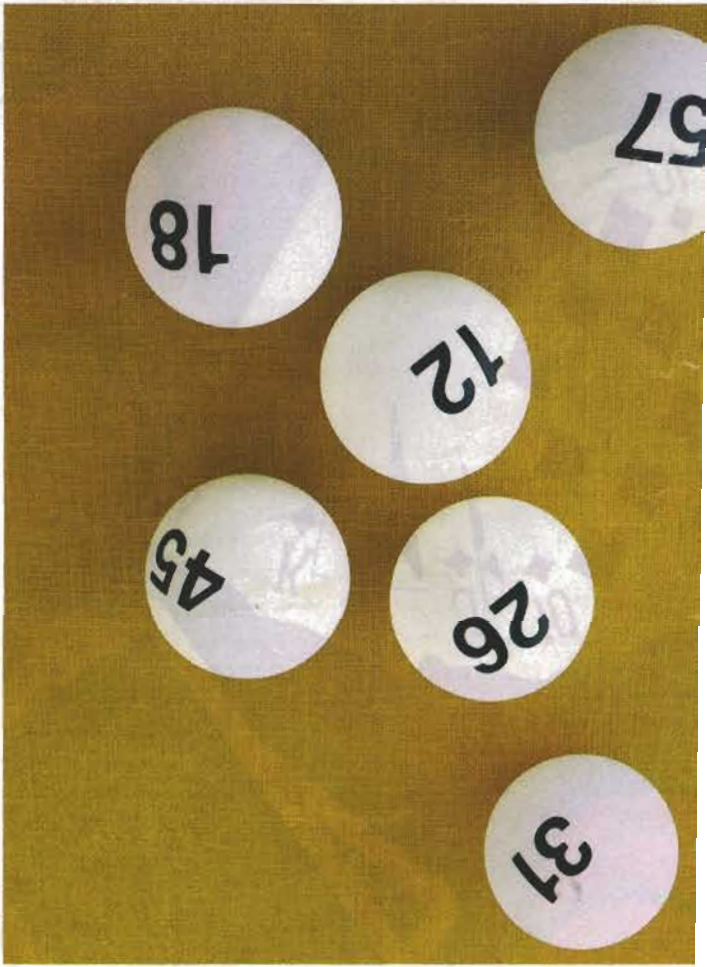




The Lottery

And you thought winning the lotto was pure dumb luck? While that's true for the scratch-off games, says Gail Howard, the author of *Lottery Mastery Guide* (Smart Luck Publishing, \$24.50), a lottery isn't entirely random, she insists. Howard, a former stockbroker, began charting winning numbers in the 1980s and claims they form predictable patterns. Certain combinations—all evens or odds; consecutive numbers, like 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6—come up infrequently, she says. So what to try? With pick-6 tickets, the most popular form of lotto, choose numbers that add up to a figure between 115 and 185. (Seventy-one percent of all winning combinations fall in that range, says Howard.) "People often play patterns that end in the same number, like 17, 27, 37; or personal numbers, like birthdays," says Larry Lesser, an associate professor of mathematics at the University of Texas at El Paso. "If you choose that way, you'll probably share your winnings if you win."

A 5K Race

How do you take the laurels? Practice, practice, practice. "If you haven't put in serious miles in the six to eight weeks before, no breathing or visualization techniques will propel you across the finish line first," says Andrea Haver of the New York Road Runners Club. Two months in advance, begin training every other day, starting with 15 minutes and working up to 45. The day of, eat a carb-based breakfast with some protein—peanut butter on toast, or oatmeal with low-fat milk—at least two hours before race time. Arrive early enough for a 20-minute warm-up jog, and leave your iPod in the car. "Top runners are focused on every stride and breath," says Hal Higdon, the author of *Run Fast: How to Beat Your Best Time—Every Time* (Rodale, \$17). Start strong, but "save yourself for the finish," Haver says. At the third mile, run as fast as you can. "You might feel a burning sensation," she says, "but it disappears as soon as you've finished—especially if you've won."

