

Cruel

1 players

52 cards

Difficulty: Hard

Duration: Short

Build four foundation piles by suit from Ace to King.

SETUP

- Place four Aces as foundation starters.
- Deal remaining 48 cards into 12 face-up piles of 4.

SCORING

- Win by building all four foundations to King.

Tip: Plan how moves will affect the next redeal since card order is preserved.

ON YOUR TURN

- Move top card of a pile to a foundation (ascending, same suit).
- Move top card onto another pile (same suit, one rank lower).
- Redeal by gathering piles in order and redealing into groups of 4.

Cruel is a solitaire card game similar to La Belle Lucie but with a distinctive redeal mechanic that preserves the order of cards within each pile. After the initial deal, players can redeal as many times as needed, but the cards are gathered in pile order (not shuffled), creating a deterministic puzzle. This makes Cruel a game of pure strategy where every deal is theoretically solvable.

Objective

Build four foundation piles from Ace to King by suit.

Setup

1. **Players:** 1
2. **Deck:** Standard 52-card deck
3. **Layout:** Remove the four Aces and place them as foundation starters. Deal the remaining 48 cards face up into 12 piles of 4 cards each. Only the top card of each pile is available.

Gameplay

1. **Available cards:** Only the top card of each pile is available for play.
2. **Build on foundations:** Move available cards to foundations in ascending order by suit (Ace through King).
3. **Build on piles:** Move an available card onto another pile's top card if it is the same suit and one rank lower. For example, place the 5 of clubs on the 6 of clubs.
4. **Redeal:** When stuck, gather all pile cards by picking up each pile in order (right to left, top to bottom) and redeal them into piles of 4, maintaining the gathered order. Unlimited redeals are allowed.
5. **Key rule:** The redeal does not shuffle the cards. The order in which piles are gathered determines the new layout.

Scoring

1. **Win:** All 48 cards are placed on the four foundation piles.
2. **Loss:** A redeal produces the same layout as the previous deal, meaning no further progress is possible.

Variations

- **Perseverance:** Similar to Cruel but uses fans of overlapping cards instead of squared piles.
- **Ripple Fan:** A variant where redeals distribute cards one at a time across fans rather than in groups of 4.
- **Royal Family:** Similar layout but with different building rules on the tableau.

Tips and Strategies

- Think about how a redeal will rearrange the cards before committing to moves.
- Try to play cards to foundations before redealing to change the composition of piles.
- Move cards between piles strategically to set up favorable redeal positions.
- Since redeals are unlimited but deterministic, plan multiple redeals ahead.

Tips & Strategy

Think about how a redeal will rearrange the cards before making moves. Play to foundations before redealing to change pile compositions. Since redeals preserve order, plan multiple redeals in advance.

The key insight in Cruel is that the redeal is a tool, not a reset. You should plan your pre-redeal moves to create favorable post-redeal positions. Think of each redeal as a strategic move itself.