Software Forge **Netris for Windows**

This program is <u>shareware</u>. If you enjoy the game and wish to continue playing it, you must <u>register</u> it.

Please choose one of the subjects below for help or information.

<u>How to play</u>	For those new to Tetris games
<u>Using Netris</u>	Special features of this version
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<u>Hints and tips</u>	Helpful advice on strategy
<u>The main screen</u>	What all those icons and buttons do
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How to play

Netris is based on the classic Russian computer game, Tetris. Playing Tetris is simple but still challenging and fun. If you already know how to play Tetris - and that's 99% of the population - you can skip this topic.

Tetris involves two-dimensional shapes which fall from the top of the play area. There are seven types of these shapes and each shape is made out of four squares, joined together in a certain way. As these shapes fall, you can move them from side to side and rotate them (in 90º increments) using the computer keyboard.

The object of the game is to keep playing for as long as possible so that you can amass score. You get points each time a piece lands, but if a piece cannot fall from the top (i.e. you've piled up pieces high so there is no space at the top) then the game ends. To prevent this from happening, you position the shapes that fall so that they fit into the already-landed shapes exactly without leaving gaps. Each time you fill up a whole row of the playfield with blocks and no gaps, this row disappears and rows above it drop down. And you get some score. If you manage to fill up two rows with just one shape (two rows at once), you get more score than you would for clearing one row with one shape and the other row with another shape. Three rows at once is even better, and getting four rows at once is called a Tetris. These give you lots of points.

To make the game more challenging, it speeds up as you fill more lines.

At this point, you'd better play the game to make sure you understand what I mean. The help sections below will tell you how to choose keys, and more about specific features of this implementation of Tetris.

Keyboard controls
Using Netris

Using Netris

This section explains all the specific features of Netris for Windows, except graphics, sound, music, and network play, which have their own sections. You don't need to read all this before you play, but it'll let you know what features are available to assist you.

Drop modes
Next piece display
Playing modes
Pause mode

Pause mode

To pause the game, you can either minimize it, click on another program window, or click on one of the buttons along the bottom of the <u>main screen</u>. (You don't have to alter anything.)

You cannot pause the game in network mode - if you switch to another window, pieces will keep falling uncontrolled, so avoid this! For this reason, it's a good idea to ensure your options (keys, music, sound, graphics) are set up to your satisfaction *before* a network game, as it won't pause to let you change them.

When the game is paused, it will hide the screen so you can't just pause and think about where you're going to put the piece. Pausing does not help you in any way, and it may hinder you because it'll take a short time to get used to where everything is when you come back to the game. Because of this, try to pause in a fairly nice position (when you've already lined up a piece, but before it lands, for instance).

When you're ready to play again, bring the window back if you minimized it, or switch back to it using the mouse or Alt+Tab if you clicked another program window, or Ok the dialog box if you clicked a Netris button.

Drop modes

There are two different modes of operation for the drop key. This key drops the current piece to the bottom of the screen.

On most PC versions of the game, pressing the key once will drop the piece instantly until it hits ground or another piece.

Versions of the game on other systems tend to use the more sensible 'smooth' method, where pushing the key makes the piece fall quickly until it hits bottom or the key is released (thus letting you change your mind about where the piece should go if you want).

The second method requires more processor time (and more programming!) which is why many PC programs don't support it. However, Netris does. You can choose which mode is used by clicking on the drop icon. If the arrow on the icon is long, instant dropping is enabled. If the arrow is short, smooth drop is enabled.

To gain the extra points for dropping, you need to keep holding down drop until the piece thuds into the bottom or another piece. You don't need to worry about the still-held key affecting the next piece; it won't unless you press it again, so if you've got no sound it's best to hold down until the next piece appears to make sure you get the bonus.

Scoring

Next piece display

This is the box in top right of the Netris window. It shows you which piece will appear after the one you're controlling now has touched the ground. This helps you plan your strategy as you can now think one move ahead.

If you click on the display, it will hide itself. This makes the game more difficult (though also introduces more luck) and gives you a 5% score bonus. Click on it again to bring the display back. You'll get the bonus for as long as the display is hidden.

Note: do not rely on this display before games have started (e.g. in network mode waiting for other players) as it may not always work.

Hints and tips

Scoring

All the score you obtain is multiplied by the level you are on - i.e. getting a triple-line on level 9 will give you 3 times as much as on level 3.

You get 5% bonus score on top of this if you turn the Next piece display off by clicking on it.

If you drop pieces, you get a bonus score depending on how high the piece was when you started to drop it. If you change your mind partway through a smooth drop, you get no extra points for the distance you've dropped the piece so far - only a continuous period ending in the piece hitting the ground will give you the bonus.

All the scoring information can be had by just waiting for the program to run through its attract sequence.

