



INTERMEDIATE

winning strategies

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*No you play with the
same group of friends?*



*Have your strategies
become predictable?*





AMERICAN MAH JONGG HOW TO PICK A HAND



AMERICAN MAH JONGG HOW TO PICK A HAND

GOOD

Pick a hand to play
from the dealt hand.



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Pick a hand to play from the dealt hand.

BETTER

Take a hybrid approach by playing adaptive during the Charleston then pick a hand.



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BEST

Identify the strength in the the dealt hand then pick a category using supporting tiles. Pick a hand when there are no more discards.



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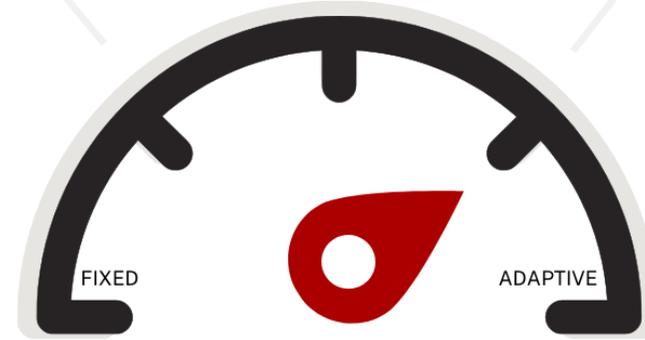
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NMJL 2022
PERCENTAGE OF HANDS BY
CATEGORY

Odds	18%
Consecutive Run	17%
Evens	15%
369	12%
Winds & Dragons	11%
Singles & Pairs	9%
Year	8%
Quints	6%
Like Numbers	5%

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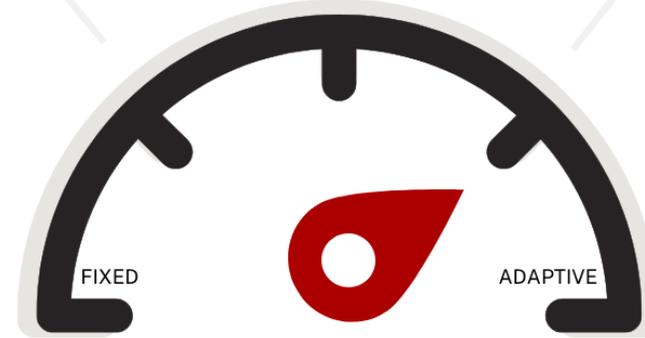
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NMJL 2022
PERCENTAGE OF HANDS BY
ATTRIBUTE

Big Multiples (pungs, kongs, and quints)	86%
Mixed Suits (with or without Dragons)	68%
Little Multiples (pairs)	62%
Like Numbers	47%
Pairs of Flowers	39%
Flowers	38%
Unique Shape	24%
One suit (with our without Dragons)	29%
Dragons	29%
Winds	14%

AMERICAN MAH JONGG HOW TO PICK A HAND

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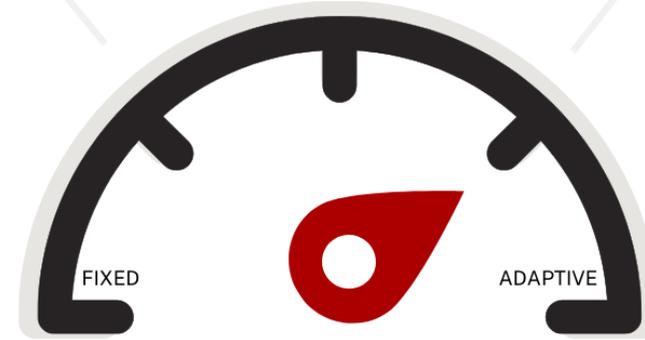
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Optimize your potential by playing with an adaptive style. When you get your dealt hand, look for multiples then pick one or two categories that can use the multiples with as many of the remaining tiles as possible.

If you don't have multiples, pick a category that matches the predominant pattern (i.e., evens, odds). When a multiple forms, reassess then build around the multiple.

Stay at the category level for as long as possible. Keep tiles that can be used regardless of suit. When you run out of discards pick a category or a hand to free up more discards. If you are between categories or hands, pick the option with no gaps (i.e., a missing pair is a gap, 369 with no 6's is a gap). If you have options with no gaps, pick the option with the most multiples.

To mitigate risk, don't claim a discard until you know which hand you are playing and there are no gaps.

Reading Hands

Reading hands is a poker strategy, but it can be applied to mah jongg.



