



Self-help guide 21+

Practical steps to keep or regain control of your gambling

This guide helps you understand how gambling affects your everyday life, recognise early signs of losing control, and build a practical plan to cut down or stop gambling.





1 Start with the first step: see where you are today.

Assess your relationship with gambling

Think about the last 30 days and answer honestly:

- ☐ Did you gamble more money than you had originally decided to?
- ☐ Did you try to “win back” lost money by playing again?
- ☐ Did you stay at the casino longer than you had planned?
- ☐ Did you hide from anyone how much you gambled or how much you lost?
- ☐ Did you gamble because you were stressed, sad, angry, lonely, or under the influence of alcohol?
- ☐ Did you feel guilt, anxiety or shame after gambling?
- ☐ Did you think you should cut down or stop, but were not sure you could?

If you answered “yes”

One or more “yes” answers do not mean that you have “failed”. It is, however, a good opportunity to take a closer look at your relationship with gambling and decide whether you need to make a change.

According to a 2022 study, 2.6% of Cypriots who gamble are at high risk of difficulties controlling their gambling.

Now is a good time to take steps to protect yourself.

2 Understand your gambling habits

When gambling takes up part of your daily life, it is useful to observe your habits and understand how they affect you.

Answer the questions below:

 When do I gamble most often?	 How much money do I usually spend?	 How long do I stay at the casino?
 What usually happens before I gamble?	 How do I feel when I want to keep gambling?	 What happens after I lose?
 How else could I have used this money?	 How will I benefit if I change?	 Which person do I trust to support me?

After writing down your answers, think:

What would I like to change in my relationship with gambling?

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3 Guidelines

International guidelines suggest three low-risk limits, which should be applied **at the same time**:

UP TO

4

DAYS OF
GAMBLING
PER MONTH

NO MORE THAN

2

TYPES OF
GAMBLING
PRODUCTS

NO MORE THAN

1%

OF YOUR
MONTHLY
HOUSEHOLD INCOME
BEFORE TAX

Important: These limits are not suitable for everyone.

If you already:

- ☐ have financial problems,
- ☐ feel intense worry or anxiety,
- ☐ have other mental health problems,
- ☐ have a family history of problem gambling,

then these limits may not be suitable for you. In such cases, stopping gambling temporarily or completely may be the safer choice.

There are many false beliefs around gambling. People at higher risk of gambling-related problems are more likely to fall into these thinking traps.

Myth or reality?

1 "After so many losses, I'm sure to win." ☐ MYTH ☐ REALITY	2 "I have a system, so I can control the result." ☐ MYTH ☐ REALITY	3 "If I stay just a little longer, I'll win it back!" ☐ MYTH ☐ REALITY
4 "The odds are 50/50. I just lost, so now I'll win." ☐ MYTH ☐ REALITY	5 "If I study the rules of the game well, I'll have an advantage." ☐ MYTH ☐ REALITY	6 "I'm lucky today, I shouldn't stop playing." ☐ MYTH ☐ REALITY
7 "I've been playing a slot machine all night and I just missed by one symbol! The jackpot must be getting closer." ☐ MYTH ☐ REALITY	8 "I don't gamble every day, so I'm fine." ☐ MYTH ☐ REALITY	9 "Gambling can cause addiction, just like alcohol and drugs." ☐ MYTH ☐ REALITY

All the statements above are myths, except the last one.

Gambling can lead to addiction and have serious consequences for the person and the people around them.

If you feel you are struggling to stop, there are practical tools that can help you.

Before you gamble or head to the casino, take 10 minutes to make your plan.

My checklist

- 1 ☐ Decide the maximum amount I can spend without affecting bills, rent, loan payments or other basic needs of mine or those of my family.
- 2 ☐ Use the **Calculate Your Available Income tool** on the Gamble Control website to set a personal money limit.
- 3 ☐ Take with me only the amount I have decided on.
- 4 ☐ Avoid taking credit cards or any other way to access extra money.
- 5 ☐ Decide in advance what time I will leave and set a reminder on my phone.
- 6 ☐ Avoid alcohol before and during gambling.
- 7 ☐ Know the rules and the odds of the games I plan to play.
- 8 ☐ Tell a person I trust, or the friends who will be with me, about the time and money limits I have set.
- 9 ☐ Decide in advance what I will do if I lose quickly or if I win early.

Limits are set before gambling starts, not while you are playing.

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Protect your money

Financial difficulties can be one of the most serious consequences of problem gambling. Money for basic needs is not money for gambling.

1 ☐ Keep a separate account for your essential expenses and financial obligations

2 ☐ Do not use money meant for bills, loans or family needs for gambling.

