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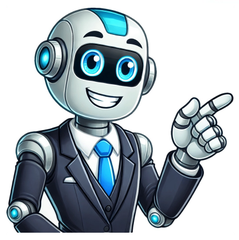

home / geometry / shape / spiralA 2D spiral is an open curve that revolves around a fixed central point, called the center, that moves farther away from the center as it revolves. Below are three different types of spirals. Spirals exist in nature and man-made objects. The spiral galaxy and a seashell shown in the first two figures below are spiral shaped. The staircase is also in the shape of a spiral. The archimedian spiral and golden spiral are two well known 2D spirals. Archimedian spiral In polar coordinate form, the equation of the Archimedian spiral is $r = \theta$, where r is the radius of a circle and θ is an angle in standard position. For each point graphed on the Archimedian spiral in the polar coordinate plane, the length of any radius of a concentric circle equals the angle measure in standard position. Several red points are graphed in the polar coordinate plane from 0 to 2π for the Archimedian spiral above. Connecting the points with a "smooth" curve creates a rotation of the spiral as shown above. Golden spiral The golden spiral is a spiral that exhibits logarithmic growth. For every quarter turn, the golden spiral gets wider by a factor of the Golden ratio, φ=≈1.618. The Golden spiral can be approximated using progressively larger golden rectangles partitioned into squares and similar golden rectangles, as shown in the figure below. The spiral is formed by connecting the corners of the successive squares with quarter circles. 3D spiral In 3D, a spiral is an open curve that rotates around and along a line, called its axis. 3D spiral equation The spiral shown below is a type of spiral referred to as a helix, and has a parametric equation of the form $x(t) = r\cos(t)$, $y(t) = r\sin(t)$, $z(t) = at$, where a and r are constants. A helix can be traced over the surface of a cylinder. The cylinder shown above has a circular base with radius r on the xy-plane. The structure of a DNA molecule is described as a double helix. This is because it looks like two helices (plural for helix) wrapping around each other. Page 2home / geometry / shape / 3dA three-dimensional space (3D) has three dimensions, such as length, width, and height (or depth). The term "3D" is commonly used to describe shapes and figures in geometry. We live in a 3D world, every object we touch, see, and use are 3D objects. The box, tube, and basketball shown below are just a few examples. 3D shapes and figures While the dimensions of a 2D shape can be described with length and width, a 3D shape requires an additional dimension, often referred to as height or depth. 2D3D The dimensions of the 2D rectangle above are length and width.The base of the 3D rectangular prism above is a rectangle that gives it two of its dimensions. The height of the prism is perpendicular to its base giving the prism its third dimension. Properties of 3D shapes 3D shapes are characterized by their number of faces, edges, and vertices. Faces - A 3D shape's face is one of the 2D sides of the shape. For example, the face of a cube is one of the 6 squares that form the cube. A sphere has 0 faces because it is a curved 3D shape. Edges - An edge occurs where 2 faces of a 3D shape meet. For example, a cube has 12 edges, while a sphere has 0. Vertices - A vertex occurs where edges meet. A cube has 8 vertices each of which is formed by 3 edges. Cuboid A cuboid, also referred to as a 3D rectangle, is a 3D shape with 6 faces. If the edge lengths of the cuboid are all the same, then the cuboid is a cube. A cuboid is characterized by the following: Faces - 6 Edges - 12 Vertices - 8 Dimensions of a 3D rectangle A 3D rectangle has 3 dimensions: length, width, and height (or depth). Typically, the length is the measure of the longest edge, and the width and height (depth) are the other two edges. Cylinder A cylinder is a 3D shape made up of two parallel circular bases a fixed distance apart that are joined by a curved surface: A cylinder is characterized by the following: Faces - 2 faces and 1 curved surface Edges - 0 Vertices - 0 Cone A cone is a 3D shape with a flat circular base that narrows smoothly to a point called the apex, forming an axis to the center of the base: A cone is characterized by the following: Faces - 1 face and 1 curved surface Edges - 0 Vertices - 0 Pyramid A pyramid is characterized by the following: Faces - 4 Edges - 6 (triangular pyramid) or 8 (rectangular pyramid) Vertices - 4 (triangular pyramid) or 5 (rectangular pyramid) 3D Coordinate geometry Determining the position of a point in 3D is similar to determining the position of a point in 2D, except that there is a third axis, the z-axis, in addition to the x- and y-axes. All three axes are perpendicular to each other, as shown in the figure below. While the x- and y-axes in 2D are conventionally the horizontal and vertical axes, respectively, in 3D their orientations can vary. As such, when determining which direction to move along any axis, the negative and positive direction must be indicated on the axes, as in the image above. A negative value indicates movement along an axis in the negative direction, and a positive value indicates movement in the positive direction. As such, the point (2, 3, 4) indicates movement in the positive direction along each axis in the coordinate space above. Also found in: Thesaurus, Medical, Acronyms, Idioms, Encyclopedia, Wikipedia.
