

TileFall

Adam Dawes

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COLLABORATORS

	<i>TITLE :</i> TileFall		
<i>ACTION</i>	<i>NAME</i>	<i>DATE</i>	<i>SIGNATURE</i>
WRITTEN BY	Adam Dawes	July 22, 2022	

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Chapter 1

TileFall

1.1 Tile Fall

Tile Fall v1.5

by Adam Dawes

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How to play Tile Fall

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1.2 How to play Tile Fall

Tile Fall is a deceptively simple game. It looks so simplistic, ↔
yet after

playing it for a while you'll find that there's more to it than meets the eye. It's also worryingly addictive. ;)

The object of the game is to remove as many tiles from the playing area as possible. As you move the mouse over the tiles, connected groups of the same tile will become highlighted. All the highlighted tiles will be removed when you click the mouse button.

The main strategy of the game is to remove as many tiles in a single group as you possible can. The scoring system dramatically rewards you when you remove large numbers of tiles at once. Small number of tiles will score very little.

As tiles are removed, tiles above will fall down to fill the space left. If you manage to remove all the tiles from a column, the tiles to the right will be pushed over to join with the remaining tiles.

The game continues until there aren't any sets of 2 or more tiles of the same type left in the game.

You can set Tile Fall to use from 2 to 5 tiles on the game area, and set the area size (small, medium or large). The more tiles you have in play, the more difficult the game is (it's very shallow with just 2 tiles, 4 and 5 tiles start to make it interesting). For a quicker game, select one of the smaller game sizes.

Each of the combinations of game size and numbers of tiles has its own high score table. So there are 12 high score tables in total: small game with 2 types of tile, small game with 3 types of tile, etc.etc. You will automatically have high scores added to the appropriate table, and if you select to view the high scores, you'll see the table for the currently selected game combination. High scores are automatically saved to disk.

If you get bored with the coloured bass-relief tile graphics, you'll be pleased to know that you can change them! Pick the "Select Tile Set..." option from the Settings menu, and you'll see a number of other tile graphic sets. Selecting one will allow you to continue with new graphics.

It's actually very easy to design tile graphic sets of your own! If you produce any you're proud of, remember to send them to me, and I'll include them in the next release of Tile Fall!

1.3 Scoring

The scoring system may at first seem complicated, but it's really very easy..

Tile Fall first subtracts 2 from the number of tiles removed in a single click. It then squares the result and adds it to your score. So:

Tiles removed	Points scored
2	0 (!)
3	1
4	4
5	9
6	16
7	25
8	36
9	47
10	64
...	...

As you can see, adding just a single tile to the number removed in one click significantly increases the score gained from the tiles. So try to remove as many tiles in one go as you can! Also note that removing a group of 2 tiles doesn't actually score any points at all. If you can avoid removing groups of 2, then try to do so...

While you are playing, Tile Fall will display the value of the currently highlighted blocks on the status line at the bottom of the screen. You can use this to see how much the tiles are actually worth before you remove them from the game.

When the game is finished, some other adjustments are made to calculate your final score. The number of tiles left is subtracted from your score. If you managed to clear **all** the tiles, you'll get a 1000 point bonus.

1.4 High Scores

Tile Fall automatically keeps track of all your high scores whilst you are playing. If a group of people are playing separately, it is nice to be able to get all your high scores on to a single table -- then you really know what scores you have to beat!

The "Merge High Scores..." option in the Game menu allows you to do just that. Select the menu item, and then pick the **other** high score file in the file requester. All the scores in this file will then be added to your own `TileFall.scores` file.

When Tile Fall is merging these files together, it will not add an entry if it is identical to an existing entry (ie, the name and score are exactly the same). This has two advantages; firstly if you accidentally merge your own high score file with itself, nothing will happen (you won't get all the entries duplicated). Secondly, if you merge high scores with a friend, and then wish to merge scores again at a later date, your scores will not end up in the tables multiple times.

As there are 12 high score tables in Tile Fall (one for each of the possible combinations of board size and number of tiles), these 12 tables will be individually merged together to form 12 updated tables. When merging is finished, the new high score file will be saved, as normal, to Tile Fall's directory with the filename `TileFall.scores`.

You can also print your highscore tables using the "Print High Scores..." option. This can be set to print to either the printer or a file. The printed scores will show all the possible high score tables, so it's great to use after you've merged some high score tables together in order to see who's on top of each table!

1.5 Using and creating tile sets

You can change the graphics Tile Fall uses by choosing "Select Tile Set..." from the Settings menu. A number of tile sets are provided with Tile Fall, but it's extremely easy to create tile sets of your own!

The tiles are stored as normal IFF graphic files, so load one of the existing tile sets in to an art package and you'll see how they fit together.

