Playing poker online is great; there are no time constraints apart from the ones you put on yourself, and thanks to its worldwide reach, you'll always find someone (probably a number of someones) who are willing to sit in a game with you. But is that the right thing to do? Just go online whenever you feel like it and get playing poker? Or is there a good time – the best time – to do it when you're more likely to come away with a winning hand or a return on your investment?

The thing with poker is there are no guarantees; even the most well-known and expert players lose sometimes. But if you can find your own advantage, no matter how small, it's worth a try. That advantage could well be the time you choose to play.

Think of it in terms of holding the upper hand… at least for a while.

Unsurprisingly (because nothing should surprise you when it comes to poker, and if it does remember not to show it; it's all good practise), research has actually been conducted into the best – and worst – times to play online poker.

The consensus seems to be that, working on GMT, the best time to play online poker is between 7pm and 2am. Perhaps not great for giving you your beauty sleep, but ideal if poker is your thing and you want the best chance of winning. That's not to say other times of the day are a guaranteed loss, far from it, but the studies show that after 7pm and before 2am are your best bet. Literally. Why? It's because you get a mix of American, European, and UK players all in together – the timezones work out so that everyone's downtime (before or after work or a combination of both) matches up – so there are more games running with more players included, and, in the end, the more you play, the more chance you have of winning.

So the next time you think about logging on for a quick hand, check the clock. It might be worth waiting until the time is right.