

Poker is all about exploits. Your goal is to find leaks in your opponent's strategy, figure out how to best take advantage of those leaks, and then implement plays to exploit their mistakes. This is poker in a nutshell.

When bluffing, your aim is to exploit a player who will fold too often.

When value betting, your aim is to exploit a player who cannot fold enough worse hands.

**Poker exploits exist preflop and on every street postflop.** But at the end of the day, every exploit at the table boils down to these four basic exploitative principles. So let's break them all down (or watch this video which explains all four as well):

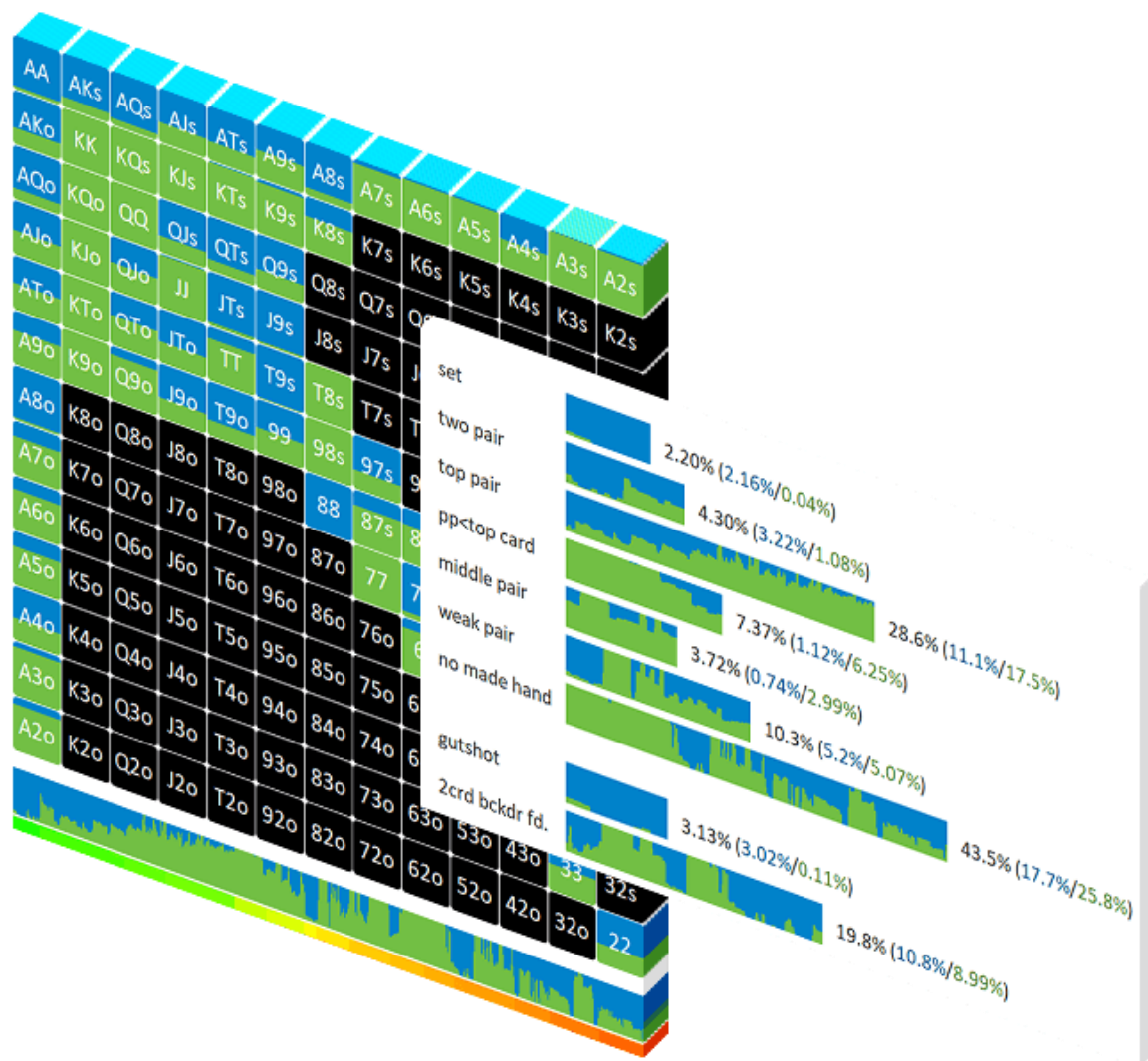
To begin, we need to know the functional definition of exploitation in poker. Essentially, this is when someone takes advantage of a player's strategic shortcomings. For more on this, check out our article [Exploitative Poker 101](#).

