

Knock-Out Whist

2-7 players

52 cards

Difficulty: Easy

Duration: Medium

Win at least one trick each round to avoid elimination; last player standing wins.

SETUP

- Deal 7 cards to each player in round one.
- Turn up the next card to determine the trump suit.
- Each subsequent round, deal one fewer card per player.

SCORING

- Win at least one trick to survive the round.
- Fail to win a trick and you are knocked out.
- Last player remaining wins the game.

Tip: Save your best trump for a guaranteed trick; you only need one to survive.

ON YOUR TURN

- Follow suit if possible; otherwise play any card.
- Highest trump wins the trick, or highest card of led suit.
- Player who won most tricks last round leads first.

Knock-Out Whist is a simplified trick-taking game with a progressive elimination format. Players start with seven cards and the number decreases each round. Fail to win a trick and you are knocked out.

Objective

Win at least one trick each round to avoid elimination. The last player remaining wins the game.

Setup

1. **Players:** 2 to 7 players.
2. **Deck:** Standard 52-card deck.
3. **Deal:** In round one, deal 7 cards to each player. Turn up the next card to set the trump suit.
4. **Reducing Hands:** Each subsequent round, deal one fewer card per player (6, then 5, then 4, etc.).

Gameplay

1. **Leading:** The player who won the most tricks in the previous round leads first. In round one, the player left of the dealer leads.
2. **Following Suit:** You must play a card of the led suit if you have one. If you cannot follow suit, you may play any card including a trump.
3. **Winning Tricks:** The highest trump wins the trick. If no trump was played, the highest card of the led suit wins.
4. **Elimination:** Any player who fails to win at least one trick in a round is knocked out of the game.

Final Round

When only two players remain and each has one card, the higher trump or higher card wins. If multiple players survive to a single-card round, the trick winner takes the game.

Tips and Strategies

- You only need one trick to survive — do not waste high cards trying to win extra tricks.
- Save your best trump card for a guaranteed trick late in the round.
- As hands get smaller, each trick decision becomes more critical.

Tips & Strategy

Survival is more important than dominance. Do not overcommit strong cards in early tricks if you already have a guaranteed winning card for later.

In the early rounds with larger hands, identify your one certain winner and plan around it. In later rounds, every card matters and reading opponents becomes crucial.