Score is given for the following things:

Landing a piece This score is given just because you're still here. It also compensates (maybe) for being unlucky and getting nasty pieces. ('Course, my definition of nasty pieces is probably different from yours)

Line-piece	**1**
Square piece	**3**
T-piece	**1**
S-piece	**3**
Z-piece	**3**
L-piece	**2**
Reverse L-piece	**2**

Clearing lines This is where you'll really notch up the points.

Single line	**40**
Double line	**120**
Triple line	**320**
Tetris!!	**880**

The best scores will be stored in the Hi-Score chart.

Hi-Score Chart

When your score is one of the ten all-time best obtained on your computer, you'll be asked for your handle (name). Fill this in - it'll stay on your computer unless you delete the file or someone knocks it off the bottom of the chart. In this way, you'll know if you get a new personal best.

To view the chart, click on an unoccupied area of the Netris window when on the main screen or the attract sequence.

Notes on the Hi-Score chart
- It won't store any scores you get in network mode.
- Neither will any scores you get in <u>challenge mode</u> be saved.
- Scores will always be saved on your own computer, in the directory containing Windows. It's not therefore possible to have one hi-score chart for the whole network, even if you play single-player, unless the copy of Windows you run is stored on the network server.

<u>Scoring</u>

Challenge Mode

This mode is selected by turning on the 'Challenge' checkbox on the main screen, and choosing a number of lines using the up and down arrows. When you play in Challenge Mode, you cannot get a hi-score. Instead, the aim is to 'complete' a level. You set yourself the target number of lines, and when this number is reached, the game ends (in victory!)

This mode is good if you only want a quick game, or in competition with friends ('I can do 30 lines on level 19!').

Note: this checkbox has the same function in network play.

Normal mode

In normal mode, the intention is to amass score. The highest scores are recorded on the hi-score chart. To ensure your game is in Normal mode, clear the 'Challenge' checkbox on the main screen.

Playing modes

There are two different modes of play for single-player: <u>challenge mode</u> and <u>normal mode</u>. Briefly, normal mode is where you aim for score. In challenge mode, you aim to get a certain number of lines on a particular level, and score is not important.

Hints and tips

Once you can manage it, it's a good idea to **set the starting level higher**. The game level does not increase until you have got 10 lines per level - i.e. at 10 lines the game moves to level 2, at 20 lines to level 3, and so on. The higher your starting level, the longer you get before the game speeds up more, and during this period you get more points than if you'd started on level 1.

Go for Tetrises. This is very important. When you are past the absolute beginner stage, try to pile the pieces with a gap for a line piece. Tetrises will get you much more score than getting less lines at once. In network mode, they are more effective at messing up the other players.

Know when to stop. I don't mean, stop playing - you should never do that! - but stop waiting for a line you need for a Tetris. If blocks get too high up the screen, get some single and double lines to improve the situation a bit.

In network mode, play fast. If you can correctly position pieces quicker than your opponents, you will get Tetrises quicker than them, get lines quicker than them (essential if you have the 'win on number of lines' option set) and generally give them a hard time. I have personal experience of this - heh heh heh....

The main screen

Please click on an item you would like information on. You can only choose items when the cursor turns into a hand as you move it over them.

Play button

This button will start the game, using all the options you've set up on the main screen. Once you've started the game, you cannot change the <u>level</u> or <u>hi mode</u>. However, you can still change all the features altered by the buttons along the bottom of the <u>main screen</u>. While you're changing features in this way (during the game) it will enter <u>pause mode</u>.

Hi selector

You can use the arrows here to alter the hi mode, which is displayed next to the arrows.

Hi mode is there to make the game more difficult. It specifies a certain number of lines which will already be partially filled at the bottom of the screen when you start the game. You'll then have these lines getting in the way until you clear them out by filling them (which isn't always easy). *Don't* try really big numbers like 15 unless you're on a very slow level and you're a good player!

This mode is a good way to make the game more even in network play if you're playing against someone with a different experience level. If they're more experienced than you, they can increase their hi mode to make the game challenging for both of you. Handicap mode deals with this automatically.

Level selector

Using the arrows on this selector, you can change the level at which you start play.

The higher the level, the faster pieces fall. This makes the game more difficult (surprise!). However, the game will not increase the level further until you have obtained a certain number of lines (the current level times 10, e.g. if you're on level 8, the game will increase to level 9 when you clear the 80th line).

You can use this to make things difficult for the more experienced player in a network or two-player game, but we recommend you use the special handicap mode for this purpose.

Attract sequence wait bar

When the blue empties out of this bar, the game will enter <u>attract mode</u>. To prevent this happening, you can click one of the arrows to change <u>hi mode</u> or <u>level</u>, which will refill the bar.

Attract mode

If you leave the game on the main screen, it will go into attract mode. First, you will be briefly shown how to play. Then, the game will go through all its scoring. Then, the hi-score chart will appear. There will then be a nag screen if you haven't yet registered, or a different screen if you have, and finally the credits will be displayed. After this, the game goes back to the main screen.

If you click the mouse (in the window) while on the main screen or the scoring information, the game will skip to the hi-score chart. If you click while on the hi-score chart, registered screen or credits, you will go back to the main screen.

