

How to Play Egyptian Rat Screw

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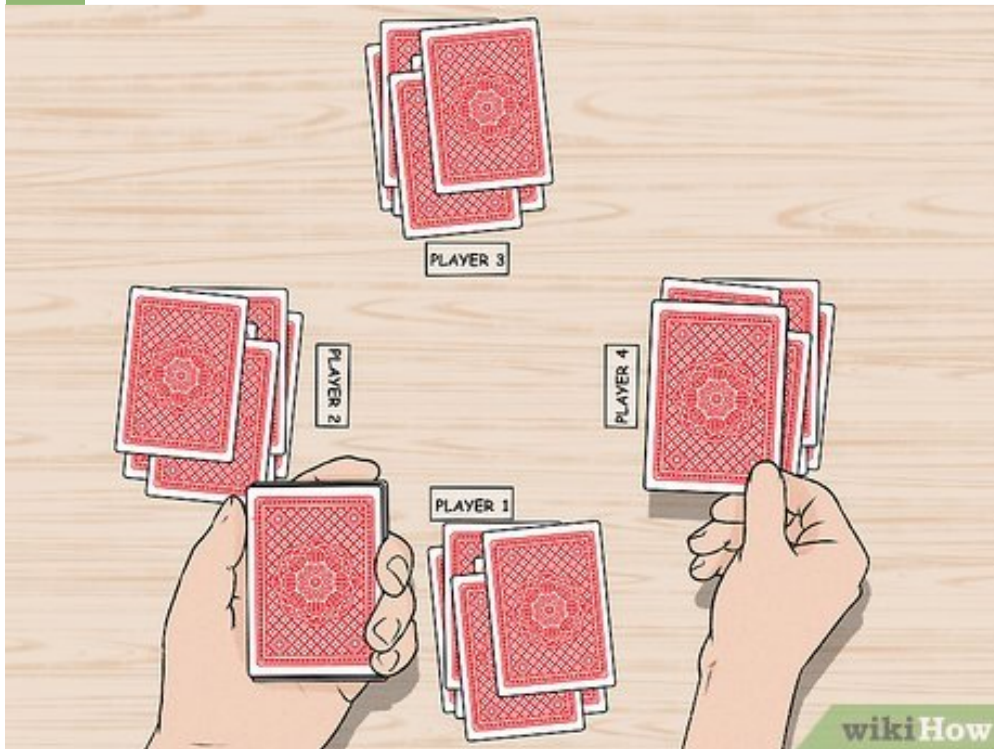
Egyptian Rat Screw, Slap, Snot, or War is a game of **quick wits** and luck. The object of the game is to take as many of the cards as possible. This is great to play if you and some friends are bored, or if you want to show off something new. Follow the steps on this article to learn how to play Egyptian Rat Screw.

