

2 x ribbon spread turnover = 1 x tractrix racer

Burkard Polster, Monash University, Australia, www.qedcat.com

1. Ribbon spread two decks of cards



2. Partially turn over both spreads



3. Balance a book on the two peaks



4. Give the book a little push in the direction of the spreads and it will race along the track turning over the two spreads in the process. Here is a movie <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEEcafsT6ec&feature=youtu.be>

A couple of observations:

The halfway stage of a ribbon spread turnover is a discrete version of a tractrix.

You get a similar discrete tractrix by tumbling a row of dominos simultaneously from both sides.

So, in a way, turning over a spread of cards is domino tumbling and the reverse of domino tumbling happening at the same time.

The book makes it possible to turn over spreads of cards that are several meters long.

The sound produced by the cards making contact with the book is very similar to the sound you get when you tumble dominos.

I hope that this is not an old hat.

In any case, have fun playing with this!