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Overview

Ringstones is an intriguing game which demands careful strategy, good memory, and a pinch of luck.

The objective is to activate more stones than your opponent.

Stones are moved on the board by calling them into the empty pip. Players call the stones using the associated picture tiles on the left of the board. Stones are activated by calling them into one of the highlighted pips (hot spots).

The picture tile (identity) of each stone changes as the game is played. Keen memory is required to keep track of the identities.

You can play Ringstones against the computer, or against another player. In either case, you want to activate only your own stones, and not those of your opponent. You will need to keep control of the empty space in order to keep your opponent from activating his stones first. Clever strategy is the key to control.

Once you master the basic tactics, you can advance to employing counter moves and further foil your opponent.

How to Play

Ringstones can be played against the computer, or against another player.
The objective is to activate more stones than your opponent.

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The Game Board





The board consists of one, two, or three rings of pips. Only one ring of pips is in play at any one time. Play begins on the inside ring and may extend to the middle and then outside ring (see [Game Size](#))





At the top of each ring of pips, some of the pips are highlighted. These are the hot spots.

The Stones

Each player has either red  or blue  stones.

Blue always makes the first play.

When you play against the computer, the computer is the red player, and you are the blue player (see [One Player](#)).

When a stone becomes activated, it changes to either  if it is red, or  if it is blue.

The Caller - whose turn is it?

All games begin with blue as the caller. Each successive ring gives the first turn to the player with the highest score.

The color of the stone immediately counterclockwise to the empty pip is the caller. If the caller is blue, then it is blue's turn; if it is red, then it is red's turn.

For example:



Blue is the caller here.



This would be blue again.



Here it would be red.

The shape of the cursor indicate's who the caller is.



Is used for blue; and



is used for red.

You need not memorize these shapes, since they are in the centre of the board in their respective colors:



The caller clicks a picture tile to call the corresponding stone into the empty pip.

Note: If someone plays out of turn, you can use [Oops!](#) to back up one move.

The Picture Tiles



On the left of the playing board are the picture tiles. Clicking on the tiles is what moves the stones around the board.

There are either eight, fourteen, or twenty tiles on the board at any one time. The number of tiles depends on which ring is currently being played: the inside, middle or outside ring respectively; and hence the number of stones currently on the board.

The picture on the tile symbolizes the hidden identity of one of the stones. When the game first begins, all the stones are unknown, but as you play, you will learn, and will be able to follow each stone's identity.



As the tiles are selected, they are successively marked with a black border. The black border helps you to see your opponent's moves. The importance of this will become more clear in the next section.

Stone Identities

At the start of each ring of pips, all the stones are unknown.

Each time a picture tile is clicked, the stone with that identity is moved into the empty pip. The caller and the called stones then switch identities.

For example:



Based on previous moves in the game, you know that the calling stone is the teepee.



The calling player (or the computer) clicks the deer tile. The stone which has the deer as its hidden identity would then move to the empty pip.

The two stones would then switch identities making the calling stone the deer, and the stone just called the teepee.

Note: The tiles at the left of the board do NOT switch places. It is up to you to remember which tile belongs to which stone throughout the game.

Exeption:

There is one exception to this rule; if the calling stone calls itself, then no identities are changed.

From the example above:

If the calling player clicked on teepee, which is the identity of the calling stone, then the calling stone would move over one (in a clockwise direction) into the empty space. The calling stone would NOT change it's identity, but would remain as the teepee.

Scoring

Each time one of your stones is activated, you receive one point. Points are received regardless of who calls the stone into the hot spot. (i.e. if you accidentally place your opponents stone in the hot spot, your opponent scores one point).

Once a stone is activated, you do not receive additional points for placing it back in the hot spot.

Stones which are in the hot spots at the start of the ring must first be called out of the pip, and then back into an hot spot to make them active.

The scores are displayed within the  symbols in the center of the board.

Winning the Game

The player with the highest score wins. A dialog box will open to announce the winner:



Blue Wins



Red Wins



It's a Tie

Click on the picture to clear the dialog box and begin a new game.

Although the high score wins, when this occurs in the game differs depending on the size of the game being played.

