



HOW TO READ YOUR OPPONENTS - TIPS FOR BEGINNER POKER PLAYERS

Posted on October 29, 2024 by James Bushy



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No casino game can match the glamor and aura of poker. To get an idea of its appeal, you only need to look at how it is portrayed in slick action movies and the respect it has as a game of strategy.

Although it has a lot going for it, there are a couple of stumbling blocks for those looking to get started in the poker world. Unlike other casino games, which you can get the gist of within a few minutes, poker requires much more concentration and attention. Given that it is a game of strategy and relies so much on reading your opponents, it is a game that is often best played in a land-based setting.

In the defense of online poker — it is a captivating game. While it might not have the same sort of reliance on reading body language or trying to read your opponent's thoughts mid-game, it has established itself as a popular version. It helps players focus on the quality of their hand without having to worry too much about what their opponent is doing. So, if you're just starting to play poker and want to improve, here are some tips to refine your game.

Brush up on the terminology

Poker players implement all sorts of weird and wonderful bluffing techniques into their game. One of the more common ones you're likely to come across are players who will use slang or specific terms to try and determine how experienced you are at the table.

In poker, a lack of knowledge can give the impression of inexperience, and inexperienced players can become targets for those who have been around the block.

We're not saying it's necessary to learn hundreds of different terms and phrases overnight before you start playing, but beginners who have a better grasp of [poker slang](#) and know what to listen for at the table can play the game more confidently. Once you know what terms and certain slang words mean, you can converse more easily with both the dealer and other players.

Body language

Reading the body language of some of the elite poker players won't get you very far as they have become experts, usually over the course of a few decades. They know how to hide their emotions expertly.

Luckily, if you're just starting off in poker, you're unlikely to come up against Daniel Negreanu, so picking up on small changes in someone's body language might be a little bit easier to spot than those of a man who has been appearing [in the latter stages of the World Series of Poker](#) for the best part of 20 years.

If your opponent constantly scratches their face, avoids eye contact or regularly moves their legs, these can all be signs of nervous body language. While they're not all guaranteed signs that the player is trying to hide something, they are some of the common body language movements that poker players look for when they're psyching somebody out at the table.

Tone of voice

This one might not apply to certain players as some players sit mute at the table for hours at a time. I'm not sure how they manage it, but they do. Many players enjoy speaking to other players or the dealer during a game, and you may be able to read their vocal patterns.

Confidence can often come across in how somebody enunciates or the volume of their speech. If a particular vocal or chirpy player is suddenly silent, this could signal that they have a winning hand. Likewise, it might also mean that they're trying to give off the impression that they have a great hand, but they haven't. It can work both ways and it can depend on the individual.

Research poker psychology

Again, we're not saying to go out there and start a college degree, but plenty of books from professional poker players dive into this topic. We have skimmed over the surface today to give you an idea of the sort of things to watch out for. However, nobody can speak about reading opponents and how to understand bluffing better than those who have spent decades looking for their opponent's Achilles heel and the telltale signs they give off via their body language.

The internet has become a vast library of content and information. You can find information on any topic, really. Whether you're [looking for information about trading](#), food recipes, sports, movies or vacation ideas, it isn't just books from ex-pros that can provide insight on how to read your opponents. We'd recommend checking out some poker podcasts or YouTube videos that dive into the topic. As they say, knowledge is power.

Betting patterns

One thing that the top poker players know how to do almost effortlessly is to evaluate the size and regularity of a certain player's betting patterns. If they break out of this habitual behavior after playing for an hour or two, it could be a sign that they're operating with a strong hand.

However, one of the many nuances of poker is that they might be trying to force your hand and push you to fold. It's not a predictable game, and people can be hard to read — especially when they know that giving anything away could give an advantage to other players at the table.

Final thoughts



Reading an opponent at the poker table is something that takes years to get better at. Although we've touched on some of the main characteristics to look for today, it can be exceptionally challenging to know how to read somebody at a poker table.

Tips from professionals and experts only go so far. A lot of the knowledge that competent poker players gain comes from spending hundreds of hours at tables, reading how people move and the sort of commonalities they share if they have a particularly strong or weak hand.

As you can see today, some of the points can go both ways. Just because somebody changes their body language doesn't always mean you've got them beaten. There can be ambiguities about it too, so be sure to navigate this casino gaming minefield carefully!