Tilt

The term tilt originates from old flipper machines tendency to become inoperable after the player in a rage smashed against it, rendering it inoperable to avoid future damage. It would display a message mechanical or electronically noticing that the machine has become "tilted".

You could also say that a player that is "tilted" is no longer in a calm and balanced state of mind.

Tilt is something that is caused by a serious of events that trigger an emotional response by the player. After a certain treshold, differing from person to person, is reached, the person is effectively "on tilt" until the person is able to move away from the task at hand and relax or simmer down.

Everybody has a tilt cap from where they start to act unrational, driven by emotions and instinct. In poker this cap can be reached through triggering events like bad beats, bad play, winning or losing hands, everything that enlists an emotional response raising the player's emotional state's dominance over rationally calculated thinking, which happens in the cerebral part of the brain.

Once the tilt cap is breached, the cerebral decision making is rendered ineffective and the more rudementary and primitive parts of the brain take over. Once a player is in this tilted state, being aware or not, the decision quality and capability of rational thinking is severly or completely impeded.

In order to get off tilt and back to a balanced calm state with cerebral thinking dominating the decision process, the player has to quit the activity and relax from the emotional stress. A lot of resetting the mind is done by either stepping away from the task at hand, in this case poker, or meditate on the feelings and tilt in order to accept and dismiss it as an active form of emotional relaxation.

Autopiloting in poker, meaning no longer being completely aware and rationalizing all, even the most obvious decisions, can already be a form of tilting.
The less subconciously accessible knowledge is present in a player's mind, the more the autopilot-tilt will result in mistakes and bad play.
So in order to effectively limit the damage tilt does is to either accumulate more knowledge to have the tilt be less harmful when it happens, or reduce the amount of emotional responses and their impact, or supplying yourself with a large amount of emotional responses needed in order to breach your personal tilt cap level.

A lot of player's tolerate their concious or unconcious tilt as not important and live with the fact that they are not playing their a-game, or are not doing anything to get their tilt level back down again after a session. But it is good to be aware of the effect of tilt you personally have and adress it if it has become a major problem with your poker game, or in life in general.