

- 1 Carry out a cost-benefit analysis:** List all the benefits (positive consequences) and costs (negative benefits) of losing your temper. Then imagine the benefits and costs of not getting angry.
 - 2 Express yourself assertively:** Ventilating your feelings at the time reduces the tendency for anger and resentment to build up and eventually explode. Practise saying, 'I feel angry because . . .' and own your own anger.
 - 3 Anticipate the triggers:** Keep a personal anger diary. Record the external triggers, your own thoughts, feelings and behaviour, and the effectiveness of various coping strategies. Then try and identify a pattern, count frequency and monitor change.
 - 4 Identify and express the feeling beneath the anger:** (eg, hurt, fear, rejection, threat). For example, a father gets angry with his adolescent step-daughter for criticising him. The feeling of anger is covering up a feeling of hurt and rejection. How much better would it be for that man to say, 'It really hurts me when you say that'. Such a reaction has a much less negative consequence.
 - 5 Identify and challenge your rigid 'should' beliefs:** Examine the core beliefs underlying your anger. It is not other people who make you angry, rather you make yourself angry because of a cluster of beliefs that you have in your head. Research suggests that there is over-use of the 'should' word. Common beliefs include; 'I *should*, must, or ought to be treated in a particular way', 'People *should* behave in a particular way', 'the world *should* be just and fair'. Alongside this, there are also beliefs that, 'who ever has done this to me *should* be chastised or punished in some way'. The more rigid these beliefs, the more likely that there will be frustration and a surge of anger. Identify and challenge some of these beliefs, soften them up, try to substitute 'it would be nice if' for 'should'. Alternatively, ask yourself 'why should this be so?'
 - 6 Prepare positive self-statements:** This involves identifying key thoughts that you can write down and then repeat to yourself at times of high provocation. An example might be a parent trying to prevent himself from getting angry with his children. The three key self statements all begin with the letter 'C', which makes recall easier: 'they are just **children**, just playing', 'this is a real **challenge**, treat it as a challenge', 'stay **calm**, try to stay relaxed'. Other key self statements might include, 'don't take it personally', or, 'I don't need to prove myself'. If you can conjure up these thoughts in that split second before anger takes off, you may be able to stay in control.
 - 7 Learn to relax:** Learn a muscle relaxation exercise.
 - 8 Manage your stress:** Do not allow unfinished business to build up, look after your own needs, maintain a balance in your life.
- 9 Develop a calming routine:** If you notice yourself getting physically tense this should be your cue to go through the following routine.

 - a Speech – speak slowly in a calm voice.
 - b Distance – take a few steps backwards.
 - c Relax your muscles – drop your shoulders, loosen your hands, relax your jaw.
 - d Slow breathing – take 2 or 3 slow, deep breaths, from your stomach not your chest.
 - e Distraction – count to ten or imagine a peaceful scene.
 - f Humour – attempt to see the funny side of the situation.
 - g Put yourself in the other person's shoes.
- 10 Be Prepared:** Prepare and rehearse how you will react in difficult situations
 - 11 Leave the situation:** If you feel you are 'losing it', remove yourself from the situation and allow yourself to calm down before returning.