It means to identify the most likely hand an opponent is attempting which is a big part of playing a defensive game.

Reading Hands

This strategy requires keen observation of exposures and discards with logical thinking.



Like any strategy, it will take practice before it becomes a skill that can give a player an advantage at the table.

Reading Hands

For American mah jongg, reading hands can be done at two levels:



Hand Level: Any player can gain information at this level an advantage at this level because hands can be identified when there are two or more exposures by process of elimination.

Discard Level: Since discards get moved around when walls are pushed out, it can be a challenge. Players with a strong memory can retain information and gain an advantage at this level.

Reading Hands

The caveat is to remember that your opponents could bluff. They can discard certain tiles to make you question your deductions especially if they have jokers.



As the game progresses, narrow down the possible hands your opponents are attempting especially if they have exposures.

Reading Hands

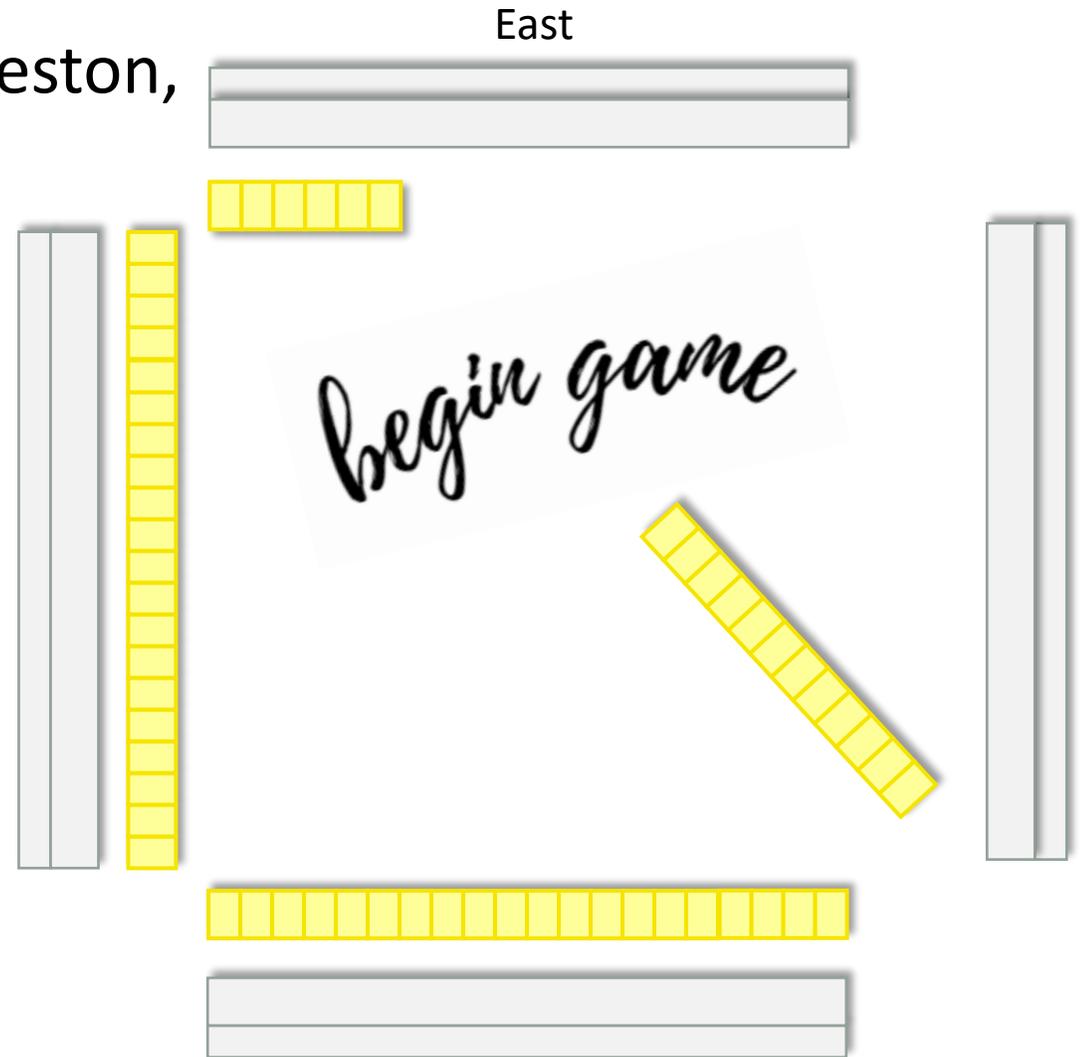
Take mental notes of the following observations then use the information to modify your tactics as you build your own hand.



