

Strategies for extracting yourself from an argument



Being part of a vigorous debate on topics you're passionate about can be stimulating. There's merit in exchanging viewpoints respectfully, especially with individuals who may have opposing perspectives.

However, there is a distinct difference when debates turn into arguments. Arguments can cause damage and hurt feelings, often accompanied by raised voices and insults, potentially leading to the collapse of strong friendships.

Learning how to withdraw peacefully

from a heated argument is a valuable skill, particularly if it's an argument you had no intention of joining in the first place.

Here are several strategies from Psychology Today to help you disengage:

1. Recognize that you have the option to choose whether to participate in an argument.
2. When you sense a conversation starting to escalate negatively, stop. Doing so before you react angrily or

shout can significantly contribute to resolving the situation amicably. This doesn't mean you lose the opportunity to express your views—just that this isn't the right time. By resisting the urge to respond impulsively and preferring to communicate when all parties are receptive, you aim for mutual understanding instead of engaging in a battle of egos.

3. Take a moment to reflect before continuing the conversation. If appropriate, suggest continuing at a later time when emotions have settled. "Maybe we can discuss this again another time when we're both more relaxed."

4. No matter what, try to stay calm and composed. Throughout the process, maintain a calm and composed demeanour. This helps to de-escalate the situation and shows that you are in control of your emotions.

It's a natural response to become defensive under attack. As discussions verge into disputes, the chances diminish that your point will be acknowledged. Reminding yourself to "disengage" allows you to observe and assess the situation, giving you the time to consider if the issue is worth further pursuit.

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How to keep our lungs healthy

If you are one of the many lucky ones who have never had issues with your lungs and with your breathing, knock on wood that your lungs remain healthy.

Genetics, air pollution, cleaning solutions, smoking, and sleep disorders put our lungs at risk. Some risk factors may be unavoidable, but some basic knowledge and prevention tips can help limit these threats.

Here are a few things to keep in mind from lung.ca:

If you smoke, now is the time to quit.

Smokers, you know this, but it bears repeating. Smoking damages your lungs and increases your risk for a number of diseases including lung cancer and COPD. This is because combustion of materials releases harmful substances into your lungs. If you have never smoked, don't start. Learn more about how to quit including the many effective medications and smoking cessation programs that work. Don't allow smoking in your home, in the car, or at work. Also stay away from third-hand smoke—residual tobacco fumes that adhere to walls and

furniture that—along with indoor pollutants to form lung-damaging compounds.

Clean house. Air fresheners, mold, pet dander, and construction materials all pose a potential problem. Turn on the exhaust fan when you cook and avoid using aerosol products like hair spray. Change your furnace air filter seasonally. Learn about indoor air pollution and what you can do to reduce your exposure.

Take the stairs. Do something active for 30 minutes each day to lighten the load on your lungs and increase the efficiency of oxygen transportation and metabolism. Walk around the building, bike around your neighbourhood, or even run in place for a bit.

Be aware of the air. People with lung diseases such as asthma and COPD need to pay particular attention to the levels of air pollution called particulates — tiny solid or liquid particles — in the environment and limit their outdoor exposure when levels are high. Visit <https://aqicn.org/> to check the air quality in your area.

Calming your mind: Effective strategies

Sometimes situations can overwhelm us and, as hard as we might try, it's hard to stop the cycle of worry. It feels like there's no way out, but how can we break free? Psychology Today experts suggest that ignoring anxious thoughts is futile; they often return with greater force. Instead, we should adopt mindfulness and cognitive therapy techniques:

Cognitive distancing

Just as we've adopted social distancing, consider cognitive distancing. View your worrying as mere speculation, not certainty. Acknowledge that your brain is trying to anticipate hazards, but possible outcomes aren't guaranteed. Examine the evidence objectively—what are the real chances of negative events occurring, and could positive outcomes arise instead?

Engage in mindfulness

Instead of instinctively responding to each thought, observe them passively. Imagine your thoughts as clouds drifting across the sky—notice which ones grab your attention and which you shy away from. Attempt to watch your thoughts without getting entangled or reacting to them.

Take action

Endlessly stressing over problems without seeking solutions only feeds your anxiety, potentially paralyzing you from taking action. Break this cycle by physically moving around or switching to a different task. This change can offer you a fresh perspective when you return to the issue.

Assess your thoughts

A thought being true does not necessarily make it beneficial. Consistently focusing on negative truths can hinder motivation. For instance, if the odds of landing a desired job after study are low, fixating on these statistics might discourage you from bothering to learn. Distinguish between reality and productive thinking; concentrate on constructive thoughts and let go of the rest.



