

How to Use the Texas Hold'em Starting Hand Strategy Table

The chart shows the one hundred sixty nine different possible starting hands in Texas Hold'em. With non-paired combinations is the letter **S** or **O**. The "S" stands for "suited" hands and the "O" stands for "off suited" hands. The **starting hand rank** is next to each combination. The starting hand ranks are based on the card face values and whether they are paired, close in face value and/or suited as well as potential for improvement. Each starting hand combination is also color coded for easy reference. When dealt your hole cards, find the starting hand rank for your hand on the chart. Then refer to the table below to find the suggested pre-flop action to take, based on table position. The next section of the table suggests the type of flop which would best support your starting hand. The first is the minimum hand you would want to flop in order to continue. In parentheses, (), is a secondary suggestion for action if you are in the best table position. The scale at the bottom of the table shows how to bet pre-flop based on table position; (**BB** means Big Blind). The grey numbers to the far right are the total of hands in that color category; 169 in all.

Example: You draw **AK** suited, in early position. Looking at the chart you find your starting hand has a rank of 37. Then, using the rank number and color, refer to the table at the bottom to determine the suggested action for your hand based on table position. With AK suited you are in the 30+, or blue, range in early position. The suggested action is a raise. With AK suited you would want to flop at least top pair. If your table position is good, four to a flush or straight, or any pair may be fine to continue.

Throughout this table are sage words of advice to help your play:

Fold 3 to a draw: Chasing three card draws will lose more than win.

Fold weak hands: They are called weak hands for a reason.

Flop it or drop it: If you don't hit the flop you must seriously consider folding.

Play strong hands: Aggressive play here will win more than lose.

Ts and 5s are keys to a straight: You can't make a straight without a ten or a five.

This Starting Hand Strategy table is *not* a prognosticator of outcome. It can neither predict nor prevent bad beats. The suggestions here are merely a starting point for your game. It is the responsibility of each player to play wisely. The game is more than just a strong hand and good table position.