

A TEN-MINUTE-A-DAY PRACTICE GUIDE

Five drills

The I Love Mahj *Exercise Room* Playbook.

Five drills, ten minutes a day, a real way to practice between games.

FORMAT

Daily rotation

TIME

10 minutes

LEVEL

All players

A guide by Lara • @larasmahjongedit

"Just play more" *isn't a* practice plan.

If you want to get better at mahjong, you have to play. That is true. But a live game is five things happening at once. You're reading exposures, running the Charleston, tracking discards, managing jokers, and deciding what hand you're even playing. If one of those is shaky, the whole game feels shaky and you can't tell which piece to work on.

Isolated practice fixes that. You pull one skill out, you drill it until it's automatic, then you put it back into your game. It's the difference between feeling stuck and watching yourself get faster, week over week.

That's what I love about I Love Mahj's Exercise Room. It's five drills, each one training a different muscle. You don't need to do all five every day. Ten minutes, one or two drills, on rotation. Build hands one morning, read exposures the next, run a Charleston the morning after. By the time you sit down at a real table, every piece has been warmed up on its own.

Here's how I'd run the rotation, drill by drill.

Ten minutes a day, one drill at a time. Pattern recognition beats every trick.

L A R A

Make a Hand.

I Love Mahj deals you a rack and you build the hand on the card. It sounds simple. It's the single fastest way to burn the 2026 patterns into your brain because you're not reading the hand, you're assembling it.

HOW TO RUN IT

→ Start in Sequential Order with one section of the card.

Pick one section (say, Consecutive Run) and run three rounds of each hand inside it before you move on. Don't jump around the card yet.

→ Move to Random Order once you can name the section without looking.

That's the bar. If you can't glance at your rack and say "that's 2468, line two," you're not done with Sequential yet.

→ Work one section a week.

Start with the section you play most (for me it's Consecutive Run). Add a new section each week until you've covered the whole card.

→ Don't skip the "easy" sections.

Singles and Pairs is where most players freeze in a live game. Drill it in the Exercise Room when nothing's on the line.

LARA'S IN-CLASS CHALLENGE

Name the section before you touch a tile.

When the rack pops up, look at it for five seconds and SAY OUT LOUD which section you think the hand is in. Then build it. You'll be wrong sometimes, and that's where the learning lives. Wrong guesses tell you which sections still blur together in your head.

Charleston Practice.

A full Charleston, run against the app, so you can watch yourself choose passes without four faces staring at you. This is where most players get better the fastest, because the Charleston is usually where the real decisions happen and we never slow down enough to study them.

— HOW TO RUN IT

→ **Before you pass anything, pick a main hand AND a backup.**

The backup has to be in a different section. That's the rule that forces you to see across the card, not just inside one neighborhood.

→ **Organize the rack KEEP / MAYBE / PASS as tiles come in.**

Don't grab three incoming tiles and ship three back out. Shuffle incoming tiles into your rack first, then pick your pass.

→ **Never pass a dragon or a flower.**

They're too useful in too many places. If dragons or flowers are your only options to pass, stop the Charleston.

→ **Pay attention to your left.**

Your left pass comes back to you more than you think. Don't hand them a pair you'll regret.

→ **Finish the Charleston, then ask: "did my backup hand get better or worse?"**

That single question tells you if you read the deal right.

LARA'S IN-CLASS CHALLENGE

Run two Charllestons a day, one fast, one slow.

Round one, pass at your normal game speed. Round two, take as long as you need and talk yourself through every pass. The gap between your fast version and your slow version is your real homework. If slow-you picks better passes than fast-you, slow-you is the one who needs to show up at the table.

What hand is that?

I Love Mahj shows you an exposure and asks which hand the player is going for. This is the drill that separates good players from great players at the live table. If you can read exposures on sight, you know what to hold, what to discard, and when to play defense.

HOW TO RUN IT

→ First pass, guess fast.

Don't stare at the card. Scan the exposure and say the first hand that comes to mind. Snap answers train the instinct you need at the live table.

→ Second pass, list every possibility.