(spī′rəl)n.1. a. A curve on a plane that winds around a fixed center point at a continuously increasing or decreasing distance from the point.b. A three-dimensional curve that turns around an axis at a constant or continuously varying distance while moving parallel to the axis; a helix.c. Something having the form of such a curve: a spiral of black smoke.2. Printing A spiral binding.3. The course or flight path of an object rotating on its longitudinal axis.4. A continuously accelerating increase or decrease: the wage-price spiral.adj.1. Of or resembling a spiral.2. Circling around a center at a continuously increasing or decreasing distance.3. Coiling around an axis in a constantly changing series of planes; helical.4. Printing Relating to or having a spiral binding: a spiral notebook.v. spi·raled, spi·ral·ing, spi·rals also spi·ralled or spi·ral·ling v.intr.1. To take a spiral form or course.2. To rise or fall with steady acceleration.v.tr. To cause to take a spiral form or course.[Medieval Latin spīrālis, of a spiral, from Latin spīra, coil; see spire2.]spi·ral′i·ty (spī-răl′ĭ-tē) n.American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition. Copyright © 2016 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved. ('spaɪərəl) n1. (Mathematics) geometry one of several plane curves formed by a point winding about a fixed point at an ever-increasing distance from it. Polar equation of Archimedes spiral: $r = a\theta$; of logarithmic spiral: $\log r = a\theta$; of hyperbolic spiral: $r\theta = a$, (where a is a constant)2. (Mathematics) another name for helix13. something that pursues a winding, usually upward, course or that displays a twisting form or shape4. (Aeronautics) a flight manoeuvre in which an aircraft descends describing a helix of comparatively large radius with the angle of attack within the normal flight range. Compare spin165. (Economics) economics a continuous upward or downward movement in economic activity or prices, caused by interaction between prices, wages, demand, and productionadjhaving the shape of a spiralvb, -rals, -ralling or -ralled, -rals, -raling or -raled6. to assume or cause to assume a spiral course or shape7. (intr) to increase or decrease with steady acceleration: wages and prices continue to spiral. [C16: via French from Medieval Latin spīrālis, from Latin spīra a coil; see spire2]Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged, 12th Edition 2014 © HarperCollins Publishers 1991, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2014 ('spaɪ rəl) n., adj., v. -raled, -ral•ing (esp. Brit.) -ralled, -ral•ling. n. 1. a plane curve generated by a point moving around a fixed point while constantly receding from or approaching it. 3. a single circle or ring of a spiral or helical curve or object. 4. a spiral or helical object, formation, or form. 5. a football thrown or kicked so that the ball turns on its longer axis as it flies through the air. 6. a continuous increase or decrease in wages, prices, etc. adj. 7. of or of the nature of a spire or coil. 8. bound with a spiral binding; spiral-bound: a spiral notebook. v.i. 9. to take a spiral form or course. 10. to rise or fall steadily. [1545–55; < Medieval Latin spīrālis= Latin spīr(a) coil (< Greek speîra; compare spire2) + -ālis -al1] Random House Kernerman Webster's College Dictionary, © 2010 K Dictionaries Ltd. Copyright 2005, 1997, 1991 by Random House, Inc. All rights reserved.Past participle: spiralledGerund: spirallingImperativePresentPreteritePresent ContinuousPresent PerfectPast ContinuousPast PerfectFutureFuture PerfectFuture ContinuousPresent Perfect ContinuousFuture Perfect ContinuousPast Perfect ContinuousConditionalPast ConditionalCollins English Verb Tables © HarperCollins Publishers 2011 Noun1.spiral - a plane curve traced by a point circling about the center but at increasing distances from the center2.spiral - a curve that lies on the surface of a cylinder or cone and cuts the element at a constant angledouble helix - a pair of parallel helices intertwined about a common axis; "the shape of the DNA molecule is a double helix"3.spiral - a continuously accelerating change in the economyeconomic process - any process affecting the production and development and management of material wealthinflationary spiral - an episode of inflation in which prices and wages increase at an increasing rate and currency rapidly loses valuedeflationary spiral - an episode of deflation in which prices and wages decrease at an increasing rate