

# GAMES FOR PEOPLE

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# Ninja

*A game for three or more players*

Everyone stands in a circle, far enough apart that their outstretched hands only just touch. Someone yells “one, two, three, NINJA”, and on “NINJA” everyone strikes a ninja pose. Starting with the player who yelled out, everyone takes it in turns to move. The order of players is determined by the order that players were in when in the starting circle. On their turn, players must make a single fluid movement. If they strike the back of someone’s hands, that player is out of the game. If a player moves out of turn, they are out of the game. The only exception to this is if someone is trying to hit their hands - in which case they can dodge, but movement is only allowed above the waist. When there are only two players left, they reposition back to back, take three steps forward and then resume playing (whoever’s turn it was next goes first). The winner is the last player left.

This game is a perennial favorite at indie videogame meetups. It happily accommodates pretty much any amount of players, though past about twenty it can be a little slow moving. There are variations in the rules on what constitutes a valid move — but personally I am a fan of “a single, fluid movement”.

# Back To Back

*Contributed by Pete Vigeant*

A wonderfully dangerous game is Back to Back. Basically you need to push yourself to your feet with your arms linked and back against another player. They’re trying to do the same thing (this is a coop game) so it’s normally successful if you have similar body types. Then you add two more people and form an outward facing square of sorts, attempting the same challenge... Then more players. It’s all good in theory, but many folks fall over during the second and subsequent levels. And you can really out the folks that are less fit, which is a bummer.



# Fives

*A game for three or more players. With hands.*

Everyone stands in a circle, and puts one hand in, either clenched as a fist or open. They take turns, going clockwise around the circle. On a player's turn, they count “one, two, three” (doing the hand bobbing thing, most likely) and then two things happen simultaneously:

- everyone (including them) can change their hand from open to closed or closed to open.
- they name a number (presumably a multiple of five)

If the player successfully names the number of fingers in the circle (so, the number of open hands times five), then they are out, and play continues without them. The last player left in loses.

In subsequent games, the loser will normally start. There is a small ritual for starting the game— the player bumps the top of their fist on the other players' fists, counting up as he does so.

This is a good drinking game, although I will leave “at what point do you drink” as an exercise to the reader. The best drinking games have open-ended opportunities for drinking anyway. You can play a slightly longer version by having each player put two hands into the circle - both fists can be played either as independent players, or as two lives with a single opportunity to guess. One rule (imported from International Drinking Rules) is that if a player expresses any celebration at getting out, then they are back in the game. This rule is nicely cruel.

# Mafia

See *Werewolf*

# Pushing Hands

*A game for two players*

Both players stand, feet shoulder width apart, about a foot from each other. Both players put their hands out flat in front of them. Each player can push the other person's hands (as the name would suggest), or pull their hands away. The loser is the first person to move their feet.

This game is played by Tai Chi practitioners. Being good at this game does not involve being the most forceful — it requires having the best inner balance, and being able to fake out your opponent by pushing or withdrawing hands in order to let them over-extend themselves. Like many of these things, it's both meditative and deeply annoying to play against someone better at it than you. I believe I learnt this game from Alex May, who does do Tai Chi, and is therefore considerably better at this game than I am.

# Listelance

*A game for two players and a crowd of spectators*

Put some dub-step on, loud (this step is optional). Both players are blindfolded and hold two wooden spoons, handle out. The crowd spins the players around, and points them in the rough direction of each other. They both then move in slow motion, doing kung-fu moves - the slower and more dramatic the better. The first player to hit the other with their spoon wins. The crowd should enforce slow motion, and cheer especially bad-ass moves.

I know of this game through Doug Wilson of Die Gute Fabrik. He is a big fan of games where you move in slow motion, and this was one of the design influences of his game Johann Sebastian Joust.

# Lemon Joust

*A game for a number of players not less than two.  
Every player should have two wooden spoons & one lemon.*

Each player balances a lemon on one of their spoons, holding the spoon by end of the handle. Then they attempt to knock the lemons off their opponent's spoons. The last player with a lemon still on their spoon wins.

There are endless variations on this game : For example, playing with one spoon, and one lemon — either knocking the lemon off with your spare hand, or only with the spoon you're using. Or the same, but each player uses two spoons, each laden with a lemon. Once a lemon is knocked off, you can play either using the now free spoon to attack, or tucked behind your back.

There's also an optional rule for "clamping" lemons -- if you use your free spoon to clamp your lemon onto your spoon, you can't move until you have "unclamped". But, personally, I think that the advantages of "clamping" are overrated.

I wrote a long email in 2011 to Douglas Wilson, creator of JS Joust (which did not stem from Lemon Joust, as I had once assumed) explaining the history of the game as I understood it, portions of which follow.

I can't recall the first time I played it, but it might have been at Gamecamp 4, where me and another couple of people proposed a physical gaming session. Someone (whose name I might be able to remember when not just back from a night out, therefore half-cut) had brought along the spoons and lemons for a game, and we played it, with these rules:

- 2 players
- Ideally in the middle of a circle of people clapping in rhythm.
- Each player has two spoons and two lemons
- When you lose a lemon, the spoon goes behind your back.
- The winner is the first person with a lemon remaining. This may be no-one.

which was pretty ace. It's pretty much a slow circling dance between two people, each angling to get the higher ground in order to knock the

lemons off, while trying to remain stable themselves. Lots of tension. And as the clapping inevitably gets faster, the players get more aggressive.

But I have also seen it in another context. Do you know Coney? Well it's kind of run like a spy network of playfulness. And at some "secret agent training", one of the sessions involved playing Lemon Jousting. "Doc" brought out a bag of spoons and lemons and distributed them. Now, he's been playing it for a fairly long while now (I got the impression a year plus), but I'm not sure where he picked it up. But his set of rules was a little different:

- 2 teams
- each person has two spoons and one lemon
- if you are standing still, you may "clamp" the lemon, ie hold it in place with both spoons.
- people may have lives, which allows you to retrieve and reset your lemon. We played with 3, but I guess it's dependent on the # of players.
- the winning team is the one that is left with a life.

Now this version suddenly has extra team tactics. It has the same attack with one hand, watch after the other hand vibe that JS Joust has. It's less of a dance (the other one is a beautiful dance between two people, angling for position, slowly rotating, the focus taut between them). The "shove their elbow" move works. People are more aggressive. You have to watch your back.

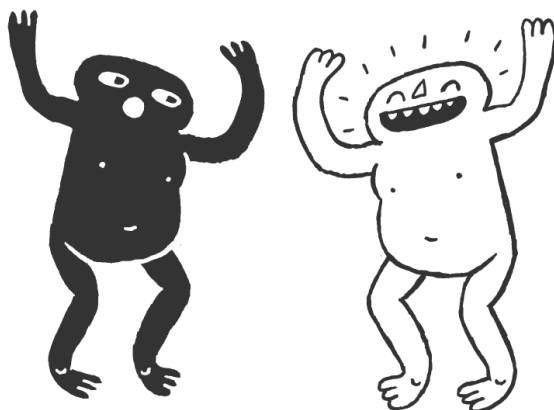
But of course these versions change - in a game played by game designers that's pretty much inevitable.

Half full beers cans sounds violent and messy, but at least you're upping the stakes. I'm not sure whether pain of burning (with candles) maybe ups the stakes too far, but I guess it's worth a try. We did actually try Ninja Lemon Jousting once, but it didn't really work.

Since writing this email in 2011, I have learned that Mink (also known as Claire Bateman) is the only one who will admit to being present when the game was created.

# Danish Thigh Slapping Game

*A game for two players, with a variation for more once you've got the hang of that.*



Both players stand facing each other, the right distance apart to play a game about clapping hands together. Move anything in your front pockets out of your front pockets. Now : At the same time, players slap their thighs and then extend their hands in one of three directions : up, to the left or to the right. Now, they slap their thighs again. If players have mirrored each other, they should, instead of reaching again, clap their hands together. Now keep going, in a steady (and probably slowly increasing) rhythm. Slap thighs, then either extend hands or clap, slap thighs, then either extend hands or clap. I guess you lose if you fuck up, but this game isn't particularly about that.

Optional extra rule: if both players reach up, then on their next turn as well as clapping they should also jump up just a little.

