

Break the Spiral Checklist

Use any one of these (or all of them) the moment you notice yourself slipping.

Ground Your Body

- ☐ Take 3 slow breaths, exhale longer than you inhale.
- ☐ Put both feet flat on the floor and press down.
- ☐ Place one hand on your chest, one on your belly.
- ☐ Run cold water over your hands for 10–20 seconds.
- ☐ Stretch your arms overhead and roll your shoulders back.

Interrupt the Thought Loop

- ☐ Say out loud: “Pause.”
- ☐ Label what’s happening: “I’m spiraling.”
- ☐ Redirect: “This isn’t helping me right now.”
- ☐ Ask yourself: “What do I need in this moment?”
- ☐ Replace the thought with a simple truth (e.g., “I can only handle one thing at a time.”)

Shift Your Environment

- ☐ Change your position in a room.
- ☐ Change rooms.
- ☐ Stand up and move for 30 seconds.
- ☐ Step outside for a quick breath of air.
- ☐ Open a window or adjust the lighting.

Use Your Senses

- ☐ Identify 5 things you can see.
- ☐ Hold something with texture—fabric, a rock, a stress ball.
- ☐ Listen for the farthest sound you can hear.
- ☐ Take a warm (or cool) shower.
- ☐ Smell something calming (tea, lotion, essential oil).

(Cont. on following page)

Break the Spiral Checklist (cont.)

Do a Quick Action

- ☐ Drink a glass of water.
- ☐ Set a timer for 2 minutes and tidy a small area.
- ☐ Text someone a simple check-in (“Thinking of you”).
- ☐ Write down the thought that’s looping and set it aside.
- ☐ Do a 10-second posture reset.

Return to the Present

- ☐ Ask: “What’s the next small step I can take?”
- ☐ Name your current emotion without judging it.
- ☐ Remind yourself: “This moment will pass.”
- ☐ Reconnect with a value (kindness, honesty, stability, calm).
- ☐ Read a grounding phrase or mantra you’ve chosen.



“Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you.”

— Anne Lamott