and currency gains in value4.spiral - ornament consisting of a curve on a plane that winds around a center with an increasing distance from the centerdecoration, ornament, ornamentation - something used to beautify5.spiral - a structure consisting of something wound in a continuous series of loops; "a coil of rope"coil, helix, volute, whorlhank - a coil of rope or wool or yarnstructure, construction - a thing constructed; a complex entity constructed of many parts; "the structure consisted of a series of arches"; "she wore her hair in an amazing construction of whirls and ribbons"6.spiral - flying downward in a helical path with a large radiusrotary motion, rotation - the act of rotating as if on an axis; "the rotation of the dancer kept time with the music"Verb1.spiral - to wind or move in a spiral course; "the muscles and nerves of his fine drawn body were coiling for action"; "black smoke coiling up into the sky"; "the young people gyrated on the dance floor"turn - change orientation or direction, also in the abstract sense; "Turn towards me"; "The mugger turned and fled before I could see his face"; "She turned from herself and learned to listen to others' needs"2.spiral - form a spiral; "The path spirals up the mountain"curve, wind, twist - extend in curves and turns; "The road winds around the lake"; "the path twisted through the forest"3.spiral - move in a spiral or zigzag courseturn - change orientation or direction, also in the abstract sense; "Turn towards me"; "The mugger turned and fled before I could see his face"; "She turned from herself and learned to listen to others' needs"Adj.1.spiral - in the shape of a coil coiling, helical, spiraling, volute, voluted, whorled, turbinatecoiled - curled or wound (especially in concentric rings or spirals); "a coiled snake ready to strike"; "the rope lay coiled on the deck"Based on WordNet 3.0, Farlex clipart collection. © 2003-2012 Princeton University, Farlex Inc.spiral downwards decline, fall, drop, sink, shrink, decrease, deteriorate, fall off, dwindle, wane, ebb House prices will continue to spiral downwards.Collins Thesaurus of the English Language – Complete and Unabridged 2nd Edition. 2002 © HarperCollins Publishers 1995, 2002verbTo move or proceed on a repeatedly curving course:coil, corkscrew, curl, entwine, meander, snake, twine, twist, weave, wind, wreathe. The American Heritage® Roget's Thesaurus. Copyright © 2013, 2014 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved. إرتِفاع تَصاعُدي للأسْعارحَلَزونيلَولَبيمَسار حَلَزونيتَرْتَفِع أو يَتَصاعَد حَلَزونِيّاً|spirálaspirálovitě stoupatspirálovýšroubovitýtočitýhastig stigningspiralstyrtdykgewundenniederschraubenSpiralespiraligWendel-...espiralmoverse en espiralen espiralcsigavonalúspirálspirálisan emelkedikhreyfa í spíral, skrúfast uppskrúfugangurspíral-spíral-, hringspírallspiralea spiralemuoversi a spiraleįvijaskaip spiralėlaipsniškai kiltilaipsniškai kristilaipsniškas kilimasattīstīties spirālveidīgigrīstespirālespirāles-spirālveidīgsskrueformet-spiralspiral-spiralformetstige fortere og forterešpirálašpirálovito stúpaťšpirálovitýšpirálovýtočitýdalgalanmafırlamakhelezonhelezonîiniş çıkışCollins Spanish Dictionary - Complete and Unabridged 8th Edition 2005 © William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. 1971, 1988 © HarperCollins Publishers 1992, 1993, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2003, 2005Collins English/French Electronic Resource. © HarperCollins Publishers 2005Collins German Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged 7th Edition 2005. © William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. 1980 © HarperCollins Publishers 1991, 1997, 1999, 2004, 2005, 2007Collins Italian Dictionary 1st Edition © HarperCollins Publishers 1995 ('spaiərəl) adjective1. coiled round like a spring, with each coil the same size as the one below. a spiral staircase. spiraalagtig لَولَبي спираловиден espiral spirálový; točitý gewunden, Wendel-... snoet; spiral- ελικοειδήςespiral keerd- مارپیچی kierre en spiraleסלילי □□□□□□, □□□□□□□ spiralan, zavojit csigavonalú berputar spíral-, hring a spirale らせん状の spiralinis, įvijas spirāles-; spirālveidīgs; vītņu- berlingkar spiraalvormigspiral-, vindel- spiralny مارپیچی،توتوی espiral în spirală спиральный; винтовой špirálový; točitý spiralen spiralan spiral- □□□□□□□□□□□□; □□□□□□□ helezonî, sarmal 盤旋的 спіральний; гвинтовий چکّر دار có dạng xoắn 盘旋的2. winding round and round, usually tapering to a point. a spiral shell. spiraalagtig حَلَزوني спирален em espiral šroubovitý Spiral-... snoet σπειροειδήςen espiral spiraalne حلزونی kierteinen en spirale לְה □□□□□□□ uvojit, uzvojit spirál spiral spíral- a spirale うず巻きの sraigto pavidalo, sraiginis spirālveidīgs berlingkar-lingkar spiraalvormig spiral-/skrueformet spiralny, śrubowaty حلزونی em espiral în spirală винтовой špirálovitý polžasto zavit spiralan spiralformad □□□□□□□□□□□ sarmal 螺旋形的 спіральний دار □مرغول xoắn ốc 螺旋形的 noun1. an increase or decrease, or rise or fall, becoming more and more rapid (eg in prices). styg, daal إرتِفاع تَصاعُدي للأسْعار прен. спирала espiral spirála die Spirale hastig stigning; styrtdyk απότομη αύξηση ή μείωση (π.