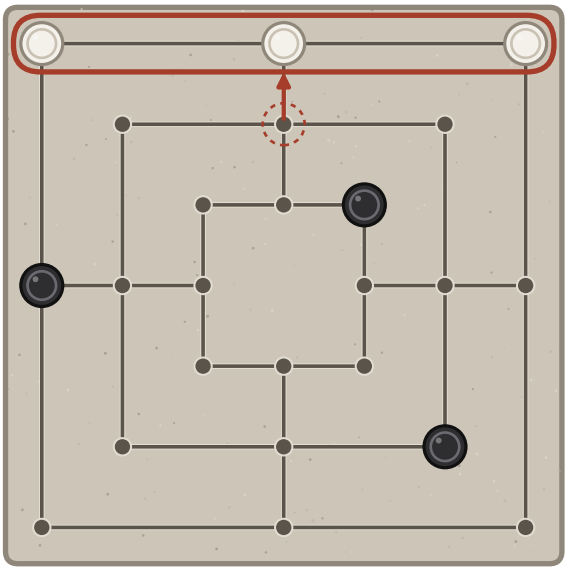
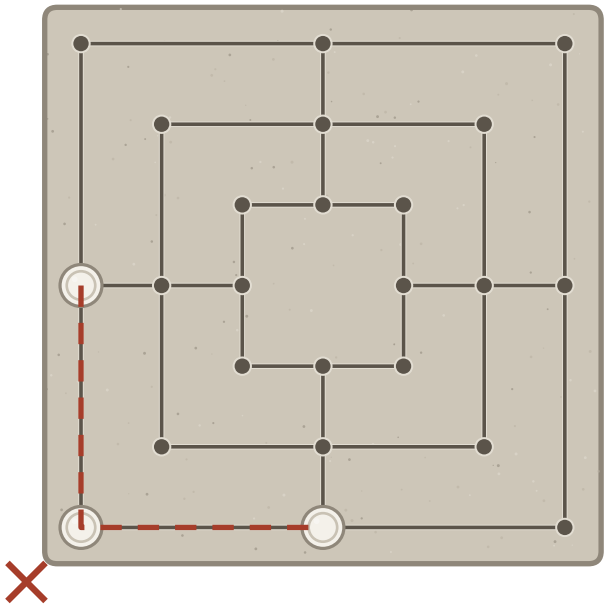
Nine Men's Morris: How to Play

2 players · about 15-20 minutes · ages 7 and up



A mill: 3 light pieces in a row along one line. Take a dark piece!



NOT a mill: these 3 bend round a corner, so they are not on one line.

1. **Set up**

   The board starts empty. Each player has 9 pieces (the pieces sheet, or 9 light and 9 dark coins or buttons). Flip a coin: the winner chooses a color, and light goes first.

2. **Place**

   Take turns putting one piece on any empty dot. Keep going until all 18 pieces are on the board.

3. **Make a mill**

   Three of your pieces in a row along one line is a mill. Each time you make a new mill, take one of your opponent's pieces off the board (two mills in one move still take only one). You may not take a piece that is in a mill, unless all of their pieces are in mills. Pieces taken off never come back.

4. **Move**

   Once all the pieces are placed, take turns sliding one piece along a line to the dot right next to it, if that dot is empty. You may break up your own mill and move back into it later to make it again.

5. **Fly**

   When you have only 3 pieces left, your pieces can fly: move one to ANY empty dot.

6. **Win**

   You win when your opponent has only 2 pieces left (on the board and in their hand together), or when it is their turn and they cannot move. If the same position comes back 3 times, or nobody makes a mill in 20 moves each, it is a draw.

About these rules: People have played this game for at least 2,000 years, in many places, so there have always been small differences in the rules. These are the rules most people play today.