

EVONY: THE FIRST FOUR HOURS (V2.7)

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ABSTRACT. We present a step-by-step, approximately optimal, guide to playing the first few hours of the online game Evony.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The biggest question most beginners have when playing Evony is: "What do I do?". Although the game eventually involves combat with other players, the opening phase is purely a single-player puzzle, with the goal to maximize resource production while also building buildings and performing research to support later developments. It involves many tricky tradeoffs.

For example, when building a resource producer such as a Farm, you give up current resources in exchange for a future resource stream.

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Doing this intelligently requires some sense of an implied rate of return, as well as an awareness of the requirements of other actions. It is very easy to "paint yourself into a corner".

One typical beginner mistake is to spend too much on resource production at the beginning. If you do this you may not have enough resources left to e.g. upgrade your Town Hall. Due to quest bonuses, upgrading your Town Hall from level 1 to 2 is essentially free, so you would like to do it fairly soon; but if you invest too much in Farms and Sawmills etc. then you may have to wait for an hour before you have enough resources again.

The following sequence is probably not perfect, but it has been tested through game play on multiple servers and will keep a beginner out of trouble. Much of it can just be followed mindlessly, but I will comment whenever there is an important point to be understood, or where you need to make a decision.

Because luck (e.g. getting 40,000 lumber from an amulet spin) can significantly alter what the "best" strategy is, this strategy should be treated as a default guideline that is only close to optimal when no such luck intervenes. After you've played for a while, you will understand how to adapt to such events (for example, by being a bit more willing to spend lumber on things, a bit less willing to invest in lumber production, and a bit more interested in selling lumber in your Marketplace), but I won't cover that sort of thing in detail here.

I assume that you do not have a Beginner's Package. This is only given to you the very first time you play Evony. You can either use it in your first game, or wait until you think you understand how to play better.

I also assume that you do not get any Evony toolbar bonuses. These give resources once a day (at the same time as the daily amulet quest), in an amount that depends on (I think) your title. You only get one toolbar bonus a day, and have to specify which server you want it sent to. A medium bonus (for Knight) gives 30K of each resource. This can make the early part of the game enormously easier, and opens up many strategies that otherwise wouldn't work very well.

To keep the text compact, we use the following notation. A building or research name, followed by a number, means to build or upgrade that building or do that research to that level. A following '*' means a free speedup is available and that you should use it. A following '!' means that this action's completion enables a quest bonus which you should (sooner or later) collect; a double '!!' means that you *must* collect the bonus immediately, usually because it gives resources you need to continue, or enables some other quest. So

- Cottage1 * !

means that you should select an empty square in the town, build a level 1 Cottage on it, speedup the build, and maybe collect the quest bonus when it is done, while

- IronMine3 !!

would mean you should upgrade an IronMine level 2 to level 3, wait for it to complete, and collect the bonus (and all other outstanding bonuses) immediately before doing anything else. I will usually not explicitly tell you to "Click X to close the window" or "Switch from Town to City"; you're smart enough to figure those out by yourself.

OK, ready? Here we go.

2. COTTAGE INDUSTRY

The first phase is to build up some population.

- Cottage1 * !
- Cottage2 * !
- Cottage1 *
- Cottage2 *
- Cottage1 *
- Cottage2 *
- Cottage1 * !!

We do this first because, when you build cottages, it takes some time for them to fill with people. Thus you want to begin this process well before you need those people.

3. RESOURCEFULNESS

The bonuses in the previous section added to your population. Now it's time to give those people some work to do.

- Farm1 * !
- Sawmill1 * !
- Sawmill2 * !
- Quarry1 * !
- Ironmine1 * !!

Note that we are only building resource producers that we can get paid back for in immediate bonuses. Later on we'll build more. Also note that, unlike cottages, resources start producing immediately as long as you have people to staff them.

4. ADMINISTRIVIA

- Go into Town Hall, select Production, and set all production rates to 100. Collect the bonus.
- Go into Town Hall, select Tax Rate, and set it to 20. Collect the bonus. Then go back and set the tax rate to 5. (Leave it there until your loyalty reaches 95, in about half an hour, then set the tax rate to 0.)

5. NEWBIE PACKAGE AND PRODUCTION BONUSES

To celebrate your progress so far, let's open your Newbie Package.

