

Learn How To Play Poker - Texas Hold 'Em (aka Texas Holdem)

by **MrStuff** on October 21, 2007

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Intro: Learn How To Play Poker - Texas Hold 'Em (aka Texas Holdem)

A Brief History :

Texas Hold 'em (or Hold'em, Holdem) is the most popular poker variant played in casinos in the United States. Hold 'em's simplicity and popularity has inspired a wide variety of strategy books which provide recommendations for proper play. Popularity of the game surged in the 2000s due to exposure on TV, on the Internet, and in popular literature. During this time, Hold 'em replaced all other forms of poker as the most common game in U.S. casinos. The no-limit betting form is used in the widely televised main event of the World Series of Poker (WSOP) and the World Poker Tour (WPT).

This Instructable is for the basic rules for Texas Hold 'Em.



Image Notes

1. The Table. (Birds Eye View) We'll be playing with 6 players.
2. KEY. (hope it's helpful) CHIPS, CARDS and the THREE BUTTONS (D, SB, BB).

step 1: Let's Begin

An Overview

Each player is dealt two private cards ("Hole Cards " or "Pocket Cards "), after which there is a betting round. Then three community cards are dealt face up (the "Flop "), followed by a second betting round. A fourth community card is dealt face up (the "Turn "), followed by a third betting round. A fifth community card is dealt face up (the "River ")and the the fourth and final betting round. At the **Showdown** , each player plays the best five-card hand they can make using any five cards from the two pocket cards and the five community cards (or **Board Cards**).

Supplies Needed

- 1) **Standard 52 Card Deck** (NO JOKERS) \$3
- 2) **Monetary Equivalent** (usually POKER CHIPS) \$5 and up
- 3) **1 - 10 willing Humans** (5 or more preferably) \$Priceless
- 4) **"DEALER" Button** (or equivalent) >\$1
- 5) **1 Table** (Large enough to accommodate said "Humans". DO NOT USE A MIRROR TABLETOP!) \$<nothing witty to say>

Optional Supplies

- 2nd Deck of cards (1 Red & 1 Blue) \$3
- "Poker Table Top" (adds a "casino" feel) \$20 and up
- Good Luck Charm

NOTE: The illustrations that follow are from a "birds eye view" of the table. I used Paint.NET for most of my photo editing.



Image Notes

1. The Table. (Birds Eye View) We'll be playing with 6 players.
2. KEY. (hope it's helpful) CHIPS, CARDS and the THREE BUTTONS (D, SB, BB).

BB).

1. WPT Playing Cards. 1 Blue Deck, 1 Red deck.
2. Poker Chips. Different colors represent different chip value.
3. Humans. Homo-Sapiens. People. Friends, etc.
4. Dealer Button.
5. Lucky Rabbit's Foot!
6. Poker Table Top

step 2: Getting Ready to Rumble

The Table

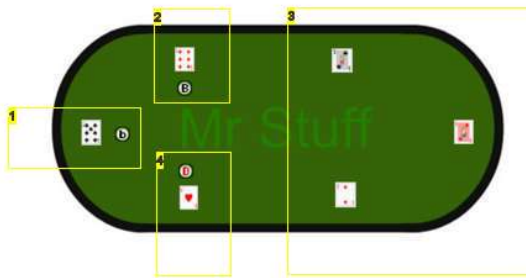
The table typically has anywhere from two to ten players. Tables with four or less players are referred to as "short handed". When there are only two players the game is called "Heads Up".

First Dealer

To determine who begins the game, a single card is dealt **face up** to each player; high card will be the first "Dealer (D)". (High card is Ace, followed by; K, Q, J, 10 etc.) The Dealer position is indicated by a white plastic chip referred to as the **button**. After each round of play, or "hand", the dealer button rotates to the left (clockwise), ensuring that everyone gets to play in all positions. <insert naughty pun here>

Blinds

Before the cards are dealt, **forced bets**, called the "**Big Blind (BB)**" and the "**Small Blind (SB)**" (or Little Blind) are made. The Small Blind position is always the seat to the left of the Dealer, and the Big Blind is the seat to the left of the Small Blind. The amounts of the blinds are predetermined, and the Small Blind is usually half the Big Blind.



