

How to Play

The Basics



Notes, sustains, and the timing zone.

Playing Notes and Sustains

When a colored note reaches the timing zone, press its key to play the note. You can play left handed, right handed, or with both hands:

Left Hand	A	S	D	F
Right Hand	J	K	L	;
Both Hands	A	S	L	;

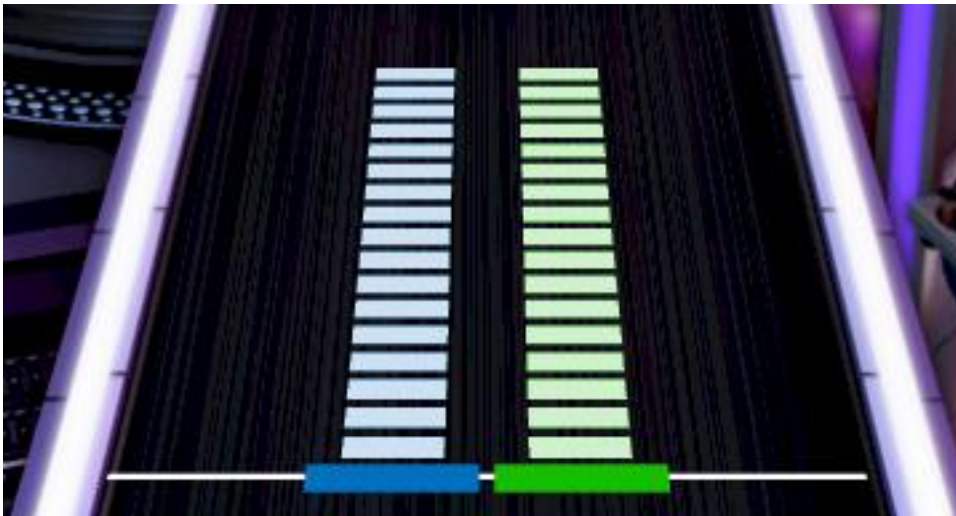
Timing matters! You score best by hitting the note exactly when it reaches the timing zone. You score less if you press the key too soon or too late. If you are way too soon or too late, you miss the note.

A note with a "tail" is a sustained note or a sustain. Press the right key as usual when the note reaches the target zone, then keep the key pressed down until the end of the tail reaches the target zone. You score bonus points for making a sustain (in addition to scoring the starting note) based on how and when you release the key. Releasing too soon or too late gets a lower -- or zero -- sustain score.

If you miss the starting note of a sustain, you automatically miss the sustain part, too. The tail goes gray when this happens.

Chords

When you see a line connecting two or more notes, those notes are a chord. If the notes in a chord have tails, the chord is sustained, as shown below. Play each note and each sustain as usual. Hitting two or more notes in a chord gets a bonus score.

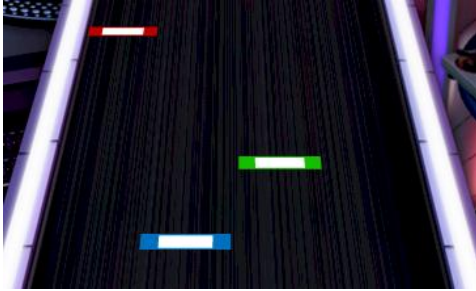


Meters



- Performance Meter: How well you are doing in your performance. (You can also just listen to the audience's reaction-they'll let you know if they like you or not!)
- Score: Your current score.
- Score Multiplier: Your current multiplier. You start at x1 and can get higher multipliers for mix power and streaks.
- Mix Power Meter: This fills up as you hit mix power notes (see [Mix Power](#)).
- Streak Counter: This appears once you have a streak of at least 20 notes going (see [Streaks](#)).

Mix Power



Mix power notes are specially marked, as shown at left.

The Mix Power Meter is in the lower left of the screen. It starts empty, but as you hit mix power notes, it fills up. Once it is at least half full, you can press Space Bar to start your mix power performance.

Your score is doubled during a mix power performance. During a performance, the track and notes change their appearance to show you that mix power is on. When they turn

back to normal, mix power is over.

One strategy is to get to know your music well and use mix power performances in places where you can rack up the points.



Streaks

You have a streak going when you hit 20 notes without missing any notes or pressing any wrong notes (pressing a note key when a note for it is not in range). Once a streak starts, your score is doubled. You get higher multipliers for keeping a streak going a long time.

If you miss a note or press a wrong note, your streak immediately ends.