This can also be played with more than two players: Stand in a circle. Play as before. But this time, if two players both reach towards the same corner then they clap together with both hands on the next turn. If multiple people reach up, then they all clap hands as a circle on the next turn. If more than two players reach up, they'll have to clap different people with each hand.

This game is great. If you play it when you're enthusiastic and drunk, you can really make your thighs sore.



The following four games were contributed by by John I. Gottschalk

## Cereal Box

*Setup:* Place a cereal box in the middle of the room

- » Each player in turn, tries to bite the cereal box while not touching the box in any other way, and not letting their knees touch the ground.
- » If they bite the box, they rip a bit of it off and its the next person's turn.
- » If their knees hit the ground, they're out, and it's the next person's turn.
- » The winner is the person who last ripped a piece off the box.

## Human Knot

*Setup:* half the group holds hands, and then rolls up into a tight knot.

- » The other half of the group has to try and get each person loose individually.
- » The half that isn't in the knot wins, by getting them loose.

(Often played boys v girls, because guys don't mind getting physically harmed by girls, but with all things considered that's kinda sexist)

## Dodge The Chair

*Setup:* Everyone holds hands in a giant circle, and in the middle of the circle you put a chair.

The group then tries to move players into the chair (while still holding hands) by running and pulling eachother.

When a player hits the chair, they leave the circle, the 2 people connected to them now join hands.

The last person (or sometimes 2 people) not to have hit the chair wins.

# Psychiatrist

To be honest I haven't played the game in awhile, and I think I even played it with 2 different groups with different rules. So this is just off my memory and basically my analysis of the game, as I've never heard of a formal rule set.

- John Gottschalk

*Story:* A psychiatrist is in a room with a group of people suffering the same anxiety, paranoia, phobia or some such. Where these people were pulled from, who put them there, and why they have this problem is unknown to us, and to the psychiatrist. In any case, it's his or her job to figure it out. Not solve it mind you, just diagnose the psychosis.

*Setup:* Out of a group of players, 1 of them chooses or is chosen to be the Psychiatrist. That player leaves the room to an isolated location, where he can not hear the other players, which will now be called the Patients.

The Patients then determine what their phobia, anxiety or paranoia is. They have to determine 3 basic aspects.

The first is what exactly they are scared of, the 'Psychosis', as previously mentioned. It is what the Psychiatrist is going to have to guess. [e.g. Existential Anxiety]

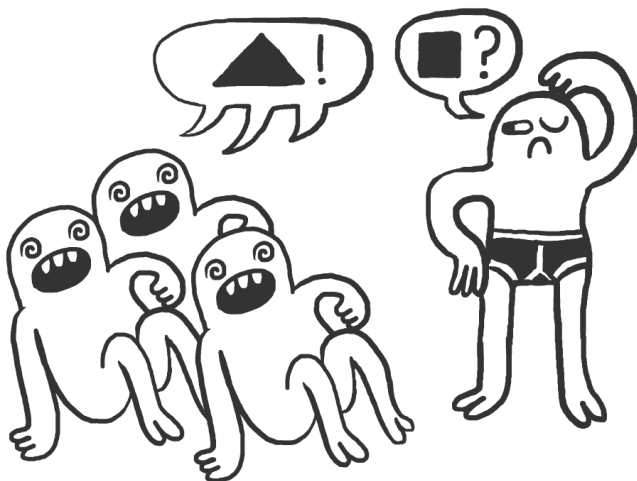
The second thing is the 'Trigger', that will set off the psychosis. This is often connected to something the Psychiatrist does, but it does not have to be. [e.g. Someone asking them a question using 'why'.]

The third and final thing for them to determine is the 'Symptom'. This is essentially the 'tell' that happens consistently, and from which the Psychiatrist can determine the psychosis. The symptom does not have to be related to the psychosis in any other way than what the trigger denotes. [e.g. Biting on their nails, repeating a word 3 times, etc.]

After this they call the Psychiatrist back into the room, and the game is begun.

NOTE: In many simple cases the first step is skipped over, because the Psychosis is made up out of the following 2 aspects, and the Psychiatrist only has to guess the Trigger & the Symptom. And in some situations, where the Patients choose a Compulsion, then the Psychosis, the Symptom & the Trigger can all be the same thing.

*Game:* The Patients have to sit in a circle and stay consistent with their psychosis, consistently showing their symptom whenever the trigger happens. The Psychiatrist can ask any number of questions they want as long as it isn't a direct diagnosis. Once the Psychiatrist has a theory about the Patients' psychosis, they can ask whether their diagnosis is correct. The Psychiatrist may do this 3 times. The Patients have to tell the Psychiatrist whether it is correct or false. If it is correct the Psychiatrist has won, if it is false all 3 times, the Psychiatrist has lost. Once either situation happens, a new Psychiatrist is chosen, and the setup is begun again.



NOTE: There is generally no win/lose condition for the Patients.

From the standpoint of the game, one might say the Patients win when the Psychiatrist loses, but it isn't really consistent with any narrative, and may lead to the players specifically trying to mislead the Psychiatrist.

On the other hand if one says the Patients win the game when the Psychiatrist wins the game, then they are far more likely to start breaking out of character to give hints about the psychosis, or be disappointed when the Psychiatrist doesn't figure it out.

In any case most players won't realise there isn't a formal win/lose for them, and the group will function in both manners depending on their demeanor.

# Turtle Wushu

*A game for two or more players, and lots of tiny plastic turtles*

Players stand in a circle, with a turtle on the back of one hand. The turtles are introduced to each other by players bring their hands into the middle of the circle so they are almost touching before pulling them slowly back whilst whispering ‘Turtle Wushu’. The game has now begun. Players attempts to knock the turtle off opponent’s hands using their free hands aiming to be the last turtle standing. They must only hit another player’s hand, any other part of the body is considered a foul. If you lost your turtle via another player’s foul then you may pick your turtle back up. If you commit a foul once, there is no penalty but a player repeatedly fouling may be kicked out of the game. Last turtle standing wins.

I believe I learnt this game from Zuraida Butler. It was created by Invisible Playground, and more details can be found at [http://ludocity.org/wiki/Turtle\\_Wushu](http://ludocity.org/wiki/Turtle_Wushu)

# The Hammer Game

*Also known at “Hammerschlagen” or “Nagelspielen”. See also the American game “Stump” which is similar.*

*A game for two to tenish players. This game requires a tree stump, a supply of roofing nails and a hammer.*

Everyone taps their nail into the tree stump, just enough so that it will stand up by itself. Turns are taken, going clockwise around the circle of players. On their turn, each player holds the hammer by the head, and in a single motion : flips it up in the air, catches the handle and drives the head of the hammer down on your nail.

The end of the hammer is not allowed to line up with the nail before the toss. If a nail becomes uselessly bent, they can take their turn to straighten the nail up instead. The loser is the last person to hammer their nail until it is entirely flush with the surface of the stump. If this is being played as a drinking game, and it probably is, then they down their drink.

Hard mode is played with a claw hammer, hitting in nails with the claw edge.

There is another quite distinct version of this I played at Roskilde with Mads Johannsen (from Glitchnap). It goes like this:

An number of nails equal to the number of players is tapped into the stump. On a signal, everyone touches a nail. This is their nail for the rest of the game. Everyone takes it in turns to flip the hammer and strike down on a nail, as before. However, this time, instead of aiming for their nail, they are aiming to hit other's nails. The first person to have their nail tapped in until it is flush with the surface loses, and (as we were playing this) does a beer bong. Play continues - as soon as your nail is fully tapped in, you stop playing. The player with the second to last nail standing also does a beer bong. For the final nail, the last remaining player names a number and a direction (ie "3 left"). Everyone hammers this one nail -- but the person who drinks is the offset from whoever finally hammers the nail down (so, for example, the person third from the left of the final person to hammer the nail in)

This variation probably depends on the mechanics of drinking to be fun -- a lot of the fun hinges upon making other people drink or not -- with the distinction of some of the crueller drinking games using this mechanic that a missed hit can make a person's nail crooked, making it harder for them to get knocked out. I can't remember the rules for straightening nails in the version, but I would assume they would be the same as the other, or done outside of the turn structure by whoever is running it.



