

Tristix

Shareware Version 1.0

© 1996 Evan Salomon & Phillip Bailey

1. Usage information

1.1 Disclaimer

This program is provided "as is". The authors are in no way responsible for any damages that may occur to your computer as a result of the use or the inability thereof to use this program.

1.2 License Agreement

This program is not freeware or public domain. It is shareware. It may not be sold, and no money may be charged for distributing it. Free distribution is permitted, and distribution on any compilation CDs is hereby authorized by the authors.

2. Hardware requirements

Tristix requires a 286 or better CPU, MCGA or VGA video, and about 520K free conventional memory. For maximum performance, a 486 or better CPU, a sound card, and XMS are recommended.

3. How to play

Tristix is based on a game originally from Russia called Tetris. Similar to Tetris, pieces fall one at a time from the top of the playing field. You have to fit these pieces together to fill rows of blocks. You can move pieces left and right, rotate them, slide them down, and drop them. When you fill a row of blocks, it will disintegrate, allowing anything above it to drop down a line. If you are playing for the first time, you might want to watch the demo to better acquaint yourself with the game.

4. Options

4.1 Selecting the players

You control the number of participants in a game in the "Players" field under the options menu.

When setting player keys, you have the option of setting keys one at a time or all at once. Press the space bar to set all keys, or simply press enter on the key you want to modify.

You also have the option of selecting a "CPU" player (under the "Mode" column). CPU players are computer-controlled and can make entertaining opponents. On the far right column you then have the option of setting the CPU speed. 1 is the slowest, and 10 is the fastest. Beginning players should start with a low CPU speed.

When playing with multiple players, remember that player 1 will have the left-most playing window, so you will want to assign that player the keys on the left side of the keyboard.

4.2 The different game types

Tristix includes several playing modes : Normal, Challenge, Competitive, and Endless.

Normal play is a regular game of Tristix with 1-4 players. For every ten lines that a player completes, his level and speed increment. The goal of all players is to score as many points as possible, and the success of any player does not depend on that of any other.

Challenge play is a single player challenge against a single computer player. The number of players option is ignored. You compete against progressively harder players. Your game is over when you lose a match.

Competitive mode is a competition between 2 to 4 players (if played with 1 player it is identical to Normal play). The winner of the game is the player who lasts longer than anyone else. In competitive mode, the creation of a double, a triple, a quadruple, or a tristix (5 lines) will result in your lines disappearing from your playing screen and re-appearing on that of an opponent without the last piece you placed in them. This can severely hinder their game play. Also in competitive mode, when one player completes ten lines and advances to the next playing speed, all other players experience the speed increase, too.

Endless mode is the same as normal mode, with the exception that the playing speed never increments. This makes it possible to play for a very long time.

4.3 Changing the starting level

The starting level of the game can be set in the options menu under "Level." The starting level regulates the speed in which pieces will initially drop down. You will acquire more points for every piece you drop if you start at a higher level, but if you do not drop pieces fast enough, you may end up getting less points. In endless mode, you will be playing at this level for the duration of the game.

4.4 Piece sizes

You can play with one of four different piece sizes. "Small" pieces are 1 to 4 blocks. "Medium" pieces are all 4 blocks (like in Tetris). "Large" pieces are all 5 blocks. "All" pieces range between 1 and 5 blocks.

4.5 Special pieces

Special pieces -- What are they?! Tristix offers 6 special pieces (of which 3 are available only in the registered version). When a line is made with a special block, its corresponding special piece is activated.

The "bomb" will destroy all blocks within a 3 block radius of its dropped location. Note, however, that this is not always beneficial! Make sure you don't drop the bomb down a tunnel or you will end up with a big hole at the bottom that will take a long time to fill up!

The shooter will fire up to 10 bullets that will blow up one piece at a time. This is good for uncovering holes that you may have created during the game. It is activated by using your rotate key.

The dropper is exactly like the shooter except that it drops pieces instead, which is useful for filling up holes.

The three previously mentioned special pieces are known as the "common" ones. These special pieces occur often and don't do anything too spectacular. The next 3 special pieces are the "rare" ones. You won't find these as often, but when you do, you will be grateful!

The double shooter is exactly like the shooter except that it shoots two shots at once, causing mass destruction in a small amount of time. You still get only 10 shots, but each shot is twice as powerful!

The meteor shower drops 5 meteors down. Each meteor blows up the piece it hits, and the highest pieces directly to the left and to the right of it.

