



HOW TO PLAY POKER

Playing Terms

Bankroll: The amount of chips that you have. It represents your bankroll for a particular game, for the day, or for any definite period.

Big Blind: The larger of the two forced bets that kicks off a round of betting. Required from the player two spots to the left of the dealer.

Big Slick: Having an ace and a king as your hole cards. This is a very strong starting hand.

Bottom Pair: A pair that uses the lowest value card on the table.

Bullets: Pair of aces as hole cards.

Button: This represents the dealer. The dealer button rotates one player after each hand.

Buy-In: The amount you must cash into chips to join a game.

Check-Raise: To check the first time the bet comes to you, and then to raise the next time it comes to you, all within a single betting round.

Connectors: Any two cards in succession (i.e. a ten and a Jack). A related term, called "suited connectors" refers to any two cards in succession that are of the same suit.

Cowboys: Pair of kings as your hole cards.

Dominated Hand: A hand that looks good to a novice player, but is known to typically lose to another hand that has a high likelihood of being played (i.e. a king and a 4 will often lose to another king with a higher kicker or a stronger hand all together).

Double Up: Going all in on a hand during a no-limit game and winning, which doubles your bankroll.

Drawing Dead: A player that is in a pot hoping to make their hand with a draw, but doesn't realize that they can't win even with a draw.

Early Position: The first few places immediately to the left of the dealer. These players are at a disadvantage because they have to bet before the rest of the table on each betting round.

Flop: The first three community cards flipped over between the first and second betting round.

Hit: Drawing a card or cards that help your hand.

Hole Cards(s): The cards dealt face down to each player.

Late Position: The first few places immediately to the right

of the dealer. These players are at an advantage because they get to bet after seeing how the rest of the table bets.

Limp In: To call a bet before the flop with the intent of either seeing the flop cheaply, or hoping to check-raise a player that bets farther around the table.

No Limit: A game where a player may bet as many or all of the chips they have on the table on any given turn.

Kicker: The highest card in a hand that isn't being used to create a pair, three, or four of a kind. Often times, the kicker serves as a tie-breaker with equally good chance of winning.

Monster: A great hand that has a really good chance of winning.

Muck: The discard pile.

Nuts: A hand that can't be beat no matter what community cards come up next.

Outs: All the cards that can come on the draw to make a player's existing hand a winning hand.

Over the Top: When you re-raise another player's raise, you are said to be "Going over the top of him". In no limit games, if you throw all your bankroll in after another player's raise, you are going "All-in over the top".

Pot Odds: The amount of money in the pot compared to what you must put in to continue playing.

Quads: Four of a kind. The third strongest hand. It can only be beaten by a straight flush and a royal flush.

River: The fifth and final community card flipped over in the center of the table. Also referred to as "Fifth Street".

Short Stack: The player with the fewest chips at the table.

Small Blind: The smaller of the two forced bets that kicks the first round of betting in each hand. It is required from the player sitting immediately to the left of the dealer or dealer button

Structured Betting: A game where there are fixed amounts for bets and raises.

Table Stakes: A popular rule that states you can't add money to the bankroll you have on the table during a hand. You cannot be forced to fold by someone with a larger bankroll than you, and instead a side pot is created for bets exceeding your contribution. This

is a universal rule in casino poker.

Top Pair: A pair that uses the highest card on a flop.

Turn: The fourth community card flipped over. Also referred to as "Fourth Street".

How to Play Poker Hands (in order from best to worst)

• **Royal Flush:** A, K, Q, J and a 10 all from the same suit

• **Straight Flush:** Five cards in numerical sequence, all from the same suit

• **4 of a Kind:** 4 cards of the same value or number (one from each suit)

• **Full House:** Three of a kind and a pair

• **Flush:** 5 cards of the same suit. The flush with the higher top cards wins. If two flushes have the same top card, then the flush with the higher second-to-top cards wins, etc.

• **Straight:** 5 cards in numerical sequence, but not from the same suit

• **3 of a Kind:** 3 cards of the same value or number (one from each suit)

• **Two Pair:** 2 sets of 2 cards of the same face or number

• **One Pair:** 2 cards of same face or number

• **High Card:** The highest single card of all the hands

Object of the Game

The objective is to win money by capturing the pot, which contains bets made by players during the hand. A player wagers a bet in hopes that they have the best hand, or gives the impressions that they hold a strong hand and thus convinces the opponents to fold. Knowing how to read a hand that appears to be beaten is just as important as knowing when to bet. In most poker hands, a combination of five cards is the best hand.

Number of Players

Any number of players, typically 2 to 10, can play.

