

Mousekeeping!

1-7 players, 10 minutes, ages 8+

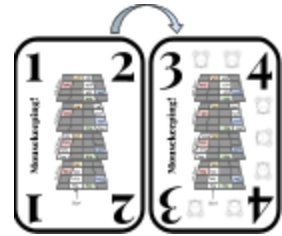
Overview

Mousekeeping! is a cooperative, real-time maze running game that takes place in a hotel that has been overrun with mice. The manager has never cared before, but now that there's a convention in town he has installed state-of-the-art mouse detectors and wants everyone on mouse-chasing duty.

Players work together to move through the hotel to reach the next mouse-sighting before tomorrow's guests arrive. But you don't want to be seen by the guests who have already checked in, so you will need to sneak around the unoccupied rooms to get from place to place.

Components

Mousekeeping! consists of 18 identical poker-sized cards that represent keycards at the hotel.



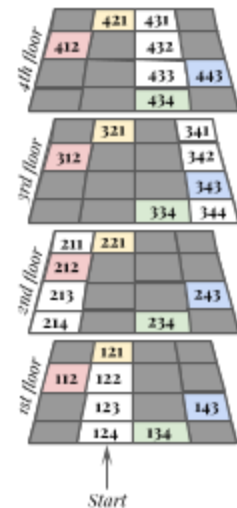
The cards are used for four distinct purposes in the game:

- **Player aid:** Both sides contain identical maps of the hotel. This is useful for route planning. It is possible but very difficult to play this game without consulting the map.
- **Randomizer:** Random destinations are “rolled” each round by placing two keycards down in a random orientation to form an arbitrary room number.
- **Map marker:** On each turn, players choose their next step in their path through the hotel. They signal this by placing their own two keycards down to form the room number of their chosen move.
- **Score keeper:** the mouse images on the reverse of the card are used to track the number of mice caught.

The Hotel

Mousekeeping! takes place in a 4x4x4 grid where each available space is identified by a 3-digit room number. Players move between adjacent rooms on the same floor or by moving up and down one of the four elevator shafts (red, yellow, green, or blue).

Locations on the map are identified by placing two keycards down to form a room number. Not all numbers from 111-444 can be represented with these keycards. Only the numbers that can be shown on the map.



Setup

Choose a player to play the role of the mice. Their primary responsibility is to count down quietly from 600 while the other players play the game. If you happen to have a mechanical device that can do this for you (like a clock application or sand timer), then it can serve this purpose instead of sacrificing a human.

Give 2 keycards to each player. All 18 keycards are identical. Each contains a map of the hotel and room number fragments on each corner.

The player who most recently stayed in a hotel is the starting player. The players always begin in the Lobby, Room 124. The player to the right of the starting player takes their 2 keycards and places them like this to represent Room 124.



Place 2 keycards aside to represent the team's score. These cards should be placed one on top of the other, with the 3/4 side on the bottom and the 1/2 side on top, so no mouse images are showing. During the game, the top card is rotated to expose one more mouse image each time a mouse is caught as described later in the **Scoring** section.

If a human is playing the role of the mice, they should randomly place their two keycards in the center of the table to represent the current destination. Remember to randomly flip and rotate the two cards, and to randomly place the top card to overlap the left or right of the bottom card. If no human is playing this role, any player can do this.

Place the remainder of the cards back in the box.

Gameplay

The game proceeds through one or more rounds. Each round has a random destination, and ends when the players reach this destination. This scores a point for the players. The game continues for 10 minutes, resulting in a final score.

Rounds

Each round begins by randomly placing two cards in the center of the table in a random orientation (with one card overlapping the other). These cards form two room numbers, either of which is your destination this round.

For example, let's say you put these two cards down like this. Players can end the round by reaching Room 443. However, depending on where they



are sitting, some players may see these cards upside down and will see Room 344. Both rooms are acceptable destinations and reaching either will end the round.

Starting with the player to the left of the last player to go, players take turns placing down their 2 keycards to form a room number that is either:

- adjacent to the last room number played, or
- the reverse of the last room number played.



Two rooms are adjacent if they differ by only +1 or -1 in a single digit. For example, Room **134** is adjacent to Rooms **124** and **234**. Note that you may not move into Rooms 133 or 144 as it is not possible to form those room numbers no matter which way you orient your keycards. The locations on the map corresponding to room numbers like this are grayed out on the map.

Instead of an adjacent room, you may also jump to the room number that has all of the current room number's digits reversed. For example, you may choose to move from Room 134 to 431. Some room numbers stay the same when reversed (e.g. Room 121) so this is not always useful, but reversing a valid room number always makes another valid room number.

After playing your two keycards to form a room number, control immediately passes clockwise to the player on your left. Once that player has placed their keycards you may pick yours up to prepare for your next turn.

Turns continue until one of the two destination rooms are reached. At that point, score a point as described in the next section and immediately begin a new round. Play until time elapses.

Scoring

Two keycards are set aside at the beginning of the game to keep score. At the end of each round, the top card is rotated to expose one more of the mouse images from the bottom card.

For example, the cards to the right show 2 points.

If you happen to score more than 7 points, turn over the top card to expose more mouse images.



Mousekeeping!

1 Mousekeeping! **2**

1 **2**

Start

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1 **2**

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1 **2**

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1 **2**

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1 Mousekeeping! **2**

1 **2**

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Mousekeeping!

3 Mousekeeping! **4**

4th floor

412	421	431
	432	
	433	443

3rd floor

312	321	341
		342
		343
	334	344

2nd floor

211	221	
212		
213		243
214		234

1st floor

112	122	
	123	143
	124	134

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