

TIPS FOR GAMBLING SAFELY

Most people gamble for fun and enjoyment. However, some people think of gambling as a way to make money, spend more than they can afford, or use gambling to distract themselves from everyday problems. Following these tips can help you to gamble more safely.

The National Gambling Helpline is operated by GamCare and offers free and confidential support, information and advice on problem gambling, either via telephone (Helpline - 0808 8020 133) or online (NetLine). It can also include direction to chat room forums and printed information depending on what you need and when.

The National Gambling Helpline's experienced staff can provide information and advice, refer you to other sources of help and also tell you what may be available locally. This can include referral to sources of help about money and debt advice, along with identifying other suitable forms of personal help such as counselling, and crisis support. You can also access free face-to-face and online counselling if you, or someone you know, has a gambling problem via a network of treatment providers across Britain.

1: Don't think of gambling as a way to make money

The venue is using gambling to make money. It's not designed to work the other way around. Over time you will give away more money than you receive! Think of gambling as an entertainment expense – just like buying a movie ticket.

2: Only gamble with money you can afford to lose

Gamble within your weekly entertainment budget, not with your phone bill or rent budget.

3: Set a money limit in advance

Decide how much you can afford to lose before you go to play. When it's gone – it's over! If you win, you've been lucky, but don't be disappointed if your luck doesn't continue.

4: Set a time limit in advance

It's easy to lose track of time when you're gambling. Set a time limit or alarm, and when time's up – quit! Odds are that the more time you spend gambling, the more money you will lose.

5: Never chase your losses

If you lose your set money limit and then try to win some of it back before you leave, then you haven't really set a money limit. Chasing your losses will usually just lead to bigger and bigger losses.

6: Don't gamble when you're depressed or upset

Decision-making can be more difficult when you're stressed or emotionally upset. Make sure you only gamble when you're feeling happy and clear headed.

7: Balance gambling with other activities

When gambling becomes your only form of entertainment, it's unlikely that you're still just gambling for the fun of it, and your gambling may even be a problem. Make sure gambling isn't your only pastime.

8: Don't take your bank card with you

This is a good way to safeguard your money limit and not let being "in the moment" warp your judgment.

9: Take frequent breaks

Gambling continuously can cause you to lose track of time and perspective. Step out for some air or a bite to eat at regular intervals.

10: Don't drink or use drugs when gambling

Drugs and alcohol cloud judgment, and good judgment stands as your main line of defence against letting gambling get out of control.