How to Play Solitaire

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Solitaire requires patience and can be stressful. If you have high blood pressure, take care to manage stress and remain calm. Take frequent breaks and avoid back-to-back games.


Getting Started

Have you ever played Solitaire?

Was it on a computer, or on a phone? Or with a real deck of cards?

This guide will teach you how to play Solitaire the old-fashioned way, with cards you can touch and whatever playing surface you choose. It will show you how to set up the game, and then walk you through the steps for playing it.

Two things you’ll need

One standard deck of 52 playing cards. Enough space to spread them out

Chances are you know a little about Solitaire already. Here’s a quick-reference guide to find the section that’s right for you.

How to use this guide

New to Solitaire? Start with the “Objective” (page 3) and “Rules” (4) sections to learn how it works!

Need help setting up? Head to the “Setup” section (page 4) to get started.

Know how to play? Check the “Playing instructions” (page 5) section for a step-by-step guide.

Want tips and tricks? Go to the “Strategy” (page 10) section for tips on how to win!
Playing the Game
Objective: What’s the Goal?
To win at Solitaire, you must create four piles of cards in ascending order (from ace to king) corresponding to each of the four suits (♠♣♥♦). You build these piles by moving cards from the stockpile and the tableau (the playing field), and placing them in their respective pile in the foundations.

The Playing Field

Foundation Piles
These are the piles you build to win the game. Start each pile with the Ace of each suit, followed by the two, three, and four—all the way up to the kings of each suit.

The cards must enter the foundation piles in order (the lowest, Aces, on bottom and the highest, Kings, on top).
**Rule Book: Know the Rules**

1. You may only move face-up cards on the top of a pile on the playing field.
2. You may take a card from the top of a pile in the foundations and move it to the tableau at any time.
3. To flip face-down cards in the tableau, move all the face-up cards on top of them.
4. You may move face-up cards on the tableau either to the foundations, or on top of another card in the tableau.
5. When you move cards in the tableau with other cards placed on top of them, you must move the entire stack.
6. Flip cards in the stock pile in threes. You may move the top card of any given waste pile to the tableau or the foundations.
7. When all cards are in the waste pile, flip them face-down to reform the stock pile.
8. You may place kings in empty slots in the tableau.

**Setup: Create the Playing Field**

1. **Start the Tableau:** Make seven rows
   a. Start by setting up the playing field. You will start by shuffling the deck to make sure your cards are randomized. Once you finish, then starting with the top card place the first seven cards on the playing field with the first card facing up.

   ![Image of seven cards on playing field]

   The last card of each column faces up.

2. **Finish the Tableau**
   - Add cards to each row to form columns
   - Each column must have one more card than the one on its left.
     - **Row 1** – 1 card (facing up)
     - **Row 2** – 2 cards (1 facing down, 1 facing up)
     - **Row 3** – 3 cards (2 facing down, 1 facing up)
     - **Row 4** – 4 cards (3 facing down, 1 facing up)
     - **Row 5** – 5 cards (4 facing down, 1 facing up)
     - **Row 6** – 6 cards (5 facing down, 1 facing up)
     - **Row 7** – 7 cards (6 facing down, 1 facing up)

   ![Image of finished tableau]

3. **Lay the Stockpile**
   - Stack the remaining cards facing down in the upper left of the playing field.
Instructions: Play Solitaire

1. Look at cards that are face-up. Are there any aces?

   Yes: Place the aces in the foundations, separated by suit.

   ![Start your foundation piles with Aces from each suit.]

   ![Example: 10♠ moved to a J♥.]

   ![b. After moving a card in the tableau, flip over the face-down card you expose.]

   ![No: Move cards in the tableau. (Step 2)]

   Go to the stockpile. (Step 3)

2. Move the cards in the tableau to find the aces.
   a. Place cards of opposite color (red on black, black on red) in descending order (king to ace) on top of other face-up cards.

   Example: 10♠ moved to a J♥.

b. After moving a card in the tableau, flip over the face-down card you expose.
The face-down card may then be flipped.

**TIP:** Make sure to place lower numbered cards slightly below higher numbered cards (as pictured above) so all cards on the playing field are visible.

3. Go to the cards in the stockpile:
   a. Flip over three cards from the stock pile to the waste pile.

4. If the top card is an ace, move it to the foundations pile.

   *Ace♣ to the foundations.*

   *9♦ to 10♠ in tableau.*

If not, try to move the top card to the tableau (*9♦ to 10♠, above*) or continue drawing in threes from the stock pile.
5. Continue rearranging the tableau and flipping the stock pile. Are there any twos?

**Yes:** Place the two on its corresponding ace in the foundations.

*Before (right): 2♥ & 2♠ in the tableau*

*After (below): 2♥ & 2♠ moved to foundation piles*

**No:** Repeat steps 2 & 3, looking for twos instead of aces.

- Move cards in the tableau until all possible cards have been flipped.
- Cycle through the stock pile, adding all possible cards to the foundations and the tableau.

*Next step?*

Move 2♣ from the top of the waste pile to the foundations ♣ pile.
Tip: When an empty slot opens up in the tableau, you may move a king from anywhere on the playing field to that slot.

6. Repeat steps 1—5 for ascending numbers (3s, 4s, 5s…) until you move all cards from the playing field to the foundations.

All cards on the playing field are placed in ascending order.

You win!
Strategy
Winning Strategies

General Strategies:
- Only move cards on the playing field if the move opens up another card to be moved or flipped.

Tableau Strategies:
- When faced with the choice of moving a card from the tableau and opening up a card to be flipped, or moving a similar card from the stockpile, always move from the tableau.
- Do not open up a slot in the tableau if there are no kings on the playing field.
- Try and build two tableau piles with the same two suits.

  Example: When you build two tableau piles with only ♥ and ♠, both piles are easily cleared into the foundations.

Stockpile Strategies:
- When a card can be used in the foundations but is not useful in the tableau, move it to the foundations.
- Only draw from the stockpile once all possible moves in the tableau have been exhausted.
- Do not move all three cards in any particular waste pile.

  Example: When less than three cards are removed from a particular waste pile, the stockpile will cycle through with different cards on top the next turn.

Foundations Strategies:
- Consider whether or not you will need a card in the tableau before placing it in the foundations.

  Example: The three of ♦ can be moved to the foundations, but should stay in the tableau so the two of ♥ can be moved from the waste pile and the ace of ♥ moved to the foundations.
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