

How To Use “My ACT Tool Kit”

In dancing, we really start having fun when we creatively combine moves, fitting them to those of our dance partners in the moment. So too, the true joy of learning the flexibility skills comes from combining them in an ongoing way to rise to the daily challenges of our lives – to pivot toward what matters ... to *us*. That is the dance of flexibility.

To make practicing your skill-building a habit, it's helpful to create a set of your own preferred ACT tools. Pick and choose your preferred tools and techniques, and for the next few months at least, largely limit your practice to playing around with your initial set until they are so familiar that they come naturally to you as you need to call on them day to day.

At that point begin adding one more method at a time. There is no need for you ever to get bored with any given exercise, as there are a huge number of alternatives available online and in the scores of ACT books available. See how what you added works, and if it's not helpful, jettison it and move on to another.

Here is an example, comprising some of my favorite metaphors and exercises selected from those I've presented. Don't be thinking this is *the* best set – this is just an example of a sensible initial set. Fill in a grid like this with your own favorites.

A Sample Your ACT Tool Kit

Defusion	Sing Your Thoughts	Give Your Mind a Name	Write Thoughts on Cards & Carry Them in Your Pocket
Acceptance	Practice the Opposite	Give Difficult Feelings a Color, Weight, Speed, Shape	Practice Dropping the Rope
Presence	Do a Scan of Your Bodily Sensations	Notice Single and Multiple Attention Targets	Open Your Focus
Self	Rewrite Your Story	Notice Who Is Noticing	Remember I'm Not That
Values	Write Out Your Values	Play "I've Got a Secret"	Do a Values Card Sort
Committed Action	Hook New Habits to Established Routines	Share Your Commitment With A Good Friend	Link Values to S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Sometimes psychological flexibility training leads to major progress, and because people feel they have “solved” the problem that inspired them to try ACT, they stop working on the skills.

That’s a great shame because if you keep practicing the skills and consciously applying them to new domains of your life, you can keep evolving your life in accordance with your chosen values. You have to keep practicing because rigid ways of thinking and acting will always keep sneaking up on us.