

MUR™

Mur is a 2-player strategy game played with 15 stones. Seven are black and belong to the first player, seven are white and belong to the second player, and one stone—the mur stone—is red and is a neutral stone.

The mur board is a round grid with 25 intersections. The center of the board is one intersection and all of the intersections of rings with diameters are the other 24. The smallest ring is the first ring, the second largest the second ring and the largest the third ring.

Each player has 7 stones. The red mur stone is a neutral stone. The mur stone does not belong to any player and cannot ever be directly moved by any player; it can only be indirectly moved by another stone bumping it during a move.

GOAL

The goal of the game is to be the first player to

a) trap the mur stone

or

b) trap their opponent three times

TRAP

A trap is when a player surrounds an opponent's stone with his stones. A trap is achieved when all the adjacent intersections of a stone are occupied by opposing stones. Note that the mur stone cannot be one of the stones used to surround and a surrounded group is not considered trapped.



An example of a trap on the third ring. Only 3 opposing stones are required.



An example of a trap on the second ring. 4 opposing stones are required.



Here is an example of a trap on the first ring. 4 opposing stones are required with one of the stones occupying the center intersection.

WITHDRAWAL FROM TRAP

There is no capturing in Mur. When a stone is in a trap, the owner of the stone must remove it from the board. In the above examples, White is placed in a trap. White, after being placed in a trapped position on the board, must use an entire turn to withdraw his stone off the board. The withdrawn stone then becomes an 'off-board' stone. A player may have any number of off-board stones at any one time. Any off-board stone may be entered back into play by simply placing it back on the board on any unoccupied intersection. Note that during a turn a player may only choose one of three actions to execute: 1) place 2) move 3) withdraw. *Only trapped stones or knocked back stones may be withdrawn; withdrawing a stone is not an option outside of these two circumstances.*

WITHDRAWAL FROM KNOCK BACK

If stone A departs its intersection and knocks stone B and—upon the immediate next turn—Stone A is knocked back to its departure intersection by stone B, then stone A must be withdrawn by its owner. The owner must use his entire turn to withdraw the stone. Note that even though a withdrawal takes place, a trap is not acquired.

EYES

When an unoccupied intersection is surrounded by stones of the same color this is called an eye intersection or 'eye'. An eye is formed from the withdrawal of a trapped stone or may be formed just from the course of play. A stone may only be placed upon an eye intersection or moved into an eye intersection if it results in the immediate trap of an opposing stone forcing the next play to be a withdrawal. If no immediate trap will result from occupying the eye intersection, no placement or move into the eye is allowed.

SAFE SPOT

Any stone occupying the center of the board cannot be trapped because that would require eight stones and each player has seven.

SETUP

Place the mur stone upon the center of the board. The setup is now complete.

PLAY

In mur, stones are placed on intersections. Only one stone may occupy an intersection at one time. Black plays the first play of the first game. During a play (turn) a player may execute one of the following:

- 1) place a stone on any unoccupied intersection
- 2) move a stone already placed upon the board
- 3) withdraw a trapped stone or a knocked back stone

Note that when a player has a trapped stone or a knocked back stone he has no choice but to use his turn to withdraw that stone.

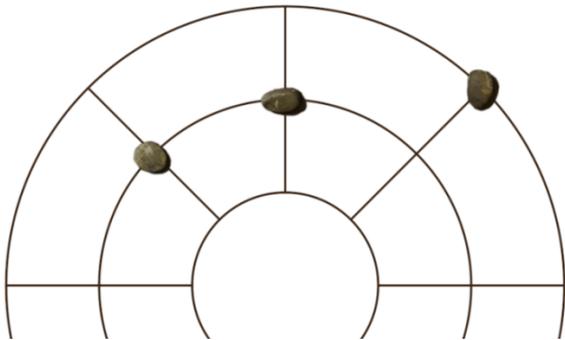
MOVING STONES

A move is the transfer of a stone from one intersection to another intersection. There are only two different paths during a move. A stone may move along a diameter, or a stone may move along a ring. When moving along a ring, a stone must maintain its direction either clockwise or counter clockwise.

A stone should only move in one direction along a diameter with the exception that if a stone moving along the diameter reaches the third ring—and still has not completed its move—it must continue moving in the opposite direction to complete its move.

