

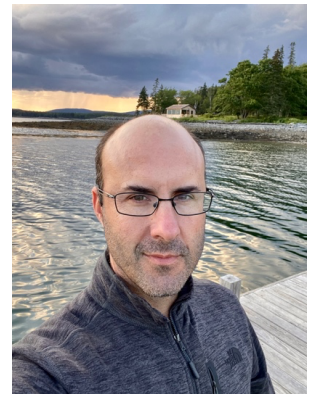
The Upward Spiral 2nd Edition – Cheat Sheet

Even when life feels heavy or chaotic or overwhelming, there's always a way to start creating an upward spiral.

This quick-reference guide gathers a key selection of the “gray box” tools from *The Upward Spiral 2nd Edition*. These practical steps will help you move from insight to action. You'll find each tool listed with its page number so you can easily return to the deeper explanations and choose the next small action that fits your moment. Because that's how change actually happens: not by forcing yourself to feel different, but by helping your brain take one small step in a better direction.

Remember, your brain isn't broken. It's just that the current tuning of your various brain circuits is keeping you stuck in this pattern. But those circuits can be reprogrammed!

Think of this cheat sheet as a toolbox. Use it whenever you feel stuck, overwhelmed, or unsure where to begin. And if the toolbox isn't working as well as you want, or it's too overwhelming, just find a trusted mentor, therapist, or coach to help guide you through it. You don't have to do it all on your own.



THE UPWARD SPIRAL

Find the right balance to optimize your unique brain

Thinking
Prefrontal Cortex

Feeling
Limbic System

Action
Striatum

NEWLY REVISED & UPDATED 30TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

The Upward Spiral

SECOND EDITION

Using Neuroscience to Reverse the Course of Depression, One Small Change at a Time

ALEX KORB, PHD
Foreword by Daniel J. Siegel, MD

For more insights, join my mailing list at <https://www.alexkorbphd.com/upward/> or follow me on Instagram: @alexkorbphd.

Disclaimer: This guide is not intended to treat or diagnose any illness. It is for educational purposes only. For medical or mental health concerns please consult a physician or mental health professional.

The Upward Spiral 2nd Edition – Cheat Sheet

1. Go out in sunlight (p. 15)
2. Think of happy memories (p. 22)
3. Focus on what you can control (p. 36)
4. Make a decision (p. 37)
5. Take a deep breath (p. 39, 74, 163)
6. Go for good enough (p. 40)
7. Avoid catastrophizing (p. 43)
8. Stay in the now (p. 45)
9. Notice what you notice (p. 55)
10. Reflect on your emotions (p. 56)
11. Lower amygdala reactivity w/ a hug (p. 58)
12. Do something, anything (p. 61)
13. Figure out your triggers (p. 68)
14. Have fun (a.k.a. don't "exercise") (p. 80)
15. Do it with someone else (p. 81)
16. Commit to a brief trial period (p. 83)
17. Enjoy the view (p. 84)
18. Think about what's important (p. 85, 100)
19. Exercise before rewarding yourself (p. 86)
20. Keep an exercise plan (p. 87)
21. Stationary is the new smoking (p. 89)
22. Make an anti-laziness rule (p. 91)
23. Make a good decision, not the best decision (p. 96)
24. Take a step in the right direction (p. 98)
25. Decide on something you want, not against something you don't want (p. 101)
26. Create specific long-term goals (p. 107)
27. Avoid bright lights after sunset (p. 112)
28. Brighten your day (p. 113)
29. Write down your worries (p. 115)
30. Comfy sleeping environment (p. 117)
31. Self-affirmation (p. 127)
32. Resolve to change (p. 130)
33. Remember the good times (p. 133)
34. Think about life improving (p. 134)
35. Practicing compassion (p. 136)
36. Eat better food (p. 138)
37. Try yoga (p. 142)
38. Are you hungry or stressed? (p. 143)
39. A splash of cold water (p. 145)
40. Use the power of music (p. 145)
41. Put on a smile (p. 146)
42. Laugh (p. 146)
43. Wear sunglasses (p. 149)
44. Relax your jaw (p. 150)
45. Slow down your breathing (p. 151)
46. Breathe faster for energy (p. 152)
47. Clench and relax (p. 153)
48. Write a detailed thank-you letter (p.156)
49. Ask for help (p. 158)
50. Keep a gratitude journal (p. 159)
51. Be grateful when you wake up (p. 160)
52. Fill yourself with awe (p. 161)
53. Be around people (p. 166)
54. Reflecting on rejection (p. 167)
55. Do an activity with a friend (p. 172)
56. Turn up the heat (p. 175)
57. Talk to people you care about (p. 176)
58. Root for a sports team (p. 177)
59. Stop scrolling mindlessly (p. 181)
60. Go see a professional (p. 186)
61. Do what you used to enjoy (p. 188)