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Approaches to manage anxiety attacks

Experiencing anxiety can be a daunting sensation that suddenly can make your heart pound and induce a sense of panic and discomfort. Many people grappling with anxiety are in search of ways to alleviate these challenging emotions. Addressing anxiety requires attention to your physical, social, cognitive, and emotional well-being.

Here are some strategies that might aid in coping:

Get out of your head and tune into the physical world through your senses.

Next time your head is spinning with anxious thoughts, give the 5-4-3-2-1 technique a try. First, name five things you can see. Then, name four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste. This grounding technique reduces anxiety by redirecting your focus from distressing thoughts to the present moment.

Reach out

Consider setting up a profile on a mental health support site or discussion group which is readily available to you. It might be easier than trying to call friends or family if you feel uncomfortable explaining your feelings to them. If however, you have someone close to you who you trust, reach out to them. You might also consider reaching out to a distress line, especially if you are worried about your ability to safely manage the overwhelming feelings on your own. Even AI apps designed to provide companionship and mental health support can help you feel heard and provide guidance when anxiety symptoms strike.

Challenge twisted thinking

Terrible things can and do happen, of course. Yet much suffering is caused by irrational thinking. When an anxious thought pops up, start by jotting it down. Then, take a closer look at it: What's the evidence that supports this thought, and what evidence goes against it? You might notice some patterns, such as acting as if you can read other people's thoughts and intentions. Once you've dissected the thought, try to replace it with something more balanced and realistic. For example, if you're thinking, "I'm going to fail at this task," remind yourself of your past successes and the skills you bring to the table. By regularly practicing this, you'll find that those anxious thoughts lose their grip, helping you develop a more positive and rational mindset.

Be your own best friend

What would you do if your best friend was having a panic attack or was having trouble managing their feelings of anxiety? If your impulse is to offer a listening ear, compassionate words or even just your undivided attention, would you be willing to offer these same loving responses to yourself? You deserve to be treated with empathy and respect by the one person who knows, more than anyone else, exactly what you are going through and exactly what you need to feel supported- you. Take time to really tune in to the way you are feeling and allow yourself the space to fully honour your needs- just as you wouldn't rush a close friend or multitask while listening to them.

**Always consult with a health care practitioner*

Assisting loved ones with depression

It's common to experience highs and lows. Some days everything seems possible, while on other days getting out of bed might feel like a victory.

For those dealing with depression, every day can pose significant challenges. If you love someone with this condition, it's likely a difficult journey for both of you. You could feel a range of emotions, such as helplessness, frustration, anger, fear, guilt, or sadness, which are normal reactions.

Your presence and support, however, are vital for your loved one. You can assist them in managing the symptoms of depression, battling negative thoughts, and restoring their zest for life. Begin by educating yourself about depression and the best ways to communicate with your loved one.

At the same time, don't neglect your own emotional health, as it is essential for providing the comprehensive support they require.

Here are key insights from helpguide.org to keep in mind:

Depression is a severe disorder. Don't underestimate the seriousness of depression. It saps an individual's energy, hope, and motivation. One cannot overcome depression by willpower alone.

Symptoms of depression are not a reflection of personal feelings. Depression makes deep emotional connections hard, even towards loved ones. It's not uncommon for people with depression to utter hurtful words or express anger. Understand this behaviour is an effect of the depression, not the person you care for, so avoid taking it personally.

Concealing the issue doesn't help resolve it. Making excuses, hiding the problem, or deceiving others for someone who is depressed can impede their path to seeking help.

A person with depression is not being lazy. The grip of depression can make the mere thought of engaging in helpful activities seem too tiring or daunting. Patience is crucial as you guide your loved one toward the initial steps on the road to improvement.

You are unable to "cure" someone else's depression. Despite your desire to help, you can't solve their depression for them. You're neither at fault for their suffering nor responsible for their happiness. Although you can provide support, the responsibility for treating depression rests with the individual.



Ways to get a good night's rest

Good sleep is vital for a healthy mind and body. The experts at the University of Michigan's School of Public Health say that when you switch off, your body gets fully switched on. It is busy working hard to repair your cells and make your body work better.

Your brain is busy too. It's talking to your nerves, cataloging and organizing data, and triggering the release of needed hormones and proteins.

The new pathways your brain forms during sleep improve your ability to think, make better choices and decisions, and much more. It helps you grasp new information more quickly. Well rested, you are more attentive with better creativity and ability to perform at higher levels.

Poor sleep does the opposite. You find it hard to decide and you can't control your emotions as well. Lack of sleep can even lead to harmful, risky behaviours. Make changes and develop healthy nighttime routines and sleep habits to avoid these problems, not only for you but for your kids as well.

A healthy evening routine is a good place to start. Your body works on circadian rhythms and establishing a restful environment in the time before sleep helps with changing over from the day's chaos to restful evening time.