Levels of Difficulty

There can be up to five levels of difficulty for a song: novice, easy, medium, hard, and expert. Some simple songs may have fewer levels.

A song at the higher levels has more notes and more chords than the same song at a lower level. Expert really is for experts.

The timing for hitting notes is tougher at the higher levels of difficulty than at the lower ones. For example, an early key press that hits a note on medium will likely miss the note on hard.

Fail-Outs

If the audience doesn't like your performance, they may boo you off the stage, ending the song early. Almost everyone fails a song sooner or later, so don't worry about it. Try again and show them who's the star!

If you fail out often at a difficulty level, consider playing at a lower level for a while to build up expertise. You cannot fail out at novice level.

Guest Play & Free Accounts

You don't have to sign up for Octagon or log in if you do sign up. If you don't sign up or log in, you play as a guest. You can play any of the featured music as a guest.

Octagon accounts are free. If you have an account and are logged in, you can do many more activities:

- Add and play your own music in the game.
- Send challenges to and receive them from your friends.
- Have your accomplishments recorded on the High Scores boards.
- Win awards and earn bonus Boom Coins.
- View a detailed profile of your stats, challenges, awards, coins, and more!

Boom Coins

You receive Boom Coins when you [sign up](#) for Octagon. You earn bonus Boom Coins for many activities. You can also [purchase coins](#).

You spend coins when you [add songs](#) to the game.

Activity	Bonus Coins
Sign up	<#> for signing up <#> more for signing up from a friend's invitation
Play (to completion) 1 song in a day	<#>
Play 5 songs in a day	<#>
Play 10 songs in a day	<#>
Invite friends	<#> per friend for friends #1-5 invited in a day <#> per friend for friends #6-10 invited in a day <#> per friend for friends #11-15 invited in a day
Challenge friends	<#> per friend for friends #1-5 challenged in a day <#> per friend for friends #6-10 challenged in a day <#> per friend for friends #11-15 challenged in a day
Play (to completion) each challenge you received from a friend	<#>, no daily limit
A friend you invited signs up for Octagon	<#>, no daily limit
Add songs to the game	<#> for adding 10 songs <#> for adding 25 songs <#> for adding 50 songs <#> for adding 100 songs <#> for adding 500 songs <#> for adding 1,000 songs <#> for adding 5,000 songs <#> for adding 10,000 songs

Days in Octagon are based on the Pacific time zone.

Challenges

If you are [signed up](#) and [logged in](#), you can send challenges to and receive them from your friends.

How to send a challenge:

- Go to [Songs](#) and click the Challenge button.
- Enter the email address of the friend you wish to challenge.
- Choose a song and level of difficulty for the challenge.
- Play the song. When the song is over, your score and your challenge will be emailed to your friend.
- When your friend takes the challenge, your two scores are compared. The highest wins! You will be notified of the outcome by email.

You can earn bonus Boom Coins for sending challenges; see the [Boom Coins help](#) for more info.

Awards

There are many awards you can win in the game, such as for achieving high scores, playing frequently, inviting and challenging friends, collecting music. It's rumored that there may be some secret awards that you might unlock as you play the game.

If you play as a guest, you do not keep any awards you won after you quit the game. You keep your awards if you are [signed up](#) and [logged in](#). Your rewards are displayed in the [My Awards](#) tab of [My Profile](#). You can find out more info about the awards and what it takes to earn them in this tab.

Fans

You gain fans when you play songs. If you play as a guest, your fans stop following you after you quit the game. Your fans keep their interest in you if you are [signed up](#) and [logged in](#) when you play. Your fans are displayed in the [My Stats](#) tab of [My Profile](#).

You gain the most fans by playing songs very well at high levels of difficulty. You can, however, win fans at all levels of difficulty except novice. You can gain extra fans for winning various awards.

Your fans like you and want to hear you play frequently. Each day that you do not play at least one song to completion, you lose some fans. If you miss a few days, you can start regaining some of your lost fans when you start playing again, as well as gaining new fans.

My Profile

Click [My Profile](#) on the main menu to display your Octagon profile. You must be [signed up](#) and [logged in](#) to view your profile.

My Stats

Click the [My Stats](#) tab to see your key statistics like high scores, recent plays, and even stats for each song you've played while logged in.

My Awards

Click the [My Awards](#) tab to see the awards you've won in the game. There are many awards you can win, such as for achieving high scores, playing frequently, inviting and challenging friends, collecting music. Check out the tab to see what you can get. It's rumored that there may be some secret awards that you might unlock as you play the game.