Small



The first person to activate all their stones wins.

Medium



The first ring is played until one player has activated all his stones on that ring. The score is carried forward to the next ring.

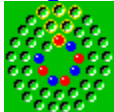
The middle ring is then played until either player activates all their stones, or until one player does not have enough inactive stones to be able to match the score of the other player.

For example:

Red scored 4 points on the first ring, and blue scored 0.

Red only needs to score 4 more points on the second ring to win. Blue can only score a maximum of 7 points on the second ring because there are only 7 blue stones in the middle ring. Once red has scored a total of 8 points, blue will not be able to catch up, and red wins by default.

Large



The first two rings are played until either of the players has activated all their stones. The total score is always forwarded to each successive ring.

The outer ring is then played until either player activates all their stones, or until one player does not have enough inactive stones to be able to match the score of the other player.

The game may end prematurely if one of the players does not have a sufficient number of stones remaining in the game (on the total remaining rings) to be able to match the score of the opposing player (see the example in Medium above).

See Also:

[Strategy](#)

[Oops!](#) - how you can cheat

Strategy

This section deals with the basic strategy of Ringstones. I would advise playing at least one game against the computer to familiarize yourself with the role of the caller before you read this section.

For the purpose of clear diagrams and examples, it will be assumed that you are the blue player, and your opponent is red.

Positioning

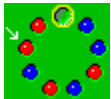


Initially your goal will be to simply empty one of the hot spots so that one of your stones can be put there. You will quickly learn, however, that if you do not have a stone left of the hot spot, then emptying the hot spot only allows your opponent to call in one of his stones.

To gain control of the hot spot, you must first place one of your stones in the Calling position relative to that pip. In the example shown above, you can see that you would have to pull the red stone out and call in a blue one. Then you would be able to control the stones being called into the hot spot.



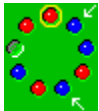
It's not always quite so simple. If the stones are arranged as diagramed at the left, simply calling out the red stone to the left of the hot spot is not enough.



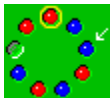
Since a red stone controls that spot as well, your opponent would simply call in another red stone. Here you must first call the red stone on the far left of the board, fill it with a blue stone. And then call the next red stone, and so on towards the hot spot.

Controlling the Caller

Of course, while you are carefully plotting your way to victory, your opponent is no doubt plotting against you. Each time it is their turn, they move their stones into position and move your stones out. How do you prevent this? If you can keep control of the caller, your opponent never gets a chance to turn against you.



While it is near impossible to control the caller all of the time, it is often easy to control it some of the time. Examine this situation where you are the caller. You are on your way to controlling the hot spot, so you want to call in a blue stone. If you call either of the blue stones indicated, then it will immediately be red's turn next.



However, if you call this blue stone, then it will still be your turn.



Now you can call out the next red stone.



With the red stone out of the way, you can call in the calling blue stone (yes, a stone can call itself). Lo and behold, it's still your turn.



The next step is to call the red stone out of the hot spot.



Now you can call in the marked blue stone, activate it, and still have a move to spare for your next scheme.

Now you know the basics, you will soon be conniving strategies of your own.

Game|New

Scramble the identities of the stones, and start a new game.

Game|Exit

End any game currently in progress and close the window.

Game Size

There are three game sizes to choose from:



Small



Medium



Large

Increasing the size of the game affects the length and complexity of play.

Hot spots

There are one, two and three hot spots for each of the respective game sizes. These are the highlighted pips at the top of each ring.


See Also:


[Winning the Game](#)


Number of Players

One Player

Select Options | One Player and then the [difficulty](#) level to pit your brains against the computer.

In a One Player game, you always have the blue stones , and it will be your turn first.

The computer will have the red stones .

When it is the computer's turn to play, the cursor will change to . When you are ready for the computer to make its move, click the mouse anywhere on the board. Clicking on the picture tiles is inconsequential while it is the computer's turn.



The computer will only make one move at a time, and you must click the mouse for each move the computer makes. This feature allows you to study each move at your leisure. Watch the picture tiles; each picture tile selected by the computer will be marked with a black boarder.