3 ☐ Write down your debts and financial obligations before you decide how much money you can spend on gambling.

4 ☐ If necessary, ask a person you trust to help you manage your finances for a while.

5 ☐ If you have debts, seek help from a qualified professional or a support service.

Stick to your plan while you play

While you are gambling or at the casino:

- 1 ☐ Stay within the time and money limits you have already set.

- 2 ☐ Do not get carried away by how friends and people around you play or talk.

- 3 ☐ Take a 10-minute break for every hour of play.

- 4 ☐ Do not try to win your losses back by playing more.

- 5 ☐ Do not raise the limits you have set.

- 6 ☐ Stop playing if you feel very upset or angry, or if you have been drinking alcohol.

- 7 ☐ Do not keep playing just because your friends are staying.

- 8 ☐ Do not borrow money to keep playing.

The exit rule

If you reach the time or money limit you have set, stop and leave, whether you are winning or losing.

Continuing to play does not mean you will get back the money you lost.

The result is never certain, and the odds are set in favour of the game provider.

Gambling is a form of entertainment, not a way to earn an income.

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Make change easier

When you feel a strong urge to keep gambling, you don't have to act on it straight away.

1

DELAY:

Wait 10 minutes before you decide.

2

REDIRECT YOUR ATTENTION:

Do something different. Leave the venue, go for a walk, call someone, or do something that takes you away from gambling.

3

REMEMBER YOUR DECISION:

Remind yourself of the limit you have set, your goal, and the reasons why you want to cut down or stop gambling.

4

TALK:

Talk to a person you trust or contact the 1422 support line.

REMEMBER

A strong urge to gamble can build up, reach a peak, and then fade.

Give the urge time to pass before you decide.

With practice, it may become easier to manage the urge.

9 Reduce your access to gambling

If you find it hard to limit your gambling, or you feel a very strong urge to gamble, make access harder.

- 1 ☐ Delete gambling-related apps, links and accounts from your devices.

- 2 ☐ Limit gambling ads and promotional content by following the relevant guide of the Cyprus Gaming and Casino Supervision Commission (CGC).

- 3 ☐ Block your access to online betting websites.

- 4 ☐ Ask to be self-excluded from the casino or from any other gambling provider, where this option is available.

- 5 ☐ Consider using tools to set time and money limits.

The harder you make it to gamble straight away, the more time you give yourself to think before you act.

Bring someone into your plan

You don't have to face this difficulty without support. Choose a person you trust and talk to them. Recognising the difficulty and deciding to do something about it can be a first step towards rebuilding trust.

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You can start a conversation like this:

“I want to cut down or stop gambling. Sometimes I find it hard to keep the limits I have set. I would like your help. I don't need criticism, I need you to remind me of my plan when I'm struggling.”

Share with them:

1

how you feel about gambling,

2

what financial or emotional difficulties it has caused you,

3

what your goal is, and

4

the reason why you want to change.

You can ask them to:

1

let them know when you plan to gamble or visit the casino and ask them to contact you at a specific time,

2

find other ways to spend your time or have fun together,

3

help you temporarily with managing your cards or finances, if this is necessary,

4

go with you to a support service,

5

help you avoid high-risk situations.

Change does not have to happen without help.

Family, friends and people you trust can support you, help you recognise your progress, and support you through difficult moments.

Know when you need help

Ask for professional support when:

1



You can't stop
even though you
have decided to,

2



You borrow money
or sell things
to gamble,

3



You hide your losses
or lie about
gambling,

4



You gamble to escape
from anxiety, anger,
loneliness or sadness,

5



Gambling is affecting
your family, work, studies,
health or finances,

6



You use alcohol
or other substances
before or while gambling.

**1422 HELPLINE**

Call **1422** to talk confidentially about the difficulties you are facing.

1422**PHAROS CENTRE**

You can also contact Pharos, the specialised Centre for the Prevention and Treatment of Problem and Pathological Gambling.

**IF THERE IS IMMEDIATE DANGER**

If there is immediate danger to you or another person, or if you feel you might harm yourself or others, this is an emergency.

**CALL IMMEDIATELY****112**

or go to the

Accident and Emergency Department (A&E).

Help is available. Seek it immediately.

**CALCULATE YOUR
AVAILABLE INCOME**

Gamble Control



Open Link

**SCAN HERE****HOW TO LIMIT GAMBLING
ADVERTISEMENTS ONLINE**

Cyprus Gaming & Casino Supervision Commission



Open Link

**SCAN HERE**

The information in this guide is intended to inform and support you. It does not replace an assessment or advice from a qualified professional.



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