

A Practical Guide

# THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO PLAYING SLOTS



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# CONTENTS

Slots .....	3
A Brief History of Slots .....	3
Type of Slot Machines .....	6
How to Play Slots .....	9
Slots Rules and Triggering the Bonus Rounds .....	11
Activating the Jackpot .....	13
Basic Slots Strategies .....	16
Top 5 Most Popular Online and Offline Slot Games in the UK .....	19
Cheating at Slots .....	21
Biggest Wins on Slots .....	22
The Dos and Don'ts of Playing Slots .....	23



# SLOTS

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**Slots are perhaps one of the most familiar casino games. Their bright lights, intriguing graphics, and captivating sounds draw players of all types in.**

When it comes to playing slots, you don't need to spend hours on perfecting your strategy. Nor are you limited with variations. Whether you have five minutes or an entire weekend to gamble, slots are a great way to fulfill satisfy your entertainment needs and even win money.

If you are new to slots or are interested in learning about the game and its rich and colourful history, this guide is for you.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF SLOTS

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### 1880

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Slot machines could not have existed without the initial invention of coin operated devices which first originated in the US around 1880.

The expensive and attractive metal machines were rapidly installed in saloons and shops throughout the wild Wild West. One of the novelty items featured a race between two toy horses and was triggered by inserting a coin. Bettors would wager on which horse would win.

Following suit was another slot game featuring 50 card faces. Based on poker, the goal was to spin the best poker hand.

By 1888, machines that paid out money were patented. At the same time, their popularity was diminishing as they were known for ripping players off and required extensive upkeep.

# THE FIRST SLOT MACHINE

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In 1894, inventor and mechanic Charles August Fey found inspiration through the old metal machines and began to create a device with an automatic payout mechanism.

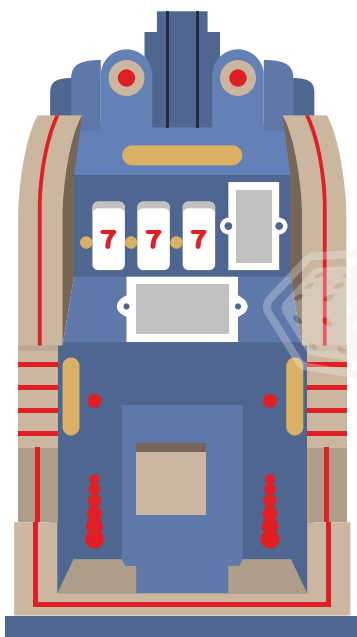
His machine consisted of three spinning reels with five symbols. They were spades, hearts, diamonds, horseshoes, and a Liberty Bell. Three liberty bells gave the biggest payout which was 10 nickels; worth fifty cents.

The name of the game was, to no surprise, the Liberty Bell and it was a major success.

The demand for the machines was so high that Fey could not keep up. By 1907, Fey partnered up with the Mills Novelty Company and created the Operator Bell. It was the first machine to feature fruits.



**The machine weighed just over 100 pounds, and was an instant success. Thirty thousand were produced and placed in cigar shops, barber shops, brothels, saloons, and restaurants. The original Liberty Bell and its predecessors are held in the Nevada State Museum.**



## 1915

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Between 1915 and 1930, Mills Novelty and Fey developed a series of slot machines with new improvements in terms of the technology and look.

In the early thirties, a bell machine featuring a double jackpot was released. This meant a player could win twice as much in one go.

The latest machines were also much quieter; hence their name, The Silent Bell.

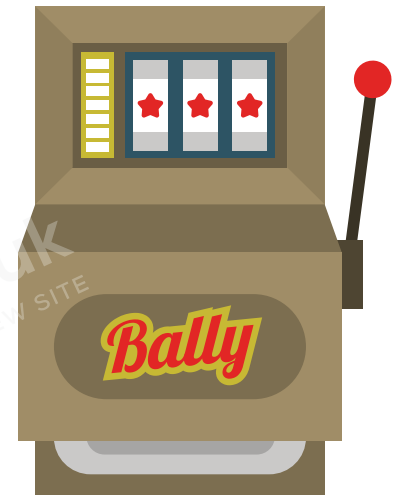
## 1963

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In 1963, the famous slot developer Bally released the very first fully functional electronic slot machine. Called Money Honey, it featured fruits, had a bottomless hopper, and auto payout of 500 coins. A human assistant was required to help with the actual payout, but nevertheless it was innovative and a must have in many establishments.