As an example, say a player bluffs too much. To exploit them we would bluff catch more liberally and be less inclined to fold medium pairs if they bet at us. If someone folds too much, then we bluff into them more, taking advantage of the fact that they fold too often.

Some exploits are much easier than others, some are much cheaper, and some require a lot of exposure. For instance, someone might have a situation where they play preflop, flop, and turns really well but they play rivers awfully and fold too often against river bets. That's great, but you're going to have to expose a lot of chips in order to run that triple barrel bluff and take advantage of their exploit. Triple barreling against that player is going to cost more to execute than [simply isolating a player preflop](#) who over-folds against a 9bb raise.

These exploits are everywhere in this game, but you may be thinking "*how does this compare with GTO nowadays?*" With game theory optimal play and solvers increasing in popularity – which is more important?

Should we be exploitatively focused or attempting to mimic a solver's output in a *given* situation?



GTO is great and it's important to understand how it works, but no human you ever play against is going to perfectly execute GTO strategies. No human can play perfect GTO which means there are areas in their game that you can exploit. Some players will have smaller areas and others will have huge pockets in many aspects of their playbook.

So with that said, exploitative play is my major focus because everyone has shortcomings in their game. My job is to sniff-out weaknesses and implement lines that exploit them while also protecting myself from being exploited as best as possible.

## EXPLOIT #1

# AGGRESSION VS. FOLDERS

The first type of exploitation we are looking at is increasing aggression vs. folders. This is [bluffing 101 in poker](#) and crucial when looking to bluff more often.

A basic example of this exploit is when someone is opening a wide range of hands preflop and if I 3bet them they're going to continue with a very small range. This means they are folding a tremendous amount of the time, and we take advantage of them by 3betting more bluffs.

This idea also helps us find auto-profit bluff C-bets, double barrels, triple barrels too. But to run these plays, we really have to know our numbers – in particular, the breakeven percentage for the common bet and raise sizes that you use.

For instance, if you were to throw out a pot size bet, how often does your opponent need to fold for you to make an automatic profit? This is just  $\$RISK/(\$RISK+\$REWARD)$ . If you are risking pot, that means you're break-even number is 50%. If your opponent is going to fold 75% of the time and you need 50% of folds, you are going to make a profit.

Whenever you identify that your opponent is folding too much, this is a great time to increase aggression and fire many more bluffs. Take advantage of their over-folding frequency, but remember that this skillset requires a good understanding of breakeven-%, hand reading, and the effects of one-vs.-multiple barrels.

Keep in mind that, you may very well be making a mathematically profitable decision, but that doesn't mean you are guaranteed to win. Sometimes they wake up with the top part of their range, and that's just how it is. But that alone doesn't mean you made a mistake. So long as your play rates to make you money in the long run, it can still be +EV even though it won't win 100% of the time.

