

THE ESSENTIAL HOME GAME CHECKLIST

Want to set up the ultimate home poker game?

With this useful checklist you'll have all the essentials you'll need to make your game run smoothly.

A successful home poker game can be great fun but it's important to get all the elements right. Tick off these essentials before you get going for the perfect poker night in.

PLANNING A HOME GAME - OVERVIEW

When: You need to know when to host a game, when people are likely to arrive, and what times to avoid.

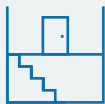
Friday and Saturday nights are ideal, midweek 'school nights' less so. Players with young families are unlikely to make a Sunday 3pm game, for example.

Do you go for a weekly game if there's enough interest or increase the buy-in and hold more infrequent games? Work out what suits everyone's schedules best and base when you host the game around that.

Where: Have a venue confirmed, and make sure everyone has directions. This avoids late arrivals. Work out where the game is going to be and if you have enough room:



Kitchen



Basement



Garage



Sitting Room/Lounge

Who: Inviting the right mix of players is like inviting the right people to a party.

You can invite eight good friends and one stranger, but will that alienate the player who doesn't know anyone else?

Working out a good mix of friendly/aggressive/funny/skilful/novice players is essential so that players keep coming back.

Notice: Have you given your group enough notice and set up a social media group or WhatsApp group?

Equipment: At home, you'll need a table, or table top/cloth, enough chips to cater for everyone, and a deck or two of good-quality plastic cards.

If you have space, consider two tables so that bust-outs can start up a side game.

Game/Structure: Have you settled on a game, a format, and a buy-in? These are essential before you begin.

FINDING PLAYERS

Do you have enough players for your group and are those players likely to turn up regularly?

Ideally, you need 10-12 regulars (allowing for 1-2 last-minute drop-outs) who are reliable and keen enough to turn up every week, fortnight, or month.

SETTING UP A CALENDAR

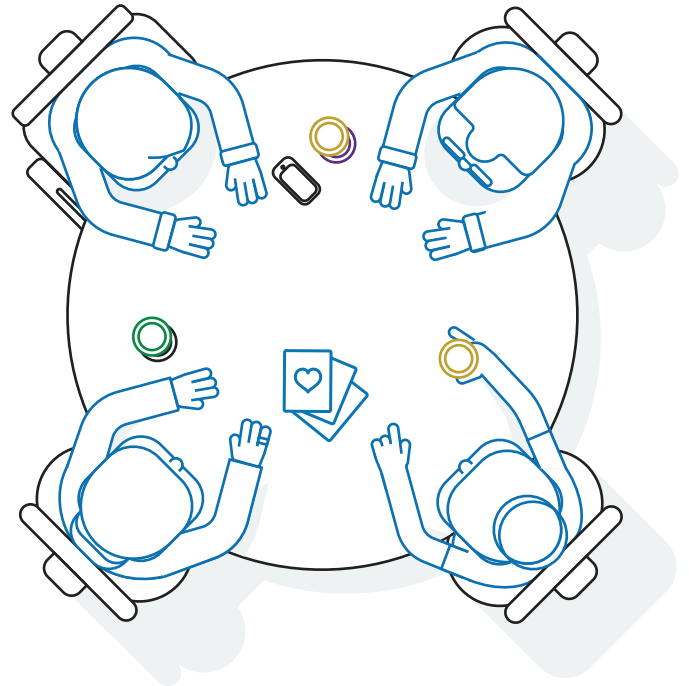
Meet-Up: A home game page on [Meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com/) is a good way of attracting new players - as long as you don't mind strangers turning up.

Facebook: Setting up a private group on Facebook is free and you can set it to Private or Public so that friends can invite their pals.

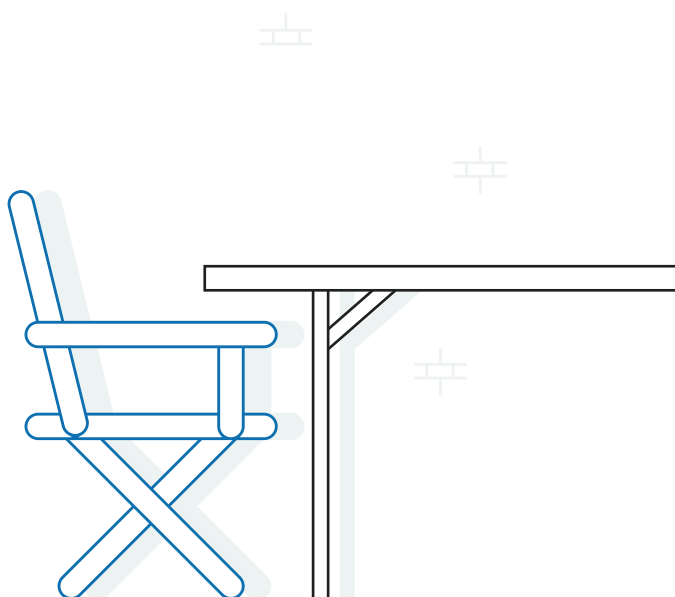
It's also ideal for sending out notifications on new dates. Just make sure you're on the right side of the law and not advertising illegal stakes.