Reading Hands

During the Charleston,
watch:

- What your opponents are passing
- Who passes blind in the first left
- Who stops the Charleston
- Who passes blind in the last right
- Who passes less than three tiles in the optional across



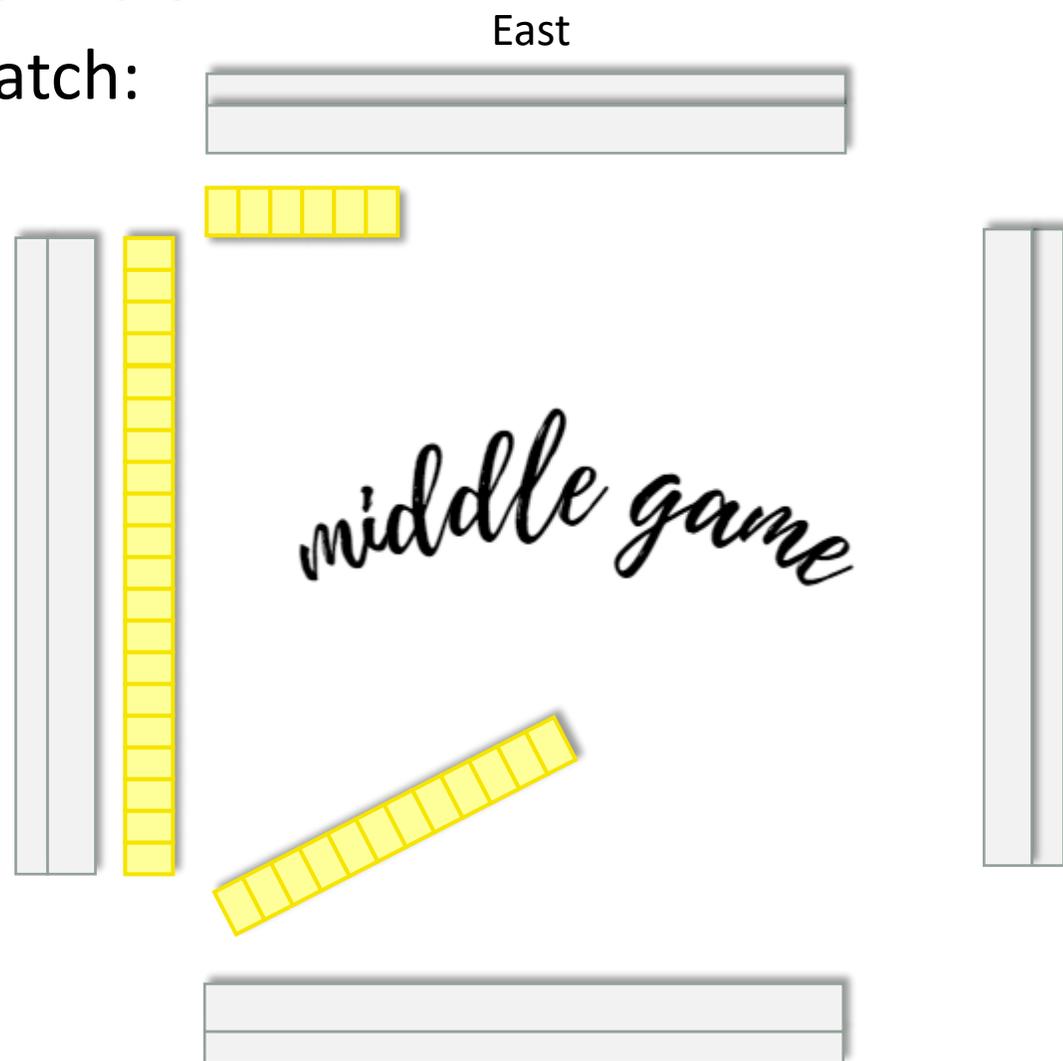
Reading Hands

While picking, watch:

- Where in an opponent's rack do discards come from
- Exposures

Discards hold meaning:

