Contents for Minesweeper Help

Minesweeper is a challenging game of strategy and luck.
To learn how to use Help, press F1.

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What Is Minesweeper?

When playing Minesweeper you are presented with a mine field, and your objective is to locate all the mines as quickly as possible. To do this, you uncover the squares on the game board that do not contain mines, and you mark the squares that do contain mines. The trick is determining which squares are which.

If you uncover all the squares without mines, you win; if you uncover a mine instead of marking it, you lose the game. The faster you play, the lower your score. You can use the counters at the top of the playing area to keep track of your progress.

The counter in the upper-right corner of the playing area is a timer, which displays your playing time in seconds. The timer does not begin counting until you select a square.

The counter in the upper-left corner of the playing area initially indicates the number of mines hidden in the mine field. Every time you mark a square as a mine, this number decreases by one, even if you incorrectly mark a square.

Playing the Game

The object of Minesweeper is to correctly mark all mines as quickly as possible without uncovering one. The following section explains how to play the game.

To choose a skill level

▶ From the Game menu, choose Beginner, Intermediate, or Expert. The higher the skill level, the larger the mine field.

To start a new game

▶ From the Game menu, choose New, or press F2. Or you can click the yellow "happy face" at the top of the game board.

To locate the mines

1 To uncover a square, select it using the left mouse button.

   If the square is a mine, you lose.

2 If the square isn't a mine, a number appears. This number represents the number of mines in the surrounding eight squares.

3 To mark a square as a mine, select it with the right mouse button.

   To mark a square you are uncertain about, point to it and click twice with the right mouse button. This marks the square with a question mark (?). Later, you can either mark the square as a mine, or uncover it.

Understanding the Rules of the Game

Follow these rules when playing Minesweeper

- The playing area is a mine field, simulated by a grid of squares. Initially, all the squares are covered.
- To uncover a square, point to it and click the left mouse button. You continue to uncover squares until only the squares containing mines are covered.
- If you uncover a square that does not contain a mine, it either contains a number or is blank.

    If the square contains a number, *N,* then there are *N* mines in the surrounding eight squares. If the square is blank, there are no mines in the surrounding eight squares.
- If you uncover a blank square, the surrounding eight squares are uncovered automatically because there cannot be any mines under them.
- If you know that a square is a mine, you can mark the square.
- If you uncover a square that contains a mine, the game is over and all the mines are displayed.

You can also "clear around" an uncovered number square whose mine has already been marked.

For example, two squares labeled 1 may both be touching a marked square. If you clear around the uncovered squares, you may uncover additional squares that do not contain mines. If you clear around a square whose mine is already marked, the surrounding numbered squares are uncovered.

To clear around a square

- Point to the numbered square, and then click both mouse buttons at the same time.

    If there are other squares whose mines have been marked, they will be uncovered for you.
- You are not allowed to clear around a square if you have not marked enough mines in the surrounding eight squares, or if the square is covered. For example, if you try to clear around a square labeled 3, and you have marked only two squares with mines, nothing will happen. Or, if you try to clear around an uncovered square, nothing will happen.
- If you clear around a square, and there is an unmarked mine in the surrounding eight squares, it is uncovered and the game is over.
- If you clear around a square whose mines are incorrectly marked and a mine is uncovered, the game is over.

Keeping Score

Minesweeper scoring is simple. The counter in the upper-right corner of the playing area indicates your playing time. The faster you find all the mines, the better your score.

To see a list of your fastest playing times

▶ From the Game menu, choose Best Times.

Using Strategies and Hints

Helpful hints for playing Minesweeper
- If an uncovered square is labeled 1, and there is only one covered square touching it, that covered square must be a mine.
- If an uncovered square already has the correct number of adjacent mines marked, clear around it.
- Don't guess. If you can't figure out how to move, try approaching the area from a different direction or marking squares with question marks.

Marking a Square

Knowing when to mark a square as a mine is the key to winning the game.

To uncover a square
- Point to the square, and click the left mouse button.

To mark a square as a mine
- Point to the square, and click the right mouse button once.

To mark a square as a question mark
- Point to the square, and click the right mouse button twice.

To change a square marked as a mine into a question mark
- Point to the square, and click the right mouse button once.

To clear a square marked as a mine
- Point to the square, and click the right mouse button twice.

Once you have marked at least one square as a mine, you may be able to safely uncover more squares by "clearing around" them.