

Do you recognise any of the following?

- Uncontrolled spending
- Significant time spent gambling
- Concealing or lying about gambling behaviour
- Gambling impacting on relationships with family and friends
- Withdrawal from family activities
- Spending excessive amounts of time on a computer
- No apparent interests or leisure pursuits
- Absence from school, college, university or work

Is gambling getting in the way of the life you want to live?

GamCare offers advice, information and practical help over the phone and online. Post messages on our Forum, chat online or talk to an adviser who can let you know about local support, including counselling services, and sources of advice about gambling-related issues such as debt.

GamCare also provides counselling to help you explore situations relevant to your gambling in a safe environment over time. GamCare counselling is offered free of charge, although we accept donations.

To find out more, talk to one of GamCare's specially trained advisers. They'll listen, they won't judge you and your conversation is completely confidential.

The National Gambling Helpline, provided by GamCare, is open seven days a week, 8am - midnight.

Call free: 0808 8020 133
www.gamcare.org.uk

Gamblers Anonymous

A support fellowship for problem gamblers.
www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk

Gam-Anon

Support for friends and families affected by gambling.
www.gamanon.org.uk

Gordon Moody Association

A residential treatment centre for problem gamblers.
www.gordonmoody.org.uk

Citizens Advice

Free, independent and confidential advice and information.
www.citizensadvice.org.uk

National Debtline

Free, independent and confidential advice on money and debt.
0808 808 4000
www.nationaldebtline.org

Family Lives

Support and information for parents.
0808 800 2222
www.familylives.org.uk

Relate

Relationship counselling and advice to couples and individuals.
0300 100 1234
www.relate.org.uk

Samaritans

Confidential, emotional support for anyone in crisis.
08457 90 90 90
www.samaritans.org.uk

Youth Access

Information on local counselling services for children and young people.
020 8772 9900
www.youthaccess.org.uk



Scan here to visit the GamCare website



Gambling problem?

Find help and support



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Many people find themselves unable to explain why they continue to gamble

This leaflet is designed to help you manage your feelings and cope with the issues associated with gambling. It is not designed to replace the support and guidance available from seeing a GamCare counsellor or attending a support group.

For free advice and support you can contact the National Gambling Helpline, provided by GamCare, on **0808 8020 133** or log on to our website at **www.gamcare.org.uk** to find out about counselling and support services available in your area.

Why do I gamble?

Many people find themselves unable to explain why they continue to gamble despite the problems it causes in their day-to-day lives. The most obvious answer would be "for the money", but is this true? When you win, do you gamble away your winnings? Do you continue to gamble until you have little or no money left?

In our experience, even though winning money may have attracted you at first, most people who have a gambling problem are using gambling as an opportunity to escape from other issues or pressures in their lives – problems at home or at work, boredom, loneliness or anxiety. Understanding what role gambling is playing in your life can be an important first step in beating the problem.

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How do I stop gambling?

There is unlikely to be a single answer that will enable you to stop gambling. Gambling problems are complex and it can take time and effort to overcome them.

Remember:

- You may need to use a combination of strategies to help you stop
- You are more likely to succeed with support from others
- Nearly everyone has relapses – you'll need to be prepared to learn from these and try again

What can I do to deal with my gambling?

GamCare counselling provides a safe, confidential space for you to talk about your situation, explore the causes of your gambling behaviour and the effects it has on your life.

Other actions which could help you include:

- Scheduling other activities at the times you're most likely to gamble.
- Making it harder to access your money. Ask someone you trust to handle your money for an agreed period of time (e.g. three months).
- Self-exclusion, which is banning yourself from gambling venues.
- If you feel strong enough, consider writing your feelings down in a diary. If you are not gambling, note how you are feeling and how you have coped. If you have gambled, think about the events that led up to this and record your feelings before, during and after.
- You can contact the National Gambling Helpline, provided by GamCare, for emotional support or you could consider joining a self-help support group such as Gamblers Anonymous.

Take steps

- Try to stop all gambling while you are breaking the habit.
- Look for patterns in your behaviour. Do you gamble, or need to gamble, when you feel bored, stressed or under pressure?

- Mark each day you do not gamble on a calendar to give you a visual marker of your progress. If you gamble, check how many days you had managed to stay clear of gambling. Set a target to beat that number.
- Reward yourself after a gambling-free period - perhaps you could buy something personal that is unrelated to gambling. If you feel uncomfortable handling money, take a friend along with you.

Take care

- Take one day at a time and it will be easier to break your gambling habit.
- Be prepared for withdrawal symptoms. You may feel depressed, irritable, shaky or have palpitations.
- There will be times when you may feel desperate to gamble – don't! Call our free Helpline or log on to **www.gamcare.org.uk** to talk about your feelings.
- Develop your range of interests, especially with other people. Try to do things with friends and family who do not gamble.
- Try replacing gambling with activities and interests that meet similar needs, perhaps a sport with a strong element of competition or calculated risks.

Take heart

- Be positive. Ensure that any changes you make are manageable and realistic - with each goal you achieve, your confidence and self-esteem will grow. You will also have an incentive to reach your next goal. If you have been gambling for many years, don't expect your life to improve immediately. It will take a lot of hard work and motivation from you to change.
- If you have a 'slip', do not punish yourself. Instead, reflect on the day and think about what you have learnt from it. Congratulate yourself for the time you were not gambling.
- Be optimistic – you can overcome a gambling dependency.