

Spin
Flip
Ball
Goal

HELTER SKELTER

Monsters everywhere! Running around, falling from the sky, jumping from platforms. Monsters above, monsters below, monsters heading straight for you! Catch them if you can, and bounce on them while they're vulnerable - but be quick, because when the timer runs out your bouncing ball will burst.

LOADING THE PROGRAM

To load *Helter Skelter* on an Atari ST place the disk in drive A and reset the computer. On an Amiga place the program disk in the drive instead of Workbench.

GETTING STARTED

Helter Skelter is controlled using either the computer keyboard or a joystick. Don't attempt to play the game using a mouse - you won't do very well!

One or two can play. Only one can play using the keyboard, so at least one joystick is necessary for a two-player game. Screens 61 to 70 are impossible unless two are playing, and so these screens are skipped when only one person is playing. To begin to play press F1 for a one-player game, or F2 for a two-player game, then indicate the control you are using by pressing the joystick fire button (or the left shift key if you intend to use the keyboard).

Before the game begins you can enter a password which will allow you to start the game on a screen other than the first. Of course, when you first play you won't know any passwords, so just press fire or shift to start the game.

HOW TO PLAY

You control a bouncing red ball (in a two-player game the second player controls a blue ball). Move the joystick left or right to make propel the ball sideways, or press the fire button to make the ball jump in the air. If you are using the keyboard the left and right cursor keys control the sideways movement, whilst the left shift key controls the bounce.

Helter Skelter has 80 different screens for you to conquer. On each screen there are a number of monsters that wander around the screen along platforms and ledges. Sometimes monsters are trapped by walls, forced to remain on a particular ledge, but often they can roam from ledge to ledge, floating down to the ledge below whenever they fall off the edge.

All you need to do is squash the monsters with the ball before the countdown timer reaches zero. It couldn't be easier - or could it? The problem is, only one of the monsters (indicated by a yellow arrow) is vulnerable at a time. Hit the wrong monster and it splits into two smaller monsters, making your task even more difficult; hit the right monster and you'll be that much closer to your target.

CONTROLLING THE BOUNCE

When you press the fire button (or shift key) what actually happens is that the ball is subjected to a downward force. If the ball is on a ledge at the time this force squeezes the ball against the ledge, which means that it bounces up as soon as the force is removed.

If the ball is in the air and travelling downwards at the time you press the fire button it will obviously bounce higher next time it lands. However, if the ball is travelling up when you press fire, the downward force acts to slow the ball down rather than speed it up. It's often important to be able to do this, but of course, you have to get the timing right. An experienced player can make the ball stop dead by pressing the fire button a fraction of a second after the ball bounces, but hit the button just too soon and the ball will bounce even higher!

SCORING

Each monster that you squash is worth between 500 and 8000 points. The first monster scores 500 points, but the next one is worth 1000 points, provided you don't hit a 'wrong' monster in between. The score keeps doubling so long as you don't hit a monster that splits into two, until the maximum of 8000 points is reached.

If you complete the screen before the time runs out you score a bonus of 1000 points for each second remaining. There's another bonus, the skill bonus, which varies from screen to screen and halves every time you press the fire button. By using as few jumps as possible you can score thousands of points in bonuses. With practice you'll find that you don't need to jump nearly as often as you do when you first begin playing.

Scoring 200,000 points awards an extra ball (you start with five); however, you cannot have more than ten balls remaining at any time.

TOKENS

Occasionally a spinning token will appear, bearing one of the letters E-X-T-R-A. Collect all five to earn a bonus ball - but beware, if you collect two letters the same they cancel each other out!

Other tokens also appear from time to time. If you collect them you can earn extra time, or else gain a temporary advantage. One token makes the monsters stand still for a time; another makes them all vulnerable simultaneously; yet another freezes the countdown timer. There's even a token that will take you straight to the next screen!

When you have squashed all the monsters on a screen the clock stops, allowing you to collect any remaining tokens before they disappear. Tokens collected after completing the screen score 1000 points each.

PASSWORDS

If you successfully complete the first ten screens a four letter password is revealed that allows you to start the game on screen 11 if you wish. Further passwords are revealed every ten screens.