Status box

The status box displays game information.

Attract mode/idle
> In this case, the status box informs you what will happen if you click the mouse on an empty screen area.

Normal play
> The game tells you what your position on the hi-score chart would be if you lost now.

Network mode
> The status box lets you know if someone loses - a message in the form 'xxx is out' will appear. If you get lines from someone else, that person's vindictive message will appear to enrage you. The box also shows you if you are waiting for other players before the game starts, and will tell you 'Let's go' when the game does start.

Keyboard controls

You can choose keyboard controls by clicking on the 'keys' icon. This'll bring up a dialog box with buttons:

Button name: *Default key:*
Turn (clockwise)   <Space>
Turn back (anticlockwise)   <Ctrl>
Left   <Left>
Right   <Right>
Drop   <Down>

Next to the buttons are panels showing the currently selected key. If I haven't programmed in the name of the key, '<?>' will be shown, but don't worry, the key will still almost certainly work in the game.

To set a key, click on its button. A popup window will appear. Then, press the key you want. For example, to set the left key to Ctrl, you'd click on the button marked 'Left'. Then, you'd press Ctrl.

As you can see, you can choose different keys so there is a key to turn each way. This can speed up your play, but it's more difficult for inexperienced players. (hey, I don't use it!) If you only want to use one rotate key, just set that one and set the other to something out of the way like a function key so you don't press it by accident.

Note: please make sure none of the keys are set to the same. If you do, you get interesting effects, but low scores!

Sound effects

<u>If you don't have a sound card</u>

You can change the sound effects by clicking on the appropriate button on the Netris window. This brings up a dialog box containing ten buttons, ten edit boxes, and ten little < arrows.

Button	*When sound is played*
Piece hits	To indicate this piece has landed
Line cleared	You cleared one line
2 lines	You cleared two lines
3 lines	You cleared three lines
Tetris	You cleared 4 lines
Up level	The game just increased in speed
You lost	Guess...
Lines added	Some waster gave you lines (network play)
Victory	You won! (network play/challenge mode)
Game start	When the game starts

To test a sound, click on the button. If the sound file can't be found, nothing will happen. Otherwise, the sound will play.

There are **two** ways to change which sounds are played when.
The easiest way is to **click on the little arrow button** (<) next to the appropriate sound. If you do this, a standard file dialog will appear so you can browse to find a suitable sound file.
You can also choose a sound file by **clicking in the edit box** with the filename in, and editing it to the name of another sound file. Include the path if necessary. Remember to check it works by clicking on the button.

A checkbox titled 'Sound on' indicates whether or not sound is turned on. If you don't have a Windows-compatible sound card installed, you cannot turn sound on.

You can cancel any changes by clicking Cancel. When you click OK, the changes are in effect. All settings are saved when you exit Netris.

The sounds provided (if you downloaded the Netris Sound FX file netrisfx) will be set up as defaults, assuming your Netris directory is C:\NETRIS and you followed the installation procedure in the readme file.

<u>Why are the provided sounds low quality?</u>

Graphics

The graphics dialog box allows you to change the background pictures used. You can set the background for each level separately, to the supplied backgrounds or ones you've created.

Background graphics work on 16-colour, 256-colour, and 24-bit colour display drivers. They probably won't work properly on 32k or 64k colour displays. Sorry, but if you use one of these, you'll be best sticking to a background colour. Also, if you have a 16-colour display, you'll get best results by loading the graphics into a image editing program like Paint Shop Pro, converting to 16-colour, and then back to 256 colours again before saving. (Windows handles the conversion otherwise, and doesn't do too well).

To change the graphic you are editing, use the arrow or type a number into the edit box. The filename display will update to show the current graphic for the level you chose.

There are **two** way to change the graphics used.
The easiest way is to **click on the little arrow button** (<) next to filename edit box. If you do this, a standard file dialog will appear so you can browse to find a suitable graphics file.
You can also choose a graphics file by **clicking in the edit box** with the filename in, and editing it to the name of another graphics file. Include the path if necessary.

If you get the name wrong, the background on that level will use the colour set as background colour. To intentionally set a level to use background colour only, you can delete the filename from the edit box and leave it blank.

Click OK to accept the changes, or Cancel to reset to the previous settings. All your settings will be saved when you exit the program.

Using your own custom graphics

It's possible to use your own custom graphics for backgrounds. Netris has tight restrictions on what is and isn't allowed, though, so read this carefully.

Graphics must be in .BMP format. They must be saved as 256-colour files, even if they only contain 16 colours. They must be 210 pixels wide by 378 pixels high. In addition, they must be flipped vertically (i.e. they will be displayed the other way up in Netris than in your image edit program). This last is for greater loading speed.

If you break any of these rules, the program may exit with a fatal error, or

crash, or you may get undesirable screen results. Don't say I didn't warn you.

