Hold Em For Money

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Tips, Tricks and Online Domination!

By
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Introduction

If poker is your game, you have probably already discovered the wonders of Texas Hold 'Em poker and possibly the rewards that go along with knowing how to play!

Whether you play in a brick and mortar casino, or online, Texas Hold 'Em has revived what some might previously have called a subculture of poker, and created an international phenomenon.

As any poker expert can tell you, there is a lot to the game besides the obvious. If you really study the game of poker, you will find that the best players understand probability, player behavior and other subtleties.

It is this understanding that helps the great poker player to win consistently and to get out when the odds are against her/him.

If you are interested in Texas Hold 'Em poker, LOVE the game, or just want to understand the game better, this book is for you!

This book is not for those who do not understand the game of poker, or for those who do not know the basics of Texas Hold 'Em.

This book is for those players who know poker, know Texas Hold 'Em and want to get better at winning, most especially in the online casino environment.

We have provided some tips, tricks and winning strategies and a savvy approach to the game that is designed to get you into the online community of Texas Hold 'Em, where you can start using your new skills to play and win!

You will even find a handy "Glossary of Terms" at the end of this book to help you understand some of the terms and phrases that are unique to Texas Hold 'Em poker.

Wouldn't it be great if you could have full access to an auto mechanic and find out the secrets behind fixing your car, or better understand those strange noises your car makes when you turn a corner?

How you feel about unfettered access to a top chef's kitchen to learn the trade secrets behind that gourmet dish you like so much? Sounds great, doesn't it?

What we are going to give you here is what amounts to the same unfettered access and insider information about Texas Hold 'Em and some great stuff about online Texas Hold 'Em!

This information will make you a more confident player and it will keep you out of trouble at the tables ☺

In this book, we will teach you how the system works, how to evaluate the behavior of other online players and what the odds can really tell you.

Texas Hold 'Em is a great game but you will enjoy it even more if you understand your own skills, the skills of others, the odds, and the ways to win!

When you jump into your first online game of Texas Hold 'Em, you are bound to feel overwhelmed. If you are playing for money, you are going to be very unhappy if you lose it all!

Even if you can stick with it long enough to figure out the basics without running out of cash, you will soon realize that you need more than luck and a little knowledge.

Like a good soldier in the field, the more you know, the safer you will be. All the class room work in the world will not teach you the same things you can learn "on the job".

The bigger the pot, the more disciplined and pragmatic you need to be when you are playing ANY kind of poker. You can buy lots of books on the subject of winning, poker strategies and odds and methods for each type of poker hand you are dealt.

It isn't likely you can memorize every detail or piece of data, so you may find it hard to apply some of the lessons you learn in these books.

What you want, and need is a way to link your knowledge and strategy to give you an advantage over other players.

A 'good' player can expect to make $35,000 or $40,000 a year in medium stakes games (three to ten dollars). A GREAT player can make more than

$100,000 a year. *If that doesn't give you the incentive to become a better player, there is probably nothing that will!*

Since it is hard to talk about online Texas Hold 'Em without some foundational information about poker and the game of Texas Hold 'Em, we will start with the basics in this book, in order to give you some background and help you better analyze the game, and the necessary skills to win that game.

The goal is to make you a confident, comfortable WINNING Texas Hold 'Em player in the online casino of your choice.

You are not going to win a million dollars overnight and you won't be the best player overnight. But if you embrace and practice what we teach you, you WILL improve and find yourself winning more games and more money as time goes on.

You can be aggressive, as long as you apply that aggression wisely, and at the right time. But don't get too cocky and forget the rules of the game. Know when to fold, when to stick it out and when to run!

The Texas Hold 'Em Basics

Let us briefly touch on the unique rules of Texas Hold 'Em. If you already know the basics of the game and you are just looking for odds, tips and techniques, you may wish to skip this section.   If you need a primer, here is a brief overview:

You will start with a standard deck of 52 cards, using the values of standard poker. You may call aces as high or low.

- Establish a dealer position and, if you'd like a specified dealer. This position will rotate around the table as the game progresses.

- The first player to the left of the dealer will make what is called a 'small blind bet' and the player directly to the left of this first player will make a 'big blind bet' to get some money in the pot. This process is called 'posting the blinds'.

- Beginning with the player directly to the left of the dealer, each player will receive two cards (called the hole or pocket cards)

- The player to the left of the 'big blind' will call or raise the big blind bet, and the play will progress around the table (known as pre-flop). You can, of course, establish table rules regarding the size of bets and raises depending on the number of players, etc.

- The 'small blind' can raise the big blind. If no one raises the big blind, the player who originated the big blind can raise her/his big blind bet.

- To prevent cheating, the dealer then discards the top card of the deck (called the burn card) and deals three cards, face up, to the center of the table (the flop).

- A second round of betting proceeds beginning with the player directly to the left of the dealer position.

- After this round is completed, the dealer burns another card and deals a fourth card, face up, to add to the 'flop'. This card is referred to as 'the turn'.

- The turn is followed by a third round of betting. This is often where the bets are doubled.

- The dealer then burns another card and then a fifth card dealt, face up, to the center of the table (the river).

- The minimum bet for the next round of betting is usually the same as the previous round.

- After this round of betting is concluded, every remaining player must analyze the best hand they can play, based on the value of the best two cards in their own hand and the five 'community cards' (otherwise known as 'communal cards'), at the center of the table. The player does NOT have to use both of her own cards if she does not wish to do so.

- Beginning with the player directly to the left of the last player to 'call', each player will reveal her/his hand in what is called 'the showdown'.

The best hand will win, based on the following rankings:

Straight Flush   Five cards of the same suit in consecutive order

Four of a Kind   Four cards of equal rank, and a fifth card

Full House   Three of a kind and a pair

Flush   Five cards of the same suit *(will not beat a straight flush)*

Straight   Five cards in consecutive order *(will not beat a straight flush)*

Three of a Kind Three cards of equal rank, and two additional cards

Two Pair   Two pair and a fifth card

A Pair   A pair and three additional cards

High   Five cards that do not comprise any better hand. King or Queen High for example might win the pot if there are no better hands

In the event of a tie, the value of the individual cards will be used to break the tie. The unused cards in the player's hand do not have any value or merit to change the outcome of the game or to break a tie.

You should, of course, understand any additional house rules that apply to the game before you sit in.

Recognizing Your Place in the Poker Food Chain

Poker players recognize the 'Food Chain' as the pecking order of skill and knowledge. Get used to the idea that when you first start playing Texas Hold 'Em, you are nothing more or less than 'bait'.

You are 'the fish'; the small fry who provides food for the sharks and big fish in the ocean.

Let's start with a look at the bottom of the food chain: The FISH.

The Fish - Eventually, as you get better at the game and at assessing risk and odds, you will become one of those big fish! In the meantime, accept your position at the table and understand that you will be gobbled up often until you learn the law of the ocean.

Consider that you will get out of the 'fish' zone faster, if you really understand the game and when you are out of your league. Even really good players can be a fish sometimes.

When you are under a lot of pressure in a game, or the number of players changes radically in a tournament or other situation, you can sometimes find yourself in panic mode and forget strategy or analysis.

You will start acting like a fish, staying in the game longer than you should; longer than your hand should allow, and raising when you should not do so. A fish plays without regard to odds or knowledge.

When a fish becomes really crazed and forsakes all logic in a frantic effort to win, he/she becomes a 'maniac', displaying aggressive player behavior that is not in line with their hand or the scenario playing out in the game.

If you want to survive long enough to learn the game and get better, you (the fish) have to play a tight game. Stick with the basics and be disciplined.

Even if ARE a fish, if you have one of the top card combinations, you can raise and gain some advantages. Here are some examples:

> ➤ AA, KK, QQ, JJ are great cards to have in your hand. You can be more aggressive here because you don't often get these combinations and they are therefore worth playing.

> ➤ Studies show that the AK combination is a better bet than the KQ combination. If you hold AK in a six-player game, the power of this combination places fifth in the top 24 power plays.
>
> If you hold AK in a game where the number of players is reduced after 'the river', the AK combination places tenth in the top power plays.

> ➤ The JJ combination is useful in some games depending on the situation. With six of more players, JJ places fourth as a power play. With fewer players, this combination falls to ninth place.

Protecting yourself as a fish means that you must look carefully at the first two-card hand you are dealt. If you are going to bet on this hand, NEVER bet on anything with less value than the top twenty cards and ALWAYS raise on the top ten cards, unless you think that will scare off other players.

If the game is very tight, you should only raise on the top five cards before the flop is dealt.   A word of caution about this situation: If you are a fish and the table is that tight, you would be better served to go someplace else to play rather than to get in over your head.

The Barracuda – Next up the food chain is the Barracuda. You have some experience and you have survived to play another day. You are intrigued and excited by the challenge, and you even make some money when you play, but you are by no means the biggest fish in the ocean.

You can safely play the top 40 cards and KQ, QJ, JT, T9 in small stakes games as well as off-suit AQ, AJ.   For the Barracuda, the right table will help tremendously in predicting your success or failure.

Look for a table where people appear to be playing and having a good time (stay away from tables with scowls and serious, furrowed brows), and where at least 50% of the players remain at the table for the flop.

As a Barracuda, you will want to build your confidence and try some more aggressive lay so you can get better.

The difference between a really skilled player and one who knows 'enough' but will never be great, is that a skilled player knows when to be aggressive and when to be conservative.

Be more aggressive before the flop using your knowledge and ability to play with a larger spectrum of cards. Don't stick to the same betting strategy throughout the game. Try to mix it up a little so that other players will have more trouble getting a handle on your style and strategy.

If the table is large, do not play as aggressively, unless EVERY player is really conservative and you are trying to bait players to get the betting moving.

It is important to remember that poker is, first and foremost, a game of perception. How other players perceive your style and knowledge is important because it drives THEIR decisions when they play.

If you are someone who is difficult to read and whose behavior is NOT predictable, you will be more successful and have more options as you play the game. This style of play might be characterized as tight and aggressive.

When we talk about the specifics and unique character of online poker, you will see that the finer points of behavior and perception become a bit more difficult to assess online. Therefore, you may have to exaggerate what you are doing so that you can get your STYLE across to the other players at the virtual table.

The Shark – What makes a player a shark? Quite simply, it is the combination of experience, intuition, perception and strategy. Like any game of poker, you can bluff your way into a winning situation by making other players believe your position is stronger than it is. You can also LOSE a lot of money that way.

You must combine aggression and stamina with a healthy dose of strategy and the wisdom to know when to be conservative and when to walk. A shark watches behavior carefully and forms an opinion of the style and strategy of other players.

Great players are made, NOT born. The combination of skills and experience will get you where you want to go if you constantly work on the finer points of the game.

You must understand odds, the particular mix of players at the table and the game itself. The shark knows the other players and can analyze their behavior and he gains the advantage as soon as possible.

Texas Hold 'Em Strategy

We all know that the best hand wins in ANY poker game, right?

The trick with any type of poker is to get enough practice and build your knowledge and experience so that you can win without losing your shirt.

What you will learn about online Texas Hold 'Em is that you can get a lot of practice for FREE and thereby build your skills toward the goal of WINNING in a real setting.

For a newcomer to Texas Hold 'Em, the basic strategy should be not to try to be too clever or deceptive and cute.   Bet when you think you have a good hand and stick to the fundamentals until you get the hang of things and build your experience.

There ARE a few situations where you can take a change and build your skills by being a bit more aggressive.

The first situation involves the opening bluff.   If you are the first player to the left of the two blinds, you can raise in an aggressive fashion so that all other players are forced to call the blind AND the raise. The reason you would do this would be to get the table down to a smaller number of players.

It is likely a number of players will fold if you use this strategy.

The players who DO NOT fold probably have a good hand or they are seasoned players who will not be intimidated.

Another strategy you might capitalizes on the players who, by virtue of their position at the table, must bid the 'blinds'. The players in the 'blind' positions must bet whether they feel they can win or not.   Once they are in the game, most blinds will try to stay, if they can, since they are already financially exposed.

If you are the dealer and everyone else has folded, except you and the two blinds, you can raise to 'steal the blind' in hopes that the blinds will both fold. If you just 'call' on your bid, the blinds may 'check', and you might make some money this way, as well.

If you want to get out of YOUR hand, this strategy may also cause the blinds to fold, so you can all move on to the next game.

The other strategy you can use IF you are in the 'cat bird seat' (the player who is last in the betting sequence), is a strategy you will want to use sparingly. If you use it all the time, the other players will catch on. But if you use it occasionally, you can strike with some element of surprise.

It is easier to take the pot if you have a good drawing hand, because you can steal the raise from your cat bird position.

If you want to try your hand at the 'check raising' strategy, you should first be sure that the table at which you are playing will allow this move. The point of this strategy is to raise the value of the pot.

Let's say you look at your hand and you feel you have a winner! You may not want to bet a lot right away because you will drive away the players and the value of the pot will not go up as much as you might like.

If you check, a second player may assume that your hand is not great and she might raise. NOW you can raise their bet. You will take the chance that they will stay in the game at that point because they have already raised and are more committed to the win than they were before.

Again, this is a strategy that depends on human behavior and allows you take advantage of another player's natural tendencies.