Things You'll Need

- ☐ Standard 52-card deck
- ☐ 2 or more players

Method 1

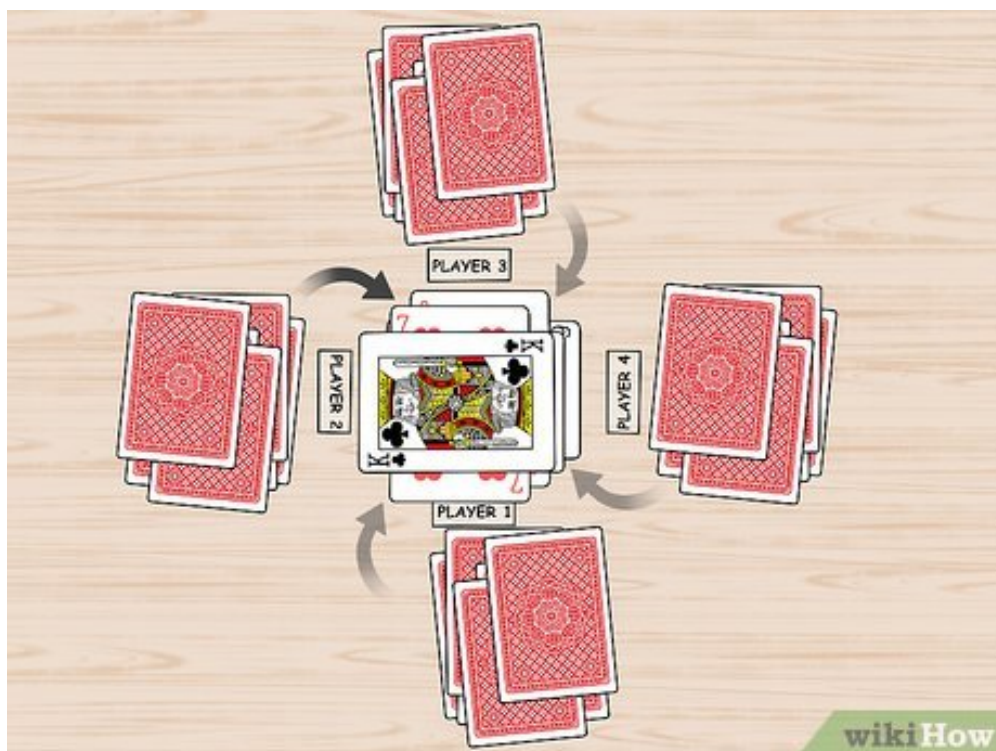
Method 1 of 2: Playing Egyptian Rat Screw



- 1** Take a regular deck of playing cards (minus the jokers) and **shuffle** thoroughly. **Pass out** the entire deck to the players, face down. Distribute evenly so everyone has the same amount. Players hold their cards face down and are not allowed to look at them.^[1]



2 Begin the game. The person left of the dealer goes first by pulling the top card off his/her pile and placing it face-up in the middle. *You are not allowed to see your card until it is placed in the middle.*



3 If the card played has a number on it, the person two spaces to the left of the **dealer** puts down a card, too. This continues around the table until somebody puts down a letter card (J, Q, K, or A). [2]

