

How to Play Hand and Foot

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Hand and Foot is a fun game to play around the campfire that plays like a mix of Solitaire and Jack Change It. However, with every veteran of Hand and Foot comes slight variations on the rules, so don't be afraid to change or experiment with the rules laid out below if it'll accommodate another player.

Things You'll Need

- ☐ Several decks of cards
- ☐ Red and black tokens.

Part 1

Part 1 of 3: Dealing the Cards



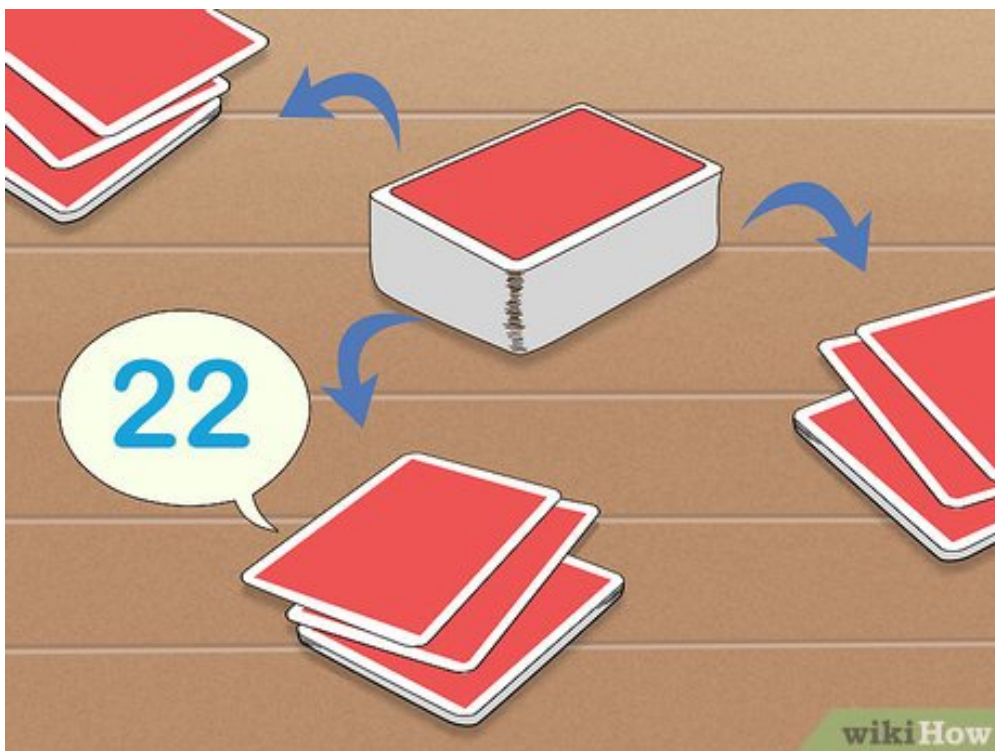
1 Gather a full deck of 52 cards for each player. The total amount of cards used in a typical Hand and Foot game can exceed 150. A general rule of thumb is to have as many decks as there are players in the game.^[1] Once you have all the decks, place them in a pile in the middle in the middle of the table. This central pile of cards is now referred to as the 'stack.'

- Hand and Foot works best with 2-6 players. Anything beyond 6 players can become unwieldy.



2 Shuffle the stack. Separate the stack of cards in the middle of the table and give a stack to each player. Each player should shuffle that stack as thoroughly as they can. Once every player has shuffled their stack, place the cards back into the stack in a random order.

- Perform a riffle shuffle on the stack if a player knows how to do or [learn how to do it](#)[2]



3 Take a group of cards from the deck, aiming for 22. Each player in turn should grab a pile of cards from the central stack, aiming for 22 cards total. If they manage to grab precisely 22 cards, they immediately receive 300 points.

- If the player did not get 22 cards, add or discard as many cards from the selected pile into the central stack until you reach 22.[3]



4 Deal the Hand and Foot decks, 11 cards in each. With the pile of 22 cards that each player now has, they should deal them face-down into 2 piles of 11 cards. Still face-down, the player should then assign 1 of the decks as a 'Hand' deck and the other their 'Foot' deck. [4]