# Dwile Flonking

*An East Anglian game for two teams*

At Christmas this year, I told my Dad about this zine. He immediately launched into an elaborate explanation of the rules & terms of Dwile Flonking. Being drunk, I couldn't remember them in detail, and instead sent myself an email containing only the words "Dwonklewhiler dad" as a reminder. After recovering it's proper name, I found this informative Wikipedia article, which entirely makes sense of the fragmentary memories I have.

## Dwile flonking

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The pastime of **dwile flonking** (also **dwyle flunking**) involves two teams, each taking a turn to dance around the other while attempting to avoid a beer-soaked dwile (cloth) thrown by the non-dancing team.<sup>[1]</sup>

"Dwile" is a knitted floor cloth, from the Dutch *dweil*, meaning "mop", and "flonk" is probably a corruption of flong, an old past tense of fling.<sup>[2]</sup>

### Rules

According to the Friends of the Lewes Arms, "The rules of the game are impenetrable and the result is always contested."<sup>[3]</sup>

A "dull witted person" is chosen as the referee or "jobanowl", and the two teams decide who flonks first by tossing a sugar beet. The game begins when the jobanowl shouts, "Here y'go t'gither!"

The non-flonking team joins hands and dances in a circle around a member of the flonking team, a practice known as "girting". The flonker dips his dwile-tipped "driveller" (a pole 2–3 ft long and made from hazel or yew) into a bucket of beer, then spins around in the opposite direction to the girters and flonks his dwile at them.

If the dwile misses completely it is known as a "swadger" or a "swage". When this happens, the flonker must drink the contents of an ale-filled "gazunder" (chamber pot ("goes-under" the bed)) before the wet dwile has passed from hand to hand along the line of now non-girting girters chanting the ceremonial mantra of "pot pot pot".

A full game comprises four "snurds", each snurd being one team taking a turn at girting. The jobanowl adds interest and difficulty to the game by randomly switching the direction of rotation and will levy drinking penalties on any player found not taking the game seriously enough.

Points are awarded as follows:

- +3: a "wanton" - a direct hit on a girter's head
- +2: a "morthor" or "marther" - a body hit
- +1: a "ripple" or "ripper" - a leg hit
- -1 per sober person at the end of the game

At the end of the game, the team with the most number of points wins, and will be awarded a ceremonial pewter gazunder.

## History

The earliest documented real-life game of dwile flonking was played at the Beccles Festival of Sport in 1966. According to BBC research, "No one can remember the score, although team members recalled feeling 'pretty fragile' the following morning." There is a reference to the sport which predates the Beccles Festival - originating in the fertile imagination of Michael Bentine, who had a show called *It's a Square World*, on the BBC. A skit in one episode had explorers stumble across a group of natives playing the sport in the darkest reaches of the English countryside. The episode aired sometime between 1960 and 1964, when the show was originally broadcast.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

The organisers of the Beccles festival event were Andrew Leverett and Robert Devereux, printing apprentices at Clay's of Bungay and Clowes of Beccles, respectively, who had apparently been shown the rules on the only decipherable portion of a parchment document entitled: "Ye Olde Booke of Suffolk Harvest Rituals", which George High of Bungay claimed to have found the same year while clearing out his late grandfather's attic. The inaugural teams were formed by employees of Clay's and Clowes.

Some suspicion was cast on the game in 1967, when the *Eastern Daily Press* ran an article which stated that the county archivist had failed to find any mention of the game amongst the county records. Dwile flonking featured as a key element in legal hearings later that year, when assessing an application for a licence extension to cater for the dinner dance of the Waveney Valley Dwile Flonking Association. The Waveney Valley Dwile Flonking Association went on to make their television debut on *The Eamonn Andrews* television programme in 1967, which resulted in letters from Australia, Hong Kong, and America requesting a flonking rule book.

*Schott's* apparently retcons the game, citing historical evidence in a 16th-century painting by Pieter Brueghel the Elder: *Children's games*.



# Egg Jarping

*(AKA egg fight, egg knocking, egg pacqueing, egg picking)*

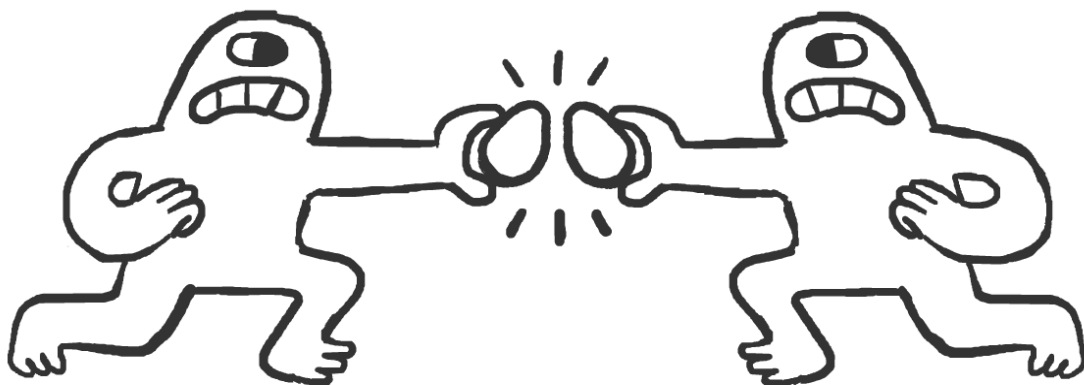
*A game for two players, and two hard-boiled eggs, painted in different colours.*

Players take it in turns to tap their eggs into their opponent's egg in an attempt to crack the shell of their opponent's egg. This must be done without cracking the shell of your own egg.

Before play can begin, one player must challenge the other player by shouting "Hold Up!" which is the call to 'pick' eggs followed by singing

*Who got a egg?  
Who got a egg?  
Who gotter Guineakee?  
Who wanter pickawee?  
Who pick? Who pick?  
Who gotter egg?*

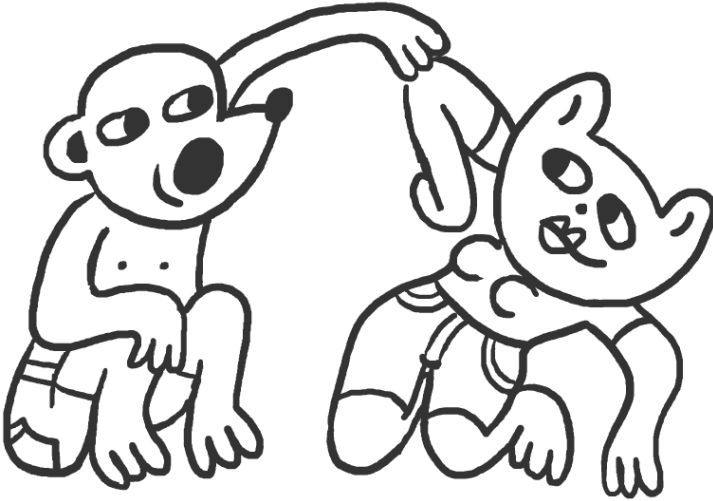
Pat will sing that song at the slightest provocation, and frankly we're all getting sick of it.



# Boop

*An endless game, played by everyone who knows of it.*

To play boop, touch someone on the elbow, and say “Boop!”



Booping someone is easy (who guards their elbows at all times?). Booping someone spectacularly is hard.

The one rule of Boop is “You can’t boop your butcher”. What this means, in plainer language, is that you can’t boop someone who has just booped you.

Advanced play : if the social context is correct, you can also do a higher-stakes boop: the nose boop. Or there is the Barry, which is a karate chop that comes just short of the persons throat. Or there is the Mildred, where you push someone’s forehead with your open hand. Or there is the George, which is a Barry to the chest. It’s not a good idea to do a George in pretty much any circumstance.

Boop was born, and grew, over the course of GDC 2014.

The next few games are, as might be evident, submissions via Twitter.

## Bolshevik Circus

**@leehsl** : @v21 @patrickashe Bolshevik Circus, deceptive tag game. Hidden random roles per round: 1 president, 1-3 guards, 1 assassin, 3-5 communists.