The Dealer

In all casino poker games, the dealer does not participate as a player. The dealer only deals the cards and ensures the games are run honestly and quickly. At home, you may rotate the deal to each player or elect one person to deal. You must also decide if the dealer can play.

The Deck

Use a standard 52-card deck, without jokers. In poker, the ace is the highest card and the 2 (deuce) is the lowest. However, the ace can be used as a low card

to form a straight 5, 4, 3, 2, A.

Poker Chips

To make the most of your game, nothing beats the feeling of playing with real poker chips. Chips are available in several patterns, styles and weights. Generally, chip colors follow a set of dollar values:

\$1 White
\$5 Red
\$25 Blue
\$100 Green
\$500 Black

The more players you have in a game, the more chips you will need to play. Below is a guideline to help you determine how many chips you will need to play:

3 to 4 players: 300 chips
5 to 6 players: 400 chips
7 to 8 players: 500 chips
9 to 10 players: 1000 chips

The Rules

Texas Hold'Em Rules:

- **Hole Cards:** Each player is dealt two cards face down
- **The Flop:** Three cards are dealt face down on the table
- **The Turn:** A fourth card is dealt face up on the table
- **The River:** A fifth card is dealt face up on the table

The five cards on the table are community cards. Your hand is formed by making the best poker hand you can by using any five out of the seven cards (5 community + 2 hole cards). All of the players have access to the community cards. When played for money, there is a round of betting after a round of cards is dealt (four rounds of betting in total).

Omaha Hold'Em Rules:

Similar to Texas Hold'Em, except the hands in Omaha are usually much better, since you get to choose from 9 cards total.

Hole Cards: Each player is dealt four cards face down

The Flop: Three cards are dealt face down on the table

The Turn: A fourth card is dealt face up on the table

The River: A fifth card is dealt face up on the table

The five cards on the table are community cards. Your hand is formed by making the best poker hand by using any five out of the seven cards (5 community + 2 hole cards). All of the players have access to the community cards. When played for money, there is a round

of betting after a round of cards is dealt (four rounds of betting in total).

5-Card Draw Rules

Each player is dealt five cards, face down. There is a round of betting. Then the players can discard up to five of their cards and dealt new ones from the deck. After the draw, there is another round of betting.

Some house rules vary in that you cannot draw more than four cards, and you can only draw four cards if you have an ace (and expose it). Also, some have a rule that to open on the first betting round, one must have a pair of jacks or better. If no one has jacks or better the hand is considered a misdeal.

7-Card Stud Rules

Played with 2–8 players. Generally played with a fixed-limit betting. After everyone antes up, five betting rounds begin.

- **Ante:** Preset amount put in the pot by each player prior to each hand being dealt. Different stake games have different antes. For example, a \$1 ante is common in a \$10–\$20 games (10% of the small blind), but a \$.25 ante is also common in a \$1–\$2 game (25% of the small blind). Sometimes the game is played without an ante.

- **Third Round:** After everyone antes, all players are dealt two cards, face down (hole cards) and one exposed card. The person with the lowest card is forced to bet half of the small bet. Players can then raise, call, or fold.

- **Fourth Round:** An exposed card is dealt to each player, followed by a round of betting. From fourth round on, the person with the best exposed hand begins the betting.

- **Fifth Round:** An exposed card is dealt to each player, followed by a round of betting. If the game is played in a fixed-limit format, this is where the big bet would be put in.

- **Sixth Round:** An exposed card is dealt to each player, followed by a round of betting.

- **Seventh Round:** Each player is dealt a final hole card, followed by a round of betting.

If the game has eight players and there aren't enough cards left in the deck to deal each player a final hole card, a card is placed on the board and is considered 'shared' by all the players (similar to a community card in hold'em).

Best poker hand wins (best 5-card hand of the 7 cards each player has).

Poker Dice Rules:

Played similar to standard poker, but instead of cards, the players use dice. To begin, five dice are rolled. Then, each player decides to either drop

out, stand pat, or re-roll as many dice as they choose. If the player does, in fact, choose to re-roll any of the dice, they double their ante.

The winner is the player with the best poker hand after all players have had a turn. Aces are high, outranking a six, except in a low straight (A, 2, 3, 4, 5).

Kickers do not apply in this game. For example, A, A, A, 6, 5 and A, A, A, 3, 2 would both score three aces. However, you may play with kickers, similar to a strict-rule poker game.

The "one tie, all tie" rule applies. If a player had dropped out prior to the tie being made, they cannot continue on in the game.

Some play that any number (but usually a two) can be used as a "wild" and then is equal to any other number of the player's choice.

