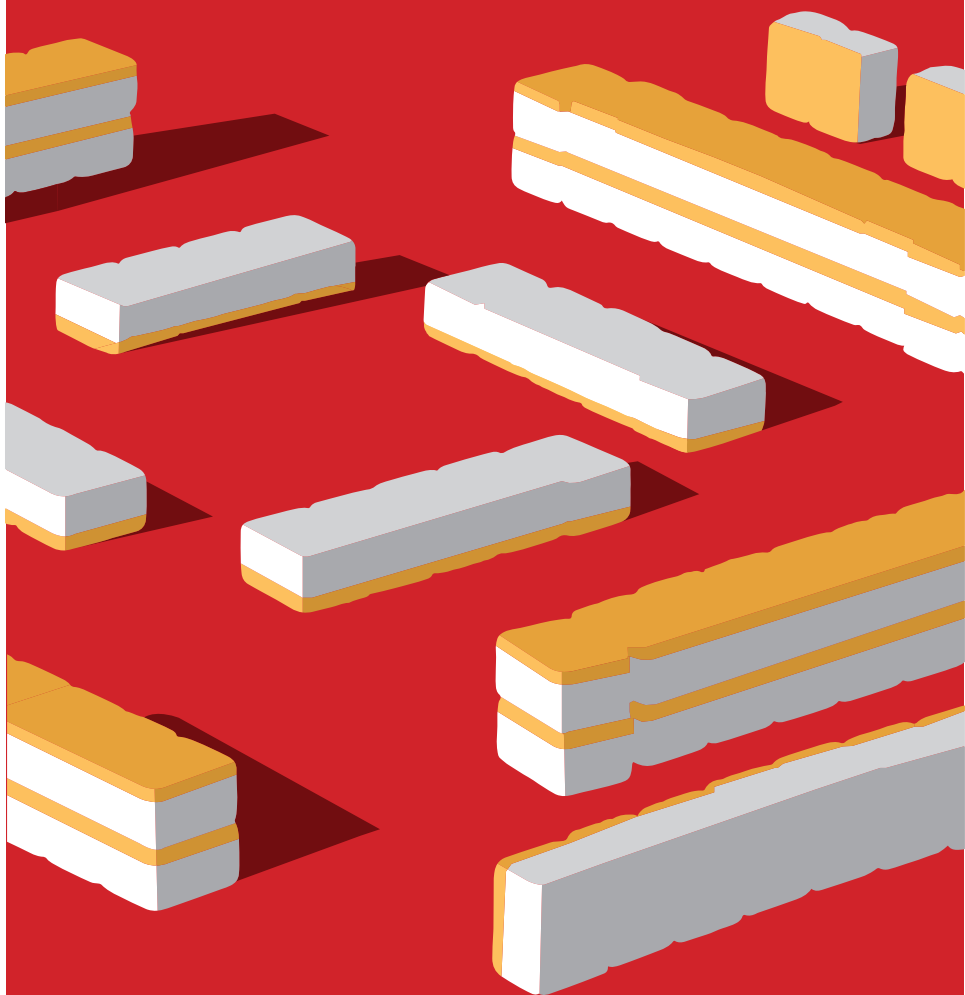


# MAHJONG FUNDAMENTALS





# What You'll Need To Play

## **Mahjong tiles**

A standard set of mahjong tiles. If your set includes flower tiles, 'seasons' or Joker tiles you should set them aside, they will not be used.

## **Scoring tokens**

Score can be kept with tokens or with a pen and paper, whichever the players find to be more convenient.

# Objectives

## **Overview**

At the beginning of the game, each player will have 20 points. A series of hands will be played, with the players competing to form a Complete Hand as quickly as possible. Players who build a Complete Hand will be awarded points

# Hand Elements and Terminology

## Sets

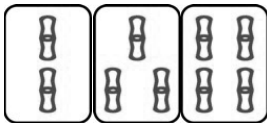
### Pon

A Pon is a set of three identical tiles.



### Chi

A Chi is a set of precisely three sequential tiles of the same suit.



### Pair

A Pair is a set of two identical tiles.



## Hands

### Ready hand

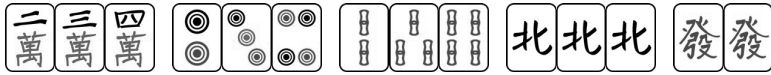
A Ready Hand is a 13-tile hand that requires only one more tile to become a Complete Hand



Hand is waiting on a 4 Sou tile to be complete

## Complete hand

A Complete Hand is a collection of 14 tiles composed of four sets (each set may be either a Pon or a Chi) and one pair.



The player draws a 4 sou tile, completing the hand

## Game Setup

- Each player starts the game with 20 points.
- The tiles are placed face-down in the middle of the play area
- One player is chosen to be the First Player. This player will start the game as the Dealer for the first hand.

The game can now begin!

## Playing a Hand

### Dealing

All players push the tiles around on the table to ensure that they are thoroughly mixed. It's possible that some tiles might flip face-up during this procedure - return them to their face-down side and continue to shuffle. Continue until the tiles are mixed to the players' satisfaction.

Each player takes thirteen (13) tiles from the center pool and places the tiles in front of them, standing up, so they are not visible to the other players. This set of tiles is the player's hand.