Then check. A Pung of 1s alone opens 13579 #2, Consecutive Run, Any Like Numbers, and more. "Only one hand" exposures (like Pung 3s + Kong Dragons same suit) are rare and worth memorizing.

→ Watch for illegal exposures.

Consecutive-number pungs in different suits (Pung 5 dots + Pung 6 cracks) are dead. So are any Like Pungs (concealed on 2026). Knowing what's ILLEGAL is half the drill.

→ Track what narrows the field.

After the first exposure, ask what a second exposure would rule OUT. That's how you play defense in a live game.

LARA'S IN-CLASS CHALLENGE

If you had to discard ONE tile, what would you let go?

Every time the exposure pops up, imagine you're three picks from the wall and you HAVE to make a discard. Which tile is safest against the line they're building? This turns the drill from "name the hand" into "play against the hand," which is what you'll actually do at the table.

Mahjle.

Wordle, but for mahjong hands. You're given a partial hand and you have to figure out which NMJL line it belongs to. It's a pattern-recognition puzzle disguised as a game, and it trains the exact skill you need when you're mid-hand and not sure which line to commit to.

HOW TO RUN IT

→ Read the tiles you have, then read the gaps.

Which tiles are missing? How many singles vs pairs vs pungs? The gaps tell you the answer as clearly as the tiles do.

→ Eliminate before you commit.

If you see a pung of 3s and a kong of 5s same suit, that's Consecutive Run #4 only. But if the suits differ, the field opens up. Train yourself to eliminate first.

→ Use prevalence to your advantage.

Singles-and-pairs hands show up in 74% of the 2026 card. When the partial hand could fit a Singles-and-Pairs line OR a pung-only line, Singles-and-Pairs is usually the answer.

→ Check the concealed rules.

Some lines are concealed-only. If the partial hand has visible exposures, you can eliminate every concealed line in one pass.

LARA'S IN-CLASS CHALLENGE

Solve it, then name a "close cousin."

Every time you solve a Mahjle, name one OTHER hand on the card that shares the same shape. That's pivot practice. The more close cousins you can name from memory, the more flexibility you'll have when a live deal doesn't go the way you planned.

Heavenly *Hands*.

The drill for the hands you almost never see. Jokerless wins, concealed hands, single-exposure lines, rare Quints. If you play once a week, you might go a full year without seeing a jokerless hand. Heavenly Hands is where you meet them on purpose, so when they show up at a live table you don't freeze.

— HOW TO RUN IT

→ Spot the double-point line.

Jokerless scores double. Concealed hands score double. If the deal gives you a shot at either, the math changes. Practice recognizing WHEN you're looking at a double-point opportunity.

→ Know which exposures kill the hand.

Concealed lines die the second anyone calls. Drill yourself on which section-and-line references are concealed-only. Use section plus line number (Quints #3, 2026 #1) so you can call them out loud at a table.

→ Note your "never-played" hands.

Everybody has lines they default away from. Heavenly Hands forces you into them. Keep a running list of the ones that still feel unfamiliar and target those next.

→ Run it last.

Put Heavenly Hands at the END of your rotation. It's the advanced shelf. If Make a Hand is still shaky, do that first.

LARA'S IN-CLASS CHALLENGE

Dot the ones you've won. Force yourself into the rest.

Print the card, and every time you win a hand live, put a small dot next to it. Next time you sit down to drill, you have to pick from the hands that DON'T have dots. I do this with my own card. It turned "I only play Consecutive Run" into "I can play any section" in about six weeks.

Drills are the warm-up. *Here's where* it gets real.

The Exercise Room will take you far. A practice app plus a group of players to run hands with will take you the rest of the way. Pick the door that fits you.

Three weeks free on I Love Mahj.

Every drill in this playbook lives inside the app. Make a Hand, Charleston Practice, What hand is that?, Mahjle, Heavenly Hands. Scan to start your three-week trial using my link.



Join the Confidence Club.

Monthly classes, card deep dives, replay library, and a community of players working the same card you are. One tier, \$19.99 a month. Come see if it's your thing.



xo, Lara