- Chips
- Cards
- Dealer
- Small Blind
- Big Blind

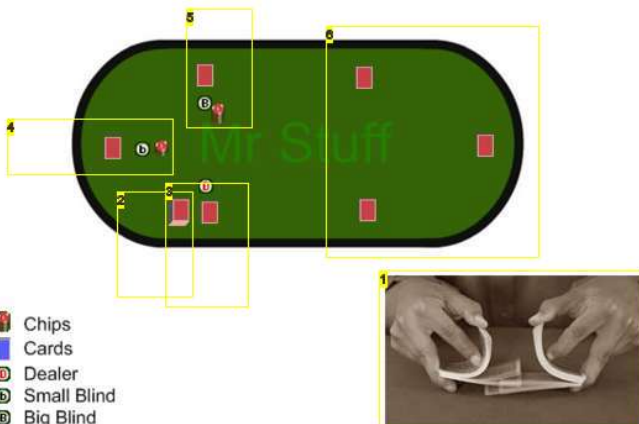
Image Notes

1. SMALL BLIND
2. BIG BLIND
3. The rest of the players.
4. DEALER. High Card; ACE

step 3: Foreplay!

Shuffle and Deal

The deck is shuffled and the dealer deals two cards **face down** to each player, one card at a time, starting with the player on the left (Small Blind position, then continues in a clockwise manner). These cards are your **Hole Cards** or **Pocket Cards**.



- Chips
- Cards
- Dealer
- Small Blind
- Big Blind



Image Notes

1. Shuffling the Deck
2. The Deck
3. DEALER. The Dealer is dealt a card last.
4. SMALL BLIND. Small Blind gets dealt a card first. The Small Blind is half of the minimum bet.
5. BIG BLIND. Big Blind gets dealt a card next. The Big Blind is the minimum bet allowed.

6. The rest of the players get dealt a card (going in a clockwise manner).

step 4: Let the Game Begin!

PreFlop

Once the cards are dealt, each player looks at their cards.

The Pot

The pot is the sum of money (or Chips) that players bet during each hand. After each betting round, all bets go into the pot until the Showdown.

Acting

Each player, when it's their turn, makes their choice and **Acts**. There are five acts that can be played:

- 1) **Check** - betting zero. Players may not check on the opening round because they must either match (or raise) the big blind or fold.
- 2) **Bet** - the opening bet of a betting round.
- 3) **Call** - to match a bet or a raise.
- 4) **Fold** - to discard your hand and forfeit the current pot.
- 5) **Raise** - to increase the size of the current bet.
- 5a) **Re-Raise** - making a second raise in the same betting round.

:: *Let's play with YOU in last position (one before the Dealer)* :: yay!

The player that's first to act (aka "Under The Gun" UTG) PreFlop, is the one to the left of the BB. The player can choose from three acts ; 1) **CALL** the current bet, 2) **FOLD** the hand without betting, or 3) **RAISE** the bet.

If a player raises the bet, each player must now call the new amount to continue playing the current hand, including those who may have already acted. If a player chooses to fold, the money already in the "Pot" from the prior "call" remains in the pot. At any time a player may re-raise. If no player raises the big blind, then the player in BB position may check or raise. It is important to note that if a player raises, that player may not raise again unless they were re-raised, as opposed to called. The round of betting stops when all players have either folded or called the last raise.

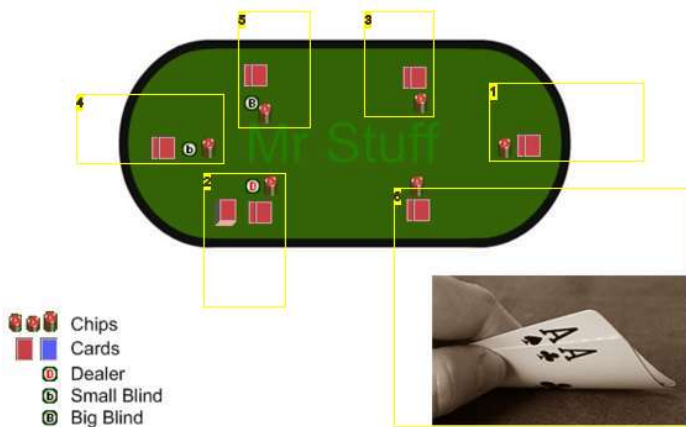


Image Notes

1. Second to act. Player CALLS.
2. DEALER. Fourth to act. Dealer CALLED
3. UTG. First to act. Player CALLS.
4. SB. Fifth to act. SB CALLS
5. BB. Last to act. BB CHECKS.
6. YOU. Third to act. You CALL. You have a Pair of ACES, Spades and Clubs.

step 5: The Flop

The Burn

The Dealer removes a playing card from the top of a deck and discards it ("Burn"), **face down** to the discard pile without it being revealed to the players. This is done to deter cheating.

