



10 Laws of Live Poker



Improve Your Strategy
and Mental Game





You've probably heard countless tips on how to play against weak live players.

A few of these tips might be useful, but the vast majority are likely the same old garbage that live regulars use to justify their bad habits.

Luckily, this guide will separate the facts from the fiction by revealing the...

10 Laws of Live Poker.

If you already have a decent grasp on the fundamentals of poker strategy, then abiding by these laws will massively improve both your win-rate and overall poker-playing experience.



10 LAWS OF LIVE POKER



❖ Strategic Laws ❖

❖ Law #1: ❖

Don't Open-limp

When you see someone open-limp, it's a sign they are probably a weak player. The main reason that good players never limp is that it denies them a chance to win the pot preflop.

It also weakens their range, deprives them of the betting initiative, and almost guarantees a multiway pot. These reasons make it harder for them to win the pot postflop.

In other words, open-limpers win less pots.

Now, it's important to distinguish between open-limping and over-limping:

❖ Open-limping ❖

...is when we limp when everyone before us has folded.

❖ Over-limping ❖

...is when we limp after another player has already limped before us.

Over-limping can be fine, and is actually often correct. Generally speaking, you want to over-limp hands that may not be quite strong enough to raise, but flop too well to be thrown away, such as suited connectors or gappers.

Note: Open-limping from the small blind when it folds around can be a viable strategy if done correctly.





❖ Law #2: ❖

Bet small in Multiway Pots

Betting small in multiway pots allows you to bet many types of hands on the flop – hands you wouldn't be able to profitably bet for a larger size. When you bet, your opponents are forced to react in a very precise manner with their range because of the many variables at play.

You should also use small bet sizes in multiway pots online, but it's especially good against live players because they are prone to making mistakes. Additionally, live players typically have much wider ranges with a lot more junky hands, which means your small bet will force more folds and run into fewer strong hands.

Once you get to the turn, when hand ranges are more defined, you can start breaking out the more typical bet sizes (66% pot or more).



❖ Law #3: ❖

3-bet versus Recreational Players as much as possible

Recreational players rarely play well against 3-bets and in 3-bet pots. There are many reasons for this:

They rarely 4-bet, and when they do it's a premium hand.

Their low 4-bet frequency allows you to 3-bet with a very high likelihood of either winning the pot preflop or seeing the flop with the betting initiative. Both are very favorable outcomes for you.

3-betting gives them the chance to make a bad fold or a bad call.

Live players are rarely adept at preflop hand selection, and 3-betting gives them a chance to make a mistake. Some will call too often with dominated hands, and others will fold hands that are worth a call.

They will play particularly badly postflop in 3-bet pots.

Since 3-bets are relatively rare at live tables, live players are usually inexperienced at playing 3-bet pots postflop.

They often play “fit or fold” on the flop, allowing you to easily pick up the pot with a c-bet when they miss.

What specific hands should you 3-bet?

Premium hands, of course, and medium-strong to strong hands that play well postflop (including suited connectors).



❖ Law #4: ❖

Overfold when faced with aggression, especially to 3-bets and River bets

It's no secret that live players tend to be passive but they are especially passive in these two common spots:

❖ 3-betting: ❖

Live players do not 3-bet with nearly enough medium-strength or bluff hands.

❖ River betting: ❖

Live players don't bluff much on the river, especially when betting big or triple barreling.

Naturally your reaction should be to overfold in these situations.

Basically, anytime the board looks good for your range and you show aggression and yet face aggression back, you should rethink the strength of your hand.

Of course, this goes out the window if you know your opponent is an aggressive player who is capable of bluffing.

❖ Law #5: ❖

Get comfortable playing with deep stacks

You can maximize your edge by making sure you play as deep as possible against the weak players at the table. This is, arguably, one of the biggest edges to be had in live poker. This allows you to both profit as much as possible when they call too light and apply maximum pressure when bluffing.

Additionally, it's not practical to switch live tables every time you get deep like you could easily do online. Rather than avoiding it, you should embrace it because deep stack play means a larger edge and higher hourly.



❖ Mental Game Laws ❖

❖ Law #6: ❖

Be a Fun and Engaging Personality

Too many serious poker players – particularly at the lower stakes – adopt an “us vs them” mentality. These players often times get aggravated when they lose a pot that was poorly played by their opponent.

Having this mindset will have a corrosive effect on your poker career, and it won't be long before you start hating the game.

Rather, you should always strive to make your table a fun place to be.

Not only will this make you more desirable to play with, it may allow you to glean valuable information from your opponents through conversation.

Poker may be your job (or side job), but that doesn't mean you have to be miserable while doing it.

❖ Law #7: ❖

Play Fast

One of the biggest challenges in live poker is how tough it is to make worthwhile money with so few hands played per hour.

It's important to take your time and think *when necessary*, but you should generally try to play quickly.

Playing more hands per hour will make you, your tablemates, and your bankroll happier.



❖ Law #8: ❖

Don't take things Personally

Sometimes you're going to get attacked at the poker table, either directly or indirectly. You're going to get bluffed, sucked out on, and occasionally berated by your opponents.

Don't take these negative events personally or let them throw you off your game. Instead, try to remain stoic and use them as an opportunity to strengthen your resolve.

❖ Law #9: ❖

Game Select

The way you make money in poker is by having an edge on the players at your table. There are two ways to increase your edge and the money that comes with it: become a better player or play with worse players.

Both are important, but the latter is much easier.

When you're at the casino, try to find and play at the table with the weakest players. This will be easier if you abide by **Law #6** and chat with your opponents while playing.

It's usually quite apparent who the good and bad players are once you get them talking.



❖ Law #10: ❖

Try not to be too Predatory

There's a fine line between game selecting and being a predator. It's important to only sit with players you can beat, but don't sell your soul and become what poker players call a "bumhunter" in the process.

Always keep in mind that these are real people you are playing against, and not just a source of income.

Treat your opponents with respect.

❖ One Last Law: ❖

Play Within Your Bankroll

If live poker is going to be your job/side job, you need to manage your risk by playing games within your bankroll.

A good rule of thumb is to have at least 40 buy-ins for whatever game you play. For example, if you play \$2/\$5 NL with a \$500 buy-in, you should have \$20,000 in your bankroll.

You can use more aggressive bankroll manager if you play very soft low stakes games or if you are prepared to move down immediately if you lose a few buy-ins.



Just remember:

Poker is a Marathon, not a Sprint.



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