Having said that, it's pretty easy to follow these rules providing you have a suitable image edit program (I use PhotoFinish). If you do create any background pictures, why not upload them to the BBS you got Netris from? If, on the other hand, you send them to me (snail mail), and they're a) any good whatsoever and b) not someone else's copyright, then they'll probably be included in future releases of the program or support archives.

The included graphics are from two sources: fractal programs FractInt (a great free program) and NRFract (my own program).

Music

<u>If you don't have a sound card</u>

There are three different music settings

Setting	Played when
Title music	On title screen or attract mode
Game music	During the game
Hi-scores	When you get a new hi-score (not just when the chart is displayed)

To change a music file, either click in the appropriate edit box and enter a filename with a path (e.g. d:\us\midi\5thsymph.mid) or click on the little arrow button (<) next to the edit box and use the standard dialog that appears to browse for the file.

You can test a music file by clicking on its button. To turn music on or off, click on the 'Music on' checkbox.

Slight problems with music occur on some systems. Because of this, you may notice some odd behaviour. If so, the below section gives more information.

<u>Problems with music</u>

Background colour

When you choose this icon, you will be able to use scroll bar sliders to specify your background colour pattern in the absence of graphics files for the current level.

This is recommended if you have a slow computer or a 16-colour graphics card. The default colour is black, but you can choose any colour you want. Generally, it's easier to play against a dark background. As 256-colour graphics dont work properly on 32k or 64k colour systems, you will probably prefer to use this option in this case as well.

Even if you have 256-colour graphics, the colour pattern will still be a 16-colour dither, so in this case you will probably prefer to use graphics files.

Network play

Network play enables you to link up several computers, or two players on the same computer, to play against your friends (or enemies, the game's not picky).

Basically, in network play, if you get two lines at once, one unfilled line appears at the bottom of an opponent's screen, pushing the rest of his blocks up. If you get three lines, two lines appear. But if you get a Tetris, the full four lines appear.

There is also an auto-handicap mode, whereby if you come first in a game, you will start off with some lines next time (like Hi Mode on one-player games).

Network play works using a simple method that's OK for low-volume data. To use it, you need a common directory that all players have both read and write access to. Ask your system manager for advice on this directory's name, or to set one up if there isn't one already.
Technical details
Windows for Workgroups instructions

When you click 'Net play' from the main screen, the network play dialog box will appear. You fill in your details here and then click OK. If you are the first player to do so, the network options screen will appear. Otherwise, you will be given a message that you must wait for the other players.

You cannot get hi-scores in network mode. To make up for this, a scoring system based on which place you get (first, second, whatever) is used. These scores will let you know who's done best out of a prolonged bout of playing. The scores are reset if you change the playing group - if someone else joins in or if someone stops playing. When a game finishes, the results dialog box will appear, even if you are doing something else.

Playing in two-player mode is slightly different, because you are both on the same computer.

Auto-handicap mode

In <u>network</u> or <u>two-player</u> play, the checkbox 'Handicap mode' is available on the <u>network options screen</u>.

If turned on, this mode makes things more difficult for the better player(s) in the game - automatically. The player who comes first in a game has their <u>hi level</u> raised by the number set using the handicap mode arrows. The player who comes last has their level reduced by this number (you can't have a negative hi level, but numbers below zero mean you have a certain number of wins before you get the handicap yourself).

You don't have to do anything once this mode is activated. All the levels will be reset at the same time as score is reset - i.e. when you change the people who are playing.

To achieve the best possible balance, use a high value such as 3 or 4 for handicap mode initially. When you start alternating games (i.e. each time you win, the resulting handicap makes sure you lose next time), decrease the value to 1 or 2 as it should now be about even.

Technical details

Netris works in network or two-player mode by writing 'message files' to the directory specified in the <u>network play dialog</u>. Any copy needs to be able to message any other. This is why the directory specified must be accessible by all the computers playing Netris for both reading and writing.

This method was chosen for three reasons:
- It will work with any network or computer linkup (even $25 Network, for instance)
- More complex methods are not really needed because messages are small (<100 bytes) and infrequent
- I don't know how to program network calls, anyway

If things mess up (not unheard of!), quit all copies of Netris and use File Manager to delete all the Netris files from the directory that's being shared. Then start up again and things should be OK (obviously, you'll have lost your scores, though).

Windows for Workgroups

Netris has only been tested on a Windows for Workgroups network. Those of you with one of these, therefore, get the benefit of this instructions procedure.

You must load up File Manager.
One person should choose a handy directory, like a temporary directory. Click on this, then click on the share button on the toolbar. Choose 'full access' and do not type in a password. (If you have a lot of shared directories, you could put 'Netris' in the comments box so people can find the right one.) OK the dialog.
Other players need to click the Connect toolbar button. Choose the first person's computer and the correct shared directory. Click OK, and note which drive letter has been assigned to the shared directory.

In the network play dialog box, the first player must type in the subdirectory name that they chose. They must NOT include a \ after it. For instance:
c:\temp
Other players should type in the drive letter they were assigned, again with no \ but with a colon, like:
d:

Tip: carrying on two games on the same network
This is possible as long as you choose two different directories (i.e. the first procedure is repeated, and some of the other players choose one shared directory while some choose the other).