Shortly after, Money Honey, a machine ran by a 5 horse power engine was developed. Its name was Big Bertha and it featured 160 reel symbols. Initially it started with three reels and grew to 8 reels with even bigger jackpots.

As the years passed, the machines were getting smaller and attracting even more players. Big Bertha became another piece added to the museum.



## 1976

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In 1976, Fortune Coin Co. released the first true video slot machine. It used a modified 19 inch color receiver and logic boards.

The first prototypes were placed in the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel. It went through cheat proofing modifications and a few other smaller changes and was finally approved by the Nevada State Gaming Commission.

Soon after the video slots could be found in the most popular Vegas casinos. The technology was purchased in 1978 by IGT.

## 1986

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Moving forward to 1986 and there was a massive number of themed slots. Thanks to their affordability, vast range of options, and how simple they were to play, they had become a favourite gaming option for gamblers, but the best was still yet to come.

During this year, progressive jackpots were introduced to slot machines. This attracted a newer gambling audience that were younger, wealthier, and more conscious of their image. Slots had become hip and cool to play no matter who you were. This is something that the tables could never succeed in.

# 1994

Online slots have perhaps been the biggest innovation of all and have enabled people to join in on the fun since 1994.

**Now the industry is worth billions and has captured a worldwide audience. These days and slots continue to flourish as a gambling game. There has been no tipping point or dwindling down of the machines, but rather they have become the focal point of many casinos – both online and offline.**

## TYPE OF SLOT MACHINES



In the early days of slots, there was one style of machine. The three reels clanked and clamoured as they spun, leaving many onlookers cringing and holding their ears. Now the players can control the sounds emitted on the sturdy games. From the timeless classic to the modern variations, today slots come in all shapes and sizes.

## THE CLASSIC 3 REEL SLOT

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Classic slots of today are a tribute to the Liberty Bell and all the 3 reel variants that followed. Today the 3 reeled classics can be found at all casinos. Featuring minimal paylines and original symbols like cherries, BARS and bells, no player can resist a quick spin on these. A notable change in these machines is that you will be paid in money rather than chewing gum!



## 5 REEL SLOT

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This is perhaps the most popular slot variation and features 5 reels with between 3 and 4 rows. More paylines, generally up to 25, are available to wager and win on.

You will be able to play for as little as one cent, all the way to five dollars or more per spin. Extra features like wild symbols and scatter symbols have been added to the 5 reel games.



## 3D VIDEO SLOTS

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As one of the newer types of slots, these boast slick animations, catchy sounds and interactive 3D graphics that draw the player into the theme. 3D slots have turned the game into an exciting experience that everyone can immerse themselves in.

## MULTI PAYLINE SLOTS

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Considered to be high variance slots, these multi payline games feature between 243 and 1024 ways to win. In general you have to bet approximately 20-30 times your coin size. The winning combinations will be distributed according to their respective payouts.

# PROGRESSIVE SLOTS

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Online casinos are well known for their progressive jackpots which can quickly top the million dollar mark.

Progressive jackpots are typically pooled with other casinos and triggered on a maximum bet (although not always).

**Usually winning happens during a bonus round or is randomly triggered. In 2015 Jon Heywood won \$20,066,800 on the online progressive game, Mega Moolah. His win was followed up by Guinness World Records who proudly told him he now held the record.**

# MOBILE SLOTS

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A recent addition to the world of slots is the ability to play them on a mobile or tablet.

The top casinos will offer a broad choice of mobile compatible slots that are very similar to the traditional variations. Progressive jackpots, multiple paylines, bonus rounds, and different wagering options will all be available.

The primary difference between mobile and desktop slots is in the visualisation which has been lessened in order to work and look good on the smaller screens.



