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## Five Easy Poker Mistakes You're Probably Making (and How to Fix Them)

Our Friends · Tuesday, December 17th, 2024

*Welcome to the wonderful world of poker!* You're about to experience the greatest game ever created. Poker is a strategy-based card game with a bit of luck thrown in for good measure. It's a game of smarts, skills, tactics, strategies, psychology, insight, mathematics, probability, patience, endurance, and, above all else, rationality. *Whew!* Let's pick this topic apart, piece by piece, to get a really good look!

Many new **Zynga Texas Holdem** poker players tend to read poker guides before they rush headfirst into poker games, all guns blazing. However, newbies must understand they were not the first to join the game. Other people were there, waiting for them. Among those people are seasoned poker players – the card sharks – waiting to feed off the new fish in the poker pool. Savvy poker players can detect the greenhorns from a mile away. Sometimes, they will even chum the waters and lead you to believe you are winning as they reel you in to take you down.

Poker is an easy game to learn but a challenging game to master. That's precisely why the world's best poker players remain at the top of their game for so long. Take guys like Phil Ivey, Stu Ungar, Doyle Brunson, Phil Hellmuth, Nick the Greek, Johnny Moss, Daniel Negreanu, Antonio Esfandiari, Erik Seidel, Chris Ferguson, and Chris Moneymaker as cases in point. These folks know how to roll at the poker tables. Now, it's time to check out some five common poker mistakes that you can avoid by following sage advice:

### #1 Learn All The Poker Rules

Who would have thought that the #1 reason why so many players lose money is because they don't know the rules of poker? It's 100% true! In Texas Hold'em Poker, like any other poker game, there are specific rules to abide by. First, players are dealt two hole cards, and they must use a combination of their cards and/or the **Flop, Turn, and River** to make the strongest-ranking five-card hand.

You can play the board, or you can use your hole cards to help you win. But you've got to know the rules of the game. It begins with a High Card, One Pair, Two Pairs, Three of a Kind, Straight, Flush, Full House, Straight Flush, and a Royal Flush. The stronger your hand ranking relative to other players at the table, the better. It's good advice to learn what constitutes a strong poker hand to know how best to play your cards.

## #2 Only Play Premium Starting Hands

***What's a premium starting hand?*** That's a great question; you will understand this concept if you learn the poker rules. Typically, premium hands include high pairs like Jack, Jack; Queen, Queen; King, King, and Ace, Ace. But of course, you can also have premium hands that are weaker than those hands if you are playing a game like Seven Card Stud. The top 10% of starting hands typically qualify as premium hands.

Poker charts are typically used to determine the relative strength of a starting hand. It's not as cut and dry as this rudimentary expose suggests. However, it's worth reading up about premium starting hands. Players are advised to learn about the importance of these hands. If you limit your starting hand selection to only use hands, you will fare better over the long term. Remember, your bankroll is everything in poker – without it, you are out of the game. If you play every hand, you increase the chances of losing. Stick to premium starting hands.

## #3 Don't Bluff Your Way Through Every Play

TV and big-screen movies are great for entertainment, but they poorly explain the mechanics of poker games. Monster bluffs may work occasionally, but only if you use them sparingly. If you use them constantly, your opponents won't take the bait. That's the beauty of a poker bluff. It is designed to make your opponent think something else about the hand that you are holding. One of the most essential things about a bluff is that it should be used infrequently. When employed, it catches other players off-guard, invariably costing them money.

## #4 Practice Poker at Social Gaming Hubs

Too many poker players dive into the deep end with real money on the table. It's a curious thing, but would those same people put all their money down on stocks they've never heard of? Regardless, practicing online poker before playing for real is essential. The high stakes gaming arena – home to the heavy hitters – is no place for people on **shoestring budgets** geared towards losing a penny. Fortunately, you can practice poker games online for free at leading social poker rooms. When you play and practice poker online, you become a much better player over the long-term.

## #5 Playing Off Kilter

Picture this – you enter your first SNG or MTT and are super excited. The adrenaline is coursing through your veins, anxiety is at fever-pitch levels, and you are raring to go. Not sure you got the memo, but playing all hyped-up like that is never a good idea. Neither is playing scared. There is a fine line between those who play with reckless abandon and those who play fearfully. If you are too afraid to make your play, poker is probably the wrong game for you. Sometimes, fear manifests as paranoia, where poker players believe everybody else is out to get them, knows they are holding hands, and has set them up.

***These five sensible tips will help you avoid many pitfalls in poker. Put them to good use in your daily grind!***

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