WhatsApp: If you're closer to your home game buddies, use a WhatsApp group on your smartphone.

Be wary of starting 'off-topic' conversations and alienating group members, though.



TABLES & CHAIRS



Having the right equipment is essential. Try not to borrow, beg and steal equipment - show you know what you're doing with your own kit.

Source your table: Cheap fold-out table tops can be bought on eBay and stored in a cupboard.

If you have space, consider a larger casino table with a foam rail.

Chairs: Fold-up chairs are ideal for lots of players and can be stored easily.

POKER CHIPS & CARDS

The right equipment will make a game move much more smoothly.

Chips & Chipsets: Have enough chips for at least 10 players. You might want additional cash value chips for a cash game (in denominations of \$0.25, \$1, and \$5).

Do You Know Your Game?: Pick a game that you and all of your guests want to play. Let them know in advance.

Playing Cards: Only go for 100% plastic cards.



You can pick up a deck of COPAGs, Fourniers, or KEMs fairly cheaply on eBay or Amazon. Have a spare set or two in case of damage.

BLIND STRUCTURE & GAMES

What is your evening going to run like? A Sit 'n Go tournament to start things off, then cash games, or one longer tournament?

The Buy-in: Have you all agreed the buy-in? And what game? Is everyone happy with Hold'em? Do you want a re-buy?



Buy-inValue?



Game Type?



Re-buys or add-ons?

Blind Structure: Print off a typical blind structure for a tournament with the number of players you have coming. You'll find plenty of good examples online.

Try to pick a structure that will ensure a timely finish and not last for 10 hours.

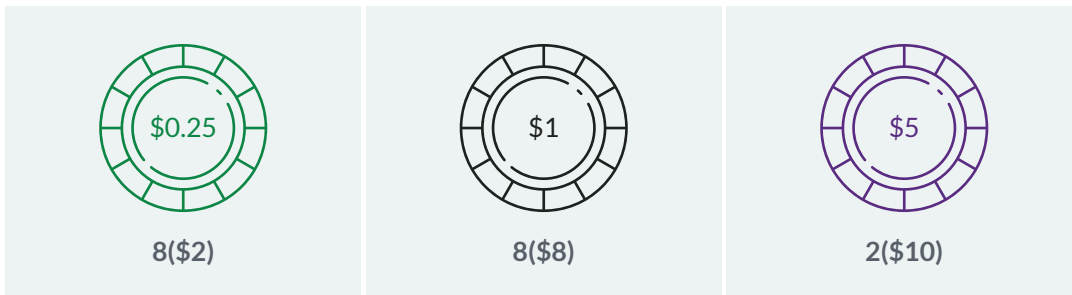
Chip Amounts: Stick to a strict tournament chip amount and have separate cash chips for side games.

Have enough high-value tournament chips for 'chipping up' later on if needed.

Tournament Chip Checklist (5000 each player):



Cash Game Chip Checklist (\$20 buy-in each player):



Poker Timer: Download an app for your phone or free software for a laptop to manage your tournament countdown clock.

Setting Up The Game: Understand how the table is set up before you play and decide if there will be a dealer dealing for the whole night.

If you have novices attending, make sure your chip set has small blind and big blind tokens, as well as a dealer button.

FOOD, DRINK & MUSIC

Food: As host, provide some snacks at the very least, regardless of whether people bring their own.

Also have a stack of pizza takeaway menus at hand. You can even take orders before everyone arrives if you want to save time.

Avoid serving messy or saucy foods, this will make the cards dirty very quickly.

Drinks: Simple soft drinks and/or beers is a good option for players who forgot to bring anything.

Music: Set up a premade playlist in your room to create an atmosphere.



FINAL CHECKLIST

Schedule date and time	<input type="checkbox"/>
Game selection	<input type="checkbox"/>
Invite list	<input type="checkbox"/>
Table and chairs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Correct denomination chips	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cards and other table equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food & Drink	<input type="checkbox"/>
Music	<input type="checkbox"/>



You're ready to play!