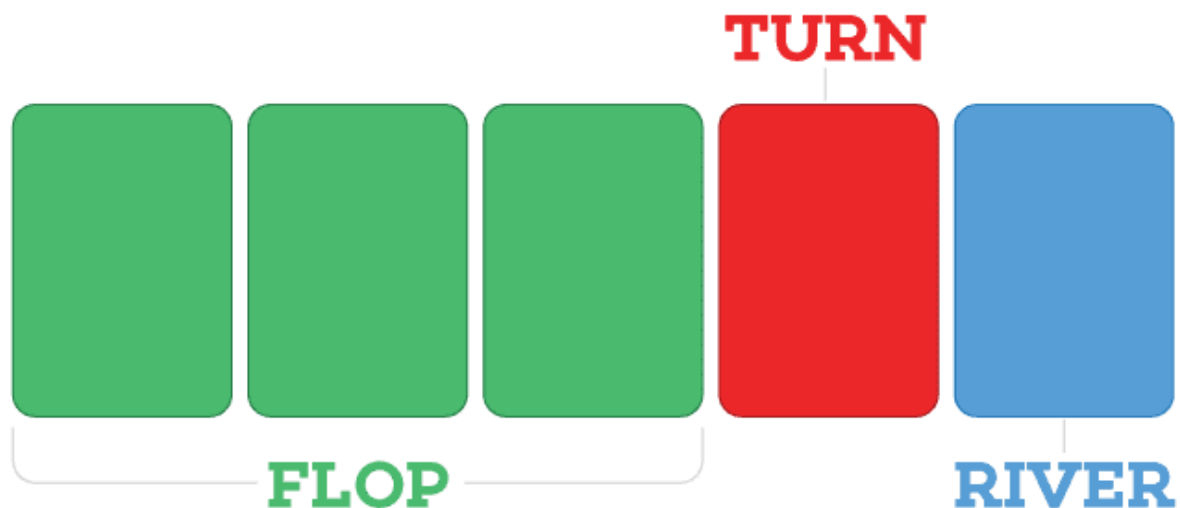
## EXPLOIT #2

# AGGRESSION VS. NON-FOLDERS

The second type of exploit is increasing aggression vs non-folders.

Here, we are focusing more on increasing our value range rather than bluffing as we did in Exploit #1. This means we are aiming to value bet thinner than we may normally. If our opponent is constantly calling and continuing with a heap of second-best holdings, then we can definitely take advantage by value betting with weaker top pairs and even some second-pair hands.

Many players might think this applies to the river, but it can most definitely be executed earlier in the hand as well.



Heck, this concept can even help you decide whether you [call or 3bet Ace King preflop](#).

Getting more aggressive on flops & turns can allow us to exploit players who are too inelastic with draws and can be much more profitable than a typical showdown value approach which allows them to actualize their draws for cheap.

Of course, there are a lot of details that go into this, including bet sizing and raise sizing every step of the way. When implementing this exploit we also want to understand inelasticity, exactly how much they will pay with those second-best hands, and also be trying to [estimate the EV of the available lines](#).

### EXPLOIT #3

## OVER-FOLDING VS. NITS

It's quite simple to beat nits – but there are plenty of spots where TAGs, LAGs, and even fish can be nitty in specific spots.

Watch this [free video for 3 plays that beat nits](#) every time.

For instance, say a nit decides to double barrel against you. Since nits bluff so rarely, chances are they have a strong hand – and the way we exploit them is by not giving them action when we have a second-best hand (especially when our hand has very little chance of improving).

Now, this can be done against nits and also against people who have nitty ranges. Even non-nits can show up with nitty ranges when they bet too rarely, raise with too strong of a range, or use a bet/raise size that all but guarantees they have a strong hand.

Just remember that **you need to be super confident when making huge hero folds** that your opponent actually is really nitty. Otherwise, you could easily be the one getting exploited since you are overfolding (letting them implement Exploit #1 on you!)

## EXPLOIT #4

# DEFENDING VS. OVER-AGGRESSION

What if somebody is too aggressive, too bluff-heavy, and they fire a bet or raise at us?

The simple way we exploit them is by folding less and forcing them to either show up with a hand (or another bet). By defending more often and folding less often, we can contend for more pots and apply pressure to them that they likely aren't used to facing.

Aggressive players are used to being in the driver's seat. So by raising, or even re-raising, you can take them out of their comfort zone with a variety of hands.



Sure, you can bluff-catch more often (which is how many players commonly think about 'defending'). And bluff-catching more is far better than over-folding and letting these players pick up too many easy pots. But defense simply means 'not folding' – which also means you can apply aggression to them and quickly find a variety of **+EV plays on every street** (especially turns and rivers).

Overall, there are a lot of different options available to exploit common strategic issues that players have. Some of these options are cheap and easy, and others require more moxie and risk to find profitable opportunities. But with some simple math and these 4 exploits in your back pocket – you can easily expand your playbook to find easy profits in your next session.

As an exercise, in the next session you play, look for 2 spots where you could implement any of these actions. Maybe you don't take it and instead, you just [jot the hand down](#) and study it later. But at least by getting your brain to LOOK for these exploits, you'll start finding these situations everywhere. Then with some extra study, you'll find yourself prepared and confident to start taking advantage.