

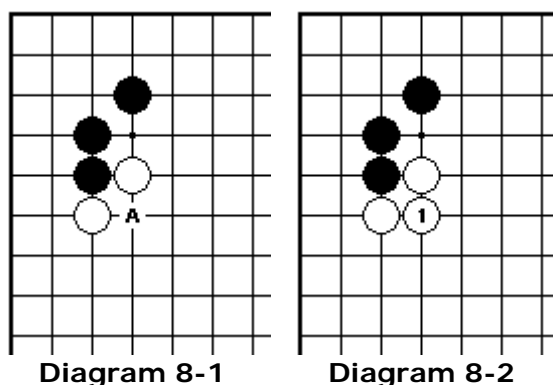
How To Play Go

Lesson 8: Basic Connecting Techniques

8.1 Connecting Solidly

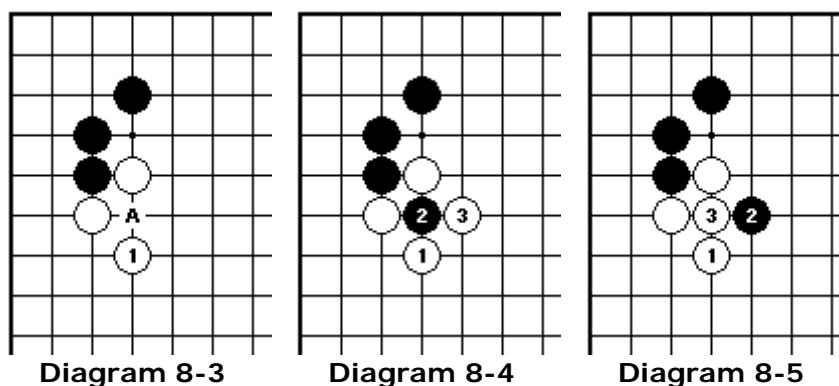
Recall in Lesson 4 on Connecting And Cutting, it is emphasized that it is generally a good idea to *keep your stones connected*. Of course, if the situation warrants it, you may consider to sever the connection of your opponent's groups so that the battle is advantageous to you.

This lesson will introduce the various basic techniques of connecting. We shall start off with the most fundamental form, which is *connecting solidly*.



In Diagram 8-1, white has a cutting point at A. If black gets to cut at A, then white is split into two and black will have the pleasure of attacking the two lone white stones. So in Diagram 8-2, white connects solidly with 1. With this there is absolutely no way black can cut the white group. Connecting solidly is sometimes the only way; while in many of the instances, it is the best way.

8.2 Tiger's Mouth

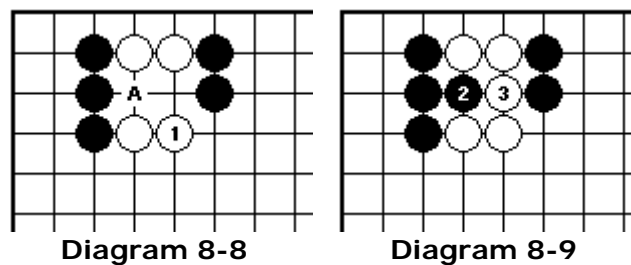


Usually, the tiger's mouth is more efficient than connecting solidly, but it may leave weaknesses, and it allows the opponent to use the peeping move to his advantage, e.g. as a ladder block.

Diagram 8-6 shows a 5x5 grid with two black dots. One dot is at the intersection of the second column and the third row from the bottom. The other dot is at the intersection of the third column and the fourth row from the bottom. This second dot is labeled with the number '1'.

Diagram 8-7 shows a 5x5 grid with three black dots and one white dot. The white dot is at the intersection of the second column and the fourth row from the bottom, labeled with the number '2'. The three black dots are at the intersections of (column, row from bottom): (3, 3), (3, 4), and (4, 4). The dot at (3, 4) is labeled with the number '3'.

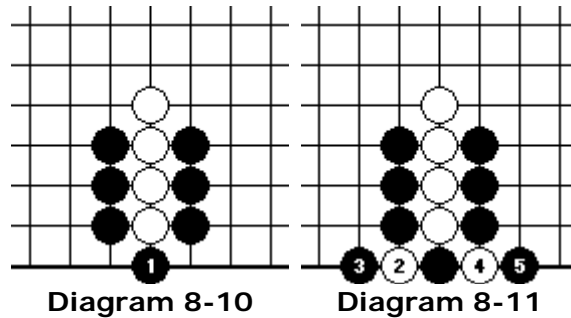
8.4 Bamboo Joint



Where the situation permits, try to use the *bamboo joint* instead of connecting solidly. White 1 in Diagram 8-8 is just a bamboo joint. It gives greater influence on the exterior compared to connecting solidly at A, although both will do the job of saving the two white stones from black cutting at A. To prove that the bamboo joint is effective, when black 2 pushes in Diagram 8-9, white answers by connecting at 3. Even if black plays at 3, white can still connect at 2.

8.5 Bridge Under

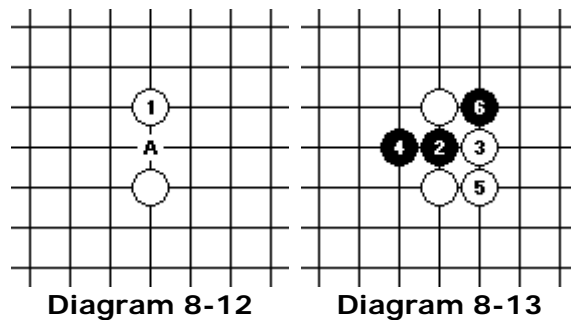
The *bridge under* technique is found in many games and has many applications. Basically, it connects two groups on the opposite ends by the edge, using the properties of the edge.