χ. τιμών) espiral (üha kiirenev) tõus v. langus افزایش دائم در حال kierre spirale לְהסְתַחְרֵר □□□□□□□□ □□□□□□ spirala (cijena), sve brži porast spirál gejolak skrúfugangur spirale 悪循環 laipsniškas kilimas/kritimas (cen menerus spiraal-spiralspirala زيات شول espiral spirală виток; спираль špirála spirala inflatorna spirala spiral □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ iniş çıkış, dalgalanma 不斷上升或下降 поступове прискорювання підвищення یا اترنا چڑھنا ساتھ کے تیزی sự tăng giảm dần 不断上升或下降2. a spiral line or object. A spiral of smoke rose from the chimney. spiraal مَسار حَلَزوني спирала espiral spirála die Spirale sp κουλούραespiral keerd ماریچ spiraali spirale לוליָני □□□□□□ spirala, zavojnica spirál gulungan spírall spirale らせん状 spiralė, vija spirāle; grīste lingkaran spiraalspiralspirala مایچ espiral spirală предмет спиральной формы špirála spirala spiral □□□□□□ helezon 盤旋(形) спіраль اٹھنا طرف کی اوپر میں شکل لولبی đường xoắn ốc 盘旋（形） verb – past tense, past participle ˈspiralled , (A or move in a spiral, especially to increase more and more rapidly. Prices have spiralled in the last six months. skerp styg يَرْتَفِع أو يَتَصاعَد حَلَزونِيّاً движа се спираловидно subir em espiral spirálovitě stoupat sich hoch-, niederschrauben stige voldsomt ανέρχομαι ελικοειδώς, με συνεχή επιτάχυνση moverse en espiral kiiresti kasvama, järjest tõusma افزایش یافتن nousta tai laskea nopeasti r flèche לולְיָני לנוע במסלול □□□□□□□□ □□□□□ kretati se u spirali, kovitlati spirálisan emelkedik meningkat hreyfa(st) í spíral, skrúfast upp aumentare らせん状になる laipsniðkai kilti/kristi svārstīties; attīstīties spirālveidīgi naik terus-menerus spiralen stige fortere og fortere wzrastać gwałtownie زيات شول subir em espiral a creşte vertiginos повышаться špirálovito stúpať spiralno (se) pren povećavati se ubrzano röra sig i (bilda) en spiral □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ fırlamak 螺旋上升 рухатися по спіралі; поступово прискорювано підвищуватися گرنا یا بڑھنا کا قیمتوں س□ تیزی tăng, giảm dần 螺旋上升ˈspirally adverb spiraalagtig حَلَزونِيّاً спираловидно espiralmente spirálovitě gewunden som en spiral; hurtigere og hurtigere σπειροειδώς, ελικοειδώς en espiral spiraalselt spiraali spirale לוליָני □□□□□□□□□ □□□ □□ spiralno, zavojito spirálisan seperti spiral í spíral a spirale らせん状で， kaip spiralė spirālveidīgi secara terus-menerus spiraalvormig som en spiral; fortere og fortere spiralnie فنری a modo de espiral în spirală спиралью špirálovito spiralno spiralno i spiral □□□□□□□□; □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ helezonî olarak 呈螺旋形地 по спіралі دار انداز میں □مرغول xoắn xoắn 呈螺旋形地Kernerman English Multilingual Dictionary © 2006-2013 K Dictionaries Ltd.a. espiral, que se envuelve alrededor de un centro o axis. English-Spanish Medical Dictionary © Farlex 2012 Want to thank TFD for its existence? Tell a friend about us, add a link to this page, or visit the webmaster's page for free fun content. Link to this page: He joined to these a spiral, two inches in diameter, which terminated in two branch pieces of unequal length, the longer of which, however, was twenty-five feet in height and the shorter only fifteen feet.The two outside started to stroll slowly in the direction of the spiral runway which led to the floors above, and in a moment were lost to view beyond a turn in the corridor."In that case," said the man, "it will be best for you to cross our Valley and mount the spiral staircase inside the Pyramid Mountain.We see the same great law in the construction of the mouths of insects: what can be more different than the immensely long spiral proboscis of a sphinx-moth, the curious folded one of a bee or bug, and the great jaws of a beetle?--yet all these organs, serving for such different purposes, are formed by infinitely numerous modifications of an upper lip, mandibles, and two pairs of maxillae.He had the letter taken from his pocket and the table- on which stood a glass of lemonade and a spiral wax candle- moved close to the bed, and putting on his spectacles he began reading.Here we discovered a spiral stairway leading up from the center of the circular room.It was spiral and he could see no farther than the first turn.He raised the door and I caught sight of the top of a spiral staircase; then he said, turning to the lady, "Madam, this is the way that will lead you down to the spot which I told you of."In the midst of the gloom of the spiral staircase, he elbowed something which drew aside with a growl; he took it for granted that it was Quasimodo, and it struck him as so droll that he descended the remainder of the staircase holding his sides with laughter."I tell you, Rosa, that I shall demolish this prison, stone for stone!" and the unfortunate man, whose strength was increased tenfold by his rage, began to