

***Straight Facts...
About Gambling***

What are the Odds?

***Find Out How Much You Know About VLT
Games and Slot Machines.***



Take the test. Find the truth.

How Much Do You Know About VLT/Slot Games?

For each statement, indicate whether you believe it is "true" or "false." then turn the page to see how well you can separate the facts from the myths.

	TRUE	FALSE
1. You will make money playing VLTs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. After a string of losses your odds of winning are higher, especially if you keep playing the same machine.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Your skill on the machine can determine how likely you are to win on a particular "spin" (play).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. It is helpful to know which machines are paying out (hot) and which are not (cold) before you start to play.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. A series of "near misses" (plays that have almost won) means that the machine is getting ready to pay out a big win.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. If you are losing, changing your bet level is a useful strategy to improve your odds of getting "wins" going again.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Different games have different payouts, even if they are offered on the same machine.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. New or casual players have better odds of winning than regular players.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Turn the page to find out the facts.

ANSWERS: Fact or Myth?

1. False. You can't make money playing VLTs.

The more you play, the more you lose. If people who gambled were always making money playing VLTs, there would be no profit for operators. You may have heard that at 92 to 95 per cent, VLTs have among the highest payouts of any form of gambling in Nova Scotia. While this information is true, think about what it actually means. On average, for every dollar that you bet, you will lose 5 to 8 cents! You may win on occasion, but wins are often small and people often use their winnings to play longer. This means that you not only lose money out of your own pocket, but also put your winnings back into the machines.

2. FALSE. Chasing losses always leads to more losses.

Each play on the machine is independent from the play just before it. The odds of winning are the same every time. Many gamblers incorrectly think that a "big" win is due after they have lost a lot of money in the machine. This is called chasing your losses. Players who chase their losses always end up losing even more because they think a "big win" is just around the corner. The odds are always in the house's favour. So over time, the more money you put in the machine, the more money you will lose. Spend a little, lose a little. Spend a lot, lose a lot.

3. FALSE. Nothing you do will influence the outcome of the game.

Your "skill" has no effect on the game. The outcome of every game is random and already pre-set before the play is even started. Sure, you might win when you hit a button during play, but that is just chance, not skill. The exact same result would have happened even if you had done nothing.



4. FALSE. There is no such thing as a "hot" or "cold" machine.

Past VLT wins or losses cannot be used to predict what will happen in the future. All VLT outcomes are random. There is no pattern, even if it looks like there is one. There are no "hot" or "cold" machines. A random number generator inside each machine makes sure the results are not predictable. It also makes sure the machines always take in more money than they pay out. This is why gambling is profitable for those operating the machines.



5. FALSE. "Near misses" are not real.

There is no such thing as a "near miss" even though it may look like you have almost won.

The truth is that you have lost. There are no spinning reels or mechanics inside the machine. There is just a blinking screen that shows any one of a number of pictures. Although the pictures look like you "almost" won, they come up randomly and cannot be used to predict future wins.

6. FALSE. Changing your bet levels will not affect when a "win" will occur.

Nothing you do can improve your chances of winning. The game outcomes are random and are set by the machine. Often, players incorrectly believe they can influence the outcome by using some kind of trick, but it makes no difference. There is no skill involved.

7. TRUE. Different games have different payouts.

The levels of payout vary by game and among the different types of VLT machines. Check the pay tables on the machines. The majority of games have an average payout rate of 95 per cent but averages can vary between 92 and 95 per cent. This means that you pay to play. On average, for every dollar you bet, you will lose between 5 and 8 cents per play. Players often leave winnings in the machine and continue playing. That means only about 70 to 80 per cent of money put in is ever cashed out as "winnings." Most players usually walk away with no payout at all.

8. FALSE. The odds are the same for everyone.

New or casual players (play less than once a month) are not luckier. They just often stop playing earlier than regular players do. This means that they are more likely to cash out with smaller wins and walk away than players who keep on playing, chasing past losses, or waiting for the "big win."

VLT and Slot Machine Gambling In Nova Scotia

About two-thirds of all money lost on gambling in Nova Scotia was lost by people playing VLTs (42 per cent) or casino slot machines (25 per cent).

Most of these losses come from the small number of people (about 6.9 per cent, or, 50,000 adults) who play the machines at least once a month.

These regular VLT and slot machine players (play once a month or more) are at the highest risk for having gambling problems. Up to half of all regular players are at some level of risk. About one in four of them will have more serious problems as a result of their gambling. Those VLT players who have a gambling problem lose an average of \$1,200 a month, each, on the machines.

People who develop problems with the machines are more likely to have false ideas and information about the games. Your beliefs about how the machines work can increase your risk for developing problems.

Did you know ...

- you can bet anywhere from five cents to a maximum of \$2.50 for a single play on a VLT, and the maximum amount the machine will pay out in winnings on any single play is \$500?
- the odds of winning this maximum top prize are about 1 in 270,000?

This means if you usually bet 50 cents per play, you will lose about \$6,750 trying to win the top prize of \$500. If you bet more than 50 cents each play, you will lose even more trying to win that top prize. At \$1.00 a bet, you will lose about \$13,500. At the max bet (\$2.50) you will lose over \$30,000 trying to win a top prize of \$500!



Whether this is your first time trying the machines, or you are a regular gambler, everyone needs to know the facts.

Just the Facts Please!

VLTs and slots are widely available, easy to play, and there is no skill required. It's your choice whether you play or not. If you are going to gamble on the machines, make sure you know the facts so you can make informed decisions and keep your VLT and slot machine gambling on track.

The truth is....

Playing the machines is an expense, not a way to make money. The more you play, the more you will lose.

The odds are always in the house's favour. Even though you may sometimes win, over time, you cannot come out ahead playing these machines.

Video lottery and slot machines are games of random chance, not skill. There is absolutely no skill involved.

The results of each play are determined by a random number generator inside the machine and are already decided as soon as you start the play.

Using a Stop Button has no effect on what comes up on the screen. All it does is speed up the game and that means you will lose your money faster.

There is no such thing as a "hot" or "cold" machine. You cannot use information about past game performance to predict what will happen next.

Nothing you do can improve your odds of winning, but you can decide how much you are willing to lose.

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Getting Help Costs Nothing

If the cost of gambling is getting too high for you or someone you care about, don't wait. Call the number below any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, toll free. Talk to a professional counsellor. Find out more about gambling problems. Your call will be kept private.

***Nova Scotia Health Promotion's Problem
Gambling Help Line:***

1-888-347-8888

Or contact the Addiction Services office nearest you.

Addiction Services in the District Health Authorities

South Shore Health

South West Health

Annapolis Valley Health

50 Vancouver Street, Yarmouth, NS B5A 2P5

Phone: (902) 742-2406, Fax: (902) 742-0684

Colchester East Hants Health Authority

Cumberland Health Authority

Pictou County Health Authority

PO Box 359

199 Elliott Street, Pictou, NS B0K 1H0

Phone: (902) 485-4335, Fax: (902) 485-7026

Guysborough Antigonish Strait Health Authority

Cape Breton District Health Authority

235 Townsend Street, Sydney, NS B1P 5E7

Phone: (902) 563-2590, Fax (902) 563-2059

Addiction Prevention and Treatment Services

Capital Health

PO Box 896

300 Pleasant Street, Dartmouth, NS B2Y 3Z6

Phone: (902) 424-5623, Fax: (902) 424-0627

Visit our website:

www.gov.ns.ca/ohp/gambling