The last, but by far the most powerful special piece, is the flash flood. It rains ten drops, which take the place of the lowest holes in your playing screen. When all drops have fallen, a crash of lightning turns the drops in all full lines to stone, and wipes out all other drops.

You can adjust the frequency of all special pieces in the options menu under "Specials." The "few" option guarantees one for every 50 pieces. "Some" gives you one in 25, and "lots" overwhelms you with one every 10 pieces! If you get sick of these pieces, you can always choose the "none" option.

4.6 The next piece window

When you're playing so fast that you don't have time to decide where to place a piece after it appears, you'll appreciate the next piece window. It is simply a small window next to your playing field that shows a picture of the next piece you will receive. In 1 or 2 player mode, it is an exact representation, but in 3 or 4 player mode, it is scaled down to fit on the screen. The next piece window can be turned on or off in the options menu.

4.7 Background sets

You can change the background set that will be used during the game by selecting the "background" option in the options menu. There are 4 different background sets to choose from (only 1 is available in the unregistered version). When you choose a set, you can see a preview of all ten backgrounds that the set it made up of.

4.8 Game options

All options mentioned above cannot be changed during gameplay. These "game options", however, can be changed. During a game, you can press Esc to bring up the game options menu. You can also change them from the main options menu by choosing "game options".

In this menu, you can set the music and sound effects volume (only if your sound card is 100% Sound Blaster compatible). You can also set the music soundtrack and the tile design that will be used for the pieces. During the game, there will also be an option to quit the game.

5. Scoring

5.1 How points are scored

You get points for each piece you drop. More points are given for dropping the piece from a higher position, and for playing on a higher level. You also get points for making lines. You acquire more points when you make more lines at once. Lines are scored the following way:

Single	(1 line)	=	100 points
Double	(2 lines)	=	400 points
Triple	(3 lines)	=	900 points
Quadruple	(4 lines)	=	1600 points
Tristix	(5 lines)	=	2500 points

As you can see, getting more lines at once exponentially increases your score.

5.2 High scores

The High Scores menu option will display the 10 highest scores in each of the different game types. You can scroll through the different game types using the left and right arrow keys.

Note : You can have multiple high score lists, changed with a command-line variable, covered in section 7.

6. Instructions

Instructions regarding basic game play and contact information are also available in the game itself under this menu option. Information is quickly accessible there.

7. Command-line options

7.1 Configuration file

Different users of a computer might prefer different configurations within Tristix, and despise having to go in every time and change it to their likings. If this is the case with you, use the command-line variable `/CFG` to specify your own configuration file. For example, `TRISTIX /CFG DAN.CFG` will load Tristix with a configuration that Dan has set up. Make sure that you specify your configuration file every time you load tristix, unless you want to use the default, which is always `"TRISTIX.CFG"`. To start a new configuration, just run `TRISTIX /CFG <name>.CFG`, and you will be able to modify settings for future games in the options menu.

7.2 High score file

Consider the following situation: Your little brother likes to play Tristix with his friends and boasts that he's got the #1 position, but then you come along and do twice as well as him. His friends come over and he shows them the scores just to find that he's miserably in second place. He is now completely humiliated in front of all of his friends and he will never regain his position as the official city Tristix leader. To avoid such embarrassing moments, use the `/HIS` command-line variable. Specify your high score file just as you would a configuration file. The default is `"TRISTIX.HIS"`.

7.3 Keyboard fix

If you experience keys repeating after you have already let go of the key, try running the game with the command-line option `/KEYFIX`. Just type `TRISTIX /KEYFIX` instead of `TRISTIX` alone to run the game. This option disables multiple key-repeating, but it may be necessary for certain configurations.

7.4 Disabling features

If for some reason the starting intro doesn't work on your computer or takes too long to load, run the game with the `/NOINTRO` command-line option.

If you would like to temporarily turn off music but don't want to have your configuration file modified, run Tristix with the `/NOMUSIC` command-line option. The same goes for sound effects with `/NOSFX`, and if you would like to completely abolish any sound for the current session of the game, use `/NOSOUND`.

8. Credits

Evan Salomon - Coding, Music

Phillip Bailey - Graphics, Sound
Daniel Danker - Editing, Creativity
Reality - Music Routine
Ethan Brodsky - Sound Routine

9. Contacts

You can contact the authors by internet e-mail at:

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The official Tristix FTP site is at:

<ftp://ftp.ccnet.com/users/msalomon/tristix/>

The official Tristix web site is at:

<http://www.ccnet.com/~msalomon/tristix/>

You can also send snail mail to:

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