

## **Ten Suggestions for Controlling Anger**

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One of the biggest problems you might have after a brain injury is with controlling anger. This can be caused by physical damage to your brain and/or stress, worry and depression. While anger can create many problems, it is often treated very effectively. Here are ten things that might help!

1. Ask for help from family members, supervisors, and friends. They can often let you know when you get mad. This is important because you may not realize when you are becoming loud, angry, and upset.
2. Family members and others can give you suggestions about what to do when you become angry. Others can remind you to take a walk, breathe deeply, or do whatever calms you down. It is important to try to not get mad at these people when they help you in this way. As you learn to control your own temper, others will need to give you fewer reminders.
3. Ask others to be concrete and specific when they give you suggestions. Instead of saying, "You're getting angry so you better calm down," they might say something like, "Your voice is getting loud and you're waving your arms. Maybe it's time to go on a short walk." This way you will know exactly what you are doing that is bothering others and what you might do about it.
4. Get enough rest. Fatigue may make it especially likely that you will lose your temper. If you can, sleep later in the mornings and take a catnap during the day.
5. Don't drink alcohol. Even one drink might make it much more likely that you will get mad.
6. Carry a list of the things you can do to keep calm. This list might include some of the suggestions from this sheet, as well as other ways that work for you. Read the list every day. Keep it in the same place at all times (like in your top shirt pocket, in your billfold with your paper money, or in your memory notebook.)
7. Get away from what is making you angry. Have a haven such as a den, backyard, or even a bathroom where you can be by yourself when you get angry.
8. Frequently remind yourself to pay attention to your own behavior. Write a note or set the alarm in your watch to remind yourself to look for signs that you are getting angry. Pay attention to such things as your tone of voice, muscle tension and facial expression.
9. Try to stop your anger early, before it gets out of hand. Its much easier to calm yourself down when you first start to get mad than later on when you have already built up a head of steam.
10. Talk to your physician about medication to help control your temper. Sometimes, medication can help people stay calm or control their anger.