# How to play StickEm

The object of the game is to be the first to discard all shape cards. Either you or the computer will win. There are no ties.

Starting with a deck of 55 unique shape cards, both you and the computer are each dealt five cards. Each card contains a shape comprised of five sticks. One additional card is dealt as the starting shape. Play begins after the shape cards have been dealt.

You start play by moving one (and only one) of the five sticks displayed. The stick may be placed anywhere as long as it touches another stick at either end, and all sticks must somehow be connected end-to-end. When moving a stick, you must attempt to match one of the shapes dealt to you.   You may flip or rotate the displayed shape to make it easier to find a match. After matching a shape or passing if you can't match one, the computer will take its turn using the same rules. You **may** match a shape without moving a stick if possible, but you **mus**t move a stick if you pass. If a match is made, the shape card is discarded. If a player passes, he is dealt another card. The first player to match all shapes and have no cards remaining is declared the winner. To make the game more interesting, you may choose to play a timed game.

To select a stick to move, position the mouse cursor over the stick to be moved and click the left mouse button; the stick will turn red. To move the stick to a **horizontal** position, place the mouse cursor slightly under the target horizontal grid line and click the left mouse button. To move the stick to a **vertical** position, place the mouse cursor slightly to the right of the target vertical grid line and click the left mouse button. The moved stick will turn black again after it is moved. If the stick is unmovable, you will hear a beep, and you will not be allowed to move that stick. A stick is unmovable if its target location would prevent all five sticks from being connected.

Valid shape   Not a valid shape   Unmovable stick
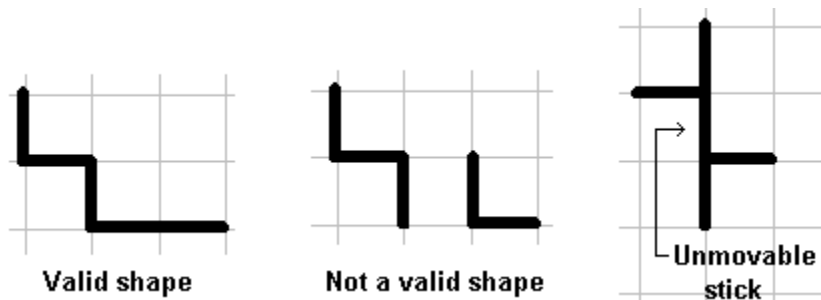
If you change your mind about which stick to move while the stick is still red, click on it again and it will be de-selected and turn black. If you have already moved the stick and not yet made a match or passed, you may restore the stick to its previous position by clicking on the **Game** menu item and then click **UNDO**.

To help you find a match, click on the **Rotate**, **H-Flip**, or **V-Flip** buttons to rotate, horizontally flip, or vertically flip the shape in the grid. You may use these buttons before, after, or during a move. Compare the shape in the grid to each of the shape cards dealt to you. If you find a match, click on the shape card that matches the shape in the grid. The matched shape card will turn red, be discarded, and the computer will take its turn. If you can't match one of the shape cards, click **PASS** and you will be dealt another card; the computer will then take its turn. Remember that you don't necessarily have to move a stick to make a match, but you must move a stick to pass.

For a more interesting game, click the **Options** menu item and then click **Set Timer**. A dialog box will appear that lets you set a time limit on how long you have to take your turn. If the time limit expires during your turn, your turn is over and you are dealt another card. You may temporarily pause a timed game by clicking the **Game** menu item and then clicking **Pause**. The game may be resumed by clicking the **Game** menu item and then clicking **Resume**. The game will also be paused if you minimize StickEm at any time. Note that the computer is not timed, but its "think time" is displayed in the timer countdown box.

To check up on the computer, click on the **Options** menu item and then click **Computer's Last Move**. The most recent "before" and "after" shape played by the computer will be displayed. A timed game is automatically paused and resumed if you click this option.

To gain an advantage over the computer, click on the **Options** menu item and then click **Computer's Cards**. Your cards will disappear and be replaced by the computer's cards. Since this is a form of cheating, a timed game is not automatically paused. After you have seen enough, click on the **Options** menu item and click **Your Cards** to restore your shape cards on the display.

Just for kicks, click on the **Options** menu item, then click **Watch Computer Think** to see graphically how the computer methodically attempts to move each stick to a new location and test it against all of its shape cards. Whenever the moving red stick seems to pause, the computer is internally flipping and rotating the shape on the grid and scanning its shape cards for a match. When you are through watching this, click on the **Options** menu item, then click on **Don't Watch Computer Think**. Note that while you are watching the computer think, the computer's "think time" will be considerably longer since it also has to attend to the graphical display as well as try to beat you.

When you win, you will be asked to enter your initials in the **Top Ten Scores** dialog box if your score is up to par. Scoring is a combination of elapsed time and the number of shapes matched. You may also view the top ten scores at any time by clicking on the **Options** menu item and then clicking **Top Ten Scores**. A timed game will automatically be paused and resumed when you use this option.

If you're losing badly and can't stand it any more, click on the **Game** menu item and click **Deal** or **Exit**. You will be asked to verify that you want to end the current game if one is in progress before either starting a new game or giving up completely.

Technical Stuff

Whenever you change any of the options described in the previous section, the STICKEM.INI file is updated to reflect the changes. This file also contains mathematical representations of the 55 shape cards and the high ten scores. It is imperative that you **DO NOT MESS** with the contents of this file! If you do, strange things may happen.

For the game to work properly, the STICKEM.INI file must be located in your *Windows* directory. The VBRUN300.DLL file must reside in either you *Windows* or *Windows\System* directory. STICKEM.EXE and STICKEM.HLP may be located in any directory, but both files must be in the same directory. STICKEM.WRI is a documentation file viewable with *Windows Write*, and the file is not required to be present for the game to run.

The Bad News

(depending on whether you're buying or selling the program)

StickEm is not free! If you have not registered the software with us, you will have to endure the annoying "Unregistered Version" message, etc. that appears whenever a new game is started.

Please register and pay your ten bucks if you like the game. Just print and fill out the registration form, or if you didn't get one, send $10.00 (American money, please) for registration only, or $12.00 for registration and the latest update to:

Financial Systems Associates, Inc.
148 N. Washington St.
Delaware, Ohio 43015

Compuserve ID -- 71641,3244
America Online -- SRWiz

Thanks for playing StickEm!