

STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH THE URGE TO GAMBLE

- Slow yourself down by taking some deep breaths and telling yourself to calm down and relax.
- Tell yourself that the urge will pass [like a dark cloud] and that you can cope with it and hold off gambling.
- Identify and challenge distorted thinking about gambling and be honest with yourself. Ask yourself:
“Will it really be different this time?”
“Just because I feel lucky does it mean that I will win?”
“Will I really only spend five minutes or \$10 on gambling?”.
- Think about how bad you felt last time you gambled and lost [depression, guilty, angry] and visualise yourself walking away after having lost again. Ask yourself if you really want to feel like and experience this again.
- Think about how good you will feel about yourself if you don't gamble [you'll feel in control and have more self-respect and confidence]
- Set yourself “mini goals”, eg; To not gamble for the next hour, then reassess how you feel and if you still have an urge set another “mini-goal”.
- Instead of getting caught up in an inner struggle as to whether to gamble or not, delay making a decision by refusing to even think about it this will help you by saving energy that would otherwise be drained by inner conflict.
- Make it harder for yourself to gamble by creating obstacles to gambling. For example give your ATM card to someone you trust to hold for you, get yourself excluded from where you gamble, always carry only a few dollars on you.
- Find something else to do. For example go to the cinema, go for a walk or run, drop in on a friend, channel your energy into something constructive, not destructive.
- Call someone, Gamblers' Help, Gamblers Anonymous, a friend, a family member, your spouse/partner, your gambling counsellor.

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