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## Solitaire

### [Microsoft Windows Solitaire](#)

*The ultimate game for mental institutions.*

I remember how awful I felt watching my aunt playing Solitaire. She looked very lonely playing with the cards. I was believing, then, that she would never marry. I cannot explain what made me suppose such a thing. Many years have passed since then - I am not a child anymore - and I still believe that solitaire players suffer from boredom or sadness, or both. I will suppose that someone was idling, as one was not engaged in any sort of activity (although something like this is very improbable). Why would one even consider playing a game like this? The only answer I find plausible is that he/she enjoys such a game. However, this is false. I have never heard of someone who truly enjoyed Solitaire. Accepting that there is in fact such a person, it is as absurd as accepting the fact that he/she has absolutely nothing to undertake. From its birth, Solitaire has proven to be one of the best time killers - especially when there is a lot of work to be done. **History** Although we refer to it as Solitaire, this game's real name is Klondike and it is just one of the thousands of card games played by one person alone. Supposedly, a casino owner in Saratoga, known as Mr. Canfield, devised it. The word "solitaire" ("patience" in British English) covers all single-player card games, and comes from its French counterpart (that means lonely, solitary). Playing cards arrived in Europe at the beginning of the 14th century. It is said their origin is Italian. However, the cradle of solitaire games is France. It is no wonder - while in the countryside people worked their backs to provide for their families, city life did not offer any particular solitary activity. What could one do with his spare time? While Descartes was constructing the deductive system of knowledge and Leibniz reasoned about causes and effects, about the best of possible worlds, the origin of evil, the nature of the soul, and the pre-established harmony, the kings and barons of France waged war, made love and devised single player games to fill up what was left of the day. There isn't any accurate history of the solitaire games, as the first written data about them was recorded during the Napoleonic era (19th century). The first author of solitaire game rules was Lady Adelaide Cadogan (probably because after the Civil War there was not a single male left in North America), followed suit, shortly thereafter, by several other people including E.D. Chaney ("Patience"), and Annie B. Henshaw ("Amusements for Invalids"). Moreover, at the turn of the 20th century, Dick & Fitzgerald published "Dick's Games of Patience" and Henry Jones wrote "Patience Games". After that, with the invention of the television and the nuclear bomb, people rather preferred to fly to the moon and watch war propaganda rather than write down dishearten impressions about solitaire games. In short, everyone was happy. Unfortunately, with the full development of the capitalist economy in the West, people had to learn how to be a great employee, or else. Those who could not escape the capitalist terror (job commitments) under the communist regimes - where the jacks of all traits and masters of nothing were praised - had to devise a cure for their horrible state. In 1989, while working as an intern for Microsoft during his senior year of college, Wes Cherry used Bill Gates' time machine and brought a relic from the past that changed the world. Mr. Cherry said he created the game as a means to learn Windows programming. Since he made the program free of charge, he never received any compensation or royalties, while the solitaire game has been included with every Microsoft Windows release since version 3.0. However, this does not explain the fall of the communist grasp over the Eastern Europe. What happened then? The socialist working class - the front line in the war against prosperity - learned about the existence of bliss embodied in Microsoft Windows Solitaire. It is clear as daylight what happened next. Each metallurgist threw his hammer and sickle directly at the iron curtain and joined the office workers' class to assist the improvement of card shuffling and

dealing techniques. A lucky coincidence? Today one is learning Windows programming, tomorrow the communist block falls. From that day and until recently, nothing bested a good game of Windows Solitaire. Come to think of it, humanity always had a natural resistance to self improvement. Surprisingly, with the development of the Internet (cheaper, faster, more accessible, more resourceful) "Win Solitaire" has fallen into oblivion. No self-conscious individual expected this back in the 90's. Nevertheless, today's "Win Solitaire" spends its well-deserved vacation in the Neverland. **Gameplay** Solitaire won its incredibly high popularity mostly through its very simple and intuitive set of rules. The fact it was included in the Microsoft Windows OSes granted it an unexpected publicity. I believe that some freemasonry society was behind it all - inspired by John Frankenheimer's "Manchurian Candidate" (1963). Only after a girl dumped me I took into consideration playing Cherry's Solitaire. I was too broken to do anything else. Listening Anathema's "Judgment" (1999) and with my mind lost between the Great Expectations' pages like a shred of ham inside a cheap sandwich, I have managed to apprehend the profound essence of this game. For those wavering and depressive/gloomy individuals this is the best way to lose their grasp on reality. Solitaire may be judged as being as psychedelic as Stanley Kubrik's "2001: A Space Odyssey" (1968). I played the Vegas mode (52 points lost for every deal - 1 point for each card; and 5 points won for every card moved to the foundations). I have raged on with this game until exhaustion, losing over 5000 points. With every game I lost, the stronger it was the urge - to push on - and keep playing it. How long? I do not know... It was just me, myself, and Solitaire. I remember two pigeons sitting next to my window on the branches of a linden tree. They raised me from the chasm, which I used to refer to it as my bed. I left this stage of my life far behind me. Recently I made some research and I have found out that the Solitaire game Klondike (the one bundled with Windows; I did not find anything about its casino counterpart) has some idiosyncrasies: not all games are solvable. Moreover, Win Solitaire sometimes produces unplayable games. In such cases, no moves are available to the player even at the beginning of the game. The game consists of seven stacks of cards (28 in total), a deck of 24 cards, and 4, initially empty, suit stacks. The arrangement of the seven stacks is by single rows. The number of cards in a row corresponds with their order on the tableau. The first row has one card, the second has two, and so on. The player has to move all 52 cards to the four suit stacks (one for every color) by building them up. Rules specify that, on the tableau, cards have to be built down by alternating colors. Only the card that is face up on the deck is available for play. For a game to be unplayable, it must satisfy the following three conditions simultaneously. There must be no aces in the playable cards (24 in the deck plus those faced up in the seven stacks, this means 31 in total if only one card is dealt, or just 15 if you deal three). The playable cards in the row-stacks cannot be moved. None of the 24 cards (if you deal one), or 8 cards (if you deal three) can be moved to any of the row-stacks. I did encounter all of these three situations in my Solitaire odyssey, but never simultaneously. **Video** I do not know who designed the graphics of the card backs for the Windows XP version, but they look awful. Those from Windows '95 and '98 looked much better. (It is supposed that Wes Cherry's ex-girlfriend, Leslie Kooy was the artist). Some of them were very slick: the dark castle with flapping bats and moonlight in the background, the gambler with an ace on his sleeve, the red robot probably embodying all "Intel inside" PC-s. **Conclusion** My aunt never married.

