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**POKER
GUIDE**

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Introduction

This training course is designed for beginner players, who want to play No Limit Texas Hold'em. In it, you will learn the fundamentals of poker, sufficient to succeed in both cash games and tournaments.

We have prepared an absolutely free course that will be your first step towards success in poker. It has been written by professional players. Attached to the course, you will find a table with detailed actions for all the main gaming situations.

Enjoy your reading and good luck at the poker tables!

Poker Terms

This course uses specialized poker terms. Below, you will see some of them. If any terms encountered in the course remain unclear to you, you can find a complete list of poker terms on the PokerListings website.

Key Terms:

- All-in – A player bets all their chips in one bet.
- Bet – The action of placing chips during a trading round.

- Betting rounds – Stages of each game deal where players make bets or fold. The number of betting rounds can vary depending on the type of poker. In Hold'em, there are 4 betting rounds (pre-flop, flop, turn, river). Betting rules may vary depending on the game format; in No Limit games, the bet size is limited only by the player's number of chips.
- Blinds – Mandatory bets made by two players before dealing the cards.
- Bluff – Bets made to pressure opponents when holding a weak hand.
- Button – A marker indicating the dealer's position at the table, moving one position after each hand.
- Call – A matching bet in response to another player's wager.
- Cash game – A game from which one can exit at any time, especially convenient for online play. Chips are used, equivalent to money.
- Check – Passing one's turn without action.
- Community cards – Cards available to all players for forming combinations. Used in games like Texas Hold'em and Omaha.
- Flop – The first three community cards.
- Fold – Handing over the cards to the dealer and exiting the game.
- Freeroll – A free tournament but with a real prize.
- Hole cards – The player's cards that are not shown until the end of the hand.
- Limp – Calling the minimum bet pre-flop. It may be seen as a sign of weakness but can sometimes be strategically advantageous.
- Raise – Matching a bet and adding additional chips.
- River – The fifth and final community card in most poker formats.
- Showdown – After all betting rounds, remaining players reveal their cards to determine the winner.
- Tournament – Unlike a cash game, players continue playing until they knock out all opponents. Prizes are awarded to the top players, with the majority of the prize going to the winner.
- Turn – The next community card after the flop.

Read more: <https://www.pokerlistings.com/poker-terms>

Rules of Texas Hold'em

If you're just starting to learn poker and specifically Texas Hold'em, keep this guide handy for quick reference. If you ever find yourself confused by the action, refer to it for some guidance. Each topic includes links to more in-depth articles on that specific aspect of Texas Hold'em rules.

Texas Hold'em is a community card poker game with gameplay focused as much on the betting as on the cards being played. Although the rules and gameplay are the same, the ultimate goal varies slightly depending on whether you're playing a Hold'em cash game or a Texas Hold'em tournament.

A Texas Hold'em tournament proceeds just like any other Hold'em game but with a few additional rules and twists. Meanwhile, a Hold'em cash game is played at a single table with 2 to 10 players. The goal is simple: win as many chips as you can, one pot at a time. You win a pot by having the best hand after the final community card is dealt, or by having all other players fold before the showdown. A full hand is formed by combining one or both of your hole cards with the community cards.

A Texas Hold'em game is broken down into three main parts:

1. Setup
2. Betting Rounds
3. Showdown

Setup

The first step is picking the player who will start with the dealer button. Hold'em is played with what's known as a rotating dealer, meaning a player will act as the dealer for one hand and then pass the role of dealer on to the player on their left when the hand is completed. To choose the dealer, either deal every player one card or spread the cards face down on the table and have each player pick one. The player with the highest-valued card (aces are high for selecting a dealer) starts as the dealer.

The Button

The player at the dealer position is marked by a distinct element called "The Button". Although in online poker players do not deal cards themselves, the dealer position serves as a reference point for each deal. And with the completion of the deal, the dealer position moves clockwise.

The Blinds

Now that you have a dealer, you need to put out the blinds. There are two blinds in Texas Hold'em Poker – a small blind and a big blind. These are forced bets required by two players to ensure there are some chips in the pot worth playing for. Without any money in the pot, all players might be inclined to fold much more often, considerably slowing down the action.

The player directly to the left of the dealer puts out the small blind. The big blind (usually double that of the small blind) is then paid by the player to the left of the small blind. The size of the blinds dictates the stakes of the game you're about to play. Typically, you want players to buy in for no less than 100 times the size of the big blind. If you want to buy in for \$20, you should play with blinds of 10¢/20¢. For convenience, most people play 10¢/25¢.

Dealing the Cards

After establishing the dealer's position and the players on the big and small blinds have made their mandatory bets, we can move on to dealing the cards. In online poker, this happens automatically and very quickly, but you'll soon get used to the monotonous process.

In Texas Hold'em, the game is played with a 52-card deck. The dealer deals each player cards. In online poker, this is done using a Random Number Generator. This is a special algorithm that makes the card deal unpredictable.

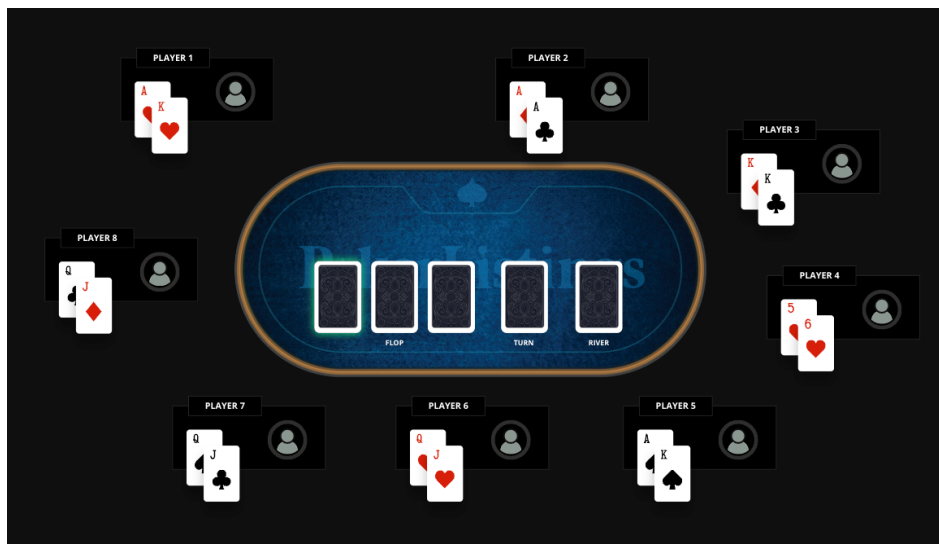
The person dealing the cards deals to the left of the player with the dealer button first and rotates clockwise around the table. Each player gets one card at a time until each player has two cards, both face down. These are known as your hole cards and they are for your use alone when making your final 5-card poker hand.

Now that each player has their cards, we can proceed to the first betting round.

Betting Rounds

In Texas Hold'em Poker, each hand involves between one and four betting rounds. The first round, known as "Pre-flop," begins after all players receive their two hole cards. The hand concludes when either one player remains after all others have folded, or after the fourth and final betting round ends with multiple players still in the hand.

Pre-Flop



Pre-flop: blinds are posted on table, and each player is dealt two hole cards.

During the pre-flop betting round, players look at their hole cards and decide on their action. Actions in Hold'em proceed one player at a time. Betting starts with the player to the left of the big blind, who can:

- **Fold:** Discard their hand and opt out of the hand, waiting for the next deal.
- **Check/Call:** Match the big blind amount (also referred to as “limping in” during the pre-flop).
- **Raise:** Increase the bet starting from double the big blind amount. The raise could be more, depending on the game's betting style (see No-Limit and Pot-Limit rules).

Play continues to the left, with each player having the options to fold, call the current bet, or raise. For example, if the big blind is 25¢, and a player wishes to raise, they would bet a total of 50¢.

If the next player wants to re-raise, they would place a total of 75¢. However, in No-Limit Hold'em, a player can bet up to all their chips at any time. The betting round ends when all players have either folded or matched the highest bet made in that round.

Read more: <https://www.pokerlistings.com/poker-strategies/fullring-holdem-before-the-flop-a-beginners-guide> and <https://www.pokerlistings.com/poker-strategies/holdem-preflop-play-part-1-the-first-bet>

The Flop



Flop: Each player has two own hole cards and three community cards are dealt on the table.

After the pre-flop round, the dealer deals the flop, starting with a burn card followed by three community cards placed face up on the table. These cards are available to all players for making the best possible 5-card hand.

The first betting round post-flop starts here. If no previous bet has been made, the first player can either check (opt not to bet, passing the action to the next player) or bet. If betting, the amount must be at least the size of the big blind in Limit games, but can be any amount up to all the player's chips in No-Limit games.

The Turn



Turn: Each player has two own hole cards and four community cards are dealt on the table

Following the flop, once all active players have matched bets, the dealer burns another card and then deals the fourth community card (the turn). This starts another round of betting, where the size of bets in Limit Hold'em doubles, thus requiring a minimum bet of 50¢ in our scenario.

The River



River: Each player has two own hole cards and five community cards are dealt on the table. This is final stage before showdown.

The river is dealt in the same manner as the turn: a burn card followed by the fifth and final community card. This marks the beginning of the last betting round, following the same rules as the turn.

Read more: <https://www.pokerlistings.com/poker-rules/texas-holdem-poker>

Showdown

After the final betting round, if more than one player remains, the game moves to a showdown. Here, the player with the best 5-card hand wins the pot. The showdown rules are:

- The player who made the last bet on the river is usually the first to show their hand.
- If there was no betting on the river (all players checked), the player closest to the left of the dealer shows first, continuing clockwise.
- Players can choose to reveal their hand if they wish, or fold and concede the pot if they have a losing hand.

Which Poker Hand Wins?

Recognizing the hierarchy of poker hands is essential, but equally important is assessing your opponents' potential hand strength. Utilizing table information, you must gauge whether your hand holds the winning edge or if it's likely beaten.

Skilled players grasp the probabilities of forming various hand combinations. Over time, familiarizing yourself with these odds will significantly enhance your decision-making. Armed with this knowledge, you can strategically choose when to invest in a hand and when to fold. From the least potent poker hands to the most formidable, here are the hand rankings applicable to Omaha and Texas Hold'em variants:

- **One Pair:** Matching one of your cards with a community card or having a pair in your hole cards.
- **Two Pair:** Forming two distinct pairs using your hole cards or the community cards.
- **Three Of A Kind/Set:** Having three identical cards of the same rank, either by using two of your hole cards and one community card, or by matching three community cards. If a pair in your hole cards matches a community card, it's referred to as a set. Matching two community cards with one of your hole cards constitutes three-of-a-kind (also known as "trips").
- **Straight:** Five consecutive cards in your hole cards or the community cards.
- **Flush:** Five cards of the same suit in your hole cards or the community cards.
- **Full House:** A combination of three cards of the same value in your hole cards and a pair in the community cards, or three community cards of the same value and a pair in your hole cards.
- **Four Of A Kind/Quads:** Four cards of the same value in your hole cards or the community cards.
- **Straight Flush:** Exceptionally strong and rare, featuring five consecutive cards of the same suit in your hole cards or the community cards. A straight flush combines a straight with a flush.
- **Royal Flush:** The ultimate hand, comprising a 10, Jack, Queen, King, and Ace, all of the same suit in your hole cards or the community cards.

Try our Wins Calculator: <https://www.pokerlistings.com/which-hand-wins-calculator>

Poker Hand Rankings

1. Royal Flush



A consecutive run of cards from ten to ace all in the same suit.

6. Straight



Five consecutive cards, varying suits. An ace can be the highest or the lowest card in the hand.

2. Straight Flush



A consecutive run of five cards all in the same suit.

7. Three Of a Kind



Three cards of same rank with two other non-paired cards.

3. Four Of a Kind



Four cards all of same rank.
(Example: J-J-J-J, 2-2-2-2)

8. Two Pair



Two pairs of two cards of same rank.
Highest pair = best two-pair hand.

4. Full House



Three cards of same rank combined with a pair of cards of another rank.

9. Pair



Any two cards of same rank plus three random cards.

5. Flush



Any five cards of same suit. Highest card determines rank of flush vs. other flushes.

10. High Card



Five non-consecutive, non-matched cards of varying suits.

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Read more: <https://www.pokerlistings.com/poker-guides/poker-hands>

Positions

Before diving into the intricacies of poker strategy, it's essential to grasp the fundamental concept of player positions at the table. Each position offers unique advantages and challenges, requiring adaptability and strategic thinking to maximize your chances of winning. In this guide, we'll explore the various positions and provide essential tips for navigating each one effectively.

Do you know all of the positions in poker? How about the value of poker positions? Besides hand rankings and bet sizing, poker also requires deep understanding of play from different positions. This guide will explain all the spots at a poker table and how you can play your position like a pro.

Besides hand rankings and how to bet, you also need to understand ranges, and the value of your holding in relation to your position at the table. In other words, making a certain move in one seat could be correct but incorrect in another.

