

BASIC

CARD CONTROL & FORCING



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Figure 1

Standard Overhand Shuffle

In the genuine Overhand Shuffle, your right hand holds the deck and makes an up and down motion as the thumb of the other left hand draws off clumps of cards. These cards are then allowed to tilt backward against the waiting fingers - making room for the next cluster. In the course of a genuine shuffle, this action is usually repeated three or four times. A series of real overhand shuffles will actually mix the cards quite well.

Overhand Shuffle Control

As convincing and innocent as this shuffle may appear to the onlooker, the Overhand Shuffle is one of a magician's best friends. The reason, of course, is that it readily lends itself to the control of one or more playing cards for discovery later.

In most all cases, the card or cards you wish to control will start out on the top of the deck. How they get there will depend upon the effect you are performing. If you are having a card selected and returned to the deck, you'll need to first bring the chosen card to the top using the pass or Double Undercut technique covered later in this publication.



Figure 2

Controlling a Card to the Bottom

Let's assume you've double undercut a selected card to the top of the pack. To shuffle it to the bottom of the deck, you simply draw off only the top card first, see Figure 1. This card is allowed to fall back against your waiting fingers and of the rest of the cards are shuffled on top of it as with a Standard Overhand Shuffle, see Figure 2.

Retaining a Card on the Bottom

Once there, you'll often want to keep the card on the bottom of the deck while shuffling. As you lower the deck to draw of the first clump, grip the card on the bottom of the deck with your fingers - drawing it off along with the first cluster of cards from the front. Again follow with the Standard technique for the completion of the shuffle. This keeps the selected card right where you want it, while it appears you are thoroughly mixing the pack.

Controlling a Card to the Second from the Bottom Position

With a selected card positioned second from the bottom, you can show a spectator that their card isn't on the top or bottom of the deck. The inference being, of course, it's hopelessly lost. This position also sets you up for the Glide or will help you bring the card back up to the second from the top spot with another false shuffle. To bring a card second to the bottom, you simply draw off the front and back card simultaneously as shown in Figure 3. Then, continue the shuffle using the Standard technique.



Figure 3

Controlling a Card from the Bottom to the Top

To bring a card from the bottom to the top, you actually start off with a Standard Overhand Shuffle for the first few clumps of cards. As you near the end, “milk” the cards one at a time with your thumb instead of pulling them off in clumps. All of the cards, down to the last one (the selected card), are pulled off in this manner. This same method is used to automatically bring a card that is second from the bottom to a second from the top position.

Retaining the Top Stock

If you’re working with a pre-arranged stock of cards and want to keep them intact, lower the deck as if to draw off the first clump, however injog (offset) the first card toward you with the thumb of your other hand. Leave the top stock and injogged card in your hand and shuffle off the balance of the bottom of the deck on top of them. The protruding card marks the spot where the stacked deck begins. To “correct” the deck, hold it in the left hand dealers’ grip and push down with your right thumb as you slide the card back into the deck. This will create a small break which you can hold with your left little finger, see Figure 4. At this point you can cut or double undercut (a smaller stock) back to the top.

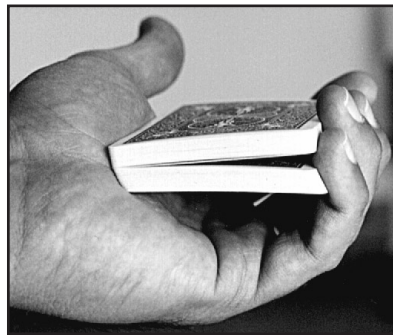


Figure 4



Figure 5

Double Undercut

In recent years, the Double Undercut has been gaining popularity in the magic community as an alternative to the “pass” for bringing a selected card to the top of the deck. For centuries, the pass, or shift as it was also known, was used almost exclusively for this purpose. The problem has always been, however, that the pass is difficult to master and even harder to execute without detection. The Double Undercut on the other hand is subtle and easy to do.

