

# Conquering Anger and Irritability

Relevant to: Depression:  Anxiety:  Irritability/Anger:  General emotional control: 

If you have problems with anger or irritability – and millions of people do have – then it's great that you're reading this. You stand to benefit a great deal by sorting it out.



Curiously, many people have mixed feelings about resolving their anger and irritability. Maybe they don't want to be 'docile' or 'an easy touch', and that is understandable enough. Even so, there is a happy medium where you are neither 'docile' nor 'irritable'. To clarify your thoughts, have a look at these questions ...

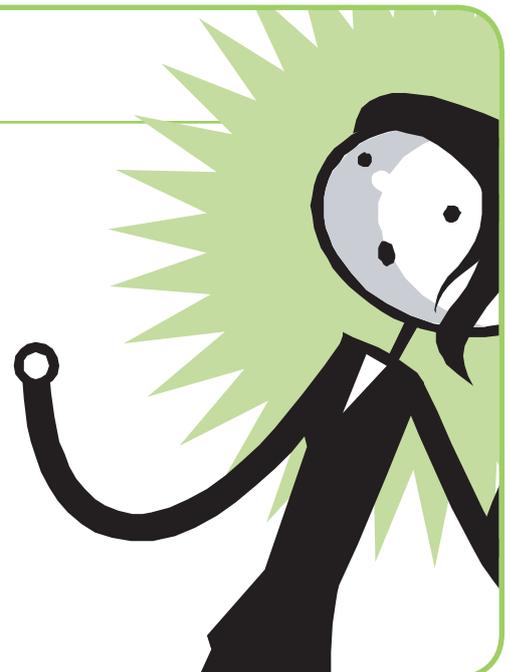
- What effect has your anger/irritability had, so far?
- What do you think will happen if you carry on being angry/irritable forever?
- What would be the pay offs of getting rid of your anger/irritability in a good way?

## Case study: Andrea

Andrea, aged 25, was inclined to be 'irritable'. That is, she would 'snap' at her friends for the slightest reason. In truth, she wasn't always like this, sometimes she was in a 'worse mood' than at other times. And at those bad times she was more likely to snap.

So, for example, she would be out at a nice social evening, and then somebody would say something which Andrea took offence at and she would 'snap their head off'. Unsurprisingly, although people tried to laugh this off, it tended to ruin the evening for people.

The result for Andrea was that her friends tended to exclude her from such events and she gradually had fewer and fewer friends. This was a pity, because Andrea was, at heart, a thoroughly good and kind person, and when she found she had only two real friends left, she came into therapy.



The sessions in the course you are on will cover all the major things to do about anger and irritability but here are some thoughts to ponder ...

### Address biological factors.

Factors such as sleep (about 7 hours), not drinking too much alcohol, taking exercise everyday and eating a balanced diet, are incredibly important.

### A good example.

Do you know someone who is assertive and yet good-natured? If so, make a conscious effort to copy what he or she does. Especially when you feel irritated!

### Straightening out twisted thinking.

When people irritate us, it is all too easy to imagine they're doing it deliberately! It certainly seems that way. And yet it almost never is! That simple realisation can be really helpful for us. After all, if somebody isn't doing something deliberately then what is the point in being irritated at them or snapping at them?



### Case study.

Bill used to drink in what he told us was a 'rough' pub. He was forever getting into fights and he was worried that he'd eventually do someone some serious damage and be in serious trouble himself. So, he decided to go drinking in 'a better class of pub'.

That worked well for a while until one evening the barman said something which Bill judged to be 'out of order' and he hit him so hard that a lot of damage was done and Bill ended up in prison.

It was a pity for Bill because he wasn't really a bad man, and his idea of moving to a different pub wasn't really a bad idea. However, he did need to do a bit more work on his anger and irritability to make things turn out ok for him in the end.

### Discussion.

- What were your answers to the questions on the previous page?
- What do you think of the two case studies – do you know people like Andrea or Bill?
- What do you think of the general ideas for controlling irritability/anger on this sheet?
- When have you managed to control your irritability/anger? How did you do it?

### Project:

Ponder the information on page 1 about being keen to sort out the anger and irritability. See if you can become clear in your mind that this is something important to do.

### Mythbuster:

**It's best to just get everything out – don't hang back. Not True.**

The world is full of people who have done just this and ended up in serious trouble one way or another. It's best to be aware of your emotions but also in control of them.