The cursor will revert to  when it is your turn to play.

Two Players

Select Options | Two Players to battle it out with a friend. The player with the blue stones has the first move.

Note: If someone plays out of turn, use [Oops!](#) to back up one move.

Difficulty

Select Options | One Player > Easy/Cautious/Moderate/Challenge/Fat Chance

The difficulty level only applies to a One Player game.

To set the difficulty level for a Two Player game, you simply need to find an appropriate opponent. In a Two Player game you can however, change the [game size](#) to make it short and sweet or an all out battle.

Easy

This is a good place to learn how to play, or to think through a new strategy.

On the easy level, the computer simply chooses a random tile, and hopes that eventually it might win. Don't laugh, easy as this may sound, sometimes a bit of knowledge is a dangerous thing. If you haven't got the hang of switching the identities of the stones, you just might find yourself slaughtered by random chance.

Cautious

The computer tries to remember the stones, but isn't always good at it.

Moderate

Your first worthy opponent. The computer is not bad at remembering, and it will work towards gaining control of key pips in an effort to call its stones into the hot spots.

Challenging

The computer has a terrific memory, and it will actively seek to keep control of the caller, gain control of key pips, and activate it's stones.

Fat Chance

No holds barred. The computer has an impeccable memory. In addition to the tactics found in the Challenging level, it will mess with your mind by calling blue stones just to mix you up.

See Also:

[Game Size](#)

[Winning the Game](#)

[Oops!](#) - how you can cheat

Sound

Toggle the sound on and off.

When you open Ringstones, it checks for the presence of a Windows sound driver, and loads the sound files. If the initialization fails, Sound is disabled.

Troubleshooting:

The sound files:

RINGSTN1.WAV
RINGSTN2.WAV

must be in the same directory as RINGSTNS.EXE.

See your Windows manual for information on installing drivers. Also check any documentation which came with your sound card.

Music

Toggle the MIDI Music on and off.

When you open Ringstones, it checks for the presence of a Windows MIDI driver (including FM synthesis), and loads the sound files. If the initialization fails, Music is disabled.

Troubleshooting:

The music files:

- RINGSTN0.MID
- RINGSTN1.MID
- RINGSTN2.MID
- RINGSTN3.MID
- RINGSTN4.MID

must be in the same directory as RINGSTNS.EXE.

See your Windows manual for information on installing drivers. Also check any documentation which came with your sound card.

Oops!

Oops! lets you back up one move. The menu bar will enable Oops! when it is available [Oops!], and will disable it when it is not [Oops!]. Oops! is also very useful when you are just learning to play Ringstones; if you lose track of a particular identity, you can keep backing up and trying again.

One Player

During one player operation, Oops only works on one of your own moves. You cannot back up one of the computer moves. You can use Oops to learn Ringstones, or simply to cheat.

Two Player

Although the shape of the cursor indicates who the [caller](#) is, you or your opponent may find yourself getting overanxious and accidentally click a picture tile when it is not your turn. Use Oops! to back up one move. You can of course use Oops! to cheat as well, but you may have to take up the issue with your opponent.

Note: Although Oops! moves the stones and scores back one move, it does not cause the computer to forget. Hence; if you use Oops! to learn the identity of all the stones, remember that the computer is learning too.

Registration

Use Ringstones free for 10 days. If you like the game and want to keep it, send \$15 to:

Carolyn Nordin
Box 200
Amisk, AB
Canada
T0B 0B0

Ringstones is [shareware](#).

Shareware

Shareware is not free although you may distribute copies to your friends. Ringstones has a 10 day trial period so you can try it out before you are required to [register](#) your copy. Payment for Ringstones is on an honour system. By honouring shareware registration, you fund the development of the software, and encourage developers (such as myself) to continue producing readily available, high quality software.

Version Information

Ringstones Version 1.1 eliminates an error message which came up at the end of each game played with the Music OFF.

Error Reporting

To report a bug use either

email: gelfling@agt.net

or snail mail: Carolyn Nordin
Box 200
Amisk, AB
Canada
T0B 0B0