## **Progression of the Hand**

The dealer starts as the first player and players, in turn, proceed through the following set of steps:

1. Draw a tile
2. Check for victory
3. Discard a tile
4. Make claims
5. Pass to next player

Details are below:

### **Draw a tile**

The current player takes a tile from the set of face-down tiles in the center of the table into their hand. The player may choose any tile they like as long as the tile is face-down.

### **Check for victory**

If the tile the current player has drawn causes their hand to become a Complete Hand, that player may declare victory. The player then reveals their hand for other players to verify that it is, indeed, a Complete Hand. Because a player has declared victory the hand is now complete - proceed to Scoring.

### **Discard a tile**

Presuming victory has not been declared, the current player chooses a tile from their hand and returns it to the center pool, face-up. The player may discard

the tile they just drew or any other tile in their hand. This tile is now the “discarded tile”.

## Make claims

Other players may now claim the discarded tile. To claim a tile, a player must make a verbal declaration loud enough for all other players to clearly hear it. Valid claims are:

### Pon

If any player at the table has two tiles in their hand that are identical copies of the tile that was just discarded, they may claim the discarded tile to complete the three-of-a-kind set. The two matching tiles must be revealed and the completed set is placed to the side of the player’s hand in plain view. This set is considered to be a part of that player’s hand, however the tiles in this set may not be discarded for the rest of the hand.

When a player claims a discarded tile to form a Pon, the Claiming Player becomes the current player. It is possible that this may skip the turns of other players at the table. The Claiming player must now discard a tile and play continues from that point.



Player calls a tile to form a pon, then sets pon aside, revealing it to other players. The rest of the hand remains concealed

### Ron

If any player at the table has a Ready Hand that can be completed with the tile that was just discarded,

that player may claim the discarded tile to declare victory. Once this claim is made, the player exposes their entire hand for the other players at the table to validate that this is the case. Because a player has declared victory the hand is now complete - proceed to Scoring.

If there is a case where two players claim a discarded tile simultaneously, "Ron" has priority over "Pon". If there is a case where multiple players claim "Ron" simultaneously, ties are broken by turn order - the player whose next turn would come soonest takes priority.

## **Pass to the next player**

If no players make claims, play passes to the player on the current player's RIGHT. The tile that has been discarded remains face-up in the middle of the table but is now inactive, it may not be drawn by any player nor may it be the target of any future calls.

## **Ending the Hand**

The hand will end when one of three situations have come to pass:

- A player declares victory after drawing a tile.
- A player declares victory by claiming a discarded tile to form a Complete Hand
- A player needs to draw a tile but there are no face-down tiles left on the table. The hand is considered a Draw.

At this point, gameplay proceeds to the Scoring phase.



# Scoring

## **Draws**

If the hand ended as a Draw because a player needed to draw a tile but there were no face-down tiles left on the table, players reveal their hands. If a player's revealed hand is a Ready Hand, that player suffers no penalty. If a player's revealed hand is not a Ready Hand, that player places one (1) point into a pool kept at the center of the table. Points placed here will be claimed by the next player to win a hand.

## **Tsumo**

If the hand ended because a player declared victory after drawing a tile, all other players at the table are responsible for payment. If the winning player was the dealer, the other players at the table each pay two (2) points to the winning player. If the winning player was not the dealer, the dealer pays two (2) points to the winning player and the other two players pay one (1) point each to the winning player. The winning player also receives any points that had been placed at the center of the table due to previous Draws.

## **Ron**

If the hand ended because a player claimed a discarded tile to form a Complete Hand, the player who discarded the claimed tile (the Discarding Player) is responsible for payment. If the winning player was the dealer, the Discarding Player pays the winning player six (6) points. If the winning player

was not the dealer, the Discarding Player pays the winning player four (4) points.

The winning player also receives any points that had been placed at the center of the table due to previous Draws.

### **Passing the Deal**

If a player declared victory during the hand

If the winning player was the dealer the deal does not pass - the dealer will continue as the dealer for the next hand.

If the winning player was not the dealer, the deal will pass to the player next in turn order (to the dealer's right). That player will be the dealer for the next hand.

### **If the hand was a Draw**

If the dealer revealed a Ready Hand the deal does not pass - the dealer will continue as the dealer for the next hand.

If the dealer did not reveal a Ready Hand, the deal will pass to the player next in turn order (to the dealer's right). That player will be the dealer for the next hand.

If the deal passes to the player who was the First Dealer, the game has ended. Proceed to Determining the Winner

### **Determining the winner**

At the end of the game, the player with the most points is the winner. In case of a tie, the tie is broken in player order respective to the First Dealer - i.e. the First Dealer takes priority, followed by the player to their right, and so on.

## Resources

USPML NYC Meetup- Meetup.com page for the USPML's monthly Riichi meetup in NYC:

**<http://www.meetup.com/Learn-Riichi-Mahjong/>**

An introduction to the rules of Riichi Mahjong:

**<http://www.japanesemahjong.com/reachmahjong/intro.htm>**

The official World Riichi Championship rules document:

**<http://www.uspml.com/downloads/entry/world-riichi.htm>**

A guide to playing Riichi Mahjong online at Tenhou.net:

**<http://arcturus.su/tenhou/>**



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