

How to:

Play Five Mens Morris

This game is similar to a whole group of games with similar rules and boards. The simplest game of the group is called Three Men's Morris and survives as noughts and crosses. Nine Men's Morris game boards have been found in locations ranging from Ancient Egypt (1400BC) to a Viking ship burial (900AD), and their general popularity can be recognised from the diversity of names by which they are known. In Germany the game is called by a very descriptive word meaning "mill", and the rules taught to me by a German friend encourage the strategy of setting up several mills which you can use to grind your opponent into dust!

Materials:

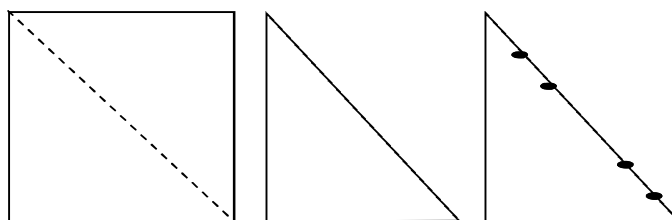
20 X 20 cm square of felt or leather
Paper or card the same size or bigger
Permanent marker
5 light coloured pebbles
5 dark coloured pebbles
(or clay to make counters with)
Thick wool or string (~90cm)

Tools:

Scissors
Ruler
Darning needle (or hole punch)

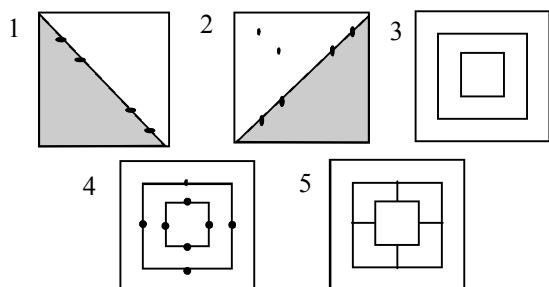
Make the template

1. Cut out a paper (or card) square that is 20cm X 20cm
2. Fold the paper in half to make a triangle, then unfold it and cut along the fold line.
3. Measure 3cm from the corner along the longest edge and make a mark (be careful not to mark the table underneath!)
4. Continuing in the same direction make marks at 8.5cm, 20cm, and 25.5 cm



Mark out the board

1. Lay the template on your square of cloth or leather.
2. Use the marks on the template to mark the corners of the inner and outer squares on the cloth.
3. Turn the template a quarter turn (90°) and mark out the other corners of the inner and outer squares on the cloth.
4. Using a ruler connect the marks you have made on the cloth to make an inner square and an outer square.
5. Mark the middle of each edge on the squares
6. Draw four lines connecting the inner square to the outer square.



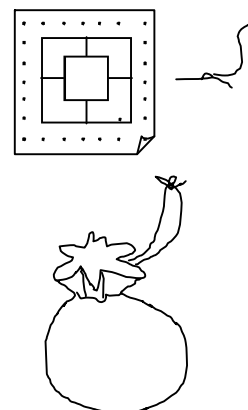
Make the board into a pouch

Leather

1. Mark dots 2cm apart and .5cm in from the edge all round the outside of the leather.
2. Punch holes where you have marked
3. Thread the string through the holes and tie the ends to each other

Felt or Cloth

1. Use the darning needle to thread the wool in wide stitches around the edge of the board.
2. It may help you to make it neater if you make marks about 2cm apart to guide you.
3. Tie the ends of the wool together.



When you pull the cord, the board will curl up into a pouch, which you can use to keep the pieces and instructions in!

Here is an enjoyable version of the rules:

Choose who will play first, this gives an important tactical advantage to a skilled player so pick carefully.

- 1: The objective in the game is to take your opponents pieces. You do this by lining up three of your pieces in a straight line (along the lines drawn on the board) this is called a mill. Diagonals do not count! Taking a piece ends your turn.
- 2: Players take turns to place one piece the corner or intersection of their choice. This continues until all the pieces have been placed.
- 3: When all the pieces have been placed, the players continue to take turns, but now move their pieces one space along the lines (e.g. from corner to intersection).
- 4: When a player has formed a "mill" (three in a row) in a particular location on the board, they cannot use that location until they have formed a mill in another location.
- 5: The winner is the one who immobilises their opponent, or reduces them to two pieces.

This board layout has also been called Six Men's Morris, the only difference is the number of pieces used to play.



If you are looking for counters you could use:

Coins (heads and tails)

Different coloured pebbles (five of each colour)

Shells (two different types, or different colours)

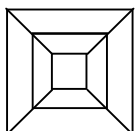
Sweets ...

Part of this games popularity is the simplicity of the board and pieces. The board could be on the ground or chalked, pebbles or shells can be used as pieces. As long as you remember the rules you can make a board wherever you are!

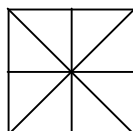
Rules version two:

1. The game has the same objective and start as before in rules 1 to 4 with players placing or moving pieces and trying to form mille of three in a row.
2. When a player forms a mill, they can take one of the opponents pieces. However they cannot take a piece from another mill, those pieces are protected.
3. A player can use the same board location for a mill consecutively (rule 5 does not apply).
4. When a player is reduced to their last three pieces they can lift them and place them down on any unoccupied space on the board. The other player continues to move their pieces as before, unless they are reduced to three pieces.

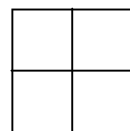
Here are the designs for some other boards, together with a suggested number of pieces.



9 Men's



3 Men's



3 Men's