



STRAIGHT JACKET

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OVERVIEW

Straight Jacket is a fast, fun card game for 3 or more players — 4 or 5 is best. In *Straight Jacket*, the players take on the roles of inmates wearing straight jackets and trapped in a padded cell. All of you want to escape, but you're not exactly pragmatic about it.

The person with the most points at the end of the games, wriggles from their jacket and escapes.

TERMINOLOGY

Deck. The main deck of cards at the center of the table.

Hand. The cards you hold form your hand. This is pretty standard card game jargon.

Jacket. The place in front of each player (patient). Cards placed each turn stack on top of one another on the jacket.

Pass. Passing involves giving a card to another patient.

Patient. The players are patients.

SETUP

Sit everyone around the table, room, cemetery, waiting room area, etc. If this is your first time playing, remove the inmate cards.

Shuffle the deck. Place it within reach of everyone. The starting player draws three cards and no one else draws any. Okay? You are now ready to start.

PLAY

On your turn, you will do three things: Draw. Play. Pass. After that your turn ends and the patient to your left does the same thing. This goes around and around until there are no more cards (i.e. a person must draw cards but cannot).

DRAW

Draw until you have three cards in your hand. If you have three or more cards do not draw.

PLAY

You must play the lowest value card from your hand onto your jacket. If two or more cards share the lowest value, you may choose which to play. Follow the instructions on the card. If the card says all patients, all patients must do what the card says. Otherwise, the instructions are written for you and only you. You must follow the instruction completely before moving onto...

PASS

Pass one card to the left patient and one card to the right patient. In that order. If you have more than two cards, only pass one each to the left and right. If you have only one card, pass only to the left. If you have no cards, pass nothing.

Your turn is over and the patient to your left now does these same three actions, drawing only if he needs to draw, playing the lowest card, and passing to the left and right (if possible).

ENDING THE GAME

The game continues in this manner until a player must draw cards but cannot. The game immediately ends. Unused cards are discarded. Tally your points. The person with the most points escapes.

EXPLANATIONS

There are some special cards, but the text is as simple as possible to eliminate confusion. Questions may arise, though.

Some cards may cause you to play a card onto someone else's jacket or have a card played onto your jacket. In these instances, ignore the text on any new card brought into play.

Cards which allow a patient to *take another turn* may cause confusion. Make sure you completely finish your turn (following text, passing cards, etc.) before drawing up to three cards and taking another turn. Playing another card is not the same thing as taking a another turn.

INMATE CARDS

Inmate cards are a special issue. Each inmate card is worth 0 points, unless you have two matching inmates cards, then the pair is worth 3 points. Each additional inmate card beyond the second is worth another 3 points. There is an additional 9 point bonus for holding all 5 inmate cards.

There is a 5-player variant where the patients all start with a unique inmate card at the bottom of their jacket. At the end of the game, every additional inmate card that matches yours is worth 3 points, but other inmates are worth nothing.

THEME

This is a game about insane people trying to escape a mental ward. It is light and funny. The mechanics at first feel like you have no strategy, but in fact, you have a tenuous, subtle strategy available to you. Since the game plays so quickly, I recommend you examine that on your second playthrough.