shake the door with a great noise, little heeding that the thunder of his voice was re-echoing through the spiral staircase.He had caught sight of the very place--a little white house nestled against a big, whispering firwood, with a spiral of blue smoke winding up from its kitchen chimney--a house which just looked as if it were meant for babies.Glancing up and down the beach, he saw the opening of a cave out of which rose a spiral of smoke. Geometry. a plane curve generated by a point moving around a fixed point while constantly receding from or approaching it.a helix.a single circle or ring of a spiral or helical curve or object.a spiral or helical object, formation, or form.Aeronautics. a maneuver in which an airplane descends in a helix of small pitch and large radius, with the angle of attack within that of the normal flight range.Football. a type of kick or pass in which the ball turns on its longer axis as it flies through the air.Economics. a continuous increase in costs, wages, prices, etc. inflationary spiral, or a decrease in costs, wages, prices, etc. deflationary spiral.running continuously around a fixed point or center while constantly receding from or approaching it; coiling in a single plane.coiling around a fixed line or axis in a constantly changing series of planes; helical.of or of the nature of a spire or coil.bound with a spiral binding; spiral-bound.spiraled, spiraling , spiralled, spiralling .to take a spiral form or course.to advance or increase steadily; rise.Costs have been spiraling all year.Aeronautics. to fly an airplane through a spiral course.spiraled, spiraling , spiralled, spiralling .to cause to take a spiral form or course.geometry one of several plane curves formed by a point winding about a fixed point at an ever-increasing distance from it. Polar equation of Archimedes spiral: $r = a\theta$; of logarithmic spiral: $\log r = a\theta$; of hyperbolic spiral: $r\theta = a$, (where a is a constant)another name for helixsomething that pursues a winding, usually upward, course or that displays a twisting form or shapea flight manoeuvre in which an aircraft descends describing a helix of comparatively large radius with the angle of attack within the normal flight range Compare spineconomics a continuous upward or downward movement in economic activity or prices, caused by interaction between prices, wages, demand, and production“Collins English Dictionary — Complete & Unabridged” 2012 Digital Edition © William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. 1979, 1986 © HarperCollins Publishers 1998, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2012having the shape of a spiral“Collins English Dictionary — Complete & Unabridged” 2012 Digital Edition © William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. 1979, 1986 © HarperCollins Publishers 1998, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2012to assume or cause to assume a spiral course or shape(intr) to increase or decrease with steady accelerationwages and prices continue to spiral“Collins English Dictionary — Complete & Unabridged” 2012 Digital Edition © William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. 1979, 1986 © HarperCollins Publishers 1998, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2012spirality nounspirally adverbmultispiral adjectivenonspiral adjectivesubspiral adjectivesubspirally adverbunspiral adjectiveunspirally adverbunspiraled adjectiveunspiralled adjective'spirally adverbOrigin of spiral11545–55; < Medieval Latin spīrālis, equivalent to Latin spīr (a) coil (< Greek speîra anything coiled, wreathed, or twisted; spire 2) + -ālis -al 1Origin of spiral1C16: via French from Medieval Latin spīrālis, from Latin spīra a coil; see spire ²Examples have not been reviewed.To better understand this unprecedented time in American history, I recently spoke to four experts about the country’s rapidly spiraling democracy crisis and what could happen next."Over the past decade and a half, an overly complex system of healthcare regulation and oversight has been left to spiral out of control," said Mr Streeting.From the ground, the research will look peculiar as the pilots perform vertical spirals, circling over power plants, landfills and urban areas.With the spiralling costs associated with proms, schools have been keen to work with charities to take the pressure off parents who might be struggling financially.circling www.thesaurus.comcoiled www.thesaurus.comspiraeaspiral armBrowse#aabbccddeeffgghhiijjkkllmmnnooppqqrrssttuuvvwwxxyyzzAboutCareersContact usCookies, terms, & privacyHelpFollow usGet the Word of the Day every day!