Online Help for

Contents

Introduction

The Basics
How to Play A Game
Scoring
Controls
Two-Player Games
Variations

Customizing Bricklayer
Game Preferences
Changing Background Graphics
Changing Piece Graphics
Changing Pit Modules
Changing Music Modules
Music and Sound Options

General
Whats new in version 2.1 ?
Registering this Software
Registration Form
Ordering the Bonus Disk Set
Comments
Troubleshooting

Introduction

Welcome to Bricklayer, the fast-paced falling blocks game!

Bricklayer is a fast-paced falling-blocks game with 256-color graphics, sound effects, and background music which add a pleasant twist to an apparently common game.

The rules of Bricklayer are simple.   Oddly-shaped blocks appear at the top of the pit and drop toward the bottom.   When a block reaches the bottom, it stops moving and a new block appears at the top.   When blocks are dropping, they may be rotated or moved left or right.   By manipulating blocks as they fall, you can control the place and orientation in which they land.   The object of the game is to drop blocks so that they completely fill horizontal rows of the pit.   When a horizontal row is completely filled with no gaps, it will disappear and the blocks in the rows above will drop down to take their place.   The game ends when the pit is entirely filled with blocks, so the more rows you clear, the more pieces you'll have room for, and the longer you'll be able to play.

Bricklayer 2.0 introduced two variations on these standard rules: heavy blocks and decaying pieces.

System Requirements

Bricklayer has been beta tested on i386, i486, and Pentium systems with 4-16MB of memory.   The memory requirements may be quite steep because Bricklayer needs to load close to 1MB of music files.   To enjoy the background music and sound effects, you will need to have a sound card with wave playing ability supported by Windows (such as Microsoft Sound System or Creative Labs Sound Blaster compatibles).

See troubleshooting for advice with common problems.

Related Topics:
> How to play a Game
> Controls
> Scoring
> AutoPlay

Scoring

score

You receive points for dropping
pieces, and for clearing rows.

The number of points you receive for clearing a row increases if you clear more rows at once.   The first row eliminated by dropping a block is worth 100 points.   If dropping the block eliminates two rows, you receive 100 for the first row and 200 for the second, for a total of 300 points.   The third row is worth 300 points, and the fourth 400, so if you eliminate four rows with the placement of a single block, you are awarded 1000 (100+200+300+400) points.   This makes eliminating two or more rows simultaneously more advantageous than eliminating them one at a time.   You also receive 1 point for each row that a block falls when you drop it.   In addition, there are ways of scoring large bonuses by making special plays, but you'll have to discover them for yourself!

Related Topics:

How to Play A Game

To quickly get started, select *Begin Game* from the *File* menu, or just use the key sequence Control-B.   If you are just starting out, you will begin playing on Level 1. Use the default J, K, and L keys to move the falling block left, rotate it, or move it right, respectively.   To drop the block, press the SPACE key.   You can change the key bindings for these actions by selecting the <u>*Change Controls*</u> option from the *Options* menu.

To play a <u>two-player game</u>, select *Two Player Game* from the *File* menu.   To play a two-player game against a computer opponent, select *Play Against Computer* from the *File* menu.
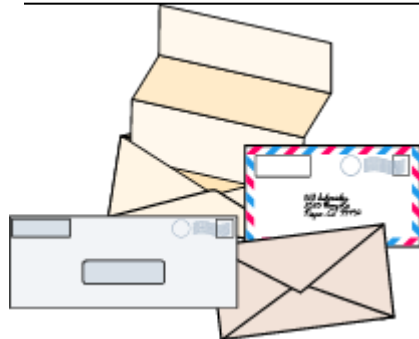
Related Topics:
> <u>Controls</u>
> <u>Scoring</u>
> <u>AutoPlay</u>

Registering

Bricklayer is $10 shareware and free for those people who've paid for previous versions. Registered users may order a *Bonus Disk Set* either at the time of registration, or at a later date. CompuServe users may register electronically and get their codes by email!

If you enjoy and play Bricklayer, *please* send in the $10 shareware fee.
It is not very much compared to the cost of a commercial game, and it motivates me to keep improving Bricklayer as well as to work on new games.   If you play, please pay.   Upgrades to new versions of Bricklayer are always free for registered users. Those who register will also be kept informed of new version releases, as well as the releases of any new products.

To register Bricklayer, please either

- **send a US$10 check** payable to Yevgeny Gurevich to the address listed below.   If you live outside of the U.S., please send an international money order (preferred) or cash, since checks drawn on foreign banks are sometimes difficult to clear.
- **use the Software Registration option in CompuServe**: `GO  SWREG` and register Bricklayer - registration id #4732.   Users who use SWREG will receive their registration codes by email.