For example, if you're the last person to act in a hand (meaning, you've got "position"), raising might be a good idea. However, if you're second to act and there are two players behind you, raising might be a bad idea. We'll go into more detail about this later. For now, just know that *where* you're sitting on a poker table is important. Regardless of whether it's first, third, or last, positions in poker matter.



Poker table positions 9-handed and 6-handed

Big Blind (BB) - This is the player who puts in the biggest ante aka the Big Blind. The Big Blind is last to act pre-flop but one of the first to act post-flop. Everything is built around the Big Blind.

Small Blind (SB) - The Small Blind is directly to the right of the Big Blind. This never changes. The Small Blind is a forced bet (ante) that's 50% of the Big Blind. For example, if the Big Blind is \$2, the Small Blind is \$1. The Small Blind makes the penultimate move pre-flop but will act first post-flop.

The Button (BTN) - The button is regarded as the best position in a poker game. It's situated directly to the right of the small blind. It's the third-to-last to act pre-flop. However, the button acts last post-flop. This makes it the most powerful because you get to close the action - everyone has to act before you, which means you get more information.

The Cutoff (CO) - Located to the right of the button, three before the Big Blind. Although it's not quite as powerful as the button. It's so-called because it's one of the last points at which you're considered to be in a strong position at the poker table.

The Hijack (HJ) - This a great spot to try and steal from the cutoff and button which are both to the left of this seat. It can be a strong position in poker because you get to act late pre and post-flop.

The Lojack (LJ) - The lojack position in poker is directly right of the hijack. However, because it's one of the middle table spots, it isn't super powerful. So, you need a strong hand to make moves from here.

Early Position (EP) - Early position in poker is no man's land - you don't want to play weak hands because you're always one of the first people to act. At a nine-handed table, Seat 7 will be the third to act. It's located three spots to the left of the Big Blind.

UTG+1 - This is another early position poker players will find themselves in at the table. It's not quite as weak as UTG, but it's pretty close. You're two to the left of the Big Blind, a long way from the button and you'll be second to act pre-flop.

UTG - Being Under the Gun (directly left of the Big Blind) is the toughest spot, particularly pre-flop, because you act first. If either of the blinds remain active in the hand, UTG doesn't act first post-flop. If the blinds are folded, that player acts first post-flop. Everyone gets to react to your moves which, in turn, means you're operating with less information. So, you should only play strong hands here.



6 handed poker positions

6-max poker positions are, largely, the same as their 9-handed counterparts. However, the big difference here is that certain seats have more power because there are fewer players at the table. Because it's all about information and the number of people to act after you've made a move. If there are fewer players, there is less that can happen after you've acted. That means you can play certain poker seat positions more aggressively in a 6-max game than you could at a 9-handed table.

- **Big Blind (BB)** - This is the same as it is in a 9-max.
- **Small Blind (SB)** - This is the same as it is in a 9-handed game.
- **The Button (BTN)** - This is the same as on a full ring table.
- **The Cutoff (CO)** - This isn't a late position seat in 6-max like on a 9-handed table. **Middle Position (MP)** - This is directly to the right of UTG and two spots from the button.
- **Under the Gun (UTG)** - Always first player to act pre-flop, sitting directly left of the BB.

👉 *"If you're acting early, play conservatively. If you're acting late, play aggressively."*

Read more: <https://www.pokerlistings.com/poker-guides/poker-positions>

Different Types of Poker Games

Having learned the basic rules of Texas Hold'em, let's now explore different poker formats. We will discuss cash games, tournaments, sit'n'go, and spin&go, highlighting their differences and sharing beginner-friendly strategies to help you improve your game. Let's dive into the world of poker formats!

Many of you have probably heard about poker and the astonishing winnings some players achieve. Yet, often, there's a lack of understanding about what exactly these discussions entail, leading some to view this game with skepticism. Let's demystify this and introduce you to poker as a game of skill, mathematics, and psychology, where success comes not from mere luck but from effectively utilizing knowledge, skills, and observational insights.

Poker teaches patience and focus. Unlike the dramatic confrontations seen in movies or live poker tournaments, real poker involves many seemingly insignificant hands that lead to winning big—this is where fortunes are made.

Types of Poker Games

Poker is a broad term for a variety of card games where players sequentially bet and strive to form the best hand. It's a game with a collective pot made up of player bets, awarded to the player who either reveals the strongest hand at the end or forces their opponents to fold.

Cash Games. These are the traditional forms of poker where players can join and leave as they wish. The game runs continuously, allowing players to manage their money freely. The objective is to win as much money as possible, rather than eliminating other players.

Tournaments. In tournaments, all players start with the same amount of chips after paying a buy-in. The game continues until one player has all the chips. Players are eliminated when they run out of chips, with the top finishers earning prizes from the collective pot.

Sit'n'Go. This is a mini-tournament style of play that begins once a certain number of players have registered. The game typically involves one or a few tables, and like larger tournaments, the last player standing wins.

Spin&Go. These are fast-paced, three-player tournaments where the prize pool is randomly multiplied before the game starts, offering the potential for high winnings from a relatively small buy-in.

As we proceed in this training course, we will dive deeper into each of these formats, discussing strategies and nuances that can help you become a successful poker player.

Strategy for Beginners

Starting Hands

Now let's jump into the different types of Texas Hold'em starting hands.

Pocket Aces (AA)

You don't need a poker cheat sheet to play this hand. Although you can write volumes about detailed lines and theories on maximizing profit with this hand, other than folding there is rarely a scenario in which you can ever make a mistake with this hand (pre-flop that is).

Post Flop: Even though this is the best starting hand, if the board doesn't improve your hand you only have one pair. Keep this in mind to avoid stacking off to random two pairs and sets in your poker games.

Pocket Kings (KK)

Pocket kings are almost identical to pocket aces pre-flop. Neither this time you will need any Texas Hold'em hands cheat sheet to play correctly. Although players have folded KK pre-flop, it's rarely the correct thing to do. If someone else is dealt AA when you have KK, chances are you're going to get it all in. Don't worry about this, just write it off as a cooler and move on.

Post Flop: The same ideas about post-flop play with AA are applicable to KK. On top of the "one pair" concept, you also need to be on the lookout for an ace on the flop.

Although an ace flopping is not automatically a death sentence, it's never a good sign.

Pocket Queens and Jacks (QQ, JJ)

Queens and jacks are right in the middle - below the big pairs and above the marginal pairs. These hands can be some of the trickiest to play. That being said, these two hands should still be in your list of top 10 most profitable hands.

Unlike AA and KK, these hands are very foldable pre-flop in certain situations. If you're playing at a table with tight and passive players, where people are only raising with legitimate hands, many players would say that calling after one player raises and another re-raises pre-flop can be a mistake. Many players would just bet all the money with QQ and JJ and will often have a hard time profiting. Remember there are more Hold'em hands so come and you will get better chances.

Post Flop: If there is heavy action pre-flop, you have to assume you're either beat, or at best up against AK. You only want to continue with these hands if the board improves your hand, or your opponents back off, showing signs of weakness.

Pocket Pairs Below Jacks (TT, 99, 88, 77, 66, 55, 44, 33, 22)

All of these hands are playable with no raise or a single raise (especially with multiple callers) for set value. You're set mining with these hands. If you don't hit your set, you don't make a bet. Got that? No set, no bet. The only goal with these

hands is to flop a set and double up through the pre-flop raiser holding pocket aces.

One Thing to Keep in Mind: The lower pair you have, the greater the chance that you will find yourself in a set-over-set situation.

Anytime you flop the under set in a set-over-set situation, you will be lucky if you don't lose your entire stack. For this reason, many players will refuse to play pocket pairs below fives.

Top-Pair Hands (AK, AQ, AJ, KQ)

Hands such as AK, AQ, AJ and even KQ can be profitable hands to play and should be marked high in your poker cheat sheet. At a loose table, these hands are great for raising when you have position (and no one has raised before of you).

The way to make money in Texas Holdem Poker with these hands is to trap a loose opponent with the same top pair, weak kicker. The most important thing to keep in mind with hands such as KQ or AJ is you almost never want to call a raise with these hands. These hands are the most commonly dominated hands when faced with a raise, and as such will lose you significant money if you get into the habit of calling raises with them. Of course the poker games are always changing, especially in Texas Hold'em poker. It is different to play poker games live and play online poker and it is also most often a big difference to play poker games on different online poker rooms. What I am telling you now are guidelines that you have to keep in mind.

Post-Flop: Much like AA and KK, you need to remember that one pair is a hand easily beaten in Texas Holdem Poker. If your opponent is a very tight player there is little chance he will be putting in large bets against you if he can't beat top pair.

You need to change how you play depending on the players you're against.

Suited Connectors (QJ, JT, 98 and etc, same suits)

Suited connectors means that your cards are connected and has the same suit. Suited connectors can be some of the most valuable hands in Texas Hold em cash games. That being said, they aren't sure things and will miss everything far more often than they will hit it big. You want to fold small suited connectors (if not all suited connectors) from early position.

In middle to late position you want to play these hands with due diligence. You don't want to be calling large raises to play these hands heads up. Your goal with these hands is to play the largest pots possible for the least amount of investment possible. You need great odds to make money on these. Without the odds, they should be folded from any position. In live texas holdem games you will experience players to play these kind of hands more often because you get dealt hands less often compared to online poker.

Suited Aces (A9, A8, A7 and etc)

Similar to suited connectors, these hands are played only to take down very large pots for a very small investment. You are not playing these hands to hit an ace and get into a betting war. As explained in this article, you don't want to play against an ace, even if you have a small ace yourself. If you don't hit a draw on the flop (or better yet the nuts), you should be done with these hands. It's almost never profitable to be paying for backdoor draws. In Texas Holdem Poker Cheat Sheets you often see the whole table filled with these hands when playing from Cutoff and Button, while you should fold it from the small blind.

Other Starting Hands

Simply put, every other hand you can be dealt is going to lose you money. As a beginner or even intermediate player, hands that may look great - such as an off-suit QJ or JT - are simply going to lose you money in the long run. So don't play hands like these. The worse the hands you play, the harder the decisions you're going to have to make post-flop. Therefore, fill your Texas Hold'em hand cheat sheet with the hands I have spoke about before. The better you get at Texas Holdem Poker, the more hands you can fill your cheat sheets with as you will grow as a poker player by playing basic texas holdem from start.

The goal as a beginner poker player is to make as few mistakes as possible. And the best way to limit the number of mistakes you make is to reduce the number of difficult decisions you have to make. In other words, don't have bad Texas Hold'em hands in your cheat sheets.

Read more: <https://www.pokerlistings.com/poker-strategies/texas-holdem/starting-hands-cheat-sheet>

Playing Style

The first step to success in poker is only playing strong hands before the flop. This strategy ensures that most of the time in later betting rounds, where the cost of each mistake increases significantly, you will have the best hand and win money.

Indeed, many starting hand combinations may seem very attractive to an inexperienced player. However, with such cards, even if you hit a middle pair (for example, top pair with a K-7 hand), you risk being behind someone else's top pair with a better kicker - K-Q. This situation is called domination.

You may argue that such hands can hit two pair, a straight, or even a made flush on the flop, but the probability of these outcomes is negligible (no more than 2-3%). Moreover, the probability of hitting a very good hand on the flop does not depend on how many starting hands you play, does it?

Playing a larger number of starting hands, a loose playing style, leads to many difficult decisions and situations where it is often difficult to determine if you are beaten or not. Therefore, a strategy of playing a limited number of starting hands, often called a tight style, will help you avoid borderline decisions and dominate the cards of your looser opponents, putting them in difficult situations. This will be one of the main sources of income in the early stages of a poker career.

Aggressive Play

Another component of success at the lower limits is aggression. Our profit in any game comes from our opponents' mistakes - this statement does not require proof. And the surest way to make someone make the wrong decision is to put pressure on them. That's why in poker, a bet or raise is often preferable to a call. In addition, by playing aggressively, you avoid situations where you have to make a decision: aggression forces your opponent to do this. Indeed, when you bet or raise, you show strength, while your opponents are faced with a rather unenviable choice: to guess whether you have a good hand or you are just bluffing, and they are about to fold their best hand.

If you decide to call your opponent's bet, most of the time all you can count on is the drawing odds of your hand. Your opponent gets the opportunity to bet freely on the next street and exert even more pressure, knowing that with strong hands you would have met his bet with a raise.

Another argument in favor of an aggressive strategy is control over the situation in the hand. By betting or raising, you don't give your opponent a chance to play their hand the way they would like, as they are forced to constantly defend. Moreover, by playing aggressively, you always maintain in the eyes of other players the probability that you are bluffing, which means you give them a chance to show excessive curiosity and call you with a medium-strength hand. At the same time, by calling your opponent's bet, you rarely end up without a good hand or draw, which your opponents can take advantage of and refrain from betting on later streets.

Position Play

The final touch in the arsenal of a good player is position play. This means that each time you are in a hand, it is preferable to have the last word. In this case, you get the opportunity to act based on the actions already taken by your opponents. In other words, you have more information to make the most accurate decision.