© 2025 Dictionary.com, LLC Stress and anxious thoughts can be a part of everyday life. For some people, however, one small worry can lead to a negative thinking pattern that becomes overwhelming. This mental and emotional overwhelm is often referred to as “spiraling,” and it can lead even minor challenges to seem unmanageable. Spiraling negative thoughts can happen to anyone and may be most common during periods of high stress and uncertainty. Left unmanaged, a negative spiral can persist, impacting daily life and overall well-being. Strategies to manage negative thinking patterns include strategies like deep breathing, which can help a person focus on the present moment, and long-term techniques, such as cognitive restructuring. In this article, we will focus on identifying how negative thought spirals occur and explore coping strategies for managing spiraling thoughts. Getty/Anna FrankDo negative thoughts lead you to spiral?Talk to a licensed therapist onlineWhat does it mean to spiral? To spiral generally means to experience a rapid, often overwhelming escalation of persistent negative thoughts or emotions. Spiraling can start with a small stimulus, like a mistake at work, an anxious thought, or an interpersonal conflict. This small stimulus may escalate into catastrophic thinking or a sense of self-doubt that can exacerbate anxiety and lead a person to become overwhelmed. Spiraling negative thinking can make it seem like each negative thought leads to another negative thought, contributing to increased stress and anxiety. There may be two different types of spiraling negative thought patterns: mental spiraling and emotional spiraling. Mental spiraling typically involves obsessive thinking and catastrophizing. A person may replay past events and over-analyze them or make predictions that those events will lead to a failure of some kind. Emotional spiraling may occur when intense emotions like fear, shame, sadness, and anger build quickly and seem unmanageable, which can make it difficult to think clearly and respond rationally.Negative thoughts and other causes of spiraling Understanding the potential causes of spiraling thought patterns can be key to managing the impacts and frequency of these events. The causes of these patterns may vary from person to person, and what leads to a spiral for one person may not affect another. Common causes of spiraling may include anxiety disorders, trauma, and negative thinking patterns Negative thoughts, negative thinking patterns, and spiralingOne key cause of spiraling thought patterns may be negative self-talk or negative thinking patterns. A negative thought or event, especially when a person is experiencing underlying stress, can be challenging to manage. These negative thinking patterns are sometimes called cognitive distortions and can lead a person to experience a cascade of negative thoughts. An example could involve a situation like forgetting to reply to an email at work. The realization that one forgot to respond may lead a person to predict that their boss may think they are unreliable, which could cause them to get fired. This wave of negative thoughts is one of the defining elements of spiraling, in which a person takes one small negative thought and builds on it until it becomes a major concern.The role of anxiety and traumaIndividuals experiencing anxiety or living with post-traumatic stress disorder may be more likely to experience cognitive distortions and spiraling thought patterns. Heightened levels of anxiety may be the body’s way of managing a survival situation. This can lead a person to experience a heightened awareness of potential risks, and they may become hypervigilant and analyze every small negative event they experience.Survivors of trauma may also experience negative thought spirals or cognitive distortions more frequently. Trauma may lead the brain to view the world from a state of hyperarousal to detect danger, even in safe environments. This hyperarousal state can lead to sudden emotional reactions and intrusive memories, which may contribute to spiraling.Grounding techniques to stop a negative thoughtFor individuals experiencing a negative spiral, it can be helpful to have techniques available to shift their mindset. These techniques, often called “grounding techniques,” may reduce anxiety and spiraling thoughts in the moment. Common grounding techniques include the following: The 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique: This technique has a person identify five things they can see, four things they can touch, three things they can hear, two things they can smell, and one thing they can taste. When a person uses this technique, they can shift their focus from internal distress to the external environment. Deep breathing or box breathing techniques: Taking a few deep breaths can reduce anxiety and shift focus to the present. One form of deep breathing is called box breathing, a practice that involves breathing in for four seconds, holding for four seconds, breathing out for four seconds, and holding again for four seconds. Naming and labeling negative thoughts: It can be helpful for a person to identify and label negative thoughts as they occur. This may remove the weight of the thought and create emotional distance from it. Engaging the body: Exercising, splashing