## IRON MAN 3



# THEMED SLOTS

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Licensed, or themed slots, are a very big deal to enthusiasts. These feature the image, voice, or licensed character of what is often a Hollywood theme. Tomb Raider, Game of Thrones, Batman, Monopoly, Thor and Terminator are some popular licensed slot games.



## SKILL GAMES

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Slots are a game of luck, but there are a small, loose category of game variations that have an element of skill added to them.

Although some people do not consider these games to be a part of slots, most casinos do group them together. In these games the player is rewarded for their skill over sheer luck.

Though they are relatively new, the games are capturing the attention of the younger, millennial crowd. The Police Pooches, Space Invaders, and Tully's Treasure Hunt are examples of skill based slots games.

## HOW TO PLAY SLOTS

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Whether you are playing online or offline, there is sure to be a slots game for you. In general, the virtual world has fewer restrictions and a bigger selection than their land based counterparts.

Luckily no matter which type you are playing, the gaming procedure is almost the same.

# PLAYING SLOTS

When you want to play slots online, you will need to follow the steps below:

Choose your online casino and sign up or log in to your account.

1

Select the game, review the payouts and rules to ensure you understand everything.

2

Decide on a wager.

3

Choose the number of paylines you wish to activate.

4

Select the coin value you wish to use to place wagers and place a select amount of coins on all the activated paylines. The total bet will be seen on the screen.

5

Now you can click or tap the spin button.

6

The symbols will spin and once stopped, you will be paid according to the pay table.

7

**Note: Some casinos will require you to download their software. Others might give you the option to download or play instant no-download games.**

## LAND BASED SLOTS

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Land based slots are very similar to the online versions. The biggest difference is the wagering, which may require you to pre load a casino card or purchase bar coded coins.

Once you swipe the card or place the coins in the slot, you will pull down the lever (or press spin) and watch the reels spin. Once they stop, you will be paid out according to any of the winning combos you hit.

## SLOTS RULES AND TRIGGERING THE BONUS ROUNDS

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Every game of slots will have its own rules. These will be accessible as soon as you click on the game so be sure to review them first.

Many games have bonus rounds that can be triggered by hitting specific images on the reels. These are most often found in 5 reel games and require you to land on five high paying symbols.

There are lots of different types of bonus games and they usually coordinate with the theme of the slot.

## WILD SYMBOLS

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Differing from one game to another, they are most popular in 5 reel variations. A wild symbol can substitute for any other symbol in the game, but they do not replace bonus or scatter symbols.



## SCATTER SYMBOLS

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Scatters are exciting because they reward players in the form of special scatter payouts. They can also trigger free spins which means you will get to spin the game without using your money.

Scatters are triggered in different ways but usually landing three symbols will activate the free spins and five symbols will trigger the bonus round.

## PICK 'EM BONUS

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A pick 'em bonus will be activated when you hit on three scatter symbols. A separate game will open up and you will be required to select icons which each reveal a prize or a multiplier. Once the round is complete, whatever you won will be added to your bankroll.

## CLICK ME BONUS

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An easy to play bonus round that will be triggered when three bonus symbols appear on the reels at the same time. You select on icon and it will reveal your special reward.

## OTHER BONUSES AND EXCITING FEATURES

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Depending on the game you play, you may find different features or bonuses like sticky wilds, battle sequences, puzzle rounds and arcade style games.

## ACTIVATING THE JACKPOT

*Jackpots can be triggered in a number of ways. Usually it happens when a combination of symbols on winning paylines are hit. You can view the payable to confirm the combination and payout.*



## HOUSE EDGE, ODDS & VOLATILITY OF SLOTS

When it comes to online slots, the house edge typically ranges from 6 - 15%.

Land based casinos vary by area and have mandatory minimums they must pay out. In general the house edge is between 10 and 30%

Due to the extensive variations of slots, determining the odds can be difficult. It's better to refer to the payback percentage of the casino to gauge the possibility of winning.

Online casinos' payouts vary but when you play at a good quality site you can expect to get a payout rate of between 94 and 97%.

The following chart is an average payout according to the denomination wagered. The higher you bet, the better the online casinos' payout becomes.

Denomination	Average Payout
\$.05	92.5%
\$.25	94.1%
\$1	95.9%
\$5	98.4%

# VOLATILE MACHINES

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As you discover slots you might see the word 'volatile' come up here and there. This basically refers to the inherent risk of the slot game and includes how much and how often you can expect to win.