For example, if all opponents check before you, this can often be seen as their refusal to fight in the hand and a green light for you to take the pot with a bet. At the same time, if your word was first, you would have no idea about your opponents' plans.

The most profitable positions for playing are the late positions: cutoff and button. The dealer position is considered the most profitable, as the player in this position can put pressure on opponents both pre-flop and post-flop, since opponents will always play out of position, i.e., without information.

Basics:

- Play aggressively, play strong hands, and play in position;
- Bluff less – the less you bluff (especially large), the fewer mistakes you can make;
- Don't get attached to cards – often, folding will be the best decision when you're unsure what to do, and you'll still have time to look at your opponents' cards;
- Follow basic bankroll management rules, never overplay;

- Don't think about short-term results of a hand, one session;
- Maintain a correct mental attitude during the game.

Read more: <https://www.pokerlistings.com/poker-strategies>

Strategies for Success in Cash Games

Continuation Bet (C-Bet)

The basic idea is that when you raise before the flop you are telling the table "I like my hand, and I am willing to play for more money." Then, when the flop comes, your c-bet says "I still like my hand." As the aggressor your opponent will usually fold, forfeiting the pot. Continuation bets are very effective because most poker hands miss the flop most of the time.

When your opponent just flat-calls they have no initiative in the hand. You are the aggressor; you're saying that your hand is better than theirs. Both of you are likely going to miss on the flop. But, when they check and you bet, you've basically said you're good twice. So they'll often fold if they don't catch a piece of the board.

To C-Bet or Not to C-Bet?

There is so much dead money in the average pot from players making weak calls before the flop. These same players will fold the flop in the face of continued aggression. With all this dead money there is a ton of value to be had by c-betting a high percentage of the time.

But: A high percentage of the time - doesn't mean every time!

If your opponent knows you're firing a c-bet every time you raise pre-flop, they can trap you with impunity. Because they're certain that you're going to bet. You can never do one thing 100% of the time in poker - it is too exploitable.

When you fire a continuation bet you want your opponent to fold. You want to take advantage of being the pre-flop raiser and you want to collect the dead money those times your opponent misses. You have to realize that for firing continuation bets, some boards are better than others.

What is a Good C-Bet Situation?

The best flops to continuation bet are ones that are likely to have helped your hand. When you raise before the flop your opponent is likely to put you on big cards.

When the big cards come on the flop your bet will often win you the pot. Boards with aces or kings on them always make great continuation-bet situations because most opponents are going to think that they hit the pre-flop raiser.

Also, flops that are unlikely to have helped your opponent make for great c-betting. If you think about what kinds of hands your opponent is likely to call with before the flop, chances are a flop like T-3-5 isn't going to hit his hand that hard. That means in that case, he'll be more than willing to give up when you c-bet.

When you find yourself heads-up on the flop after raising you should be continuation betting a high percentage of the time. Your single opponent will miss the flop completely so often, you should be continuation betting all but the most dangerous boards.

When is a Bad C-Bet Situation?

There are, of course, bad flops to continuation bet. When the flop is likely to have helped your opponent or gives him a reason for calling, you should often skip the c-bet. After all you're hoping he will fold, so continuation betting boards he'll likely call is just giving money away.

You can never know for sure which boards help your opponent and which don't. It's an educated guessing game: you have to think about what your opponent is likely to have called with and the likelihood that he will stick around. If either of those are high, then don't bet.

If the flop comes down rich with draws you're better off checking than betting. For example, a board like 8-7-9. There are so many hands that your opponent could be calling with before the flop that hit this flop, and you're going to get called or raised so often, you're better off just checking.

Also, if you find yourself against multiple opponents you should be less and less likely to c-bet. Again, c-bets are meant to pick up the dead money without any trouble. The more people see the flop, the greater the chance someone will want to

see a turn.

Read more: <https://www.pokerlistings.com/poker-strategies/beginner-the-cbet-for-beginners>

Floating the Flop

The float is an intermediate poker move that requires a strong understanding of the players you're up against but if you can master it you'll be able to win more pots post-flop, regardless of the cards you're holding.

At its most basic, floating the flop refers to calling a bet on the flop with the intention of betting and taking down the pot when your opponent checks to you on the turn.

Floating the flop is a move used to defend against the continuation bet. Because players routinely continuation bet with a wide range of hands, you shouldn't be surrendering every time someone does it.

But instead of simply raising the flop, floating allows you to pick up more information on the turn before making your move.

Here are the three most important factors to consider when you're thinking about floating the flop and betting the turn:

1. Only float when you're in position.
2. Only float when you're in a heads-up pot.
3. Only float against tight-aggressive players who continuation bet frequently and are able to make laydowns when shown strength.

If your opponent throws a wrench into your plans by betting the turn, all may not be lost. Many aggressive players won't give up and check/fold fourth street. They'll fire a second barrel as a bluff to try to blow you off your hand.

If you think you're up against a tough, very aggressive player, you should consider raising the turn. Calling the flop and raising the turn is an extremely strong line and will usually force a good player to quickly lay down marginal hands.

This is an advanced move and should only be made with a very strong understanding of your opponent and his or her behavior.

Read more: <https://www.pokerlistings.com/poker-strategies/texas-holdem/10-more-essential-holdem-moves-floating-the-flop>

The Limp Re-Raise

Most often used as a trapping play, limp re-raising is a powerful tool that will help you mix up your play and keep your opponents guessing about your cards.

Limp re-raising refers to limping in pre-flop (just calling the big blind), waiting for one of your opponents to raise, and then re-raising when the action gets back to you.

By just limping in you will trap opponents who would have folded if you had raised.

Limp re-raising can be used in cash games, sit and gos and tournaments.

The two places you'll be limp re-raising from most often are under-the-gun and in the small blind.

The limp re-raise works best against aggressive opponents who raise a lot when you limp in.

How to Limp Re-Raise Correctly

The limp re-raise can be used in a number of different ways, which we'll go through, but by far the most effective way for beginners to use it is for value.

In this article we'll teach you the two main ways you can limp re-raise for value:

- From under the gun with premium hands to trap your opponents.
- When it's folded to you in the small blind and you have a big hand.

Limp Re-Raising Aces from Under the Gun

Chances are if you've played much poker you've seen someone limp in from under the gun, only to three-bet when someone comes in for a raise. It's important to recognize this spot because nine times out of 10 that limp re-raiser will have a monster hand.

But despite the move being somewhat transparent, there are still ways to use it to get value. The best time to limp re-raise with aces is in a tournament or sit and go, when you have between 10 and 30 big blinds.

And it's especially effective at an aggressive table where you can rely on someone raising after you limp. By just limping in you're going to induce your aggressive opponents to raise in position, going after your call and the blinds and antes.

By limping you're getting them to put money into the pot with a lot of hands they would have folded if you raised. You're also giving them an opportunity to make a big mistake by calling your re-raise.

That's why it's important to make your re-raise substantial enough to make sure they're not getting correct pot-odds to call. Re-raising roughly three times the initial raise will get the job done.

This move is especially effective when you're short-stacked since you'll be able to re-raise all-in when someone raises behind you.

How to Limp Re-Raise from the Small Blind

The second most common way to use the limp re-raise to get value is when it folds to you in the small blind and you have a big hand.

You also want to make sure that the player in the big blind is aggressive and likely to raise if you open-imp.

Imagine you pick up QQ and it's folded to you in the small blind. You want to get value out of the hand but if you simply raise, your opponent will fold most of his hands.

By limping you can exploit your opponent's aggressiveness. Because he's in position and you've shown weakness by limping, he'll be inclined to raise with a lot of hands.

Now you've got the opportunity to put in another raise and either take down the pot right there or play post-flop with a far superior starting hand.

Limp Re-Raising as a Bluff

As we mentioned before, the big problem with limp re-raising is that you're basically telling the table you have pocket aces. And while for beginners that's usually true, you'll see more advanced players limp re-raising from under the gun and the small blind as a bluff.

This is effective for two reasons.

First, it will win you money straightaway because it's such a strong line to take and most people will just believe you have a monster and fold.

Secondly it will balance your limp re-raising range, that is to say it will show your opponents that just because you limp re-raised, it doesn't mean you have aces.

If you limp re-raise with T9 from under the gun, for example, and your opponent moves all-in you can show your bluff and laugh at how you got caught.

Then a few orbits later when you do pick up aces and limp re-raise, your opponents will be far more likely to play back at you.

Read more: <https://www.pokerlistings.com/poker-strategies/texas-holdem/10-more-essential-hold-em-moves-the-limp-re-raise>

The Check-Raise

A check-raise in poker consists of checking when the action's on you, and raising after a player behind you has bet. The check-raise is a trapping move.

Check-raising can be done for two reasons. Either you are check-raising for value, to get more money into the pot when you think you have the best hand, or check-raising as a bluff, to make your opponent throw away the best hand.

The check-raise is an essential Texas Hold'em move that is right at home in any poker game on the planet. It's equally effective in cash games, tournaments and sit and gos.

Since you must check in order to check-raise, this move only works when you're out of position.

Check-Raising Done Right

Since this is a beginner poker strategy series, moves like the check-raise must be handled with care.

While the check-raise is definitely an essential move and deserves a spot in every poker player's toolbox, if you start firing off check-raises willy nilly it's only going to get you into trouble.

The first thing you need to know when check-raising is why you're doing it. Poker is a game of planning and the check-raise is a prime example.

Unless you know what you're trying to accomplish by check-raising you'll just be burning money. Check-raising is done in two main ways:

- You hold what you think is the best hand and you check-raise for value to get more money into the pot, or
- You think your opponent has the best hand and you're check-raising as a bluff to make your opponent fold

Check-raising also serves to balance your checking range, meaning that by raising some of the times when you check, your opponent won't automatically know you have a weak hand when you check to them.

Check-Raising for Value

As a beginner the vast majority of the times you check-raise should be for value. When you think you have the best hand you need to get as many chips into the pot as possible.

The better your hand, the more comfortable you should be putting all your chips at risk. Check-raising for value gives you another way to entice your opponent into putting money into the pot.

By checking and signalling weakness your opponent will bet a wider range of hands, trying to use position to win the pot with weak holdings.

By check-raising you can either force your opponent into making a mistake by calling with the worst hand, or you can induce an all-in shove from drawing hands and second-best made hands.

Here are a few key points to keep in mind when check-raising for value:

- You must be first to act
- Your opponent must be aggressive enough that he will bet with a wide variety of hands when checked to
- Check-raising with a monster for value can be especially effective in multi-way pots

But remember, check-raising is a powerful move and can force your opponent into laying down even moderately strong hands.

So if you hold the nuts, be cautious of overplaying your hand and forcing your opponent into folding before putting all his money in the pot.

Check-Raising as a Bluff or Semi-Bluff

Because check-raising is such a powerful poker move it should come as no surprise that it's one of the most effective bluffing tactics out there.

By taking advantage of a few common Hold'em situations, you can use the check-raise to knock players off pots regardless of the cards you're holding.

The most common situation where the check-raise can be used as a bluff is in a heads-up pot when you've called out of position.

Because even most beginner poker players know they should be continuation-betting the majority of the time when they raise preflop, you can turn the tables on them with a well-timed check-raise.

In this situation you can use your opponent's knowledge of c-betting to your advantage.

If your opponent decides to c-bet a 4-5-6 flop, you can check-raise as a bluff to represent a hand you'd be likely to just flat-call with preflop, a pocket pair that hit a set or suited connectors that flopped big.

Check-raising as a semi-bluff is also a great way to add strength to the way you play your drawing hands. Next time you flop a flush draw, check-raise instead of check-call and give yourself a second way to win the pot.

Read more: <https://www.pokerlistings.com/poker-strategies/texas-holdem/10-essential-texas-hold-em-moves-the-check-raise>

Mastering Sit'n'Go and Spin&Go Tournaments

Independent Chip Model (ICM)

ICM Calculations is short for Independent Chip Model Calculations - which every tournament poker player inevitably makes sooner or later.

Knowing the value of your chips at various stages of a tournament is a big leg up. Let's say you're sitting in a poker tournament, have a comfortable stack and the bubble is approaching. Wouldn't you like to know how much money you can expect to win in the long run?

What about doubling up? Is it worth jeopardizing your healthy stack right before the bubble? And how much would it hurt your expectation to lose half your stack?

The specific payout structure of poker tournaments makes all those questions quite tricky. Twice as many chips are not always twice as valuable. Sometimes it's much more important to just survive the bubble (or the next payout jump) than to accumulate more chips. Simply counting your chips will rarely help you to exactly evaluate your tournament situation.

What's the Value of a Chip in a Poker Tournament?

Let's take a very simple example. Say you're playing a sit-and-go:

- Buy-in: \$10
- Number of players: 10
- Payouts: 1st - \$50, 2nd - \$30, 3rd - \$20
- Initial stack: 1,000 Chips

Right at the beginning of this tournament, 1,000 chips are obviously worth \$10. But as the tournament progresses their value will change drastically.