**@leehsl** : @v21 @patrickashe Majority of communists touching = declare a Communist Party, communists win! If assassin kills president, also win

**@leehsl** : @v21 @patrickashe Guards can touch anyone and yell JAIL to remove them. Assassins can do same three times per round.

**@leehsl** : @v21 @patrickashe President goal: survive the revolution. Guard goal: help keep President safe. Highly moddable/tweakable. <END>

## Hoopfight

**@leehsl** : @v21 @patrickashe HOOPFIGHT: two players hold one sturdy but not weaponized hoola hoop. Only use one hand, start opposite each other.

**@leehsl** : @v21 @patrickashe ...put the majority of the other player inside the hoop to win.

## Prox

**@leehsl** : @v21 @patrickashe PROX: all players blindfolded in quiet bounded space. Anyone can yell 'PROX', everyone must freeze. Yeller can't move feet

**@leehsl** : @v21 @patrickashe but attempts to touch another player. If successful, touched is out. If not yell is out. Then, yell yells RESUME.

**@leehsl** : @v21 @patrickashe players unfreeze and game continues until only one person left. Score by how many people you caught, not survivors.



# Twofaced

**@leehsl** : @v21 @patrickashe TWOFACED: players simultaneously say emotions/states, then attempt to portray all emotion on face simultaneously.

## Grandmother's Footsteps

**@tassosstevens** : @leehsl @v21 @patrickashe Grandmother's Footsteps, of course. My favourite variant being what I first encountered modded in Lonnie...

**@tassosstevens** : @leehsl @v21 @patrickashe ...players on both sides of Grandma. It turns it into Blink. Play it in a house, as I then did @DubYouthTheatre .

## Grandmother Ninja

**@leehsl** : @v21 @tassosstevens @patrickashe Oh! A great ninja mod from my students: Grandmother Ninja. Assign numbers and yell it on your ninja turn...

**@leehsl** : @v21 @tassosstevens @patrickashe if you are killed go back to respawn line. If you kill grandma, become grandma. 1 to 3 minute timer.

**@leehsl** : @v21 @tassosstevens @patrickashe Grandma starts 5 paces away from respawn line. Whoever is grandma when timer goes off wins!

## Mr. Hit

**@tassosstevens** : @leehsl @v21 @patrickashe And another favourite workshop game: Mr Hit. It's tig/tag/it but whichever player is IT, when they tag someone...

**@tassosstevens** : @leehsl @v21 @patrickashe ...the tagged is out and IT continues. A player under threat can shout out the name of another live player...

**@tassosstevens** : @leehsl @v21 @patrickashe ...who then becomes IT. Last standing two players win. Tactics for different configurations quickly emerge.

# Mitt Rowdy

*A game for two players (plus a referee). Requires two oven mitts & one large coin*

A third player (referee) tosses a coin in the air. The players can only touch the coin with the mitt and should keep their other arm on their back at all times. The first player to pick up the coin wins.

There is a more civil version: play using more than one coin.

This game was created by our friend Jonatan Van Hove. The official ruleset can be found at <http://joon.be/mitt/>

# Mitt Crowdy

*A game for more than two players. Requires an oven mitt per player & one or more large coins.*

Like Mitt Rowdy, but with more players.

# Finger Jousting

*A game for two players.*

Players lock hands in such a way that their index finger with outstretched towards their opponent, similar to how players lock hands before an arm wrestle. Players then attempt to poke their opponent anywhere on the body except for the right hand jousting arm whilst avoiding being poked in return. Matches are often played best out of 3/5/7/etc.

There is a now-deleted Wikipedia page with more information, currently located at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User:13jej> This also links to the World Finger Jousting Federation, which holds tournaments and has more formalized rules.

# Mercy!

*(AKA Mercy Mercy, Uncle, Pinochle, Peanuts, and Cravens)*

*A painful form of bullying for two players (or a variation for more).*

Players face each other and hold each other's hands, interlocking fingers and thumbs. Players then attempt to bend and contort their opponent's wrists and hands to inflict pain. When a player can't take the pain anymore they yell Mercy! (or Peanuts, Danny Stavros Buck, Pinochle or Uncle depending on the game you're playing) and they have lost.

Can be used as a form of bullying. There is a one-handed variation, played as you'd expect. This game can also be played with more than two players - everyone interlocks hands — as a person taps out, the two players on either side link up. There's another variation called Flooring Mercy - a player can win by 'flooring' the other player as well by forcing them to declare Mercy!

# Get Down Mr. President!!

*An endless game for groups of friends.*

Basically, the gist of the game was that when you were with a group of friends, at any random time, a member of the group would stick their finger to their ear, as if receiving a message. Eventually, others would notice and copy the movement, and whoever was last upon sticking a finger to the ear or hadn't noticed gets tackled to the ground regardless of location, and the others would yell "Get down Mr. President!!"

Thanks to iluvboobies123 from Urban Dictionary for this game, and the write up - originally posted at

<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Get+Down+Mr.+President!>

# My Leg's Achin'

*A game for two players (with legs and fists)*

One player punches the other player in the leg. The other player punches the first player in the leg. This continues until people decide they don't want to play any more.

I am assured this is a traditional Irish game. I've not played it myself, so I give you these rules as a second-hand memory from a night where Brendan Caldwell taught Alice O'Connor how to play, and proceeded to lose handily.

# Navy SEALs

*A violent game for two players.*

Players stand in a circle, in their right hand players are holding an (imaginary) knife with the blade pointing to the ground. With their left hand they must hold the person to their left's right wrist. Players must then attempt to stab the person to their right with their knife, whilst using their left hand to protect themselves from the person trying to stab them. If a player is stabbed, they must leave the circle and the players close the circle by grabbing the wrist of the person to their left now. Last player standing wins.

I think I learnt this from Jonatan Van Hove (see also *Mitt Rowdy*). We played it once, and everyone was sufficiently injured that no-one wanted to play it again.

*Pat interjects* : This is a lie, I taught some people it at a party a few months later where it was a great success with people wrestling around in the very thin hallway for a good half an hour until everyone's wrists hurt too much. Pat then later played Five Finger Fillet and stabbed himself in the finger with a large knife. Wine and knives don't mix, kids.

# Slapsies

*(AKA hot hands, red hands, slap jack, red tomato, slaps, or hand-slap game)*

*A game for two players.*

Players hold their hand in a prayer-like position, with their hands pointing towards their opponent and with their hands almost touching. One player goes first and attempts to slap the other player's hands. The player being slapped must try and avoid being slapped by pulling their hands away. The slappers turn continues until they miss a slap and then the roles switch and the slapped is allowed to attempt and slap the other player. This continues until one player can take no more and quits the game.

Play can switch once a player has been slapped instead of if the slapper misses. Players can hold their hands flat out in front of them with palms facing the ground, the slapper has their hands hovering above the slapped. Play is the same except the slapped cannot flinch too much. If slapper acts as if slapping (but does not ever bring his hand over) and the slapped flinches and moves his hands far enough from the slapper's hands so that their hands are no longer overlapping, then the slapper gets a free hit at one of the slapped's hands. If the slapper slaps the slapped's hands once his hands have left the overlapping area, the slapped gets a free hit at one of the slapper's hands, and the roles switch as if the slapper had hit..

I have fond memories of playing this at school til my hands were raw. And playing Blackjack, with the stakes being the number of "raps" (strikes to the knuckles with a deck of cards) you'd get on losing. Stakes is possibly a misnomer here : the number of raps would be determined by cutting the deck. The card shown would be the number of raps, and the colour would determine how hard they would be given.

# Werewolf

See *Mafia*



# Folk Games I Have Played

1982-1992

*Contributed by Holly Gramazio*

There was a game where we lay back in swings and closed our eyes, me and my friend Summer. When someone made too much noise nearby we'd sit up and yell DON'T WAKE ME UP at them, loud, leaning forward in our swings, top-of-our-lungs anger. We won if we both yelled. If only one of us yelled, then we lost. This is the first game I remember playing.

There was a game where someone was a Hider. The Hider would hide my lunchbox, anywhere in the school, and everyone else tried to find it and get it back to the handball court before the Hider caught them.