Tip: lots of players
You can have up to 20 players in one game. However, we suggest that 8 is a sensible maximum, or network slowdown might result. Do not try to go over 20 players, or GP faults might result - you have been warned. In chaos mode, 3 is the reasonable maximum, but then if you want chaos mode, you don't want things reasonable!

Netris has only been extensively tested with two players. Glitches like getting the scoring wrong, or similar communication failures, are much more likely to occur with 3 or more players - even though we've done our best to test and fix these problems. You may need to clear the shared directory to get rid of any problems: go into it and delete all the Netris message files (names like netris.0, netris.sco, netris.gam etc).

Network play dialog

Play Network Multi-Player

Name: Russell   Short Name: Rus

Lines Quote

Got

ya

there!

Tetris Quote

Take

that!!!!!

Net dir. d:\tetbak   Cancel   OK

Please click on any item you'd like help with from this dialog box. You can only get help on an item when the cursor turns into a hand over it.

Full name

In this edit box, you can enter your full name or handle. (For instance, 'Sam The God' is my immensely modest handle!) This will appear in the <u>results dialog box</u> and on the <u>network options screen</u>.

Short name

You should enter a short name for yourself in this box. I use 'Sam'. This is used when necesary during play, if your name appears in someone's <u>status box</u>. (For instance, if I lost the message 'Sam is out' would appear in everyone else's status box.) Try to make your entry here as short as possible, as longer entries may cause graphics to glitch.

Lines quote

Each of these three edit boxes represents one line of the message that will appear in an opponent's <u>status box</u> when they get some lines that you've kindly donated. Enter what you like (remember, superior-sounding comments like 'Better luck next time' often infuriate people).

Bear in mind that these text lines must fit into the status box. If you type too much, it'll overflow and look stupid, so keep them short.

Tetris quote

Each of these three edit boxes represents one line of the message that will appear in an opponent's <u>status box</u> when they get four lines from your Tetris. Enter what you like (but try to be nice to any inexperienced players).

Bear in mind that these text lines must fit into the status box. If you type too much, it'll overflow and look stupid, so keep them short.

Network directory

This must be the full directory name of your shared (common) directory. Do not include the final \ sign. Examples:
e:
p:\common

Do not get this wrong! If you do, you'll be on your own, so click Play from the network options screen and then choose Cancel.
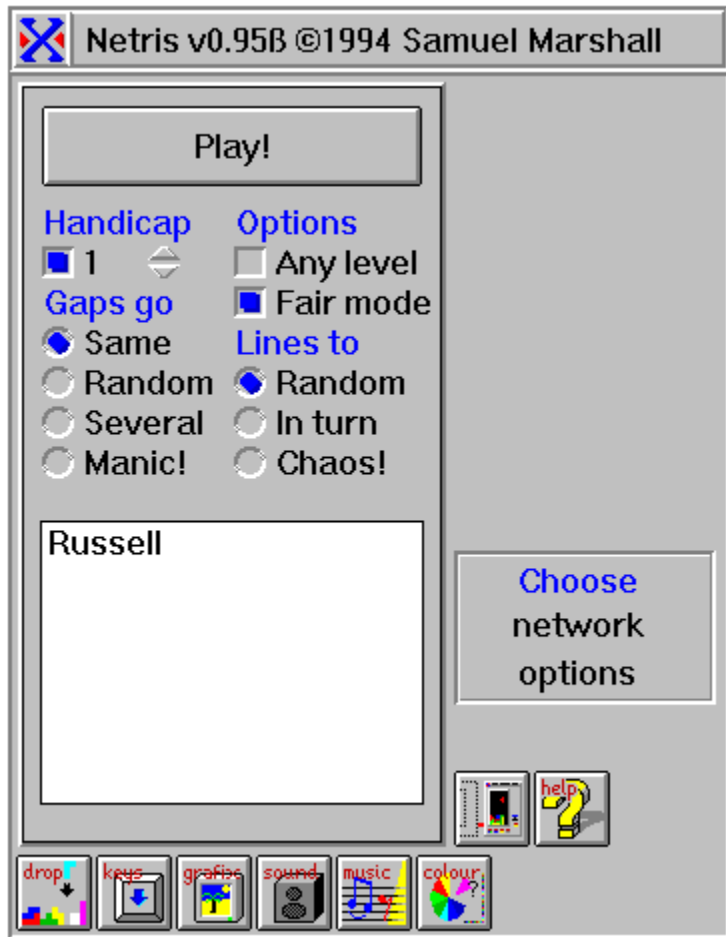
For more details about this, see
   Technical details

If you use a Window for Workgroups network, full instructions are available.
   Windows for Workgroups

Network options screen

Netris v0.95ß ©1994 Samuel Marshall

Play!

Handicap
■ 1

Gaps go
● Same
○ Random
○ Several
○ Manic!

