

Understanding How It Works so You Can Make Informed Decisions About Your Gambling

Video Lottery Terminals and Electronic Table Games are similar in appearance to classic slot machines or as simulated classic table games, but these terminals are linked to a centralized system maintained by the NYS Gaming Commission that tracks the game play and earnings for each game. Video Lottery Terminals (VLTs) have the same appearance as slot machines. VLTs must receive winning outcomes transmitted by the central system. Electronic Table Games (ETGs) offer video versions of popular casino games like roulette, craps, and baccarat.



House Advantage

Casino games are designed with a house advantage. Mathematically, the house advantage is a measure of how much the house expects to win, expressed as a percentage of the player's wager.

For example, in a wager with a house advantage of 10 percent, the player will lose, on average over time, \$10 for every \$100 wagered.

Because the odds always favor the house, the longer or faster a person plays a casino game, the more the person should expect to lose. In the same way, the more a person wagers, the more the person should expect to lose. For instance, if the "hold percentage" (or house advantage) for a typical machine is 10 percent, then, on average, a player will win back \$90 for each \$100 wagered. However, if this player then re-wagers the \$90, the player will again win back, on average, 90 percent of the \$90, or \$81. As the betting continues, over time players are more and more likely to lose money, rather than win. An individual may lose more or less than the average, but the machine always comes out ahead in the long run.

True or False?

If a VLT machine hasn't paid out for a while, it's due for a win.

False. VLTs operate randomly at all times—no matter how many wins or losses have occurred in the past. A machine that has not paid out for a while has no greater chance of paying out in the future.

After hitting a jackpot, a player should move to a new VLT machine. The machine currently in play is not likely to hit again.

False. The odds of winning another jackpot on the next play are the same as they were before hitting the jackpot.

A VLT machine can tell the difference between maximum and minimum bets.

False. The amount wagered does not affect the outcome of the game. It only affects how much a player may win or lose.



It might be fun to imagine that rubbing a rabbit's foot improves a player's chances of hitting a jackpot, but the reality is that this "magical thinking" has no impact. Cheating aside, there's nothing a player can do — no ritual and no lucky charm — to influence the outcome of any casino game. Superstitions can't determine whether a player wins or loses.