The Flop

The Dealer then deals three cards **face up**. This is called the "Flop".

These are the first three of the five community cards that all players can use, along with their pocket cards, to make the best possible poker hand. (See the end of this Instructable for Standard Poker Hand Rank.)

Betting; Round 2

First to act after the Flop and on every subsequent round of betting, is the SB. The SB can choose from the following acts ; 1) CHECK without betting anything, 2) BET or 3) FOLD.

There is one change in play decision here-on-out: If the players acting before your turn choose to "Check", you may do so too. As before, the betting round ends when all players have Folded or Called the last bet or raise, or if all players have "Checked".

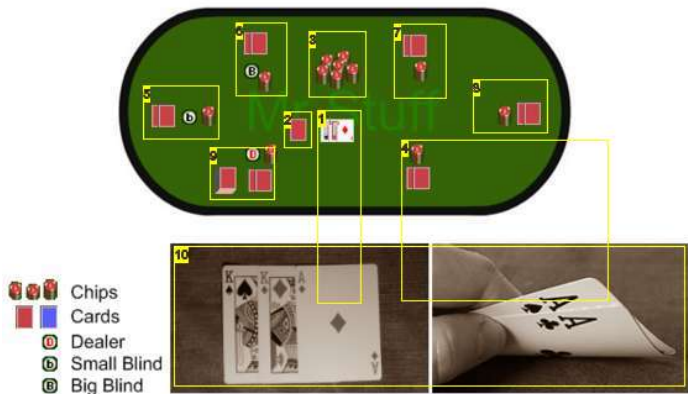


Image Notes

1. The FLOP. K of Spades, K of Diamonds, A of Diamonds.
2. BURN CARD
3. The POT.
4. YOU. Fifth to act. You CALL. You have a FULL HOUSE; Pair of K's, with Three A's.
5. SB. First to act. SB BETS.
6. BB. Second to act. BB CALLS.
7. Third to act. Player CALLS.
8. Fourth to act. Player CALLS.
9. D. Last to act. DEALER CALLS.
10. YOUR best hand right now is a FULL HOUSE (3 A's, 2 K's). Can only be beaten by; Four Of A Kind, Straight Flush and a Royal Flush.

step 6: The Turn

The Turn

The dealer burns another card and then deals a fourth community card face up. This is called the "Turn".

Betting; Round 3

There is another round of betting, with the SB position being first to act. As mentioned before, the SB has the same choice of acts as after the Flop. (Check, Bet, Fold)

Once again, the betting round ends when all players have Folded or Called the last bet or raise, or if all players have "Checked".

NOTE: There are Two Images below.

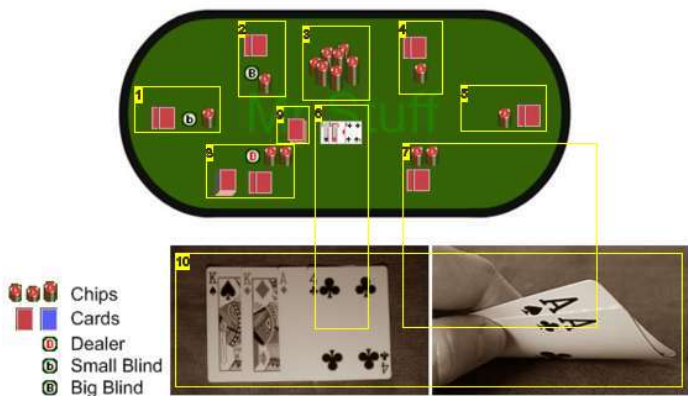


Image Notes

1. SB. First to act. SB BETS.
2. BB. Second to act. BB CALLS.
3. The Pot. (see how it grows)
4. Third to act. Player CALLS.
5. Fourth to act. Player CALLS.
6. The TURN. 4 of Clubs. (K of Spades, K of Diamonds, A of Diamonds, 4 of Clubs)
7. YOU. Fifth to act. You RAISE. You have a FULL HOUSE; Pair of K's, with Three A's.
8. D. Last to act. DEALER CALLS.
9. Burn Cards
10. YOUR best hand is still a FULL HOUSE (2 A's, 3 K's). Can only be beaten by; Four Of A Kind, Straight Flush and a Royal Flush.

