

Royal Magic Playing Cards Svengali

RGS 5232

A Svengali deck is a common type of trick card deck with slightly shortened duplicate cards. With it, you gain the ability to do hundreds of different magic tricks. The key part of using a Svengali deck is setting it up before you go in front of an audience. Also, master a few basic techniques to keep the audience guessing while you efficiently pull off tricks. Once you know the secret of a Svengali deck, the tricks you can come up with are limited only by your imagination.

Setting up the Deck

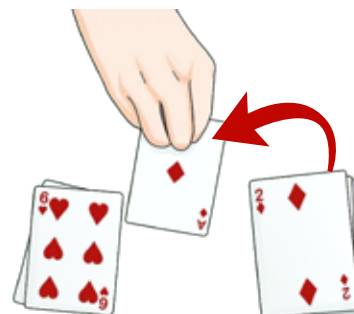
- 1 Separate the duplicate cards into a pile. The secret of the Svengali deck is its 27 identical cards. Half of the deck's cards are copies of a single card and are slightly smaller in size. The other half of the deck consists of a selection of normal playing cards. Move the regular cards into their own separate pile. The duplicate card in the deck is your trick card. It is the focus of all tricks done with a Svengali deck. Each Svengali deck has a different duplicate.
For instance, one deck may use the 6 of hearts while another uses the ace of spades.



- 2 Alternate the regular and duplicate cards in a stack. Start with one of the duplicate cards in your deck, placing it face up in front of you. Put a regular card face up on top of it. Continue following this pattern to combine all of the cards in a single deck. Your deck is set up and ready to amaze spectators.
 - Most tricks rely on this specific alternating pattern. This pattern puts the copies on top of the regular cards, which makes forcing someone to pick a trick card very easy. When you flip the deck over and fan the deck out, the copies stay hidden behind the regular cards.



- 3 Reverse the regular and duplicate cards if you need a different setup. Some advanced tricks may require you to set up the cards differently. One way to do this is by alternating the cards in reverse, setting a regular card face down and following it with a trick card. This deck has the opposite effect from the regular setup. With this setup, the regular cards are on top while the deck is face down. Flipping the deck over and fanning it out exposes all of the copy cards. It's a fun way to suggest that you transformed all of the cards in the deck into copies, for instance. Shuffling techniques like riffling also allow you to arrange the deck this way when you're in the middle of your act.



Learning Shuffling Skills

- 1 Dribble the cards by letting them fall into your hand. To dribble, hold the entire deck between your thumb and middle finger with either hand. Bend the cards outward with a little bit of pressure so they begin falling into your other hand. The cards fall in pairs, so the shorter copies stay hidden behind the normal cards. Dribbling is a great way to pretend you're working with a regular deck while navigating to one of the copies. The copies are a little smaller than the regular cards in the deck. You can identify them by feeling for the space they leave between the bigger cards. Make sure you dribble the cards in the correct direction according to how you set up the deck. When the deck is set up normally, hold the cards face up and let them fall forward into your other hand. If you used the reverse configuration, hold the cards face up and let them fall backward into your other hand.



2 Practice cutting the deck to the shorter duplicate cards. Set the deck face down in front of you, then divide it into 1 or more stacks. The card at the top of each stack is one of the copies. Because the copies are shorter, anyone who cuts the deck does so at one of the longer, regular cards. Turn over the top card on the split to reveal your trick card.

You can cut a Svengali deck multiple times, always finding a duplicate card. Mix this with dribbling and shuffling techniques to fool your audience with more complicated tricks.

Keep in mind that your cards may be out of order if someone sets up or riffles the deck incorrectly. If this happens, cut the deck yourself to ensure a duplicate card is next on the pile.



3 Riffle the cards to incorporate shuffling into your tricks. Riffling is another way to act like you're picking a specific card out of a well-mixed deck. A simple way to do this is to cut the deck in half. Hold the stacks so a single corner on each almost touches. Use your thumbs to lift the long edge of each deck up, then release the cards one by one to shuffle them into a single deck.

The deck doesn't actually get shuffled. When you master riffling, you can make the cards fall in pairs. Each pair consists of a regular card and a copy card.

