

Why Our Tempers Flare in the Summer Heat: An Explanation on Why We Get so Hot Under the Collar

Why does it seem like the summer makes it so much easier to get that much angrier?

Dehydration:

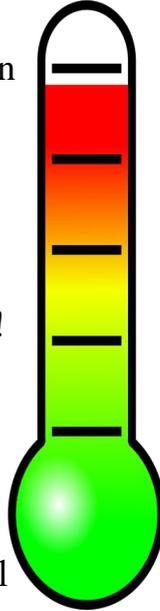
A lack of fluids makes functioning difficult even on the best of days. But when it gets hot and you're sweating more than ever, it's easier to get tired and cranky.

Dehydration leads to high blood pressure which in turn can cause headaches and aggression. A bad combination in the heat!

Activity Restriction:

The best part of summer is being able to go out and have fun with it. But when we can't enjoy the most fundamental part, we get frustrated with being stuck inside and out of the sun.

Think of the way cabin fever makes us feel during winter: cooped up, irritable, and too close for comfort.



Sleep:

We've learned about the importance of sleep in the past, but it's a good reminder to know that poor sleep influences us in the worst ways.

Sleep deprivation causes us to feel grouchy, anxious, and unable to concentrate.

Lack of Control:

We can't change the weather, we can only change ourselves. But even that seems to be a challenge when the thermometer is on the rise.

Our perception also changes. "As temper increases...[our] perception decreases," meaning we can't tell we're more angry when we actually are. And, it's that much easier to over-react.

Let's look at Road Rage for an Example

Anderson argues that hot temperatures make us uncomfortable, which leads to crankiness, and cranky people are irritable and prone to lashing out.

"Numerous fascinating psychological processes might be involved in the typical effect of high temperatures on aggression and violence," Anderson writes. "The simplest and most powerful ones all revolve around the 'crankiness' notion. Being uncomfortable colors the way people see things. Minor insults may be perceived as major ones, inviting (even demanding) retaliation." Anderson goes on to explain how irritable, cranky people are primed for aggressive thoughts and attitudes and quick, impulsive retaliation to perceived offenses. When it's hot and sticky outside, minor provocations – like forgetting to signal or cutting off another vehicle – are more likely to quickly escalate into dangerous retaliatory behavior (like tailgating) or even outright violence.

Put It On Ice:

How to Keep Yourself, and Your Temper, Cool in the Extreme Heat

Avoid Dehydration:

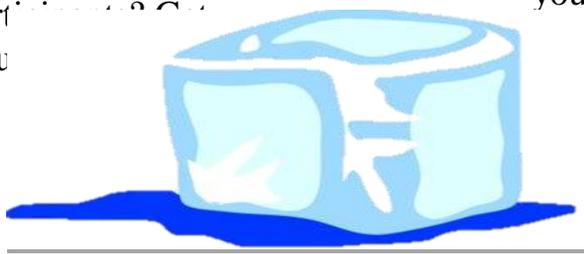
Like we learned above, not getting enough fluids is bad news all around. Water can get boring, but it's absolutely necessary when the mercury is on the rise.

To avoid dehydration, drink at least eight cups of water a day at regular intervals. Drink before you're thirsty, and if water is too plain try ice tea or gatorade to add some variety.

Find A New Hobby:

Exploring new places that are free or low cost can give you a refreshed sense of freedom. Whether indoor or outside, a change of scenery not only gets you out of the house but in a better mindset.

Finding a new hobby is something to keep in mind as well as you visit new places: do they have a free club to join or a program for regular visitors/participants? Curious and check it out!



Get a Full Night's Sleep:

Sleep not only helps the body heal but is also important to our brain function on a daily basis. Since our brain controls everything, giving it the best rest it can get is crucial.

Get a full night's sleep by resting somewhere cool with regular air flow. If your residence doesn't have air conditioning, make sure to get a fan to help keep cool.

Practice Calming Techniques:

Yes, it feels silly to take ten deep breaths, but it works and that's the point! Achieving a better state of mind and not reacting so irrationally means being able to step away and gain back control of what's important.

Practice different ways of gaining back your sense of calm through controlled breathing, working out, or talking with a mentor.

HEALTH INITIATIVE ANNOUNCEMENT!

We'd like to give a big shout out of "CONGRATULATIONS" to all those individuals that had the chance to participate in the 2016 Health Initiative Program! It was a wonderful success and there's so much to be proud of as we all continue to make new goals and achieve them together.

<http://www.today.com/health/heat-waves-lead-hot-tempers-heres-why-6C10436073>

<http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/news/motr/does-hot-weather-fuel-road-rage.html>

If you have questions or want to check out a book from the library, don't hesitate to ask or talk with me after Court!

- Ann Keidatz RN BSN, Jordin Gegare BA