Have dinner and enjoy a little time with subdued lighting, and some relaxing music or sounds. Don't exercise or use drinks with caffeine or alcohol. It stimulates your nervous system and releases hormones that make your body feel you should be awake. Some people enjoy herbal teas like chamomile before bed to relax.

Making your bedroom into a sleep sanctuary is easy and won't cost a lot. Turn off flashing or noisy electronic devices. Install an inexpensive white noise generator or turn on a fan to create a soothing soundscape in the room.

Put up dark blinds or a blackout curtain to filter out unwanted light. If needed, paint the rooms in restful pastel shades and make sure night lights are kid-sleep-friendly. Buy those that offer enough light to prevent fear of the dark without too much light shining.

Temperature is important too. Keep bedrooms around 20 degrees celsius and make sure bedding is cool and comfortable. A favourite stuffed friend keeps the bad dreams away for most kids and some adults too.

Follow this simple mantra. Keep it dark, cool, and quiet so that you and your kids can stop waking up sore and tired.

Ideas to make your bathroom safe

Is the bathroom the most dangerous place in your house? You may not know it, it but the modern home, specifically bathrooms, contain many hidden health and safety risks.

Here are some tips for making your bathroom a safe place:

- Prevent mold growth by installing an adequate bathroom ventilation fan. Removing the excess moisture helps deprive fungi of the moisture they need to grow.
- Apply inexpensive liquid rubber coating to suspect surfaces. The material is easy to apply and adding sealing tape and flashing around places the walls meet the floor and in corners again deprives the mold of living spaces.
- Clean regularly with adequate, preferably natural cleaning solutions. White vinegar, baking soda, and hydrogen peroxide are all effective mold killers without the formaldehyde, bleaches, or harsh chemicals many commercial cleaners contain.
- Make sure bathrooms are safe for everyone in your home. Get those damaged tiles replaced and put nonslip surfaces down in the tub and shower. There are a range of attractive and affordable tub and shower tapes and stickers that help stop falling on slippery surfaces. Look online for professional, plumber-recommended brands that work well and will last longer.
- Electric shocks are another common bathroom occurrence. This is sometimes because of unsafe use of appliances like hair dryers and electric shavers and sometimes because of the wrong type of outlet is installed. If you don't have ground fault circuit interrupter outlets, GFCIs, installed you should call an electrician right away. The older-style outlets are unsafe and cannot meet modern building codes.

If you have asthma or serious allergies, it's vital to manage excess moisture-laden air in your bathroom. Too much water can cause bronchoconstriction and aggravated asthma attacks. Good ventilation is your best solution. An expert can handle any electrical connection and ducting needed without worry.



Small steps lead to lifetime wellness

Warm breezes and longer days encourage us to be outdoors, take in fresh air, and feeling as sunny as it is outside. This is what wellness is all about. All it takes is the smallest and consistent of efforts to bring the best results.

To lead a happy and healthy life, start by giving your well-being the importance it deserves. Start with these small but positive steps:

Take some fresh air. With many of us having to spend time indoors, it has become a rare deal to go out and spend some time with nature. Research shows that getting fresh air affects the levels of serotonin that make us feel good about ourselves. Fresh air is good for your lungs and skin, it can improve your blood pressure and heart rate, and relieves stress and anxiety. Bottom line: fresh air can make you happy.

Play happy songs. Music is known to evoke all kinds of emotions. It is very actionable and can be used to manipulate your mood. Make a playlist of your favourite upbeat and happy songs and play it in the morning to set the tone for the rest of the day.

Do something new every day. Routines are boring and unhealthy. Doing the same thing repeatedly is going to

bring monotony in your life. Try doing something new every single day. Don't complicate, start with small things like taking a different route to work, having coffee instead of tea, or reading for an hour instead of watching tv. Attempting new things can make life more exciting, is good for your brain and mental strength. It will give you a great sense of accomplishment.

Sit up straight. The way you stand, sit, and walk is also a part of your well-being and health care. If you are always slouching, you need to take care of your posture because not doing so could result in physical deformities later in life. To maintain a good posture, place your body in a neutral position so that your pelvis, trunk, and head are in alignment. It is an optimal position that helps you to work efficiently even for long hours.

Eat more fruits and green salads. Make time for healthy eating otherwise you may have to waste time on illness. About 70-80% of health is eating the right food at the right time. Understand your body type and its nutritional needs. Leafy greens and fruits are a great source of natural fibre, vitamins, and minerals. Eat a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables — it's both easy and delicious.

From heartbreak to happy

Breakups aren't fun and, if you're struggling with the end of a romance, know that you're not alone. It's normal to grieve for a relationship when it's over, but it's also important to remember that there's light at the end of the tunnel. **Go from heartbreak to happiness with these five steps:**

1. Let yourself grieve

Even if your breakup is for the best, it's crucial you make room for any emotions that come up. Allow yourself to feel sad for those parts of the relationship you'll miss, even if you know it's the right choice.

