

[Top 10 Lottery Myths](#)

Many people who play the lottery believe things about the lottery that are simply untrue. There are also many people who choose to not play the lottery because they believe one or more of the myths concerning the lottery. Here is a list of the most common lottery myths and explanations about why they are not true.

Myth #1: Lotteries take advantage of those with less money.

Many studies, conducted by individual state lotteries, show that this myth is not true. In fact, these studies showed that lottery players cross-section the overall population in that jurisdiction. In 1997, the Washington Post published an article about a lottery poll conducted by Martinez Marketing of St. Louis. This poll found that those most likely to play the lottery come from middle income backgrounds. Those who are the wealthiest are less likely to play the lottery and the same is true for those who are the poorest. In 1996, the New Mexico Department of Health conducted a survey showing the prevalence of gambling increased as income increased.

Myth #2: The lottery is a Tax.

Playing the lottery is completely voluntary. Playing the lottery is a personal choice and is just like buying any other product. People are forced to pay taxes; no one is forced to play the lottery. In fact, the only consequence to not playing lottery is missing the fun and possibly a prize.

While some people argue that the lottery is an implicit tax, because it has higher administrative costs and is less efficient way of raising money, but its revenues go for education just like other tax money does. Just like taxes, playing the lottery depletes the player's discretionary income so that it cannot be used for other purchases. Unlike taxes, however, this is completely voluntary just like going to the movies or a concert. A tax is compulsory payment to support government. The lottery is simply a form of entertainment that happens to benefit your state and generally your state's education programs.

Myth #3: The odds of winning the lottery are worse than the odds of getting struck by lightning.

According to the NASPL, in 1996 alone 1,136 people won a million dollars or more and an additional 4,520 won \$100,000 or more by playing North American lotteries. Only 91 people, on the other hand, were killed by lightning during that same year. Further, the lottery provides many ways of winning prizes besides winning the jackpot by matching some of the numbers. The chances of winning the lottery are much greater than the chances of getting struck by lightning.

Myth # 4: Since the odds of winning the lottery are pretty slim, few people benefit from lottery.

All across the nation (and the world), millions of people have won cash prizes playing lottery games. But there are many more millions of people who also are lottery winners. For example, lottery retailers earn commission on the sale of lottery products, and this income contributes to the economy for everyone in a jurisdiction. When a person wins the lottery and spends the money on goods and services in a jurisdiction, the local economy benefits. Furthermore, the lottery supports many programs including education and various environmental programs among many others. By giving back to these programs, the lottery supports all people who live in the state.

Myth #5: New tickets at retailers are luckier than tickets from a previous week.

The probability of purchasing a winning ticket is the same no matter when the ticket was produced. Unsold tickets from an earlier week have the same chance of containing winning numbers as newly delivered tickets. When your ticket was produced has no effect on the odds of it being a winner.

Myth #6: If you don't win a lottery prize, you've wasted your money.

Even if you don't win the lottery, you're still left with the fun of playing the lottery. The lottery is a game, and provides entertainment to the player even when s/he does not win. The lottery allows you to scratch your cards, break open your pull-tabs, or choose your numbers. It also provides you with the anticipation of finding out if your lottery numbers are right. Even if you don't win, you still have lots of fun playing the lottery. You also have the comfort of knowing that the money you spent was not a waste, since most of the money supports such programs as education in your state.

Myth #7: The lottery is responsible for the increase of compulsive gamblers in the US.

Providing a substance like alcohol does not create an alcoholic. Likewise, providing the lottery does not create a gambling addict. Compulsive gambling is an addictive behavior that involves biological and psychological factors. A National Survey on Gambling Behavior conducted for the National Gambling Impact Study Commission last year found there is no relationship between problem gambling rates and the presence or absence of a lottery. However, the lottery is not unaware of these problems. Most state lotteries provide warning to Play Responsibly, and many state lottery websites include links to gambling help sites.

Myth #8: Because state governments benefit from the lottery, they cannot be trusted.

States make their own tax policies and many other decisions concerning their citizens, so there is no reason to not trust them when regulating their own lotteries. In fact, lottery files are public records and open to scrutiny by the media and citizens. Lottery board meetings and legislative hearings also are open to the public. Thus, states are not hiding lottery information, and if you think they are, you can check it out for yourself. There is no reason not to trust the state's regulation of lottery programs.

Myth #9: There is no way to be sure that lottery drawings are fair.

The state lottery industry is more scrutinized than almost any industry that has ever existed. State lotteries have a high level of security and public drawings. Further, lottery draws are completely random, ensuring the fairness of the lottery. And, through strict security procedures, the ALC ensures that no one knows which lottery tickets are winners so there can be no cheating. The lottery is all about honesty and fairness.

Myth #10: Players can control lottery outcomes by using various lottery methods.

Because lottery results are completely random, no one can control the outcome. It is impossible to predict a number beyond its overall probability of appearing among the winning numbers. A random guess has just as much chance at winning as playing birthdays, anniversary dates, or any personal system. Even lottery methods like the wheeling system cannot predict which numbers will be drawn.

About the Author

Anthony Wayne works in the marketing department of [online lottery site](#) LuckyLotto in Pennsylvania. He is also editor of the Internet Bingo Blog a great source of [internet bingo information](#).

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