

Online Help for



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Introduction

Welcome to Bricklayer, the fast-paced falling blocks 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.

System Requirements

Bricklayer has been beta tested on i386, i486, and Pentium systems with 4-8MB 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).

See [troubleshooting](#) for advice with common problems.

Related Topics:

[How to play a Game](#)

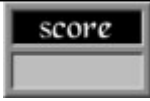
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Scoring



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](#)

[Controls](#)

[Recording Events](#)

[AutoPlay](#)

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 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 *Change Keys* option from the *Options* menu.

Related Topics:

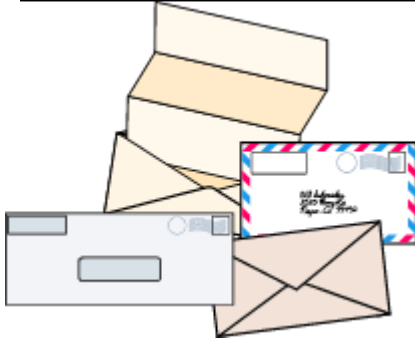
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Registering



Bricklayer is \$10 shareware and free for those people who've paid for previous versions.

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 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.

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

post: **Yevgeny Gurevich**
129 Franklin Street #112
Cambridge, MA 02139
U.S.A.

Email: yevg@aol.com

Once you have registered, you will receive a registration code. Select the *Register* menu item from the *Help* menu and enter your name and registration code *as they appear* on the registration information returned to you. This code will remove any notices to register the product, clearly identify your copy as registered to your or your organization, and allow you to access some custom features of Bricklayer.

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

Related Topics:

[Whats new in version 1.6](#)

Recording Events



One of the advanced features of Bricklayer is its ability to record, save, and playback your games.

To record a game, first select the Event menu and select the Record menu item. The Record item will now have a check mark next to it, alerting you to the fact that the next game to be played will be recorded into the *Event Buffer*.

You can then begin playing a game of Bricklayer as explained in [How to Play a Game](#).

When you are done with the game, you can save it, by using the *Save Events...* menu item from the *File* menu, or play it back from the Event Buffer by selecting *Replay* from the *Event Recording* menu.

You can only save one game at a time in the Event Buffer. If the *Record* menu item is selected from the *Event Recording* menu and you play two games in succession, only the last will be in the buffer. You may load and replay as many games as you wish.

Related Topics:
None

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 fast systems like i486DX2-66's, the smart player is faster than the dumb player on an i486SX-33.

For programmers:

I may release a programming interface and guidelines to allow you to write your own Bricklayer players in the form of DLLs. Please write me if you are interested.

Related Topics:

None

Whats new in version 1.6 ?



Version 1.6 of Bricklayer fixes a few bugs and introduces some features for registered users.

- This version of Bricklayer has support for external piece and background graphics modules. The Preferences dialog box allows the user to select alternative background graphics and piece-graphics modules. Currently, alternative modules are available on a separate goodies disk which may be purchased for a nominal fee by registered users. A few alternate graphics files are included in the shareware distribution. Some of these may only be used by registered users of Bricklayer.
- Registered users are acknowledged with a small notice in between games.
- The gameboard size can be doubled for users with large monitors or high resolutions.
- An incompatibility with PC Tools Desktop™ has been fixed.
- Continuous background music is more stable.

Related Topics:

[Registering Bricklayer](#)

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 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 graphics modules is to click on the Browse button in the Preferences dialog box and double click on available .BLB 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 graphics modules are installed.

Related Topics:

[Changing Piece Graphics](#)

Changing Piece Graphics

Piece graphics are the little bitmaps which are drawn to represent each of the seven colored pieces in Bricklayer.

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 graphics modules is to click on the Browse button in the Preferences dialog box and double click on available .BLP files. If the File-Open dialog box does not show the drive where Bricklayer is installed, you will need to change to the directory where the alternate pieces modules are installed.

Related Topics:

[Changing Background Graphics](#)

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 *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 Bricklayer, 1.60, uses the Microsoft WAVEMIX.DLL sound mixing library. You may notice that the background music has stopped playing after six or seven minutes (and in some instances, even less) of continuous music when **both** music and sound effects are enabled. If this occurs, press the [TAB] key to restart the music.

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

Related Topics:

None

Controls

The default controls for Bricklayer are:

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 Keys* item in the *Options* menu. When you select *Change Keys* a dialog box prompts you to change any or all of the keys which control piece movement. If you select *CANCEL*, none of the changes come into effect. Selecting *OK* in the menu changes key bindings to your newly-selected keys. These keys are saved in the Bricklayer preferences file and are active in the current game of Bricklayer, and all future games as well.

Related Topics:

[How To Play A Game](#)
[Scoring](#)

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

Bricklayer Preferences

Bricklayer has many options which you can set to customize the game to fit your taste. Select *Preferences* from the *Options* menu. A preferences dialog box appears with check boxes to toggle system settings, and Browse buttons to select alternate graphics files.

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.

Double-Size Blocks

Doubles the size of the blocks and the gameboard for systems with high-resolution displays. Nice for kids, too.

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

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

Related Topics:

[Changing Background Graphics](#)

[Changing Piece Graphics](#)

[Music and Sound Options](#)

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 **BRICKLYR.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.

Another problem may be a video-driver incompatibility. Try running Bricklayer with the **-d** command-line option.

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.

Finally, you may try modifying the settings in the **WAVEMIX.INI** file. This file controls options in the wavemixing library which are not tuned by Bricklayer itself. Try changing the number of ping-pong buffers or the buffer length.