My Challenges

You can challenge your friends to play a song, and be challenged by your friends in turn; see the [Challenge help](#) for more info. Click the [My Challenges](#) tab to see the open and finished challenges you have sent or received.

My Account

Click the [My Account](#) tab to see info about your Octagon account. You can change your email address, password, and contact options. You can see your Boom Coin balance and purchase coins here.

My Coins

You can earn bonus Boom Coins by doing various activities in the game; see the [Boom Coins help](#) for more info. Click the [My Coins](#) tab to see info about the bonus coins you've won. You can also see your Boom Coin balance and purchase coins here.

FAQ

System Requirements

- Operating System: Mac OSX, Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7. (Linux is not supported yet.)
- Browser: Firefox 3+, Internet Explorer 7+, Safari, Chrome. (Opera 9+ is only partially supported at present. You can play songs in Opera but must use a supported browser to add music to the game.)
- JavaScript: JavaScript must be turned on in your browser. (Most browsers come with JavaScript turned on, but if you or your security software turned it off, you need to turn it on again.)
- Java: To add songs to the game, Java also must be turned on in your browser. (Many browsers come with Java turned on, but if you or your security software turned it off, you need to turn it on again.)

Java 6 Update 14+ is recommended. Some earlier versions of Java will not run correctly. Visit the [Java web site](#) to update Java and check on your installed version.

- Flash: Flash Player 9+ is required. If you have an earlier version (or none at all), the game should automatically provide you with details on how to update Flash. You can also visit [Adobe's web site](#) to get the latest version of Flash Player.

Playing Songs and DRM

You can play any m4a (iTunes), mp3, or mp4 music files on your computer. From [Songs](#), click the Add Song button and choose a song. Octagon will analyze the music and create the notes that you will play in the game. This process can take a couple of minutes, but you can play other songs in the game in the meantime.

Note: Octagon cannot play any music that has DRM (digital rights management) copy protection. If you bought music from iTunes before late 2008, it was most likely copy protected. Copy protected files from iTunes have the file extension .m4p. Octagon cannot process or play these files. If you have a song in .m4p format you wish to play, you must purchase a new (unprotected m4a) version of it from iTunes.

Using Multiple Computers (Where's my music?)

You can play your Octagon music on different computers, as long as you have a copy of your music on each computer. For example, if you played a song on your laptop in Octagon and want to play it on your home computer, you need a copy of the song's file on your home computer. (Octagon uses the music file on your computer to play the music and does not at present transfer your music files between computers.)

Optimizing Performance

Octagon is an intensive music game and can sometimes be affected by other applications. If the game slightly pauses or stutters during play, try the following:

- Don't have a lot of programs running in the background. Quit the ones you don't need.
- Heavy Internet use can affect the game. Avoid things like downloading files, uploading files, or playing videos in the background.
- Some email and IM applications can affect the game when they receive messages. If you notice the game stuttering when a message arrives, quit the app or just set it to check for messages only when you tell it to. If you can't live without constant email or IM, then maybe you need to chill and play more music.

