

you may play the pokies for a

quick flutter or even a longer session of gambling, but how much do you really know about these gaming machines and how they work?

poker machines are designed to make a profit for the venues licensed to operate them. In NSW, those venues are hotels, registered clubs and the casino. While poker machines can also be a fun way to spend money, they are not designed to help people add to their income.

While you may win money in the short term, in the long term it is virtually impossible to come out ahead.

here are some tips on the odds

how do gaming machines work?

Gaming machines are games of chance. Whether you win or lose is totally a matter of luck. This does not include games which involve an element of skill such as Video Blackjack or Video Draw Poker. While chance is still involved, good playing strategies may improve your chances of winning.

The NSW Government checks the operating programs for all gaming machines to ensure that they meet strict technical standards. It is illegal for anyone to tamper with machines or change the operation of a gaming machine without prior approval.

In games of chance there are no playing methods or patterns that can have any effect on whether you win or lose. Modern gaming machines contain a computer program known as a random number generator that controls and operates them. Each time you press the button to play a game, the computer program randomly selects the position of each symbol or picture.

Gaming machines cannot think or remember. They are operated by computer programs that produce random outcomes.

what's in it for you?

Gaming machines in NSW are programmed to return to players at least 85% of the money gambled, over the long term. This percentage is called 'player return' and is set by Government regulations. In practice, player returns often average around 90%.

Obviously the money may not be returned to the same player who put it into the machine. Player return is a long term average and it means that, in the long run, the machine almost always comes out ahead.

what are your chances?

The symbols assigned to each stopping position on each reel are programmed into the machine. For example, if there is a Queen symbol assigned to positions 2, 18, 23 and 33 on the first reel, these positions are permanent and do not change from game to game. The other positions on the reel have other symbols permanently assigned.

The random choice of stopping position is done separately and independently for each reel. On a machine with five reels and 35 possible stopping positions on each reel, there are about 52,500,000

possible stopping combinations. Most machines in NSW use computer graphics rather than mechanical reels. The principle of random position selection applies to both machines with computer graphics and those with mechanical reels.

The symbol that will trigger the maximum prize is often assigned to only one position on each reel. If so, the chance that all five of these symbols will appear on any one line is about **1 in 52,500,000**. Of course, the chances of winning a smaller prize [requiring fewer matching symbols] will be much better.

can you improve your odds?

No outside factors have any bearing on the outcome of a gaming machine game, including previous games.

This means it is impossible to predict a gaming machine's behaviour. Each symbol that comes up is chosen randomly.

It does **not** make a difference whether:

- > you play a machine straight after someone else has had a big payout from it
- > you play a machine that has not had a big payout over a long period of time
- > you play at certain times of the day or night
- > you play on certain days of the week, or
- > you press the buttons a certain way.

The chances of winning a prize on a gaming machine at any one time will always be the same.

Once the player return has been programmed into the gaming machine, it can only be changed to another approved setting by a licensed technician. It is illegal for anyone else to change the rate of player return or tamper with a gaming machine.

what's in a win?

In NSW the most you can win on any one play of a single gaming machine is \$10,000. Some venues have gaming machines linked together where a percentage of the money bet on them goes into a jackpot 'pool'. The progressive jackpot prize on linked machines can be up to \$100,000.

The most predominant type of jackpot in NSW is the 'random link' or 'mystery link'. A random number generator programmed in the link controller selects a value between a minimum and maximum amount where the jackpot will be won.

As bets are placed on machines linked to the jackpot, money is added to a displayed value. When this value reaches the amount selected by the random number generator, it is paid to the machine that triggered the jackpot.

The other type of jackpot in NSW is the 'standard linked progressive system' or 'linked jackpot'. As with the 'mystery link', money is added to a displayed jackpot as bets are placed on linked machines. The jackpot pool is paid to the machine that displays a specific predetermined combination of symbols [pictures] – the jackpot.

need a second chance?

If gambling isn't fun for you anymore, or you think you may need some help controlling it, check the place you picked up this brochure for a similar one called '**PlaySmart ... you can choose a better deal**' containing tips to keep your gambling under control.

If you are worried about someone you know, look for the brochure called '**PlaySmart ... everyone can lend a hand for a better deal**' containing tips to help if gambling by a friend or family member is worrying you.

if you want to talk to someone
who can help with
information, counselling
and referral, call
G-line on 1800 633 635

the hearing impaired can call
TTY 1800 633 649

G-line counsellors are available at any time,
24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

You don't have to give your name,
and interpreter services are available
for non-English speakers.

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betting on gaming machines?

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...know
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