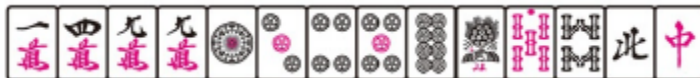


In addition, there are also times like when 5m is the dora and you have the aka version, i.e. tiles you absolutely can't cut. You think of that as one block. Or, when you think of a strong extended shape like 3456m as two blocks. On the other hand, while you do think of a kanchan or a penchan each as one block, they aren't very reliable so you may end up discarding them. Pairs are each counted as one block, but it's enough to have one head, so there are times where you cut a pair as well. **It is very important in hand-building to simulate in your head things like what exchanges you can make for unreliable blocks, or what tiles you want to make blocks from.**

Key Point: A "block" is either a set or a head, or else a candidate for making one of those.

East 1, South seat, Turn 1, Dora: [haku]



Now, to return to the primary topic. Let's take another look at the hand from earlier. How many blocks are confirmed in this hand?

Gominchu: "Ummm... [99man] and [345pin] make two... Ah, I get it, they aren't confirmed at all, are they? (laughs)"

They certainly aren't. This is the #1 key point for today: at the start of the round when your blocks aren't 100% confirmed, **it's critical to avoid missing out on joints or sets while you build your hand.** In order to do that, you should choose your discards in order to **"minimize the backfire tiles you can get."**

Key Point: When your blocks aren't 100% confirmed, choose the discard that "minimizes the backfires you can get."

As an addendum, when you are holding the [1man] in [14man] as a floating tile, since you can use [2man] or [3man] "immediately" if you draw them, there are cases where it's better to cut the [1man] ahead of time, such as "the hand is cheap, and the shapes are bad across the board, so I want to keep the yakuhai or guest wind for defense," or "I have 2 or more dora so the value of yakuhai is high and I want to keep those honor tiles for offensive reasons." (We will cover handbuilding when you are in 1st place in South round in Lecture 7.)

**Key Point: Standards for cutting [1man]([9man])
when both of [14man] ([69man]) are floating tiles:**

- 1) The hand is bad, so you want to keep honor tiles
- 2) Hands where you're glad to stack yakuhai

With that said, I'll repeat it as many times as I need to: **the standard discard order for floating tiles is guest wind -> yakuhai -> 1/9 -> 2/8 -> 3~7**. To those who glanced at the hand and answered [1man] or [1sou], from today onward, I recommend that you thoroughly compare to yourself: "If I cut this tile, which are the backfires and how many tiles is that? And what are the backfires for this other tile?"

That level of "making thorough comparisons, discard by discard," is extremely important not just in the early game but in all aspects of mahjong.

With that, this lecture is complete. Thank you for coming!

Remember at least this much!


Standards for cutting floating tiles at round start:

Guest wind -> yakuhai -> 1/9 -> 2/8 -> 3~7

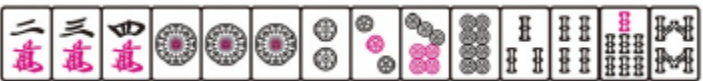
Lecture 2 - The "6 blocks in early game is cool with me!" playstyle

When choosing what blocks to keep, you might keep joints whose acceptance is larger, or keep joints where the tiles surrounding the wait have been cut, so it looks like the wait will be better. It's very important to keep a close eye on the table and judge what to do based on the players' discards. There may be people among you who don't feel confident in making choices like these, but I suggest referencing the lesson on block-reading (Lecture 18), and trying as best as you can to make sure that you carry good blocks into 1-shanten and into tenpai.

And when you reach 1-shanten and drop a block, **from midgame (Turn 7~12) onwards, prioritize safety and discard from the inside first (the closest to the center.)**


例1.  (Dora: [7sou], Turn 9)

→ Cut from [4man].

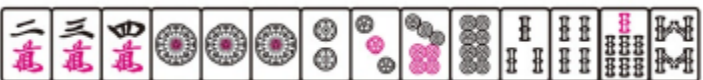
例2.  (Dora: [7sou], Turn 9)

→ Let's keep [34sou]. It has a slight chance of sanshoku, and also aka [5sou] acceptance. In that case, let's clear out the [78pin] block, starting from the inside with [7pin]. [8pin] can be swapped with a safe tile.

On the other hand, however, if it's still early and you have the legroom to do so, then you have the option to use some tricks to make it harder to narrow down your wait.

例1.  (Dora: [7sou], Turn 3)

→ Cut from [2man]. Hang on to [4man] while it's still early, making people misread your likely wait as [36man]. This increases the amount of tiles that are difficult to push against you, and gives you an opportunity to thin out your opponents' possible counterattacks.

例2.  (Dora: 7sou], Turn 3)

→ Here you clear the [78pin] block, but after cutting [7pin], why not try holding onto [8pin] until

As for the [1man]... With another [1man] or [4man], you could move toward pinfu or become able to pon the 中.

A2: Cut [2sou]

Now that you've advanced into the midgame, and you're still 2-shanten, the chance of the opponent taking the initiative is large. The most dangerous of your excess tiles is [2sou], so get it out of there in order to prepare for the dangers of riichi or open hands, and aim to push back cleanly against them in the endgame with your slimmer remaining hand.

Lecture 3 - Peak 1-shanten style

East 1, South seat, Turn 5, Dora: [haku]



Let us begin the lesson. This time is a continuation of the last lecture: The 3rd point to be wary about when using the “6 blocks in early game is cool with me!” playstyle. Please take a look at the hand above. Yuragi-san, what do you think would be good to discard?