cold water on the face, or simply standing and stretching may reduce negative thoughts and shift attention from the mind to the body. Getty/ucharIt may be important to note that the goal of using a grounding technique is not to avoid or eliminate anxiety or negative thoughts. Instead, grounding techniques can empower an individual to manage these thoughts in a healthy way. Grounding can slow the momentum of the spiral and give a person space to respond more calmly. With practice and repetition, these practices can become easy and quick to implement. Cognitive strategies to regain control of negative thoughts Cognitive strategies, such as self-reflection, self-development, and education on the origins of negative thoughts, can also help people regain control over their minds. Common cognitive strategies for managing negative thought patterns include reframing feelings, reflecting through journaling, and using positive self-talk or affirmations. Cognitive behavioral therapy techniques to reframe feelingsCognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a therapeutic technique that is typically implemented by a mental health professional and involves identifying and reframing negative thought patterns. Outside of a therapist’s office, a person can utilize this process to challenge distorted thought patterns and develop healthy coping strategies. In some cases, a person may learn to implement CBT techniques with their therapist and then apply them outside of the controlled therapy environment. Using a thought log or journal to analyze a negative thoughtFor some, writing or journaling about negative thoughts can reduce anxiety. Rather than suppressing or avoiding negative thoughts, a person may engage with them by writing them out, exploring their underlying causes, and analyzing their validity. Over time, this practice can retrain the mind to recognize distorted thinking and replace it with more balanced, helpful beliefs.Other strategies to regain control during a spiral Other strategies that can help a person regain control during a spiral may include positive self-talk and asking grounding questions. Positive self-talk often involves incorporating positive affirmations that can increase motivation and self-confidence. A person may also ask themselves grounding questions when they feel overwhelmed. For example, they may ask, “What do I know is true?” This can help them identify cognitive distortions and reduce spiraling thoughts. Long-term strategies to manage and regulate feelingsWhile having a short-term toolbox to manage spiraling thoughts can be beneficial, it may also be helpful to develop a long-term strategy to manage thoughts and emotions. Taking a long-term view involving lifestyle changes, healthy boundaries, and positive thinking patterns can help a person become proactive in managing anxiety and stress. Lifestyle changes to improve mental healthLifestyle changes to improve mental health include incorporating daily exercise and getting enough quality sleep. Exercise has been shown to increase neuroplasticity, which can help a person process challenges more effectively, and it can also improve sleep quality. High-quality sleep can ensure that the brain is ready to meet the challenges of the day. Eating nutritious food is another lifestyle change that can properly fuel the brain and body.Setting boundariesIt can be helpful to track and record events or situations that may lead to negative thought patterns. Once these stimuli are identified, a person can set boundaries for them to avoid the cascading effect of a negative thought spiral. As an example, if a person frequently spirals when watching the news or social media, it may be helpful to set limits or stop consuming information from those outlets altogether.Developing a variety of techniques to reduce negative thinkingThere may not be a one-size-fits-all approach to reducing negative thinking patterns. This is why it can be a good idea for a person who experiences frequent spiraling events to have a variety of strategies available. Breathing techniques, mantras, and affirmations that are at the ready, as well as a support network that a person can lean on in times of crisis, can be invaluable.Mindfulness practices to slow negative thinkingOne of the keys to slowing negative thinking may be to take the mind out of the hypothetical and ground it in the present. Mindfulness practices can help a person focus on the here and now and may reduce the anxiety and stress associated with cognitive distortions. Common mindfulness practices include breathwork, observation, and guided meditation. To increase the impact of mindfulness practices, it may be helpful to practice them as part of a daily routine. For example, a person may use mantras or affirmations while brushing their teeth in the morning or practice meditation right before bed each night. With mindfulness, the key is not to suppress or avoid negative thoughts, but to gain perspective of