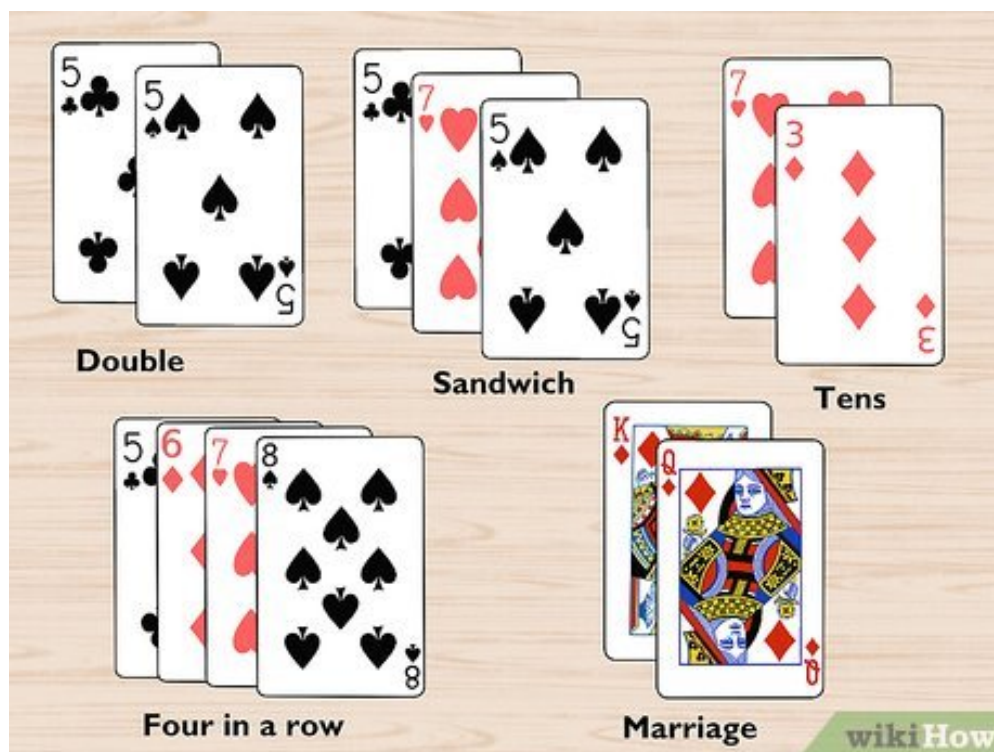


4 When a *letter card* is played, the next person in the **sequence** must play another **letter card in order for play to continue**. The number of chances they have to play a letter card is determined by the initial letter; you can play up to 4 cards if an ace has been played, 3 for a king, 2 for a **queen**, and just 1 for a jack.

- If the next person in the sequence does *not* play a letter card within their allotted chances, the person who played the last letter card wins the round and the whole pile goes to them. Subsequently, the next round begins with this winning person.
- If you play with jokers, in some versions, you have to put down 5 cards for a joker. If you do this, then you can't play the jokers slap (look two steps below).
- Remember, nobody can look at their cards before they're played, so the odds are completely random!

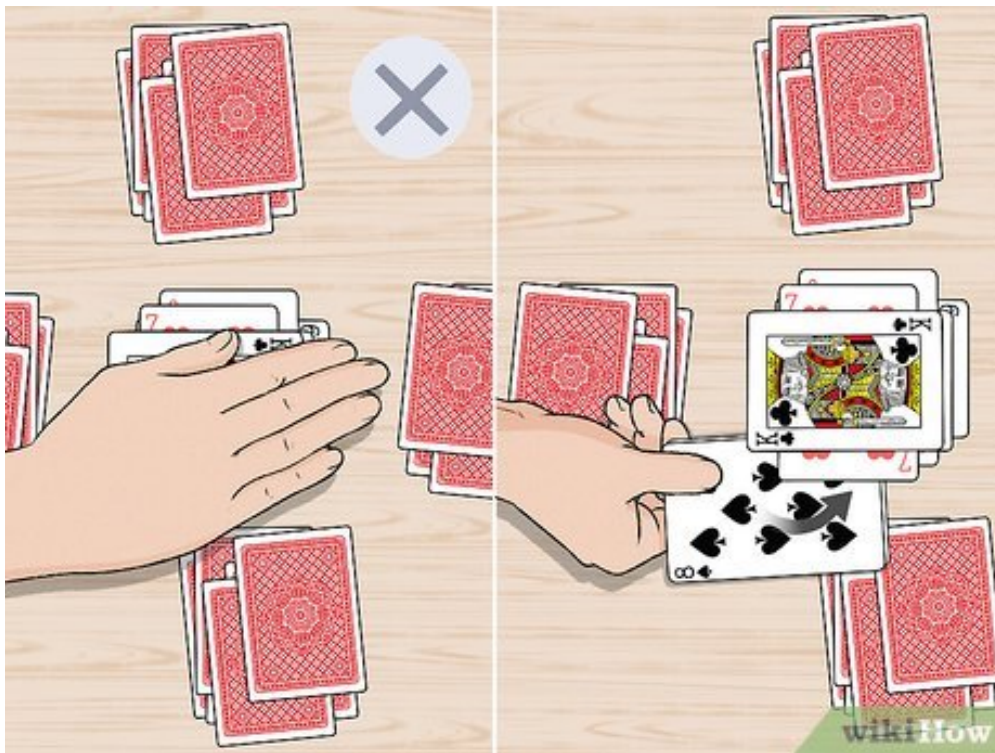


5 The only thing that overrides the letter card rule is the **slap rule**. The first person to slap the pile of cards when the slap rule is put into effect is the winner of that round. If it cannot be determined who was the first to slap the pile, the person with the most fingers on top wins. If the tie cannot be **resolved** this way, play continues normally.[3]