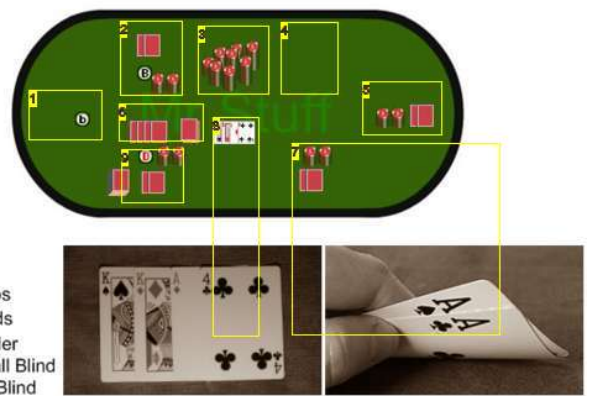


Image Notes

1. SB. After the Raise, SB FOLDS. The initial bet goes into the Pot.
2. BB. BB CALLS.
3. The Pot.
4. After the Raise, Player FOLDS. The initial bet goes into the Pot.
5. Player CALLS.
6. Burn Cards. (also the Folded Cards)
7. YOU. Since YOU Raised, there are no more acts available and the betting round ends.
8. The TURN.
9. D. The D has no act available. (Hi Ma)

step 7: The River

The River

The dealer burns another card and then deals the fifth and final community card face up. This is called the "River".

Betting; The Final Round

This is the final round of betting. First to act has the same choice of acts as before. (Check, Bet, Fold)

At this point (or before) if all but one player folds, the last player who didn't fold wins the pot. In such a situation the player may **"Muck"** his hand, which means to toss it into the discard (Burn) pile without showing anyone their hand. Mucking helps keep the other players from learning your playing style.

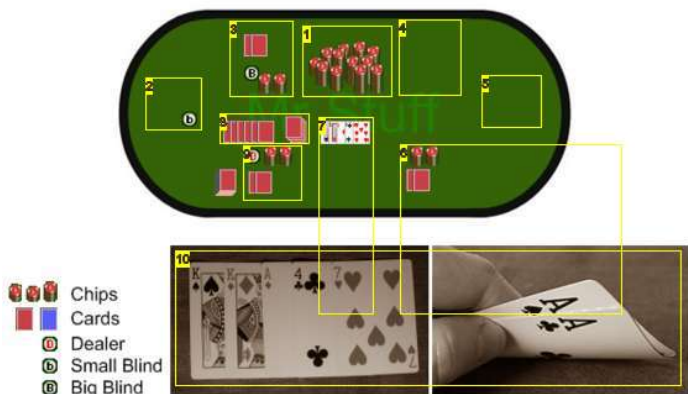


Image Notes

1. The Pot.
2. SB. SB Folded during the previous hand.
3. BB. First to act. BB BETS.
4. Player Folded during the previous hand.
5. Player FOLDS.
6. YOU. Third to act. You CALL. You have a FULL HOUSE; Pair of K's, with Three A's.
7. The RIVER. 7 of Hearts. (K of Spades, K of Diamonds, A of Diamonds, 4 of Clubs, 7 of Hearts)
8. Burn Cards. (also the Folded Cards)
9. D. Last to act. DEALER CALLS.
10. YOUR best hand remains a FULL HOUSE (2 A's, 3 K's). Can only be beaten by; Four Of A Kind, Straight Flush and a Royal Flush.

step 8: Showdown!

The Showdown

If more than one player remains after the last betting round, the remaining players expose and compare their hands to determine the winner (or winners). This is called the "Showdown".

A showdown can involve anywhere from two players to the entire table, depending on how many players stayed in the game up to this point. All players still in the hand show their cards, starting with the last person to bet. Once this player shows their cards, all other players in the showdown may muck their hand, essentially conceding the pot. By mucking the player is admitting that they have been beat without having to show their cards.

Tie

If two (or more) players tie a hand, they "chop (split) the pot" evenly among those players. The same holds true if the board has the five highest cards (best hand), the pot is chopped.

