

Ace-Five

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The Ace-Five method is for the game of Blackjack. Certain conditions must exist for successful use. Notably that the Dealer Stands on Soft 17. This rule is not as popular as it was years back, but still can be found in high-competition areas of gaming with limits of \$25 minimum. Surrender is quite useful and is accounted in the chart. The bonus is Re-Split Aces. Being allowed this in lieu of Surrender is an excellent compromise. Having both Surrender and Re-Split Aces allowed is the best one can hope for with the Dealer stands on Soft 17 rule. Even an 8-deck shoe game becomes worthy.

When Ace-Five was developed in 1982 the main Blackjack attraction was single or double deck games. Having the game "hand dealt" was all people cared about. One could find a \$10 shoe game (4 decks back then) with all the good rules, and hardly anyone was seated. The aforementioned pitch games had lousy rules, bad penetration, and full tables. Ace-Five was always a moderate success at the shoe games. When dealing down to the last deck of four with those rules, it wasn't hard. I would ask that you test this rule-set yourself when finished, and perfected. 4 decks, 3 in play, Dealer stands soft 17, late surrender, Double down any 2 cards, double after splits, pairs split up to 4 hands, Re-split Aces allowed: split Aces get one card only (no hit rule). (EV -0.24% Basic: -0.22% by chart below)

East Coast US and Las Vegas still have S17 shoes available. Usually at higher minimums of \$15 or \$25. The game is primarily 8-deck, but 6-deck games are normal in some casinos. Atlantic City does not allow Late Surrender by Gaming Law.

In essence the Ace-Five strategy counts the two most important cards in the deck according to the change in advantage by their removal. The Fives favor the Dealer, as they take a loser like 12 to 16, and turn it into a standing hand of 17 to 21. Aces, not 10's, are critical to Blackjack. There are plenty of face cards to make 20, but it takes an Ace to make Blackjack. Aces are also important in soft hands due to doubling. And pairs of Aces are also quite good. Ace-Five is derived from the Fives Count as presented by Lawrence Revere in his seminal book "Playing Blackjack as a Business". Ken Uston's book "Million Dollar Blackjack" actually contains three pages devoted to Ace-Five. However, this is limited to the rare "Early Surrender" version of Blackjack tested in Atlantic City in the early 1980's, and does not offer a playing strategy for Late Surrender, that replaced it. The betting strategy was simple, and is nearly duplicated here.

What makes my version unique is that there are a few changes to Basic Strategy that have a small but measurable effect. Six of them in all. Due to shoe games with a House Advantage (Uston's Ace-Five is based upon a Player Advantage!) I devised a way to indicate who has the advantage: Dealer or Player. Its very simple... start the count at -2. Add 1 for each Five seen, and subtract 1 for each Ace seen. When the count is zero, the game is even. Anytime this running score is positive, the player has the advantage. When negative, the Dealer has advantage. When the dealer shuffles up, reset the score to -2.

Knowing this one fact allows a small variance in the betting. When negative, bet 1 unit. When zero or +1, bet 2 units. At +2 or more, the bet is 4 units. One other rule used for the Ace-Five method is the Missouri Cover. Missouri being the "Show Me State", we want the dealer to "Show me a winner" before we increase our bet as indicated by the count (NEVER raise bet upon a tie or loss). Naturally, we reduce the bet immediately when the count indicates. The Missouri Cover is important, always use it when playing Ace-Five. It makes betting 2+ units efficiently allowing the player to have an advantage at a score of zero. When near the burn card, you may add 1 to your running count. This follows the way the House Advantage shrinks with fewer decks in play. In a 6-deck shoe its easy, 1/2 the cards played is a good indicator. For 8-deck shoes, 5 decks must be removed.

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For those games without Surrender, Ace-Five uses one simple rule. Hit if you can't surrender. 16 is listed as Surrender when the Dealer shows a 10-value card, but stand on 3 cards or more. Since surrender is not allowed, we will always Hit 2-card 16 versus a Dealer X. The House looks at this hand to detect Card-Counters!, but for accuracy's sake the correct decision is stand at -1, zero, or any positive count.

When to leave the table financially is up to you. However, computer sims indicate there is a correct balance to the Ace-Five Method. To play about 70% of the hands (and thus avoiding detection by playing when the House has an increased advantage) there is an established "quit point" of -6. At -7 you MUST leave (NEVER play at -7, -8, -9, etc). After you perfect this, bump the quit point to -5 for a little more overall advantage. You will play 60% of the hands under generally better conditions.

Finally, don't expect an advantage like real counters, their methods are more complex and accurate. But you do have an edge over the House, nonetheless. As written here 8 decks at Foxwoods is +0.10%. When in Vegas with all the good rules and 6 decks (but be prepared for \$25 a hand minimum!) its +0.25%. DO NOT USE THIS, OR ANY COUNTING STRATEGY FOR INTERNET BLACKJACK: THE CARDS ARE SHUFFLED AFTER EVERY ROUND RENDERING ALL COUNTING METHODS USELESS!

ACE 5 RC	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X	A
5 to 8	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H
9	H	D	D	D	D	H	H	H	H	H
10	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	H	H
11	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	H
12	H	H	S	S	S	H	H	H	H	H
13 & 14	S	S	S	S	S	H	H	H	H	H
15	S	S	S	S	S	H	H	H	-2	H
16	S	S	S	S	S	H	H	-2	R*	R
17 to 21	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
A2	H	H	H	-2	D	H	H	H	H	H
A3	H	H	H	D	D	H	H	H	H	H
A4	H	H	-3	D	D	H	H	H	H	H
A5	H	H	D	D	D	H	H	H	H	H
A6	H	D	D	D	D	H	H	H	H	H
A7	S	D	D	D	D	S	S	H	H	O
A8 to AX	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
22 33 77	P	P	P	P	P	P	H	H	H	H
44	H	H	H	P	P	H	H	H	H	H
55	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	H	H
66	P	P	P	P	P	H	H	H	H	H
88 AA	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
99	P	P	P	P	P	S	P	P	S	S
XX	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
* S 3+ cards	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X	A

Many, many, many thanks to Norm Wattenberger and those folks at Qfit for CVData, and CVBJ. These were absolutely essential in providing the tweaks to Basic that benefits A-5. The wong-out at -6RC was also proven, and the correct betting ramp established. What took me a day to do in the mid 80's takes a New York Minute... really.