

How to Play Spider Solitaire

Set up ten columns, learn which runs can move, and build the three habits that create winning space.



104 cards

10 columns

8 runs

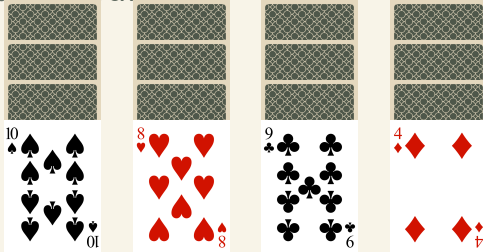
S

The goal: remove eight complete same-suit sequences, each built from King down to Ace.

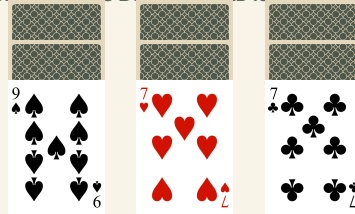
01

Set up the complete board

54 TABLEAU CARDS



ONLY EACH COLUMN'S BOTTOM CARD IS FACE UP



10 TABLEAU COLUMNS

First four: 6 cards each

Next six: 5 each

54 cards dealt

1

2

3

4

5

6

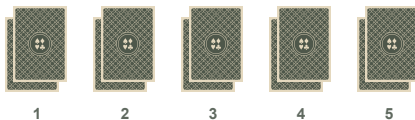
7

8

9

10

Stock - five deals of ten



1

2

3

4

5

Each stock action adds one card to every column.

Completed runs - eight foundation slots



1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

A same-suit King-to-Ace run leaves the tableau here.

02

Read the four board zones

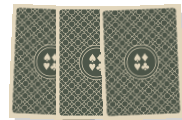
TABLEAU



Ten working columns

Build downward here, reveal hidden information, and create empty workspace.

STOCK



Five rows remain

Each deal covers all ten endpoints with one new card. Exhaust useful moves first.

COMPLETED RUNS



Eight sequences win

Only a complete same-suit King-to-Ace sequence leaves the board.

EMPTY COLUMN



Temporary workspace

Any single card or clean same-suit run may move into an empty column.

03 Five rules that govern every move

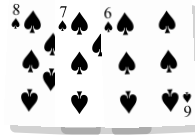
RULE 1



Build down by one rank

A single exposed card may land across suits.

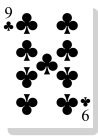
RULE 2



Move only clean runs

A group travels together only when every suit matches.

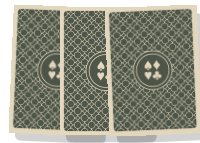
RULE 3



Protect empty space

Any card or clean run may use an empty column.

RULE 4



Deal across all ten

A stock action covers every endpoint. Scan first.

RULE 5

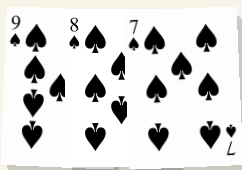


Clear a same-suit King-to-Ace run

The full 13-card sequence leaves the tableau automatically. Remove eight complete runs to win.

04 Choose your suit mode

1 SUIT

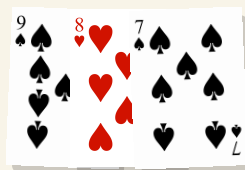


50.0%

measured result / 2,257 starts

Literature: Practically every deal

2 SUITS



10.4%

measured result / 1,195 starts

Literature: The overwhelming majority

4 SUITS



1.1%

measured result / 177 starts

Literature: Most deals - if a line is found

MEASURED PLAYER RESULT IS NOT THE SAME AS THEORETICAL SOLVABILITY

START HERE

1 suit

Learn the movement rules and practice creating empty columns.

NEXT STEP

2 suits

Plan suit joins earlier because mixed stacks lose mobility.

EXPERT MODE

4 suits

Treat every off-suit placement as debt that must later be repaid.

05 The decision order before every stock deal

1

Reveal information

Prefer a move that flips a hidden card over cosmetic tidying.

2

Preserve empty space

Use an empty column as workspace, not permanent storage.

3

Join the same suit

Clean descending runs keep their mobility and can leave the board.

4

Improve mixed stacks

Use temporary off-suit builds only when they create access.

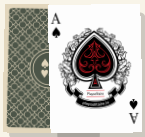
5

Deal last

A fresh row changes all ten endpoints, so exhaust useful moves first.

06 Three board tests before you deal

TEST 1



Can I reveal?

Move the exposed end of a column and flip the hidden card beneath it.

TEST 2



Can I connect?

Join same-suit cards before temporary off-suit placements split the run.

TEST 3



Can I create space?

Empty a column only when the new workspace immediately improves mobility.

07 Four traps that quietly remove options

TRAP 1

Dealing too soon

A new row can bury a useful endpoint and fill the empty column you worked to create.

TRAP 2

Chasing cosmetic order

A tidy mixed stack is still immobile. Prefer reveals and same-suit joins.

TRAP 3

Filling space permanently

An empty column is valuable because it lets you rearrange; do not turn it into storage.

TRAP 4

Breaking a clean run

Once same-suit cards move together, protect that mobility unless a deeper reveal repays the cost.

08 Practice the three habits

01

REVEAL



Flip one hidden card

Find a move that uncovers information before the first stock deal.

02

CONNECT



Build a four-card clean run

Join four descending cards of one suit so the group moves as a unit.

03

CREATE SPACE



Empty one tableau column

Earn workspace through legal moves, then use it to expose a deeper card.

09 Before every stock deal



Scan all ten endpoints for legal moves.



Prefer a move that flips a hidden card.



Join same-suit cards when the cost is reasonable.



Keep at least one column available as workspace.



Count what each mixed placement blocks.



Deal only after useful movement is exhausted.

10 Table language

Tableau - the ten working columns.

Stock - the 50 cards dealt in five rows.

Clean run - descending cards of one suit.

Mixed stack - descending cards across suits.

Endpoint - the exposed bottom card of a column.

Empty column - temporary rearranging space.

Completed run - a same-suit King-to-Ace sequence.

Deal - one new card placed on every column.

11 Reference, data and reuse

Keep the maintained guide with this handout

The online guide adds interactive boards, FAQ answers and current measured results. When sharing this printable online, link readers to the maintained source.

playsolitaire.io/how-to-play-spider-solitaire

playsolitaire.io/spider-solitaire

Data note

The 50.0%, 10.4% and 1.1% figures are measured player results from PlaySolitaire.io. They are not theoretical solvability rates; samples and literature estimates are printed on page 2.

Suggested citation

MN Media. (2026). How to Play Spider Solitaire - Rules and Suit Guide. PlaySolitaire.io.