

# Identifying Anger in Your Body

## What to Know

In cartoons, it's easy to recognize when people are angry - they might turn bright red, release steam from their ears, and ball up their fists. Although it's not as obvious, you also have body reactions when you're angry. Some are visible, others are not. Knowing the signs your body shows when you're angry helps you respond in a healthy way. While people may look and feel different when they are angry, the body has similar physiological reactions, including the following:

- Heart rate and blood pressure increase to pump blood to muscles
- Respiration increases to send oxygen to muscles
- Body temperature increases
- Muscles tense, resulting in clenching hands or jaw or grinding teeth
- Perspiration increases
- Faces flushes or gets red

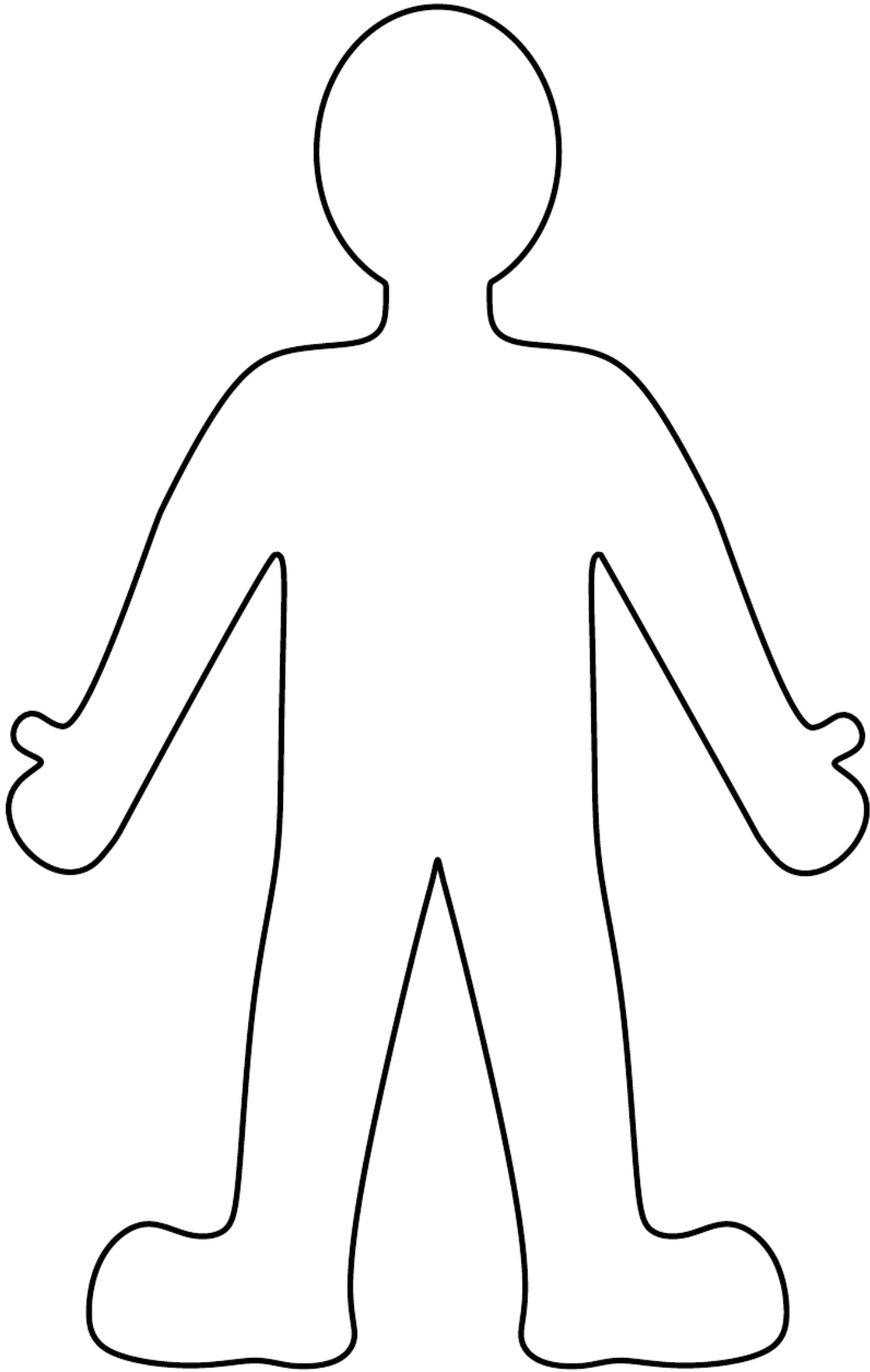
Anger - and the body signs that come along with it - are normal. Managing your anger takes practice and begins with knowing how your body responds. Learning to identify these body signs can help you realize that what you're experiencing is anger. If you can't identify anger, how can you manage it?

## What to Do

Think about a time when you were angry with someone close to you. Can you feel what it was like? Where do you feel it in your body? Imagine the size, shape, temperature, color, and quality anger has.

Using the body sketch on the next page, use colored pencils or markers to draw what you feel on the part of the body where you feel it. Take a deep breath. Sometimes imagining anger can bring the feeling into your body. When the feeling is there, try to accept its presence and keep an open and curious mind about why it is there. Learning how to manage anger can be helpful when you get angry in the future.

Fill in the body sketch, then answer the following questions about when you get angry.



What does anger feel like inside your body? Are you warm or cold?

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Does your head feel different? Are you able to focus?

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When you're angry, can you breathe calmly? Why or why not?

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Do your muscles feel relaxed? Your arms, legs, shoulders, and jaw?

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How does your stomach feel?

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Is it easy to talk to others about your anger? Why or why not?

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Check off any of the following that you do to manage your anger.

- Take deep breaths
- Write down your thoughts
- Use positive self-talk
- Count to ten
- Find something to distract yourself
- Share how you feel with a loved one
- Talk with a friend
- Cry
- Think about good things that can happen
- Do something to calm down. Describe:

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What else do you do to deal with anger? Describe.

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Who can you talk to about your anger?

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