
What Is Self Exclusion?

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Self-exclusion is there for one simple reason: to give you space if gambling starts to feel less like entertainment and more like something you *have* to do.

All UK gambling operators are required to offer self-exclusion as part of their responsible gambling policies. So if things are getting a bit too regular, too costly, or just not enjoyable anymore, it's a straightforward way to press pause.

What Does Self-Exclusion Mean?

Self-exclusion does exactly what it says on the tin. You ask a gambling operator to block you from using their services, and they're legally required to follow through.

Once it's in place:

- You won't be able to log in or place bets
- Your account is locked for the chosen period
- You're removed from marketing emails, texts, and offers

The minimum exclusion period is six months, though many sites offer longer options like one year or even five years.

And importantly, once it ends, you won't automatically be allowed back in. You'll need to actively request access again, which gives you a bit of breathing room before jumping straight back in.

How To Self-Exclude Online

If you're using UKGC-licensed sites, the process is usually quick.

You'll find the option in the responsible gambling section, typically in your account settings or down in the footer. From there, you can choose how long you want to exclude for and confirm the request.

If you want a more wide-reaching option, there's **GamStop**.

GamStop lets you self-exclude from *all* UKGC-licensed gambling sites in one go, rather than doing it one by one. You can choose between:

- 6 months

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- 1 year
 - 5 years

It's free to use and takes a few minutes to set up. Once you're registered, licensed sites must block your access automatically.

Just bear in mind, it only covers online gambling. If you also visit physical venues, you'll need to take a few extra steps.

Self-Exclusion From Land-Based Venues

For land-based gambling, there are separate schemes depending on where you play.

- **SENSE** covers land-based casinos across the UK
- **MOSES** applies to betting shops
- Bingo halls have their own multi-operator schemes

The good news is you don't need to go door to door asking to be excluded. These schemes cover multiple venues at once, and in many cases, you can register online, by post, or via email.

What Happens When The Exclusion Period Ends?

Once your self-exclusion period is over, access isn't automatically switched back on.

Most operators require you to contact them and request reinstatement. There's often a short cooling-off period built in as well, just to make sure it's a considered decision rather than a spur-of-the-moment one.

If you used GamStop, you'll need to contact them directly to lift the restriction, and there's usually a 24-hour delay before it's removed.

When Should You Consider Self-Exclusion?

Not everyone who gambles needs to self-exclude. But there are a few signs that it might be worth considering.

If any of these sound familiar, it could be time to take a step back:

- You're spending more than you planned, or chasing losses
- Gambling feels like a routine rather than something you actively choose
- You're thinking about gambling even when you're not playing
- You've tried to cut back, but keep slipping into old habits
- It's starting to affect your mood, sleep, or relationships

Self-exclusion isn't just for extreme situations. It can be a practical way to reset your habits before things get worse.

Even taking a short break can help you get a clearer head and put things back into perspective.

Extra Steps That Can Help

Self-exclusion is a strong first step, but it works best alongside a few practical changes.

You could:

- Install blocking software like **Gamban** to restrict access to gambling sites
- Delete gambling apps from your phone
- Remove saved payment details from accounts
- Ask someone you trust to help keep you accountable

None of this is overkill; it just makes it harder to slip back into old habits on autopilot.

Getting Support

If things feel like they're getting out of hand, you don't have to deal with it on your own.

- **GambleAware** offers free advice and support
- The National Gambling Helpline is available for confidential conversations - 0808 8020 133

There's no drama in taking a step back. In fact, recognising when you need a break is probably the most sensible move you can make.

Gambling Self-Exclusion FAQ

What is self-exclusion in gambling?

Self-exclusion is a tool that allows you to block yourself from gambling sites or venues for a set period of time. Once activated, operators must prevent you from accessing your account or placing bets.

How does GamStop work?

GamStop is a free UK service that lets you self-exclude from all UKGC-licensed online gambling sites at once. You can choose to exclude for six months, one year, or five years.

Can I cancel self-exclusion early?

No, once you've set a self-exclusion period, it cannot be reversed until it ends. This is designed to protect you from making impulsive decisions.

Does self-exclusion stop all gambling?

Not completely. GamStop only blocks UK-licensed online sites. Land-based venues and unlicensed sites require separate action, such as SENSE or MOSES schemes.

What happens after my self-exclusion ends?

You won't automatically regain access. Most operators require you to request account reactivation, often with a short cooling-off period before access is restored.

Responsible Gambling: Gambling should be fun and never seen as a way to make money. Only gamble with money you can afford to lose. If you feel you may have a problem, visit [gambleaware.org](https://www.gambleaware.org) or call the National Gambling Helpline on 0808 8020 133. All sites featured on Top Online Bingo Sites are licensed by the UK Gambling Commission. You must be 18+ to gamble.

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