There was a game where Summer and I would phone each other after school, and one of us, let's say me, would get a wooden spoon and I'd hit it against things in my loungeroom, and Summer would try to guess what I was hitting. There was a two-metre circle of things around the phone that I could reach - stretching the coiled cord as far as it would go - and after a while Summer could guess them all. I learnt the sound of her spiral staircase bannisters, and her kitchen sink, and her music stand, and her many many books, though I couldn't ever tell one book from another.

There was a game we called Bockwinkel, because that was the surname of the man who taught us. "It's not called Bockwinkel," he'd say with growing anger. "I didn't make it up."

There was a game where you'd walk along the beach and point at things, slightly disgusting things on the sand: tangled-up seaweed, old ice-cream sticks, some blobs like big transparent jelly-beans that we called jellyfish (though I guess they weren't really). If you pointed at something your opponent had to pick it up and hold it in her hands while she counted down from ten, and if she made it all the way to zero she could throw it at you. Summer with seaweed in her hair, and her mother yelling down at us to stop fighting.

There was a secret version of Spin the Bottle, where you'd be sent into the cupboard with a boy (or just pushed behind a curtain, if someone was already in the cupboard), and you'd kiss each other. The secret rule was that you would stand there and stare at the boy, just stare at him and not smile and not say anything, and then after thirty seconds you would leave and he would follow.

There was a game called Truth, Dare, Double Dare, Kiss, Pash or Torture. "Kiss" was a specific type of dare, to go and kiss someone; "pash" was the same but more so, a really heartfelt kiss. Pash. "Torture" was hitting someone ten times, usually not very hard, just open-handed slaps on the upper arm. We made up a new rule, which was: once someone had picked one of the options nobody could pick it again, not until all the remaining options had been taken. Because it's not much of a game otherwise, right? But nobody wanted to play it with us once we'd fixed the rules, so we sat on a tree trunk instead and ate barbecued sausages and looked out through gum trees into the car park.

There was a game of strip poker. Nobody really understood how poker worked, but we figured out some approximate rules based on a girl's brother's memory of a time he hung out with some older kids. Summer and I were good at games, for eleven-year-olds, so we sat there while the other eleven-year-olds lost more and more of their clothes. "Shall we stop this," we eventually said, one boy down to his boxer shorts, a girl in nothing but her sundress, her undies crumpled up and shoved into her bag in the corner. "Yes," they all said. "Yes, let's stop."

# Five Finger Fillet

*(AKA Knife Game, Pinger, Nerve, Bishop, Stabscotch)*

*A dangerous game for one or two players and a knife (or other object capable of stabbing)  
Seriously, don't play this game.*

Player spreads their hand out on a wooden table or similar with spaces inbetween each of their fingers, they use the knife to stab inbetween their fingers, gaining speed and attempting to see how long they can keep going until they stab themselves in the finger. The normal order for which finger to stab is 1-2-3-4-5-6-5-4-3-2 (repeat) where 1 is the space before the thumb and 6 is the space after the little finger.

There are various different orders that are used for which fingers to stab in between. Common in Australia is the order 1-2-1-3-1-4-1-5-1-6 (repeats), Europe uses 1-2-1-3-1-4-1-5-1-6-1-5-1-4-1-3-1-2 (repeats) or an even more complex order of 1-2-1-3-1-4-1-5-1-6-2-6-3-6-4-6-5-6-4-6-3-6-2-6 (etc.).

# Split The Kipper

*This game requires two players and a knife. Remember that last game involving a knife, and how you shouldn't play it? That also applies for this game. In fact, I think it applies to most games that are "knife-centric".*

Both players stand facing each other. The first player to go throws the knife into the ground near their opponent's foot. The 2nd player then moves his foot to the knife and pulls it out of the ground. 2nd player repeats, throwing the knife at the 1st player's feet whilst keeping their feet in the new position from pulling the knife out of the ground. This is repeated until a player falls over when retrieving the knife. The player still standing wins. A player instantly loses if they throw the knife into the other player's foot.

# Mumblety-Peg

*(AKA mumbley-peg, mumblepeg, mumble-the-peg, mumbledepeg or mumble-de-peg)*

*A game for two players and two knives. Again: don't play games involving knives. Do I really need to tell you this?*

Players stand facing each other with their feet shoulder-width apart. The first player throws their knife into the ground so that it sticks as near to their own foot as possible. The 2nd players does the same and the winner is the player who gets their knife closest to a foot. A player automatically wins if they stick the knife into their own foot. The loser must pull the knife out of the ground with their teeth.

'Chicken' is an even more dangerous variant of Mumblety-peg in which a player bets on how many times the other player can 'stick' the knife in the ground between his legs. Each time the throwing player sticks the knife into the ground in the middle of the player's feet, the betting player must move whichever foot is closest to the knife to where the knife stuck in the ground. The throwing player then throws again and the betting players move his foot again. This is repeated until either the throwing player has thrown the knife enough times or the knife strikes the betting player in which case the betting player loses. If a player chickens out then they lose. 5 is generally the upper limit for bets due to the distance between the player's feet decreasing by half each time.



# I Demand Satisfaction

*A game for four or more players and one fewer hat than you have players.*

Here's how to play, if you fancy a go. Fancy hats are best, but playing it in pubs has seen everything from newspaper hats to gloves being worn atop heads.

The rules:

1. Someone needs to be the host. You'll need to think up accusations, cajole people into the pompous spirit, and gently nudge play along if it stalls.
2. Everyone else is a guest and must wear a hat. Quick, pick your favourite before someone else does!
3. To begin each round, the host declares "I demand satisfaction!" and levels an accusation against a guest they believe has wronged them, some minor infraction of social order and etiquette. "I demand satisfaction!" you may cry, "This blaggard here stole my treasured signed photograph of Angela Lansbury!" Start small; it'll grow.
4. "Well I never!" the accused shall ideally cry. Technically all they need to do here is accuse someone else of the misdeed, repeating the accusation and adding another accusation onto the end. But the more they act outraged, defend their character, and cast aspersions on whoever they're accusing, the better. "Why I never! Dear madam, you know I prize your friendship and trust above all. That you could accuse me of... no, no, I know the true villain is this slattern here, who not only stole your prized signed photograph of Poplar's dearest daughter, but lays it beside themselves on their pillow every night and kisses her on the lips," they might say.
5. This newly accused player does the same, only they and each subsequent player can choose to replace the infraction added by the previous player with one of their own. The accusation doesn't simply grow longer; it also changes as it goes.
6. If any player believes someone else has slipped up, forgetting an item from the list of charges, or failing to add or change one, they should cry "Damned unsporting!" This is how people get knocked out. They briefly explain what mistake they believe the accuser made, then it goes to a vote.



7. “Damned unsporting!” joins in everyone who agrees, ideally drumming the table dramatically too. It’s a simple majority vote: if most people agree they slipped up, clearly they’re the rotten cad who did all them horrible things wot people said. They may not have actually made a mistake, mind, but no one said democracy was fair.
8. De-hat that rotter! They’re out of the game. Swipe the hat from their head, and give it to whoever lead the cry of “Damned unsporting!” They have to wear that hat too, of course, stacked up on top of their own.
9. If a player has several hats when found guilty, they’re stripped of them all.
10. After a spot of acting appalled to discover someone they thought a dear friend was, in fact, a monster, the host needs a need accusation, and away we go again.
11. Rounds continue until all hats rest upon the head of one player, the host’s only true friend.

As it’s a game all about performance and spectacle, the hammier and sillier you can all make it, the better. Accusations will inevitably turn risqué. Try to mediate that, considering what’s appropriate for the group.

A few variants for advanced players:

No host. Whoever wins a round gets to level the next accusation.

Drop-in, drop-out. Spectators can join in the game by leading a “Damned unsporting!” This turns it into a rolling game, with a natural turnover of players. This worked well with the London Indies gang, as people will want to slope off for a pint or to chat with someone.

Thanks to Alice O’Connor for both creating this game, and letting us steal her description and explanation of it’s rules. There’s yet more info available here: <http://shoving.biz/post/74375162663/i-demand-satisfaction>

# Heads Down Thumbs Up

(AKA “Seven Up”, “Heads Up, Seven Up”, “Heads Up, Thumbs Up”, “Thumbs Up, or Seven Up”)

*A game for large group of people, seated at desks or tables.*

Two to seven people are selected whilst the rest are told to place their heads on their desks with their thumbs up in front of their head by someone saying “Heads down, thumbs up!”. Those players that were selected walk around the room and secretly press down or squeeze the thumb of one of the people with their heads down. Once all those selected have squeezed or pressed down a thumb, those who had their thumbs interfered with have to try and guess who did it. If they guess correctly they swap places with the person who touched their thumb. Once everyone has guessed then the next round begins.