Black 1 in Diagram 8-10 is the bridge under. To those who have never seen this before, it may be quite surprising, but it is perfectly safe. We prove this easily in Diagram 8-11. White playing at 2 and 4 will only find their stones taken off the board with black 3 and 5.

8.6 Jump

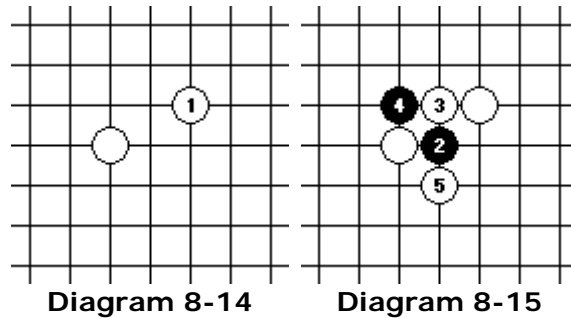
Some beginners like to play stones all connected in a straight line, one after another, but usually this would be too slow, or inefficient. Hence, stronger players will naturally prefer the *jump*, which is more efficient. However, the connection is rather loose, as you can see later.



In Diagram 8-12, white 1 is a typical jump. It is generally better than simply extending at A. However, it leaves the weakness of the *wedge* by black at A, hence the connection is not as complete. Yet there is no worry to the wedge. Diagram 8-13 shows the sequence for the wedge at 2. White answers by the atari at 3, and then connects at one side at 5. When black 6 cuts, a battle will start, but it is four white stones vs. three black stones, and it is white's

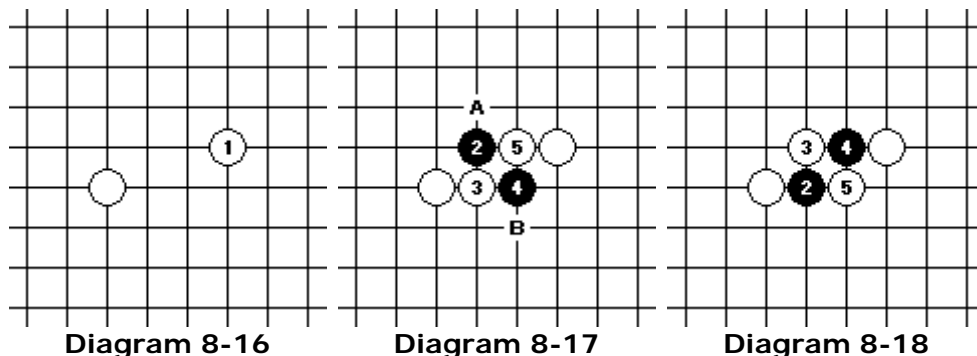
turn. Thus in general, this battle is favourable for white. Still, white has to be on alert for the black's wedge.

8.7 Knight's Move



White 1 in Diagram 8-14 is known as a *knight's move*. You might have guessed correctly that this name originated from the International Chess. If black decides to play at 2 in Diagram 8-15 and then make a *crosscut* at 4, white can catch black in a ladder with 5 (provided the ladder works). However, the connection by a knight's move isn't as strong as a jump.

8.8 Large Knight's Move



The *large knight's move* is similar to the knight's move, except that it is played one line further, as in white 1 of Diagram 8-16. It is also a method of connecting, but the connection is even weaker than the knight's move.

However, for black to cut white's large knight's move isn't a simple matter. This section will list only two examples. Diagram 8-17 shows black 2 and 4 attempting to sever the connection, but is cut by white 5 instead. Black now faces two ladders at A and B, which he can't defend both at once. For black to try to attach at 2 in Diagram 8-18 followed by a wedge at 4 will only incur a loss when white performs a double atari on black.

There are other variations, but like the techniques described previously, these will turn out to be a battle which white can fight with confidence. So black should wait for his surrounding stones to increase before he engages in a cutting war with white.

[More Stuff] – Learning Go

Go is a very fun board game to learn, and here are some tips for beginners to get stronger in Go. And playing Go is a social activity as well, making friends while having an enjoyable time playing Go.

Go is not a game of rote memorization. Doing so will only impede your progress. Therefore you can't say that you have finished reading Go books or all the lessons in the How To Play Go series and you know everything about Go inside-out, or that you are an expert Go player. What we are trying to put across is that you couldn't just memorize, you need to *understand* and know how to *apply*. A mere reproduction of the techniques won't do.

As Go is a game full of variations, it is not possible for any text to cover every single variation. Together with the above point of understanding and application, this is why it is important to *practice*, by playing with other people. In this way, you will get to apply all the theory you learned so far, and it would reinforce your understanding of the various techniques in Go. Play with as many different people as possible, to gain exposure to the different styles of playing, and increase your experience. Put in *effort* to play every single game you play. It is good to *replay* the moves of the games after playing to find out which moves are good and which needs improvement. This is where game records will come in handy, as most people wouldn't be able to remember a game from head to tail.

Forming a *peer learning group* with those with similar strength in Go, and playing with stronger players are good ideas. You might also want to go to *Go clubs and associations*, as the atmosphere for playing Go would be ideal, and these are centralized places of playing Go. Some of them conduct *Go classes*, and perhaps you would like to enroll in one of these as well if you have the time (and money). With professional teachers in some cases, you will find yourself progressing quickly from these classes. It is also possible to play Go on the Internet, e.g. Internet Go Server (<http://igs.joyjoy.net/>).

In Singapore, the ideal place to learn and play Go is the *Singapore Weiqi Association* (<http://www.weiqi.org.sg/>). This place is air-conditioned, well-equipped with Go sets, and the atmosphere is just right for playing Go. Classes are also conducted for various levels as well.