

How to Read Tarot Cards: A Complete Guide on Reading Tarot Cards

Tarot cards can be used for many different purposes such as answering a question about love, to give guidance to an individual, or to reveal obstacles in life.

One does not need to be particularly spiritually inclined to ask for a message from their tarot deck.

In order to read your cards, you just need to have focus, energy, and drive. Aside from the mental properties needed, there are also a few rules and physical items you must learn about first.

What You Will Need to Begin Your Tarot Reading

Though, you certainly must follow the rules of tarot. Every tarot reading starts off with the right materials: a tarot card deck, an instruction booklet, and focus.

Your instruction booklet will give you definitions for each tarot card as well as ideas for potential spreads. It is one of the most important parts of the process and often goes overlooked.

Many decks come with an instruction booklet. Though, if yours does not (or if you find your booklet unhelpful) be sure to seek out a companion guidebook. After you gather your materials, you're ready for the next steps.

Step-by-Step Process on How to Read Tarot Cards

Step One: Prepare Your Cards

Choosing a deck can be difficult as there are many different options online and in stores. Beginner decks should have memorable imagery on each card. Each design should be eye-catching to entice readers to become more familiar with meanings faster.

Three of the most popular and recommended decks for beginners are Rider Waite Tarot , Everyday Tarot Mini Tarot , and Modern Witch Tarot . Rider Waite is known for being simplistic and a classic amongst readers for its clean designs.

The Everyday Tarot Mini is known for its focus on the heart of tarot (self-help) and attention to symbolism. Lastly, Modern Witch is eye-catching and offers up art featuring empowered women.

As the world around us changes and becomes a place where women can and will thrive, my personal opinion is that the Modern Witch cards are more than worth the purchase. Not only is the deck itself gorgeous, but the accompanying booklet is also simple, making it approachable for beginners.

Step Two: Know the Difference Between Major and Minor Arcana

Typical decks are usually split into 78 cards with twenty-two major arcana cards and fifty-six minor arcana cards. Major arcana cards reflect big picture events while minor arcana cards deal with daily situations.

Minor arcana cards are separated into suits: swords, pentacles, cups, and wands. Each suit represents an element. Pentacles represent earth, cups are water, wands are fire, and swords are air.

Step Three: Know Which Tarot Cards Spread Is Right for Your Intention

There are thousands of different ways to place cards in a reading. This is called a spread. Each spread has a different meaning based on the type of question or inquiry posed by the person being read to. Some of the most popular spreads include the Celtic Cross, Past/Present/Future, and the Week Ahead spread.

The Celtic Cross spread explains how a present situation may change in the future based on your strengths, weaknesses, and outside factors. The Past/Present/Future spread will tell the reader about someone's past obstacles, present situation, and future obstacles or successes.

The Week Ahead spread gives positive and negatives insights into the future week. Researching spreads is important to become a versatile reader. Each spread offers both the reader and person being read to unique advice and warnings for their current situation.

Step Four: Shuffle Your Tarot Cards

Shuffling your tarot cards is a crucial step to reading tarot accurately. When you shuffle your cards, you are transferring your energy and intentions onto the cards.

Without this step, you are not present in the tarot reading as an interpreter and you become a mere spectator. When reading, you want to be as present and focused as possible on/in the reading. So, shuffling is the first step to focus.

Step Five: Set Your Intention as the Tarot Cards Reader

Just like the person being read to, the reader should set an intention during a tarot reading. More than likely, your intention should be to answer the question of whomever you're reading to.

However, during a reading your thoughts should be quite focused on being accurate and helpful. Make sure to stay focused and don't let your thoughts wander too much.

Step Six: Read the Meanings of Each Card in Your Tarot Reading

Be sure to use your accompanying instruction booklet to look up the meanings of each card that has been pulled during the reading.

You don't have to have the meaning of each card memorized to start reading tarot. Using your booklet during each session will help you retain both the symbolism on each card and accurate meanings of each card.

Step Seven: Tarot Card Reading Practice

Practice reading for different people. It gives you more experience and time with your deck.

Bonding is an important part of becoming a tarot master. Readers that are bonded with their decks are often able to give more descriptive and in-depth tarot readings. Readers can often learn more about themselves and others through practicing frequently, as well.

Step Eight (optional): Cleanse Your Cards

Another tip, if your cards sustain trauma, you may want to consider cleansing them. There are many ways that this can be done. However, three of the most popular ways are by moon bath, using a singing bowl, and visualization.

The first method, a moon bath, is quite simple. You will just need to place your cards on your windowsill facing the full moon or outside in the moonlight during the full moon. This method may be beneficial to those who are particularly connected to the moon.

For the singing bowl method, you will just need to place your cards in a singing bowl while playing it. This method can also be healing to you as singing bowls are known to have emotional healing properties.

Lastly, for the visualization method, you must meditate and imagine yourself removing the negative energy from your cards. Meditating for intention can also be good for personal tarot readings and reaching enlightenment.

All of these methods are beneficial as cleansing your deck after a negative experience can make your readings more stable and positive. This can also apply to receiving cards from someone who is no longer in your life or grief of any other kind. Clearing the dark energy from your cards and starting out your readings with a clean slate is essential for any master tarot reader.

Step Nine (Optional): Bond With Your Tarot Deck

Sometimes readers can have trouble connecting to new cards. This can especially be a problem if this is their first deck. There are many different ways to bond with a new deck. However, some of the most popular are full moon bath, sleeping with your deck, and the use of crystals.

For a full moon bath, place your cards in a plastic bag and leave them under your pillow for three nights starting with the full moon. Due to the intense energy of the moon during peak point in the lunar cycle, your deck will start anew.

To bond with your deck, sleeping with it is a good way to give it some of your energy. For this method, all you'll need to do is sleep with your deck underneath your pillow for a week.

In order to use crystals to bond with your deck, you will need a few charged crystals of your choice. Place the crystals around your deck and let them sit overnight.

Tarot comes with practice just as any skill does. Daily practice is essential to memorizing the meanings of each different card. To ensure that you are getting the most from your tarot deck, you should have a daily practice of reading either your or someone else's tarot.

It is important to get in the habit of reading to commit each card to memory and sustaining the knowledge of the process of tarot.

FAQs About Reading Tarot Cards

Can you read your own tarot cards?

Yes, they are encouraged to use for personal guidance. Reading your own tarot cards can be seen as a form of shadow work for witches. Picking one card at random from your deck can be an energizing and telling way to start your day.

Is there a different meaning when the cards are upside down?

Generally, when cards are reversed, their meaning is inverted as well. For example, The Fool upright symbolizes new opportunities. Though when reversed, The Fool symbolizes suppressed potential.

Can you buy a deck for yourself? Are they best given as a gift?

Anyone can buy tarot for themselves or others. Tarot decks have no rules as to who can or cannot buy them.

Can tarot cards be used to speak to the dead?

No, they can only be used to answer questions about the past, present, or future. Though you can ask the cards a variety of questions, they cannot determine anything about the dead.

Recap on How to Read Tarot Cards:

Find a deck that has a simple art style that appeals to you. Shuffle your deck. Find the proper spread for the intention of the reader. Once you've selected your spread, turn the cards over and look up their meanings. Remember, practicing tarot with different people is important and key to retaining information.

Final Takeaway on How to Read the Tarot Cards

After following these key steps, you can begin your journey as a tarot reader. Though, practice takes many hours and tons of research.

It is important to step into this opportunity with an open mind and heart. Reading for others can open your eyes to personal development. Becoming a tarot reader, you will learn more about others as well.

What do you think about tarot reading, have you ever tried it? Let us know in the comments!