Once you've saved your tiles, try loading them in to Tile Fall and see how they look. Once you've created (and tested!) some nice tiles, why not email them to me? I'll include them in the next release of Tile Fall, and I'll credit you as the author.

Standard Tile Sets

Each tile is exactly 40 pixels wide and 20 pixels high (to be displayed in a hires-nonlace screenmode, thus making the tiles roughly square). A tile set has 5 tiles in total, each in an "unselected" and a "selected" position. The tiles are to be arranged vertically, each touching the ones above and below, alternating between the unselected and selected graphics. The existing tile files should make this all very clear.

The tiles must be drawn using an 8 colour palette. The first 4 colours in the palette are fixed as grey, black, white and blue. If you change these colours in your tile files, they will be overwritten with the fixed colours when loaded in to Tile Fall. The remaining 4 colours, however, are free for you to set however you wish. Tile Fall will pick up the correct colours when the tile set is loaded.

When you have designed some new tiles, you must save them as a brush. The brush must be exactly 40 pixels wide and 200 pixels high (which is precisely the right size to encompass all the tiles). If the IFF file saved doesn't match these dimensions, the graphic will appear corrupted in Tile Fall.

Extended Tile Sets

New with release 1.4 of Tile Fall are extended tile sets. These use a different graphic for each tile, depending upon which other tiles it is touching. With extended tile sets, you can make tiles that truly join together with the surrounding tiles of the same type. For some examples of this at work, see the ColourBlockTiles or one of the ConnectedTiles tile sets.

Extended tiles are rather more complicated to create, but are usually worth the effort. Each tile set consists of 10 rows of tiles (5 different colours, each of which is in a selected and unselected state). Each row consists of 16 individual tiles (40*20 pixels, as described above), arranged according to which other tiles it touches.

The order of these 16 tiles are as follows:

N A R AR B AB RB ARB L AL LR LAR LB LAB LRB LARB

Key: N = touching no other tiles
A = touching tiles above
R = touching tiles to the right
B = touching tiles below
L = touching tiles to the left

If this sounds complicated, try viewing some of the extended tile sets in an art package. The Connections1Tiles probably show this most clearly.

To create your own extended tile sets, draw the tiles as described here and demonstrated in the existing extended tile sets. You then need to save the tiles as an IFF picture, with dimensions of exactly 640 pixels wide and 200 pixels high. If the IFF picture does not have these coordinates, Tile Fall will not recognise the file as an extended tile set, and the graphics will appear corrupted.

The same restrictions on palette depth and colours apply as with the standard tile sets, described above.

1.6 Installation

Tile Fall does not require installation as such, it's written to be run directly from anywhere you should happen to put it. To install it somewhere other than where it has been unarchived, just copy all the files to a new directory and run the program from there.

The only files that need to be separately installed are the three libraries that Tile Fall needs: iff.library, config.library and reqtools.library. Copy these from the Libs/ directory of the game distribution to your LIBS: directory before starting the game.

This version of Tile Fall is compatible with the highscore files from all previous versions of Tile Fall. To continue adding to your existing highscores, just copy your old TileFall.scores file to the Tile Fall directory.

Finally, if you wish to use the MagicWB icons, which are supplied in the MagicWB/ directory, copy them over the normal game icons. There are two icons supplied: one for the game directory, and another for the game itself.

1.7 System Requirements

Tile Fall should run on any Amiga with KickStart 2.04 or above. It is completely system friendly, and so should run on any chipset, AGA or otherwise.

In addition to the program you will also need `iff.library`, `config.library` and `reqtools.library`. These are supplied with Tile Fall in the `Libs/` directory, and should be copied to `LIBS:` before Tile Fall is run.

1.8 Legal stuff...

I will not accept responsibility for any damage done to your system, or data lost, directly or indirectly, as a result from using this program or any of its associated files. You use the program entirely at your own risk. Of course if you *do* experience problems then I'll do what I can to sort them out, and please let me know so that I can try to cure them in a future release.

Tile Fall and its associated files are not public domain. They may be distributed freely as long as no unreasonable charge is imposed. They may not be included within any commercial package without express written permission from the author; the exceptions from this are the AmiNet CDs and Fred Fish's collections.

1.9 History/Future

v1.01 (17.1.97)

Initial public release.

v1.2 (1.2.97)

When Tile Fall's screen is deactivated, any tiles currently highlighted will now be deselected. This means that when you return to the game, it won't remove the selected tiles without you wanting them removed.

Bug fix: starting Tile Fall when using one of the `MULTISCAN:Productivity` screenmodes will no longer result in a system crash or incorrectly sized screen.

Tile Fall is now font-sensitive, and should look correct with non-8pt fonts. If anyone finds a section that looks wrong at a particular font size, please let me know what's wrong and what font size breaks it.

