

Winning advice from ‘7 times lucky’ player

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Last Updated: 3:20 PM, March 29, 2012

Posted: 12:33 AM, March 29, 2012

A super-lucky Florida man who has won seven lottery drawings has some down-to-earth advice for New Yorkers hoping to score tomorrow night's world-record \$500 million Mega Millions jackpot.

“Go and buy tickets, but the most important thing I’m telling people to do is don’t go crazy,” said Richard Lustig, 61, an Orlando-based talent agent who has written a book called “Learn How to Increase your Chances of Winning the Lottery.”



His tips sound deceptively simple and include setting a budget and spending only what you can afford, avoiding quick picks and making sure the numbers you pick have never won before.

“I’ve won seven lottery-game grand prizes. I tell people it’s a process and you have to follow it and stick with it,” Lustig said. His nailed his first jackpot, a modest \$18,000, when he was 18, and since has bagged Fantasy Five jackpots of \$74,000 and \$98,000 — and a Florida Mega Money prize worth \$842,000.

Another expert, Emory University mathematician Skip Garibaldi, said people should pick less popular numbers. You won’t increase your odds of winning, but you can improve your chances of having the only winning ticket, he said.

IF HE HITS THIS ONE . . . we’re gonna scream! Richard Lustig has won seven jackpots.

“A lot of people play dates, and numbers between 1 and 12 are especially popular so you might avoid those,” he said. “Any choice of numbers is equally likely to win the jackpot but you can pick numbers that other people won’t pick. The question is, what numbers *do* you pick?” Still, Garibaldi himself ignores his own advice and goes for quick picks — the opposite of what Lustig recommends. “Statistically, 70 percent of winners are quick picks,” he said. Lucky Lustig, citing the mind-boggling 1-in-176 million odds of any ticket being the winner, urged people with lottery fever to keep their cool. “This is the biggest prize in history, and people are going to go out and buy a lot of tickets, and almost all of them — millions of people — are going to lose, so don’t spend the grocery money or the rent money,” he said. “You have to buy tickets to win, and the more you buy the better your chances, but don’t go crazy,” he advised.