Online Texas Hold 'Em

The first thing to understand about Texas Hold 'Em is that, like any other style of poker or game, the only way you can learn to play is to PLAY. Ay attention and learn from your mistakes!

The GREATEST thing about ONLINE Texas Hold 'Em is that you can learn in a less expensive environment.

There are any number of advantages and benefits to playing Texas Hold 'Em online, especially for the novice.

You can go to online casinos and see what is happening. Play for free and begin betting on games only when you feel you are ready to take on the challenge. You can choose lower limit tables so you do not lose all your money.

You should also take advantage of watching online games to see how the game flows and where people make mistakes. If you notice a player who is particularly successful, look for that player when you are next online and watch and learn.

Take notes as the game progresses. Some of the online casinos also allow you to take and save notes online while you are watching. This is particularly efficient!

When you are taking notes, you should note the following areas:

> ➢ What kind of hands do the good players play?
> ➢ What is their style and pace of play?
> ➢ What is their betting and raising strategy?

Another advantage that online Texas Hold 'Em gives you is that you can see what is in the pot. When you are playing at a regular casino, you will have to estimate the pot based on the betting history.

When you KNOW what is in the pot, you can play the game of 'pot betting' where you adjust your style and your game to the results you can expect to achieve, knowing full well whether your bet is worth the risk.

Another reason you might like to play online is that you can choose from many different tables in thousands of online casinos. There are many betting options, limits and player types.

Keep in mind that, if you want to win, you will always be weighing the odds against the player behavior and of course your position at the table. Because of the blind positions in Texas Hold 'Em, your position is a necessary consideration and, yes, the dealer position is the most coveted.

If you are the dealer, you get to see how other players are betting and you can better adjust the pot. But in online Texas Hold 'Em, the dealer position is actually held by the system software!

Once all the other players have bet, a raise by the dealer can double the pot. Because all players are already in the game, they are more likely to try to stick around for another round of betting.

If you observe a poker table for any length of time you will see that the winning hand will often occur in a clockwise order around the table, going from one to the next.

Studies reveal that the 'win' typically moves in that direction so you can look for that pattern in your own games online. That does not mean that you can ignore skill or the cards in your hand, but it does mean that playing behavior and the positions of people who fold and people who stay in are often predictable.

What if your table position requires that you are the player who must act first, or the one 'under the gun'. You will always have to act before other players. Both the two blind positions and the player 'under the gun' must be careful and selective.

However, if you are in a 'late' position (or 'cat bird' position) where you are the last to call, you already know who is in and what they have bet. You might be able to squeak out a win with a so-so hand like a KJ or a smaller pair, if a lot of people have folded before the table gets to you.

If you are in the cat bird position, you will also get some free cards. If no one bets in any given round, you'll get a card with no risk, and it is your choice as to whether you want to take the free card.

Before you begin betting in the online casino, be sure you grasp the differences between live play and online play. It is harder to judge the behavior of a player in a virtual environment so if you want to be aggressive, your behavior has to be more obvious.

To accomplish this, you can try one of several tactics. For example, you might push the bets harder and perhaps even play with the strategy of slowing down the game occasionally. When you do this, you can sometimes get the less experienced players to pony up and put money in the pot just to get the game moving.

If you decide to take this tactic, just be sure that you limit the number of times you fold after you slow the game down. If you do that too often, the other players will believe that you are indecisive and that you have little or no experience.

If you make a big raise after your pause, you will communicate a more assertive posture.

If you choose to slow down the play online, be ready for some abuse. Other players may chat and comment about you and may even decide to be vindictive. Yet, in their frustration, they may make some pretty bad mistakes, like betting on a hand they should not keep.

If you are patient and you believe in your hand and your strategy, you can often distract the players enough to make critical mistakes.

Just don't do this every time you play or you will get a reputation and others will not want to take a seat at the table where you are playing!

In online poker it is even more critical to gain some control over the table and to use the playing behavior of others to help you win the game.

The other crucial factor in online play is self control. When you do not have to sit across the table from another player, it is easy to talk yourself into making a move that may be wrong.   Know the odds! We will talk about this later in the book.

Know the hands you can use if the flop is good, and understand when it makes more sense to fold to protect yourself.

You should be able to participate in one out of three of the pots at your online table.

In online poker environs, you may also need to consider your approach to the classic Texas Hold 'Em problem of defending against a blind that is small. If the player who places the blind stays in the game, it may be because the blind is small and even with a bad hand, the player feels they can take the chance of sticking with the table.

When you are playing in an online environment, you will have to consider the pace the game and the fact that you will get a 'toss up' hand (or throwaway hand) one out of three times. That statistic presumes that you will see the small blind about once every ten minutes during online play.

If you ALWAYS call instead of folding, you are likely to lose a lot more money in those circumstances. If you fold half the time under those circumstances, you will save yourself a lot more money.

So what marks the difference between a pro shark and a novice fish? First of all, pros always know who is sitting across the table from them.

You have to consider the odds and the cards, but you also have to know the other players, their behavior and how you can use strategy against them. Winning poker players are great at the art of behavioral analysis and they can adjust to the people at the table.

When you are just getting started, you will want to follow the tried and true rule of thumb which is to befriend players on your left and to declare on anyone who is seated to your right.

Don't try to throw daggers at every player at the table unless you are REALLY good. Build some trust with those who are going to throw the game back to you as they go around the table.

Here is another fact you may wish to consider: Research of online casinos reveals that at least half of what you will win in an online poker session is already determined before you ever take a position at the table.

The way to affect the remaining half of your odds and alter the determining factors is to understand the top hands and play strategically while considering your position at the table.

The first consideration in choosing a table is to stay away from really tight tables where everyone is a great player. You are not likely to win in that case, unless you are one of the pros!

If you dare to enter a tight game, remember that your strong hand is worth more than the blind, and your weak hand is worth less. If you weigh the blind against your hand and find your hand lacking, folding is your best option! Get out while the getting is good.

There are some basic guidelines to picking a table and playing Texas Hold 'Em online.

1. Look at the other players at the table and decide if you are good enough to play their game. If you have been watching online play in a particular casino, you can note the names of players and build your own list of those you want to avoid and those you think you can beat.

2. Pick a table where you can find the position that will be the most beneficial to you.

3. Be sure you go in with enough chips. Your stash DOES matter in this game. You don't want to run short. When you run out of chips, you are eliminated.

4. Assess your hand, consider the blinds and your position and get started.

Here is an illustration of how the game might go:

You are seated in the middle of a six-player table (not the dealer, the blinds or the cat bird position).

Let's say that the dealer gives you a King and a Ten. Look at the odds charts and top hands we will give you later in the book and decide whether that is a strong hand or a hand you will need to watch.

For now, we'll tell you that the additive probability (the odds) of your winning with that hand are a little less than 16%

Next, look at the pot: What is the total? You won't want to bet more than 16% of the pot total because that would exceed the odds against you. Let's say the pot is $100. You should bet no more than $16.00.

When the betting comes around to you again, the pot is at $150.00. What would be your maximum? Something in the vicinity of $24.00. But you've already bet $16, so you'll have to limit your bet to $8.00 or less. If you need another $10.00 to stay in the game, this would be the point that you should fold.

If you are playing according to the odds, you should follow this calculation right out of the game. If you tell yourself that the difference between your limit of an additional $8.00 and the $10.00 needed to stay in the game is ONLY $2.00, you are likely to lose it all because you are going against the odds.   If you feel you are a good enough player to take this chance, when you consider all other factors, then by all means, stay in. Otherwise, GET OUT!

Beat the odds by KNOWING the odds.

In fact, if you can consider the odds for all the players at the table, based on what you know of their hands and the table conditions, you will be better off. What if you had a pair of Queens in your hand at the flop?

Half of all online Texas Hold 'Em pots are won with pairs of nines or better. So your odds are good so far. But when you look at the table, there is a partial straight laid out for all to use. How do you know whether you can use that to win the hand or whether someone else will build their winning hand with the partial straight?

What do the other players have in their hand, do you suppose?   The art of the 'tells' is the art of evaluating another player's hand, based on what you know.

If there is already a partial straight on the table, then one of the other players must have must have something close to a straight (one or two cards). If that is true, then you would need at least THREE of a kind (not a pair) to stay in the running. In other words, you would need another Queen.

There should be another two queens out there somewhere. If you look at the information you have accumulated so far, you know that there are six players, and based three down in the flop, and two cards in each of the six players' hands, there have been fifteen cards dealt. Your odds would be two out of fifteen or 13.3%.

What about the bet you have to make? If the pot is at $200 when it gets to you, you can afford to make a bet of $26.00 to stay in the game. That will be the cost of getting a look at the next card (the turn card).

Let's say that the turn card is a five of clubs. A straight will beat your three of a kind (thrip), and you should probably fold now. While you can improve your hand with another card, so can all the rest of the players, so the odds don't change much.

With a full table of players, you can get a lot of mileage out of a KT, QJ JT, 89,79, or 46. These are a strong foundation as pocket or hole cards. If you don't get the cards you are looking for as the game goes on, it is easy to fold.

With an apparent POWER hand like a pair of aces, you will find it hard to fold because you will be so deeply invested in the pot that you'll want to stay in for the duration. With a JT or 89 hand, you can raise to build the pot and play the odds.

When you adjust your play, you must adjust to the changing conditions of the table and reassess your odds and the playing conditions (how many players have dropped out, etc.)

Online Tournaments

You have tried your hand at the online Texas Hold 'Em world of poker and you feel you are up to the challenge of enrolling in a tournament.

Consider that the higher the states, the more rounds, the higher level of players on the food chain. You'll start with a lot of fish and then graduate to barracudas and sharks.

In the early stages of a tournament, do not make the mistake of trying to aggressively build your 'stack'.

Stick to tight fish rules and play conservatively to protect your position and keep yourself alive!

What many novice tournament players find is that they get short-stacked somewhere around level three to five of the tournament and they are out of luck.

Remember that you are eliminated when you run out of chips. If and when you make it to the six player level switch to a barracuda strategy and start playing less conservatively always conscious of the pre-flop strategy and assessment.

When you get down to three players, your shark skills can emerge and you can play more aggressively. You will never win a tournament if you are not willing to become more aggressive as you knock off more of the competition. Just don't be a maniac!

You will start a tournament at a lower limit with about 800 chips at the start of the tournament. The table limits will increase as you progress through the ranks, completing ten hands before the next level commences.

In the early rounds you will want to play a conservative game, to ensure that you preserve your stack and make it to the higher levels of play.

If other tournament players are playing fast and loose and building a stack faster than you are, bear in mind that they will probably be out before the mid-level play begins. Do not be frustrated by their apparent early success. Slow and steady wins the race.

Keep it tight in the early rounds. The biggest fish will call and draw you out so it is hard to win in early rounds without a strong hand.

Look for the top pocket cards. Bet wisely to force people out and check on the river to get your pay out.

Because tournaments spike the betting limits, you must have a really strong bankroll to get into a tournament and stay there for any length of time. If you do become short-stacked during a tournament, do not panic.

Try to play a tight game and only bet on high-ranked pairs.

Continue playing only if the flop improves your hand.

Tournament play is fast, and you have to be able to keep up and think as you play, assessing odds and adjusting strategies. If you are not yet at the point where this comes second nature to you, you may wish to wait until you get more experience before you jump into the online tournament world.

If you ARE going to play, take notes as the games and rounds progress so that you can see the patterns, behaviors and style of your opponents. What hands do they like in the pre-flop stage? What hands do they play? When and under what circumstances do they like to raise?

You can create your own picture of each player. As that picture emerges, you can decide how you want to deal with that player.

In general, you can use the following rule of thumb:

Player Profile	You Should
Tight Players	Bluff them
Bluffs	Call on bets that are questionable
	Raise if you have a decent hand

When you get to round three or four of the tournament, you can start bluffing if you feel comfortable doing so.

Your opponents will be stronger by the time you reach this level and they will be less willing to draw on you. More aggressive players will become more of a thorn in your side, getting more dangerous as the play progresses.

When you are 'short-stacked' and you make a play, you will often find that other players will think you are desperate and they are not likely to take the bait and believe your play comes from a position of strength. If you find yourself in this position, just play it tight and try to stay in play.

Don't get too cute!

If you make it to round four and above your tables limits will be 200-400 with 100-200 blinds. You will need to adjust to the smaller table and change gears with your strategy.

When you are playing with fewer people (a short-handed game) your moderately strong hand will be much stronger. The earlier you play, the stronger your hand should be.

If you wait to play, your hand does not need to be quite as strong. You still need to think about your position at the table and be sure that you consider all the information you have.

Don't get into a showdown with your opponents.   You MUST raise on a strong hand and fold quickly with a weak hand.

If you raised during the pre-flop phase, BET THE FLOP.   But don't be overly aggressive and raise on everything. Adjust to conditions of play so that you can be aggressive and conservative as necessary.

When you are the aggressor, you are bound to make more moves on tight players, because you will have more information than your opponent when you on the offensive.

If they raise into you, you know they have something so you can adjust accordingly.

If you bet into them, you throw them off balance because they don't know what you might have.

At the lower levels of play, a player is unlikely to catch on, but when you get to the higher levels of the tournament and you are dealing with a stronger player, the player may start to raise you to see what you will do.

Raise again if you have a strong hand pre-flop, and call with a weak hand. Raise pairs and call with an AK high. Fold if you have low 'high' cards.