- It may not be needed
- It may be a tactic to mitigate risk
- It may be a bluff



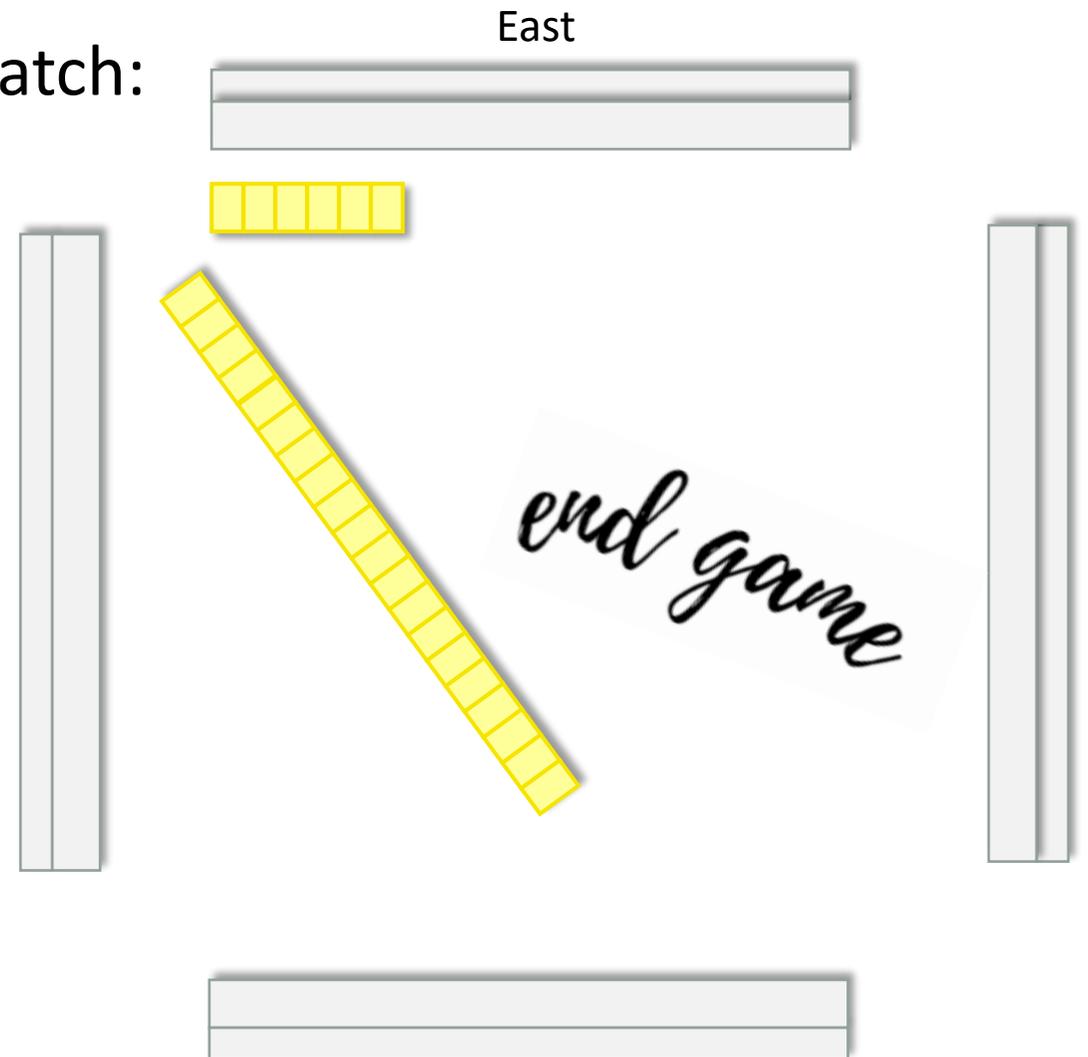
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