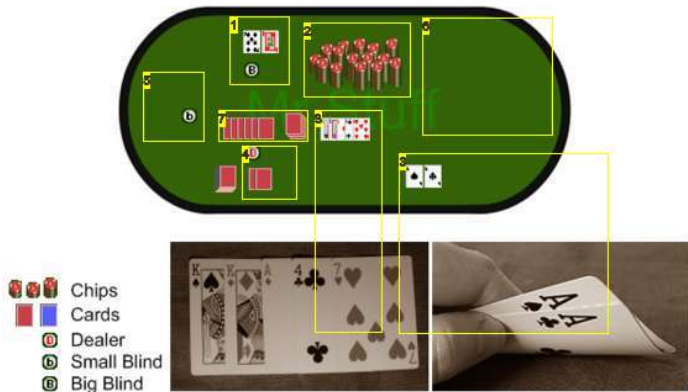


Image Notes

1. BB. BB is showing a 7 of Clubs and a K of Hearts. Best Hand; FULL HOUSE, Pair of 7's with Trip K's.
2. The Pot. Player with the Best Hand wins the pot.
3. YOU. You show an A of Clubs and an A of Spades. Best Hand; FULL HOUSE, Pair of K's, with Three A's.
4. D. The D mucks.
5. SB. Folded previously.

6. Players. The other players folded previously.
7. Burn Cards.
8. The Board. (K of Spades, K of Diamonds, A of Diamonds, 4 of Clubs, 7 of Hearts)

step 9: The Winner!

The Winning Hand

The best five-card hand (or hands, in the case of a tie) wins the pot.

:: *In our example, this is YOU!* ::

Forming a Hand

There are three possible combinations to form a hand using board (community) cards and/or pocket cards.

- 1) Two pocket cards & Three board cards
- 2) One pocket card & Four board cards
- 3) No pocket cards & Five board cards (called playing the board. You must declare that you are "playing the board" before you throw your cards away; otherwise you relinquish all claims to the pot.)

Hand Rankings

A hand always consist of five cards. Individual cards are "ranked" as follows (high-to-low): A, K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2. ACE can be low, but only when part of an A-2-3-4-5 straight. Suits (Club, Diamond, Heart, Spade) have no value, so if two players have hands that are identical except for suit, then they are tied. A "Kicker" card is a high card used to break ties between hands of the same rank (ex. 2 players with "Four of a Kind", 3 K's on the board. P1 has K, 9 and P2 has K, 6. P1 with K, 9 wins with the "9 Kicker".)

Here are the "Rank of Hands" in the order of Strength with Probability of being dealt.

Royal Flush - A, K, Q, J, 10, all in the same suit. 1 in 650,000

Straight Flush - Five cards in sequence, all of the same suit. 1 in 65,000

Four of a Kind - Four cards of one rank. Kicker breaks ties. 1 in 4,000

Full House - Three matching cards of one rank, plus Two matching cards of another rank. Higher ranking set of three wins. If two players have the same set of three, the player with the higher pair wins. 1 in 700

Flush - Five cards of the same suit. High card wins. 1 in 500

Straight - Five cards of sequential rank, but different suit. High card wins. 1 in 250

Three of a kind - Three cards of the same rank, plus two unmatched cards. High set wins. 1 in 50

Two Pair - Two cards of the same rank, plus Two cards of another rank. High pair wins. 1 in 20

One Pair - Two cards of the same rank, plus Three unmatched cards. High pair wins. 1 in 2 1/3

High Card - One card high, plus four unmatched lower ranking cards. Ace is the Highest card. Kicker breaks ties. 1 in 1

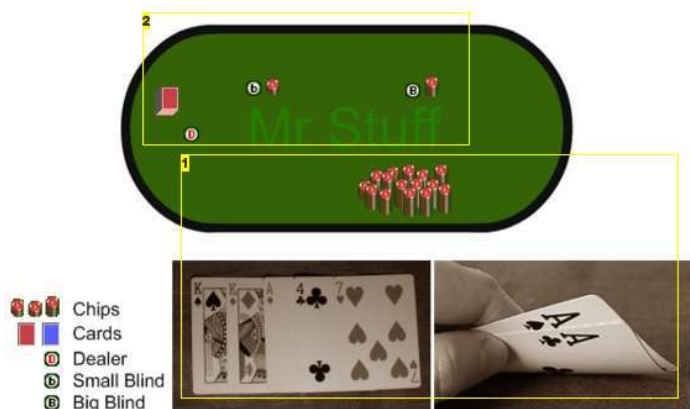


Image Notes

1. YOU WIN! You won with a FULL HOUSE, Aces full of Kings.
2. New Hand. All the buttons (D, SB, BB) move to the left. Blinds are posted, the new D shuffles the deck and a new hand begins.

step 10: Other Poker Stuff

NOTES

Texas Hold'em can be played as **Limit**, **No Limit**, and **Pot Limit**.