Remember that when you are aggressive, someone will eventually make a move against you. Don't be a maniac. As we have said above, be sure you are carefully assessing your strategy at every turn and know when to change your approach.

Tournaments are the same as regular games, except that they are faster paced and more grueling, in that the rounds raise the stakes and the players tend to change behavior and profiles more often in an attempt to throw off their opponents.

If you keep this in mind and play with a good solid knowledge of the odds, player behavior and common sense, you will be fine!

Picking the Right Online Casino

In 1995, the first internet casinos went live with over 15 online games. By 2003, the total revenue for online gambling was over five billion dollars. Most online gambling corporations are not resident in the U.S.

By establishing these companies outside the confines of the United States, online casino businesses can avoid many of the regulations and tax implications imposed by the U.S.

In order complete these international transactions, all payments are processed through an online, secured, payment processing system. Today, you can choose from approximately 1500 online gambling sites.

If you choose to take your Texas Hold 'Em game online, you will be one of about twenty million people currently playing casino games online.

While about 85% of gamblers do play online, only about one third of those players are actually playing for real money.

Of those who play for real money, about 75% lose money online, versus the 80% who lose in brick and mortar casinos, so it would seem that your chances of winning are better in the online environment.

However, studies DO show that online gamblers will lose more money PER GAME than those who play in brick and mortar casinos. But there must be something to the idea that you can do well online and that your chances of winning are greater.

There are more than four times the number of so called 'high rollers' playing online today than there are in traditional casinos.

You should be aware that, because these online gambling companies are not based in the U.S., you will have little recourse if you have a problem with the casino. In light of that, your should be even more careful to choose your online casino wisely.

Be sure that your money is secured and that the casino has a good history and reputation when it comes to paying its winners and establishing online security and policies.

Unless you are inclined to do a lot of research, your beset bet is to protect yourself by playing only in established online casinos with a reputable history and feedback.

Look for casinos with a broad range of tables at various price levels. Once you start playing in an online casino, you are bound to get attractive offers from other online casinos trying to woo you and your business. Avoid those casinos that are start-ups and those that offer you big bonuses to get you to jump ship.

If you haven't heard of these businesses, their offer of big winnings may just seduce you into spending a lot of money and you may never see your winnings even if you are the big winner at the table.

The software used by all reputable online casinos provides the table with a random number generator (RNG) to determine the cards dealt and the outcome, based on an algorithm.

With billions of RNG possibilities, the results of each game are truly random and therefore it is impossible for anyone to develop a 'system' to beat the software.

Let's look now at the primary factors in choosing your online casino:

> **Security** – Be sure you know the security policies and guarantees the site offers regarding the safety or your credit information, your personal identity and your contact information (you don't want the site selling a marketing list to others and ending up with a flood of email in your inbox).
>
> Look at the site policies and FAQs that describe the safety of the site gaming conditions, the software security and how the site ensures that hackers cannot invade and compromise the software on the online casino servers. Read the fine print!
>
> **Access** – Can you get into the site and get a place at the table at any time of the day or night?

Some sites become overloaded and when you are ready to play, you will be unable to find a chair, or you may get dumped by the site server because the online casino cannot handle the volume of players.

How often does the game or site crash, and how long is the site down when it DOES crash? If you are booted off, can you get back on right away or will it take your forever to get back to your game?

How long is the lag time between a move and the transfer of information to the public view?

Some problems can come from your own connection and computer, but in many cases, an online casino cannot support the connectivity you will expect so that you can play a game seamlessly without disruption.

Look and Feel – The experience of playing online poker should be a positive one. You should be able to play on a site that is attractive with tools that are easy to use and easy to find.

Can you chat with other players or turn off their chatter if you wish? Are the colors and graphics appealing and eye catching or are they distracting? Can you mute sounds etc.?

Cash and Winnings – How much money does the casino payout? Do they credit your credit card to pay winnings or pay into your bank account? How long will it take before you receive your winnings?

How easy is their site to use when it comes to calculating your winnings and understanding your financial position?

Are you charged for all cash-outs? Are there additional or hidden fees you should know about before you start playing? Will the site send you email or text confirmations of deposits and withdrawals?

Will the casino offer you a bonus or incentive or promotion to play in certain games or tournaments?   These can include ten to twenty dollars to try their site, and/or matching bonuses to match your deposit.

Freebies – Can you play for free in a Texas Hold 'Em game? Can you observe tables to watch play? Do you have to register and submit personal information and credit card information even if you are playing the free games?

Other Factors -   Look at the other features on the site. Can you use an image or a picture to represent you online (an icon)? Can you easily track your statistics over a month or year?

Can you get email newsletters or online articles from professionals or other links that will help you build your skills and knowledge?

Here are some sites you may want to consider for Texas Hold 'Em action! These sites are well renowned and considered safe and productive by most poker players.

- ➢ **Paradise Poker** - This site has tournaments, a fairly standard range of games and table limits and lots of activity. The game interface is good and the appropriateness of the random card outcomes is monitored by PriceWaterhouse.

- ➢ **Planet Poker** – This site is one of the oldest, most established oldest online poker sites. It handles a lot of traffic throughout the week and can have as many as five hundred people on the site at one time, but you will never have a problem getting a table for Texas Hold 'Em in the price range you want.

  The owners of this site have spent some money to upgrade the look and feel of the site, and the speed of play, so you should not be disappointed.

- ➢ **Party Poker** – A very large, very active site, often with forty or fifty thousand online at the same time. They sponsor one of the largest annual tournaments.

  Whether you are looking for lower limit games or higher limit games, there is a decent balance for the 'rake', with a three dollar cap for moderate limit games.

- ➢ **Ultimate Bet** – This site has a good average pot size, though the number of players on the site is considerably lower than the larger sites. Pre-flop percentages can be above 45% and the site is particularly profitable for games with one to three or two to five table limits.

- ➢ **InterCasino** - A well established casino that started in the mid-1990s. Gambling Online Magazine voted this casino the best early in this decade, though in recent years, competition has grown considerably.

  You can use any currency to play one to two dollar games or one hundred to two hundred dollar games. The site volume is relatively low, but it is growing by leaps and bounds as the game of Texas Hold 'Em becomes more popular.

  The graphics and features are good and you even have a voice option on this site!

- ➢ **Jackpot Palace Casino** – This site features top notch software design and dependability. As a result, you will find it easy and secure to play on this site and the features you can use will make it easier to see what is happening in the game, to cash out and to take other action.

- ➢ **OmniCasino** – This site is also audited and monitored by PriceWaterhouse. It is considered one of the top online casinos and is known for its rapid payouts and its COMP program.

  You can also avoid the top site winners if you don't want to sit down at a virtual table with a lot of sharks. Pre-flop games can be above 40% at any given time.

- ➢ **Empire Poker** – You might like this site because you can see the average pot for the last twenty hands and because the average pots tend to be pretty good at all table limits.

- ➢ **PokiBot Poker** – This site offers NO money games, but it is a great place to go and practice your skills in free games. You play against a robot (not a live person). These 'bots' learn from each game so they get better and better and can be quite challenging.

Now that you have the information on some of the top online casinos where you can play Texas Hold 'Em, you should think about your own skills and preferences.

1. Do not limit yourself to only one online casino. You will want to play in a few casinos (4-5) to find the ones you like the best and then you can rotate among them to keep your play active and fresh and to meet other opponents.

2. Look for a variety of table limits and stick to the lower limits until you build your skill. Don't be tempted to play big until you are ready. You have to learn about player behavior and get a feel for the ebb and flow of play and get better at profiling players. Stick to $1/2 up to $5/10 blinds and you should be OK.

3. When you begin to play, choose a stake that is fifty to one hundred times the 'big blind' so that you have wiggle room.

4. Before you jump into the fray, watch the table you choose for ten to fifteen minutes. Look at 3-4 tables before you choose one. Don't be too anxious to lose your money! Find a table that is loose and you can then play a tight game with a good chance of winning.

5. Last but not least, be sure you select a position at the table that is a good one for you. Look for the person who is playing the tightest game and 'sit' to the left of that player.

As you become accustomed to online play, you will build confidence and begin to win more money, but only if you improve your skills and strategy.

Be a student of the game at all times, even after you become a shark. Study the odds, player profiles, positioning and learn to adjust your techniques as the flow of the game changes.

Developing a Strategy

Everyone has their own style and playing poker with personal style and strategy is no exception. When you begin to play Texas Hold 'Em, you will need to review the odds we have provided, and the techniques and methods, and decide what will work for you.

When you play Texas Hold 'Em online, it is even MORE important to have a strategy. If you do not continue to learn and develop skills, you will remain a fish. Strategy is not something that is static.

You must understand the odds, the probabilities and you must be willing to adjust your strategy for each game, the players at the table and the game dynamic.

You should know that online poker is going to seem faster and more aggressive to a newcomer.

If you consider each decision you make throughout the game, you can see that every time you decide to play a certain way or use a certain tactic, you take a turn down a different branch of the path.

When the game ends, your outcome is determined by all the small choices you have made along the way.

> **Bluffing** - When you are considering your overall strategy, do not go right to bluffing as an automatic technique. Whenever you decide that the conditions are right to fluff, remember that everyone else may also be making that assessment.
>
> If, over time, you see that a player always seems to bluff in a particular situation, you need to consider that as part of their profile. But understand that others will also note the same thing about you.
>
> Bluffing is effective if you do it sparingly so that it is not EXPECTED or anticipated.
>
> If you get caught bluffing, just sit tight. Don't try it again right away.
>
> You must build a reputation and make the other players think that the bluff you made was just an aberration, and that you aren't the kind that will bluff at every opportunity.
>
> When next you choose to do so, you can then catch the table by surprise. Don't bluff against aces. The chances are that someone may have a pair.
>
> Don't bluff against a flop like 'KQ9'. The other players at the table have probably all decided they make something out of the flop and they will stay in anyway.
>
> If you are playing at a large table, bluffing is probably not a good idea. Given the number of players (8-10) there is a very good chance that one or more of the players will stay in and, if you bluff, you will just

raise the pot and the resulting loss. The odds do not support this kind of play.

Remember that if you are in a blind position, most players will expect you to bluff, even if you have a good hand, so you have to carefully consider the flop cards before you decide whether bluffing is worth the risk.

You should know that you are likely to encounter more bluffing in online games. Online players feel more anonymous and believe they can hide behind that anonymity to fool other players by bluffing or wild play.

The concept of replacing money with chips is a good psychological ploy because players do not readily relate the chips to money in the same way they would if they saw a hundred dollar bill on the table.

Now consider the concept of pushing a button to bet. There is even LESS connection to one's own financial health and the monetary impact of that bluff or bet. Online players seem ready to throw caution to the wind and bluffing is rampant.

You cannot assume your opponents are ALWAYS bluffing but you will need to call and raise more often to keep yourself in the game and counter what may be a bluff.

That also means that you probably want to limit your own bluffing and just play a good game. In spite of that, you will find that other players will call more often because many players PRESUME that others are bluffing.

If you are considering a bluff, in general, you should consider the number of people at the table. It is easier to bluff a couple of people than to bluff the whole table and with a table of 10 people, the chances are good that someone will read you.

Even at a small table, you may have to be patient and keep bluffing through a couple of rounds in order to 'prove' that you are serious. If that is the case, you had better be sure that these players are not going to keep calling your bluff, or you could end up making a costly mistake.

If you are playing with people who fold easily, you can usually bluff to get them out of the game if that works for you. In that case, bluff

early and if they do not fold, you will have to rethink your strategy. There must be a reason the player is staying in the game.

Don't get in over your head. Know the other players and take notice of any behavior that is not common for them.

If you bluff in a late position after everyone else has checked, you MAY force out some players, but not all of them. Many players will stay in just because they feel the odds are in their favor at that point.

If you have been playing at the table for a while and built some respect from other players, that perception alone might give you the ability to bluff and be taken at face value.

To do this, you will have to play the bluff hand exactly as you did the winning hands that came before. That way you lead the other players to believe you are on a roll.

You can often bluff when there is a pair on the boards. If it is a pair that is an eight or below, this bluff can be quite effective.

Read the tells and see who is not really fully engaged in the game. These players will often give away the fact that they HAD a card.

Just keep in mind that if you are playing with experienced players, they will know this trick and will be gunning for you when you bluff.

Do not be afraid to consider the partial bluff. You don't have to have a really bad hand to bluff. What if your hand is OK but you are hoping it might improve. You just need everyone to believe that you have a GREAT hand so you can continue and hope for a good pot.

You have to look at the odds that you might GET that hand and put your best face on. If you are using this technique, it will be more effective if you are sitting at a larger table. The odds that you can improve your so-so hand are better in this case.

Before we leave this topic, let's cross the line from 'bluffing' to 'cheating'.

Though cheating in online poker is pretty hard, given the fact that the dealer is in fact a software program, you should probably be more concerned about collusion.   This can happen when two or more

players decide to go up against an opponent by talking to each other to share their cards and their strategy.

It has gotten more difficult to do this online, but some players know each other from previous games and they can share information in a separate chat or IM session on their computer or talk to each other on the phone to share strategies.

Most good online poker casinos look for players that always play at the same table and will throw them out of a game if they see that there is evidence of collusion.