Your settings (board size, number of tiles and your name for the highscore table) are now automatically remembered when you quit the game, and will be used when the game is next started.

New tile sets: `BulbTiles` and `MusicTiles`.

v1.3 (7.2.97)

"Merge High Scores..." option allows highscore tables to be joined together in to one single file. If your friends are playing Tile Fall too, now's your chance to get really competitive. :) See the section on merging high scores for more information on how this option works.

Added "Undo Last Move" menu option. This (by design) only allows you to undo a single move, so you still have to be careful not to make mistakes!

Value of currently selected blocks are now shown on the status line, so that their score can be seen before the blocks are actually removed.

Added "Iconify" function.

Added an inset border around the playing area.

Settings menu now contains a "Screen Mode..." option. If Tile Fall has not been told any specific screenmode, it will copy the screenmode used by the Workbench screen. If a screenmode has been set via this menu item, it will use that mode each time it starts instead.

All requesters now use reqtools.library instead of asl.library.

Added new soundfx for the Undo function, and for when a highscore is achieved.

New tile sets: BoulderDashTiles, DitherTiles, SimpsonsTiles and SpaceTiles.

v1.4 (17.2.97)

Added support for extended tile sets! These use different graphics for each tile depending on which other tiles surround it. Now it is possible to have tiles that completely join with their neighbours! Try some of the new tilesets supplied with this version to see this feature in operation.

"Print High Scores..." option allows printing of all high score tables to a file or a printer.

Switch to turn soundeffects on and off. The game plays *significantly* faster with the soundeffects off.

Fixed stupid memory allocation bug; Tile Fall wasn't releasing graphics memory for tiles each time a new tileset was selected.

Added MagicWB icons for the game and directory.

New tile sets: BlobTiles, ColourBlockTiles, ConfusionTiles, Connections1Tiles, Connections2Tiles, Connections3Tiles, DiskTiles, and RoadTiles.

v1.5 (8.3.97)

Tile Fall now remembers which tile set you were using, and will restore the last used set each time you start the game.

After merging high scores, information is available about the scores that were added. You will initially be told how many new scores were merged, and can optionally be shown the number added to each individual board.

Game boards with only a single one of a particular colour of tile will no longer be generated. This makes it potentially possible to completely clear any board that is created.

Clicking in the Game Over/Final Score window will now **immediately** close it and move on to the highscore table, meaning less delay between games.

Changed startup screenmode selection code. Now the game will default to a normal PAL or NTSC HighRes screen if no screenmode has previously been selected.

High score merging function now performs some validation checks on the selected file, to ensure that it really **is** a highscore file.

"Merge High Scores..." requester now defaults to a pattern of "TileFall.scores#?" (so any files beginning "TileFall.scores" will be visible), and the pattern gadget is enabled so that the pattern can be changed.

Removed need to open maths libraries.

New tile sets: SmileyTiles.

If you have any ideas for future releases, please let me know!

1.10 Acknowledgements

My thanks to the guys at Darkside BBS who helped me test Tile Fall and suggested numerous ideas for improvements:

Peter Hughes
Lars Janssen
Matt Kille
Richard Pearce

Huge thanks in the direction of Nick Waterman, for creating and maintaining the Tile Fall mailing list.

Thanks also for tile set designs to: Lars Janssen (Dice, Pastel, Hidden and Invisible), Matt Kille (Abstract), Daniel Martinez (Bulb and Music), John George (Confusion), John Teasdale (Disk), and Ann L. Goonan (Smiley).

I also send my gratitude to Juergen Urbanek, who designed the excellent MagicWB icons, and to everyone who has sent their ideas for the game and/or expressed their appreciation.

iff.library is copyright (c) Christian A. Weber.

regtools.library is copyright (c) Nico François and Magnus Holmgren.

1.11 The Official Tile Fall Mailing List

Due to popular demand, the Official Tile Fall Mailing List is now available! Discussion topics range from possible new Tile Fall features, through scoring tactics and mathematical probabilities, up to highscore postings.

If you are interested in joining the list, send an email message to Nick Waterman, the list administrator, at "nick@cimio.co.uk". He will send you details of how to join the list. Details can also be found at

<http://www.cimio.co.uk/~nick/tilefall/>

Speak to you there!

1.12 Contacting the Author

If you like Tile Fall, have found a bug, or have suggestions for its future, please contact me! I can be contacted via electronic mail or snail mail. I can't promise to reply quickly to snail mail, but I will always do my best to reply to email messages. I won't complain if anyone decides to send money! :)

InterNet:

Adam@darkside.demon.co.uk

<http://www.rdainfotec.demon.co.uk/adam/>

<http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/1225/>

FidoNet:

Adam Dawes@2:254/524.50

Snail Mail:

Adam Dawes
47 Friar Road
Brighton
BN1 6NH
England