This is a common game in classrooms, but it’s not very exciting.

# That Game Where You Shove Each Other Off Things

*A game for two players, and a narrow piece of geometry. Like, a wall, or a series of posts, or something like that. Not too high, and not too hard underneath.*

Each player stands at either ends of the wall. They advance towards each other and try to get the other player to fall off. The winner is the last player to touch the ground.

You can play with extra rules, like “no grabbing”, or finessing what happens if both players fall off more or less simultaneously.

I have a dent in my leg from playing this game, very late at night on a slippery bench in the Meadows in Edinburgh.

# 1000 Blank Cards

*A game for more than two players, and a big pile of blank cards of some kind.*

Everyone starts with a hand (3? 5? — you decide) of blank cards. Play starts by proceeding left around the circle, with players putting down a card, and then the text written on that card takes effect. At any time, a player can write on any blank card in their possession. The rules of this game therefore collaboratively emerge from the text written on the cards. The winning condition is also specified by the text written on cards — in practice, due to the power every player has, the ending of the game is a collaborative process where players co-operate to put it to bed.

It's fun to play this game with cards left over from a previous session, if you have those. Some people say that a card needs a title, a picture and text to be valid — that seems fair to me. In games I've played, a notion of points takes hold, though they rarely increment sanely, or mean much. It's also fun to make cards that prohibit players from speaking, blinking, using the letter e, sitting down or some other such nonsense.

## Connected Words Game

*A game for three to six players (ish)*

One person names a thing or concept. The next player names a thing or concept which relates to the previous thing or concept. The next player names a thing or concept which relates to the previous thing or concept but not to the thing or concept before that. Repeat.

This is the first game I remember designing. Me and my family would play it on car journeys. I guess it is possible to play it competitively, going for adjacent concept into order to cause the next player to forfeit, but we usually played it co-operatively. I hate anagrams, but have a good vocabulary, so I like this game.

# Standoff

*A game for a group of people sitting in a circle*

I know this game as “that laserpistols game” -- I played it as a kid, and then recreated the rules from corrupted memory a few years back. But Douglas Wilson remembers it better, and wrote it up in some detail in 2012 on the Die Gute Fabrik blog (the post is at <http://gutefabrik.com/blog/?p=2041>). Take it away, Doug:

Standoff is a simple game for two or more players – ideally a group of 5 to 10 people. It’s kind of like Rock-Paper-Scissors meets John Woo action flick. I learned the game back in college, through my then-roommate John Shedletsy. The game and its variants go by many different names, but “Standoff” is the name that I use these days. In this post, I’m going to explain several variations of the game, including my own favorite version.

## **Standoff – Version #1** (Recommended)

Players stand in a circle, facing each other. The game plays out as a series of rounds.

Before each round, each player pantomimes a gun with one hand, placing it in an imaginary holster by their waist. Then, on the count of three, all players simultaneously act out one of three choices:

1. Shoot an opponent – point your imaginary gun at an opponent of your choice
2. Shoot yourself – point your imaginary gun at yourself, touching your temple
3. Shoot nobody – point your imaginary gun at the sky

Players then hold their pose while they collectively figure out who has been shot.

Shooting an opponent kills that opponent... unless they are shooting themselves. In that case, your attacking shot is reflected and you die. Note that shooting yourself reflects all bullets fired at you, so you could potentially kill a whole slew of attackers.

If you shoot yourself but nobody aims at you, you actually end up shooting yourself and you die. Note that you do survive if you reflected any attackers. If two players aim at one another, both players die. Note that it is also possible to die in a whole circular chain of people shooting one another. Finally, shooting the air serves as a kind of conservative move, played if you think all your opponents might try to shoot themselves.

Any players who were killed are eliminated from the game, and the remaining players continue to the next round. The game continues until only one player remains. That player is the winner. Also note that it's possible for all players to die, in which case there are no winners!

As with most folk games, performative embellishments are encouraged for maximum fun. For example, my friends and I often pretend to reload our imaginary guns before each round, with the appropriate gesture and sound effect and everything.

Even within this particular version, there are a few modifications you might want to try. In my own personal favorite variation, each player gets two guns, one on each hand. After all, it feels way more badass to wield dual pistols! In this mode, you can either aim both weapons at the same target, or point them at different targets. We typically play that two guns beats one gun – both when firing at one another, and when firing at someone who is shooting themselves. Obviously, though, you could tweak these particulars to your own liking. Another way to play the double pistol variant is to simply make each player lose one of their guns each time they are hit. Effectively, this means that each player has two lives (though they become less powerful after losing a life).

### **Standoff – Version #2** (sometimes called “James Bond”)

This version of the game works similarly – players stand in a circle and try to be the last player standing. However, the three actions you can take differ in this version:

1. Shoot – point your imaginary guns at an opponent of your choice
2. Reload – holster your two guns by you waist
3. Block – place your two arms in an x-shape across your chest

Note that in this version, you almost always play with dual pistols, because you'll have to use both of your arms anyway for the block gesture. However, in the standard version, you can't direct your guns at different targets or actions.

In this version, each gun can only hold one bullet. That's why the reload action exists – you have to reload before you can shoot again. Players themselves are responsible for remembering who is loaded and who isn't.

Blocking, as is probably obvious, successfully deflects an attack. However, blocking does not reflect an attack, like shooting yourself does in Version #1 (see above).

The key decision in this version is gambling on when to reload. This choice is especially foregrounded when only two players remain, one loaded and the other not. The loaded player only wants to shoot when they think the unloaded player will reload.

(EDIT: indie dev Alan Hazelden points out that, from a game theoretical point of view, this version of the game can “deadlock” in a stalemate. If two players remain, and only one is loaded, the unloaded player shouldn’t ever reload until the loaded player shoots. In practice, most players want to avoid this situation, and will still chance a reload just for the fun of it. Nevertheless, it is true that more “serious” players may refuse to budge. The bazooka mod I mention in the next paragraph does suggest one possible fix, and I’m sure there are many other creative solutions!)

As in Variation #1, there are lots of possible variations here. My friend Tim Garbos taught me one variation where reloading your gun three times gets you a bazooka! A bazooka can shoot through a block, but is beaten by a (faster) regular bullet. In this variation, part of the challenge is to keep track of your opponents’ reload counts.

### **Comparing Version #1 and Version #2**

As I see it, a big disadvantage of Version #2 is having to remember who is loaded and who isn’t. In the chaos of battle, it can be easy to forget – even your own status! On the flip side, one might argue that this is an advantage – that keeping track of the current game “state” is one of the intended challenges of the game.

A main disadvantage of Version #1 is the lack of narrative plausibility. That is to say, why does shooting yourself reflect bullets? It doesn’t really make sense, and some players get hung up on that lack of coherence. Then again, I would argue that the strange game logic is actually an advantage. My friend Dick Hogg (of Honeyslug fame) put it best:

*I actually like the wrongthink of it. [...] It makes no sense but it has the authentic feeling of weird warped logic that you get in kids games, playground games etc.*

Another key selling point of Version #1 is that shooting yourself feels fun. Even just physically, holding up your finger to your temple makes the gambit seem all the gutsier, as if you were playing Russian Roulette or something.

Alan Hazelden then replied in a comment :

Disclaimer: I have only ever played version 2. Thanks to V Buckenham (@v21) for teaching me originally!

We keep track of state by having each hand either in a fist (unloaded) or a pretend gun (loaded).

On further thinking, the stalemate actually occurs when both players are loaded, not when one player is loaded and the other is not as I originally suggested. Either both players fire and kill each other, or one player fires and the other blocks (giving the blocking player the advantage), or both players block and nothing changes. Unfortunately, I think the bazooka variant only creates a different stalemate. (Maybe a less likely one?)