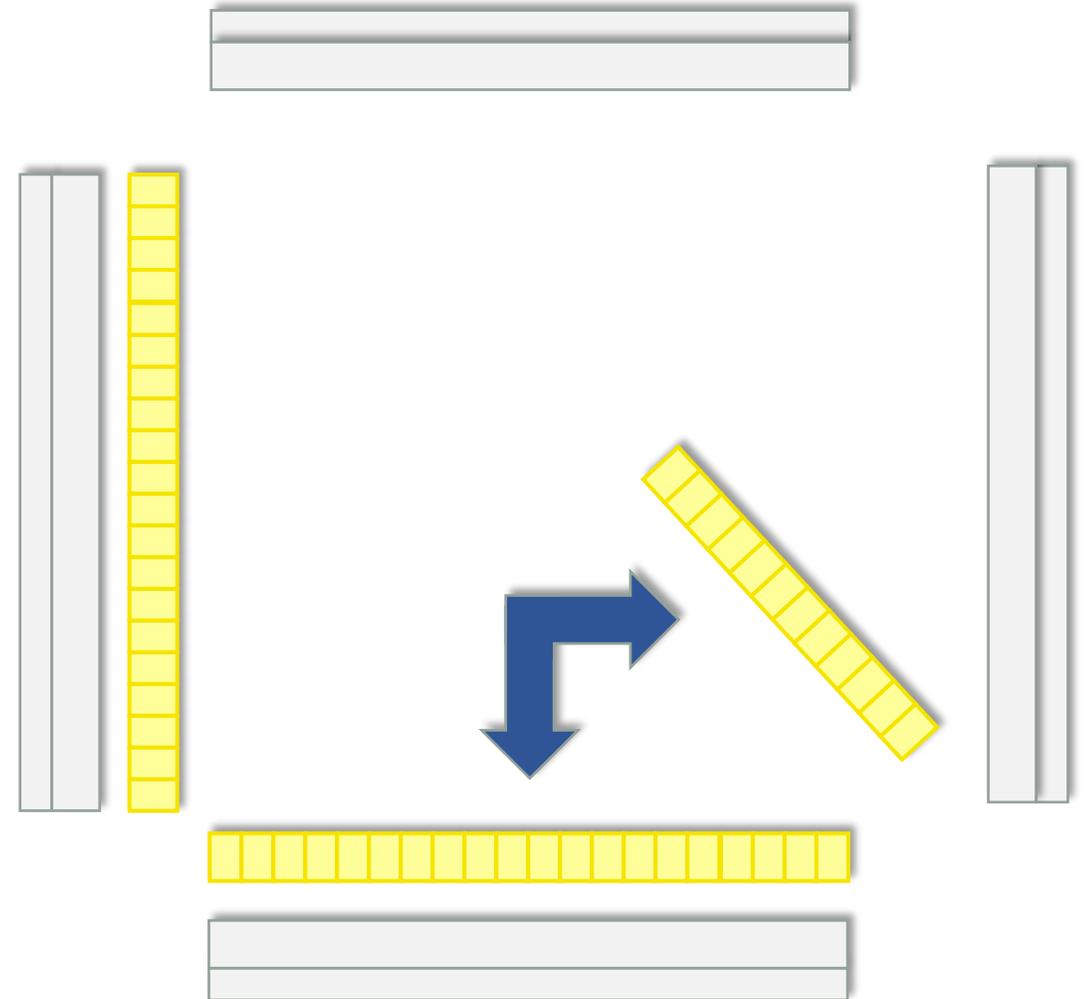
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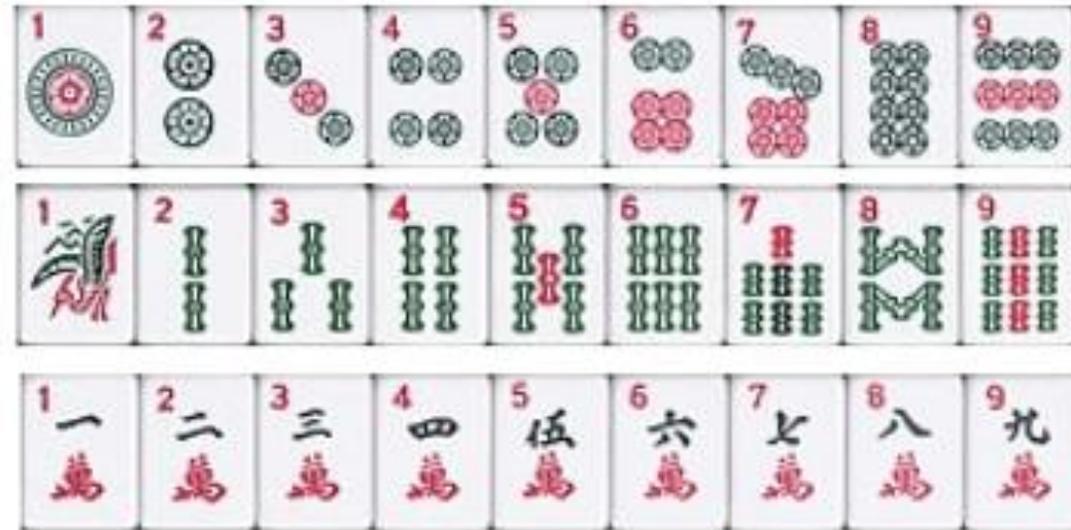
Outside In/Inside Out

