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The ability to fold marks one of the most important aspects of a winning poker strategy. In Texas Hold'em, playing too many hands preflop, or moving forward with too many marginal hands post-flop, can end up as a major detriment to your win rate.

Knowing when to fold in poker is arguably the most critical skill in the game. The world's best players know this, and fold often.

When to Fold Before the Flop

In Texas Hold'em, the best poker players fold 75 percent or more of all starting hands before the betting even begins. A fundamentally sound preflop strategy sets you up for success in all subsequent betting rounds.

Even the loosest preflop players (if they're winning players) fold before the flop around 70 percent of the time. To figure out when to fold before the flop, you need to establish a set of hand ranges that you're willing to play from each position at the poker table.

Hand range charts (like the Upswing Poker free preflop chart) Tj T* BT

range charts dictate what hands to open raise with from each position, as well as which hands to call or raise with against a player who has bet before you get to act.

A good starting hand chart will have you doing a lot of folding preflop. A good preflop strategy involves playing tighter in early position, then adding more starting hands to your range in the later positions.

Premium hands, like pocket aces, kings, queens, and ace-king, can be open raised from any position. As you get closer to the button, you can add more hands like low suited connectors (5 4 , 9 7) or small pairs like pocket threes and twos.

When to Fold After the Flop

Once the flop hits the board, the game dynamic from the preflop round completely changes. Getting too attached to a hand in certain situations can spell disaster, as the pots can escalate dramatically after preflop play.

Signs that you should fold facing a postflop bet include:

When your preflop hand isn't strong after the flop

When a player who never bluffs is betting big

When you've played a pocket pair preflop, and two or more overcards hit the board

When you have no pair or drawing potential with your hand post-flop

When you do have drawing potential, but don't have the right pot odds to call