

When thinking about mindfulness, images of meditating and practicing yoga may come to mind. But mindfulness techniques can also be used to help you manage your anger. Unexpressed anger can result in all sorts of physical and emotional issues so it's critical that we find a way to channel that energy in a more productive way.

Do something productive and physical: Notice the word “productive” in this tip. It won't make much sense to physically beat the object of your anger (whether it's a person or an object). But you can get out some of your frustration by doing something physically challenging. Run, go to the gym, take a hot yoga class, or even visit a boxing gym. Getting your adrenaline level up along with a flood of calming endorphins will help you feel centered, clear, and focused.

Make a list of your triggers: One of the hallmarks of living mindfully is to be conscious. Rather than moving through life as a ball of unmindful reactions, mindfulness asks us to be aware and live with our eyes open. When it comes to problems with recurring anger, the first step is to identify your triggers. Make a list of things that set you off and get your blood boiling. This is only the first step but is an important one in managing anger.

Create new reactions: Once you have an idea of what sets you off, the next step is to find some new reactions to each trigger. If one of your triggers is a person, like your spouse or co-worker, find new ways to manage that relationship. If having a heart-to-heart conversation is out of the question, find other ways to deal with it. Make a list, talk to a friend, counselor or therapist and be creative.

Give up the urge to be right: Deepak Chopra talks about the approach of giving up our feelings of self-importance and the need to be 'right.' When that person cuts us off while driving or a co-worker drops the ball on a project, instead of using all your energy to convince them of your side, let it go. Think about other ways you can use that energy to do something for yourself.

Imagine a different way: While the idea of meditating may not interest you, the idea of visualizing yourself acting in a different way might. Close your eyes and imagine yourself in one of your trigger situations. Then, “see” yourself acting differently than you usually do. See it in your mind's eye and use that as the start of making a new approach.

Get to the root of it. While anger is a powerful emotion, the root cause is usually fear. Some believe that there are really only two core emotions, fear and love, and everything else we experience is an extension of one of those. Take the time to get underneath your reactions and identify your fear. It could be fear of being alone, fear of being hurt or fear of failure. This is hard work and takes honesty and courage but can help you resolve your outbursts for good.

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We wish you 20 minutes of mindfulness each day!

