

What Is Anger Doing to Us?

According to Redford Williams, author of **Life Skills**:

“The question isn’t whether to let it out or hold it in. Either way, anger kills.”

Anger causes this kind of damage as a result of an overactive fight or flight response. When you feel threatened, your body responds with a surge of chemicals that put your body on the alert.

Your body gives you signals to tell you how it feels when you become angry. If you fail to listen to your body, you can risk serious health problems.

If we will look closely at what anger is doing to us, perhaps we will rethink how to react in certain situations.

1. Tension

Tension is the first stage in the anger process. When your muscles tighten and you get headaches or chest tension, you should recognize that tension is high.

Over time, tension lets you know that you’re wearing down, and illness in the form of physical or emotional breakdown is the final result.

2. Physical Effects

Anger escalation brings on physical effects that can lead to chronic illness, such as:

- Increased blood glucose, cholesterol, heart rate, and blood pressure
- Shallow, difficult breathing (often the first reaction is to hold the breath)
- Back, neck, and head pain
- Sweating, flushing of skin, and changes in body temperature
- Muscle rigidity (shoulders, jaw, arms, legs, fists, stomach)
- Agitation/shaking
- Increased risk of heart attack and stroke
- Lowered immune functioning
- Ulcers
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Lupus
- Arthritis

3. Mental Effects

The mental effects of anger include:

- Difficulty concentrating
- Poor performance
- Sleeplessness
- Lack of focus

All of these can lead to other emotional problems such as:

- Depression
- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Nervousness
- Worry

4. Behavioral Effects

The behavioral effects of anger can include:

- Drug use
- Overeating
- Alcoholism
- Smoking
- Restlessness
- Impulsiveness
- Compulsiveness
- Withdrawal
- Isolation

5. Organizational Effects

The organizational effects of chronic anger include:

- Job burnout
- Dissatisfaction
- Lawsuits
- Poor relationships
- Job turnover
- Accidents

The inability to handle anger on the job can lead to a whole list of consequences – all bad – which can include:

- Termination
- Early retirement
- Being passed up for a promotion
- Reduced productivity
- A poor working climate

We often become upset when there is no intention to harm or hurt us or someone or something we care about. We become angry because we perceive the situation as other than what it is. Your distorted view triggers your anger thoughts and brings about a negative situation.

Anger is too much of a problem when:

- You are angry too often.
- It is too strong a feeling.
- It leads to aggressive behavior.
- It rules your life.