

Arachnid V5.0 Help Index

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Arachnid Rules

The object of the game is to build a stack of cards in the same suit from King to Ace and remove the stack from the table to the stacks above. When all eight stacks have been built and removed, you have won the game. A more challenging version of this is to leave all eight stacks on the table until done instead of removing those that are complete to the stacks above.

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The Initial Tableau

Shuffle together two decks of cards (104 cards in all) and deal ten cards face down in a row. Deal three more rows face down on the first. Next deal one card face down on each of four piles (traditionally the leftmost four, but it doesn't matter; for aesthetic reasons some people prefer the first, fourth, seventh, and tenth piles), for a total of 44 face-down cards. Finally, deal one card face up on each pile. These 54 cards constitute the initial tableau. NOTE: In the description below, the card at the "bottom" of a pile is taken to be the last one dealt or played onto that pile, as opposed to the card that is underneath all the others in the pile. Thus the "bottom" card is the one displayed bottommost on the screen by the Arachnid program.

Building

All building is done in the tableau, there being no separate foundations. On the bottom card of a pile may be placed any card of next-lower rank, regardless of suit. (Cards rank King (highest), Queen, Jack, 10, 9, . . . , 3, 2, Ace.) The bottom card of a pile is always available to be moved, as is any sequence of cards at the bottom of a pile that are consecutive and ascending in rank and of the same suit.

For example, suppose the 6, 5, and 4 of hearts are together at the bottom of a pile, with the 4 bottommost. They may be moved as a unit, or the 4 can be moved by itself, or the 5 and 4 can be moved without moving the 6. If the 6, 5, and 4 were moved onto a 7 of hearts at the bottom of some other pile, the four cards could then be moved as a unit onto any 8; if the 7 were not a heart, however, then once the hearts were placed upon it it would not be available to be moved until the hearts had been moved from it (to another 7 or into a space; see below).

When all face-up cards have been removed from a pile, the bottom face-down card is turned up and becomes available for play.

Spaces

When all cards have been moved away from some pile, the resulting empty pile is called a "space" or "hole". Any card or sequence of cards available for moving may be moved into a space. A King, or sequence headed by a King, can be moved ONLY into a space, and once moved there can never be moved out (except into another space, which doesn't accomplish anything) unless it is being removed entirely as described below.

The Hand

The 50 cards not dealt initially form the "hand". Whenever you wish (typically, whenever you get stuck), you may deal a new row of ten cards from the hand face-up upon the piles. NOTE: You are not allowed to do this if you have any spaces. You must first fill them in. Notice that these additional deals tend to introduce discontinuities in the piles; that is, you can get cards covering others that are not next-higher in rank. If you get stuck after having dealt the last of the five additional deals, you have lost.

Removing Suits

When you have assembled a complete suit of thirteen cards, in sequence from King down to Ace, at the bottom of a pile, you may remove the thirteen cards from the tableau entirely. Cards so removed are never brought back into play; thus it is not always desirable to remove a suit when you have the opportunity (though it usually is), since it may pay to keep it around to aid in manipulating the other cards of that suit (recall that there are 26 cards in each suit). The game is won if you manage to remove all eight suits.

If you find that a game is going so well that you're sure you're going to win, you can spice things up by trying to finish with as many completed suits as possible still in the tableau. Hardest of all is to finish the game with each of the eight suits brought together in sequence from King down to Ace, with all of the cards still in the tableau. Note that, once you start striving toward such a goal, you may make such a mess of the position that you won't be able to win at all!

Scoring

Arachnid is a difficult game to master, and some players like to be able to evaluate their progress by scoring unsuccessful games. No rules for scoring are in the literature, but the program implements the following rather arbitrary formula: 10 points for each initially face down card that gets turned over; 15 additional points for each column where all the face down cards have been turned over (even if you don't manage to get a space); 2 points for each card that is sitting atop the next higher card of the same suit; 50 points for each completed suit removed from the tableau (in which case you do not also score for the 12 cards sitting atop next higher cards). This yields a maximum score of 990. If you win the game with 4 or more completed suits still in the tableau, add 2 points for each suit after the first three. Thus winning with all eight suits still in the tableau yields a score of 1000.

The scoring system is modified if the program detects any cheating.

Arachnid Hints

For general strategy, try to create a space since this is the most flexible way to move cards around. A space is where all cards in the table have been removed. Note: before dealing the next round, all spaces have to have at least one card in them.

Also, when moving the cards, it is generally to your advantage to move the highest cards first and the lowest cards last doing the obvious moves first. For example, move a 5 of spades onto a 6 of spades, then Queen of hearts onto a King clubs before you move the 7 of clubs onto the 8 of hearts. Then you may choose to move 5-6 of spades group onto the 7 of clubs. The strategy is to combine the cards into same suit groups that may be moved as a unit. Once the group 5-6 of spades has been created, it may be broken up by using the right mouse button on the lower card.

Cheating

Within Arachnid it is possible to select three levels of cheat detection, depending upon how strict you are feeling at the time. When cheating is detected the program changes the background colour of the window and *halves* the game score. The three options are:-

No Detection Any undo operation is safe.