If you suspect collusion (which often happens among players with little skill, so they may not be able to do much damage, anyway) you should look for the following evidence:

1.   These players will not play quickly in pre-flop. They need time to talk about their hand and to develop a strategy, so you will see a lag.

2.   Players who always seem to be raising each other to force other players to call multiple bets and raise the ante.

3.   Players who hike bets by raising (with someone seated between the two colluding players).

      They are milking the third player to get a maximum betting scenario going and then for no apparent reason one of them will fold with only one bet to go and a huge pot on the table.

      Alternatively one of the players in collusion might end up having a really poor hand which would make you question their original raising and re-raising strategy.

      If their judgment in that regard seems unreasonable, given all the other signs, then you may have evidence that someone is trying to cheat.

If you believe players are in collusion, do not approach the player but rather go to the casino administrator and provide the evidence and information so that the administrator can follow up on the claim.

Watching the Speed of the Check and Raise - Let's think about the 'tells' or how you figure out what a player may have and how they are going to play the game.

We will talk later about player behavior, but right now, you want to focus on how YOUR STRATEGY changes when you think you know what a player is doing.

When you are playing online poker, you can 'in turn' button will give you a lot of information about another player. If the player activates the button immediately, you can pretty well figure that the player has a strong hand.

If you pause a moment before you act, and your opponents check right away AS SOON AS YOU FINISH checking, they probably don't have much.

When the first player checks and you bet or raise, look to see whether the player next to you raises immediately. If so, she/he probably had the button checked already and was going to raise regardless of what you did. What does that tell you?

Watching the Slow Player - If you use the advantages you have in online gambling, you can change your strategy as you go along, because you are getting the 'tell' in more ways than you would at a live table.

If you notice that a particular player is always lagging behind and takes a long time to make a play, it could be for a variety of reasons (the player is doing something else, is insecure or is just not paying attention).

But if that same player suddenly begins making moves promptly, it is probably because the player has just realized that he has a good hand. Think about this within the context of play. How will this change your strategy?

Leveraging the Omaha - If you see a player who is stalling at the last card (Omaha) because the last card creates a 'nut hand' like a flush, you should watch the other players. An average player might pause for a moment in thought.

While this pause usually means a really GOOD player is trying to psych you out, when the pause comes from an average or so-so player, it

usually means that they have just been given a great hand and they are sitting in stunned silence.

How does THAT change your strategy? If you know this person has a good hand, what will you do?

Considering the Table – Before you start betting in the pre-flop, look at your hand AND the number and type of players at the table. How much risk is appropriate?

The more competition you have, the more likely someone else will have a strong hand.

The more aggressive the players at the table the more you want to hang back and play tight. Let those players win the blinds and then take your shot with a good hand in the pocket pre-flop.

Look at your bankroll and figure out how much risk you can take and manage your strategy accordingly. If you are down to your last $5.00, you will be playing a much more conservative game.

If you are flush with cash, you can afford to take a bit more risk on a $1.00 to $2.00 table. You may also wish to buy more chips than you need just to set expectations and intimidate your opponents.

This larger stack also ensures that you can afford to stay in the game, so you should consider whether you can afford a large stack (say fifty times the big blind). In more competitive online poker, you should consider going up to 100 times the big blind.

You don't ever want to be in a position where you are holding the big nut at the end of the game and you can't afford to raise! You need to come into the game with an appropriate stack.

Assessing the Nut Hand – What if you think you have the 'nut' hand - the hand that no one else can beat in this game?

You should know that most of the time, no on has the nuts.

A 'nut' is three of a kind with a pair in the hole that is equal to or exceeds the highest card on the boards, with NO possibility of a flush or a straight.

To determine whether you have the nut hand, you need to look at the possibility that anyone else can beat what you think is your 'nut'.

If you had a nut four-of-a-kind for example, you would have at least one of the cards on the boards in your hole cards, and there is no higher pair on the boards and no possibility of a straight flush.

Using the Weak Player to Your Advantage – When you develop your game and your strategy, you can add to your stack by playing a hand that may not be a winner for a fish, but one that you think you can finesse to get the fish's money.

Play well and play when you know there is a bad player opposite you.

If you happen to sit down at a table where there are a lot of passive, tight games being played, and you see one person who is playing aggressively and badly, you would be foolish not to call that person out and 'outplay' them. But you should only do that if you know more than the person you are facing.

What you should know is that many people play the game of Texas Hold 'Em, using a slightly backwards strategy. They play loose and go through a number of flops in the early rounds and then they panic and play tight in subsequent rounds.

If you don't throw away your chips in early rounds, you can use them later to your advantage. If you have a bad hand that looks good in a fish's eyes, you can play the game and win.

Consider the results of a recent study by a large online casino. When looking at the results of 6,000,000 Texas Hold 'Em games, the hands that lost the most money were not the WORST hands according to the odds.

The hands that lost most consistently were hands that SHOULD do better in the odds, but were played in a cavalier fashion by fish who really thought they had something. An A2, or a 23 are consistently overvalued in the eyes of a fish.

Establishing the Chip Stack – If you are playing a $2.00 to $4.00 game, you should start with $400-800 (about 100 times the big blind). Covering yourself this way should ensure that you will not be short-stacked no matter how the game may evolve or your style of play. If you are a really aggressive player, you will need more chips in the stack.

Consider that a large stack will also create an image that other players will respect, especially if they are fish. So, you can use your stack for intimidation. Bigger is better!

Just be sure you have enough left in the bank so you can play in a different game if you want to do so. Otherwise you will have to cash out of one game before you can get into another one.

Watch the Rake – The rake (the profit taken from each pot) in an online casino ensures that the casino makes a lot of money. The more games you play, the more money the casino makes on the rake.

Some online casinos only rake the pot when it reaches a certain dollar amount. If the rake is a percentage 4-10%, your aggressive strategy will not help you as much. If you want to play an aggressive game, look for a flat fee so that you are not "raked over the coals".

Every time you try to blind steal or bluff in a percentage rake game, you will give up 4-10% of what is gained. If you are a fish at a percentage table, play tighter than you usually would. If you are a good player, you will have to be a BETTER player to overcome the rake and still win what you want.

Let's say that the pot is $125 and the house takes an initial $1.00 rake and five percent of the pot balance at the end of the game. The winners get 94.4% of the pot and the house gets 5.6% in total.

If you are trying to pay a bill with your winnings, remember the casino will skim off the rake before you can take home your money!

Playing in Short Sessions – When you are playing online Texas Hold 'Em, you can switch to another game, or play in short sessions. Because players are always moving around, it is less likely that your opponent will thoroughly evaluate your playing style or your skill.

If you are playing in a real brick and mortar casino, you are usually playing with the same players for five to eight hours at a time.

You can see where these players would get to know your style and strategy, intimately, and they would start to use that against you.

In an online casino, you can play a straight ahead game with less bluffing and deception. You may not benefit from a bluffing image online, because your opponents will not have enough time to see that you do this well and to respect your play.

Playing online means you don't have to mix up your style and strategy as much, although if you play in a particular casino or against a lot of the same players all the time you will have to factor that familiarity into your strategy and approach.

Making the Early Choices – You should know that early choices matter more than late choices in Texas Hold 'Em. Remember that every step you take, brings you down a certain path and you cannot turn back.

Realizing you should have done something differently at the end of the game may give you valuable insight and experience, but it will not win you the pot.

The choice you make with your hole (pocket) cards and the decisions you make at the beginning of the game will follow you through the rest of the game.

Let's look at this in a purely objective way:

> ➢ The person who has the best hole (pocket) cards is the most likely to win the showdown
>
> ➢ The player who has the best five card hand after the flop is most likely to win the showdown
>
> ➢ The player who has the best five card hand after the turn is most likely to win the showdown
>
> ➢ The player who has the best five card hand after the river is most likely to win the showdown

That sounds like pretty basic information, doesn't it? What it means is that if you KNOW your opponent has you beat at one of these points in the game, you should not be calling heavily for the next card.

You should evaluate your options and understand the odds so you do not risk more than a reasonable amount.

Using the Lobby – Spend time in the lobby and check out limits, tables and games. Look at the average pot size at these tables, the number of players who see the flop, the number of hands played in the past hour and the names of the players at the table and on the waiting list.

Your winning strategy should start before you ever sit down at a table and engage in a game. It should start with your choice of a table and players.

In online Texas Hold 'Em, you are fortunate to have the ability to get a lot of information about a table and the players before you ever sit down. USE THAT INFORMATION!

The most popular online casinos provide lots of information and options, so you can find games that fit your style and skill. Do not be so anxious to sit down and lose your money that you fail to use the data and options available to you.

This information will make you a wiser and better player and will help you improve your skills more quickly and win money while you are learning.

There is no doubt that math and the odds can help you reduce the amount of 'luck' you need and win more often.

Do not think that you can have a strategy without understanding the strongest hands, the odds for and against you and your position at the table.

Whatever strategy you develop and use must consider the 'value of your hand'.

So, let's dive in and look at odds and other considerations that will make you a better player.

Playing the Odds

Perhaps the most important factor in Texas Hold 'Em is the value of your two card hand BEFORE the flop. That value is closely aligned to the probability of your win.

Here is a table you may find helpful. This focuses on the pocket or hole card odds, and more specifically on the odds you will GET that particular set of two-cards.

Cards	%
Suited	23.56
Connected	15.73
Suited/Connected	3.96
AA	0.45
KK	0.46
QQ	0.45
JJ	0.45
TT	0.45
99	0.45
88	0.45
77	0.45
66	0.45
55	0.46
44	0.45
33	0.45
22	0.45

Now take a look at the table below to see the two-card hand values.

You can afford to be more flexible if you are seated in a late position at the table, but be more conservative and selective if your position is an early position at the table.

The following table will give you the odds of a win when using that particular two-card combination.

We limited the results to those with least a 45% probability.

Hand	3 Player Probability	4 Player Probability
Pair A	73.78%	73.78%
Pair K	69.21%	69.21%
Pair Q	65.29%	65.29%
Pair J	61.57%	61.57%
Pair T	58.02%	58.02%
Pair 9	54.08%	54.08%
Suited AK	51.77%	51.77%
Pair 8	50.46%	50.46%
Suited AQ	50.56%	50.56%
Unsuited AK	49.28%	49.28%
Suited AJ	49.49%	49.49%
Suited KQ	48.28%	48.28%
Suited AT	48.5%	48.50%
Unsuited AQ	48.01%	48.01%
Pair 7	47.02%	47.02%
Suited KJ	47.22%	47.22%
Unsuited AJ	46.84%	46.84%
Suited KT	46.24%	46.24%
Suited A9	46.16%	46.16%
Unsuited KQ	45.61%	45.61%
Unsuited AT	45.79%	45.79%
Suited QJ	45.55%	45.55%

Hand	6 Player Probability	8 Player Probability	10 Player Probability
Pair of A's	49.43%	39.05%	31.36%
Pair of K's	43.51%	33.26%	26.43%
Pair of Q's	38.68%	28.71%	22.66%
Pair of J's	34.57%	25.13%	19.84%
A/K suited	32.05%	26.00%	21.73%
Pair of T's	31.07%	22.32%	17.76%
A/Q suited	30.62%	24.51%	20.44%
K/Q suited	29.72%	23.72%	19.80%
A/J suited	29.39%	23.41%	19.51%
A/K unsuited	28.96%	22.68%	18.29%
Pair of 9's	27.78%	19.89%	16.05%
K/J suited	28.54%	22.66%	18.94%
A/T suited	28.42%	22.55%	18.87%
Q/J suited	27.92%	22.10%	18.55%
K/T suited	27.61%	21.87%	18.34%
A/Q unsuited	27.27%	20.98%	16.78%
Q/T suited	26.99%	21.38%	18.04%
K/Q unsuited	26.5%	20.31%	16.30%
J/T suited	26.71%	21.26%	18.07%
Pair of 8's	25.18%	18.19%	14.96%
A/J unsuited	25.96%	19.70%	15.70%
A/9 suited	25.97%	20.28%	16.87%
K/9 suited	25.06%	19.50%	16.22%
A/8 suited	25.25%	19.66%	16.34%

Consider the odds! There are over two and a half million possible hands in Texas Hold 'Em, so the more familiar you are with the odds and probabilities

(we will talk more about probabilities later in this book), the better your game will be and the more times you will win.

While we would never give short shrift to profiling behavior and other factors, the real core of the game is in understanding the chances you have to win when you are dealt a particular hand.

Let's say you play 100,000 hands of poker during your poker career – an admirable goal!

What could you expect in the way of odds? Just how many great hands would you be dealt?

50,000	Pat Hands
40,000	Hands with One Pair
20,000	Hands with No Pair
5,000	Hands with Two Pair
2,000	Hands with Three of a Kind
400	Hands with a Straight
200	Hands with a Flush
170	Hands with a Full House
25	Hands with Four of a Kind
1.5	Hands with a Straight Flush
.15	Hands with a Royal Straight Flush

Good Texas Hold 'Em players use the odds to make their playing decisions. They don't play be 'feel' or with their eyes closed.

The chances of finishing a flush or a straight you think you could make, or the probability of getting a face card, or the percentage of times you might get a flop card to match your pocket (or hole) pair are all factors in how you will play the game, or whether you will fold.

