

# Tak

## Rules

### Object of the Game

The object is to create a road, which is a string of your pieces connecting opposite sides of the board. A road does not have to be a straight line. Diagonal spaces do not connect. Standing stones cannot be part of your road, but your capstone can.

### Examples:



A winning road connects opposite sides of the board.

**Connections:** Spaces on the Tak board are connected only by their edges. Spaces are not adjacent diagonally, and pieces do not move diagonally.

### Other Ways to Win

**Flat Win:** If either player runs out of pieces, or if the board is completely full, then the game ends immediately and the player with the most flat stones wins.

Count only the flat stones on top of stacks, not those buried within stacks. If this count is tied, then the game is a draw.

**Double Road:** If a player creates a winning road for both players in the same move, then the active player is the winner.

For example, if White makes a move that creates a white road and a black road, then White wins because it is White's turn.

**Calling "Tak":** You will typically call "Tak" in a friendly game, but it isn't strictly required. Like "check" in chess, this is a warning that you are one move away from winning.

### The Board and Game Pieces

#### Setup

The number of pieces in the game depends on the size of the board.

Each player has the following:

Board Size:	3x3	4x4	5x5	6x6	8x8
Stones:	10	15	21	30	50
Capstones:	0	0	1	1	2

There are two types of playing pieces in Tak: **Stones** and **Capstones**.

Stones can be played in two ways: **Flat** or **Standing**.

**Flat Stones:** Flat stones can stack up, and they can count as part of a road.



**Standing Stones:** Nothing can be stacked on a standing stone, but standing stones don't count as part of your road. This makes them good for blocking, so they are sometimes called "walls."



**Capstones:** Capstones combine the best aspects of standing and flat stones: they do count as part of a road, but they can't have another piece stacked on top. In addition, a capstone by itself has the power to flatten a standing stone.



When flattening a standing stone, the capstone must act by itself (See **Flattening Walls** overleaf).

**Note:** Capstones can flatten stones of either colour.

## Gameplay

On your turn you may either **place** a piece in an empty space, or **move** one of the stacks under your control.

**Place:** You can place a flat stone, a standing stone, or the capstone in any empty space on the board. (**You never play a piece directly on another piece.**)

**Stacks only form because of movement.)**

If you place your last piece, or if you fill the last space on the board, the game ends immediately.

**Move:** You can move one or more pieces in a stack that you control. A “stack” of pieces can be any height, including just one piece. **“Control”** means that your piece is on top.

To move the stack, take any number of pieces off the top, up to the carry limit, and move them in a straight line, dropping at least one piece off the bottom in each space along the way. The pieces that you drop will cover up any stacks that are already there.

The simplest move is to take one piece and move it one space. Taller stacks can move farther, dropping pieces as they go.

### Additional Movement Rules

**Carry Limit and Stack Height:** There is no limit to the height of a stack, but there is a limit to the number of pieces that you can move. This “carry limit” is equal to

the width of the board, so for example in a 5x5 game, you can carry no more than five pieces. That means if you start with a stack of 7, you must leave at least 2 of those pieces in the starting space.

**Insurmountable Pieces:** Standing stones and capstones cannot be covered, which means that all the spaces in your path must either be empty or contain flat stones.

**Flattening Walls:** A capstone can, by itself, move onto a standing stone and flatten it. The capstone may be part of a larger stack that is making a longer move, as long as the final step (crushing the wall) is done by the capstone alone. Aside from flattening it with a capstone, you cannot lay down a wall.

### Basic Strategy

Movement is the key to the game. A tall stack has many options and a long move can seriously change the balance of power.

Be careful not to make moves too early, you need to get pieces into play, and not just move the pieces you already have. In the late game, don’t be afraid to “run out the clock” and run out of pieces if you’re ahead on the flats!

### Moving a Tall Stack Example:

White controls this stack, with a standing stone on top.

Assuming that this is a 5x5 board, the carry limit is five. That means White is allowed to move this entire stack of five pieces, or she could choose to leave some behind.

Moving in a straight line, White must drop at least one piece in each space. These pieces come off the bottom of the stack.

In the first space, she leaves two pieces. On the second space, she leaves two pieces again.

The standing stone, by itself, goes into the last space. The end result is shown in the last step.

This single move has given White control of three spaces that just belonged to Black!