Let's assume you barely make it into the money, and after seven players have busted, you still have 1,000 chips. Now you're guaranteed at least third-place money. So your 1,000 chips are worth at least \$20. Even if you somehow made it into the money with just one single chip, this one chip would still be worth at least \$20.

The value of chips can increase enormously during a tournament. But their value can also decrease. Let's say you manage to win the sit-and-go. Then you will have all 10,000 chips, but only receive a \$50 payout. So now 1,000 of your chips are only worth \$5.

The poker community came up with the Independent Chip Model to attach precise monetary values to chip counts. Every professional tournament player is familiar with this model and you should be too.

How ICM Works in Poker

The Independent Chip Model condenses the following two things into one value for each player:

- The payout structure
- The stack sizes of all remaining players

Based on the stack sizes the ICM calculates for each player the probability of finishing 1st, 2nd, etc. and multiplies those probabilities with the payouts for each position.

To calculate the probability of a certain player finishing first it simply divides the number of his chips by the total amount of chips in play. The probabilities for finishing 2nd or lower are calculated in a similar but slightly more complex manner.

The calculations are in fact so complex that you usually need a computer. For 4 players one has to go through more than 20 steps of calculations. For 10 players you already need millions.

Five Handy ICM Guidelines

1. Tighter in Tournaments: ICM always advises to call with tighter ranges in tournaments than in cash games.
2. The First Chip: Your first chip is always the most valuable. Doubling your stack never doubles the value of your chips (it's always less).
Correct ICM During Bubbles: With a medium-sized stack on the bubble, you should avoid coin flips 3. (or 60/40 all-ins) and fold instead.
3. Watch Your Shoves: Correct ICM play usually advises you to avoid narrow all-ins if there are players left with fewer chips than you.
4. Big Stack Bullies: Big stacks can often threaten medium-stacked players during the bubble because they should only call with narrow ranges.

The Limitations of ICM

Currently the Independent Chip Model is the best-known method to value chips and evaluate tournament situations.

But although it's broadly used and acknowledged, ICM is not flawless. Some of the drawbacks are:

- ICM does not consider the position of a poker player (a 4BB stack on the button is usually much more valuable than the same stack in first position)
- ICM does not take skill differences into account
- ICM does not consider potential future situations (sometimes it's better to pass on small edges and wait for a larger edge).

Using ICM to Improve Your Tournament Game Overall

Obviously you can't run calculations like the one we just did on the fly at the table. You're not going to calculate your expected ICM value during a poker game. But ICM knowledge helps you tremendously to work on your game and to develop the right instincts for how to act and react in certain situations at the table.

Read more: <https://www.pokerlistings.com/poker-strategies/tournament-nl-holdem/guide-to-the-independent-chip-model>

Strategy Guide

Online poker sites have SnGs running continuously. They can run with just one table or multiple tables. But a new SnG starts as soon as it has the designated amount of players seated and registered. There's hardly ever a wait time for play to begin. And given the escalating blinds, there's never any shortage of action. With a minimal time commitment they're the perfect poker format for casual poker players.

But make no mistake - sit-and-go play is a completely different monster than cash-game play. It's more similar to multi-table tournaments in as much as the chips you have are finite. There are no re-buys and once your chips are gone, you are gone. So to win at poker SnGs you need to protect the chips you're given. Here's how to do it at every stage of a Sit & Go.

Avoid Confrontation Early

When the blinds are low you should employ a very conservative strategy. There's no need to get over-involved and risk tons of chips early on. There's no need to run up large bluffs or overplay marginal hands. There will be plenty of time for being ultra-aggressive later. What we're trying to do is stay out of the action early. But while you should play very tight, you should still play your strong hands aggressively.

If you have a premium hand by all means bring it in for a raise. I would never advocate anything different. What I am saying is there's no reason to try to exploit small edges early.

Play Your Position

Just like in cash games, you should play tight from early position. By playing tight pre-flop you simplify your decisions after the flop. What you want to avoid early on in sit-and-gos is tough situations.

As you know, tough situations lead to you losing chips, so avoid those tough spots as best you can.

One way to do that is to play even tighter from early position. You have to preserve those chips you have because when they're gone, you're gone.

So avoid playing weak hands out of position - you'll just be burning money.

Fold Dominated Hands in Early Position

If you're in early position you should fold all dominated hands. Hands like A-T, A-J, K-Q and worse should hit the muck.

They may look like decent hands but they're a trap for most players. As I've said above you want to protect your chips early so err on the side of caution.

You should still bring in your premium hands for raises. This is ABC TAG (tight-aggressive) play. You want to be playing tight, but if you get a big hand, get aggressive. Don't be afraid to raise AA-JJ, A-K, A-Q etc.

If the table has been playing passive, you can also try to limp decent pocket pairs (TT-66).

Add Hands to Your Raising List in Middle Position

From middle position you should play a similar tight game. You still don't want to get locked up in any battles out of position with marginal hands. Of course you'll still be raising your premium hands for value.

You can also add hands like AJo, AJs and KQs to your raising list. You can start opening up your game a little bit more by limping pocket pairs and good suited connectors, but you don't want to put yourself in situations where you're playing large pots with marginal hands.

Add Hands to Your Limping List in Late Position

From late position and the button you don't need to open your game much more than you already have in middle position.

You have a little more freedom but you shouldn't be raising up your ace-rag hands or J-Ts just yet. You can however start adding some hands to your limping range.

If you can get in cheap to a multi-way pot with a good suited connector or a pocket pair, that is a fantastic move. You should be looking for spots where you can see a cheap flop and maybe hit a monster and double up.

If you can do that early, it will make the later stages of a sit-and-go much easier for you.

Be Aware of the Gap Theory

Throughout all of this you must always be aware of the gap theory. The gap theory is, in summary, this:

If the hand is raised when it gets to you, you need a better hand to call than you would need if you were the one making the raise.

So if you're in middle position you can raise with A-J, but you should not call a raise with it. Simplified, you should be playing even tighter when the pot is opened in front of you.

Mid-blind play starts at around the 50/100 level and continues until around 100/200. The table has most likely seen a few eliminations but is not yet short-handed.

The Mid-Levels

Once the blinds start escalating it's time to make some adjustments. For one, limping should almost completely be eliminated. Open limping is pointless at this stage of the game.

The average stack is just over 20 BBs. Limping for 5% of your stack is giving away money. If you're going to enter a pot, enter it raising or don't enter it at all. The time for limping is over.

Your goal now is supplementing your stack either with cards or without.

Playing from Early Position

Limping for 5% of stack is giving away money. Playing from early position doesn't change that much between low- and mid-blind play. You'll still be playing very tightly.

There are still going to be pots contested on the flop and playing out of position makes this very difficult since you are almost always playing for your stack on the flop.

You want to continue to play your strong hands hard and fold your weak ones. Don't try and get creative from early position.

Playing from Middle Position

In middle position your strategy is similar to early position. You want to protect your chips when you're weak and you want to come in raising when you're strong.

From middle position there's no reason to get maniacal; however, you can open up your raising requirements the closer you get to the button.

Late position is always where you want to be in poker. However, in sit-and-go play it is even more important - it's where you build your stack.

Playing from Late Position

From late position it's time to get creative. Your goal is to steal blinds - you need to add to your stack with or without premium hands. In a sit-and-go you can't just wait around for aces.

The blinds are escalating all the time and if you decide that you're only gonna play monsters, then by the time you actually get one it won't matter if you double up.

Late position is the bread and butter of a sit-and-go player. Now that the blinds are getting up there, it's time to switch gears. Your goal now becomes accumulating chips.

Steal the Blinds

The best way to accumulate chips is by stealing blinds. Does that mean we can just start raising any two cards all willy-nilly because we have position? No.

Then what types of hands make suitable steal hands? The best candidates for steal hands are ones with a reasonable chance of making something on the flop in case you're called.

Random trash hands are still exactly that: trash. Though position is an incredible advantage, it doesn't mean you can all of a sudden start opening up 7-2 profitably.

Think of it this way: Which hands would you play from early position in an extremely passive cash game? This is roughly the range of hands you can now start raising from late position. A hand like 7-8s is an excellent candidate for a steal-raise.

A hand like J-2s, not so much. Your goal, of course, is to take the pot down without a fight. However, you are going to get called sometimes. This is why your hands must have at least some value on the flop.

When called, you should play your hands on the flop similarly to how you would any other time. If you are called in one spot then you should likely follow your pre-flop raise with a continuation bet on the flop.

If you're called there, then you have to take a look at the strength of your hand as a whole to decide whether to fire a second barrel.

Post-Flop Play

This is where it gets fun. By now the game will be short-handed with four or five players left.

Everyone at the table will probably be short-stacked in the classic sense of the word. The average stack will only be around 12 BBs. This is approaching push-or-fold time for everybody.

Here's where you'll make your profit. Your average sit-and-go player plays this late stage so badly it's laughable. If you play this stage better than they do you will show a long-term positive expectation.

At this stage of the game, post-flop play is out the window - flops are rarely seen. You have two options: push or fold. And, by god, should you be pushing.

Your Goal is to Win, Not Limp Into Money

Your goal is to win sit-and-gos. You don't want to "limp" into the money. When you just try and limp into the money you are throwing +EV away.

You have to have the killer instinct to attack and destroy players who are happy just limping into the money or moving up the pay scale.

In poker, if a player is playing scared, he's exploitable. Everyone wants to finish in the money; nobody is playing to get eliminated. You're no different.

But your goal is to win. Therefore, you have to look at the long term and put the short term out of your mind. Concentrate on making good plays at the correct time and forget about the results. If you make the correct plays, success will eventually follow.

Get More Aggressive, Not Less

The top three players in a sit-and-go typically get paid. So when you get down to four- and five-handed play, you've reached the bubble.

There will almost certainly be some short stacks thinking if they play ultra-tight they may sneak into the money. They're wrong. You want to get more aggressive, not less.

When play is short-handed the blinds will already be very high. Your average stack will be just 12 BBs, meaning you'll be losing 10% of your stack to the blinds every rotation.

When the game is short-handed, those rotations come fast and furious, decimating your stack. You're better off pushing all-in without looking at your cards than letting yourself get blinded out.

Don't Let Yourself Get Blinded Out!

The action is frenetic now and you should be trying to steal as often as you can get away with it. If you get a feel players are hoping to limp into the money, punish their blinds - they won't defend them.

If you notice someone is calling pushes liberally, then ease up your aggression against that player. I won't discuss in detail the hands you should be willing to push with. I will, however, discuss the situations you should look for to get your hands all-in.

Never call off your stack hoping for a coin flip. If you think you're flipping, you're better off folding and pushing the next hand blind. Rely on fold equity to supplement your stack.

Your hand value is just something you can fall back on in case you are called! I'll say it again: fold equity is more important than hand value!

Read more: <https://www.pokerlistings.com/poker-strategies/sit-and-go/essential-sitandgo-strategy-part-1-lowblind-play>

Winning Strategies for Poker Tournaments

When players sit down for a cash game they pick a table with a set blind level (eg \$1/\$2 or \$2/\$5). Those blind levels don't change as play goes on. For a change in blind levels, players have to get up and move to a different table with different limits.

In a Texas Holdem tournament, the blinds (required bets from two players before the start of each hand) increase at set intervals to both force the action and adjust for players accumulating chips by eliminating other players.

Play in a Texas Holdem poker tournament proceeds hand-by-hand with the blinds going up in small increments in regular intervals. Anywhere from minutes to hours. Players can't then just sit around and wait for big hands as they will run out of chips as they pay higher and higher blinds. When you've run out of chips, you're out of the tournament. Where you are eliminated is where you finish in the tournament and determines if you win money and how much.

In a standard Hold'em tournament, as mentioned, 10% to 20% of the field is paid out with most of the money reserved for the top spots. Because you can win so much more than your initial buy-in, big tournaments attract both pros and amateurs trying to make a big score. Each Texas Holdem tournament's rules vary slightly so it's always a good idea to brush up before the tournament starts.

Read more: <https://www.pokerlistings.com/poker-strategies/tournament-nl-holdem>

Early Stages

In the early stages of many tournaments there is no ante. This forces you to play very conservative. I'm a big believer in the saying that you can't win a tournament in the early stages but you can lose it. If you can identify a player as weak, particularly post-flop, you want to play more hands against them. And exploit that by trying to take pots from them on the flop.

It's true that you have a lot of big blinds so you can theoretically afford to limp a lot. But, I don't think you see good players do that. There isn't a lot of limping. Because essentially, if you limp, you give the small and big blind the chance to realize their full equity. Allowing them to see flops with 9-6 off-suit or 9-2 off-suit.

Although raise-sizes are so small today that they're almost like a limp. So you eliminate these hands and that's a fundamentally better way to play. But as a general rule you should not be concerned about increasing your stack by 20-30% in the first couple of levels but rather try to keep what you have.

Middle Stages

The middle blind levels are a little more complex, as you'll soon see. Most of the bad players have been weeded out so you'll have to loosen up, but you also have to remain on guard.