The reason you need to understand the odds is so that you can know when to bet, when to raise, etc. Without that knowledge, you are just guessing.

Consider these examples for the pre-flop odds in a ten player game:

Example 1 - Let's say you have two queens in your hand. It is now time to call or raise the bet. At this point, your chances of winning the hand are about 22%.

If the pot was $60.00 and you had a 22% chance of winning, your 'pot odds' would tell you that you could safely bet up to $13.20.

But what if someone decides to bet heavily? What are the odds that they have a good hand? Over half of all Texas Hold 'Em pots are won with a pair of 9s or something better.

How does that compare to what you have? You should continue to play a tight game unless the players at your table are all big fish.

Example 2 - Your hole or pocket cards happen to be a pair of aces! If you look at the 10 player table above, you will note that your chances of winning are about 31%.

So, you have a distinct advantage pre-flop. What should you bet? Well, if you use the betting strategy we gave you earlier, you would not bet more than 31% of the pot, right?

Let's say the pot is $200.00. Your highest bid would be $62.00 (31% of $200.00). But here's a question. What if you did not need to bet that much to stay in the game? Should you use the additional money you COULD bet to raise the bid?

Before you make this decision, consider two things. If you raise to your maximum bet, you may drive players out of the game, which would improve your odds of winning.

However, if you WANT to keep more hands in the game so that the pot will increase even more in value, you should play it a little cooler so that you will not have a mass exodus.

Remember that you are not 80-90% sure of winning. Your hand is valued at 31%.

So you might want to raise the bet to $40.00 to see who stays in the game. If the table is strong, you might bet something less $20.00 or $25.00

Example 3 – Let's say you draw a pretty bad hand, namely a 7 and a 2. The odds are really against you.

You have no high cards to build on and you have no real straight or flush prospects.   Your chances of winning are about four percent.

You should ONLY stay in the game through the flop if it will cost you less than the value of your hand, which is four percent of the pot.

If your maximum bet in a $100 pot is $4.00, and the blinds are established at five and ten dollars, you would need to have at LEAST a ten percent chance of winning to stay in the game.

You don't have that chance. Your chances are limited to four percent.

Under these circumstances, you will want to fold. While it is true that you might be able to get a pair or two out of the flop, you have to weigh the probability that will happen against the odds you KNOW you have in your hand.

If you are always looking at the odds, you can use your knowledge of the odds when you want to decide whether to bluff. This technique comes in handy when the pot is large with only 2-3 players at the table.

Bluffing to the Odds - _Here is an example you might find useful:_

You are in a two-person game (5-10 dollars), and you are on the river with $140.00 in the pot.

You don't make the river which you thought might reap you a straight or a flush, or perhaps you saw a flop that started with two hearts and a spade, and proceeded with two additional spades.

If you have two hearts in your hand, you might want to bluff, even if your opponent checks you. At this point, you know you have probably lost, but if you can get him/her to back down, your bluff will win you the game.

Rather than check at this point, you could plunk down another ten dollars to get you odds of 14 to 1, and hope they fold.

If this strategy works for you at least seven percent of the time, you will make money in the LONG RUN. If not, it is a strategy you should dump. Perhaps you are just really bad at bluffing?

Just remember that the more players who are seated at the table, the less likely the odds will support your bluff. Stick to bluffing in smaller games and you are likely to come out the winner more of the time.

When you consider whether it is worth learning and playing the odds, consider this: If you change your odds of winning by only 5%, you can take a 10/100 record and change it to 15/100.

Using the 10 wins for every 100 games scenario, if you have a stake of $100.00, with the house taking a rake of $1.00 per pot, you would get $90.00 at the end of your poker session if you had played one hundred games. So you lost $10 after 100 games.

What's the big deal?

But if you increase your winning advantage by a mere five percent with a pot of $115.00 for the hundred games, you could make eighteen thousand dollars by playing three nights a week for twelve months.

Not bad for a mere 5% advantage!

Odds and Outs - To further explore the concept of 'odds' let's look at the idea of 'outs'. Outs are cards you need to make the hand you want to create so you can win the pot.

If you need four cards to make your hand, you have 'four outs'.

Let's say that you have a six of clubs and a seven of diamonds and you find, much to your pleasant surprise, that there is a nine of spades in the flop.

You can use this with an eight to create a straight, right? The thing you have to consider is the odds of your getting that card.

With One Card to Come	**With Two Cards to Come**
52 cards	47 cards available for turn
- 3 cards in flop	x 46 cards available for river
- 2 cards in your hand	/ 2 (card cannot match itself)
- 1 turn card	
= 46 unknown cards*	= 1081
*42 of these cards will not help you. 4 will help you make your hand.	To find the number of two-card combinations with eights in the mix, you must complete the calculation as follows:
You have roughly a 9% chance to make your hand	

One of your eights can show up on the 'turn'. If it does, there are three eights left for the 'river'.

```
       4
x      3
/      2  (card cannot match itself)
=      6  unique pairings of 8 cards
```
If we take this to the next step and assume that an eight shows up on the turn or the river, you still have 46 unseen cards to consider.

You don't care about the three eights still left in the deck, so take those out of the equation. That leaves you with 43 unknown cards.

```
   46
-   3
= 43      cards to form pair with one of 3
          remaining 8s
x   4     total number of two-card combos
          with at least one 8 in the mix
=172      total number of two-card combos
          with at least one eight in the mix

+   6
=178      possible two-cards hands
          with 1-2 eights in the hand
```

If you consider the original 1081 we got when we finished the first calculation with two cards yet to come, and then subtract 178 from that number, you will come up with a resulting 903. So your odds of getting an eight to finish your straight by the river are a little less than 20%.

Before we leave the subject of out odds, we should tell you about the 'rule of four-two'.

This is an easy way to figure out the odds when you know the number of outs. While it isn't completely fool proof, it is a fast method and it will keep you playing with a good, solid idea of your odds for making your hand.

With two cards to come after the flop you will multiply your outs by the number four.

With one card to come, you will multiply your odds by the number two.

Here is an example:

Your Hand	**# of Outs**	**# of Cards to Come**
Four Card Flush	Nine	Two

Do the math: 9 x 4 = 36.

A rough estimate of your odds would give you a 36% chance of making your hand. If you were to look at a true odds chart, you would find that the actual number is 35%.

Not too far off for a 'guesstimate'!

Pot Odds – Let's talk in more detail about analyzing pot odds. When you look at the current size of the pot in your game and weigh that against your next call or bet or raise, you see that your decision can be important to whether you stay in the game or fold.

Here are a few examples:

Example 2 – You have $200.00 in the pot and you have a bet of $10 in front of you. You need to fill a four card flush, so you have a one in four chance (or 25%) to get what you need.

If the odds are about 25% and you only have to bet 5% of the current pot to stay in the game, you are OK. You only have to bet $10 to stay in and you could afford to bet $50.00 and stay within your card odds.

Example 1: Let's say you are in a $5.00 to $10.00 game holding a JT pocket with only one opponent left on the turn. You have an outside straight draw with a board that looks like this: 2, 5, 9, QA, and only one river card left to make that straight.

Any 9 or K will finish it.

You have eight outs (four 8s and four Ks in the deck), and 46 unknown cards. With an eight out of forty-six chance of getting your hand, you have about a 17% chance of winning.

You can make that $10.00 bet when it comes around to you, and the odds are 17% so you are still ahead of the odds. If your bet or call is smaller than the 17% odds you can get your next card at a discount.

Don't just throw away what you consider a bad card. Figure the odds for the hand and the pot and play accordingly. You may be able to build that great hand and win anyway.

By the same token, don't just keep drawing in hopes for that flush or straight.

Look at the options and weigh them against the odds. In other words, is there enough money in the pot to justify the risk or should you just fold?

If there is a reasonable chance of winning, you may want to stay in the game and shoot for the big pot. Knowing the card and pot odds will help you make that decision.

For a pot of $100.00 with a $10.00 call, you should win at least once every eleven times if you are going to break even.

If you have to draw for a flush, your odds would be about 35%. If the bet is $5.00 to you, should you call? What are the pot odds? With fifteen dollars in the pot and a $5.00 bet to you, your odds are 25%.

To break even, you would have to win once out of every five times you play this combination. Your chances of making that draw are better than that!

Your chances are about one in three, so you can go ahead and play for the profit margin!

If you do not win this time, you will win when you make this play in the long run and you will make money. If your pot odds are better than the five to one required, why not take the chance?

But if your pot odds become an even bet, you probably don't want to take the 50-50 chance you will win.   You might fold or try a partial bluff to see if you can stay in long enough to improve your hand.

While it is a great idea to memorize the odds so you can quickly calculate your cards and pots, the basic idea is more important. Play draw hands when your POT ODDS are better than your CARD ODDS.

Implied Odds – This technique uses odds coupled with a prediction about how other players will react in the game.

If for example you are in a $5.00 to $10.00 game with a four flush at the flop, and your neighbor bets, you might see that everyone else folds.

If the pot is $50.00, you first have to do your math to figure out the chances that you will get your flush on the turn (19% - or about a 1 in 5 chance).

To stay in the game, you will have to call the $5.00 bet and when you consider the $50.00 pot that is OK. A one in five chance is better than a one in ten chance so the odds are OK.

But you still have to consider what the opponent will do. He is going to bet on the turn and the river so that's another $10.00 for each bet, bringing your total bet to $25.00.

Your chances of hitting the flush on the turn or the river are about 35% (a better than one in three chance now) but you have to pony up that $25.00, bringing the total of the pot to $100.00.

You have a one in four chance of winning when you consider your investment in the pot versus the pot size.

That's still OK.

But what if you don't make the hand on the turn. You'd have to change your outs and your odds to reflect the game you are now both playing.

Your chances of getting the flush now stand at 19.6%, but your chance of winning when you consider the pot odds, seem OK.

You have to make a $20.00 investment but you'll get the $100.00 pot if you do and you can figure a one in five chance of that.

If you decided to take your chances and stay in, you might consider raising your opponent to get another $20.00 to $40.00 in the pot.

As you can see, if you master the outs and the pot odds, you can use these to your advantage in trying to predict the implied odds and player behavior.

Before we leave the subject of odds, let's look at a few more examples so you can test your ability to judge and strategize.

Example 1 – You are dealt a pair of Jacks. But the flop does not reveal another Jack. What are the chances that you will get a Jack on the turn? Here's a hint: calculate the number of outs and divide it by the number of cards in the deck.

With two more Jacks in the deck, you have 47 more cards to see. You have already seen five of them (your two pocket cards, and the flop). Under these circumstances you would have about a 4.3% chance of pulling another Jack (.0426%).

What if there is no Jack on the turn? You still have the river, right? And there are still two Jacks left somewhere, but there is one less card in the deck. The odds remain about the same for those 46 remaining unknown cards (about 4.3% or .0434%).

But what if you wanted to get BOTH the remaining Jacks on the turn or the river. If the chances of getting ONE Jack are 1 in 47 at the turn, what are your chances of getting that second Jack at the river?

Since you already have the first one you wanted, you would be looking at only one Jack left in the deck. So the chances are still 1 in 46 or 2.2% (.0217%). If you multiply the .0426 x .0217, you get .0009 (1/10th of a percent). That is not a bet we would suggest you make!

Example 2 – You try this one! You have a straight draw. What are your chances of hitting the straight on your next card? A K or 8 will complete your hand and you can assume there are four left in the deck. You have eight outs at the flop.

What are the chances of getting what you want at this point?

      a.   12%
      b.   15%
      c.   17%
      d.   20%

You will find the answers for these questions at the end of this chapter!

What if you didn't get the card on that turn and you want to calculate your chances now? There are now 46 cards left in the deck and eight that will help you win. What's the chance you will win now?

      a.   12.5%
      b.   16.2%
      c.   18.9%
      d.   17.4%

What are your chances of getting that card on the turn or the river? To get that information, you will have to calculate the chances of NOT getting the K or 8. Invert the probabilities (by subtracting them from one), and then multiply them to get your number.

$\{39/47\}$ x $\{38/46\}$ results in what odds?

      a.   29.4%
      b.   31.4%
      c.   25.1%
      d.   27.3%

Example 3 – Let's say you are dealt the Kd and the 9h. The flop contains a Ks, a 9c and a 4c. What are your chances of getting the full house on the turn? You will need a K or 9 and there are two of each of these left in the deck so you have four outs.

With 47 cards left after the flop your chances are four out of forty seven or about 8.5% (.085).

Can you get a full house on the river? Those chances are not going to change much with one card (four in forty six), so your shot here is about 8.7% (.087).

What about your chances on the turn OR the river? It WON'T happen on the turn 43 out of 47 times (.915). On the river, it WON'T happen 42 out of 46 times (.835).

If you invert those numbers, you get a 16.5% chance that you will get your hand by the river.

What are your chances of getting four of a kind? You'll need to get the full house on the turn and if you recall, the chances of that are .085. The chances of your getting the same card again are 1 in 46 or 2.2% (.022).

If you multiply these two (.085 x .022), you get 1/5 of one percent. Half the time it will be K and the other half of the time it will be a 9.

Return on Investment (ROI) - When the stakes increase, it stands to reason that there will be an increase in the average winnings.

Players will play tight games at the beginning of play, so the pots will not grow as fast. If that is the case, your ROI will go down as the small blind goes up.