- Click on My Items, click on Chest, click on Newbies Package, click Apply, click Close. Collect the bonus.

Among the items you got in your Newbies Package were ones that give a 25% bonus to production rates. You will also get 1 more of each of these from later quests. Because resource production is so critical early in the game, and becomes less so later (in the late game you get most resources by looting NPCs and other players), I usually recommend using these bonuses fairly soon. In what follows, we will activate them as soon as we have 1000 base production in the corresponding resource.

6. STONE SOUP

Food is not very important in the beginning, so we concentrate on the other resources. It's important not to spend too much on resource production here, though, so that we leave enough for big items like Town Hall. Everything prior to this step has been essentially "free" because quest bonuses gave back what we invested. These items, however, actually cost us something.

- Quarry2 *
- Quarry1 *
- Quarry2 *
- Quarry1 *
- Quarry2 *
- Quarry1 * !
- Click My Items, Produce, Quarrying Tools, Apply

It is worth noting that resource investments have fairly long break-even times. For example, a Sawmill1 costs 750 resources (plus 10 people) to build, and generates 100 resources per hour. Thus (assuming all resources to be equally valuable, and 1 person = 1 resource) it takes about 7.6 hours to break even, and only after that are you ahead. For

the goal of getting as much done in the first few hours as possible, it is a dead loss.

Nonetheless, some fraction of our total effort needs to go into such longer-term investments. One thing to consider is this: Suppose we want to build something (like an Embassy) which does not produce resources, and a resource-producer (like a Sawmill), and we have enough resources to build both in either order, and there is no particular requirement on the order. Then it is always better to build the resource producer first, because that way we collect its production while the other one is building. This implies that resource producers should be built "as early as possible, but no earlier".

This then is our quandary: if we build up production too soon, we cripple our ability to do other important things, but if we do it too late, then we waste valuable time and lose the resources that could have been produced during that time.

You may wonder why we are concentrating on stone here, when most Evony guides say that lumber is the most critical resource early in the game. The reason is that we are aiming to reach Beacon Tower 3 as quickly as possible, and it requires 12000 stone. The quest bonus for BT3 is very generous (it pays back 20000 stone!), and so doing BT3 is highly profitable ... *if* you have the resources. (We'll be pulling a few other tricks to reach that critical 12000 stone as we go along.)

7. INN TOWN

Having spent as much as we can afford to at this stage on resources, let's get back to building up our town.

- Inn1 * !
- RallySpot1 * !
- Barracks1 * !!
- FeastingHall1 * !!

After Feasting Hall finishes, check the hero in the Inn. Make sure you take your Feasting Hall 1 quest bonus before you recruit a hero; otherwise you won't get quest credit for recruiting.

Up to this point everything has been deterministic; you will get the exact same results every time you do it. However, whether you get a good hero or a bad hero here is a matter of luck. What you *want* is a cheap (preferably level 1 or 2) hero with very high Politics (over 67). You probably won't get it.

If you *do* get a good hero, or even a decent one:

- Recruit the hero. !!
- Appoint the hero to be your mayor. !!

After recruiting the hero, check the Inn again to see what new hero you got. It might be even better!

If you get a bad hero, you have some hard choices to make:

- (1) You could continue without recruiting it, and with no mayor. This is the cheapest path but it loses all mayor production bonuses until you find a hero you like. It also doesn't get you the quest bonuses yet.
- (2) You could apply a Hero Hunting to roll a new hero, and hope your luck is better. Be careful not to use your last Hero Hunting, though, as you will need one for a quest later.
- (3) Another possibility would be to upgrade the Inn to level 2, which gives you an additional hero. This has the advantage that if you now apply Hero Hunting, you get *two* new heros. This is, however, pretty expensive in resources.
- (4) You could spend gold to recruit the hero, check if the new one in the Inn is better, and if so dismiss the bad hero and recruit the better one. (This technique is worth noting, as it can be very useful late in the game when you have lots of gold but no or few Hero Hunting.) The problem here is that you have less than 20K gold at this point, and spending up to 5K of it on a hero you are just going to dismiss is pretty much a dead loss.
- (5) You can recruit the bad hero and appoint it mayor anyway. At least this way you will get *some* production bonus. This strategy is best if the hero has high Attack or Intelligence, because then later when you get a good Politics mayor you can just move them over to a different job.
- (6) If you happened to get a helm from an amulet roll, you could use it to recruit a free hero. (Note, however, that this does NOT give you the bonus for recruiting a hero from the Inn.)
- (7) A non-obvious option here is to dismantle the Inn and build another one. This costs resources, because you don't get back as much as you spent, and also wastes time. However, it will get you another hero in a few minutes.
- (8) Later, after you have an army and can attack valleys, if you have an empty slot in your FH then every time you defeat or capture a valley there is a small chance that you will capture the defending hero. If this happens, and they are no good, dismiss them; but if they are good, you can persuade them to join your side with gold or medals.
- (9) Finally, if you are utterly desperate for a good hero, you can try building your Inn to level 5. Level 5 Inns seem to refresh every