Click **here** to view the registration form (select File/Print to print it).

Site licenses are available - please contact me for more details.

post:	**Yevgeny Gurevich**
	Vanilla-Extract Software
	P.O. Box 391
	Falls Church, VA 22040-0391
	U.S.A.
America Online:	`Yevg`
Internet email:	`yevg@aol.com`
CompuServe:	`76101,2317`

For fast response, request to have the code mailed to you electronically.

Once you have registered, you will receive *registration information*, containing your **registration name** and **registration code**.   Once you have the registration information, you should enter it into the game.   There are two ways to perform this

step: select *Register* from the opening shareware notice window, or select the *Register* menu item from the *Help* menu once you see the main game window.

A box asking for your registration name and code will appear.   Enter your name and code exactly as they appear in your registration information (mailed to you after reception of your registration fee.)   If the code is correct, you will be notified immediately that the game has been registered.   From that point on, registration notices will no longer appear, and your copy will be clearly identified as registered to your or your organization.   You may opt to remove the *Registered To:* information from the bottom of the game window through the preferences dialog box.

You may be interested in ordering the Bonus Disk Set.

_____
Related Topics:
        Whats new in version 2.0

Bricklayer32 for Windows v2.1a Registration Form

```
[Name]
Title          _____
Last Name      _____
First Name     _____        Initial __

[Address]
if USA:
    Address      _____
    City         _____
    State, Zip   __    _____-____
_____
if Outside USA:
        Address _____
                _____
                _____
                _____
        Country _____
_____
email address  _____
Would you like to be notified about
new products/releases via email ?  [ ] Yes        [ ] No
```

```
[Additional Information]
Where did you find Bricklayer ?
[] Internet (FTP/WWW/Gopher)        [] Online Service
[] BBS                              [] Friend
[] Software club                    [] store-bought CD
[] book CD                          [] Other
```

Pricing Information

Description	Qty	Unit Price	Total
Single-User Registration		$10.00	
Additional Single-User License		$ 5.00	
10-machine site license		$50.00	
25-machine site license		$100.00	
Unlimited site license		$150.00	
Latest Version on disk		$ 3.50*	
Bonus Disk Set of Music and Graphics		$10.00*	
(includes latest version)			
Total Enclosed:			

```
----------------------------------------------------------------
* Only registered users or users registering with this order are eligible
  to purchase disk sets.  Price includes media and shipping charges.

Thank you for registering Bricklayer32 for Windows v2.1a!
Please send US$10 for each copy of Bricklayer to be registered to:
    Yevgeny Gurevich
    Vanilla Extract Software
    P.O. Box 391
    Falls Church, VA 22040-0391
    USA
```

AutoPlay

The AutoPlay feature lets the computer play a game of Bricklayer.   The computer plays at two levels of intelligence - Quick n Dirty and Deep Thought.

The fast player thinks quickly but is not as good at playing the game as the slower and smarter player, which uses the Next Piece for lookahead.   On systems like i486DX2-66's, the smart player is faster than the dumb player on an i486SX-33.

Related Topics:
    None

Bonus Disk Set

The Bonus Disk Set is a collection of music and graphics files to make Bricklayer even more varied and exciting.   The disk set contains the latest version of Bricklayer, and additional disks, consisting of 5 original music compositions, 3 to 4 background graphics modules, half a dozen new piece graphics designs, and several pit graphics.

This disk set is only available to registered Bricklayer users.

You may order the disk set together with your registration, or may do so separetely at a later time.   Users who have registered previous versions of Bricklayer are welcome to purchase it.

The price is *just $10.00* which already includes the shipping and media costs.

Please specify that you are ordering the Bonus Disk Set for Bricklayer32, as music and graphics modules are not interchangeable between Bricklayer and Bricklayer32.

Related Topics:
  <u>Registering</u>

Whats new in version 2.0 ?

Version 2.0 of Bricklayer
introduces a host of new features
and improves the user interface.