If you used the regular alternating set up for your deck, the copies are always on top of the bigger cards. Use the space left by the shorter cards to alternate releasing card pairs from both halves of the deck.

Because of the alternating pattern you used to set up the deck, the copies are always on top of the bigger cards and easy to find. To find them without the audience noticing, dribble, riffle, or cut the cards to bring a regular card to the top. They are shorter than the regular cards, so they leave small gaps in the deck.

As you get used to riffling, try doing it while arching the cards into a bridge. It's very flashy, and if you do it fast enough, no one will notice the shorter cards in the deck.



Performing Basic Tricks

1 Spread the deck out so it looks like it has no copies in it. All you need to do for this basic trick is arrange the deck in a standard alternating pattern. Flip the deck over so the audience can see it. If you arranged the deck correctly, the top card is one of the regular playing cards. Fan the cards out with a swipe of your hand to show all of the regular cards in the deck.

The trick cards stay hidden behind the larger cards. You can easily reveal them if you aren't careful, so don't move too quickly.

You can also fan out the cards while holding them. You may find this easier than spreading them out on the table.

Another option is to show all of the trick cards, such as when you "transform" the deck into copies. Riffle the deck so the cards still alternate but the copies are under the regular cards. Fan the deck out as you normally would.



2 Predict the card someone will pull for a simple starting trick. Use the "astonishing prediction" trick for an easy way to impress others. First, write down your deck's trick card on a piece of paper for a spectator to hold onto and open at the end of the trick. Then, dribble through the deck. Because of the way the cards fall, one of the duplicate cards will be on top for you to turn over.

After completing the prediction, try turning over the entire deck and spreading it out. If you do this carefully enough, you can pretend the deck is normal by hiding the shorter duplicate cards.



- 3** Find a card shuffled into the deck if you need a quick trick. Start by dribbling or riffing the cards as usual so the copy cards alternate with the regular cards. Let an audience member select one of the copies. Shuffle the card back into the deck, then begin dealing cards face up on the table until the spectator tells you to stop. Finish the "mind blower" trick by either revealing that the chosen card is in your hand or next in the deck.

A variation of this is the "blurt out" trick. Have the spectator put the card back in the deck, then dribble through to show them that all the cards are different. Say something like, "Sometimes people forget what card they chose, so remember that you picked the ten of clubs."



- 4** Put a card in your pocket if you want a more interactive trick. Set a trick card in your pocket ahead of time to remove when you finish the trick. Let a spectator pick out one of the trick cards, then immediately put it back into position in the deck. After riffing, announce that "one card is missing" as you slowly pull out the trick card. Turn the deck over and fan it out to show that there are no copies in the deck.

Make sure you keep the copies hidden behind the regular cards in the deck. If you aren't careful when fanning out the deck, you may end up revealing the trick. Don't let the audience inspect the deck.

For an alternative version, tape the card to your back and pretend like you can't find it in the deck.

Advanced magicians may be able to plant a duplicate card on an audience member. Doing this involves distracting the audience's attention, such as by talking and doing tricks, while you put the card in place.



- 5** Cut the deck into piles if you wish to let someone find a card. Dribble or riffle through the cards before letting the audience member pick one of the copies. Have them put the card back, then shuffle the deck. Ask them how many piles to cut the deck into. Have them select a pile and reveal the top card on it.

When you split the deck correctly, all of the piles will have a duplicate on top. It doesn't matter how many times they divide the deck or which pile they choose.

You can have the audience member tell you where to cut the deck or you can do it yourself. Either way works.



- 6** Use the "lie detector" trick to identify a card someone chose. Ask an audience member to volunteer, but don't tell them what you're about to do. Manipulate the deck as needed to get them to "randomly" pick a duplicate and place it in their pocket. Begin calling out the names of random cards. Instruct the other person to say, "That's not my card," even if it is. After a few rounds of this, name the trick card to surprise the audience.

Tell the audience that you have been training yourself as a human lie detector and are going to prove your talent. It's a fun trick that engages the audience but doesn't require anything beyond basic Svengali techniques.

