

SAY GOODBYE to Being Hangry

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Many scientists believe that being hangry is a real thing, and not just a catchy hashtag. In fact, hunger causes physical changes similar to many emotions, including anger. Skipping breakfast or taking offense at someone who cuts you off in traffic both increase stress hormones and alter brain processes.

The connection isn't limited to anger either. Hunger can exacerbate other emotions like sadness and fear.

Some researchers believe that the trouble is mostly a matter of being unaware that we're hungry, which makes us more likely to blame our discomfort on someone or something outside of ourselves.

For example, one study found that spouses who were hungry were more likely to stick pins in a voodoo doll that looked like their partner.

Learn to take control of your hunger and your feelings. **Try these ideas for bringing your body and brain back into balance.**

Managing Your Hunger

The ability to recognize hunger signals varies greatly from one individual to another. Similarly, you may experience hunger more intensely than others depending on your lifestyle and metabolism.

Using these strategies will help you manage your hunger:

1. **Eat breakfast.** If you become cranky while waiting for lunchtime, make breakfast a regular habit. Squeeze a nutritious meal into a busy morning by

starting preparations the night before or eating something simple like a cup of Greek yogurt.

- 2. Carry snacks.** Be prepared for traffic jams and long meetings by keeping healthy snacks in your car and office. Fill a cooler with fruit and cheese. Pack a desk drawer with nuts and whole grain crackers.
- 3. Pick real comfort foods.** Do you indulge in donuts and French fries when you're feeling down? Switch to treats that will nourish your brain better than sugar, unhealthy fats, and empty calories. **Choose foods like nuts, berries, and salmon that are rich in vitamins B and D and can enhance your mood.**
- 4. Increase your protein intake.** A diet packed with protein and complex carbohydrates can help fight anger and depression by increasing your levels of serotonin. When you're planning meals and snacks, include some choices from both groups like tofu and fish with vegetables and brown rice.
- 5. Stay on schedule.** A consistent schedule may help if you sometimes forget to eat. Plan your day in advance and block out time to refuel.

Managing Your Anger

While eating is an obvious solution to being hangry, you'll need other options when you're in situations where that's impossible.

If you're stuck in a traffic jam or concerned about the effects of chronic anger, try these strategies:

- 1. Boost your awareness. Just asking yourself if you're hungry can reduce your irritation.** You may find that you're arguing with a coworker because you skipped lunch and not because they're being uncooperative.

2. **Think positive.** Gratitude and optimism can help deflect anger. Look for humor in difficult situations. Focus on the admirable qualities in others.

3. **Talk it over.** Process your frustrations by talking about them with family and friends or a professional counselor. Guide the conversation towards creating solutions rather than complaining.

4. **Advocate for yourself. You're less likely to lose your temper if you know how to stand up for yourself effectively.** Ask for what you need directly and tactfully. Set reasonable boundaries in relationships.

5. **Listen to music.** Any distraction can shift your attention away from what's bothering you, and music is especially powerful. Create a soothing or uplifting playlist for when you're tense.

6. **Work out.** For extra relief, listen to your music while you're running through the park or lifting weights. Physical exercise relieves stress.

7. **Hit pause.** Anger can interfere with your judgment. Stop and think about the consequences before you say or do something you'll regret.

Say goodbye to being hangry. Enhancing your emotional awareness and avoiding excessive hunger will help you to stay happy and peaceful.