The password for screen 81, the first user-defined screen, is *user*. When all the user-defined screens have been played the game restarts from screen 1, but with a difference!

SCREEN DESIGNER

One of the best features of *Helter Skelter* is the built-in screen designer, which allows you to create your own screens - devilishly difficult, subtly simple, wonderfully weird - you name it, you can do it! To enter the screen designer press F10 when the title screen or high score screen is displayed.

The screen designer is mouse-controlled - move the pointer to the option you require, and press the left button to select it. For example, the first stage in designing a screen is to draw the platforms - each screen can have up to 64 platforms, each of which can be either horizontal or vertical (more complicated shapes must be built-up from several platforms).

When you select *Platform* the options *Add Platform* and *Delete Platform* are displayed; to add a platform select that option, then position the pointer where you want one end of the platform to be and press the left button. Now move the pointer to where you want the other end of the platform to be, remembering that it must be either vertical or horizontal, and press the button again. Note the coordinates displayed at the top left - these are relative to the centre of the screen, and range from -158 to +158 in the horizontal direction, and -82 to +82 in the vertical direction. To cancel a partly-drawn platform press the right button; to remove a completed platform select the *Delete Platform* option.

Once you have drawn the platforms, the next step is to decide how many monsters you want of each type, where they should start from, their initial direction, and their speed of movement. Select the *Monsters* option, then *Add monster*. Move the pointer to the appropriate platform and press the left button; a monster will appear at the left end of the platform. Press the right button to change the monster type, then move the monster to the required starting position. Finally choose whether the monster should begin moving left or right, then select a speed (0 is the slowest, 7 the fastest).

Once you have positioned all the monsters for the screen (there can be up to 8), you can change the order in which they must be squashed - normally the order in which you positioned them. The order you choose can make an enormous difference to the difficulty of a screen (as on screen 16 of the built-in screens).

The starting position of the ball is important too: *Start positions* allows you to fix the start positions for both the red ball (Player 1) and the blue ball (Player 2). Finally select *Parameters* which allows you to set the time allowed for either a one player or two player game, the probability that monsters will make random changes in direction, and the starting value of the skill bonus (this must be a round number, and is entered as so many hundreds, e.g. 100 for 10,000). Whenever you are entering numbers you must use the numeric keys on the main keyboard, not the keypad.

Screen select allows you to move to any of the 48 user-defined screens (81-128). To copy a screen move first to the screen you wish to copy to, and select *Copy screen*. Then move to the screen you wish to copy and choose either *Select* to effect the copy, or *Abort* if you have made a mistake. *Delete* will delete the currently displayed screen, moving all higher-numbered screens down one, whilst *Insert* works in reverse, creating a blank screen and pushing higher-numbered screens up one (screen 128 will be lost).

When you are playing user-defined screens the + and - keys on the numeric keypad can be used to step through the screens. This makes it easier to test a specific screen. There's quite an art to designing screens - as you will discover, many of the built-in screens have ingenious solutions, and there's no reason why *your* screens should not be at least as much fun to play.

Once you have designed your own screens you'll naturally want to save them to disk. You'll need either a blank disk (which need not be formatted), or a disk you have previously used for saving screens. If you haven't used the disk before to save screens select the option *Init disk* first. This creates six 'slots' on the disk, each of which can hold a complete set of 48 screens. Label the disk and make a note on the label when you use a slot, otherwise you might write over some of your favourite screens.

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How would you like to spend a weekend at fabulous Alton Towers? Audiogenic Software, in association with Alton Towers, are giving away a weekend for four including free rides, meals, and hotel accomodation on Saturday night.

All you need to do to enter our free competition is to send in a disk with one or more *Helter Skelter* screens you have designed yourself, and a short description (not more than 150 words) of your favourite screen. Send your entry to *Alton Towers Competition, Winchester House, Canning Road, Harrow HA3 7SJ* to arrive no later than 31st March 1989. If you wish your disk to be returned enclose 42p in stamps to cover postage and packing. All entries will become the property of Audiogenic Software. The judges' decision is final.

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