Some variants coming up:

- Two hands = two guns. You can fire both in the same turn, or use them separately to get two firing goes before having to reload.
- With two guns, you can have the rule that you can only reload one gun at a time. Takes longer to get fully loaded, makes firing only one gun per turn more useful.
- With the above rules, we tried having guns overheat and kill you if you had both guns loaded for three consecutive turns (i.e. blocking three times in a row with both guns loaded).
- Without the hand = gun rule, you can reload as many times as you like, each giving you one extra bullet. You have to keep track of your ammo.
- I haven't played with the bazooka variant, but I played one game with one-reload-at-a-time plus the rule that firing both guns at the same player got past a block. This made for an un-fun early game however — if there's too many active players it feels random/unfair to be blocking but still get killed.

With V and a few others, came up with a weird zombie variant:

- If killed, you must spend at least one turn dead
- After that turn, you may as your action awaken
- If awakened, you may as your action lunge at any living player (or just stand where you are, moaning for brains)
- If shot while lunging, you die again (but can reawaken after one turn)
- If you lunge at someone who is blocking, you are stunned for a turn

I think originally we had it so that zombies could only attack adjacent players, but forget how we defined adjacent. Possibly you can only lunge in one direction or the other, and you attack the first living player in that direction around the circle. I guess players are then shooting in a direction as opposed to at specific zombies. More playtesting required!

# Game Police

*A game for two players*

One player names a thing (that they see, most likely. The other player assures them that it isn't a game. Repeat until the joke stops being funny, or until you swap roles.

This... well, I guess it's not a game. This not-a-game was invented by Holly Gramazio and V Buckenham while trying to invent Tiny Games. Apparently this game wasn't a good fit for the general public, and so was not included in the final app.

We're also including a selection of games that did make it into the Tiny Games app. An ulterior motive is that I worked on some of them. Thanks go to Alex Fleetwood and the ghost of Hide&Seek for allowing us to include them here.

## Ping!

*A game for any number of bold players and the stop-bus button.*

*Does this bus have a button to press when you want to get off? And can you see the exit?*

Everyone likes ping-pong, right? In this game, you get a point every time you ping it (only once per stop, don't get carried away).

However, if nobody gets off - well, you don't want to waste the driver's time, right? So it's time to hop off yourself.

Before every stop, feel free to ping the button to let the driver know you want to get off. Get a point for every ping you ping. But only **ONCE** per stop. If you ping and nobody gets off, you've lost, and must exit.



# Footloose

*A game for two or more players and an office chair.*

*Do you have an office chair with wheels? And are you willing to woosh around the office on it?*

In this game, you're going to guess how far you could get around the office on a wheeled office chair, in one minute, without touching the ground. Whoever reckons they can get furthest has to prove it.

Whoever has been working here longest: look around the office. From where you are, how far do you think you could get on a wheely chair in **ONE** minute, **WITHOUT** touching the ground? You can push off desks, grab hold of door frames, anything like that - but not touch the floor.

Now invite everyone else to say how far they think they could go. Who thinks they can go the furthest? They have to prove it, while the others set a timer. If they fail, the next person who thought they go furthest gets a chance for glory.

# Pick Up The Pace

*A game for three or more dawdling players.*

In this game, your aim is to shout "I'm behind you!" from at least ten feet behind the other players.

However, you can't turn around and go back in the direction you came - you can only slow down or stop. If anyone notices a player doing that, they can call out "Pick up the pace!" and you have to catch up with them.

Can you get behind the other players before the game ends?

# Backbey Boad

*A two player game of racing your words against their wits.*

*Is there a route map somewhere nearby, with stops or stations marked on it?*

Are you in Bew Bork Biby? Or Bonbon? Belbourne, Bobonbo, Berbin? It doesn't matter - all you need is a map of local bus or train routes.

One of you will pick a route secretly, and race along it, reading out names - but beginning each syllable with "b". The other will try to spot which route you've picked...

Stand by the route map, and look at it carefully. The person whose name has the most Bs in it begins by secretly choosing a line on the route map. Starting at one end of the line, you're going to read out every marked stop or station - but you'll begin each syllable with "B". Hackney becomes Backbey, Avenue become Babebue - you get the idea.

You win if you can reach the end of the route before the other player puts their finger on the map - on the stop you're at. Then swap, and try it the other way round! Barber ban bit books, bight?

# Crossed Paths

*A game of memory and a powerful business metaphor for two or more players.*

*Is there a whiteboard nearby?*

Drawing a line through a circle on a whiteboard is easy - until you're doing it with your eyes closed and each line makes the circle smaller.

Take turns striking through an ever-shrinking space until only one player stands triumphant. Consider it a financial metaphor and declare this business training if you like.

Whoever grabbed a whiteboard marker first starts by drawing a big circle on the board. This is your playing space. Close your eyes, take a step forward, and draw a line through the circle. Open your eyes and scribble out the smallest section of the split circle. This bit is gone. It doesn't exist anymore. Accept it and move on.

Up steps the next player, eyes closed, to try to draw a line through the remaining space. If you split it, scribble the smaller part out again. Take turns drawing lines and scribbling out. Anyone who fails to strike through the remaining space is knocked out.

Keep going until only one player remains, declared an undisputed expert in the field of drawing on whiteboards. Why not play again, this time spinning players around first?

## That Wasn't Milk

*A game about milk and more mysterious things for three or more players.  
Do you have lots of milk and other ingredients?*

In this game, you'll be making "milk cocktails" for each other - milk plus one other ingredient.

Once you've made the cocktails, you'll have to try to guess the secret ingredient in yours to win.

To begin, everyone makes a "milk cocktail": a couple of tablespoons of milk, and another secret ingredient. Now everyone exchange cocktails, so you have one each. Now, drink your cocktail - can you work out what the extra ingredient is?

Tell everyone your guess! You get a point if you're right. Play three rounds - the player with the most points wins!

# Wallball

*AKA Patball. Also known (I think by my Dad) as Spotkick.*

*A game for two or more players.*

Players decide an order in which each player will take their turns. The first player serves by throwing a tennis ball at the floor near the wall so the ball will bounce and hit the wall. The next player can let the ball bounce once before returning the ball by hitting it at the floor and having it bounce off the wall so the next player can return it. If a player misses the ball or fails to hit the wall with their return then they are out and a new round begins starting with the first player again. When there are only two players remaining, the overall winner is decided by a first to two wins.

This game was invented in 1949 at Dulwich College where Pat's dad went to school. They invented an entire jargon to describe events and types of shot. This can be found on the Wikipedia page for Patball, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patball>, along with rules for other types of play such as a point based Patball known as 'Aces' or team based version called 'Kingpin'.

## Chair Ball Game From Ecole Philippe Gaulier

*A game for two players with two chairs, a rope and a ball.*

Place the chairs a good distance apart with the ball (ideally football sized) between them and the rope around the ball so that the players can just about reach the ball from the other side of the rope. Players stand either side of the ball and inbetween their opponent and their own chair, play begins when a player grabs the ball. The player that has grabbed the ball then must run and touch either of the chairs with the ball to win that round. They gain one

point for touching their chair and three points for touching the opponent's chair. If the player who didn't grab the ball manages to tap the other player before they touch either of the chairs then the player with the ball loses a point. First to five points wins.

I was taught this by Ed Rapley, who learnt it at the clown/theatre school Ecole Philippe Gaulier, on a dark campsite on the Devon coast. It was played slightly drunkenly on slippery wet grass, which could be considered 'hard mode'.

## Mime Boxing

*A game for five or more mimes.*

Five or more players stand in a circle (the more, the better). Each player forms an invisible "wall" by putting up their hands, palms forward. The wall extends on a plane from floor to ceiling between the player's hands. Other players cannot walk through a wall, but they can (and should) walk around it.

When a player forms a wall, they must stand still. The wall must come down while the player is moving.

During play, mimes move around the play area, putting up walls to block each other's movement. If a player is surrounded by three or more players' walls and can't go anywhere, they are OUT. Play continues until no more mimes can be taken out.

Players do not talk while boxing, but do emote wildly. You're mimes, after all.

