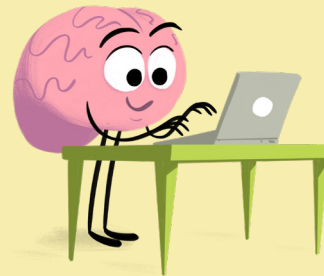




Brain Connections is a series of educational tools designed to share current research about gambling and the brain.



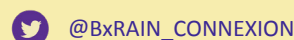
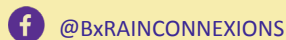
SLOT MACHINE FEATURES & THE BRAIN

Brain Connections is a collaboration between
The City of Hamilton's Alcohol, Drug, & Gambling Services
&
The Peter Boris Centre for Addictions Research



GAMBLING RESEARCH
EXCHANGE ONTARIO
DRIVING KNOWLEDGE INTO ACTION

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SLOT MACHINE FEATURES & THE BRAIN

Many slot machine features impact your brain, mood and behaviour.

Feature #1: Losses That Look Like Wins

Multi-line slot machines often highlight 'wins' across lines of play, with triumphant sounds and flashing lights: these are signs that you've won!

But have you really?

Imagine you bet \$10. The machine lights up, makes winning sounds, and shows: 'YOU WON \$3!'

But, the machines don't highlight your losses.

The Reality...

You have lost \$7.

By presenting winning lights and sounds, it feels like you're on a 'winning streak.'

You may actually be steadily losing money but not realize it.

If the machine made losing sounds with each loss, you probably would stop gambling sooner.



Feature #2: Near Misses

A 'near miss' occurs when reels show two matching symbols, with a third *almost* lining up at the pay line.

Near misses impact the body and the brain in several ways:

- It feels bad to 'almost' win
- You spin again because it seems like a win is close
- Your brain's reward network 'fires up' as if you had won, even though you lost
- It feels like your chances of winning are improving, so you spin again



The Reality...

wins and losses are already pre-determined by the slot machine's random number generator.

Whether you 'almost won' on the previous spin has no impact on the next spin. Each play is separate and already determined.

Feature #3: The STOP button

Slot machines often have a button that gives you the chance to stop the reels.

Pressing the button tricks the brain into thinking that, if you are skilled, fast or have the right pattern of presses, you have a better chance of winning.



The Reality...

The button only affects the length of time for each spin. It does not affect whether you win or lose.

Slot machines use mental connections that we already have to keep us playing: winning sounds usually mean that you won. Near misses mean you should try again. STOP buttons should give us control.

But, this life experience does not apply to slot machines.

It's important to take frequent breaks from playing to clear your head and give your brain a rest.