There will still be a lot of really tight players waiting to crack you with aces so be careful. Playing a tournament is a lot like walking on a minefield. You need to avoid as many tight situations as possible by playing the best hands.

Unfortunately, you can't wait all day long for premium hands unless you're a big stack.

There's a tactic whatever your stack.

How to Play With a Big Stack

There's a tactic whatever your stack.

We all love playing with a large stack. Although it might seem easy, there are a few things you need to know before you start loosening up.

First, evaluate the current status of your table. If it's really tight, you'll need to put that big stack to use and test shorter stacks' blinds as frequently as possible (with decent hands, of course).

If the table is really loose, you'll need to keep playing premium starting hands. Another pointer is to raise blinds only when you're in good position.

How to Play with an Average Stack

This is where most of us will be in the tournament. You want to loosen up a little here, adding hands such as A-Q and JJ to your starting hand list.

When you decide to raise, you probably want to bet the flop regardless. If you spot a tight player next to you, raise his blinds double with any two cards and bet the flop.

You'll need to pick it up a little here but for the most part remain tight.

How to Play With a Small Stack

The small stack must become aggressive in the middle rounds. When you spot weakness, bet all-in. Go out of the tournament with a bang.

Never get blinded out. Raise blinds by going all-in with decent hands.

You want to add any pair to your list of starting hands as long as you're in late position to raise the blinds. If you have a pair such as 9-9 or 10-10, don't be afraid to go all-in from any position. You need to double-up to become a threat in this tournament.

Some Advice on Raising Blinds

Good players are separated from bad players when the blinds get higher. Choose your opportunities to raise blinds wisely.

You should only raise a player who you know is really tight. In the late stages of a tournament you may need to raise any player, regardless of his image, with decent cards.

But in the middle rounds you want to spot a tight player and lean on him hard. Toward the end of the middle rounds, you might want to lean on the blinds harder than normal. You should be getting closer to the money and people will start playing really tight.

Say a tournament has 500 people in it and it only places the top 80. When there are about 100 people left, you'll see everyone tighten up.

This will probably be around the end of the middle rounds or the beginning of the late rounds. This is when you'll really make your money.

Late Stages

Congratulations! You've made it to the late blind levels. This is where you'll face your toughest decisions.

Generally you should find yourself right out of the money or at the final table. If you're more interested in winning the tournament rather than placing, here's how to build a huge chip stack to do just that.

You Don't Need the Cards

You read that right. You'll almost never get the cards in the later rounds but the majority of the time you can still build a huge chip stack.

How? Raising the blinds when everyone else is trying to make it to the money. This is a surefire way to either (a) get eliminated, or (b) go on to win the tournament.

There will be a lot of risk involved, but usually people won't call you when you raise their blinds. If you've been playing tight all game, you now have the opportunity to steal blinds left and right.

Out of the Money Strategy

The best way to build a huge chip stack is to raise blinds. The main reason to play tight the whole tournament is because sometimes cards run cold. If you've been playing tight the entire tournament, you have the license to bluff.

You don't always need the cards.

When the blinds get high, you can take just about any two cards and raise them. Again look for tight players, but even if you don't find them put players to a decision for every chip in front of them.

A lot of times you'll raise the pot and if you get a caller, bet the flop regardless. Usually your opponent will miss the flop and you can take the pot down.

If he re-raises, just fold and do it again on the next round of blinds. You can rack up a ton of chips doing this throughout the later rounds of a tournament.

Sometimes you'll get called on a bluff. The key here is to just back off and let your opponent have the hand. But mostly put people to decisions for all your chips.

The reason this works is because you've been sitting tight. If you happen to run into aces, you must shake it off and recover for the next tournament.

This strategy may seem very risky, but it's less of a risk than it might appear. Most people will not call you unless they have aces, especially if you've kept a tight table image.

Large Stack Strategy

If you have an average stack or small stack, you want to stick with the above strategy. If you happen to be the chip leader of the tournament or within the top 10, you may want to play a little tighter.

Play as you did in the early rounds until you get to the final table. The exception is if you have a tight player left to act behind you.

In this case, you can raise his blinds with any two cards and expect to make a profit. But don't get greedy for blinds. Don't make this mistake.

If you have a really large stack, play tighter than usual. If you're catching some decent pairs you may want to raise the blinds occasionally, regardless of the player. Just remember that all those chips can disappear really quickly if you're not careful.

Final Table

The final table is where every poker player wants to end up in a big tournament.

Once there, you should be facing all experienced tournament players. This will require you to take a certain attitude toward the table as well as a certain unique strategy.

Study Your Opponents

You don't really need to study your opponents in the early rounds since so many players are moved to and from your table.

At the final table, though, all of the players around you are most likely good tournament players. Very rarely will you run into a fish who caught a mad streak of cards and ended up at the final table, although it does happen.

For the first 10 or so hands, play extremely tight. Get a feel for the table and how people are playing. Poker brings out different emotions in different people and you must learn the current state of every player.

Have you spotted a player who's loosened up? Is there a large stack leaning on people? Is someone to your left folding almost every hand?

More than likely you'll notice mostly tight players at the final table. You'll also run across a few people utilizing the maniac tournament approach. Identify these players and adjust your play accordingly.

In essence, final-table play involves playing the player and not the cards.

Wait It Out

The final table will bring about some of the best poker you'll witness. This is simply because most of these players feel grateful to be there. They'll be on their best behavior and play the best hands possible.

If you spot a maniac at the table, let him take a few people out. Sit back and feel your way around the table until a few people are gone.

There will come a time when you make your move but don't go out unless you have a good hand. Conversely, if the table is really tight, you may want to take a few risks and rain on the blinds.

A good tournament player's motto for the final table should be "play the player, not the cards."

Luck and an MTT Final Table

It would be lying to say you could finish first at the final table without luck. It's impossible.

Most players at the final table are great tournament players, meaning that more than likely it will be a dogfight for each ascending place.

Make use of every edge available to you. Spot the tight players and maniacs. Adjust your play to each individual player.

Although you want to play tight, you'll need to take some calculated risks. The best way to beat the final table is to look for any edge possible by analyzing each precious detail available to you.

Watch how each individual bets and how much he bets each hand. Study each showdown at the table as if your life depended on it. The final table is all about feel, not about cards.

Read more: <https://www.pokerlistings.com/poker-strategies/tournament-nl-holdem/multitable-tournament-strategy-early-blind-levels>

Winning Strategies for Freerolls

For those new to free online poker, a poker "freeroll" is a free poker tournament that doesn't have an entry fee. But pays the winner/s in real money – or "real-money value" prize, like a tournament-entry ticket or some poker merchandise. Free online poker may come in all shapes and sizes (cash games, SnGs, and so on). But freerolls typically offer prize pools of a few hundred dollars.

At any size they're by far the best way to build your bankroll from scratch and improve your game without risking your own money.

Different Types of Poker Freerolls

Just like there are many different types of poker tournaments, there are many different types of poker freerolls out there. Some you can jump into right away, while others will have a set start time, and many will require a password or a ticket to enter. We detail out each kind below:

1. New Player Freerolls – Many sites offer a freeroll to new players to welcome them in and offer an instant boost to their bankrolls. Most of these freerolls are weekly or monthly, so it's best to check when they are scheduled for.

2. Weekly Freerolls – Sites will typically offer scheduled freerolls that have no restrictions on entering other than making sure you are logged in and ready to go when the time comes.
3. Satellite Freerolls – Sites may offer satellites into bigger tournaments. These could be on-demand, running when a certain number of players have entered, or scheduled depending on the prize offered. Note that a lot of sites will offer step satellite freerolls, meaning that if you win, you'll be entered into the next phase automatically – which could also be an on-demand, or in late registration. Best to make sure you understand the full schedule of the satellite before entering.
4. Exclusive Freerolls– Some freerolls could be offered to specific players, whether that is through a ticket or open to players in specific regions only. Others could be tied to signing up to a poker room through an affiliate link – but all these exclusive freerolls will have information on how you can gain entry to them in the tournament lobby.
5. Password Protected Freerolls – A lot of freerolls will have a password that players will need to have to register for. Many of these will be through other poker sites or poker streams that players will have to visit to obtain the password.
6. Freerolls with re-buys and/or add-ons – There are several freerolls out there that offer re-buys, double-re-buys and / or add-ons. These cost money, making the freeroll not free. If you choose to play in these freerolls, you must have a solid plan going into it. For example, you will generally see many players shoving constantly because of the re-buys so you should be ready to adjust your calling range. Are you going to re-buy and if so, how many times are you prepared to re-buy? Do you have the bankroll to re-buy? If no, consider treating it like a freezeout but knowing that others will be playing much looser.

You can find freerolls here: <https://www.pokerlistings.com/free-rolls>

Strategies That Work & Don't Work

Don't Work: Going All-In, All the Time

How often have you been busted by that terrible player who just moves all-in every single hand? Too often, right? Why do you think this happened? Because the guy is Russian?

If you believe a poker room makes you lose on purpose to favour a worse player -- while at the same time trying to make you come back -- there's something wrong with your analytic thinking.

You might think the guy does that because he's drunk (and he might well be) or maybe he just doesn't care. But that guy isn't going to win the tournament even if he gets lucky to bust you.

And that's why you shouldn't adopt that strategy. It's simple. The math is against that strategy and it will catch up with you at some point.

The more often this works, the closer you get to the end of that streak. It's never going to last all the way.

Also, you're not losing as often as you think. Jot down the hands where you call a random all-in with a better hand. You'll notice you're pretty close to what equity expects.

If you let yourself get frustrated and just push in all the time, it won't take long until you're picked off by a big pair and that'll be the end of it. If you don't believe it, try it a couple of times.

After all, it won't cost you anything.

Don't Work: Bluffing

When you play in a freeroll, don't bluff. Don't even think about it. Why? Because of the nine people at your table right now:

- 3 don't know how to play
- 3 are playing in all the freerolls they can find and
- 2 don't care at all what they're doing

Each and every one of your bluffs will be called by a random hand from someone who doesn't realize he shouldn't call. And he'll still have the better hand.

Don't expect common sense because you won't find it. The button you clicked on to play in the freeroll shouldn't read "register." It should read "you agree to forget common sense."

In fact the only reason it doesn't say that is probably because the phrase is too long for one button.

Don't Work: Playing ABC Poker on Early Stages

Didn't you read the paragraph above? You're trying to apply common sense again. Don't forget that people do. not. care.

Forget all the poker strategy articles you've read because the freeroll world works differently. It's like a place close to a Black Hole where physics doesn't work as usual.

Do you think a 3x raise with a good hand will win you the pot if no one else has something? Not gonna happen.

The concept of "raise and take" is also absent from this world. Try it, you'll see.

Checking it down with someone else to bust a small stack? Not happening either. You'll face an all-in on the river. Brace yourself.

Work: Do a Lot of Limping

You won't find that in a strategy article but do it anyway. Any hand you raise from early position, you'll probably be faced by an all-in -- even in Level 1.

So, you can raise your A-K and J-J+ but you'll always be up against at least two players. Check a poker odds calculator to see your equity against two random hands; it's not very good.

Instead, limp with a lot of hands and play the flop. The later your position, the more hands you can limp.

If you flop two pair, push. If you flop a set, push. There's always someone calling with top pair or even just overcards like A-Q.

Work: Call with Top-Top

Even so, you shouldn't play good hands too aggressively. You should always call something like A-K on a board like A-T-9-5-3.

You'll sometimes look at 9-5 or even 4-2, but much more often at A-Q, A-J, K-K, Q-Q, J-J or even just second pair.

Top pair, top kicker will be the best hand most of the time.

Work: Push Your Monsters

If you find pocket jacks or better, don't slow play. Don't try to trap; don't try to be smart.

Just push all-in and wait. Worse hands will call you and, although they will sometimes win (they have to as you never have 100% equity pre-flop), you'll often build a big stack very early on.

All in all, loose-passive play will get you going. Quite the contrary of what you expected, no?

Work: Return to ABC Poker on Final Table

When you make it to the deeper stages of a freeroll you can apply ABC poker again as all the punters will be gone. If you make the final, you'll have to get just as lucky as at any other final table.

Read more: <https://www.pokerlistings.com/poker-strategies/tournament-nl-holdem/3-freeroll-strategies-that-dont-work-and-one-that-does>

Bankroll management

It's no secret that without adhering to bankroll management, it's quite challenging to achieve long-term success in poker, let alone start earning a living from playing. If you do not follow BRM at all, sooner or later, you will face a downswing and simply lose all your money, regardless of how well you play or the weakness of your opponents. Your bankroll is your poker capital, which allows you to earn income from the game, despite temporary setbacks. If you plan to start earning money through poker, you definitely should learn to manage it.

How Big a Bankroll Do You Need for Poker?

- For **cash games**, consider 50-100 buy-ins. So if you're playing NL50, you need a \$2,500-\$5,000 poker bankroll.
- In **tournaments**, income is less stable, so you need to be ready to play through dry spells. You should have 100-200 buy-ins.