Take at look at this table to see what we mean:

The Maximum Bet in Dollars	The Pot in Dollars
Two	28-37
Four	25-35
Six	20-22
Ten	10-28
Twenty	6-7
Fifty	12
Sixty	7.6
One Hundred	6.1
Two Hundred	5.5

One of the benefits of playing Texas Hold 'Em in an online casino is that these casinos release data to show the ROI on various hands versus the bets made. For example, in a $2.00 game, the winning pot was 28-37 times the big blind.

Average pots were about $60.00. So, if you have the right hand, you can expect a 3,000% return on your investment!

If you are in a high-stakes game ($200), while the pots may average anywhere from six to twelve hundred dollars, the risk is also much greater, and the games will be much tighter.

Pots will only be about five or six times the big blind.

The low stakes tables seem to be a better bet, especially for the fish!

You should consider that while the high-stakes tables play a tighter game, that does not mean they play a slower game. If you are not ready for the action and you find it hard to make decisions quickly, you should beware.

A recent study revealed that a large percentage of games with pot totals over one thousand dollars were completed in less than one minute, and many more in less than six minutes.

If you look at the speed on the low-stakes tables, you will find about the same statistics, so there isn't much difference in the pace of play.

When you consider the hand odds, the pot odds and other strategies and information you will use to make your decisions, think about this: Most Texas Hold 'Em online casinos report an average of 50-60 hands each hour, PER TABLE.

When you consider risk versus reward, the $5.00 to $10.00 limit tables are the best bet for a novice or minimally skilled player

Before we leave this section on Playing the Odds, we will offer one last encouraging note.

Before you get crazy trying to memorize odds or decide to quit the game because you are discouraged by the need to keep all these numbers in your head, you should know that you can get odds charts that will easily help you figure out odds in your hand and odds for modified strategies as the game proceeds.

Oh, yes and for those of you who are keeping score, here are the correct answers to that little test we gave you above in **Example 2** of the **Implied Odds** section!

The correct answers appear in bold, below:

Example 2 - You have a straight draw. What are your chances of hitting the straight on your next card? A K or 8 will complete your hand and you can assume there are four left in the deck. You have eight outs at the flop.

What are the chances of getting what you want at this point?

    a.   12%
    b.   15%
    c.   17%
    d.   20%

What if you didn't get the card on that turn and you want to calculate your chances now? There are now 46 cards left in the deck and eight that will help you win. What's the chance you will win now?

    e.   12.5%
    f.   16.2%
    g.   18.9%
    h.   17.4%

What are your chances of getting that card on the turn or the river? To get that information, you will have to calculate the chances of NOT getting the K or 8. Invert the probabilities (by subtracting them from one), and then multiply them to get your number.

{39/47} x {38/46} results in what odds?

    e.   29.4%
    f.   31.4%
    g.   25.1%
    h.   27.3%

The Wonderful World of Poker Probability

Understanding Player Behavior and in Various Situations

This section will focus on observing and predicting player behavior – that means YOUR behavior, the behavior of other players and even how the behavior of players and the tone of a game can change with fewer players as well as tables where there are eight or ten players.

All of these factors will influence how much you win and how well you can analyze your game and change your strategy.

For starters, we will offer you a little tip about online poker. You may find this helpful in identifying players and matching a name to a profile or style of play.

Many people turn off the avatars or icons that other players use to identify themselves during play. These images can be pictures of anything or anyone but the player has chosen that picture to give themselves on online identity.

DON'T turn off the avatars.

When you meet a person face-to-face, you couple what you know about them with their face and you remember them for those characteristics.

It is much easier to remember a player and their profile if you have some image to remind you of that person's behavior and persona. It is like attaching a face to a name when you meet someone on the street.

If you want some practice in understanding human behavior, you can try to play a game of solitaire poker.

Keep track of your moves and go back and analyze how you played the game. Were you loose or tight? Did you consider the odds when you were faced with a decision to fold?

Most studies on gambling reveal that the average player overvalues their own hand and undervalues the hands of their opponents.

As you play your game of solitaire poker against the virtual players, see if you can guess how each player is playing it and whether they have a good hand, a so-so hand or a poor hand.

If you play with an eye toward the behavior or the other players and keep the odds in mind, you will win more games.

Try to guess the hole (pocket) cards of the other players based on their playing behavior.

Then try playing in free online casinos to see if you can sharpen these skills. Take notes and write down what you are thinking and doing at each decision point and analyze your behavior to improve your style and strategy for real games.

When you become a student of human behavior at the poker table, you will take the lessons you have learned about odds and sharpen your game more by learning to read visual, verbal and other cues.

But what happens when you can't SEE the people with whom you are playing? How do you read behavior when you are not in the same room with the other players?

Do not despair!

There are ways you can assess online behavior to give you the same information.

Here are some things you should notice:

> How long does it take for player to respond to a bet or raise?

> Does the player seem uncertain or does she/he play crisply and decisively

> Does the player seem to change strategy or his/her approach often?

> Does the player always raise in a certain situation?

> Does the player seem to use the same pattern on every hand regardless of what the odds might tell them to do?

> For example, do they always raise and then stay, then raise and then stay and ultimately chicken out and fold? Or do they perhaps play with abandon, never seeming to consider the odds?

To get some practice thinking about moves in a particular situation, consider these scenarios:

1. What if the player is betting very aggressively in spite of the fact that the flop was pretty bad? Perhaps they are trying to keep things moving in hopes of bluffing their way out of a bad position.

   But what if there was a re-raise? Would they change their behavior or fold? What do you think?

2. Everyone folds on the turn with a big pot at stake, because an obvious draw was missed. But one person stays in. Is that person bluffing? If so, you could understand why if the pot is big enough.

   It might be worth the risk, even if the person bluffing has a terrible hand.

   This is when you have to assess the player's previous behavior, decide whether they have a good hand or they are bluffing and look at YOUR hand to determine the odds of you winning in this contest of the wills.

   It is probably worth your staying in if you don't have a bad hand.

3. What if it is down to a very small table but you suspect that a player is bluffing. Again, you must look at the history of their play and see if you can figure out what they have by their playing behavior and style.

4. If the flop doesn't have any draw and a player bets, they may have a good hand. Do you know this player will enough to figure that out?

5. What if they bet on the flop and checked on the turn? If there was a draw and it did not hit, that player may just be buying a free card. Try betting back and see what happens.

6. How about when a player bets on the flop and the turn and checks on the river? Again, they probably just wanted to see the free card.   Bet right back at them and see what they do.

7. If a player gives you advice on their own bet, e.g. "save your money", the chances are that they are trying to create a smoke screen.

   Great players, and players with really strong hands do not feel the need to puff out their chest and scare away the competition. Great players let their hands speak for them! Go ahead and re-raise!

There is so much data available from online casinos and it can tell us much about human behavior and provide us with some general strategies that will work well in many situations.

While these observations may not apply to every person at every table, if you can use them to predict a general flow of play, you will be ahead of the game (especially as a novice).

But don't get too cocky.

The idea is to use the guidelines to get you started and then, within the confines of each table and each game, to take notes and make observations like Sherlock Holmes and his trusty sidekick, Watson!

Become your own sleuth and you will find it easier to predict behavior. Not everyone is the same but there are certain common behaviors and reactions that will make your life easier if you understand and use the guidelines.

1. When playing against a **loose table**, aggressive play is usually a winning strategy. If everyone at the table is playing loose, no one will win. Players will swat pots while the casino rakes in the cash.

   Betting pre-flop on every hand allows you to come away with a medium-sized stash.

   However, if you bet on every hand, eventually, the other players may catch on, so if that strategy starts to flag, don't be afraid to change.

   If you are at a large table, with a lot of fish, they are not likely to figure out your strategy.

   On the other hand, pre-flop RAISING is probably not a good idea. It will reduce your profit and it will get more and more expensive to see the board as the game progresses. That gets very expensive when the flop doesn't hit and you have to fold.

2. With three or fewer players at a table, you can also make some money by being aggressive. If there are four players or more, you'll want to back off on that strategy or you will lose a lot of money.

3. Bluffing at full or nearly full tables is a waste.

4. Hands with strong odds can double in power, even if they are not huge hands. If you can get the table down to a few players, you can increase the power of your hand.

5. Watch the stacks of other players. Tight players tend to lose chips in small increments, and will seesaw between moderate and larger stacks.

   If you are playing against a lot of tight players, you can bluff all night and you won't get far.   Watch the stacks to get important information about the player's style and use that information to your benefit.

6. Loose players will swing a lot farther in both directions. You don't want to get caught in the cross-fire.

   You can read players on your right a lot more easily, and it is great if you end up with an animal or a maniac on your right because you can let them do the work for you by eliminating players with so-so or draw hands.

   Loose players are either novices (fish) or they just play to have a good time and don't really know the game. They will take chances and wander all over the place so it is usually pretty easy to tell that they have NO strategy or knowledge. They bet more and build the pots for the better players.

   If you sit down at a table with ten players and half of these players are better than you are, you are bound to lose.

   In the beginning, a loose table is a great way for you to learn and win a little at the same time.

   Find a loose table by observing the play for 10-15 minutes at a minimum – 30 minutes is even better. Take notes and find the loose players.

   Assess your odds of being able to play with the people at this table and be sure there are loose players you can beat as you begin your learning journey.

Try to play at tables where most of the players have less experience and ranking. It is easier for you to learn and make a profit on their mistakes and lack of knowledge.

7. If you think you are facing a tight player, know that they are more likely to call a bet than to re-raise, even though they may have a strong hand.

   You may be able to scare them into thinking you have a great hand and buy free cards even if they have the positional advantage.

   A tight game, where few players are calling before the flop, and fewer are staying in until the final showdown can really reduce your profit.

   Some players prefer a tight/passive game because these players are pretty predictable and you can probably steal more pots by making others folds.

8. When you are playing at a **tight table**, you should understand that the casino will win if EVERYONE PLAYS it tight. Players will lose less, but no one will really win.

   The more seasoned players will therefore tell you that if you want to win more money you should play tight in loose games and ONLY play in loose games if you want to win more money.

   The play will tend to get tighter as players drop out. If the game gets too tight, find a better table.

9. Distracted players are an interesting breed. They play more than one table at a time, read email, watch TV and talk to others in the room.

   Remember that online play allows the player to sit at a computer and do other things while they are playing poker.

   While any player may lag at a particular time because they are calculating odds or handling a temporary distraction, the inattentive player is especially annoying because they slow down the play and because they just don't seem all that invested in the game.

You can take advantage of this if you assume that the player is not paying full attention and thus is probably not that familiar with the other player styles and what is happening in the game in general.

Play a straight ahead game without worrying about whether this player can read you. You can probably gain some advantage later in the game because of the player's inattention.

When you log on to an online site, you should choose your table by spending time looking at tables and players and assessing the best location for you and your skills.

Use a simple numerical system to assess each player and the overall strength or weakness of the table:

➢ Assign a one (1) to the tightest players – those who win consistently and resist bluffing from others, those who make good decisions and are willing to fold when it makes sense to do so.

➢ Assign a ten (10) to those who are loose players. These players may be novices or perhaps they just don't care enough to learn the rules. They bet inconsistently and illogically, raise for no apparent reason and seem to love bluffing.

At the showdown, these players often reveal a hand that should have been folded early in the game.

➢ Use the numbers in between (2-9) to rank players with degrees of loose or tight behavior.

➢ Then average out the table to see whether this table and the players at the table will allow you to win. If the average is 6-10, DO NOT play at that table.

Anything less than an average of five will be a good table for you to play. The lower the average, the better!

Once you choose a table, try to position yourself in a late position from the two best players.

There are other tools you can use to get a jump on player behavior and they are featured in most online poker rooms. These tools allow you to see:

➢ How many players are seeing the flop.

➢ Those players who fold a lot on the first two cards are the tighter players.

➢ Players who NEVER or almost never fold on the first two cards, even when it costs them money, are the loose players.

When picking a loose/passive game, choose a table with a fairly high flop percentage and a good pot size.

There is no doubt that it will take time and experience to know what type of table and mix of behaviors will be best for you.

Until you improve your knowledge and skills and get better at reading the odds and the players' behavior and style, you can stick with a loose/passive table to ensure that you will make SOME money.

Another behavior that often plagues Texas Hold 'Em online poker players is the "stick to it" philosophy. "I lost money here, I need to win it back".

If a table is not working out for you and you are suffering with players who are too tight or too experienced, GET UP AND MOVE TO ANOTHER TABLE! Let the other fish in the pond stay on to be eaten alive again and again!

What about the 'behavior' and flow of a table? Do numbers count in the game?

> **Ten Players** - Since most online tables seat ten players you will have to play a tighter game and consider your position at the table. Call before the flop with good cards or a good drawing hand.

> Remember that you will have more competition so you'll have to showdown more hands.

> **Six Players** – You can play it looser here and you will see wider wings and variances, so you'll have to watch your stack.

Three or Less Players – At short-handed tables, you are likely to see the flop more often and have more chance of winning the pot.

But, you will also face some pretty aggressive behavior at small tables.

It is important that you understand raising behavior. Most new players start out playing in low-limit, loose games.

