# Chapter 13 — The Grind Operating System (Poker as a Job)

Purpose: Convert poker from a leisure activity into a structured part-time business. This chapter is the operations manual: schedule, volume targets, multi-tabling progression, session rules, and the discipline firewall that keeps a gambler's instincts out of a grinder's bankroll.

## 13.1 The Job Mindset

You are the only employee of a one-person poker business. The binder is the standard operating procedure; this chapter is the employee handbook.

- A job has scheduled hours. You play when the schedule says, not when the itch says.
- A job has output metrics. You measure hands played and execution quality, not "did I win tonight."
- A job has a boss. The boss is the weekly review (14.4). It decides promotions (moving up), demotions (moving down), and discipline (missed stop-losses).
- A job pays you last. Every dollar stays in the business until the bankroll hits its milestone (13.7).

The test of "am I treating this like a job": you can show a written log of every session this month. No log = hobby.

## 13.2 The Weekly Schedule

Baseline template — roughly 10–12 hours per week, sustainable next to real life:

| Block | When | Length | What |
|---|---|---|---|
| Play block 1 | Weeknight | 90 min | Scheduled stakes, scheduled table count |
| Play block 2 | Weeknight | 90 min | Same — no "bonus" tables |
| Play block 3 | Weekend | 2 × 90 min | Longest volume day, break between blocks |
| Play block 4 | Weekend | 90 min | Optional — only if rested and Stage 0 tilt |
| Study block | 2 × per week | 30–45 min | Chart drills, one binder chapter, flagged hands |
| Weekly review | Sunday | 30–45 min | Section 14.4 — logs, KPIs, leak of the week |

Rules that make the schedule real:

- Sessions are 90 minutes max. Multi-tabling concentration decays hard after that. Break, then decide fresh.

- The schedule is written down before the week starts. Adding an unscheduled session requires being at Stage 0 tilt, fully rested, and current on AARs — all three.
- A skipped session is skipped. It does not get "made up" by doubling the next one. Chasing volume is chasing.

## 13.3 KPIs — What Gets Measured

Track these weekly. Results (money) are the trailing indicator; process is the leading one.

- Hands per week — the volume metric. Estimate: soft-pool sites run roughly 60–90 hands per table per hour. Two tables × 6 hours ≈ 800–1,000 hands/week to start.
- Execution score — self-graded 1–10 per session (from the AAR). Weekly average ≥ 7 is the bar. This is the most important number in the whole system.
- Stop-loss adherence — sessions ended at or before stop-loss, as a percentage. Target: 100%. This number IS the degen-recovery metric.
- AAR completion rate — AARs filed per session played. Target: 100%. No AAR, no next session.
- bb/100 — only meaningful past ~20,000 hands. Log it, watch the trend, do not react to weekly swings.

## 13.4 Multi-Tabling Progression Ladder

Volume is how a small edge becomes real money — but only at full execution quality. Earn tables; never default to them.

| Stage | Tables | Promotion requirement |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 table | 5,000 hands or 2 weeks with average execution ≥ 8 |
| 2 | 2 tables | 10,000 more hands, execution ≥ 7.5, no stop-loss violations |
| 3 | 3 tables | 15,000 more hands, execution ≥ 7.5, winrate non-negative |
| 4 (cap) | 4 tables | Learning-phase ceiling. Revisit only after a full move-up test passes |

- Drop one table immediately when: you time out on decisions, you stop hand-reading and start auto-piloting, or tilt reaches Stage 2.
- Never add a table mid-session to "catch up" after losses. That is Stage 3 tilt wearing a productivity costume.
- Tournaments running? They count double toward table load — an MTT in the late stages occupies more brain than a cash table.

## 13.5 Session Rules (Non-Negotiable)

1. Stop-loss: 2 buy-ins per session at your main stake. Hit it, session over, AAR filed, walk away.
2. Hard time cap set before the first hand is dealt.
3. Tilt check at −1 buy-in: name your tilt stage out loud (Chapter 10 spectrum). Stage 2 = finish the orbit, quit.
4. No "get even" sessions. Ever. The bankroll does not know what day it lost the money.
5. After any −4 buy-in day: mandatory 24-hour cooldown before the next session. Use it for the AAR and a chart drill instead.

## 13.6 The Degen Firewall

Written for a self-aware gambler. These rules exist because the same wiring that makes a $5 parlay fun will torch a poker bankroll.

- Separate money, physically. The poker bankroll lives in its own account/wallet. It is not the sports betting money. It is not entertainment money. Transfers INTO the poker roll are scheduled; transfers OUT follow 13.7 only.
- The poker roll plays poker only. No casino games, no slots-style sweeps games on the same sites (they will be one tab away — that tab is off-limits), no props, no staking anyone.
- Sports betting stays in its own lane with its own small entertainment budget. The moment a lost parlay makes you open a poker table — or a lost poker session makes you open a sportsbook — stop both for 24 hours. Cross-tilt is the leak that empties everything at once.
- No shot-taking outside the schedule. Playing above your scheduled stake "just to feel it" is a firewall breach even if you win.
- The firewall metric: stop-loss adherence (13.3). Three violations in a month = drop one stake level for two weeks. That's the deal you're making with yourself, in writing, today.

## 13.7 Paycheck Rules — Building the Roll

The mission is a bankroll that funds the next stage of the progression (sweeps grind → Encore live shots → regulated online when Massachusetts finally acts).

- Phase 1 (now → 60 buy-ins at current stake): zero redemptions/withdrawals. Everything compounds.
- Phase 2 (60+ buy-ins): move up per the Move-Up Readiness Test (Chapter 11) OR begin skimming 25% of monthly profit toward the Encore live fund.
- Phase 3 (Encore-funded): $1,500+ set aside = three shots at 1/3 live with the binder's live-play adjustments (Chapter 15).
- A downswing never triggers a deposit from outside money mid-month. Rebuilds happen at month boundaries, deliberately, from the weekly review — not from the wound.

## 13.8 The MTT Side Lane (Optional)

If tournament fields on your platform are soft enough to be worth a lane:

- Budget: at most 10% of the bankroll in tournament buy-ins per week.
- Bankroll math is different: swings of 50–100 buy-ins are normal in MTTs. Never judge a tournament experiment on a month of results.
- Late-stage MTTs demand full attention — cut cash tables as a tournament approaches the money.
- Log MTTs separately in the session log. Mixed logs hide leaks in both formats.

## 13.9 The Monthly Business Review

Last Sunday of the month, 45 minutes, replaces the weekly review:

1. P&L, total hands, bb/100 trend, and all four process KPIs.
2. Top three leaks with evidence from AARs — carried into next month's study blocks.
3. Move-Up Readiness Test (Chapter 11) — full pass, honestly scored.
4. Firewall audit: any breaches, any cross-tilt incidents, adherence percentage.
5. One sentence, written: "Next month the business improves by ______."