

May I?

Introduction

May I? is a version of Rummy consisting of a series of rounds. In each round there is a different contract: players have to collect a particular combination of sets and runs before they are allowed to meld. The contracts become progressively more demanding on each deal.

Players

3 – 8

Cards

May I? is played with two standard decks of 52 cards for three to five players or three decks for six to eight players. Threes are low, Aces high and Deuces are wild.

The Deal

There are seven rounds altogether. The first dealer is chosen randomly, and thereafter the turn to deal rotates clockwise. The deal itself is clockwise, one card at a time. In the first round, the players receive 7 cards each. The number of cards dealt increases by one each round until each player receives 13 cards in the last round.

The cards remaining after the deal are placed face down on the table to form the stock pile, the top card of which is turned face up and placed alongside to start the discard pile.

Object of the Game

The object of each round is to dispose of all your cards by a combination of melding, laying off, and discarding. In order to do any melding or laying off, you must begin by fulfilling your contract for the round currently being played.

There are two kinds of melds, runs and sets.

- A run consists of consecutive cards of the same suit, such as ♣4 ♣5 ♣6 ♣7.
- A set consists of three cards of the same rank, irrespective of suit, such as ♦5 ♦5 ♠5.

Once it has been melded, a sequence can be extended by adding additional consecutive cards at either end. The longest theoretically possible sequence being 12 cards long with a three at the bottom and an Ace at the top. A set can be extended by adding additional equal ranking cards.

When a player goes out, by disposing of all their cards, the other players score penalty points for all the cards remaining in their hands. The object of the game is to be the player with the lowest score at the end of the series of seven rounds.

The Contracts

The contracts in each successive round are as the following.

- 2 sets of 3
- A set of 3 and a run of 4
- 2 runs of 4
- 3 sets of 3
- A set of 3 and a run of 7

- A set of 3 and 2 runs of 4
- 3 runs of 4 (Alt: 2 sets of 3, a run of 4 and no discard.)

The Play

The player to dealer's left takes the first turn. A turn consists of:

1. The Draw

The player must either draw the top card of the stock pile or take the top card of the discard pile. A player who chooses to draw a card from the stock pile must first give any other player who wishes the opportunity to take the discard (see below).

2. Melding

The player may place sets and runs from your hand face up on the table. When melding, you must lay down exactly the combination of sets and runs which is required by the contract for the round you are in. For example, you cannot lay down one group if you need two, or if you need a sequence also. When you meld, you may meld more than the minimum number of cards required. For example if you have a run of a greater number of cards than four, or a set of more than three, you may meld the additional cards. You may meld only the combination required by the contract. For example, if the contract calls for a set and a run, you may not meld two sets and a run. Melding is optional - you are not required to meld as soon as you are able to.

3. Laying off.

Laying off is adding cards to sets or runs which have already been melded - both your own and those melded by your opponents. You may lay off only if you have already melded. You may not lay off before the turn in which you meld. There is no limit as to how many cards you may lay off in one turn. Laying off is **optional** - you are never obliged to lay off cards if you do not wish to.

4. The Discard.

At the end of your turn, you **must** discard one card from your hand and placed it face up on top of the discard pile (see Round 7: Alt. below).

Play continues with players taking turns clockwise around the table until one person has gotten rid of all the cards from their hand.

It can occasionally happen that the stock pile runs out of cards. If a player wishes to draw a card when there are no cards left in the stock pile, then you take all the cards of the discard pile except the top one, shuffle them together, and place them face down to make a new stock. The top card of the old discard pile remains face up to start the new discard pile. Play then continues as before.

If there are a lot of May I?'s (see below), it is conceivable that both the stock pile and the discard pile might run out of cards. In that case the play ends. There is no winner and everyone scores penalty points according to the cards that they have in their hands (see scoring).

Taking the Discard Out of Turn (the "May I?")

If at the start of your turn **you choose** to draw from the stock rather than take the discard, any player who desires the card on the top of the discard pile may ask for it by saying "May I?" (hence the name May I?) If several people want the discard, it goes to the person that asked first. The player who takes the discard in this way must take in addition the top card from the stock as a penalty card.

After someone has taken the discard out of turn, it is possible for a different player to take the next card of the discard pile in the same way, also taking a penalty card from the stock pile along with it. There is no limit as to how many times this can be done, but the same player is not allowed to take two successive cards from the discard pile in this way.

Only when the other players have had the opportunity to take any cards they want from the top of the discard pile does the person who was about to play draw from the stock and continue their turn. Note that the play resumes from its original point - the turn to play does not jump to the person who takes the discard.

Note also that if the player whose turn it is to play wishes to take the card at the top of the discard pile they may do so, without taking a penalty card from the stock pile, and no one else then has the chance to take any discards.

Deuces

Deuces may be used in either sequences or groups, to substitute for any missing card.

If a deuce is played in a sequence, any player who has the card which the deuce is representing, and who has already melded their contract, may, during the laying off phase of their turn to play, replace the deuce in the meld with the card it represents. The deuce must remain with the same meld. For example, a player has a run: ♣5, ♣6, ♦2, ♣8 where the deuce represents the ♣7. You have fulfilled your contract and are holding the ♣7. On your turn you may lay off the ♣7 and move the ♦2 to represent the ♣4 or ♣9. If a run is complete, 3 through A, any deuces contained may not be replaced as there is no place to move the deuce.

Round 7: Alt.

In the final round, you must meld all your cards at once. As you have melded all your cards, there is no discard - play ends immediately after the meld.

Scoring

When someone goes out by getting rid of all their cards, play ends and the other players score penalty points for all the cards remaining in their hands, the cards scoring as follows:

Number cards	Face value.
Face cards	10 points
Aces	15 points
Deuces	20 points

At the end of the seventh and last round, the player with the lowest total score wins.