their impacts and reduce anxiety. Getty/Renata AngeramiDo negative thoughts lead you to spiral?Talk to a licensed therapist onlineConnecting with a mental health professionalIn addition to mindfulness strategies and lifestyle changes, it may also be helpful for a person to seek professional help to manage cognitive distortions and spiraling thoughts. A therapist can evaluate, diagnose, and treat a variety of mental health conditions. They can also consider a person’s mental health holistically and make personalized recommendations. Attending in-person therapy at a brick-and-mortar office isn’t always convenient or accessible. Online therapy sessions can occur from any location with a personal device and an internet connection. This means that you can get the support that you deserve at a time and place that works for you. Research suggests that online therapy can be an effective way to reduce anxiety. Many online therapists use CBT techniques and other modalities to help clients manage negative thought patterns. Takeaway Everyone experiences negative thoughts occasionally. However, if those thoughts become all-encompassing or hard to manage, it may be a sign of spiraling. Spiraling can be described as a negative thought pattern where a stimulus can lead a person to feel anxious or overwhelmed. Managing spiraling thoughts typically involves mindfulness strategies and therapeutic techniques. Online therapy can be an effective way to reduce negative thought patterns and anxiety while providing a person with the tools they deserve to improve their mental health and well-being.How do I stop myself from spiraling?When you notice that you’re falling into a downward spiral, taking deep breaths and focusing on the world around you by paying attention to each of the five senses can be helpful. You might also distract yourself by engaging in positive experiences, such as spending time doing a fun hobby, reading a book, or talking to a friend.Why do I spiral so easily?If you notice that you spiral easily, that may be a sign that you have deeply ingrained negative thinking patterns. It’s also possible that you’re living with a mental health disorder like generalized anxiety disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Cognitive behavioral techniques, particularly when taught by a licensed mental health professional, may help you stop negative thinking in its tracks and break free from emotional distress.How can you pull yourself out of an anxiety spiral?Pulling yourself out of an anxiety spiral can be challenging, but it’s possible. Practicing grounding exercises, spending time with friends, engaging in self-care, and doing things that bring joy may be helpful. You might also try journaling or exercising to reduce anxiety in the moment. In the long term, seeking support from a therapist can help you manage negative emotions, practice self-compassion, and develop improved mental wellbeing.How do you calm someone who is spiraling?Removing them from the situation (if possible) and taking deep breaths with them may help the person calm down. You can also talk to them about what they’re experiencing and validate their emotions.What does an anxiety spiral look like?An anxiety spiral may start with one negative thought, but it may quickly devolve into picturing worst-case scenarios, reliving past experiences, and even experiencing physical symptoms of anxiety. If anxiety spirals affect your daily functioning, professional intervention may be beneficial.How can you stop an obsessive thought spiral?Practicing mindfulness or engaging in distracting activities may be helpful. You can also try journaling. You may find that once your thoughts are out of your head and written on paper, you’re able to let them go.How do you sleep when spiraling?If you’re spiraling while trying to fall asleep, focusing on your breath, counting backward from 100, or visualizing a relaxing environment may shift your focus. You could also try to think of your thoughts as passing clouds rather than ideas you must engage with.How do you get out of a rumination spiral?Focusing on the present moment instead of the thoughts in your own mind may stop rumination. However, this often takes practice. Be sure to treat yourself with the same kindness you would a friend, and celebrate small victories rather than being frustrated with yourself for experiencing rumination.How do I relax my mind from overthinking?Exercise may decrease anxiety and reduce overthinking. Fun hobbies and other distractions may also shift your focus and perspective. Building awareness of the situations that often lead to overthinking may give you more control over your thoughts in the long term.How can you help someone who is spiraling?You might take deep breaths with them, let them know you are there to listen, and validate the emotions they’re feeling. If they spiral frequently, you could encourage them to seek professional help if you believe they would be receptive to the idea.