

# Tower of Hanoi Python Implementation

```
1 def towers_of_hanoi(n, source, target, auxiliary):
2     """
3     Recursive function to solve Towers of Hanoi problem.
4     Args:
5     - n: Number of disks
6     - source: The starting peg
7     - target: The destination peg
8     - auxiliary: The helper peg
9     """
10    if n == 1:
11        print(f"Move disk 1 from {source} to {target}")
12        return 1
13    moves = towers_of_hanoi(n - 1, source, auxiliary, target)
14    print(f"Move disk {n} from {source} to {target}")
15    moves += 1
16    moves += towers_of_hanoi(n - 1, auxiliary, target, source)
17    return moves
18
19
20 def main():
21     # Ask for the number of disks
22     try:
23         num_disks = int(input("Enter the number of disks: "))
24         if num_disks <= 0:
25             print("Number of disks must be greater than zero.")
26             return
27
28         print("\nSteps to solve the Towers of Hanoi:")
29         total_moves = towers_of_hanoi(num_disks, 'A', 'C', 'B')
30         print(f"\nTotal moves required: {total_moves}")
31     except ValueError:
32         print("Invalid input. Please enter a positive integer.")
33
34
35 if __name__ == "__main__":
36     main()
37
```

## Answers to Questions

1. What is the (theoretical) maximum number of disks that your program can move without generating an error?

- The maximum number of disks depends on the recursion depth limit of Python, which is typically 1,000 by default.
- For the Towers of Hanoi, the recursive depth required for  $n$  disks is  $2^n - 1$ . Hence, for a recursion depth of 1,000, the practical limit would be around **15 disks** (since  $2^{15} - 1 = 32,767$  moves).
- This theoretical limit can be adjusted by increasing Python's recursion depth limit using `sys.setrecursionlimit(new_limit)`. However, doing so could lead to stack overflow errors if the limit exceeds system resources.

## 2. What limits the number of iterations?

- **System Stack Size:** The primary limit is the stack size, which determines the maximum number of recursive calls the program can make.
- **Memory Constraints:** The larger the number of disks, the more memory the program requires to maintain the recursive call stack.
- **Performance:** Towers of Hanoi has exponential time complexity  $O(2^n)$ . As  $n$  increases, the number of operations grows exponentially, making the execution impractical for large values of  $n$ .

## 3. What is the implication for application and system security?

- **Stack Overflow:** Excessive recursion can cause a stack overflow, leading to program crashes or vulnerabilities that could be exploited in denial-of-service (DoS) attacks.

- **Resource Exhaustion:** Programs requiring large amounts of memory or CPU for recursive operations can overwhelm system resources, making the system vulnerable to performance degradation or unavailability.