Options
☐ Any level
■ Fair mode

Lines to
● Random
○ In turn
○ Chaos!

Russell

Choose
network
options

drop keys grafics sound music colour

help

Please click on any item you'd like help with from this screen. You can only get help on an item when the cursor turns into a hand over it.

Play (on network screen)

This button starts the network game.

Before you click it, make sure that you've chosen all the options correctly and that all players have joined (are listed in the player list). This is the final button - there is no way to cancel. Also, make sure your keys are set up right as the network game does not pause.

Having said that, the play button also works *to* cancel. If no other players have joined - your name is the only one on the player list - this button will not start the game. Instead, a dialog box will appear giving you the option to cancel and return to the main screen, or retry (wait for other players to join).

Any level option

If this option is not checked, then all players play at the same difficulty (speed) level. The level set is the one you've chosen on your <u>main screen</u>. This option is so other players cannot cheat and set their game to an easy level!

You may wish to check (set) this option, so that novice players can choose easier levels, or expert players can choose more difficult levels.

Fair mode option

Fair mode ensures that all players are given the same pieces. This removes the element of luck from a network game, as it becomes a test of skill depending only on where you place the pieces, not which pieces you get. Whoever places pieces the best should win.

If you prefer to allow luck to play a greater part, you can turn this option off.

For example, if one player gets first an S-piece, then a square, and then a line, all other players will also have had this sequence if fair mode is on. If it is not, they will probably not get the same (and almost certainly not over a long period).

This option does not increase network traffic, by the way, so feel free to use it without worrying about slowdown.

Gap in same place

All gaps in one 'batch' of lines - those that appear at the same time - will be lined up level to each other. However, different batches will have their gaps in different places. This makes it relatively easy to get the lines back, but not as easy as in manic mode...

Gap placed randomly

Explanation/overview

Even in one 'batch' of lines, the gaps in them will be placed differently when using this mode. This makes it very difficult to return lines you've been given.

Several gaps

<u>Explanation/overview</u>

In each line given you, there will be several gaps instead of just one (at random) which makes returning lines almost impossible.

Manic gaps!

<u>Explanation/overview</u>

All gaps in any lines given to you will be lined up level to each other. This makes it almost ridiculously easy to give them straight back, so things get rather manic sometimes. (Incidentally, this is the way it works on the Game Boy version.)

Gaps go where?

This set of options on the network options screen allows you to choose how the gaps are placed when lines are given to you in network mode. The lines appear at the bottom of the screen with gaps in (obviously, if they had no gaps in, they'd just disappear again). The placing of gaps is decided by one of these four options. Go back to the network options screen and click on an option for further information.

This setting is the same for all players in a game.

Lines to who?

When you get two, three, or four lines at once in network mode, one, two, or four lines will be added to the bottom of someone else's screen. You can't directly choose who, but you can choose how the *game* decides who. These three options determine this. For more information, please go back to the network options screen and click on an option.

This setting is the same for all players in a game. With only two players, this setting makes no difference, as all the options will have the same effect.

Lines to random player

<u>Explanation/overview</u>

In this mode, lines are given to a random player (but obviously not the person who cleared them in the first place).

Lines given in turn

<u>Explanation/overview</u>

In this mode, lines are given to each player in turn - i.e. if you are player 2 out of 4 players, the first time you get 2 or more lines at once they will go to player 3. The second time, to player 4. The third time, to player 1, and the fourth time, to player 3 again.

(Players are numbered in the order they appear in the <u>network options screen</u>, but this number is not important).

Chaos mode!

Explanation/overview

In this mode, lines are given to *every* other player at once. This makes things somewhat crazy, and with more than three experienced players or four novices, games tend to be *very* short. (But quite fun).

Player list

The player list shows all the players who will be in the game if you click <u>Play</u> now, including yourself. Before you do click play, ensure that everyone who should be in the game is listed.

If there are more players than will fit on the list, you should be able to scroll it to see the remainder. Please bear in mind that the game will not run with more than twenty players.

2-player indicator

This indicator appears only in two-player mode. The icon is meant to show two copies of Netris, linked to each other. On one player's screen, the left-hand copy will be highlighted - on the other, the right-hand copy. Left-hand and right-hand players have different sets of options, and to change which option set each copy of Tetris uses, you can click this button on either copy. This switches the two round. It does not work during play.

Two-player mode

Results dialog box

The results dialog box lets you know who is doing best in a series of games. It appears after each game, on the computers of all players, even if they are doing something else (i.e. having a one-player game).

Scores are ordered according to total score. To see who won the last game, check the 'Place' column, where lower numbers are better, or the 'Score' column, where higher numbers are better.

The highest score given is equal to the number of players minus one. In a four-player game, for example, the winner is given three points, second place gets two, third gets one, and the loser gets none.

