Pyramid

Pyramid is one of the classic solitaires. It is simple to learn, makes pretty patterns on the table, and has surprising depths in its strategy. Be sure to read On the Screen: Pyramid has some unusual features that you'll want to know about.

Layout Size: The whole window won't fit on the shortest screens, but if you use small cards you can see enough that you won't need to scroll.

Difficulty: Easy to learn, hard to win. While Pyramid may seem mechanical at first, there is actually a lot of scope for planning and analysis.

Rules: Shuffle the deck and lay out 28 cards, face up, in a pyramid pattern: one card at the top, two in a row below it and overlapping it, three in the next row, and so on to the bottom row of seven cards. Each card except those in the bottom row should be overlapped by exactly two cards in the row below. Place the remaining cards in the stock, face down. Two other piles, the wastepile and the discard pile, begin the game empty.

Cards may be turned up from the stock, one at a time, and placed face up on the wastepile. Both the top card of the stock and the top card of the wastepile are available for play, as are all cards in the pyramid which are not overlapped by other cards. Pairs of available cards whose ranks add to 13 (e.g. Ace + Queen, or 5 + 8) may be picked up and discarded. Kings may be discarded singly. When the stock has been emptied, you may re-deal by picking up the wastepile and turning it over to refill the stock. You may redeal twice, for a total of three passes through the stock. The goal is to discard all cards.

(See picture: Pyramid. The 6 and 7 of Hearts at the bottom of the pyramid can be paired and discarded. This exposes the Queen of Spades; either that Queen or the Queen of Hearts can be paired with the Ace of Spades and discarded. This in turn exposes the 3 of Diamonds, which can be paired with the 10 of Hearts, and so on.)

Scoring: Because it is hard to win a game of Pyramid, there is a scoring system that allows you to play for "par." Play the game to the end; if you manage to discard all cards in the pyramid, note whether you did it during the first, second, or third pass through the stock. When the game is over (no more moves are possible, and you have used both your redeals), count the cards that were not discarded. Calculate your score by subtracting that number from:

50, if you cleared the pyramid on the first pass; or
35, if you cleared the pyramid on the second pass; or
20, if you cleared the pyramid on the third pass; or
0, if you did not clear the pyramid.

If you can play six games and finish with a total score of zero or more, you have made par and won the match. Solitaire Till Dawn counts a win only when all cards are discarded, but also calculates your score for each game and keeps a running total.

On the Screen: Pyramid is an unusual game, and requires some unusual behavior on a computer screen. You should read this section carefully to get the most from Pyramid in Solitaire Till Dawn.

To match up and discard pairs of cards, drag one of the cards onto the other and drop it. Both cards will then automatically move to the discard pile.

Kings may be dragged straight to the discard pile, or simply clicked to make them move automatically.

There are several ways to deal cards from the stock onto the wastepile. You can simply drag them to the wastepile. You can click them; they will automatically move to the wastepile (except for Kings, which will move to the discard pile). You can select Deal from the Other menu, or type âŒ˜D.

When the stock is empty, the hand will show in its place. The hand will display the number of redeals remaining. To redeal, click the hand, or select Deal from the Other menu, or type âŒ˜D.

Normally, if you deal a card from the stock onto the wastepile, and that card forms a pair with the card on top of the wastepile, both cards will automatically move to the discard pile. Sometimes you may want to keep those cards in the wastepile. Just below the stock and wastepile is a checkbox labeled "Auto-Match" (see picture: Pyramid). Click this checkbox to change whether the program will automatically discard matched pairs from the wastepile. By default the box is checked, and pairs will be discarded.

If you change your mind and decide to discard a pair that is already on the wastepile, just click the top card: both cards will be discarded.