This strategy is in the early and middle game.



Outside In/Inside Out

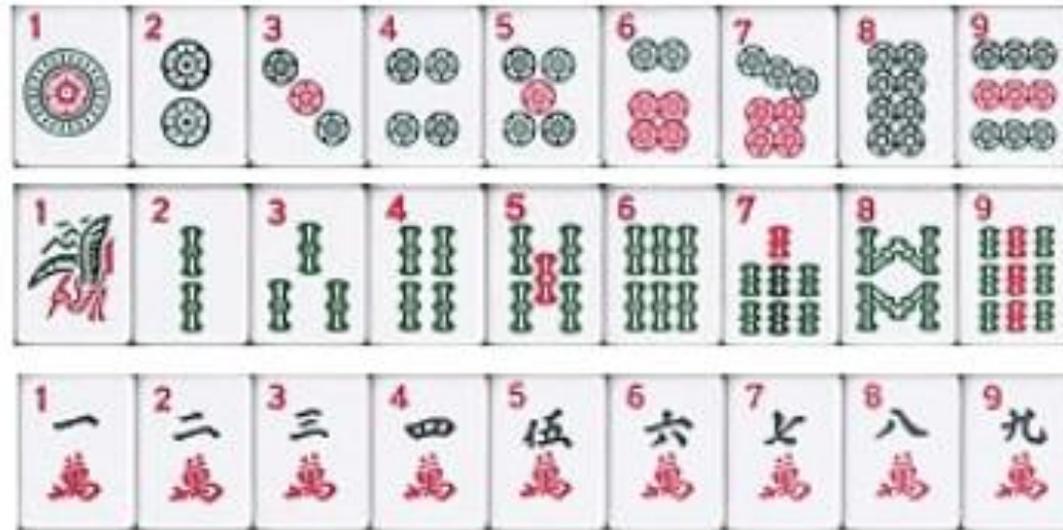
The focal point of this theory is the
Consecutive Run category.



Outside In/Inside Out

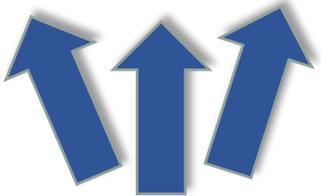
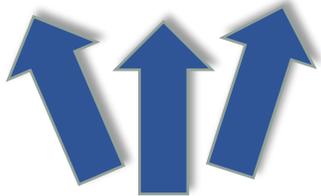
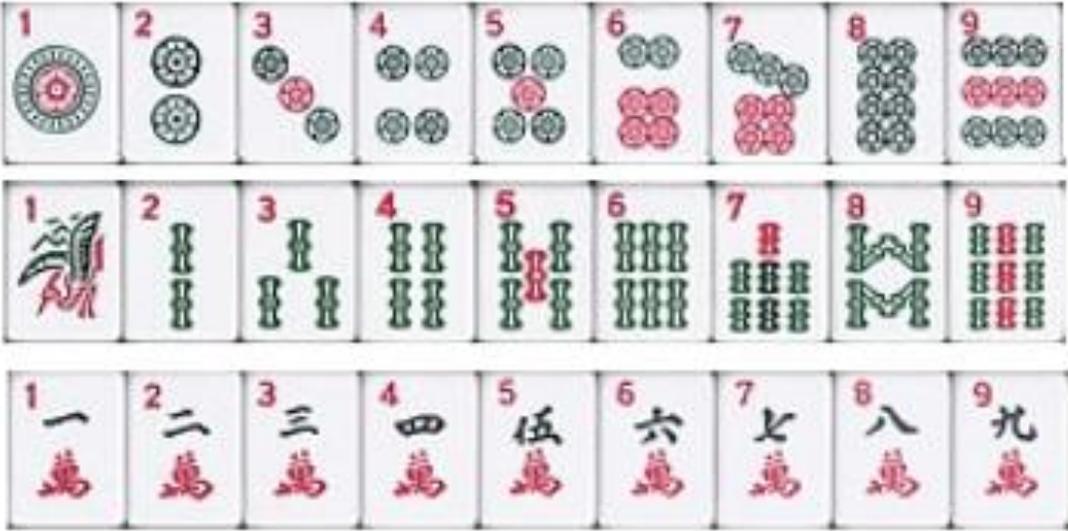
The focal point of this theory is the Consecutive Run category.

This is the most flexible on the card because there are 3 suits numbered 1-9.