All the scores are reset if players leave or join the game - i.e. each game must be played with exactly the same people, or scores will be reset. It isn't necessary to have the same person start the game each time, but whoever does start it should make doubly sure everyone is there before they click Play from the network options screen. Scores will also be lost if anyone quits and restarts their copy of Netris.

Two player mode

At the moment, there is an unresolved problem with two-player mode, although it still works. The readme.txt file may give more up-to-date information.

The problem is this:

- You can't load two copies of Netris on the same machine from the same file.

If you try, the application will give you a message to inform you of the problem.

I do not understand this problem, as you *can* run two copies of Netris from the same file but on different machines (i.e. across the network, using just one shared netris.exe), and you can also run two copies of Netris on the same machine but from different .exe files.

This is the workaround.

- Make a copy of netris.exe called netris2.exe
- If you use Program Manager, use File/New - Icon - and then Browse to find netris2.exe, so that you have two icons for Netris.
- In two player mode, load both copies by clicking on both icons. Rearrange them on the screen as suitable. If they have detected each others' presence, which they should have done, the two-player indicator will appear on each screen.

Two-player mode works almost exactly the same as network mode. However, there are some additional things you need to know.

- **Some settings are stored differently for left and right players**
  The settings for keyboard controls, network names, and network line and Tetris messages are saved separately. You can change which copy of Tetris uses which settings by clicking on the two-player indicator. These settings, if edited in two-player mode, will be saved as per usual when you quit.
  The settings for the left-hand player (the one with the coloured-in bit on the left of the indicator) are the usual (one player) settings. Settings for the right-hand player are used only in two-player mode.
  The 'thud' sound (when a piece hits) is also saved separately. This is so that, if your sound card supports stereo, you can make one player's thud sounds come from the left speaker and one from the right. You can use the sound effects dialog box to

achieve this - the provided sounds are called thud_l.wav and thud_r.wav.

- **Graphics palettes must match**
  You must ensure that either:
  a) one or both of you have solid-colour background pictures
  or b) you both have the same 256-colour background graphic
  or c) you're not running in 256-colour mode
  If all these rules are broken, the display on one screen will be in the wrong colours, because you only have 256 colours and 512 are necessary to display two pictures at once. (Other programs manage this more cleverly, but Netris doesn't).
  Graphics

- **Music will be controlled from one players**
  Music will be disabled on one player (the first to be loaded). If you want to change music, do so on the copy that's actually playing it! Sound effects still work on both copies.
  Music

How to register

Netris is not free software. If you enjoy playing it, you must register.

When you register, you get:
- A registration code to personalise your copy of Netris and remove the nag screens
- Information on where to find the latest version of Netris if there's a new one
- Information on other Software Forge products forthcoming
- An uplifting sense of moral goodness!

Seriously, *please* register. It's only a fiver, and I've spent hundreds of hours on this program. Your registration will encourage me to write more and better programs. And why not include your comments and (gulp) bug reports with your registration?

If you're in the UK
Send £5 cash (preferably)
or a £5 cheque payable to Samuel Marshall drawn on UK funds

If you're in the US or the rest of the world
Send $10 cash
or £5 UK sterling cash.

I cannot accept credit cards, or cheques drawn on non-UK funds

My address is
Samuel Marshall
31 Budebury Road
Staines
Middx
TW18 2AZ
United Kingdom

This address must be used for registrations, but for other purposes c<u>lick here for alternative contact methods</u>.

Why is it so cheap?
Simple. Even though I've spent hundreds of hours on this program, it's still a Tetris game. I think £10 would be the maximum possible price for a Tetris game, but as I want to see shareware work for me, I thought I'd pick the cheapest possible price so absolutely no-one has any possible excuse for not registering. If you think the game deserves more money, or you're rich enough, send more money. I won't complain!

To keep the price down to £5, I don't send out a disk when you register. This would cost me in money but mainly in time. Instead, you're given a special registration code that removes the nag screens. If you haven't registered, please don't bother trying to crack the code. Just register the program.

Why does it cost more in dollars?
I have to charge more, because I have to go down to the bank and change into pounds any money I get in dollars. $10 is also the next convenient denomination that's above £5. If you want to save money *and* do me a favour, change your dollars into English pounds sterling yourself.

Credits

Programming, game graphics, documentation:
Samuel Marshall

Assistance and advice
Joseph Marshall
Peter Marshall

Playtesting
Joseph Marshall
Matthew Barker
Russell Croxford
Graham Arden
Ian Thorne

Network test site
Spelthorne College

Thanks very much to everyone. And, hi! to all the GUS users out there, especially the demo and game coders.

Finally, a very special thanks to all the registered users. You people make shareware possible!

About the author

I'm Samuel Marshall, an experienced amateur programmer. This is my first Windows software release. Since the initial release of this program, I've also written a program for planning Underground journeys, and a program to store system exclusive setup data from MIDI keyboards. Both of these run in Windows and are available on CIX and probably wherever you got this, should you be interested.

Current plans for other programs include a pinball game (DOS, of course, for the full screen scrolling. I'd thought pinball games were pathetic, having seen Pinball Dreams 1, 2, etc, but then Epic Pinball came along...) and a music sequencer (Windows).