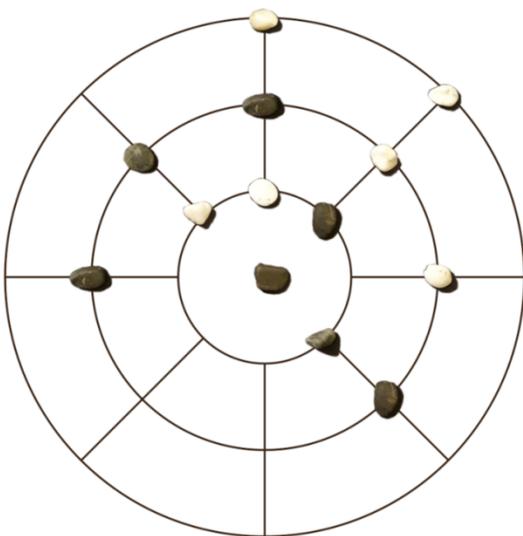
DISTANCE OF MOVES

Each stone may move an exact distance and this distance is determined by the number of stones in the group the stone is in. Adjacent stones are considered linked; linked stones can form a pair or a group.



In the diagram to the left, the stone to the far right is a single stone since none of its adjacent intersections are occupied. This means this stone may only move a distance of exactly 1.

The other stones, however, form a pair since they are linked at adjacent intersections. This means each of these stones may only move a distance of exactly 2.



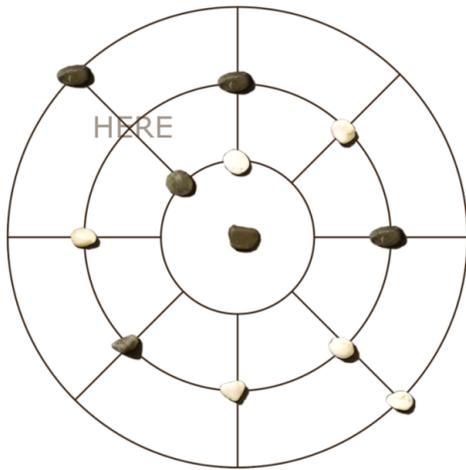
In this diagram black has two groups, one group of 3 stones and another group of 4 stones. White has a group of 4 stones and a group of 2 stones.

ORDERS

A single stone, called an alpha stone, is of the first order--the highest order--and therefore may only move exactly a distance of 1. Each stone in a pair of stones is of the second order and therefore may only move exactly a distance of 2. Each stone in a group of three stones is of the third order and therefore may only move exactly a distance of 3 and so on. The order of the stone is determined by the number of stones in its group. The mur stone is always of the fourth order.

MOVING TO OCCUPIED INTERSECTIONS

Moving to an occupied intersection is called bumping or knocking. A stone may only move to an occupied intersection if it is of a higher order than the occupying stone. The highest order is the first order. The second highest order is the second order and so on. The occupying stone is then bumped out of its intersection and must continue moving along the same path and come to rest upon the first unoccupied intersection.



In this diagram, the white stone on the third ring is in a group of three. It may move a distance of exactly three. If it moves clockwise or counter clockwise, it will be on an intersection adjacent to the black stone on the third ring.

The black alpha stone (single stone) on the second ring East of the center may move clockwise a distance of one and knock the white stone next to it to the intersection labeled 'here'. This is because the knocked white stone must take the first unoccupied intersection in the same direction.

ENTERING STONES INTO PLAY

During play a player will have any number of stones off the board. This may be because the stones have not yet been placed upon the board or because of withdrawals. Any stone off the board may be entered into play whenever it is the owner's turn. To enter an off-board stone into play, simply place the stone on any unoccupied intersection.

COMPLETING THE GAME AND SETUP FOR THE NEXT GAME

The final trap must be complete, and the owner's withdrawal of his stone from the board. Next, the mur stone is placed upon the center intersection of the board (unless it just happens to already be occupying the center) and any stone occupying the center must be withdrawn to make way for the mur stone. Except for these adjustments the position of the board maintains the game position achieved at the moment the last withdrawal was made. The positions of the stones comprise the asymmetrical setup for the next game. Please note that in all odd numbered games such as the 1st, 3rd, and 5th game, Black has the first move and in all even numbered games such as the 2nd, 4th, and 6th game, White has the first move. Mur matches are usually played in two sets of six games.

NO SUSTAIN OF POSITION

A player may never pass on a turn and must alter the board position by placing, moving or withdrawing. A position is not altered if all stones of the same color remain on identical intersections. For example, if a player knocks a stone of the same color so that it is knocked to the intersection just moved from; this sustains the position and is therefore illegal.

SINGLE ACTION PLAYS ONLY

During a play a player may 1) place 2) move or 3) withdraw. Only one of these actions is permitted per turn. It is illegal to move and withdraw within the same turn. For example, if player A acquires a trap on an opponent by knocking opponent B's stone, this is acceptable as long as the knocked stone does not come to rest upon an intersection which traps one of player A's stones. A move like this resulting in self-capture would be illegal since it would require player A to withdraw immediately after moving. Note that when a double trap occurs, withdrawing 2 stones during the same turn is required and is not a violation of the single-action-play rule.