Yuragi: “This is 2-shanten! I would discard [3sou] and set up my 6 blocks!
6-block hands are cool with me!”

...Thank you very much for the beautiful mistake. (laughs) I guess it's not only your face that's...
Oops, sorry, my apologies. Wait, I wasn't making fun of you! I absolutely wasn't!
It was a compliment, really! C'mon!!



...Let's return to the lesson. The third warning for the “6 blocks is cool with me!” playstyle is, when you have 6 blocks all with good shapes, and one of the ryanmen shapes includes a paired (vertical) support tile making a total of 2 pairs, in that case the standard play is to aim for “perfect 1-shanten” and switch to a 5-block hand.

You may have doubts about whether it's really a good idea to reduce your number of good shapes after you just built this many of them, but if you set up 6 blocks in this situation, you will cause trouble for yourself when you reach 1-shanten.

In the case where you cut [3sou], your acceptance in 2-shanten becomes 32 tiles:



And then, if you complete a ryanmen, for example by drawing [9sou], now you're 1-shanten.



Here, you have no choice but to pick when ryanmen shape to keep.

So, let's say you cut [6pin]. How many tiles is your acceptance toward tenpai now?

It's 16 tiles:



Looking at these numbers, you can tell that when you reach 1-shanten with 2 ryanmen shapes, your acceptance toward tenpai is drastically smaller than what your acceptance was in 2-shanten.

So, let's return to the 2-shanten hand, and see what would have happened if you had cut [6pin] instead of [3sou].



Now your acceptance adds up to 28 tiles:



Yuragi: "That's smaller than cutting [3sou]! This is fraud! Give me my money back!"

...Hey, now. Calm down. Here, look in the mirror. Give it a nice smile. Anyhow, let's say we drew [9sou] like before, and reached 1-shanten.



How many tiles bring you to tenpai this time?

The correct answer is 20 tiles:



Comparing that to before, you can see that the number has increased by 4 due to the extra shanpon wait. In exchange for the acceptance in 2-shanten decreasing by 4 tiles, the acceptance in 1-shanten has increased by 4. You can picture it like you moved those 4 tiles somewhere else.

If you discard [6pin], and then draw one of [25sou] into the ryanmen with a paired support tile, then you do still end up with only 16 tiles of acceptance. However, completing either of the other 2 ryanmen becomes the 20-tile "perfect 1-shanten."

So, to progress to the key factor in this strategy, comparing these two patterns, what we can say is that the acceptance in 1-shanten is smaller than the acceptance in 2-shanten, yes? To give a rough summary, **it's far, far harder to get to tenpai than to get to 1-shanten.**

In comparison, the acceptance from 2-shanten to 1-shanten is already large, so it's not too hard to advance to 1-shanten even if the acceptance decreases a little bit. **if you have a choice of where to add 4 tiles of acceptance, you ought to use it to bulk up your 1-shanten, which is harder to advance from.**

So, foreseeing later developments, when you're at the 3-shanten or 2-shanten stage and have a full set of good shapes which include 2 pairs, keeping the paired support tile and dropping one of the other joints, leaving you with 5 blocks so you can strive for perfect 1-shanten... That is what's called "Peak 1-shanten style." It's possible you may have heard the term elsewhere, but never mind that. (laughs)

To sum it up, the 3rd warning about the "6 blocks in early game is cool with me!" playstyle is that if you discover an opportunity to go for "perfect 1-shanten" because you have good shapes including 2 pairs, you should swap over to peak 1-shanten style!

The "6 blocks in early game is cool with me!" playstyle maximizes the acceptance that brings you to 1-shanten. In contrast, peak 1-shanten style strengthens the number of tiles that take you to tenpai during 1-shanten itself. The spot where they make their greatest effects is different for each, but they do butt heads with each other anyway because peak 1-shanten style requires you to make preparations during 3-shanten or 2-shanten before you reach perfect 1-shanten. At some point, the time will come when you need to swap over.

As I mentioned before, -reaching tenpai- is more difficult than -reaching 1-shanten,- and there is a fairly significant difference in the number of tiles between each. So, if these different playstyles butt heads with each other, peak 1-shanten style should take precedence. Make sure you keep aware of that point where you should switch styles!

If you're going about your hand in a straightforward manner, then it proceeds like this:

Very early game: Cut the tile with the least backfires. Keep your losses to a minimum.
→ Early game: Use the "6 blocks in early game is cool with me!" playstyle, so that you don't miss out on good joints or full blocks.
→ If you end up with nothing but good shapes, and one of those has a paired support tile attached bringing you up to 2 pairs, then you use "peak 1-shanten style" to aim for perfect 1-shanten.

That's more or less the picture you get...

But there's more in the next lesson! Good studying so far!

Remember at least this much!
"6 blocks is cool with me!" playstyle
Warning #3

Incidentally, if you draw the aka [5pin] next turn, having [5pin] as your pair also makes the hand more flexible with the tanyao addition, so you should cut [4pin] before [5pin].

A2: Cut [7man]

You must not be transfixed on sanshoku and cut [3man]. Cutting [7man] instead allows the following tiles to lead you into an even wider 2-shanten:



And not only that, but it also becomes easier to reach perfect 1-shanten.



And, of course, the chance of sanshoku still remains.

Another attractive point of this discard is that if you draw the dora [8sou], you now have 3 pairs and can call easily for tanyao.