You can contact me at this address:
> **Samuel Marshall**
> **31 Budebury Road**
> **Staines**
> **Middx**
> **TW18 2AZ**
> **United Kingdom**

or by email care of Peter Marshall - write to
> **petermarshall@cix.compulink.co.uk**

and start your message with the line 'Sam,' or, 'To Samuel Marshall', or something similar.

Use this address for suggestions, bug reports - I'm particularly interested in *repeatable* bug reports - and comments. Use your computer's bit bucket device for complaints and nasty comments.

Shareware is software that's given away free on a trial basis. If you like the software, you register it. This usually enables extra features or removes screens which nag you to register. Netris uses the nag screen approach.

Registering is the act of paying for the shareware program. If you like this software, you must register it (by sending me some money!) See the appropriate help section for more details. Registering removes the 'nag screens' from the program.

Sound cards

To use the advanced features of Netris for Windows to the full, you need a sound card. This should be compatible with Windows so that it can play MIDI and WAV files. Netris uses the standard Windows methods to access a sound card, so anything with a Windows driver should do. DO NOT USE THE PC SPEAKER DRIVER! If you have this, turn sound off using the <u>Sound dialog box</u>.

If you don't have a sound card or are looking to upgrade, I recommend the Gravis UltraSound, which is available from about £95+vat. This card plays at 16-bit, 44khz, uses wavetable synthesis from 32 digital voices, and stores patches in its own RAM. Alternatively, the UltraSound Max (cheapest, about £150+vat) has a more advanced mixer, 16-bit recording, more memory fitted initially, and comes with the latest software to save you getting it from a BBS.

Avoid at all costs cards with FM synthesis (this sounds like bleeps instead of real instruments) like most basic Sound Blaster-compatibles. Wavetable synthesis is essential if you use MIDI or game soundtracks. If the card has RAM-based sounds, these can be changed easily so that you can make your own sounds to play music with, or load in other peoples'.

The Gravis cards are, in my opinion, the best for the price. They emulate Sound Blaster with reasonable success, and also the combination of Roland SCC-1 plus Sound Blaster at the same time (works with most programs that do not use 386 extenders, sounds absolutely stunning with X-Wing). In addition, shareware like Doom, Epic Pinball, and Zone 66, almost all graphical demos, and many commercial games support the GUS in its native mode for superb sound quality. Even if games didnt ship with specific GUS support, there are many 'back patches' to fix them. For instance, all Sierra's games since KQ6 have specific GUS drivers available. There are drivers for Pinball Dreams (not that youd want to buy it, with Epic Pinball available), all games that use AIL sound drivers, etc.

GUS also has 3D sound. Take it from me, Doom on a GUS is a million times better than on anything else, even AWE32.

If you're a programmer, you'll be interested to know that programming information and libraries are available free of charge from BBS and on-line services, unlike many other cards.

Why are the sounds of low quality?

The sounds were all recorded using the Gravis UltraSound sound card. They were made using the card's MIDI facilities, which produce crisp and clear CD-quality sound, and the quality was great when I played them, with zero detectable noise.

However, ever since a faxmodem was installed in the next slot of the computer, we've had problems with the GUS recording quality due to the interference (playback is still crystal clear).

If you have an SBPro or similar sound card, it probably has inbuilt filters to make up for the card's poor output quality (you can control them from the mixer). You might not even notice the noise in the samples, because this may have been cut out along with all the other high-ish frequencies. For those of us with a better output and less filtering, though, I've removed high frequencies from some of the sounds myself.

Sorry about this, but I can't remove the fax just to make some sound effects!

(By the way, you may not like the sounds I've made. Nor do I, in most cases. Therefore, you'd be well advised to sort yourself out with Darth Vader, Terminator, various applause samples, cow moos, etc to personalise and improve your version.)

Problems with music

There are a few minor problems with the music routines. These are mainly due to a workround I've done to avoid a difficulty in some Windows MIDI drivers. This problem means that you can't load a new MIDI file at the same time as a sound is playing.

To get around this, I've made the MIDI routines wait until sound effects are not being played before trying to start the music. This means the music will not start until the 'game start' effect has finished.

If you have a GUS, or another patch cacheing soundcard (patch cacheing is the way cards like the GUS, with 256k to 1Mb RAM, use better instrument sounds than ROM-based cards with 1Mb ROM. The sounds - about 6Mb - are stored on disk and loaded when needed) there will be a delay of a few seconds at this point while patches are loaded.

If this irritates you, you can turn off the 'game start' effect by using the <u>sound effects</u> dialog box, clicking in the edit box next to the 'game start' button, and deleting the filename or specifying one which doesn't exist.

In case you're interested, the bug is caused by a DMA conflict between WAV playback and the patch transfer. No solution is possible, therefore, unless your WAV playback and patch playback DMA channels are different. This may happen with Ultrasound Max, Im not sure.