Some experienced players love to take advantage of the fish and they prefer the loose/passive play at the low-limit tables, but others may have trouble playing against players with consistently bad hands and poor playing skills.

A fish may not know enough to fold when a more experienced player raises against them.

Fish can sometimes win by "sucking out" with an poor hand against a really solid hand like a pair of aces.

BUT, if you raise before the flop and keep betting after the flop, all but the fastest and loosest maniacs will fold because your betting will be too aggressive.

If you are playing aggressively to discourage those maniac fish who don't know enough to quit when they have a bad hand, you will drive out enough players at the table to increase your odds of winning with a moderately good hand.

The one cautionary note here is to be sure that you keep the odds and rules in mind. Don't become a maniac yourself by betting and raising on a terrible hand.

If you have a good hand, and you feel you have a handle on those fish and know that they are bluffing or just out of control, go ahead and raise to get rid of them. Most of them will eventually panic in the face of those aggressive raises and they will fold.

Statistics show that bad players will raise with a draw, an over-card or a so-so pair.

If you call the bet and you are prepared to call to the river, you should be OK as long as the board (community cards) doesn't get too crazy.

Use your head and calculate the pot odds to see if you are justified in continuing to bet.

If your opponent raises to three bets, you should reconsider your strategy. An average low-limit player will not raise at this point unless he/she has a good hand.

Study the board and try to figure out what your opponent may have in his/her hand.

It is wise to avoid the re-raise unless you have "the nuts". You can call to the river without the "absolute nuts" but you should be careful to consider your moves.

Profiling the Players at the Table

Because there is so much data available in an online casino, you can begin to profile a player before you ever sit down at the table. For example, if you are playing in the Party Poker casino, you can click on the hand number that appears at the top of the screen and ask that a history be sent to you via email.

Go to the bottom of the list and look at what the player is holding. Then watch their playing style to see how they are playing the hand.

Keep records by creating a document in Word or Excel. Use that form to take notes on players and to keep a history for yourself.

You will start to see what strategies work for you in which situations and how other specific players will play in certain games. If you are not comfortable keeping computer notes, you can just buy a spiral notebook and keep your records there.

Don't rely on your memory or get stuck because you don't seem to be doing well. If you save data, you can actually analyze how other players are playing the game and how YOU are playing the game.

At a minimum, you should keep the following information:

Session Dates

Start Time

Stop Time

Wins and Losses   Note each opponent as a 'Net Loser', 'Low/Moderate Winner', 'Moderate Winner', or a 'Maximum Winner'

Running Bankroll Totals

Hourly Win Rate

Bet History   Do they bet pre-flop, etc?

Hands   What were you dealt? What hand did you use to close out the game (five cards)

Opponents   Identity (names, avatars)

Tells

Style and Strategy of other players   Assign each opponent a profile according to the player types below

Details about Opponents   What size is their stake? Do they play quickly or slowly?

What kinds of cards do they play on, bet on, raise on? Sites like Party Poker offer an online note-taking feature which is helpful.

Right mouse click on the player image (avatar) and select 'Player Notes' to insert your comments.

While this may seem like a tedious exercise, it will help you to objectively analyze your own play and the play of others and this is how you will learn and win more money.

When you analyze your style and create profiles for other players, you can combine the odds with a strategy that is appropriate to a particular game and scenario.

Look at your statistics from several vantage points to see how the value of cards might change depending on the other players at the table and the betting styles of those players.

Here are the types of players you will profile:

Profile	**Description**
Loose/Passive	Experienced players call these individuals "calling stations", because they will call any bet even if there is no chance they will win the pot. They will not fold, even if they have a garbage hand. They will stay in most hands unless you push them hard to call.
	Yet, these same players will, strangely enough, NOT raise when they have a good hand, thereby revealing their 'passive' side.
Loose/Aggressive	These players will often make inappropriate raises. They may not have the best hand but they will raise anyway. They bet irrationally, raising and then staying, then raising and then folding, with no rhyme or reason for their actions. These players are truly 'maniacs'.
	Playing against them can be profitable, but it can also cost you money because you will have to call all those crazy raises in order to stay in the game.
Tight/Passive	The 'rock' players play fewer hands and play very cautiously. For a fish, this is the right way to play. When a player like this finally DOES raise, you should be careful. They probably have the nuts.
	While you will not lose as much money if you play like a 'rock', you will not win as much money either.
	When you play OPPOSITE a 'rock', you must be patient and ready to recognize behavior that indicates a great hand is lurking in the wings.

Tight/Aggressive These players play few of the hands they are dealt, but when they DO play, their behavior is more varied and less predictable.

If these players raise, you will find it hard to know whether they have a good hand or they are bluffing. These players are selective in their aggression which keeps other players guessing. They may bet carefully on a good hand and trick others into thinking they don't have much. They might raise to push weaker players out.

These players will drive you crazy as opponents. HOWEVER, your goal should be to become a tight/aggressive player and drive everyone else crazy!

Playing and Acting Like a Winner

There are many components to winning Texas Hold 'Em in an online game. If you want to be a winner, you have to build your knowledge, think like a winner, pay attention, know the odds and have a strategy that is credible.

Here are just a few of the factors that figure into a winning profile:

Aspire to be a Rock – Wherever it is appropriate and at whatever tables you can find to leverage this strategy, be a 'tight/aggressive' player.

If you choose your table and the players carefully before you sit down, you can use this strategy to make you harder to read and you can drive everyone else nuts and win money.

Be willing to wait. Don't panic. Patience is important if you are going to improve and learn the game. Fold when necessary and wait for the good hand. It might take an hour or two to get that hand, but it will pay off and you will lose less money in the meantime.

If you plan to stay at the table for a long time, the other players will see that you fold when necessary and take pots with good hands.

After you have established credibility, you can bluff effectively, because you have an established image with the rest of the players at the table.

Pay Attention – If you eliminate distractions, you will be more likely to catch the small details that will make a difference in the game.

Tune out outside noise and tune into the music and sounds of the casino to help you stay focused on your target. The sounds may be annoying, but they will keep you in the game.

Most online casinos provide plenty of sound cues (shuffling, chips clacking, etc).

If you are playing more than one game, keep your game windows open and refreshed so that you can keep track of changes, which can be pretty quick in online poker and especially in tournaments.

Turn off the chat function so that you can really focus. Players who chat rarely if ever have anything useful to say and chatting creates a distraction that others can use to their advantage.

Turn off the TV and close the door so that you are not distracted by other voices, watching the news or a sporting event or talking on the telephone.

Take a Break – Play for an hour and then take a break and stretch. Even if you are winning, you are less productive if you get tired. You will lose your focus. Go get a drink of water, stretch, talk to a friend or family member for a minute or two and then get your head back in the game.

Stack Up – Go into the game with plenty of chips so you don't get short-stacked. You can lose a really good hand if you run out of chips.

Bluff Occasionally – You don't want to be TOO predictable. Use bluffing judiciously and selectively. You may win a pot on a weak hand, or you might lose a few chips if the bluff does not work, but you will teach other players that your behavior is not always going to be predictable.

Don't try to bluff unless you are in a position in a low-limit game, where you feel you can force other players out.

Others may call you just to be sure you are honest and you don't want to lose it all on a bluff in a big pot.

Use the pot and implied odds to see if you have a one in ten chance of winning, with a ten to one return. You may not be able to get enough tells to give you this information, but you can estimate and do your best to cover yourself.

Remain Calm and Focused – Don't sweat, shake and become emotional when you lose. Don't let others rattle or defeat you. Count on the cards and your knowledge and pick yourself up and try again.

Never give another player a reason to think you are rattled, or you have given them the edge.

Remember that the best revenge is to beat your opponent on the next round, but don't use revenge as your motive or your emotions are likely to get the better of you and you will find yourself betting, and raising when you should fold.

Bide your time and wait for your win.

Don't Drink While You Play – There is nothing that will beat you sooner than a cloudy brain! If you are playing for keeps, you should not alter your focus with a fuzzy brain.

Let the other players drink while they play. There is plenty of time for a cocktail after you win your pot.

Quit Before You are Broke – Know when to fold. It sounds trite, but the tendency to stay in the game when you KNOW you should fold is one that even professional players fight.

If your hand is really bad, if you are outranked by a better player or just misjudging odds, GET OUT of the game.

If you are hemorrhaging money, you are not showing your best face to your opponents. They are more likely to play against you because they will smell blood. Just get up and leave.

If the play gets too short-handed and you feel outdone, get up and leave.

Don't be chum!

Try another table or game to get a fresh start, or just quit for the night and start again tomorrow.

If your focus is slipping and you are making mistakes, get up and leave. Get some rest and come back the next day with a fresh focus!

Think Like a Pro – If you watch and learn from the really great players, you can mirror their behavior.   Find a few players you really respect and watch them play online. Note their moves, their style and the detail of their play. If you think like, and play like a pro, you are bound to get better.

Start playing at a table when you are sure you have the right table with the right players.

Don't outplay yourself by getting in over your head. Know your own skills and get out when you should. Stay when you should stay.

Be confident. Be observant.

Don't rush or slow down your play. Play at a steady pace and keep plenty of notes so you can look at your results later.

When you are ready to strike, do so aggressively and with purpose. Push out weaker players.

Review your notes at the end of the night, while they are fresh in your mind and make decisions about what you did right and what you did wrong.

Decide how you will change your behavior and what style was the best for you so you'll have some options the next time you play.

Put the losses behind you and never get into a grudge match. Keep an even head and a cool temper.

You cannot play well if you are too emotional.

Do not use 'selective reasoning' to explain away your losses and gloat over your wins. Look objectively at both your wins and your losses to learn from both experiences.

Keep copious financial records. These will chasten you when you are losing and keep you objective and realistic. They will also help you understand where you won and where you lost and hopefully explain your betting behavior so you can avoid the pitfalls in the future.

If you want to get better at ANYTHING, you must study, practice, and analyze.

The final tool we will give you before we end this book is the Glossary of Terms we promised you at the beginning of the book. This Glossary is helpful if you want to understand what other poker players are saying, and moreover, it will make you SOUND like a pro.

As we all know, half of the poker player's advantage lies in the persona she/he develops and how that player is perceived by others.

So learn the lingo and use it to your advantage.

May the odds be with you!

Glossary of Terms: Texas Hold 'Em and Online Poker

A	
Absolute Nuts	The best hand possible, considering the board cards
Action	The amount of money wagered by a player during a game. Placing money in the pot
Active	A player who is still "in the pot"
All Blue or All Pink	A flush
All In	Put all your remaining chips in the pot
American Airlines (Pocket Rockets or Rockets)	Pair of Aces
Anchor	Player who is seated in the last position at the table (right before the Dealer)
Angling	Take an action or talk when it is not your turn. Meant to distract and mislead opponents
Animal (Maniac or	Players that are loose/aggressive, will tend

Loose/Aggressive)	to be involved in too many hands, and will bet or raise even with garbage hands
Ante	The first money wagered on a hand, or the minimum amount each player must put into the pot before a new hand commences

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">B</td></tr>
<tr><td>Baby</td><td>A card that has a low ranking (typically 2-5)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Backdoor</td><td>Unfinished hand that requires assistance during the turn and the river if the hand is going to win</td></tr>
<tr><td>Backdoor Flush</td><td>This occurs when the player needs two specific cards of the same suit to complete a hand</td></tr>
<tr><td>Back Into</td><td>Making a hand that is different than what you originally set out to create</td></tr>
<tr><td>Bad Beat</td><td>A hand that is the clear loser to a strong underdog and should not have been in the pot in the first place</td></tr>
<tr><td>Bankroll (BR)</td><td>Total amount of money a player has available for a game or tournament</td></tr>
<tr><td>Belly Buster (Gutshot or Inside Straight)</td><td>A draw to fill an inside straight, where only one card will make the player's hand</td></tr>
<tr><td>Bet</td><td>To wager or gamble</td></tr>
<tr><td>Betting Limit</td><td>The established minimum or maximum that may be wagered on one bet</td></tr>
<tr><td>Bicycle (Wheel)</td><td>Five high straight</td></tr>
<tr><td>Big Blind (BB) (Blind Bets)</td><td>The table position that is two players to the left of the "button". The player in this position must place a full bet prior to the Dealer's distribution of the two hole cards</td></tr>
<tr><td>Big Chick</td><td>Suited or unsuited Ace and Queen hole (or pocket) cards</td></tr>
<tr><td>Big Slick</td><td>Suited AK hole (pocket) cards</td></tr>
<tr><td>Blank (Rag)</td><td>A card that appears to be useless within the grand scheme of the game</td></tr>
<tr><td>Blind Bets (Small Blind and Big Blind)</td><td>The blind bets (small blind and big blind) are bets that players must make if they are seated in the first and second chair to</td></tr>
</table>

	the left of the dealer. These bets are made before the dealer deals the hole (pocket) cards
Bluff	Players will use bluffing when they have a weak hand but they want to try to win by driving other players from the game
Board (Community or Communal Cards)	Otherwise known as the Community Cards placed face up in the center of the table for the flop, the turn and the river. These cards are used by all the players to create a winning hand when combined with their two hole (pocket) cards at the end of the game
Boat	Full house
Bonus Whoring	Players who belong to many online casinos so they can take advantage of casino bonuses are said to be 'bonus whoring'. If you want to be a bonus whore, you can visit http://www.bonuswhores.com for more information.
Bounty	Rewards given in an online tournament, based on certain criteria or goals like winning a particular hand, killing off another tournament player or finishing in a certain position in the tournament
Brick and Mortar (B&M)	A casino building as opposed to an online casino
Broadway	Ace high straight
Bubble	A player who finishes a tournament in the position that is nearest the money pot is said to be "on the bubble". If the top ten winners get money and you finish in the 11th position, you are said to be finishing on the bubble
Bullets	Pair of aces
Bump (Bump It)	To raise the bet
Burn Card	A card that is discarded instead of dealt. The purpose of the burn card is to prevent cheating
Bust Out	A player who lost their "buy in" amount is said to "bust out"
Button (Puck)	A disk that represents the dealer position at the table