New Cards Only If the last move revealed a new card or cards then performing an undo is considered cheating. Moves that simply transfer cards from pile to pile without revealing any new cards can be undone without affecting the score.

Full Detection Any use of the undo feature will be considered cheating.

The cheat detection level can be set using the **Cheat Level...** option from the **Cards** menu.

Playing Arachnid

Moving cards around and dealing is achieved through use of the mouse. The playing table is normally split into three areas (unless the **Hide/Show Deal And Discard** option is in use).

In the top left-hand corner is the hand. Clicking on this pile will cause Arachnid to deal a new set of cards, one to each row. Note that you may only deal if there are no spaces.

Right of the deck is the run removal area. When complete runs from King down to Ace of a particular suit have been completed, they may be removed from the tableau to here. Once a run has been removed it is out of play and cannot be brought back in. A run may be removed to this area by dragging it from the tableau to a free space or by using the auto move facility.

The rest of the table (the tableau) comprises 10 columns of cards. Here you may move the next lower card onto a card of the same or different suit; however, you may only move contiguous cards of the same suit as a group. To move a complete group of cards (eg. the 7-8-9 of spades) click with the *left* mouse button anywhere on the column containing the group to be moved. Then, drag the mouse (keeping the left button pressed) until the pointer is over the column you wish to move the cards to. Releasing the left mouse button will complete the move (if it is legal).

There may be times when you want to split a group of contiguous cards. Eg. you may have the 5-6-7 of hearts at the bottom of a column and want to move the 5-6 of hearts under the 7 of clubs. To do this click with the *right* mouse button over the card you wish to split the column at. Then drag, holding the right mouse button down, to the column you wish to move the cards to and release the button.

Auto-Move

If all this mouse dragging is too much, you can use the game's auto move function. Clicking over a column with the *left* mouse button will cause the program to work out a legal move for the group of cards at the bottom and perform it. The order in which moves are assessed are as follows:-

- 1) If the cards to be moved form a complete suit (Ace to King) then the suit is removed.
- 2) Try and find a card of one higher rank and the *same* suit.
- 3) Try and find a card of one higher rank and *any* suit.
- 4) Move to a space (if there is one).

Arachnid Menu Commands

Select the menu you are interested in:-

[Game Menu](#)

[Move Menu](#)

[Cards Menu](#)

Game Menu

New	Abort the current game and start a new one.
Load...	Load a previously saved game.
Save...	Save the current game to disk.
Save As...	Specify the filename under which to save the current game and save it.
Exit	Quit Arachnid.

Move Menu

- Undo** Undo the last move. Arachnid has an (almost) infinite undo stack and so any move or series of moves can be undone.
- Replay** Start a new game using the current deal (useful if you've really made a mess).
- Deal Row** Same as clicking on the pack. Deals a new card to each of the columns.

Cards Menu

- Display Column...** If the display gets too crowded, you can display all the visible cards in any of the columns using this option. After selecting it, click on the column you wish to see.
- Locate Card...** Will tell you if a particular card is visible.
- Hide Deal and Discard** Hides the pack and the discard pile from the screen, giving more space for the columns. This option toggles on/off.
- Whole Bottom Card** Determines if Arachnid is to display the entire the bottom card when drawing the columns. If this option is unchecked, Arachnid will display the top 1/4 of the bottommost card if the column gets too long.
- Cheat Level...** Allows setting of the cheat detection (See [cheating](#)).
- Verbose** If you perform an illegal move, Arachnid will inform you of this with a message box. It is possible to turn off these boxes and just have Arachnid beep.
- Visual Dragging** If this menu item is checked, cards will move with the mouse when dragging from column to column.

Game "Features"/Credits/Version History

Three Card Sizes Will choose a card size depending on the window size. Currently, the three card sizes mean the whole table will fit in a window 320, 640 or 800 pixels across.

Casual Court Cards The smallest card set has all court cards in casual dress.

Version History

- V1.0** Initial release
- V1.1** Bug fixed that meant undo didn't work properly after cheat detection. Made Arachnid save options to WIN.INI
- V1.2** Added visual card dragging (selectable from menu).
- V1.3** Bug fixed where if you clicked the other mouse button whilst dragging, cards would be lost.
- V2.0** First Shareware release.
- V2.1** Undo stack is now saved when the game is saved. Accelerators are now Windows 3.1 "friendly". Now uses SP-CARDS.DLL instead of CARDS.DLL to fix a name clash with Windows for Workgroups V3.11 Uses COMMDLG.DLL for Open/Save as dialogs and CTL3D.DLL for 3D controls.
- V5.0** Brought version numbers of games pack into line. 32bit Version released

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Mike, Gary and everyone in the IV-Lab for game testing.

Sun Microsystems, for introducing me to the game (as a demo with OpenLook called Spider), and for a little of the documentation :->

This program is shareware. If you've registered already then thank you. If not, details on how to register are available from the address below.

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