- This version of Bricklayer has support for selecting entire directories of graphics modules at a time.   Pit graphics are changed once per level, while backgrounds and piece graphics are changed once per game.   These options are available through the preferences dialog box, and by right-clicking to get a **Properties** menu (see next item).
- Graphics modules can now be selected simply by right-clicking in the main game window!   Right-click in the pit to change pit graphics, right-click on a piece inside the pit to change piece graphics, or right-click outside of the pit over the background to change background graphics.   The list of available files is taken from the directory where the currently-selected graphic resides.   Most likely, this is the directory where Bricklayer is installed. You can select individual files or the entire directory.   If you select the directory, you can opt to have sequential selection of files (default) or select Randomize Directory to have Bricklayer choose modules at random.
- Joystick support has been added to Bricklayer.   The *Change Controls* menu option may be used to select joystick versus keyboard input.
- Two-player mode has been added!   You can now play Bricklayer against a human or computer   opponent.   More details are provided in the two-player page.
- Two new variations on the game have been added: heavy blocks and decaying pieces.
- The high-scores table has been expanded with room for 15 names, and now includes the number of rows cleared as well as the game playing date.   There are separate high-scores tables for single-player and two-player games.

New in Version 2.1a
- You can now use the numeric keypad keys and arrow keys in specifying game controls for the keyboard.   This allows you to use virtually any key on the keyboard to control pieces.
- Double-Sized blocks has been replaced with a general Block-Size slider.   You can select to play with normal-size pieces, and pieces which are 25%, 50%, 75%, or 100% larger.   100% is equivalent to double-size blocks in versions 2.0b and earlier.
- The size of the game pit can be changed with sliders.   You can change the number of rows and columns in the game pit independently.   The default values are 10 columns by 20 rows.
- Your high scores can be uploaded to the Microsoft Kids Space.   When you enable this option in the game Preferences, Bricklayer32 will attempt to contact the space and send your high scores (or they may be sent later if you are not logged on).   You can view your current space high scores by selecting Game Space High Scores from the Options menu.   Only scores from default games (no decaying pieces or heavy blocks enabled , and a pit size of 10 by 20) will be eligible for uploads.

Related Topics:
      <u>Registering Bricklayer</u>

Changing Background Graphics

Background graphics are bitmaps which are tiled in the main game window, usually different for each level in the game.   You may select alternate graphics modules in the Graphics sheet of the <u>preferences</u> dialog box, or by right-clicking on the main game window background to bring up the **Background Properties** menu.

You can select a file or an entire directory of modules.   If you select a directory, Bricklayer will select a new backgrounds module each time you start a new game.   By default, Bricklayer will cycle through the modules sequentially.   You can also direct Bricklayer to select modules randomly by selecting *Randomize Directory* from the background properties menu.

Once a new module is selected, it is loaded instantly and loads by default the next time that Bricklayer is executed.

If you are selecting alternate graphics modules by selecting *Browse* from the Graphics sheet of the preferences dialog box, the File-Open dialog box may not show the drive where Bricklayer is installed.   In this case, you will need to change to the directory where the alternate graphics modules are installed.

Related Topics:
<u>Changing Piece Graphics</u>
<u>Changing Music Modules</u>   <u>Changing Pit Modules</u>

Changing Pit Graphics

Pit graphics are bitmaps which are drawn over the black pit area of the game.   By default, no graphics are shown to improve game performance.   You may select graphics modules to be drawn in the pit area (and enable them being shown) from the Graphics sheet of the <u>preferences</u> dialog box, or by right-clicking on the game pit to bring up the **Pit Properties** menu.

You can select a file or an entire directory of modules.   If you select a directory, Bricklayer will select a new pit module each time you start a new game.   By default, Bricklayer will cycle through the modules sequentially.   You can also direct Bricklayer to select modules randomly by selecting *Randomize Directory* from the pit properties menu.

Once a new module is selected, it is loaded instantly and loads by default the next time that Bricklayer is executed.

Make sure to enable the drawing of the graphics by selecting the *Show Pit Graphic* checkbox in the Graphics sheet of the Preferences dialog box, or by selecting *Show Pit Graphic* from the pit properties menu.   Once this option is enabled, all future games will use pit graphics.

New to version 2.0 are *multipit modules*.   These modules are similar to normal pit graphics, except that there are several graphics grouped into a single file.   As you play a game which uses a multipit module, a new graphic starts to inch its way up the game board to replace the previous graphic, controlled by the number of rows that you clear.

Please note that when playing with larger than normal blocks, the game performance will suffer heavily.

Related Topics:

Changing Music Modules

Music modules are used as the source of the music which plays in the background during a Bricklayer game. You may select alternate music modules from the Music sheet of the Preferences dialog box.

Once a new module is selected, it is loaded instantly and loads by default the next time that Bricklayer is executed.

The easiest way to select alternate music modules is to click on the Browse button in the Music sheet of the Preferences dialog box and double click on available `.BM2` files. If the File-Open dialog box does not show the drive where Bricklayer is installed, you will need to change to the directory to one where the alternate music modules are installed.

