

Poker-Tipp: Top 10 Best and Worst Hold'em Poker Hands

Here's a quick guide to the ten best Texas Hold'em poker hands. If you start with any of these ten hands during Texas Hold'em, you are in excellent shape.

For a more detailed guide to which hands to hold and which to fold, read Texas Hold'em Starting Hand Selection.

1) Ace-Ace

This is the best Hold'em poker hand you can hope to have. It's the best of the best, and will win more than any other hand. They are also known as American Airlines, pocket rockets and bullets.

2) King-King

This 2nd-best hold'em hand is still incredibly strong and will win you a good chunk of change. Two kings or "cowboys" are only dominated by aces.

3) Queen-Queen

Two queens or "ladies" are a very good hand. Sure, kings and aces will beat you, but you've got the upper hand on jacks and below.

4) Ace-King

Ace-king is a strong but tricky hand. It is the strongest of the drawing hands, but the flop needs to work with you to give you a pair of aces or kings for it to really pay off. Suited it is slightly stronger than unsuited, as then you can also make the nut flush much more easily.

5) Jack-Jack

A pair of jacks, ten-handed, will win almost 20% of the time. If the flop shows a queen, king, or ace, watch out, but otherwise, it's smooth sailing.

6) Ace-Queen

Ace-queen is the second best drawing hand, and when suited, will win about 20% of the times well.

7) King-Queen

King-queen, especially suited, is a great drawing hand that is only afraid of an Ace falling on the board.

8) Ace-Jack

Ace-jack is another great drawing hand. Suited is always better here, but unsuited is still playable.

9) King-Jack

King-jack, especially in later positions, is a fine hand to play, but can be beat by any of the hands listed above and should be folded to big raises. Statistically, suited it will win just under 19% of the time, but unsuited that drops to just 15%.

10) Ace-Ten

Ace-ten is still a good hand -- you've got the ace, and can make a straight if the miracle J-Q-K falls on the board. But be wary of playing it too strong, especially unsuited, as if all you end up with is a pair of aces, you may be out-kicked.

Sure, you know that a pair of aces is the best hand in Texas Hold'em, but do you know the worst starting hands? Knowing that these hands are almost-always-fold'em hands in hold'em is just as important to improving your poker game and not playing like a donkey.

Some of these "worst hands" are bad in the same way and will lose at about the same rate, so we call them ties, even when one is a slightly better hand.

1) 2-7

7-2 off suit is considered the worst hand in Texas Hold'em. They are the lowest two cards you can have that cannot make a straight (there's 4 cards between 2 and 7). Even if they are suited, they will make you a very low flush, and if either pairs, it's an awfully low hand.

Because it is the worst, some players will play it for fun and in online games, it is known as "the hammer."

2) 2-8

This is the same basic problem as above, only you've got an 8 instead of a 7. Still pretty bad for a high card. Suited or not, this is a fold'em hold'em hand.

3) Tie: 3-8 & 3-7

The 3 makes this hand able to beat the two above it, but with the 3-8 you still can't make a straight and the 3-7 still, well, just sucks.

4) 2-6

While if the board gives you a miracle flop of 3-4-5, you will have a straight, someone with a 6-7 will have a higher straight. If you get a flush, someone will probably have a higher flush. Against even 4 players, this hand will lose about 90% of the time. Not good odds.

5) Tie: 2-9, 3-9, & 4-9

The only thing these three hands have going for them over the hands above is the 9. If the 9 pairs, you'll have a middle pair that could still be beat by anyone holding pocket 10s, jacks, queens, kings, or aces, yet you might be fooled by a board filled with low cards into thinking you have the best hand and losing a lot of money. No straights can fill the gap between these cards, either. Beware.

6) 2-10

This hand has a legendary quality because Doyle Brunson captured two "World Series of Poker" Bracelets with it. But it's not a good hand -- Doyle Brunson is one of the all-time best in the game and unless you're a Texas road gambler who's logged thousands of hours at the table, you shouldn't try and win with the Doyle Brunson.

7) 5-9

Another hand people play because it's fun is the old 9 to 5, the "Dolly Parton." If you're playing to win, it's not a good idea to play hands because they have a funny name. That may be how you pick the winning horse in a race, but poker's a marathon, not a sprint, and over the long term there's no doubt this hand is a statistical loser.

8) Tie: 4-7, 4-8, 5-8, 3-6...

All these hands will rarely win, especially unsuited. Toss 'em. Just toss'em. Yes, even in the little blind. If you see two low cards in the hole, unless you're in the big blind and you can see the flop for free, fold.

9) Face card + low card, unsuited

One of the most common mistakes I see beginners make is that when they see any paint in their hand, they play it. J-2, Q-3, K-4 whatever -- and most of these hands are losers. They're junk that may win a few pots, but more often will lose you huge cash when you find the other player has a higher kicker and the winning hand.

10) Ace + low card, unsuited

This is another common beginner mistake, playing any ace. Again, it may win occasionally, and heads-up it's a fine hand, but at a table of 4 or more, this hand shouldn't be played if there's a raise in front of you. You're going to be out kicked a lot with Ace-little, and it's going to feel like a kick in the junk when the other player shows their higher ace.