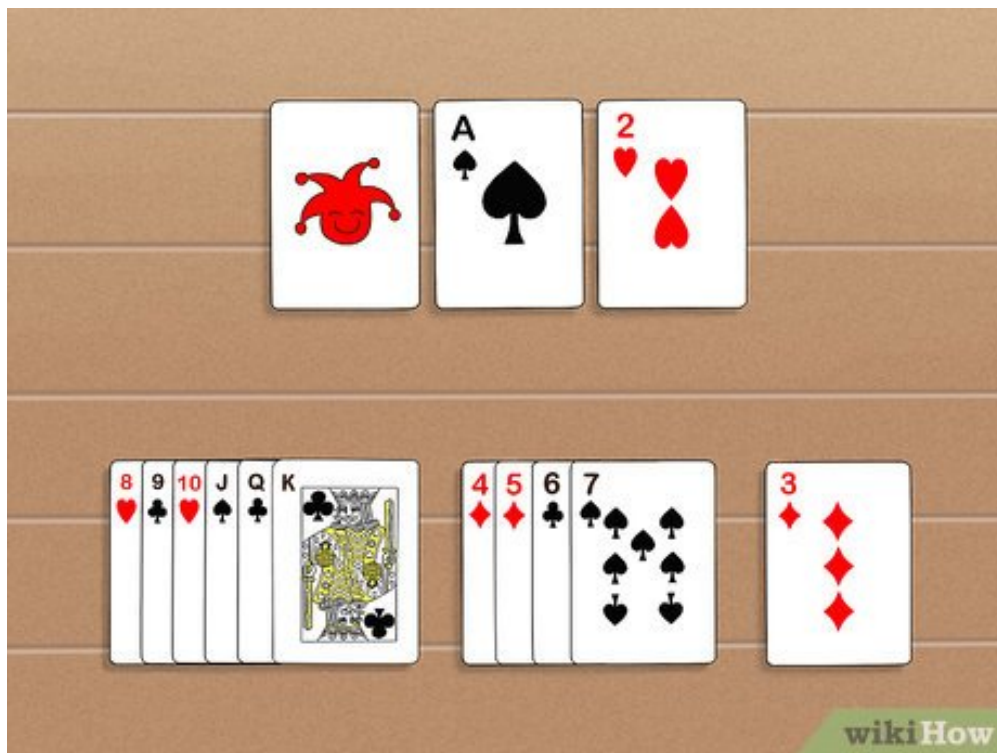
- Once you have your Hand and Foot decks, you're now ready to begin the game.

Part
2

Part 2 of 3: Understanding Melds



1 Understand that the aim of the game is to get rid of your cards. Now that you have your Hand and Foot decks (each totaling 11 cards), pick up your Hand deck and look through the cards. Your goal is to get rid of the Hand deck, then the Foot Deck, using a technique called 'Melding.' [5]



2 Learn the card values. Each card in Hand and Foot has a different point value.

- The following cards are 'Wild cards.' Jokers are worth 50 points. Aces and 2's are worth 20 points.
- The rest of the cards are 'Natural cards.' 8's through Kings are worth 10 points. 4's through 7's are worth 5 points. A black 3 is worth -5 points. A red 3 is worth -300 points.



3 Look through your Hand deck for any 'Clean' melds. A meld is a group of cards as few as 3 or as many as 7 total. A 'Clean meld' is a meld that is made up of only natural cards, regardless of suit, as long as it meets a minimum point threshold (this is explained in a later step). If you have 3 to 7 natural cards in your hand and can meet the minimum point threshold, you can play a 'Clean meld.'^[6]

- At the end of the game, natural melds are worth more points.
- A completed natural meld make up 'Red Piles.'
- A clean meld is only legal when it meets a minimum point threshold. Each round in a game of Hand and Foot has an increasing point threshold to meet. Clean melds are easier to play at the start of a game of Hand and Foot.



4 Search through your Hand deck for any 'Dirty' melds. A dirty meld is a group of 3 to 7 cards that contains both natural and wild cards and meets the minimum point threshold for the round. It doesn't matter what suits the cards are in. For example, if you have 2 natural cards in your hand and 1 wild card, you can construct a 3 card dirty meld.[7]

- At the end of the game, dirty melds are worth less points than clean melds.
- A completed dirty meld makes up 'Black Piles.'
- Because dirty melds are easier to play, usually it's wise to save these plays for later in the game.



5 Learn the minimum point thresholds for a play. To play a meld in a round of Hand and Foot, the cards that make up the meld must exceed a certain point value. A traditional game of Hand and Foot is made up of 4 rounds.^[8]

- In round 1, the point value must exceed 50.
- In round 2, the point value must exceed 90.
- In round 3, the point value must exceed 120.
- In round 4, the point value must exceed 150.



1 Draw and discard cards at the start of the turn. The person to the left of the dealer begins the game. With their Hand deck, they must draw 2 cards from the stack and add it to their Hand deck. Then, they get to discard 1 card from the Hand deck into a discard pile.^[9]

- Remember, the aim of the game is to get rid of all your cards. Try to construct a meld every turn you can so that your hand is shrinking as a round goes on.



