

# SHORT DECK STARTING HANDS



Mixed Game Poker Strategy



# FEWER CARDS MEAN BETTER HANDS

Regardless of your playing style, **success in Short Deck No Limit Hold'em depends largely on the starting hands you choose to play.**

Because there are 16 fewer cards than Hold'em, it may seem like every hand is playable, but that can quickly get you into trouble as **you will often make second best hands.**

On the flip side, playing hands that make the nuts is the best way to make money from second best hands.



Make the  
nuts and  
charge  
second best  
hands



## FOCUS ON PLAYING IN POSITION

Having position in Short Deck is critical due to the fact that equities run much closer and turns and rivers are scarier as the deuces and other blanks are taken out of the deck. By the river the board will either be paired or a straight will be possible and having position will help you avoid tricky situations.

# STARTING HAND RANKINGS

(SHORT DECK - FLUSHES BEAT STRAIGHTS, ANTE ONLY)

Premium	
AA	1.00%
KK	1.00%
QQ	1.00%
JTs	0.60%
JT	1.90%
AKs	0.60%
QJs	0.60%
98s	0.60%
T9s	0.60%
	<b>7.90%</b>

Very Good	
JJ	1.00%
TT	1.00%
AK	1.90%
AQs	0.60%
AJs	0.60%
ATs	0.60%
QJ	1.90%
98	1.90%
T9	1.90%
KQs	0.60%
KJs	0.60%
KTs	0.60%
J9s	0.60%
	<b>14.00%</b>

Good	
99	1.00%
AQ	1.90%
AJ	1.90%
AT	1.90%
KQ	1.90%
KJ	1.90%
KT	1.90%
J9	1.90%
T8s	0.60%
T8	1.90%
97s	0.60%
	<b>17.50%</b>

Marginal	
88, 77, 66	2.90%
97	1.90%
87s	0.60%
A9s, A8s, A7s	1.90%
87	1.90%
Q9s	0.60%
96s, 86s, 76s	1.90%
J8s	0.60%
A9, A8, A7	5.70%
T7s	0.60%
Q9	1.90%
96, 86, 76	5.70%
A6s	0.60%
K9s	0.60%
	<b>27.60%</b>

## 9 HAND OPENING STRATEGY CONSIDERATIONS

For Short Deck with 100 Ante Effective Stacks

Short Deck Hold'em utilizes a very unique structure that helps facilitate action while also allowing for a multitude of different yet successful strategies for the opening round of betting.

In the ante only structure everyone except the button antes once while the button is forced to make a double ante.

Here are nine essential fundamentals to help guide pre-flop play:

1. With 100 ante stacks, it may seem you are playing deep, but it's essentially a 32 Big Blind Stack which is actually quite shallow.



**2.** In this structure everyone is getting great odds to play and the equities run close. For example the first limper is getting 7 to 1 odds to enter the pot.

**3.** Since it is beneficial to play many hands, getting such great odds many players employ a limp only strategy to completely mask their range. Other players use a mixed strategy or raise every hand they play but this is harder to balance effectively.

**4.** A raise to 4x the button ante gives the button 2.3 to 1 odds and is standard in most deep stack situations. However, tournament considerations may make smaller sizing optimal. Then, one would typically add one ante for each limper that has already entered the pot.

**5.** From the UTG position in a six handed game it is best to stick to the Premium or Very Good hands.

**6.** With three or four players left to act you can add the Good hands to your range.



7. The hi-jack and cut-off positions are when you can begin to play the Marginal hands. If no one else has entered the pot you can still elect to limp, especially since the player most invested in the pot (the button) has position.
8. A limp only strategy is easiest to implement and recommended for beginners. A mixed strategy is hard to balance and a raise only strategy means you need to tighten up your opening range.
9. With a mixed strategy (some limping and some raising) you should tend to raise stronger hands, limp the weaker ones, and hold some strong hands back that will play well for a re-raise. Candidates to hold back include AK off-suit, a few combinations of KK, and some suited connectors such as 98s and J9s.



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