

TIME-OUTS

How to Stop the Violence - NOW!

The **Time-Out** is one method for stopping the violence from now on. This method has been successfully used by many men/women who have attended program. All it takes is your conscientious effort to do this exercise faithfully.

Time-Out: Whenever you feel your anger rising, your body getting tense like it is going to explode, or you begin to feel frustrated or out of control, say out loud to yourself and your wife or lover:

*"I'm beginning to feel angry and I need to take a **Time-Out**."*

Leave your home for one hour (no longer and no shorter), during which you cannot drink and you should not drive (unless it is absolutely necessary). It is most preferable for you to go for a walk or run, to do something physical. If you begin to think about the situation that made you angry, just say to yourself:

*"I'm beginning to feel angry and I need to take a **Time-Out**."*

In this way you will be taking a mental **Time-Out** as well as a physical **Time-Out**.

When you return in one hour, check in and tell your partner that you have come back from your **Time-Out** and ask if she/he would like to talk with you. If you both want to discuss the situation, tell her/him what it was that made you feel angry. You may also want to talk about what it was like for you to take a **Time-Out**. If one of you doesn't want to talk about the situation, respect that person's need to not discuss it. In either case, if you find yourself feeling angry again, take another **Time-Out**.

Some topics of conversation may be too charged to talk about. If this is true in your situation, put that issue on the shelf for a while, acknowledging that it is too difficult for the two of you to discuss alone. Take these issues and others to a counselor to get some help working them out. Even if it's an important issue that is making you angry, think of your priorities. **Nothing can be more important than stopping the violence!**

HOW TIME-OUTS WORK

Let's now look at the different aspects of the Time-Out to see how and why it works.

I'M...

An "I" statement. You begin by talking about yourself, and talking about yourself immediately puts you in charge of yourself. You aren't name-calling or blaming.

..BEGINNING TO FEEL ANGRY...

You are talking about how you feel. It's a direct communication. Nothing unclear about this statement. Saying you feel angry may in fact make you feel less angry. Try it--you'll like it!

..I NEED TO TAKE A TIME-OUT.

Another "I" statement. You are also saying to your partner that you are not going to hit her/him; instead, you're going to do something else, take a **Time-Out**. Taking a **Time-Out** helps build up trust with the other person--that in fact there will be no violence.

..LEAVE FOR AN HOUR...

If you stay away for the full hour, you and she should be sufficiently cooled off by the time you return.

..DON'T DRINK, USE DRUGS OR DRIVE...

Drinking and drugs will only make the situation worse. Don't drive because there are already enough angry people on the roads!

..DO SOMETHING PHYSICAL...

Going for a walk, a run or a ride on your bicycle will help discharge some of the angry tension in your body.

..COME BACK IN AN HOUR - NO SOONER - NO LATER...

If you agree to come back in an hour, live up to your agreement. It helps to build trust. In addition, an hour will give you enough time to cool off.

...CHECK IN - TALK ABOUT WHAT IT WAS THAT MADE YOU ANGRY...

If you do no more than check in, you completed the exercise. If you go on to talk about what it was that made you angry, you get experience and practice in communicating and discussing emotional issues.

When there has been violence in a relationship, the trust factor drops significantly. This **Time-Out** exercise not only helps to stop the violence, but also helps to rebuild trust. Trust takes some time to rebuild. Just because you may take one or two **Time-Outs**, it doesn't mean that everything is OKAY. Be patient! Concentrate on identifying your anger and taking your **Time-Outs**. The rest takes time.

IMPORTANT!

Be sure to tell your partner about the **Time-Out** and how it works. You might even want to read this aloud and talk about it together. No matter which way you do it, be sure they understand what the **Time-Out** is, how and why it works. **Time-Outs are hard to do!**

Why? Because men/some women grow up to believe that only a coward will walk away from a fight. Your impulse will be to stay and finish it, or at least get in the last word. But, think of what is most important to you. Is it more important to maintain your image as a "real man", or "I'm in control" to stop the violence?

Many have also expressed the fear that their partners will be gone when they return. This is part of the trust building; as each of you follows through with your part in taking a **Time-Out**, the trust will grow.

The other frequent problem people have with **Time-Outs** is staying away from alcohol. Many people use alcohol to treat loneliness, and you may feel quite alone during your **Time-Out**. Also, people will often go to a bar to hang out with their buddies/friends when they need support or someone to talk to. We want to emphasize again that alcohol can make an argument much worse.

Don't Drink or Use Drugs!

Although taking **Time-Outs** may be difficult for you initially, they will get easier with time and practice.

Practice Time-Outs

Practice **Time-Outs** will help you to take your real **Time-Out**. What's a practice **Time-Out**? It's the same as a real Time-Out except for two things: First, in a practice **Time-Out** you are not feeling angry. Second, the practice **Time-Out** is only half an hour. It's just practice at saying the words and walking away. You tell your partner;

"I'm NOT beginning to feel angry but I want to take a Practice Time-Out."

The more you take *practice Time-Outs*, the easier it will be to take *real Time-Outs*.