**Appendices**

**Strategy**

1. Always play an Ace or Deuce in Solitaire wherever you can immediately
2. Always make the play or transfer that frees (or allows a play that frees) a down card, regardless of any other considerations
3. When faced with a choice, always make the play or transfer that frees (or allows a play that frees) the down card from the biggest pile of down cards
4. Transfer cards from column to column only to allow a downcard to be freed or to make the columns smoother
5. Don't clear a spot unless there is a King immediately waiting to occupy it.
6. Play the King that will benefit the column(s) with the biggest pile of downcards, unless the play of another King will at least allow a transfer that frees a downcard.
7. Build your Ace stacks (with anything other than an Ace or Deuce)

only when the play will:

- a. It does not interfere with your Next Card Protection.
- b. Allow a play/transfer that frees a downcard.
- c. Open up a space for a same-color card pile transfer that allows a downcard to be freed.
- d. Clear a spot for an immediate waiting King (it cannot be to simply clear a spot).

8. Don't play/transfer a 5, 6, 7 or 8 anywhere unless at least one of these situations will apply after the play:

- a. It is smooth with its next highest even/odd partner in the column.
- b. It will allow a play/transfer that will immediately free a downcard.
- c. There have not been any other cards already played to the column (it will be the second card from the top of the column).
- d. You have no other choice to continue playing (this is not a good sign!).

9. When you get to a point where it seems that all of your necessary cards are covered and you just cannot get to them, immediately play any cards you can to their appropriate Ace stacks. You may have to rearrange existing piles to free blocked cards for you to be able to move them to their Ace stack. Hopefully, this will clear an existing pile up to the point that an existing pile upcard can be used to substitute for the necessary covered card.

**Terminology**-

- Stock - A pile of cards, face down, which are left over after setting up the other layout areas. These can be turned over into the waste, usually one-by-one, but sometimes in groups of two or three, when the player wishes.
- Waste/Waste pile - The area where the cards from the stock go when they are brought into play. Only cards from the stock can be played to the waste. Only the topmost card is available for play.
- Foundations - Most solitaire games feature foundations - the aim of these games is to clear the tableau and move all the cards to the foundations. Usually they are built up by suit from Ace to King, but some games have different rules. Usually only thirteen cards are allowed in each foundation.
- Tableau - This consists of a number of piles of cards where cards can be moved from one area to another, under varying rules. Some allow stacks of cards that match the building requirements to be moved, others only allow the top card to be moved, yet others allow any stack to be moved.
- Reserve - A group or pile(s) of cards where building is usually not permitted. These cards are dealt out at the beginning, and used, commonly one card at a time, during the play.
- Building up - Cards can only be placed on lower value cards
- Building down - Cards can only be placed on higher value cards
- In sequence - Cards can only be placed on the card one higher or lower (usually one or the other, not both).
- In multiples - Cards can only be placed on the card two, three, or four higher or lower: a Jack is considered as an eleven, a Queen as a twelve and a King as a thirteen. Modular arithmetic is often applied - e.g.: an Ace can be placed on a Queen if building up by two is required.
- By suit - Cards can only be placed on a card of the same suit.
- By color - Cards can only be placed on a card of the same color (Diamonds and Hearts are considered Red, Spades and Clubs are Black).
- By alternating colors - Cards can only be placed on a card of the opposite color.
- By any other suit - Cards cannot be placed on a card of the same suit.