6 Players should abide by the slap rule in the following situations:

- **Double**: when two cards of equivalent value are laid down consecutively. Ex: 5, 5
- **Sandwich**: when two cards of equivalent value are laid down consecutively, but with one card of different value between them. Ex: 5, 7, 5
- **Top bottom** (or bottoms up): when the same card as the *first* card of the set is laid down. However, this rule is nullified if a card is burned as a penalty (see below).
- **Tens**: when two cards played consecutively (or with a letter card in between) add up to 10. *For this rule, an ace counts as one.* Ex: 3, 7 or A, K, 9 (sandwich)
- **Jokers**: when jokers are used in the game, which should be determined before gameplay begins. Anytime someone lays down a joker, the pile can be slapped. This is only if you're not playing the version where you lay down 5 cards for a joker.
- **Four in a row**: when four cards with values in consistent ascending or descending order is placed. Ex: 5, 6, 7, 8 or Q, K, A, 2
- **Marriage**: when a Queen is placed over or under a King (this is considered an optional rule). Ex: Q, K or K,Q



7 You must **add** one or two cards to the bottom of the pile if you slap the pile and it **was not slap-able**. This is called "burning cards" and voids the top bottom slap, since it changes the first card in the set.

- If you have no cards and you slap at the wrong time, then you are out of the game for good (unless you are playing by modified rules, such as allowing players to lend cards to each other).



8 **Continue playing even if you have run out of cards.** So long as you don't slap at the wrong time, you are still allowed to "slap in" and get cards! Everyone should try to stay in the game until you have a single **winner** who obtains *all* the cards.

Method 2 of 2: Playing with Optional Triples Rules



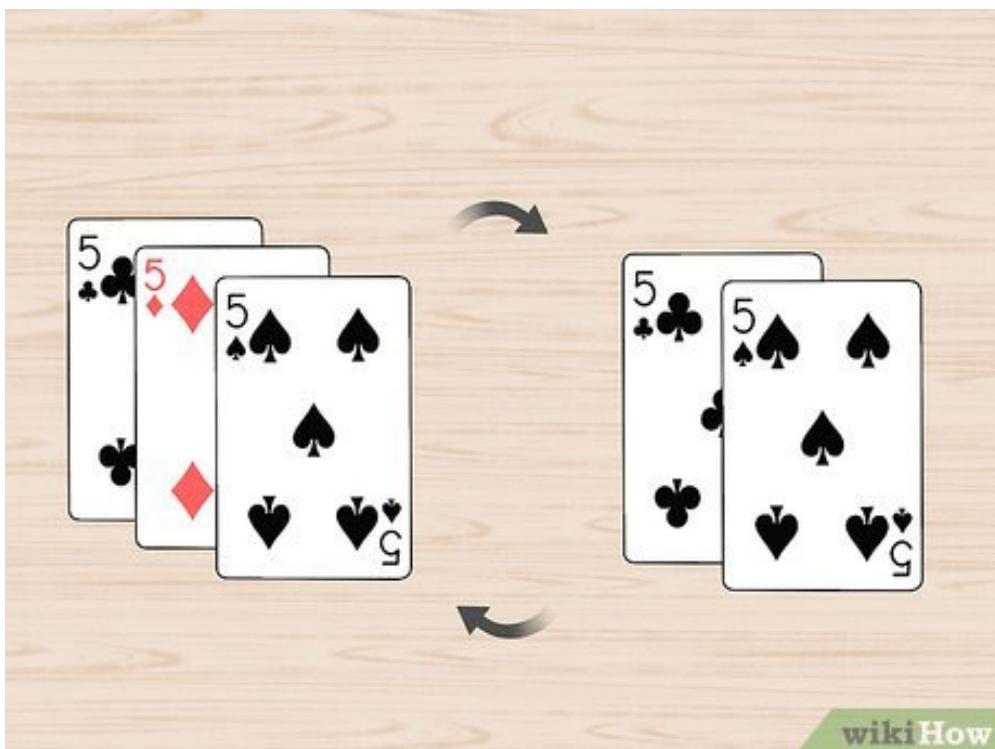
1 Treat triples as instant-win scenarios. In this variation, when three cards of the same type are played in a row (777, QQQ, etc.) the first player to slap instantly wins the game, even if they had no cards before slapping!