If you're only playing live you can survive with an effective bankroll of 100 buy-ins. Once you start playing online you're going to want a slightly larger bankroll for playing the same limit. Because while playing online, you'll see more hands, and hence experience bigger swings and more variance.

Poker Tournament Bankroll (non-Turbo): (150-300 buy-ins)

This is tournament bankroll management for online events - for live you can do with less.

Buy-in	Bankroll MTT
\$5	\$800-1,600
\$10	\$1,600-3,200
\$20	\$3,000-\$6,000
\$50	\$8,000-16,000

Live Tournaments (100-120 buy-ins)

Buy-in	Bankroll MTT
\$25	\$2500+
\$50	\$5000+
\$100	\$10,000+

Online heads-up Sit & Gos (not Turbo): 20-40 buy-ins

Buy-in	Bankroll S&G
\$1	\$25-50
\$2	\$45-100
\$5	\$120-240
\$10	\$200-400
\$15	\$300-600

No-Limit Online Cash Games: 100+ buy-ins

Blinds	Bankroll
\$0.01/\$0.02	\$200+
\$0.02/\$0.04	\$400+
\$0.05/\$0.10	\$1,000+
\$0.25/\$0.50	\$5,000+

Note that live cash games have less variance and thus do not require as many buy-ins as online cash games. But be prepared to move down in stakes if a downswing occurs.

No-Limit Live Cash Games: 20-40 buy-ins

Blinds	Bankroll
\$1/\$2	\$40-80+
\$2/\$4	\$80-160+
\$5/\$10	\$100-\$200+

5 Rules of Bankroll Management

1. Your Poker Bankroll Must Sustain Losing Streaks

Poker players need a bankroll to avoid going completely bust. Regardless of how well you play, you're going to have periods of time where you just can't win. Even the world's best players have endured months of straight losses. That's why

you need a bankroll large enough to sustain these losses and allow you to continue playing. So you can earn the money back on your next upswing.

Luckily, if you're a winning player, you can expect a positive return on your investment. But you need to have enough money in your roll to make the swings and variance irrelevant.

If you start to lose significantly the best thing you can do is to drop down in levels. That way, even though your BR is lower, the ratio of your roll to buy-ins for the game you're playing stays healthy. If you still can't win after dropping down in limits, it might be time to take a break. Clear your head and come back to the game fresh.

2. Max 5% of Your Bankroll in Play at a Time

The rule of thumb for a cash-game bankroll is to never have more than 5% of your entire roll in play at one time. This means a 20 buy-in minimum for single-table cash games, and more for multi-tabling.

If you really want to be robust, drop that number as low as 1% or 2%. Some of the most profitable and serious online grinders play with rolls 10x that.

In a tournament setting, you typically want over 100 buy-ins to the tournaments you want to play. So if you're playing \$5+50¢ tournaments, you want \$550 as your roll. This almost ensures that (as long as you don't suck) you'll never go bust.

3. Building Your Poker Bankroll is Slow, Not a Race

Yes, the stories you've heard from your poker buddies are true. There are some people who deposited \$100 online and within a couple of years had \$1m+ bankrolls and were playing some of the highest-stakes available. Back in the early days of the online poker boom (2004-2006), this might have been a semi-common story. But nowadays, this isn't the norm and isn't likely to happen to you.

Most players never even advance past micro-stakes. But there are ways you can build a nice, profitable poker bankroll over time with solid practice and good money management skills.

4. Don't Obsess Over Your Poker Balance

If you're following the above tips and likely recording your poker bankroll spreadsheet, don't monitor it constantly. When you're on an upswing, every time you check your balance you feel good. But it only takes one beat to make that number go down. And if you're still checking your balance, seeing that smaller number will make you feel bad.

This can lead to you "chasing your losses." You're going to start forcing your play to get back to where you think you should be. If you're watching your balance you'll fall into the depression of "a week's work lost" or "It will take me a week to get back what I just lost in an hour." The only way to get it back fast is to jump limits and take a shot at a big score. This breaks rule #1 and is the first step to going broke.

5. Treat Your Poker Game Seriously

When you're playing online poker for real money, every session, pot, and decision matters. Even the smallest of mistakes costs you money. The more money you lose from mistakes, the harder it becomes to generate profit and keep from going broke.

Limit distractions: Honestly assess your ability to multi-task and set yourself up to play in an optimal poker environment. Also pay attention to anything that's on your mind that's affecting your play, or enhanced states while playing like drugs and booze.

Don't play bored or tired: If you play for fun, that's fine, but if your goal is making money, don't play if you legitimately don't feel like it. Because this causes you to make dumb moves just for action and excitement.

Fix Your Tilt: A bad beat can drive even the most measured player into a frenzy of ridiculous bets, raises, and calls. It's time to get up for a breather or do something else. feeling good, you're not going to be playing your best poker.

Read more: <https://www.pokerlistings.com/poker-strategies/bankroll-management>

Psychology of Poker

All the decisions we make are not purely random but are deeply rooted in our psyche and are dictated by past experiences and our state of mind. Whether we are angry, happy or sad, it all comes down to how neural connections and we can – and

should – explore our psyche to better understand what is going on. This can help us understand how decisions are made – by us and others – and help us understand how and why certain scenarios play out the way they do.

The applications for this are broad and not only will it help you in your everyday life, but it can also vastly improve certain aspects, like your Poker game. So, let's take a deep dive into the world of psychology and how it can be useful to you.

Read more: <https://www.pokerlistings.com/poker-strategies/psychology>

When to Stop?

Playing Poker is fun, and we all love to play our favorite game as much as possible. But when is it too much? When does the fun start becoming work? Or when might it even be dangerous? Today we will have a look at different scenarios within your poker journey and when it's time to turn off your computer or put down your deck of cards and just chill out.

Stick To Your Budget Plan

This is a simple but very important rule. You probably see this in every other article, but that is because it's the most important rule. If you decided to play for 20€ a week, do it! If you go bust on Monday, well tough luck. Then next time make sure to quit when you're already down 5€ and live to play another day.

Again, even if you can afford it, there is an important plan to it: Spending more on a bad day will hurt your bottom line. You might have a day when you are up 20€ after 2 hours, effectively doubling your money. In that case, cash out, rebuy for 5€ or 10€ and see where it goes from there. If you lose that money, you're still up a lot and take the winning day.

But there WILL be days when you lose your 20€ in a single session – maybe you're making bad decisions, maybe you're not reading your opponents the right way or maybe you just have some bad luck that day. That is somewhat likely to make you tilt. Firing in another 20€ just to make up for the loss will likely not improve your odds of winning.

Get up, do something else, come back later of the next day when you're feeling better and relaxed.

Manage Your Stoploss

The stoploss is a term that comes from trading (usually stocks, crypto or Forex), something that draws a lot of parallels to Poker. A stoploss is a point where you sell your position at a loss to not lose more on a trade. Something that some people may not know is you can move your stoploss into profit if you are in a winning trade. A quick example: You bought a stock for 5€ per share and now the price went up to 15€ per share. You can move your stoploss up to 10€ per share. This means, that price has the chance to go higher and give you more profits, but if it reverses and goes back down, you are still guaranteed to have the 5€ profit per share.

You should always manage your profits in Poker the same way. If you feel like you are having a great run, cash out some money and go back. Let's say you made 200€ that day, which in this case is your target, but you feel like you're on a roll: Cash out 150€. If you are right and you are just incredible that day, you should still be able to make a good profit with the remaining money, right?

But imagine being up 200€ and just blowing it on some dumb overconfident plays. You would be kicking yourself for the rest of the day, possibly the week. It is important to keep your bottom line in the black. Making a consistent profit is more important than having one good day – at least in the long run.

And if you hit your stoploss: Stop.

Read more: <https://www.pokerlistings.com/poker-strategies/psychology/when-to-stop>

Tilt

In Poker, tilt describes a state of mental unclarity, where someone's judgement is impaired, which leads them to make suboptimal decisions. The cause of this can be anger, fear or just frustration, be it because of an unlucky occurrence, a run of bad luck in general or maybe even something that doesn't have anything to do with the game at all.

Tilt can be extremely detrimental to a poker player's performance and overall success, for several reasons:

1. Tilt can cause players to make impulsive and irrational decisions, such as going all-in with a marginal hand or calling a bet with an inferior poker hand. These decisions can be costly and result in significant losses.

2. Tilt can lead to a lack of focus and concentration, as players may become distracted and preoccupied by negative thoughts and emotions. This can lead to mistakes and missed opportunities at the table.
3. Tilt can result in a lack of discipline and control, as players may become careless and take unnecessary risks. This can lead to a significant erosion of a player's bankroll over time.
4. Tilt can impact a player's mental and emotional well-being. It can lead to feelings of frustration, anger, and disappointment, which can be harmful to overall mental health and happiness.
5. Tilt can be contagious and have a negative impact on other players at the table. If one player is on tilt, it can create a negative atmosphere and disrupt the dynamic of the game.
6. Tilt can be costly in terms of time and money. A player on tilt may spend more time at the tables, trying to recoup losses, and may end up losing even more money as a result.
7. Tilt can lead to a lack of enjoyment in the game. When on tilt, players may not be able to fully appreciate and enjoy the game, which can take the fun out of playing poker.

In short, tilt is a dangerous and destructive state for poker players to be in, as it can lead to poor decision-making, lack of focus and discipline, negative emotional states, and overall decreased enjoyment of the game. It is important for players to recognize when they are on tilt and to take steps to prevent it from happening or to manage it when it does occur. How you play poker is not just about knowing strategy it also demands calm zen-like mental state.

How Do You Know When You're on Tilt?

It is important for players to be able to identify when they are on tilt, so that they can take steps to prevent it from affecting their game. Here are some signs to watch out for that may indicate that you are on tilt:

1. Irrational or impulsive decisions: If you find yourself making decisions that you wouldn't normally make, such as going all-in with a marginal hand or calling a bet with an inferior hand, it may be a sign that you are on tilt.
2. Lack of focus and concentration: When on tilt, players may become easily distracted and unable to concentrate on the game. This can lead to missed opportunities and mistakes at the table.
3. Loss of discipline and control: Tilt can lead to a lack of discipline and control, as players may become careless and take unnecessary risks. This can result in significant losses and erosion of a player's bankroll.
4. Negative emotions: Players on tilt may experience negative emotions such as frustration, anger, and disappointment. These emotions can be a sign that you are not in a mental state to make good decisions at the table.
5. Inconsistency in play: Tilt can lead to inconsistency in a player's game, as players may deviate from their normal strategy and make inconsistent decisions.
6. Increased time at the tables: Players on tilt may spend more time at the tables, trying to recoup losses, which can lead to even more losses over time.
7. Lack of enjoyment in the game: When on tilt, players may not be able to fully enjoy and appreciate the game, which can take the fun out of playing poker.

To identify tilt, it is important to pay attention to your thoughts, emotions, and behaviors while playing poker. If you notice any of the above signs, it may be a sign that you are on tilt and should take steps to prevent it from affecting your game.

How to "Untilt" Yourself

If you catch yourself playing on tilt, the most important thing is to take a step back.

Take a deep breath and get up, take a walk, clear your head. Calmed down a little? Good, then let's move on.

It is crucial that you understand where your tilt is coming from.

Review Your Game

It's common for players to realize they are on tilt after starting to lose money. In such instances, it's crucial to carefully review the decisions you made that led to these losses:

- Did you adhere to your established strategy?
- Were your reads on your opponents accurate?

- Did you accurately assess the risks involved?

If you identify issues in any of these areas, it's wise to take a break. Reevaluate your strategy and your approach to bankroll management, and consider your mental state. Remember, no one starts as a professional; developing expertise in poker requires time and experience. If you find yourself struggling, consider pausing your play for the day. Perhaps spend some time reading our guides on improving your skills, and return to the game with a fresh perspective tomorrow.

Read more: <https://www.pokerlistings.com/poker-strategies/psychology/tilt>

Advanced Poker Strategy

👉 This gaming strategy is designed for advanced players. It serves as a template that you can either follow directly or use as a foundation to develop your own strategy. While we cannot guarantee success in any specific hand, this strategy has been tested by numerous low limit players over years of gameplay. We recommend studying the proposed strategy and adapting it to fit your own playing style and the skill level of your opponents at the chosen gaming limit.

This chart system was specifically created for low-limit players (NL2-NL10) with the aim of helping them play correct poker and start winning at the very beginning of their poker careers, when they still lack extensive knowledge of the game.

The actions listed in the charts are "standard" for the given situations, and it is advisable to follow the charts initially – deviating from the recommended decisions will generally only lead to greater losses and hinder your development as a poker player, as well as your progress up the stakes ladder.

Remember, when starting your poker journey, your main task is not to outplay your opponents, but solely to steadily build up your starting capital and master the basic principles of poker – most of your opponents will be giving you their money anyway, so there is no need for sophisticated tactics.

Preflop

Adhering to the suggested list of starting hands is mandatory for low limits. If your hand is not on the list, you must fold it immediately preflop, rather than looking for an excuse to call or raise. Strictly following the suggested lists of starting hands will help you avoid making tough decisions on later streets, where you are most likely to lose money.