Thanks to Jason Lee for letting us put this in. You can read more about it here along with a few variants: <http://floor.is/lava/mimeboxing/>

# Subs And Cruisers

*(AKA The Convoy Game)*

*Original author unknown*

*This version based on rules compiled by John Langfield  
and the school memories of James Wallis*

Create the course. This should be a loop of about a mile or 1.5 kilometres, with five clearly marked 'Ports' at roughly equal distances around the edge, and cover in between. Urban areas or wooded parks are ideal. Ports are marked by three flags.

Get lots of players and divide them into two–four teams, identified by shirt colours. For every 10 players in a team there should be:

- 4-6 Merchant ships
- 1-2 Submarines (can sink Merchants and Aircraft Carriers, can be sunk by Cruisers)
- 1-2 Cruisers (can sink Submarines, can be sunk by Aircraft Carriers). In some versions Cruisers are known as Frigates.
- 1 Aircraft carriers (can sink Cruisers, can be sunk by Submarines)
- 1 Q-Boats (can sink Submarines)

All ships apart from Q-Boats are identified by armbands. Q-Boats are armoured boats disguised as Merchants and carry an ID card. These cards can be swapped between Merchants. No other players can change ship-type during the game.

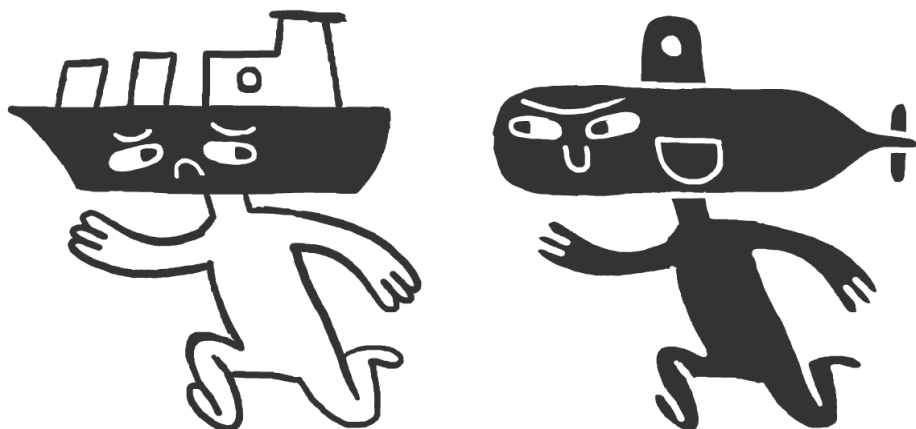
The aim is for the merchant ships of each team to complete as many circuits of the course as possible. Every circuit completed by a merchant ship scores one point. It is safest for merchant ships to travel in one or more convoys protected by cruisers. The different teams go around the course in different directions.

If a ship is touched by an attacker from an opposing team, it is sunk. Merchants and Q-Boats must return to the last port before rejoining the

game; all others go to a single central point in the middle of the course before they rejoin. Merchants and Q-Boats are safe when in port; subs and aircraft carriers are safe when touching a living tree or bush.

Merchants and Q-Boats have to stick to the course; the other ship types can range freely.

The game lasts 30-60 minutes and starts and ends with a loud noise.



*James Wallis also gave us these comments on the game:*

Folk music, as Earl Okin observed, is just music made by folk, and the roots of folk games are the same: they're just made by folk. They don't have to come from gritty street corners, comprehensive playgrounds or village greens. Some of them start elsewhere, and perpetuate in other, much less obvious ways.

I spent the late 1970s at a small boarding-school in Northamptonshire. Its name is less important than the fact it was very rural, set in large grounds on the edge of a small village, a former country house largely unchanged from when my father had been there in the 1940s. Its grounds included sports

fields, a wooded area called the ‘wilderness’ studded with rare tulips which the enterprising headmaster occasionally dug up and sold to the Dutch, a lake and a long driveway that looped around the school, connecting the front and back gates which geographically were only a couple of hundred yards apart.

In the summer term we played cricket, but if it rained we played Subs and Cruisers instead. Subs and Cruisers was a complicated game involving the whole school, modelled on the trans-Atlantic convoys of WWII. Most boys were Merchantmen, who would be escorted in convoys by Frigates and Aircraft Carriers, running from front gate to back gate and through the wilderness back to the front gate. This scored your team one point, if you weren’t attacked and sunk (chased and touched) by an enemy submarine, in which case you had to go back to the front gate and start again. Submarines can sink merchantmen. Frigates can sink subs. Aircraft carriers can sink frigates. Subs can sink aircraft carriers. And there are Q-ships, disguised as merchantmen within the convoy, which can also sink subs. Different ship types are identified by arm-bands. And added to all this is the other team, which is running around the course in the other direction, being harried by your side’s subs.

It does not, I have to say, communicate much of the experience of crossing the Atlantic with a cargo of butter in 1941. But it was fun even if you didn’t like physical games—and it’s quite clear that the point of Subs and Cruisers is to give about eighty pre-teen boys their daily dose of post-lunch exercise. It wasn’t an integral piece of school culture, it wasn’t something that anyone ever played on their own, and it does need a critical mass of about thirty players so it’s hard to start a spontaneous game of it.

But I do remember a conversation with my father about the game, in which he remembered it from his time at the school—and he left before WWII ended, which means that the game’s origins lie in a hellish and desperate situation that was actually going on at the time.

In the late 2000s I was casting around for an idea I could turn into an urban street game along the lines of *Journey to the End of Night*, and remembered



Subs and Cruisers. But I couldn't recall the exact rules, so I wrote to the school secretary to see if anyone had ever written them down. What I got back was surprising and delighting.

Subs and Cruisers, it turned out, had died out at the school at some point after I left—all it takes is a single headmaster, a single five-year generation of boys, to erase the memory of such things. I don't know which headmaster had extinguished the game, but I have my suspicions. Other headmasters had come and gone, until the present incumbent had arrived a couple of years before, bringing with him from his previous prep school the rules of a game called The Convoy Game. And it's Subs and Cruisers, right down to quirky little fix-it rules like frigates and aircraft carriers being safe if they're touching a living tree or bush. And he reintroduced it and, like the tulips, it has flourished.

So what's happening here? Were the rules created centrally and propagated to suitable schools by some agency, or did boys spread it, or masters moving within the community of English boarding schools? Is it endemic within this culture, emerging, blossoming and spreading across schools, only to die back, like cell outgrowths in Conway's Game of Life? Does it change and evolve organically, or have the rules become codified? (The rules that headmaster John Langfield sent me in 2007 are almost identical to the ones I remember from thirty years earlier, with the addition of school houses which we didn't have.) What's the lifespan of a game like this?

I don't know. If you know, if Subs and Cruisers or the Convoy Game sound familiar to you, I would love to know about it. I don't think it'll ever become the slick urban game I was hoping to turn it into, it's too rigid and too based on 'Come ON Wallis, get moving!' and hierarchical organisations in which the senior, popular boys are the sexy fighting ships and the rest of us are condemned to a herded life as merchantmen. But Subs and Cruisers is measurably eighty years old. It's doing something right.

# Thanks for reading

This zine is a collection of folk games, compiled by Pat Ashe and V Buckenham, with a lot of help from various friends. So: thank you, people who have written things for this zine, or have consented to have your writing hijacked and put into it. And the most thanks to Angus Dick, who did the lovely cover, and the lovely illustrations.

What is a folk game, I hear you ask, rhetorically. Well, I don't want to try to define that. But most of these games are games that can be played with minimal equipment, aren't too legally or morally questionable to give away for free, and ... well, they're not being transmitted orally here, but they could be in the future, and they mostly have been in the past. I guess that's basically a working definition. Damn it.

We made this zine because we have bad memories, and wanted to have something to remind us of games when we're at parties. But, inevitably, the games included have sprawled out in many different directions, and now includes genuinely moving tales of childhood, and some treasured bits of heritage. Also a lot of games about throwing knives at people. Please don't throw knives at people.

If you know a game that you think would look good in a future edition of this zine, please get in touch. V is contactable on Twitter at *@v21*, and by email at *vtwentyone@gmail.com*, and Pat is contactable on Twitter at *@patrickashe* and is *patrickashe@gmail.com* on email. Also you should send in the rules to Mafia because we literally don't know how to play that game, and were too embarrassed to ask anybody.