"Limit" games mean that you can only bet up to a predetermined amount, typically equal to the big blind, and raise the same amount.

"Pot Limit" means you can raise up to the current amount in the pot, but no more.

"No Limit" is the most dramatic of the three, where any player, at any time, can declare "All In" and bet everything he has. A player calling an All In move with too few chips creates a **side pot**, which he cannot win and is separate from the main pot, which he can win.

Raises are typically limited to four or five bets total; the big blind, the first raise, and then three or four more re-raises.

Thank you for Viewing MrStuff's Instructable.

POKER HAND RANKINGS

Royal Flush	10♥ J♥ Q♥ K♥ A♥
Straight Flush	4♣ 5♣ 6♣ 7♣ 8♣
Four of a Kind	K♠ K♥ K♣ K♦ 3♠
Full House	10♥ 10♠ 10♦ A♠ A♣
Flush	10♠ K♠ 2♠ 6♠ 7♠
Straight	7♣ 8♠ 9♦ 10♠ J♥
Three of a Kind	5♠ 5♥ 5♣ J♦ A♦
Two Pair	A♠ A♥ 3♣ 3♠ J♣
One Pair	Q♦ Q♥ 2♥ 8♠ 9♣

Related Instructables



Texas Hold Em
by awesome



Learn How to Play Poker! by Bran



Poker Trick Revealed! Impass Your Friends! One Hand Cut. - DIY - MagicSir.com
by magicsir



CHEAT at Poker! by ambiguous



How To Mark Playing Cards (video) by pyro222



How To Mark Playing Cards - instructable by pyro222



Put an LCD in your Poker Table by je1330



Make Custom Gaff Playing Cards - CHEAP
by pyro222

Comments

9 comments [Add Comment](#)



suzukisuv says:

Nice info, this is good for beginners, do you have something for advanced players?

Aug 6, 2009. 12:42 PM [REPLY](#)



MrStuff says:

Thank you. I would advise finding or starting a home game with friends. Hone your skills by playing. As for strategies, there is a plethora of books out there.

Aug 7, 2009. 3:53 PM [REPLY](#)

PS: what sort of Instructable do you see for "Advanced Players"? any specific focus?



raidbet says:

Mar 10, 2009. 8:42 PM [REPLY](#)

Can you provide us some poker strategies or some of your own poker experience? I really like your way of explaining. Thanks for your sharing.



feelwell says:

Mar 9, 2009. 12:41 AM [REPLY](#)

Poker is full of myth, hopefully we could share our knowings and confusion here, so we could help each other out.
One for all, all for one!
If YOU have any further intention of knowing about Texas Holdem, please visit raidbet as your best guide.



Giants123 says:

Nov 5, 2008. 12:32 AM [REPLY](#)

Texas Holdem I also like to play Texas Holdem, but I'm new to poker, so could you give me some nice tips? Thanks

visit <http://www.enteratlantis.com>



komonews123 says:

Oct 20, 2008. 12:47 AM [REPLY](#)

Thank you for sharing your experience. I like your style of instruction, humorous and of great fun, which makes me like poker more than ever!

Visit Raidbet



MrStuff says:

Oct 20, 2008. 2:35 PM [REPLY](#)

You're very welcome.
I'm glad that you discovered poker and hope you thoroughly enjoy it.



dramaart says:

Sep 21, 2008. 9:33 PM [REPLY](#)

Can you please explain me some basic rules of Texas Holdem. Also let me know what is the difference between Speed Holdem and Texas Holdem?

Visit Raidbet



MrStuff says:

Sep 22, 2008. 8:26 AM [REPLY](#)

Did you read the entire Instructable? It should explain everything. If you have any specific question, I'll be glad to answer. As for your second question, Speed Poker is exactly the same as Texas Hold'em. The differences in rules relate to the time players have to act on their hands. Each player has 15 to 30 seconds to act before his or her hand is ruled dead (or checked if there has been no previous action).