Bet Sizes

The standard raise size, if all opponents before you have folded, is 3.5 big blinds. If one or more players before you have limped into the pot (i.e., posted a single big blind), and you decide to raise, your raise should be 3 big blinds plus one additional big blind for each player who has limped.

If you are planning to make a three-bet, in position, it should be three times the size of your opponent's initial raise (typically 10-11 big blinds); out of position, it should be four times (typically 12-15 big blinds).

If you need to make a four-bet, its size should around be 27 big blinds.

Three-Bets

Under no circumstances should you spend money calling an opponent's three-bet with just any hand, hoping for a favorable flop—this is a sure path to significant losses.

You should only call a three-bet with the following hands when in position on the CO (cutoff), BTN (button), or SB (small blind): JJ, TT, AQ.

If your opponent's stack is down to 30-40 big blinds or less, it's acceptable to make a three-bet and take an all-in from such an opponent with hands ranging from 99-AA, AQ, to AK.

All-In Preflop

It's important to remember the hands with which it's permissible to go all-in preflop. Regardless of your position, these hands are: AA, KK, QQ.

With these hands, in response to an opponent's three-bet, you should make a four-bet (of the size mentioned earlier) and be prepared to call an all-in.

If you are the one who has made the three-bet preflop and your opponent counters with a four-bet, only with these hands is it advisable to go all-in preflop in response.

Remember that with the hand AK, you should not go all-in preflop—except in cases where your opponent's stack is down to 30-40 big blinds or less.

Preflop Chart:

Hands	Opponents' Actions	UTG	UTG+1	CO	BTN	SB	BB
Premium Hands							
AA, KK, QQ, AK	Everyone folded	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise
Limp (one limper)	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	
One raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	
One raise & one call	Re-raise (3bet)	Re-raise (3bet)	Re-raise (3bet)	Re-raise (3bet)	Re-raise (3bet)	Call, AK - Fold	
Strong Suited Broadways							
AQ, AJ, KQ	Everyone folded	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise
Limp (one limper)	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	
One raise	Call	Call	Call	Call	Call	Call	
One raise & one call	Call	Call	Call	Call	Call	Call	
Re-raise (3bet)	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	
Weak Suited Broadways							
AT, KT, QJ	Everyone folded	Fold	Fold	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise
Limp (one limper)	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	
One raise	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	
One raise & one call	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	
Re-raise (3bet)	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	
Strong Pocket Pairs							
88 - JJ	Everyone folded	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise
Limp (one limper)	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	
One raise	Call	Call	Call	Call	Call	Call	
One raise & one call	Call	Call	Call	Call	Call	Call	

Hands	Opponents' Actions	UTG	UTG+1	CO	BTN	SB	BB
Re-raise (3bet)	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	
Weak Pocket Pairs							
22 - 77	Everyone folded	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise
Limp (one limper)	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	Raise	
One raise	Call	Call	Call	Call	Call	Call	
One raise & one call	Call	Call	Call	Call	Call	Call	
Re-raise (3bet)	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	
Older Suited Connectors							
A9s - A2s, K9s, Q9s, J9s, K8s, Q8s, J8s	Everyone folded	Fold	Fold	Raise	Raise	Raise	Check
Limp (one limper)	Fold	Fold	Raise	Raise	Raise	Check	
One raise	Fold	Fold	Call	Call	Call	Check	
One raise & one call	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	
Re-raise (3bet)	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	
Older Offsuit Connectors							
KT, QT, JT	Everyone folded	Fold	Fold	Raise	Raise	Raise	Check
Limp (one limper)	Fold	Fold	Raise	Raise	Raise	Check	
One raise	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	
One raise & one call	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	
Re-raise (3bet)	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	
Suited Connectors							
T9s, T8s, 98s, 87s, 86s, 76s, 75s, 65s	Everyone folded	Fold	Fold	Raise	Raise	Raise	Check
Limp (one limper)	Fold	Fold	Call	Call	Call	Check	
One raise	Fold	Fold	Call	Call	Call	Check	
One raise & one call	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	
Re-raise (3bet)	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	

Flop

Continuation Bet Size

The size of the continuation bet should be 2/3 of the pot on uncoordinated boards, such as A 7 2, and 4/5 of the pot on

coordinated flops like J T 8, which offer numerous draws possible on such a flop, giving worse pot odds.

If you are playing against an opponent who has about 2 to 3 times the pot size left after your bet on the flop, do not make a continuation bet without a strong hand that you would be willing to accept an all-in from your opponent (top pair with a good kicker or better, or a medium draw or better).

Bet Raise Size

Never make your bets too small or too large – all your bets should be uniform in size, and the size of your raises and re-raises should be 3-3.5 times the opponent's bet or raise. Smaller raises give your opponents excellent pot odds, thus causing them to make fewer mistakes.

Playing Against an Opponent's Check

If you are the pre-flop caller in a pot with just you and another player, and your opponent checks on the flop, refusing to bet, you must make a bet of 2/3 of the pot on any flop with any hand when you are in position.

Flop Classification

Good Flops:

This category includes all paired flops, as well as flops where the cards are not in sequential order. Typically, a good flop consists of one or two high cards (A, K, Q, or J) along with one or two lower cards. The number of cards of the same suit is not considered.

- Examples of good flops: A82, TT5, 332, AA6, Q86, T54, AT3, K72, KQ2, KT7, Q92, KKQ, AJ7, J85, A79
- If there are no high cards on the flop and all three low cards are not consecutive, such a board can also be considered good. There are no "Pair plus straight-draw" hands on these boards.
- Examples: 853, 832, 973, T94, T84

Bad Flops:

All three cards are sequential, or they are close to each other in rank (within 1-2 cards). Such boards always have many "Pair plus straight-draw" hands.

- Examples: 89T, 847, J87, Q89, 96T, 568, KJ9, JT8, KJQ, KT9
- More examples if sequence matters and you do not hold an Ace: Q J 8, 6 4 2, 8 6 4, A K Q, 2 3 4

This simplified classification helps in assessing the nature of the flop quickly and making strategic decisions based on the likelihood of opponents holding strong hands.

Hand Classification

Air - A hand with no matches or draws, having no value.

- Example: A T on a board of 3 3 2 or J 8 5
- Example: K T on a board of 5 6 8 or 2 3 4

Top Pair Weak Kicker (TPWK) - Top pair with a weak or medium kicker (any card below T).

Top Pair Good Kicker (TPGK) - Top pair with a good kicker (one of the high cards – K, Q, J, or T).

Top Pair Top Kicker (TPTK) - Top pair with the highest possible kicker.

Weak Draws - Draw hands with few outs to improve, and many "dirty outs."

- Examples: 7 8 on a board of T, A 9 on a board of 6, A T on a board of K, Q J on a board of 9, A 9 on a board of 6, A 6 on a board of K
- Gutshot examples: J 2, 7 T Q 2, T 2 7, 8 4 J
 - Gutshot on a "bad" flop
 - Gutshot with one overcard
 - Open-ended straight draw on a monotone flop
 - Open-ended straight draw on a "bad" flop
 - Flush draw with one card (up to Q) on a monotone flop

Medium Draws - Draw hands with sufficient outs to improve, few of which are "dirty," but there is a chance that if the draw completes, it might not be the best hand.

- Examples: T 9 on a board of A 6, 7 9 on a board of 9 Q, 8 A on a board of 2 5, 6 8 on a board of J J, K 6 on a board of K, K 9 on a board of J 9, A 6 on a board of T, A T on a board of K
- Mixed draws like: Pair plus open-ended straight draw, Two overcards plus a gutshot
- Gutshot plus flush draw on a monotone flop
- Nut flush draw without overcards
- Overpair plus flush draw on a monotone board
- Overpair plus straight draw on a "bad" flop
- Nut flush draw with one overcard on a "good" flop
- Nut flush draw with two overcards on a "bad" flop
- Flush draw with one high card (A, K, Q) on a monotone flop

Strong Draws - Draw hands with ten or more outs to improve, and a high likelihood that if the draw completes, you will have the best hand.

- Examples: T 9 on a board of J 2, A J on a board of Q T, A 3 on a board of 7 9, A 7 on a board of A K
 - Straight-flush draw
 - Straight draw plus flush draw
 - Nut flush draw plus two overcards on a "good" flop
 - Pair plus nut flush draw
 - Pair plus a weak or medium flush draw
 - Top pair plus nut flush draw on a monotone flop

Two Pair – Ready hands formed by pairing two of your pocket cards with cards on the board.

- Example: T 9 on a board of A T 9
- Example: 6 7 on a board of 5 6 7

Types of Draws

In the explanations accompanying the tables, you might have noticed terms like "nut draw" or "nut flush draw." These terms are used as follows: if your draw hand gives you a chance to improve to the strongest combination possible for that category, it can confidently be called a "nut draw."

Example: 9 T on a board of 2 7 8 (this open-ended straight draw is a nut draw because if a J or 6 comes on the turn, your straight will be the highest possible on the board - all other possible straights will lose to yours; meanwhile, a draw like 5 6 is close to a nut because any 4 on the turn gives you the nut straight, though a 9 could give a higher straight to a J T hand).

Example: K J on a board of 6 7 A (this flush draw is a nut draw because if any club comes on the turn, your flush will be the highest possible on the board - it will include the highest card possible, K, since A is already on the flop).

Example: A T on a board of 6 7 2 (this flush draw is a nut draw because if any club comes on the turn, your flush will be the highest possible on the board - it will include the highest card possible, A; meanwhile, a flush draw with Q T on this board would not be a nut).

This classification also applies to completed hands like "Straight" and "Flush." Thus, if you had a nut straight draw or flush draw that completed on a subsequent street, you could consider it a nut straight or flush.

Note: A Q on a board of 8 9 T J (this straight can be considered nut because there are possible lower straights like 7 6 or 8 7 - these are not nut straights and are very weak hands; meanwhile, the best straight on this board would be K Q).

Note: 9 T on a board of 2 7 8 6 (this is a nut straight because there is no higher straight possible on the board; meanwhile, a straight like 4 5, though not nut, would be a very strong hand on a board that is three cards to a straight, which could be considered a nut; a straight like 9 5 can be considered close to nut because there are possible lower straights).

Table: Play on the Flop (Pre-flop Raiser / With Initiative)

Flop Type / Hand	Good Flop - Heads-Up Pot	Good Flop - Multiway Pot	Good Flop - In Response to a Raise	Bad Flop - Heads-Up Pot	Bad Flop - Multiway Pot	Bad Flop - In Response to a Raise
Air	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold (Check)	Fold (Check)	Fold (Check)
Weak Draw	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold (Check)	Fold (Check)	Fold (Check)
Medium Draw	Fold	Fold	Fold	C-Bet	C-Bet	C-Bet
Strong Draw	C-Bet	C-Bet	Raise (All-in)	Fold (Check)	Fold (Check)	C-Bet
Third Pair and Worse	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold (Check)	Fold (Check)	Fold
Second Pair	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold (Check)	Fold (Check)	C-Bet
TPWK (Top Pair Weak Kicker)	C-Bet	C-Bet	Fold / Raise	C-Bet	C-Bet	C-Bet
TPGK (Top Pair Good Kicker)	C-Bet	C-Bet	Raise / Fold	C-Bet	C-Bet	Fold / Raise
TPTK (Top Pair Top Kicker)	C-Bet	C-Bet	Raise / Fold	C-Bet	C-Bet	Fold / Raise
Overpair	C-Bet	C-Bet	Raise (All-in)	C-Bet	C-Bet	Raise (All-in)
Two Pairs	C-Bet	C-Bet	Raise (All-in)	C-Bet	C-Bet	Raise (All-in)
Set and Better	C-Bet	C-Bet	Raise (All-in)	C-Bet	C-Bet	Raise (All-in)

Table: Play on the Flop (Pre-flop Caller / Without Initiative)

Hand Types / Actions	Good Flop - In Position	Good Flop - Out of Position	Bad Flop - In Position	Bad Flop - Out of Position	Multiway Pot - Good Flop	Multiway Pot - Bad Flop
Air	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold
Weak Draw	Fold	Fold / Raise	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold
Medium Draw	Call	Raise / Call	Call	Call	Call	Call
Strong Draw	Raise (All-in)	Raise (All-in)	Raise (All-in)	Raise (All-in)	Raise (All-in)	Raise (All-in)
Third Pair and Worse	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold
Second Pair	Call	Call	Fold	Fold	Fold	Fold
TPWK	Call	Call	Call	Call	Fold	Fold
TPGK	Call	Call	Call	Call	Fold	Fold
TPTK	Call	Call	Call	Call	Fold	Fold
Overpair	Call	Raise / Call	Call	Call	Fold	Fold
Two Pairs	Call	Raise / Call	Call	Call	Fold	Fold
Set and Better	Raise (All-in)	Raise (All-in)	Raise (All-in)	Raise (All-in)	Fold	Fold

Turn

Continuation Bet Size

The size of the continuation bet on the turn should be 2/3 of the pot. However, if you are playing against an opponent whose stack is about twice the size of the pot before your bet, do not make a continuation bet without a strong hand that you would be willing to face an all-in with (such as top pair with a good kicker or better, or a strong draw).

