

= Aces and eights (blackjack) =

Splitting aces and eights is part of blackjack basic strategy . Rules vary across gambling establishments regarding resplitting , doubling , multiple card draws , and the payout for blackjack , and there are conditional strategic responses that depend upon the number of decks used , the frequency of shuffling and dealer 's cards . However , regardless of the various situations , the common strategic wisdom in the blackjack community is to " Always split aces and eights " when dealt either pair as initial cards . This is generally the first rule of any splitting strategy .

= = Splitting = =

The object of blackjack is for a player to defeat the dealer by obtaining a total as close to 21 as possible without accumulating a total that exceeds this number . In blackjack , the standard rule is that if the player is dealt a pair of identically ranked initial cards , known as a pair , the player is allowed to split them into separate hands and ask for a new second card for each while placing a full initial bet identical to the original wager with each . After placing the wager for the split hands the dealer gives the player an additional card for each split card . The two hands created by splitting are considered independently in competition against the dealer . Splitting allows the gambler to turn a bad hand into one or two hands with a good possibility of winning . It also allows the player to double the bet when the dealer busts . Some rules even allow for resplitting until the player has as many as four hands or allow doubling the bet after a split so that each hand has a bet double the original . The standard rules are that when a bet is doubled on a hand , the player is only allowed to draw one more card for that hand .

= = = Aces = = =

A pair of aces gives the blackjack player a starting hand value of either a 2 or a soft 12 which is a problematic starting hand in either case . Splitting aces gives a player two chances to hit 21 . Splitting aces is so favorable to the player that most gambling establishments have rules limiting the player 's rights to do so . In most casinos the player is only allowed to draw one card on each split ace . As a general rule , a ten on a split ace (or vice versa) is not considered a natural blackjack and does not get any bonus . Prohibiting resplitting and redoubling is also common . Regardless of the payout for blackjack , the rules for resplitting , the rules for doubling , the rules for multiple card draws and the dealer 's cards , one should always split aces .

= = = Eights = = =

If a player is dealt a pair of eights , the total of 16 is considered a troublesome hand . In fact , the value 16 is said to be the worst hand one can have in blackjack . Since sixteen of the other fifty cards have a value of 10 and four have a value of 11 , there is a strong chance of getting at least an 18 with either or both split cards . A hand totaling 18 or 19 is much stronger than having a 16 . Splitting eights limits one 's losses and improves one 's hand . Probabilistic research of expected value scenarios shows that by splitting eights one can convert a hand that presents an expected loss to two hands that may present an expected profit or a reduced loss , depending on what the dealer is showing . A split pair of eights is expected to win against dealer upcards of 2 through 7 and to lose less against dealer upcards of 8 through ace . If a player hits on a pair of eights , he is expected to lose \$ 52 for a \$ 100 bet . If the player splits the eights , he is expected to lose only \$ 43 for a \$ 100 bet .

= = History = =

Blackjack 's " Four Horsemen " (Roger Baldwin , Wilbert Cantey , Herbert Maisel and James McDermott) , using adding machines , determined that splitting eights was less costly than playing

the pair of eights as a 16 . They were part of a 1950s group that discovered that strategy could reduce the house edge to almost zero in blackjack . Now a typical strategy involves the following sequence of playing decisions : one decides whether to surrender , whether to split , whether to double down , and whether to hit or stand .

One of the earliest proponents of the strategy of splitting eights is Ed Thorp , who developed the strategy on an IBM 704 as part of an overall blackjack strategic theory published in *Beat the Dealer : A Winning Strategy for the Game of Twenty @-@ One* in 1962 . Thorp was the originator of the card counting system for blackjack .