> Artists or programers may contact me for specification of the .BM2 file format so that they may develop third-party music modules for use with the game.   If you would like to have your music included in future distributions or bonus disk sets, please contact me.   Please ONLY send material which you have rights to distribute.

Related Topics:

Changing Piece Graphics

Piece graphics are the little bitmaps which are drawn to represent each of the seven colored pieces in Bricklayer. You may select alternate graphics modules in the Graphics sheet of the <u>preferences</u> dialog box, or by right-clicking on the main game window background to bring up the **Piece Properties** menu.

You can select an file or an entire directory of modules.   If you select a directory, Bricklayer will select a new piece module each time you start a new game.   By default, Bricklayer will cycle through the modules sequentially.   You can also direct Bricklayer to select modules randomly by selecting *Randomize Directory* from the piece properties menu.

Once a new module is selected, it is loaded instantly, and loads by default the next time that Bricklayer is executed.

Related Topics:
       <u>Changing Background Graphics</u>
       <u>Changing Music Modules</u>
       <u>Changing Pit Modules</u>

Music and Sound

Bricklayer contains terrific sound effects and background music.   Through the Options menu, you can elect to hear just the background music, just sound effects, or both.

Sound effects and background music can be individually toggled using the *Music* and *Sound Effects* menu items in the *Options* menu.   A check mark next to each of the items means that it is active for the current and all following games.

Control over whether background music and sound effects are loaded each time Bricklayer is executed is handled by the *Load Music* check box in the Music sheet of the *Preferences* dialog box.   For users who do not have wave-output sound support, the *Load Music* option can be deselected (no check mark).   This will prevent Bricklayer from loading the background music and speed the total load time.   All sound and music options will be disabled for future loads as well.   This option may be checked off to enable loading music at any time.

Wave Mixing
This version of Bricklayer32, 2.1A, uses the Microsoft DirectSound library.   You must have DirectX installed for the music and sound to work.   DirectX can be installed from DirectX distributions with the `DXSETUP.EXE` program.

The music `.WAV` files and `.BM2` modules are Copyright Opinicus Microtechnologies, and may be freely distributed only as part of the Bricklayer32 for Windows game for use by the Bricklayer32 program.   See the distribution information for more details.

Related Topics:
        Changing Music Modules

Controls

Bricklayer may be played using keyboard controls or a joystick.   The default are keyboard controls shown below:

j	Move Left
k	Rotate
l	Move Right
SPACE	Drop
a	Push Down

The numeric keypad keys are always active as control keys in addition to any user-selectable settings.   On the numeric keypad, the 4, 5, 6, and 0 act the same as the j, k, l, and space.

Keyboard control is customizable with the *Change Controls* item in the *Options* menu. When you select *Change Controls* a dialog box lets you select the player for whom you are changing the controls, and the type of control (keyboard or joystick) that player will use.   For single-player games, the controls for Player 1 are used.

If you select Keyboard controls, five edit fields allow you to edit the keys that will be used to control the pieces.   These keys are saved in the Bricklayer preferences file and are active in the current game of Bricklayer, and all future games as well.   In addition to the alphanumeric keys, you can specify the cursor four keys, nine numeric keyad keys, or the special insert/delete/home/end/pageup/pagedown keys. Controls may be identical for both players in a two-player game.

If joystick controls is selected, you should select the *Calibrate Joystick* button to calibrate your joystick for use with Bricklayer.   Joystick control of pieces is as follows:
> Move the piece left or right by moving the joystick left or right.
> Rotate a piece by pressing button #1 on your joystick.
> Drop a piece of pressing button #2 on your joystick.
> Push a piece by moving the joystick down.

Related Topics:
> <u>How To Play A Game</u>
> <u>Scoring</u>

Comments, Suggestions, Bug Reports

I look forward to hearing from you.   If you encounter problems while playing Bricklayer, I would appreciate any information that you can provide, such as your system configuration and a detailed description of the problem.   Suggestions for improvements are also welcome.

Send email to
         `yevg@aol.com`
or, via CompuServe to
         `76101,2317`

Bricklayer Preferences

Bricklayer has many options which you can set to customize the game to fit your taste. Select *Preferences* from the O*ptions* menu.   A preferences properties dialog box appears with tabs for different sheets.   Click on the tabs to select among general options, graphics options, and music options. Sheets contain check boxes to toggle system settings, and Browse buttons to select alternate graphics and music files.   The options available through these sheets are summarized below:

Fast Left/Right Motion   If this option is on, holding down the move left or right key continuously will move pieces faster.

Pause on Lose Focus   If this option is on, the game automatically pauses when you switch from Bricklayer to another program or window. With this option off, the game continues even if you move on to another program.   Unselecting this option is useful if you want to see the computer play in the background. The music will not play once you switch from Bricklayer so as not to hog the sound resources.