Accuracy, Mastery, and Score

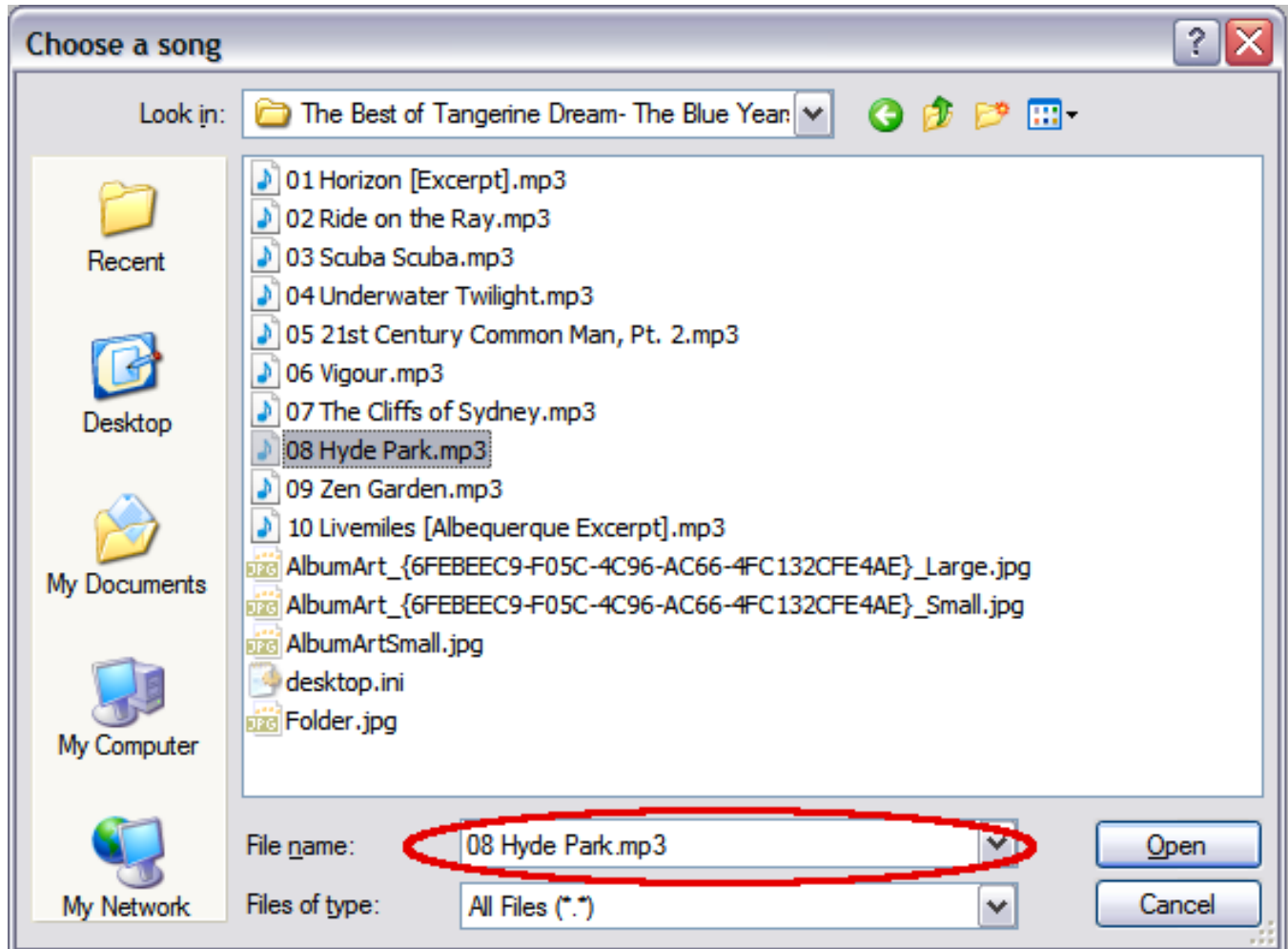
When you finish a song, you get rated for both Accuracy and Mastery. What's the difference?

Accuracy tracks if you hit a note, missed it entirely, or pressed a wrong note key. If you hit all the notes with no misses or wrong notes, you'll get 100% accuracy.

Mastery and Score also track how well you hit the notes. Timing matters! You get the best mastery and score by hitting a note exactly when it reaches the timing zone. You get less mastery and score if you press the key too soon or too late.

If you play at Novice level, you get feedback on how well you are hitting each note as you play. You can turn this feedback on at higher levels by checking "Mastery feedback" in Settings. To improve your mastery, practice trying to get great and perfect hits.

Can I rename a song in the song browser?



No. Changing the name of the song in the "File name" field does not rename the song. Instead, the browser will attempt to find a song with the name you typed in, fail, and not add any song to the game. For example, if you change the name "08 Hyde Park.mp3" to "Hyde Park", there is no song in the folder named "Hyde Park", so no song will be added when you click the "Open" button.

Just click on a song and "open" it to add it to the game.

Troubleshooting

The game is programmed in Flash, and Flash may occasionally get out of sync after heavy use. If so, just press the reload button on your browser to reload the game.

What's a "Day" in the game?

Days in Octagon are based on the Pacific time zone.

What do I do when my firewall shows a “Java is attempting to access the Internet” security alert?

Click the “Allow” or “Always Allow” button. If the alert has a “remember this setting” checkbox, check that box before pressing the button.

Some firewalls, including those from Norton and Zone Alarm, may display a security alert like “Java is attempting to access the Internet” when you browse your songs to add them to the game. Java must be able to contact the Internet in this case so that your songs can be analyzed and made playable in the game. This is normal behavior for the game and is not a security threat to your computer.