Bet Raise Size

Never make your bets and raises too small or too large – all your bets should be consistent in size, and your raises and re-raises should be 3-3.5 times the size of the bet or raise of your opponent. Smaller raises give your opponents excellent pot odds, thus causing them to make fewer mistakes.

After making a raise on the turn, you should go all-in (either calling an all-in from your opponent or moving all-in in response to their re-raise).

Playing Against a Raise on the Turn

If you make a bet on the turn and receive a raise, you should fold all hands except for the ones listed below. You should ALWAYS fold your overpairs and top pairs on the turn in response to an opponent's raise.

With a "Strong Draw" (see classification below), against a raise, it is advisable to simply call and see the river in hopes of hitting your draw. The exception is on boards with three suited cards - here, you should fold your "Strong Draw."

If you have a hand of "Top Two Pair or Better," you should go all-in in response to an opponent's raise.

You should fold the following hands in response to an opponent's raise:

- Weak flushes on boards with four suited cards (a weak flush here would be any flush not on K or A)
- Weak straights on boards with four cards to a straight (here, any non-nut or weak straight would be considered weak).
- Any straights when the third or fourth card to a flush arrives on the turn.
- Any set or two pairs on a board with three or four cards to a flush.

If the opponent's stack is so small that it is only 1.5-2 times the size of the pot on the turn before your bet, it is permissible to call an all-in from your opponent or to go all-in yourself with hands like "Top Pair Good Kicker" and "Strong Draw" or better, unless the fourth card to a flush or straight arrives on the turn.

Hand Classification

Air – A hand with no matches or draws, having no value. Examples: AT on a board of 3329 or J85; KT on a board of 5682 or 234A.

Straight Draw – A hand missing one card to complete a straight. Examples: 78 on a board of T; A9 on a board of 6; 65 on a board of A. (Gutshot examples on a "bad" flop and open-ended straight draws)

Flush Draw – A hand missing one card to complete a flush. Examples:

- Strong Flush Draw: KJ on a board of 6A27; AJ on a board of Q259.
- Weak Flush Draw: TJ on a board of A225; A6 on a board of KJ29.

Pair + Straight Draw – A hand missing one card to a straight, also having a pair. Examples: 89 on a board of 9T62 (pair plus gutshot); 76 on a board of 754A (pair plus open-ended straight draw).

Pair + Flush Draw – A hand missing one card to a flush, also having a pair. Examples: T7 on a board of AT25 (pair plus a weak or medium flush draw); A6 on a board of 32JA (pair plus a strong flush draw).

Strong Draws – Draws that include a combination of straight and flush draws, potentially with a pair. These are strong on the turn but are not considered strong on monotone boards or if involving nut flush draws with overcards: Examples: T9 on a board of J268; A2 on a board of Q357; JT on a board of 379A; 78 on a board of 389A. (Street-flush draws and straight draws plus flush draws)

Top Pair Weak Kicker (TPWK) – Top pair with a weak or medium kicker (below T).

Top Pair Good Kicker (TPGK) – Top pair with a good kicker (T, J, Q, K).

Top Pair Top Kicker (TPTK) – Top pair with the best possible kicker.

Lower Two Pair – Hands that are made by pairing two lower or middle cards on the board with your pocket cards. Examples: T9 on a board of TAK9; 65 on a board of 567K. Note: A hand like 88 on a board of JJ47 should be played as "second pair and worse," whereas AA on the same board is considered a standard overpair.

Two Pairs, Set – Hands formed by pairing two higher (or a high and a middle, high and low) cards on the board with your pocket cards (Two Pairs), or by a card appearing on the board that gives you three of a kind (Set). Examples:

- A6 on a board of TKA6 (two pairs, high and low paired)
- A7 on a board of JA7K (two pairs, high and middle paired)
- K2 on a board of 725 (set)
- A5 on a board of A25 (set, also known as trips)

Weak Flush – Any flush where the highest card is below a queen.

Strong Flush and Better – Any flush where the high card is a king or ace, as well as any hand ranking higher than a flush (full house, four of a kind, straight flush, etc.).

Turn Situation Classification

Third Card to a Flush – The board now shows:

Example: 3♥9♥A♥

Four Cards to a Flush – The board now shows:

Example: 3♥9♥A♥8♥

Four Cards to a Straight – The board now shows:

Example: 5♣6♣7♣8♣

Additional Outs – You gain extra outs on the turn, such as a pair added to your straight or flush draw, or any draw (straight or flush) added to your pair, or your air hand gains some draw.

Example: AT on a board of 9287 (you had a flush draw on the flop, but the turn also gave you a straight draw, turning your hand into a strong draw on the turn)

Example: TT on a board of 928T (you had a flush draw on the flop, but the turn gave you a pair, turning your hand into a strong draw on the turn)

Example: JT on a board of AQ8J (you had a straight draw on the flop, but the turn gave you a pair, turning your hand into a pair plus a straight draw)

Opponent's Range Strengthens – Typically, your opponent's range strengthens when the second or third highest card pairs on the flop (since they might have called your bet on the flop with second or third pair), or with the arrival of cards likely giving them a range of pair plus draw hands (often applies to situations when the third card to a straight arrives on the turn).

Example: On a board of 9287 or 65TJ (opponent's range strengthens as many of their hands now have two pairs/set, or a pair plus straight draw, or a complete straight: 75, 76, 87, 97, T7, T8, T9, 77, 66, JT, 65)

Example: On a board of Q567 (opponent's range strengthens as many of their hands now have two pairs/set, or a pair plus straight draw, or a complete straight: 34, 54, 64, 57, 67, 78, 89, 77, 88, 99)

Example: On a board of J727 (opponent's range strengthens as many of their hands either won't believe another bet from you, or have a set: 75, 76, 78, 79, 7T, A7)

Example: KT on a board of Q8K9 (opponent's range strengthens as many of their hands now have a pair plus a straight draw: QT, J9, 8J, 8T, 9T, etc.)

Paired High Card – The highest card on the flop pairs on the turn.

Example: If the flop was KT and the turn is another K.

Scary Card – Refers to when a card such as A, K, Q, or J, which is higher than the highest card on the flop, lands on the turn. This classification applies only if the turn brings a scary card that doesn't lead to four cards to a straight or flush, doesn't add three cards to a flush, and doesn't strengthen the opponent's range.

Example: If the flop was bad for a continuation bet, a scary card on the turn should be treated as a "neutral card" and act accordingly.

Example: On a board of J26A, 35K, or 679A (treated as a neutral card when the scary card lands)

In the "Scary Card" row, the strength of hands on the turn, mentioned in the top row (only for hands with a single pair), should be taken from their strength on the flop (unless the turn brought a "Top Pair with the arrival of a scary card").

Example: KK, since K (Top Pair Good Kicker)

Example: AT on a board with 3 (Top Pair Top Kicker)

Example: AK on a board with 3 (Top Pair Top Kicker)

Table: Play on the Turn (With Initiative, With Position)

Hand Type / Scenario	Additional Outs	Neutral Card	Opponent's Range Strengthened	Paired High Card	Scary Card
Air	Check/Bet	Check	Check	Check	Bet
Straight Draw	Bet/Check	Bet/Check	Check	Check	Bet
Flush Draw	Bet/Check	Bet/Check	Check	Bet	Bet
Pair + Straight Draw	Bet	Bet/Check	Bet/Check	Check	Bet
Pair + Flush Draw	Bet	Bet	Bet/Check	Check	Bet
Strong Draw	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet
Second Pair or Worse	Bet	Bet	Check	Bet	Bet
TPWK (Top Pair Weak Kicker)	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet
TPTK (Top Pair Top Kicker)	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet
Overpair	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet
Two Pairs	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet
Set	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet
Straight	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet
Weak Flush	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet
Strong Flush and Better	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet

Table: Play on the Turn (With Initiative, Without Position)

Hand Type / Scenario	Additional Outs	Neutral Card	Opponent's Range Strengthened	Paired High Card	Scary Card
Air	Bet / Check	Bet / Check	Check	Check	Bet
Straight-Draw	Bet / Check	Bet / Check	Check	Check	Bet
Flush-Draw	Bet / Check	Bet / Check	Check	Check	Bet
Pair + Straight-Draw	Bet / Check	Bet / Check	Bet / Check	Bet / Check	Bet
Pair + Flush-Draw	Bet / Check	Bet / Check	Bet / Check	Bet / Check	Bet
Strong Draw	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet
Second Pair or Worse	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet
TPWK (Top Pair Weak Kicker)	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet
TPGK (Top Pair Good Kicker)	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet
TPTK (Top Pair Top Kicker)	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet
Overpair, Weaker Two Pairs	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet

Hand Type / Scenario	Additional Outs	Neutral Card	Opponent's Range Strengthened	Paired High Card	Scary Card
Straight	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet
Weak Flush	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet
Strong Flush and Better	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet

This table provides a clearer, vertical format where each type of hand is matched against different game scenarios, helping players determine their strategy based on the hand the

River

If you have followed all the recommendations precisely on the flop and turn, then playing on the river should not be difficult for you. By this point, you should only be left with hands where all decisions are quite simple and straightforward.

Continuation Bet Size

The size of the continuation bet on the river should be 2/3 of the pot.

Bet Raise Size

Never make bets and raises too small or too large – all your bets should be consistent in size, and your raises and re-raises should be 3-3.5 times the size of the bet or raise of your opponent. Smaller raises give your opponents excellent pot odds, thus forcing them to make fewer mistakes.

After you have raised an opponent's bet on the river, you should go all-in (either call their all-in or go all-in in response to their re-raise).

Playing Against a Raise on the River

If you bet on the river and receive a raise, you should fold all hands except for top two pairs and better. Always fold your overpairs and top pairs on the river in response to an opponent's raise.

If you hold a combination of "Top Two Pairs and Better," you should go all-in in response to an opponent's raise.

Exceptions are made for weak flushes on boards with four cards to a flush (a weak flush here would be any flush not involving a King or an Ace), as well as weak straights on boards with four cards to a straight (here, any non-nut straight would be considered weak).

Also, you should not go all-in with sets and two pairs on boards with three or four cards to a flush. Moreover, any straight on a board with three or four cards to a flush should be folded.

River Situation Classification

Three Cards to a Flush – This refers to three flush cards appearing either on the turn or the river, applicable only in situations where two flush cards were already on the flop.

Example: A board of KQ745 can be classified as "Three Cards to a Flush" because two flush cards were already on the flop.

If two flush cards were on the turn and a third appeared on the river, this situation can be classified as "Opponent's Range Strengthened," and you should play accordingly.

Four Cards to a Flush – This refers to four flush cards appearing either on the turn or the river.

Four Cards to a Straight – This refers to four straight cards appearing either on the turn or the river.

Ace or King on the River – An Ace or King appears on the river, and it does not become the third (or fourth) card to a flush, the fourth card to a straight, nor does it strengthen the opponent's range. In this case, refer to the appropriate river situations.

Hand Classification

The same hand classification used on the turn applies on the river. However, unlike the "Scary Card" scenario on the turn where the strength of your hand was based on its strength on the flop, on the river, all hands are determined by their strength on the river.

Table: Play on the River (With Initiative, With Position)

Hand Type / Scenario	Air	Second Pair or Worse	TPWK	TPTK	Overpair, Weaker Two Pairs	Straight	Weak Flush
Paired High Card on the Flop	Check	Check	Check	Check	Check	Check	Check
Ace or King on the River	Bet	Check	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet
Neutral Card	Check/Bet	Check	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet
Opponent's Range Strengthened	Check	Check	Check	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet

Table: Play on the River (With Initiative, Without Position)

Hand Type / Scenario	Air	Second Pair or Worse	TPWK	TPTK	Overpair, Weaker Two Pairs	Straight	Weak Flush
Paired High Card on the Flop	Check	Check	Check	Check	Check	Check	Check
Ace or King on the River	Bet	Check	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet
Neutral Card	Check / Bet	Check	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet
Opponent's Range Strengthened	Check	Check	Check	Bet	Bet	Bet	Bet

Conclusion

Thank you for investing your time in this collection of educational articles. We hope that the knowledge you've gained here empowers you on your journey through the fascinating world of poker. Whether you are just starting out or looking to refine your strategies, the insights shared in these pages are designed to enhance your understanding of the game and assist you in developing your skills further.

As you apply these strategies and insights, we hope they lead you to greater successes at the poker tables. Remember, the journey of mastering poker is continual, and there is always more to learn and areas to improve.

For those eager to dive deeper and stay updated with the latest trends and techniques in poker, we highly recommend visiting PokerListings.com. This resource is updated daily with interesting articles and invaluable resources that cater to players at all levels. It's an excellent next step for anyone committed to improving their poker game.

Once again, thank you for your dedication to learning, and we wish you all the best in your future games. May the odds be ever in your favor, and may each hand played bring you closer to the mastery you seek.