

<http://www.sun-sentinel.com/features/health/orl-coolit06mar21,0,1657036.story?coll=sfla-news-health> WHAT MAKES US TICK Anger management - it's good medicine
You're cut off in traffic, arrive home late, then storm out of the car. Oops, look out for that skateboard . . . you're about to become a statistic.

Darryl E. Owens
Sentinel Staff Writer March 21, 2006

The next time someone ticks you off, think twice about blowing your stack. Doing so might just land you in the emergency room.

That's because episodic anger boosts the risk of injury by as much as 60 percent, a study suggests. And compared with women, furious men face double the danger of winding up in a world of hurt.

In the study, 2,446 patients at three Missouri emergency rooms described their emotional states before their injuries, applying labels such as excited, irritable, angry and hostile.

Injury risk jumped 30 percent for "irritable" patients and doubled for "hostile" ones.

"Ordinary degrees of anger increased ordinary injuries" -- and not just the self-inflicted variety, says Dan Vinson, who led the research. The study, published in the *Annals of Family Medicine*, didn't address why mad men are more prone to injury than women, but Vinson, a professor of family and community medicine at the University of Missouri-Columbia, gave this advice for men: Cool it."

Easier said than done.

But Peter Favaro, psychologist and author of *Anger Management: 6 Critical Steps to a Calmer Life* (New Page Books, \$15.99), says practicing self-soothing techniques helps.

In calmer moments, he prescribes "stress inoculations." Imagine tense scenarios and "practice ignoring inappropriate behavior," he says. "Enjoy the feeling of not letting toxic people push your buttons."

If your buttons are pushed, Joyce Morley-Ball, an Atlanta psychotherapist, says one calming trick is sitting, because "people are more empowered to be angry when standing."

And she says old standbys such as deep breathing, retreat and "oral self-talk: 'I am only in control of me; I can't control others and I can't control all situations'" still work.

Susan Gayle (formerly Susan Neri-Friedwald), **founder of the New Behavior Institute in New York, says to praise yourself when you avoid a trip to the ER:**

"Managing a moment brings a sense of pride -- and with it, an inner calm."

A pat on the back, after all, is better than a fist in the wall.

First photo ran on page E1. Darryl E. Owens can be reached at 407-420-5095 or dowens@orlandosentinel.com. Copyright © 2006, Orlando Sentinel