacher, a trusted friend, or even an adult in the Wellness Center (but make sure to get permission first before you go).

It is impossible to avoid ever feeling frustrated or angry. These emotions are just as natural to us as joy and happiness. Nonetheless, learning to effectively handle anger and emotion is extremely beneficial. Doing so will strengthen our relationships, improve our mental and physical health, and increase our self-esteem; all of which are crucial ingredients for a happy and successful life. (687)