## HIGH VOLATILITY SLOTS

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High volatility slots are equal to a game with a higher risk. The payoff will be apparent in the actual payouts which are typically larger, but few and far in between.

These games should only be played when you have a cushioned bankroll and plenty of time on your hands.

## LOW VOLATILITY SLOTS

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Low volatility slots are equal to a game with lowered risk. The payouts are usually small, but frequent and there is not a whole lot of 'wait time' while playing. They make for great games on the go and are accessible to players on a tight budget.



## DETERMINING VOLATILITY

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It is not possible to look up a games' volatility directly. However, it may become obvious as you play. You can also look at the payable. If the rewards are very high, the game is likely to be a medium to high volatility slot.

# THE MATHS BEHIND SLOTS

You might be wondering whether or not you really have a chance at winning slots? Casinos make money by paying less than what the true odds of a bet are worth. In table games this is easy to see. For example in double zero roulette, the true odds are 37-1, but a casino will pay 35-1.

Slots work in a similar manner, but there are way more possibilities to win. In fact there can be thousands, even millions, of different reel combinations. Software developers assign the monetary value of winning combos. These combinations and the payouts per winner help to determine the games' total odds.

In the early days of slots, the three reels had 10 symbols each. This meant there were 1,000 different combinations. When blanks or spaces were used as a stop, the combinations became 8,000. As slots started to have bigger reels, the combinations also increased.

For instance 20 symbols and 20 spaces meant 64,000 different possibilities. Today, many 5 reel slots have 100 different symbols meaning there are 10 million combos.

The math behind online slots, and modern land based slots, is much more complex than the slots of yesterday.

Now there are random number generators working with huge sets of numbers, multiple reels and symbols, and many more paylines. Then of course there are bonus events to take into consideration. All of these things add up and give players access to 1000s, even millions, of possible ways to win.



When you play online, you will discover hundreds of different slot games. Some have a high variance and others are less risky; thus, offering more opportunities to boost your bankroll. Combinations, payouts, and features will also vary depending on the game.

What is certain is that the average online payout is significantly higher than the land based counterparts. The game selection may be larger or smaller than a virtual one, but the potential combinations will be very similar.

**Realistically, both online and offline casinos have their own advantages which is why it's a good idea to try each option out for yourself.**

**Rest assured, the maths behind the games makes winning a reality regardless of where you are playing.**

# BASIC SLOTS STRATEGIES

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When it comes to slot strategies, you might feel confused about how this is even possible. And you're right; there is no tried and true strategy that will help you to win more. After all, slots are a game of luck. What you can do is learn about some popular myths associated with slots and winning.

## GENERAL MYTHS

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### Myth:

Slot machines have been programmed to have hot and cold streaks.

### Fact:

Slot machines are specifically programmed so that every spin is random. Such hot and cold streaks are a result of short term deviation from the probable statistics.



### Myth:

If a slot has not paid out in a while, it will hit very soon.

### Fact:

Slot machines will always payout, but there is no real way to tell this because of its random probability.

### Myth:

A machine that has just paid out a jackpot won't payout again soon.

### Fact:

There is no connection between previous wins and when the machine will payout again. It is completely possible for a slot to payout minutes after a jackpot win.

## LAND BASED CASINO MYTHS

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### Myth:

If I use a loyalty card, the odds of me winning are reduced.

### Fact:

A loyalty card is not given to players as a means to punish them; rather they exist to reward players. It's like a way of saying thank you.



If anything, you lose by not taking advantage of the card because you miss out on promotions and giveaways.

### Myth:

Pulling the slot handle gives better odds than pushing the button.

### Fact:

The odds remain the same regardless of how the reels are spun.

### Myth:

Slot machines that payout most often are always in the darker areas of the casino.

### Fact:

Casinos will place machines wherever they choose. If a machine does win more frequently, it will likely be an area that is frequently visited by players to encourage them to give the game a spin.

## ONLINE SLOT MYTHS

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### Myth:

Online slot machines are fixed.