Force 16-Color Mode   On some 16-color-only systems may speed up the game.

Load Music on startup   By default this option is on and tells Bricklayer to load music files each time the program is loaded.   Setting this option off will prevent music from being loaded, speeding load time but preventing you from listening to the background music.

Blocks Size   Specifies the size of the game blocks and the corresponding game window.   The slider ranges from normal to 25%, 50%, 75%, and 100% (double size) larger. The game window will be scaled according to this setting. If the game window will be larger than can be displayed on your system, a warning dialog box will come up, letting you cancel the size-change.   Larger blocks and gameboards are useful for systems with high-resolution displays. Theyre easier for some children to play with as well.

Remove Notice   Gets rid of the Registered To: information box at the bottom of the game window, if checked.

Show Pit Graphic   Enables the display of the pit graphic over the black game board.   When double-size blocks are also enabled, using this feature on will heavily impact the performance.

Columns   Specifies the number of columns in game pit.   The default
                               number of columns is 10.

Rows   Specifies the number of rows in game pit.   The default
                               number of rows is 20.

The input box in the General sheet allows you to enter how many levels of debris are
placed on the screen at the start of each game.   You can challenge yourself or the
computer by increasing the debris.

The Music, Background Graphics, Pit Graphics, and Piece Graphics **browse** buttons
allow you to select alternate music and graphics modules.   Just click on the appropriate
browse button to get a listing of available files.

Related Topics:
        Changing Background Graphics
        Changing Piece Graphics
        Changing Pit Modules
        Music and Sound Options

Variations

Bricklayer 2.0 includes two variations on the standard game - **heavy blocks** and **decaying blocks**.   You can select either of these variants by selecting the entries in the *Variations* submenu of the *Options* menu.   If you get a high score while playing a variation game (as opposed to the standard game) your high-score entry will be marked with an asterisk (*) to denote the fact that it was a variation game.

Heavy Blocks

Some pieces that drop from the top of the screen are outlined and consist of heavy blocks.   If a heavy block lands on a stack of other blocks, it will push the entire stack of blocks down by one square, if the stack is sitting atop an empty square.

Decaying Blocks

As you stack more and more rows without clearing them, blocks begin to disappear (decay) from the board.   To stop this decay, you must clear a row where the last block that had decayed, or drop a piece on top of a space where the last block had decayed.

Two-Player Games

Bricklayer 2.0 allows two-players to play a game together.   Select `Begin Two Player Game` from the `File` menu.   Players take turns on the same gameboard. Scoring is just as it is for single-player games, except that separate scores and number of rows cleared are kept track for each player.   At the end of the game, either or both players may earn high scores.   High scores for two player games are kept separate from single-player games.

Players may use the same keyboard bindings for movement, or use different controls. They may even have one player use a joystick while the other uses a keyboard.   See Controls for instructions on how to modify keyboard and joystick settings.

A human player can also elect to compete against the computer.   Select `Play Against Computer` from the `File` menu.   The human player alternates controlling pieces with the computer.   Scoring is just like it is for two-player games.   In the high-scores table, entries for players which competed against the computer are marked with a `C`.

Common Problems and Solutions

Due to rather steep memory and processor requirements, some users may experience problems starting, or playing with Bricklayer.   This section details some common problems and their solutions:

Bricklayer won't start up

Often due to insufficient memory or incompatibilities with sound hardware.

Try creating a file called `BRICK32.INI` in your `WINDOWS` directory and putting the following lines there:

```
[Settings]
LoadMusic=0
```

This will force Bricklayer to ignore the music and sound settings and not load any music files.   You will be able to play, but will have no music or sound effects.

Background music stops playing during the game

Some problems involved with mixing the sound effects and background music result in the background music sometimes stopping after a few minutes of playing.   You have several options.

- If you select to have music but no sound effects, this problem does not seem to occur.
- You may press the `TAB` key to restart the music during play.

Game seems extremely slow

On some slower computers, the processing needed to play the background music and sound effects becomes the major time sink.

Try unchecking the music and/or sound options.   Without background music, the game will feel snappier on slower computers.

Audible clicks when pieces drop

The sound mixing is done in software and is not perfect.   Some audible clicks may be heard when pieces drop and background music is on.   This is especially evident when using AutoPlay.

If you like the background music, getting rid of the sound effects by unselecting them from the options menu will make the music sound much smoother.   If you value the sound effects more, try unselecting the music option.   The clicks will be less evident.

Make sure that your soundcard is supported by DirectSound for optimal performance.