



Gambling Guardrails

Your first week without gambling

A private, seven-day plan for getting your footing back, one day at a time.

A free guide from Gambling Guardrails





Start here

If you're reading this, part of you already knows something needs to change. Maybe it's the money, the hiding, or how much of your life it's taking up. Whatever brought you here, it took something to open this.

This guide won't lecture you. It's a set of practical steps for the next seven days: ways to make gambling harder to reach, get through urges, and stop carrying this alone.

If things feel hopeless, start here

Gambling losses can make things feel hopeless fast. If you're thinking about not being here, or feel like there's no way out, please reach out right now. You won't be judged, and you don't need to have a plan figured out first.

988

Call or text, 24/7, for any crisis or thoughts of suicide

1-800-MY-RESET

National gambling helpline, 24/7

How to use this guide

Each day has one focus and a short list of things to do. You don't have to finish everything, and you can go at your own pace. If you only do one day, make it Day 1.

Day 1

Block access

Day 2

Guard money

Day 3

Know triggers

Day 4

Urge plan

Day 5

Tell someone

Day 6

Real numbers

Day 7

Plan for slips

Day 1

Make it harder to gamble today

Willpower runs out. Barriers don't. The goal today is to put as many steps as possible between you and your next bet.

- ☐ Delete betting and casino apps from your phone, tablet, and computer
- ☐ Close or self-exclude your sportsbook and casino accounts. Most licensed sites let you do this in account settings
- ☐ Install a gambling blocker such as [Gamban](#) or [BetBlocker](#) on every device you use
- ☐ Sign up for your state's voluntary self-exclusion program, if it has one
- ☐ Unsubscribe from promo emails and texts, and block the numbers that send them
- ☐ Change your route if it takes you past a casino or betting shop

You don't have to do all of it today. Each barrier you add buys you time, and time is what lets an urge pass.

Day 2

Put distance between you and your money

Fast access to money makes it easy to act on an urge before you've had a chance to think.

- ☐ Remove saved cards from your phone, browser, and payment apps
- ☐ Carry only the cash you need for the day
- ☐ Set up automatic payments for rent and bills right after payday
- ☐ Ask your bank or card issuer whether it can block gambling transactions
- ☐ Freeze your credit with [Equifax](#), [Experian](#), and [TransUnion](#) so new cards and loans can't be opened quickly
- ☐ If you trust someone, ask them to help you manage access to your accounts for a while

This guide isn't financial or legal advice. If debts feel unmanageable, a nonprofit credit counselor can help you look at your options.

Day 3

Get to know your triggers

Urges rarely come out of nowhere. Most follow a pattern you can learn to spot.

Check the ones that sound familiar, and add your own:

- ☐ Payday
- ☐ Game days or big events
- ☐ Boredom or too much free time
- ☐ Stress, conflict, or bad news

- ☐ Drinking
- ☐ Being alone late at night
- ☐ Ads, promos, or free bets
- ☐ A big win or a big loss

My biggest trigger is:

The time of day I'm most at risk is:

Day 4

Make a plan for the next urge

Urges tend to rise, peak, and fade if you don't act on them. A plan you've written down ahead of time is easier to follow than a decision made in the moment.

Fill this in now, while you're calm. Keep a photo of it on your phone.

When I feel the urge, I will first wait _____ minutes before doing anything.

Then I will call or text:

I will get up and go:

I will remind myself:

Day 5**Tell one person**

Gambling grows in secret. Telling one person you trust takes away some of its power, and gives you someone to call when an urge hits.

Pick someone who is more likely to help than to judge. It doesn't have to be the person most affected.

Ways to start

"This is hard to say, but my gambling has gotten out of hand and I'm trying to stop. I'm not asking you to fix it. I just need someone to know."

"Can I text you if I get the urge to bet? Just reading a reply would help."

Day 6**Look at the real numbers**

It's easy to avoid looking. But a clear picture of where things stand is the first step to getting out of the hole, instead of trying to win your way out of it.

- ☐ List every debt: who it's owed to, how much, and the minimum payment
- ☐ Total what you've spent on gambling in the last few months, as best you can
- ☐ Notice any thoughts about winning it back. That's a sign of chasing losses, not a plan
- ☐ Write down your essential bills for the month and when each is due

Don't try to solve all of it this week. Seeing it on paper is enough for now. A nonprofit credit counselor can help you build a plan from here.

Day 7 Plan for slips, and get support

Recovery is rarely a straight line. A slip doesn't erase your progress. What matters is what you do next.

If I slip, I will:

- ☐ Stop and step away, without trying to win back what I lost
- ☐ Tell the person I picked on Day 5
- ☐ Look at what triggered it, and add a barrier or a step to my urge plan
- ☐ Reach out for support: a Gamblers Anonymous meeting, 1-800-MY-RESET, or a coach



Numbers and links to keep handy

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Call or text 988, 24/7, for any crisis.

National gambling helpline

1-800-MY-RESET (1-800-697-3738), 24/7, free and confidential.

Gamblers Anonymous

Free peer support meetings, in person and online.
gamblersanonymous.org

Nonprofit credit counseling

The National Foundation for Credit Counseling can connect you with a nonprofit counselor. nfcc.org

Free credit reports

AnnualCreditReport.com

Gambling blockers

Apps such as Gamban and BetBlocker block gambling sites and apps on phones and computers.

Self-exclusion

Most states with legal gambling run a voluntary self-exclusion program. Search your state's name plus "gambling self-exclusion."

You don't have to figure this out alone

Gambling Guardrails offers private, online gambling recovery coaching with certified gambling counselors. Work at your own pace, with a coach in your corner.

gamblingguardrails.com

Gambling Guardrails provides coaching and education. This guide is not medical, legal, or financial advice and is not a substitute for treatment from a licensed provider.