### Fact:

Like every other game, online slots have a house edge which means the odds favour the casino but you always have a chance at winning.

Games are not fixed and to give you peace of mind they are audited by third party organizations like eCogra.

### Myth:

The auto feature pays out less than clicking on the spin button.

### Fact:

The payout is not affected at all by how you choose to play the game.

### Myth:

Using a bonus decreases the chance of winning.

### Fact:

The random number generators in a machine cannot differentiate between a player with or without a bonus. The payout will remain the same.

## Myth:

High rollers are the only players to win progressive jackpots online.

## Fact:

Anyone can win a jackpot; although the chances of winning do increase when the wager amount is higher.

Sometimes you might have to bet max in order to trigger the jackpot. This does not mean the game is only for high rollers because anyone will have the opportunity to make maximum bets which are usually around \$5 or slightly more.

## TOP 5 MOST POPULAR ONLINE AND OFFLINE SLOT GAMES IN THE UK

*UK players are big on slots but there are a few games which enthusiasts cannot get enough of. Some of these are only in a land based casino, others are exclusive to online.*



## The most popular UK slots include:

### OFFLINE



Triple 7



Stag Night



Super League  
Rugby



Cash Ahoy



The Great Escape

### ONLINE



Gonzo's Quest



Mega Moolah  
Progressive Jackpot



Starburst



Game of Thrones



Monty's Millions



Butterfly Staxx

New in  
2017

# CHEATING AT SLOTS

It's estimated that up to one billion dollars has been stolen from slot games. Most of this came from older machines at land based casinos. New technology, security measures, and other protocols have made cheating very difficult.

**These days it is nearly impossible to cheat at an online casino. Not to say that people don't try, but they do not get very far.**



Land based casino cheating is another story. Even with pit bosses, cameras, alarms, and security personnel, a brave few souls try their luck at making a quick dollar through cheating. Some of the most popular methods tried are:

**Counterfeit /fake coins:** As one of the oldest ways to cheat, players bring their own coins into the casino. This scam was used for decades until casinos started using pre loaded cards and special coins.

**Coins on a string:** A coin is tied onto a string and put into the machine only to be pulled out quickly. The goal was to trick the machine and cause it to spin without parting with any money.

**Monkey's Paw:** A clever method, this involved a flexible material that had a claw apparatus attached. It was stuck up the coin chute and caused the machine to pay out more on a win.

**Mini-lights:** A newer method that casinos have caught onto, this involves special devices with lights and optics. The device interferes with sensors on the machine; thus, promoting a false win.

## BIGGEST WINS ON SLOTS

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*Slots is a game of luck and for some people, Lady Luck was certainly on their side. Online and offline players have won millions of dollars just by spinning the reels. Some notable winners include:*

### MR. ANONYMOUS: \$39.8 MILLION

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In 2003, a 25 year old won the biggest jackpot ever on a \$100 bet. He was initially in Vegas for a basketball match, but decided to play a few rounds of slots.

He went to Megabucks and won nearly 40 million on his first spin. Casino staff said he begged them to keep his name anonymous in lieu of his wife finding out. She did not approve of gambling; we'll see how she feels now...

### WINNING IN THE HALL OF GODS: \$7.6 MILLION

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In 2012, a Swedish woman decided to try her luck out on Hall of God's, a popular NetEnt slot. After a few spins, she won €7.6 million on the progressive jackpot.

She used her winnings to travel, pay off debt, and enjoy life.