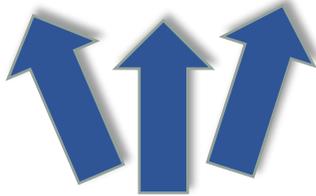
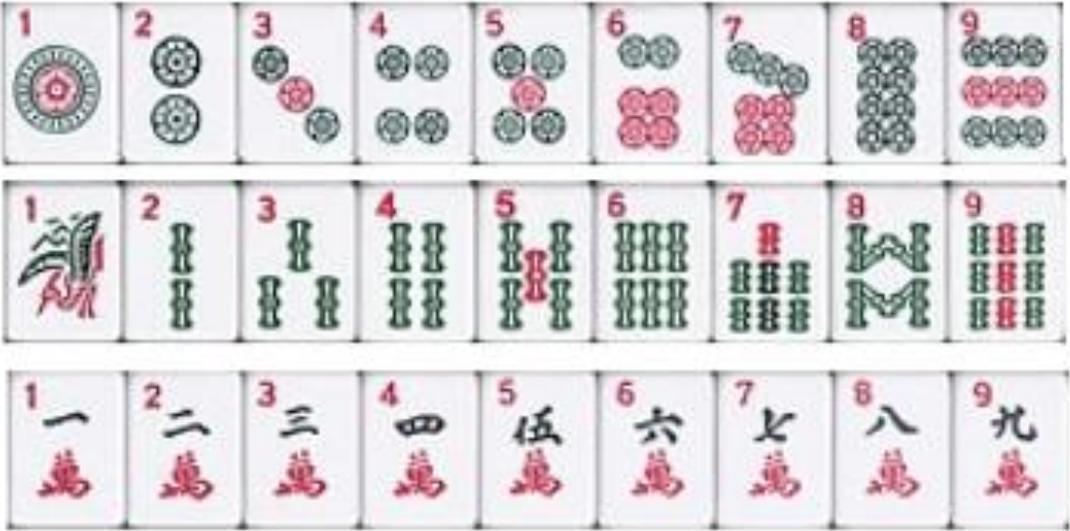
Outside In/Inside Out

Tiles 123 and 789 are limited because they are on the edge of 9-number sequence.



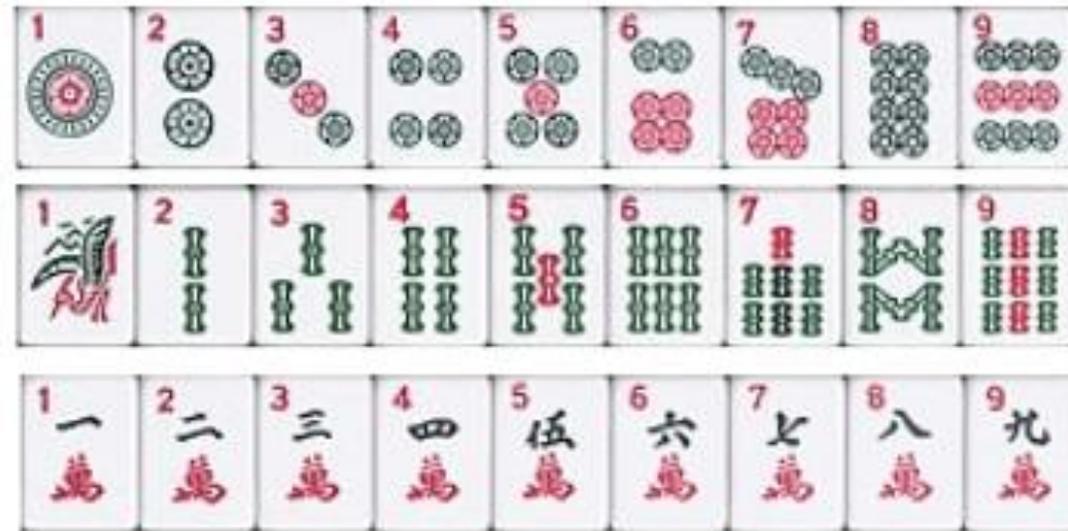
Outside In/Inside Out

Tiles 456 are in the middle so the sequence can build up or down making them the most efficient and more likely to be used.