Start with the deck in the left hand dealers’ grip. Lift off about half the deck with your right hand to allow someone to return their card to the middle of the deck. Place the right hand half on top of the cards in your left hand. As you do this, obtain a left little finger break as shown in Figure 4.

Now pick up the deck from above with your right hand. Keep the break between the two halves with your right thumb. With your right thumb, release about half the cards below the break (about a quarter of the deck) into your waiting left hand. Refer to Figure 5. Place these on top of the deck with your left hand. Bring your left hand back underneath and release the rest of the cards below the break. Put these on top of the deck as well. The selected card is now on top.



Figure 6

The Riffle Force

The cleanest riffle force method uses a “corner short card.” To make your own, take a pair of regular fingernail clippers and snip off the upper right corner (with the card face down). Place the force card on the bottom of the deck with the short card underneath. Undercut about a third of the deck from the bottom and place it on top. This places the force card and short card about two-thirds up when riffling from the bottom. To force a card, grip the deck in one hand and riffle the upper right corner with the index finger of the other hand (from the bottom upwards). See Figure 6. Ask a spectator to say “stop.” Again, as with the last force, you must time it so you stop at the short card. You’ll feel it snap slightly when you reach it. This will expose the force card, which is the next card (just above the short card). Have the spectator look at their card and close the deck.

What if you pass the short card before the spectator stops you? This will happen from time to time. If it does, just quickly riffle the remaining cards so the spectator does not have an opportunity to stop you and start riffling from the bottom again. On the second time around, say something like, “Feel free to stop me sometime today!” The person will be quicker to stop you the next time.

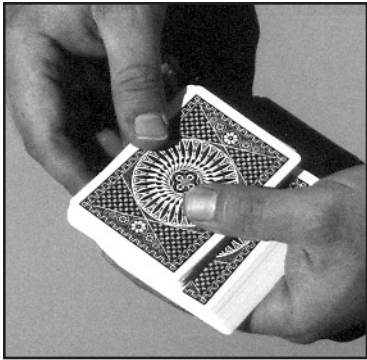


Figure 7

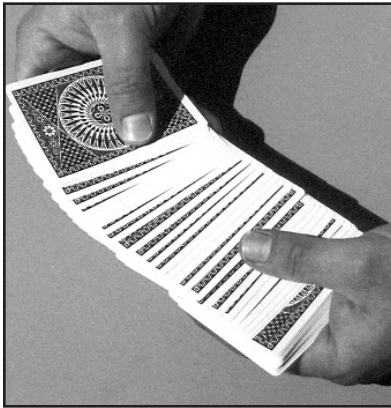


Figure 8

Classic Force

This is the standard sleight of hand way to force a playing card. It is well worth the effort required to master it. Here is an easy to use technique. Start with the card to be forced on the bottom of the deck. Undercut about half of the deck, bringing the force card to the middle of the pack. Offset or “step” this portion of the deck slightly to the right, as shown in Figure 7. Two or three of the fingers of your left hand, which holds the deck in the dealer’s grip, should be touching the force card. This lets you keep track of the force card. Begin spreading the cards to the right and ask the spectator to take one. See Figure 8. You must increase or decrease the speed at which you spread the cards, so the force card is the last card exposed when the spectator reaches for the card. The force card is exposed a little more than the others to make it easier to take, as shown in Figure 9. Remember, timing is everything. One subtlety which has proven effective is to look away as the spectator goes to take a card. As you do so, say “just take one, but don’t let me see it.”

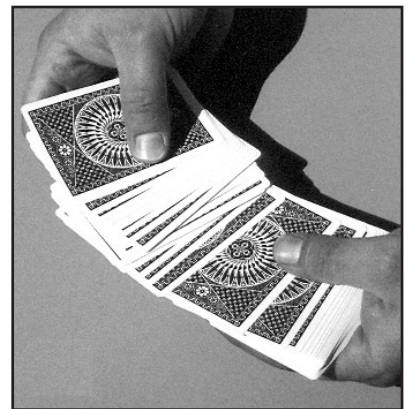


Figure 9