

An algorithm that shuffle a set

You can use the Fisher-Yates shuffle. Here is the algorithm, listed on

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fisher%E2%80%93Yates_shuffle

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To shuffle an array a of n elements (indices 0..n-1):  
  for i from n - 1 downto 1 do  
    j ← random integer with  $0 \leq j \leq i$   
    exchange a[j] and a[i]
```

This can be solved by any computer language: C#, C, C++, Java, Python and so on. Note that *n* can be any size. The random method will be used to get a random number *j* with $0 \leq j \leq i$

Try to visualize the solution on paper. Let us say that you have an array of 5 elements: 1,2,3,4, and 5.

Indices will be 0,1,2,3 and 4. There will be 4 iterations, per algorithm description.

First iteration

- Value of *i*: 4
- Use random function to get a value between 0 and 4. Let's say we got *j*=3, (*a*[3] is 4).
- Exchange *a*[4] and *a*[3], (that is to say the array now is 1,2,3,5 and 4)

Second iteration

- Value of *i*: 3
- Use random function to get a value between 0 and 3. Let's say we got *j*=0, (*a*[0] is 1).
- Exchange *a*[3] and *a*[0], (that is to say the array now is 5,2,3,1 and 4)

Third iteration

- Value of *i*: 2
- Use random function to get a value between 0 and 2. Let's say we got *j*=1, (*a*[1] is 2).
- Exchange *a*[2] and *a*[1], (that is to say the array now is 5,3,2,1 and 4)

Fourth iteration

- Value of *i*: 1
- Use random function to get a value between 0 and 1. Let's say we got *j*=0, (*a*[0] is 5).
- Exchange *a*[1] and *a*[0], (that is to say the array now is 3,5,2,1 and 4)

Final set: 3,5,2,1, and 4. At another run you may get the result set as "5 2 4 1 and 3"