Betting Basics

- **Bet:** You can put one bet into the pot. All the players must call that bet by putting in the same amount of money, or else they must fold.

- **Check:** You can choose not to place a bet. If no one bets, then the game continues and everyone is still in the hand. If someone else bets, you must match the bet or fold.

- **Fold:** You are out of the hand and cannot win any money. Any money you have put into the pot up to this point is lost.

- **Call:** Match bets made so far for this round of play.

- **Raise:** You put money into the pot equal to the amount bet so far, plus one bet. Now all the other players must call your raise or fold. They may also raise you back.

- **Showdown:** After all the cards have been dealt and all players have made/matched bets, cards are shown to determine the best hand.

- **Win By Default:** If everyone except one player folds, then that player gets all the money in the pot. He does not have to show his hand to the other players.

- **Reraise:** Someone raises you, but you feel that you have a very strong hand, and you want to make your opponent pay to stay in the hand. Then you can raise him back and force him to put in another bet or fold.

- **Check-Raise:** You check, your opponent bets, and you raise them. Now they call, and if your hand is as good as you think it is, you just won two bets from them. Check-raising is a powerful tool, but it can be dangerous, because your opponent might also check. Then you win no money from them. Or, they might have an even better hand than

you, and they might reraise you.

- **Check-And-Call:** If you have a decent hand, but you think there is a good chance your opponent might have a better one, you may wish to avoid a raise. In this case, you can check-and-call.

- **Blinds:** Each hand, one player at the table puts in a big blind and the player in front of him puts in a small blind. In most games, the small blind is half the size of the big blind. The big blind is the size of a small bet in a limit game. The blind is paid regardless of whether the player likes his cards or not. The other players must call (or raise) the blind bet or else they must fold. The player in the small blind must make up the difference between the big blind and the small blind in order to stay in the hand. So, if the big blind was \$2 and the small blind was \$1, the player in the small blind would have to pay \$1 to stay in the hand.

- **Position:** The blinds rotate each hand. The person to the left of the dealer pays the small blind, and the person to the left of the small blind pays the big blind. In the preflop betting round, the player to the left of the big blind is the first to bet and the big blind is the last to bet. In all rounds after that, the small blind is the first to bet, and the dealer is the last to bet. Position is very important in poker. Information is power and each bet gives away information. If a person bets before you, he gives you information you need to make your bet. On the other hand, they have to make their bet without the information contained in your bet.

- **Limit Poker:** The bets are limited to a specific size. You cannot make a smaller or larger bet. The size of the limits will be in the name of the poker game. For example, you might decide to play \$1–\$2 limit game, here's what the sizes of the bets would be:

Preflop: \$1 (small bet)
On the flop: \$1
On the turn: \$1 (big bet)
On the river: \$2

This shows how much one bet would be at any stage of the hand. So, before the flop, one bet would be \$1. On the river, one bet would be \$2.

- **No Limit Poker:** There is no limit to the maximum bet you can make in any betting round. However, there is a minimum bet similar to limit poker. For example:

On the flop: \$1
On the turn: \$2 (big bet)
On the river: \$2

- **Pot-Limit Poker:** The minimum bet is structured like Limit Poker, and the maximum bet is the amount of money in the pot. This

game is less risky, but you need to be prepared to bet your entire stack or lose your entire stack. Less money is better because players cannot over bet the pot.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can you have a three-pair in Texas Hold'em? No, there is no such thing as a three-pair. Only your best five-card poker hand counts.

Do kickers matter? It matters if it is part of person's final five-card poker hand.

Can I show my hole card to my opponents before the showdown in order to psyche-out my opponents? It depends on the house rules. Sometimes when a player must make a large call, they display their hole cards to their opponent to see if the opponent gives some sort of reaction. Certain poker rooms and home games allow this but other place would instantly call the hand dead and would make the player fold.

Who wins if two people each have a straight? Whoever has the highest straight wins. Example, if player A has a 4,5,6,7,8 and player B has a 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, then player B would win.

What happens if someone at the tables bets more than I have? You either fold or go all-in. If you go all-in, you can only call as much as you have in front of you at the table.

Can I buy more chips during a hand instead of going all-in? No, you have to wait until the hand is finished to get more chips.

What is the maximum number of bets/raises in a fixed-limit game? This depends on the house rules. Generally, poker rooms allow for one bet and up to three raises per betting round. Some places allow for up to four raise. If the game is heads-up, poker rooms will sometimes allow for an unlimited number of bets/raises.

How is the pot calculated in a pot-limit games? A person may bet or raise up to the amount in the pot.

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