2 Begin constructing melds for points from the Hand. Look through your hand for clean or dirty melds using a total of 3 to 7 cards total. Remember that in round 1 the total point value of a meld must exceed 50 points. Place your meld face up on the table to play it.^[10]

- If possible, you can use multiple melds in a single turn to meet the minimum point threshold. Keep the melds on the table as you'll need to assign point values to them later.
- Once you have made your play the player to the left of you begins.



3 Move on to the Foot deck by getting rid of the Hand deck. As the round continues, try to get rid of all the cards in your Hand deck by using a combination of melds and the discards. Once you get rid of your Hand deck, you can pick up your Foot deck.^[11]

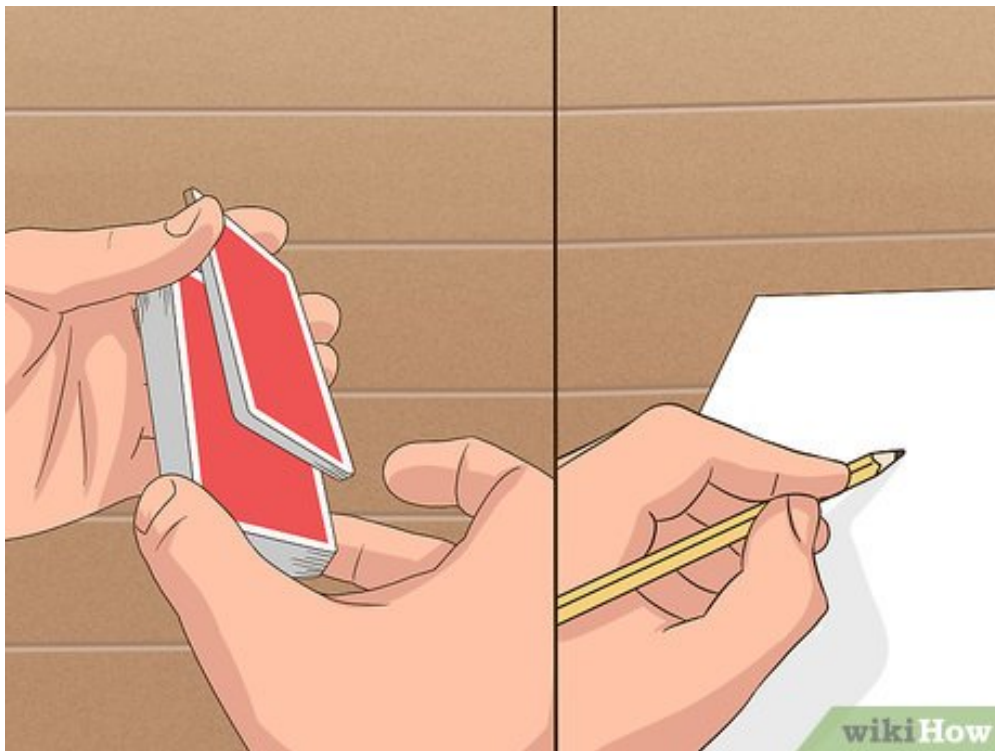


4 End the round if you're ahead by constructing melds and discarding. Generally, if you can end the round the fastest you should do so. With your Foot deck in hand, continue to use melds and discards to get to the end of the round. The round ends when a single player has no cards left.^[12]



5 Tally up the scores at the end of the round. Once a single player gets rid of all their cards, the round ends. Place a red token on any clean melds and a black token on any dirty melds (red and black poker chips, pieces of paper, card, or anything that is red or black can be used as tokens). Now, begin to tally up the score of the melds and the cards played in the melds.^[13]

- Each red pile is worth 500 points. Each black pile is worth 300 points.
- Tally up the individual card values that constructed the melds as well.
- Once you have your total score, keep it to the side and continue into round 2.
- Put all the cards back into the central stack and reshuffle.



6 Play 3 more rounds and tally your score. The game plays similarly round to round, the only difference being the minimum point threshold required to play a meld in each round. Once you have finished 4 full rounds, count up the total score of each round. Whoever has the highest score overall, wins the game.



Community Q&A

Question

How do we play with 5 people?



Paige Hoy
Community Answer

It's about the same as playing with any other number of players, you'll just need more cards.

Helpful 9 Not Helpful 12

Question

Can I print out the rules for the Hand and Foot card game?



Community Answer

Yes you can. Go to the share button and scroll down until you see where it says "print". Or, turn it into a PDF first so you can control how many pages print out.

Helpful 3 Not Helpful 2

VideoRead Video Transcript

<https://www.wikihow.com/video/6/6d/Play+Hand+and+Foot+Step+0.1080p.mp4>



Tips

- If you don't like a rule or would prefer to add another, do so. Experimenting is key to get a version of the game that's just right for you.

References

1. ↑ <https://youtu.be/iD0T1OsojFM?t=12>
2. ↑ <http://mathworld.wolfram.com/RiffleShuffle.html>
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