

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

INCREASING YOUR SELF-CONTROL IN CHALLENGING SITUATIONS

Think of self-control as a muscle you can strengthen with practice.

We've all experienced that moment when our self-control is tested. Perhaps it's in the middle of an argument with your teenager whose attitude is pushing you to your limits. Maybe it's a situation at work that frustrates and annoys you. No matter what the scenario, there's often a split second when we know if we lose control, we might say or do something we'll later regret. So how can you increase your self-control in difficult circumstances?

Self-control, or self-discipline, is the ability to manage your emotions, impulses, and behaviors, especially in challenging situations. People with a high level of self-control tend to be healthier, happier, and more successful in achieving their goals. When you can delay self-gratification, an important part of self-control, you're more likely to make decisions that positively impact your emotional and physical health. For example, what you eat, how often you exercise, whether you get regular check-ups with your doctor and dentist, how you conduct important relationships in your life, and the financial decisions you make are all influenced by your level of self-control.

Think of self-control as a muscle you can strengthen with practice. Ways to improve your level of self-control include the following:

- **Take time out to think about your response.** For example, before you blow up during a heated argument, take a few moments to clear your head.
- **Recognize and reframe negative thoughts.** It's easy to lose perspective and overreact when you're under stress. Don't rush to judgment about other people's intentions until you understand the whole story.
- **Identify and face your fears.** Sometimes we lose our self-control when we feel threatened and insecure.
- **Take good care of yourself.** You're more likely to make good decisions when you're well-rested and not hungry.