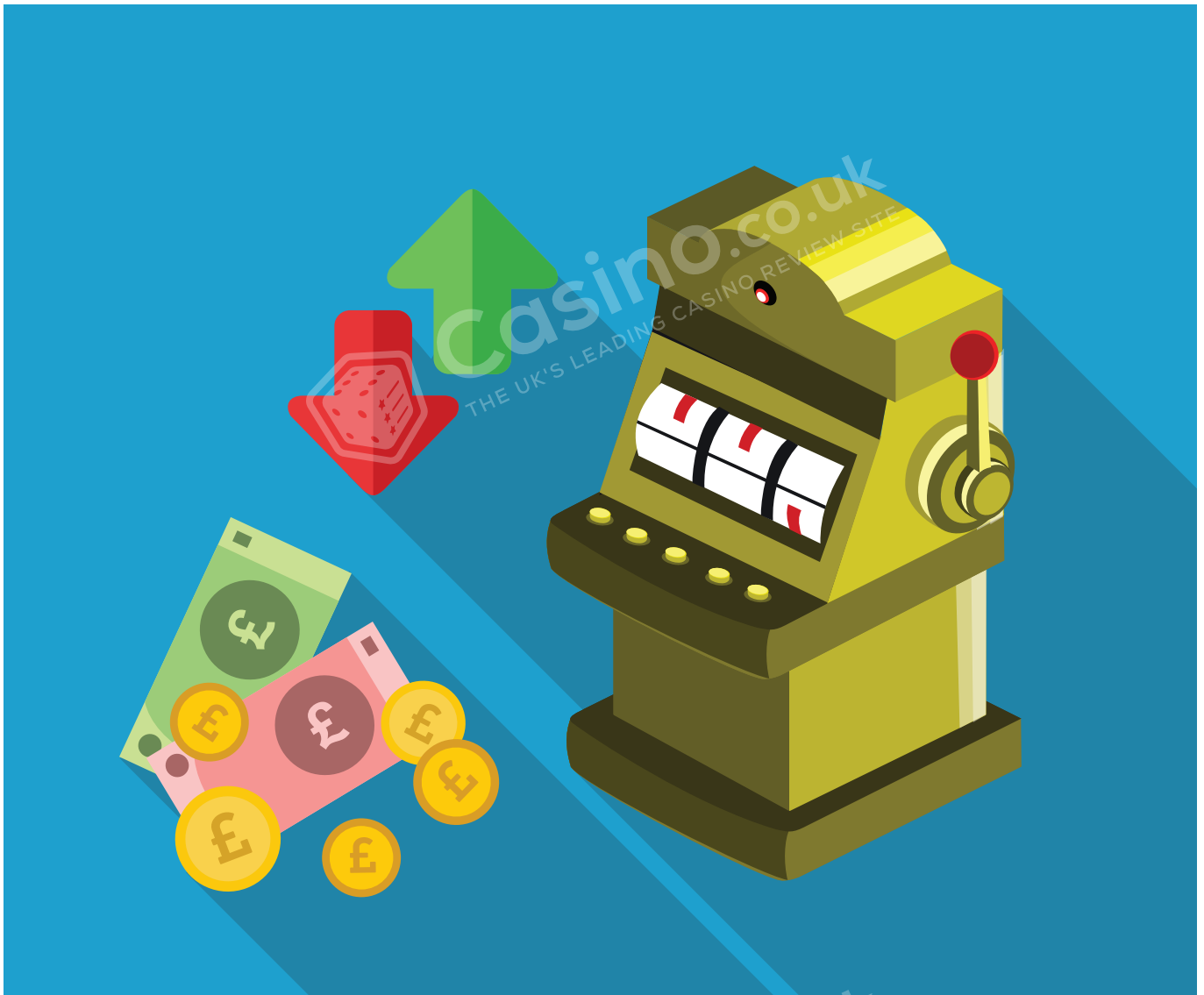
### LARGEST MOBILE WIN: \$9.22 MILLION

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Mega Moolah is one of the most popular progressive jackpot games on the web. It never ceases to disappoint and is known to pay out millions on a regular basis.

In April 2017, one mobile player set the record for the biggest mobile payout which exceeded \$9.22 million. The winner chose to remain anonymous, but said her average wager was \$7.20.

# THE DOS AND DON'TS OF PLAYING SLOTS



Before you start spinning the reels, be sure to follow this dos and don'ts checklist to make the most you can from playing slots:

✓ DO

If you are playing progressive jackpots, make sure you bet enough to be eligible.

✗ DON'T

Speed up your playing as time passes.



Set a budget and stick to it.



Chase your losses.



Choose games that fit your goals and your personality.



Believe that there are really hot and cold machines.



Pause and take breaks.



Spend money on books or memberships that promise a slots strategy.



Remember that slots are a game of luck and should be enjoyable.





**NOW YOU'RE READY  
TO PLAY SLOTS**



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