2. Write down your feelings

Bottling up your thoughts never works. Writing down your feelings might be the outlet you need. Some people find writing fake letters a great way to release emotions and thoughts. Get out what you want to say, let yourself be utterly honest, and then hide it away somewhere that only you can see it. Write as many letters as you need to until those angry, sad, and hurt emotions begin to ease, and make room for happiness.

3. Get back to socializing

Sitting with your emotions is important if you want to heal from a breakup, but at the same time, you don't want them to take over. Make sure that during the painful parts of the process, you're still getting out there and living life. Get in touch with friends and family to arrange social activities that you enjoy, even if it's just a chat over a cup of coffee or a video call after work.

4. Treat yourself to self-care

A breakup provides the perfect opportunity to get back in touch with "you". Give yourself some self-love and discover the activities that make you feel happy on your own. This is such a fulfilling practice that can unlock long-lasting joy in your life. Self-care can be simple, like carving out space in the day to read a book or journal your thoughts.

5. Be okay with set backs

You've been feeling good all week and then you go back to an empty house on Friday night and it all just - hits. This is okay. Healing from a relationship isn't necessarily a straight path towards happiness and you're likely to face setbacks along the way. Don't beat yourself up over feeling sad. Take the time to embrace your emotions. When you're ready, get back up and carry on.

However, it is important to know the difference between emotions from a breakup and mental health issues. If you find that for more than two weeks you can't find joy in anything, you struggle to get out of bed, or you find it difficult to sleep and eat, it's a good idea to get in touch with a professional. Talking through your emotions with a therapist will make your path to happy days a lot easier.

3 ways people living with HIV can access support



(NC) When faced with a life-changing diagnosis, such as HIV, you may experience unique challenges, from physical health concerns to psychological and social ones. Yet, among these challenges, you may find support systems that provide guidance and empowerment. If you or someone you love is looking for HIV support options, here are three places to start.

Community-based organizations:

There are many local organizations that specialize in services tailored to individuals living with HIV. These include

resources like support groups, counselling services, educational workshops and advocacy initiatives.

Health-care providers: Those on the front lines of health care play a pivotal role in facilitating HIV support. In addition to medical treatment, health-care providers offer services such as mental health counselling, medication support and referrals to specialized care facilities. Building a strong rapport with your care team helps ensure ongoing support and guidance.

Online support platforms: Turning to online support platforms designed for individuals affected by HIV is a great way to build a community with others facing similar experiences. Websites, forums and social media support groups offer opportunities to share information on HIV treatment, research advancements and community events, seek guidance and build solidarity, while providing a sense of belonging.

energyzone

All foods can provide you an energy burst but in different ways. Sugary drinks, candy, and pastries put too much fuel (sugar) into your blood too quickly. The ensuing crash leaves you tired and hungry again. “Complex carbs,” healthy fats, and protein take longer to digest, satisfy your hunger, and provide a slow, steady stream of energy.

Here are two favourites:

Oatmeal

It’s a complex carbohydrate. That means it’s full of fibre and nutrients. Oatmeal is slower to digest and supplies energy evenly instead of all at once. A bowl in the morning will keep you going for hours.

Foods for exercise

The best fuel for exercise is carbohydrates, preferably “complex” ones like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Healthy fats from fish, nuts, vegetable oils, and avocados can help fuel endurance sports like long-distance running. Protein can help boost an immune system worn down by exercise.

Choose the right energy boosters!



Add more fruit and vegetables to your diet

Most of us know that eating more produce will help us obtain healthy eating habits but consuming at least five daily servings of fresh fruits and veggies can seem like a challenge.

If you’re trying to up your produce intake, check out these simple tips for increasing your daily fibre, vitamins and minerals:

Eat at least one dark green vegetable (such as broccoli, green beans or spinach) each day.

When fresh vegetables and fruit are not in season, choose frozen or canned options that are low in sodium, fat and added sugar.

Choose to eat vegetables and fruit more often than juice.

Add berries and other fruit to whole grain cereal or yogurt.

Cook omelettes and frittatas with vegetables like peppers, mushrooms and broccoli.

Bake kale or thinly sliced zucchini as a substitute for potato chips.

Try spiralized vegetables like zucchini and sweet potatoes instead of pasta noodles.

Add fruits and leafy greens to smoothies.

Swap applesauce for oil when baking.

Mash cauliflower instead of potatoes as a veggie side dish.

Mix a variety of vegetables into soups and other one-pot meals.

Ask for a side of vegetables instead of bread or fries at a restaurant.

Try one new fruit or vegetable each week, or a recipe that uses these items in a new way.