- Note that this is exceedingly rare - for this to happen, the first double has to have gone unnoticed. If anyone slaps the initial double, s/he wins those cards and a triple is no longer possible, even if the next card played is the same type as those in the double.



2 Treat triple 6's as instant-lose scenarios. For a devilish twist on the standard triples rules, use this optional variation. In this case, when a triple six is played (666), if anyone slaps it, s/he instantly loses, no matter how many cards s/he had. It's extra-tricky to remember to slap any triples *except* for this one, so be prepared for serious frustration!

- As with the normal triples described above, this one also requires the initial double to go un-slapped to be valid.



3 Treat triples as you would normally treat doubles. If you're not interested in playing Egyptian Rat Screw with the possibility of someone instantly winning or losing through luck, you can simply treat triples as doubles and proceed to play as you normally would, allowing players that slap triples to win the cards in the pile.



Community Q&A

Question

What if there is a double or sandwich at the end of a face card turn (i.e. K, 3, 6, 3)? Would I be able to slap and get the cards or do they go to the face card owner?



Andy Z
Community Answer

Normally, you would be able to slap it and get the cards. However, sometimes the face card owner does something called a "safety slap." They will slap when it is the end of a face card turn, because if it is a face card, it could very well be an important slap, and if it isn't, he gets the cards anyway.

Helpful 4 Not Helpful 3

Question

Can you shuffle your cards in ERS?



Community Answer

You're not supposed to. Memorizing cards can be part of the game, especially if that player only has a few cards left.

Helpful 11 Not Helpful 6

Question

What does Rule 6 in Section 3 mean?



Community Answer

Top Bottom is a little confusing: after the board is cleared, look at the first card thrown. If it's a three, for example, you can slap any other three when it's thrown. This rule is nullified if anyone slaps in incorrectly and is forced to place one or two cards on the bottom.

Helpful 7 Not Helpful 2

VideoRead Video Transcript

<https://www.wikihow.com/video/d/d9/Play+Egyptian+Rat+Screw+Step+0.1080p.mp4>



Tips

- Most of the time, if it's an extreme game, you will **argue** over who slapped first. Don't cheat, and try compromise over who hit first. If that still doesn't work, then apply the "fingers rule" (mentioned in step 5) or just continue gameplay with no winner yet for that round.
- Jacks are extremely useful to have as they only allow one chance for the next player to play a letter card, but watch out if someone plays one before you!
- You may play by different rules about what is slap-able. Most likely only two or three of the mentioned rules will apply. Establish basic rules before you begin to avoid confusion.
- Some people will develop a **habit** of slapping every card, especially if another player only has a few cards left. Thus, if a player incorrectly slaps more than five consecutive cards, they are out of the game permanently.



Warnings

- Make sure to take off your rings and other hand **jewelry** before playing.
- Try not to argue too much (after all, it's just a game).
- This can be a very intense and **competitive** game. Your hands will probably get slapped. Play cautiously--if you get a broken finger you probably won't want to play again.

References

1. ↑ <https://funattic.com/how-to-play-egyptian-rat-screw/>
2. ↑ <https://bicyclecards.com/how-to-play/egyptian-rat-screw/>
3. ↑ https://www.realcty.org/wiki/Egyptian_Ratscrew
4. Wikipedia on Egyptian Rat Screw
5. <http://www.waste.org/~oxymoron/cards/ratscrew.html>

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