

[The Rules Of Poker](#)

The rules of poker are provided below for Texas Hold'em, the most popular poker variant. The ultimate goal of a poker player is to win as many chips as possible; so let's get started so you can too!

This guide is for the classic poker game texas hold'em. However, if you would like to know the rules of other poker games types such as 5 card poker, check out pagat.com.

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The rules of poker - Texas Hold'em

In Texas hold'em each player is dealt two cards called their '**hole**' cards. Hole cards can only be seen and used by one person. The dealer **button** (denoted by a circular disc) is allocated before hands are dealt to allow for the positioning of the forced bets: **small blind** and **big blind**, and also to determine who will act first and last in the hand.

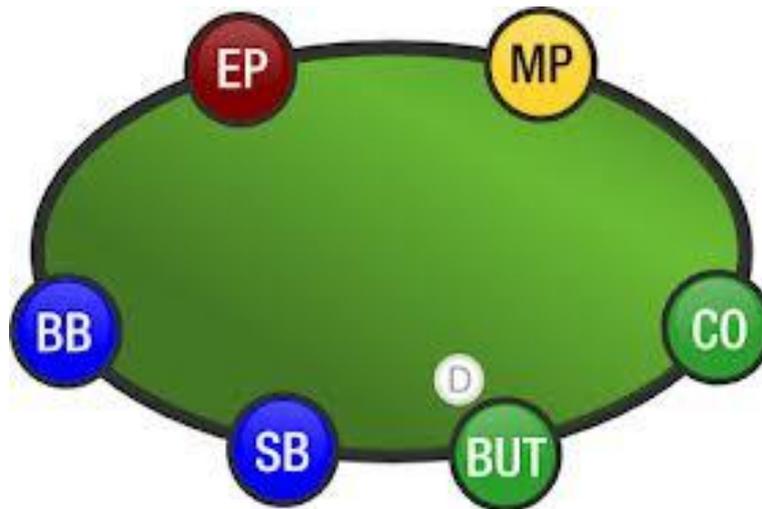
There are a total of four betting rounds: preflop, the flop, the turn and the river. The betting rounds will be detailed further on.

If you have a dedicated dealer (such as at a casino), the button will still move around the table so everybody will eventually have to pay the blinds. The button doesn't show who is dealing in a casino; the button shows who is seated the best position at the table and where the blinds are located.

If you just sat down (out of turn) you will have to pay the blinds in order get dealt a hand; otherwise you can wait until the blinds come around to your seat. You should wait for the blinds as paying twice is unprofitable.

The size of the blinds depends on the limit; for example a 1/2 No Limit Hold'em game would have a big blind of \$2 and a small blind of 1\$. The small blind and big blind are located to the left of the button.

This is shown in the case of a 6 handed game below:



The blinds are an important part of the rules of poker. These forced bets which give players an incentive to play; in other words 'spice up' the game. Without the blinds there would be no penalty for waiting and only playing strong hands. The only hand worth playing would be two aces!

Antes are another form of forced bets which are often used to increase the action in some game types such as [tournaments and deep stacked cash games](#).

Pre-flop - The first betting round

The first round of betting takes place starting at the position to the left of the big blind (early position or **EP**). Each player has the following options:

Raise: you can raise the current bet to increase the stakes of the game. If someone has raised before you, you can still raise again - this is called a reraise. The minimum size you can raise is typically chosen to be twice that of the last bet or raise.

Call: When you do not want to raise the stakes but want to continue with your hand you can match the current bet.

Fold: If you feel your hand is not worth playing any further you can fold your hand and not commit any more bets.

Check: If there is no bet placed you can check in order to see the next card. This isn't applicable to preflop. The blinds are the first bet preflop which must be matched with a call or raised, if a player wishes to continue.

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Players must act in sequence until all bets are settled. The button must always **act last** in the first sequence. This first round of betting called '**pre-flop**' occurs before the flop is dealt.

The Flop - The second betting round

The second round of betting takes places after the three community (shared) cards called the **flop** are dealt. The action will be on the first player to the left of the dealer. This is opposed to the action starting to the left of the big blind during the preflop betting round. .

The first player to act has the option to check bet or fold; although you should not fold when you can check for free. The betting rounds after the flop is dealt is collectively known as '**post-flop**'.



The Turn - The third betting round

The third round of betting occurs after the second community card has been dealt. This card is called the **turn**. Again, the action starts with the active player to the left of the dealer.



The River and Showdown - The fourth betting round

The fourth and final round of betting occurs after the **river** is dealt by the dealer. The hand ends with the showdown of hands or if there is only one live hand remaining (the other player(s) have folded).

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At showdown, the player with the best five card combination from their hole cards and the community cards wins the final pot. Split pots occur when both players have the same best five cards.



After each hand the button moves to the left of the dealer. This means everyone will have to play the blinds at some point.

The rules of poker are quite simple; however the strategies involved in winning are ever evolving.

The rules of poker are just the beginning so head to [poker 101](#) if you want to learn more!

If you are unsure of the poker [hand ranking system](#) (what hands beat what) make sure you check it out.

Other notes:

- The dealer will often take one card off the top of the deck before turning over the flop, turn and river for a total of three cards. The three removed cards are called the burn cards. The purpose of these cards is to make it difficult for cheaters.
- A player cannot buy in for any more chips once he is in the hand. So if they start the hand with \$100 they cannot add another \$20 to their stack midway through the hand; they have to top up in between hands.

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