

Donsol – A Singleplayer Dungeon Crawler Card Game

Donsol is a Dungeon Crawler Roguelike card game, designed by John Eternal, although it's very similar to Zach Gage and Kurt Biegs Scoundrel. The great thing about it is that it can be played alone and in a purely analog way, using only a basic set of 54 Poker cards (52 cards + 2 jokers). You might want to have a pen and paper nearby though.

The original website can be found here, and a video showing off a digital version by Hundred Rabbits is to be found here.

I deserve no credit at all regarding the development of this game, but I was lacking a comprehensive manual, so I'm writing this here mostly for my own use.

Gameplay

The gameplay is fairly simple. You explore the dungeon one room at a time, which is represented by raising the top four cards from the face-down card deck. These four cards – the current room – are now shown face-up, and you can interact with them one after the other. After you interact with a card, it's removed from the game (put on another stack), and after you've interacted with all four of the current room, you advance to the next room.

Stats

You – the player – are defined by your basic stats:

- your health, on a scale from 0 to 21,
- your equipped shield and
- your XP, which is just the amount of cards you've cleared this far (0 to 54).

You start the game with full health of 21 HP, no shield equipped and 0 XP.

The Cards

Potions (Hearts)

Potions heal your health by their card value, up to the maximum of 21 HP. You can only use one potion at a time, consecutive usage of multiple poisons has no effect (except for the first one). The face cards – *J*, *K*, *Q*, *A* – represent a value of 11.

Shields (Diamonds)

Shields are a bit complex.

Each shield is determined by two stats:

- its protective value and
- its condition.

You can equip one shield at a time, equipping another one replaces your current shield. When equipping a shield, its protective value is set to the value of the shield card (face cards *J*, *K*, *Q* and *A* again have a value of 11) and its condition is intact.

When interacting with a monster, having a shield equipped often reduces the damage you take. The equipped shields protective value is subtracted from the monsters strength before it is subtracted from your health. If the monsters strength is lower than the shields protective value, the shields protective value gets updated to the monsters strength. The condition of the shield is also set to the monsters strength.

If the monsters strength is higher than or equal to the shields condition, the shield breaks and you lose its benefit (you take full damage from that interaction) and also the equipped shield. This means that shields can only be used against monsters of descending strength (even across rooms). Thus, a shields value and condition decrease over time, forcing you to equip new ones from time to time. You'll also have to equip a new shield before attacking a joker monster with strength 21.

There is no inventory, you can only ever have one shield equipped.

Monsters (Club/Spades)

All black cards and the two jokers represent monsters you encounter. A monsters strength is determined by its cards value, where

- *J* has strength 11,
- *Q* has 13,
- *K* has 15,
- *A* has 17 and
- *jokers* have strength 21.

When interacting with a monster, its strength is subtracted from your current health (while applying the shield rules described above). You die, once your health falls to 0 or lower and the game is over.

Escaping rooms

You can also escape a room without interacting with every card. The leftover cards of that room are readded to the bottom of the face-down deck.

There are three game modi, which specify when you're allowed to escape the current room:

- **Easy mode:** When you've cleared every monster in the room or you haven't escaped the last room.

- **Normal mode:** Only when you haven't escaped the last room.
- **Hard mode:** Only when you've defeated all the monsters in this room.

Escaping rooms allows you to not waste shields and potions, but keep them for subsequent rooms.

End of the Game

The game ends either when your health reaches 0 or when you've cleared the whole dungeon (card deck).

Let me know if anything is still unclear or if I've got something wrong!