Buy In	The amount of money that is necessary to play a particular game, or the amount of money that you to play a game
Buy the Button	Betting or raising the bet to make players after your position fold before the play gets back to the dealer. If this play works, you will be the last to bet before the next round
Buy the Pot	To bet, raise or bluff in an effort to get others to fold so you can win the pot
C	
Chips	Tokens that are purchased by the player to represent money or cash during play. These chips are bet in increments ($5, $10, etc) and together represent the player's total bet
Chop	If no one calls after the blinds are placed, the bets made by the players who placed the blind are returned to those players and the dealer goes on to the next hand
Chopping the Blinds	Two players will agree to take back the blind bets if there is no wager ahead of them. If you agree to chop the blinds, you have set a precedent and will be expected to chop the blinds throughout the entire time you are playing at this table
Chum	Like the bait used to attract sharks, the poker chum is the fish that will become a tasty meal for the more experienced player
Cold	A losing streak
Cold Call	Calling more than one bet at a time. In a cold call, the player does not call a bet and then a subsequent bet, but rather calls two single bets
Color Down	Exchanging chips for chips of a lesser denomination
Color Up	Exchanging chips for chips of a greater denomination
Come Hand	A drawing hand, like an open-ended

	straight
Complete Bet	When the small blind calls by throwing in the necessary chips
Complete Hand	A complete poker hand with all five cards e.g., straight, flush, straight flush, full house
Connectors	Consecutive cards (suited or unsuited) cards that help to complete a straight
Counterfeit	A hand that loses value because a board (community) card duplicates it, or because a board card gives other players a hand that is similar to yours
Cowboys	A pair of Kings
Cripple	To cripple an opponent is to win an important hand in a tournament and leave your opponent short-stacked
Cripple the Deck	One player's hand contains most or all of the critical cards that can be used to create a hand with the board (community cards)
Crying Call	A player calls with no cards to come with the expectation that she/he will lose
Cutoff	Player to the right of the button (dealer) in the last position at the table
D	
Dark	As in "playing in the dark". This happens when a player bets or checks without seeing the hole (pocket) cards. Also refers to the first player to act before the next board card is turned over
Dead Money	Money put in the pot players who are no longer able to win the pot
Dealer	A casino employee (or online software program) that deals the poker game
Drop Box	The box on the poker table into which cash, chips and markers is deposited
Dominated Hand	A hand containing three or less outs against another hand, e.g., AK would dominate AQ because AQ needs one of the three remaining queens to beat the AK

Double Up	Winning a heads-up pot in no-limit poker when you are all in
Ducks	Pair of twos
Dump	To fold
E	
Edge (House Edge)	Casino advantage over all players in the game
F	
Face Cards (Paint)	King, Queen or Jack of each suit in the deck
Family Pot	A game in which the potential to win the pot is shared by many players at the table
Fancy Play Syndrome (FPS)	Players who like to play convoluted or complex games thinking that they will confuse everyone else. In fact these players are usually better served to play a straight forward, simple game
Fast	A player who is playing a hand aggressively
Fish	A novice or poor poker player
Flash	Showing one or more cards even if it is not required
Flat Call (Smooth Call)	Call one or more bets without raising. This is usually done when you are fairly certain you have the best hand
Floor	The "floor" is an employee who works for the casino and assists players, making rulings and decisions when disputes arise
Flush	Five cards of one suit
Fold (Lay Down or Pass)	Player declines to bet and drops out of the game
Forced Bet	Mandatory bet
Four Of A Kind (Quads)	Four cards of the same ranking
Free Card Play	When a player bets or raises in the late position on the flop, hoping others will check to the turn so that the player can see the river card for free
Free Ride	Round in which no player places a bet
Free Roll	A player has a lock on at least half the pot

	and a good chance to win the whole pot, e.g. John holds Ks/Qc, while Susan holds Kd/Qd. The flop turns to Kc/7d/4d. Susan is free rolling because she can win the whole pot if she gets a diamond
Freeze Out	A tournament that ends when one player has won all of the chips in the tournament
Full House	A hand with three of a kind, and a pair
G	
GrannyMae	Qs/5s hole (pocket) cards
Gutshot (Belly Buster or Inside Straight)	See "Belly Buster"
Hand History	Data that provides records of a players' games played online
Hit	Flop cards that are helpful to the player's hand
Hold Up	A leading hand that wins the pot at the showdown
Hole Cards (Pocket)	The two cards that are dealt to you and remain hidden from the other players throughout the game
Hooks	Pair of Jacks
Horsing (Scooting)	Giving another player some chips when you win a pot
I	
Image	The playing style and behavior your reveal to other players
Inside Straight (Belly Buster or Gutshot)	A straight that requires an inside card to complete (as opposed to an open-ended straight)
J	
Jam	Lots of action in a game, especially in raising
K	
Kicker	The card used as a tie-breaker when two

	players' hands are almost identical
Kill (Kill Game)	A hand played for double stakes based on previous hands that meet certain criteria
Kill Button	Button placed in front of the player who can kill the game
Knuckle	To "knock on the table" or "check"
Kojak	King/Jack as hold (pocket) cards. Having a King and a Jack as your hole cards.

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<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">L</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lay Down (Fold or Pass)</td><td>See "Fold"</td></tr>
<tr><td>Limp In</td><td>Entering a round by calling a bet, rather than raising</td></tr>
<tr><td>Live Game</td><td>See "Ring Game"</td></tr>
<tr><td>Live Straddle (Straddle)</td><td>Optional raise made by the person to the left of the big blind, and declared before the hole (pocket) cards are dealt. That player then has the option to re-raise</td></tr>
<tr><td>Long Odds</td><td>Low probability</td></tr>
<tr><td>Loose Aggressive (LAG)</td><td>Players that are loose/aggressive will tend to be involved in too many hands, and will bet or raise even with garbage hands. These players are often known as "Animals" or "Maniacs"</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">M</td></tr>
<tr><td>Maverick</td><td>Q/J hole (pocket) cards</td></tr>
<tr><td>Maniac</td><td>See "Animal"</td></tr>
<tr><td>Marry</td><td>Becoming attached to a hand too early so that you stay in for the showdown when you should have folded earlier</td></tr>
<tr><td>Monster</td><td>Superior winning hand</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">N</td></tr>
<tr><td>Nut</td><td>The best possible hand, e.g. "nut flush", "nut straight", though not necessarily the Absolute Nut(s) (see "Absolute Nuts")</td></tr>
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<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">O</td></tr>
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Off–suit	Unsuited cards
Open Raise	The first player in the pot, raising, rather than calling, after the pre-flop
Option	Big blind player choice to call or raise
Orbit	Complete table rotation
Out-kicked	Losing a hand to one with a better kicker than yours
Outrun	Beating a hand to which you were previously losing
Outs	Cards that remain in the deck that may help you win the pot
Over-call	Calling a bet that has already been called by at least one other player
Over-card	A hole (pocket) card that is higher than the highest card on the board (community cards)
Over-pair	A hole (pocket) pair that is higher than the highest card on the board (community cards)
P	
Paint	See "Face Card"
Pass (Fold or Lay Down)	When a player does not bet he "passes" or "folds". See "Fold"
Pay Off	Calling a river bet when the action tells you that you are probably going to lose, but the pot is attractive enough to warrant the call
Peel One Off	Staying in for the turn or the river when the odds do not justify the call
Pocket (Hole Cards)	See "Hole Cards"
Pocket Rockets (American Airlines or Rockets)	See "American Airlines"
Pop (Bump)	See "Bump"
Post	Paying the blind(s) when you are not in the big blind position, i.e., when you first sit down at the table or after you sat out a turn
Pot	Money in the middle of the table collected from ante, bets and raises, and paid to the winner of the hand

Presto	Pair of 5s as hole (pocket) cards
Puck	See "Button"
Push	Playing aggressively
Put	When you suspect that someone has a particular hand
Q	
Quads (Four of a Kind)	See "Four of a Kind"
R	
Rag (Blank)	See "Blank"
Ragged	A board (community cards) that do not seem to be helpful to a player or players
Railbird	Game observers
Rainbow	A board (community cards) that contains different suits, thereby making it impossible to get a flush on the next card
Raise	Matching the previous bet and then betting more to increase the stakes
Rake	The money taken by the casino as a service fee for playing each hand of poker or a flat fee that is taken from the pot after each betting round
Rank	The value of a set of cards
Return on Investment (ROI)	The percentage or money you can make back on the investment you have made in the game
Ring Game (Live Game)	A game that is played for stakes, as opposed to a tournament game played for position
Rivered	Losing your hand on the river, when it appeared that you were ahead and likely to win. This term is sometimes used to define a hand that is made using a river card
Rock	Term used to describe a tight player who will normally only play in hands where he/she is a favorite to win
Rockets	See "American Airlines"
Rock Garden	A game with a lot of "rock" players
Rounder	Professional poker player

Royal Flush	Ace high straight flush (the best possible hand you can have)
Running Bad	A losing streak
S	
Sandbagging (Sell a Hand or Slow Play)	Playing a very strong hand as if you have a weak hand so that other players do not fold
Scare Card	A board (community) card that can turn a winning hand into a losing hand
Scoop	Winning the whole pot (often when you have a hand that is both the high and low hand in a split game)
Scooting (Horsing)	See "Horsing"
Sell a Hand (Sandbagging or Slow Play)	See "Sandbagging"
Semi-Bluff (Partial Bluff)	To bet or raise with more cards to come even though you feel you are already beaten. This technique can give you the opportunity to improve your chances and ensure that other players will stay in the game long enough for you to salvage a hand
Set	Three of a kind made from two cards in your hand (hole or pocket cards) and a third that is revealed on the board (community cards)
Short Stack or Short-Stacked	A relatively small number of chips compared to other players, or too few chips to stay in the game
Side Pot	An extra pot established when a player goes "all in". The player who is all in is not eligible to win the extra pot
Singleton	A card that is the only one of its rank and value
Sit and Go (SNG)	A tournament that is spontaneous as opposed to a scheduled tournament
Slow Down	To play less aggressively than the game was played earlier
Slow Play (Sandbagging or Sell a Hand)	See "Sandbagging"

Small Bet	In a game with limits, the small bet is the smaller of the two in the betting limits
Small Blind (SB)	The first position at the table to the left of the dealer (button). This player must bet first, prior to seeing the hole (pocket) cards. This bet is followed by the "big blind", placed by the player directly to the left of the "small blind"
Smooth Call (Flat Call)	See "Flat Call"
Spike	The next board (community) card dealt is a specific ranked card that you need for your hand
Splash	To "splash the pot" is to throw your chips into the center of the table instead of placing the chips. Most dealers and players do not like those who splash the pot
Spread	A certain poker game(s) offering by a casino
Stack	The amount of money you have available to you (in chips) so you can play the current game
Steal	Winning a pot on a bluff
Steal the Blinds	Pre-flop open betting from the cut-off or button (dealer). This is done to get everyone who follows your position to fold, in hopes you will win the pot
Steaming (Tilt or Tilting)	To play recklessly, usually because of a "bad beat"
Straight	A hand consisting of five cards in consecutive order
Straddle (Live Straddle)	See "Live Straddle"
Straight Flush	A hand consisting of five cards of the same suit in consecutive order
Stuck	Losing and low on chips
Suck Out	Winning a hand with cards that would make you the underdog and in a circumstance where you should probably have folded
Sweat	Observing a player poker session with the player's consent
T	

Table Coach	A player who loves to tell everyone else how to play the game and their cards
Tap Out or Tapped Out	Losing all your money
Tell(s)	When you are able to read the behavior or the odds to determine the strength or weakness of another player's hand
Three Bet	The first re-raise, i.e., a total of three bets in
Three Of A Kind (Thrips)	Three cards of the same rank
Thrips	See "Three of a Kind"
Throwing a Party	Novices or fish who are playing fast and loose and donating a lot of money to the pot
Tilt or Tilting (Steaming)	See "Steaming"
Trap	One player gets caught between two or more players who are betting and raising and that player is unlikely to win the pot
Two Pair	Two sets of pairs
U	
Underdog	A hand that is not likely to win the pot
Under the Gun	The first player who must act in any round of betting
Under-pair	A hole (pocket) pair lower than the lowest board (community) card
V	
Value Bet	A bet you wish your opponent to call, either because you have the best hand or because you have enough outs to make the bet profitable in the long-term
W	
Walking Sticks	Pair of sevens
Whale	High roller
Wheel (Bicycle)	See "Bicycle"
Wired Pair	A pair in hole (pocket) cards