Outside In/Inside Out

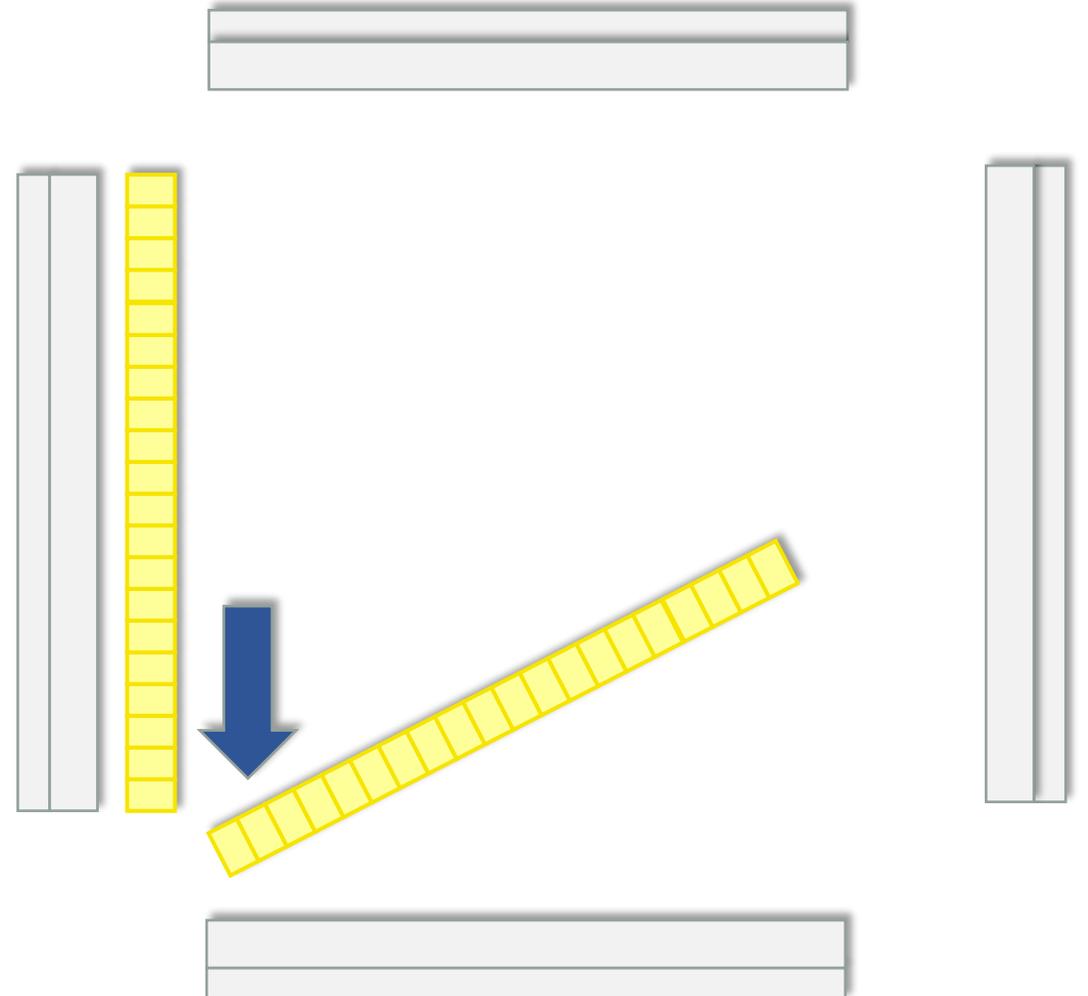
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Therefore, discarding tiles 123 and 987 in that order (outside-in) would leave the most efficient tiles, 456, for joker exchanges.

Outside In/Inside Out

Towards the end of the 3rd wall, decide if you are playing to win.



Outside In/Inside Out

If you are playing to win, discard the riskiest tiles first.



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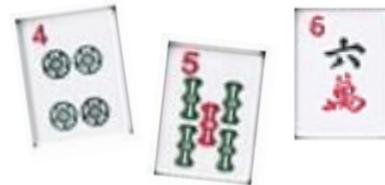
- Fresh tiles



Outside In/Inside Out

If you are playing to win, discard the riskiest tiles first.

- Fresh tiles
- Inside-out



Outside In/Inside Out

If you are playing to win, discard the riskiest tiles first.

- Fresh tiles
- Inside-out
- Dragons



Outside In/Inside Out

If you are playing to win, discard the riskiest tiles first.

- Fresh tiles
- Inside-out
- Dragons
- Flowers



Outside In/Inside Out

If you are playing to win, discard the riskiest tiles first.

- Fresh tiles
- Inside-out
- Dragons
- Flowers

If you are folding, break up your hand and discard safely.



Ready for a challenge?

Try one of these strategies

TOMORROW

and let me know how it goes.

Michèle Frizzell



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