few minutes (as opposed to nearly an hour for level 1), so you will see many more heros. Check it frequently. Doing this will, however, use up so many resources that the rest of this guide will become nearly useless.

Because I want this guide to work for everyone, I have to take the worst-case of all the above, which is that you have no mayor but spent the recruitment gold anyway (e.g. you recruit a hero, dismiss it, find that the new hero is also bad, and decide not to recruit it, leaving you with no mayor). Most of the time, you will be better off than that. In fact, you should check the Inn before dismissing your recruited hero. If you aren't going to re-recruit, make the first one your Mayor. Any bonus is better than none.

Also, a hero with high Attack or Intelligence will be useful later. Attack gives attack bonuses and also speeds up troop builds. Intelligence speeds up research and is rumored to improve the chance of a medal dropping. None of that will help right now. Politics speeds up buildings and wall defenses, and also increases overall production (you can see how much by looking at Production in your Town Hall). Until you get an academy or an army, only Politics gives any benefit.

8. ALARMING DEVELOPMENT

Now we focus on getting to BeaconTower3. This section will feel slow because we don't get free speedups.

- BeaconTower1 !

While BT1 is building:

- Click on Town Hall, Rename City. Rename your city. Collect the bonus.
- Collect your DailyQuest Amulet bonus.
- Click on amulet wheel (the thing in the lower left that looks like a roulette wheel), click Apply, wait for spin. Collect the bonus.
- (optional) Use your other amulets also.

Although later in the game a prize of resources might not be very good, in the early stages it can be quite helpful.

- Barracks2 !!

While your Barracks is upgrading to level 2, your loyalty should reach 95. When it does, set tax rate to 0.

- BeaconTower2 !!
- TownHall2 !!

While your Town Hall is upgrading to level 2, your loyalty should reach 100; this will allow your population to increase over time to PopMax

(currently 1050). (Note: Do not do the Lieutenant quest yet unless you got extra gold from an amulet spin. You will need the gold for research first.)

- Barracks3 !!

While Barracks3 is building, your population should reach PopMax of 1050. Collect the population increase bonus. Then go into your Town Hall and do a Stone Levy. (This will lower your loyalty to 80, but it will slowly rise by itself.) Collect the levy bonus of 1000 stone. Set the tax rate to 100. Collect the tax bonus. Set the tax rate to 15.

- BeaconTower3 !!

You should have enough stone for BT3 here; if, for some reason, you don't, just do Academy1 and 2 while you are waiting for enough stone. Click SpeedUp on this one and use a Beginner Guidelines to save 15 minutes. Collect the guidelines bonus. After BT3 is complete, collect a very generous bonus. You now have plenty of resources to continue.

9. GETTING WOOD

Now that we are a bit more comfortable on resources, it's time to get back to ramping up resource production. Lumber first, because it's critical for cottages and later for archer towers.

- Sawmill1 *
- Sawmill2 *
- Sawmill1 *
- Sawmill2 *
- Sawmill1 * !
- Click My Items, Produce, Arch Saw, Apply

10. ACADEMIC INTEREST

- Academy1 !
- Start researching Lumbering1 !
- Academy2 !
- Continue researching Agriculture1 !, Masonry1 !, Forging1 !, ...

After Academy1, you now have the capability to do research. This complicates our sequence, because now there can be two things happening at once: building a building, and researching a technology.

It is worth noting here that some research has a long payback time. For example, Agriculture1 costs 500 food and 1000 gold, and increases food production by 10% of your base. The bonus gives you 2000 gold back, so the immediate payback is like selling 500 food for 1000 gold (an implied price of 2). But in terms of food alone, your base at this

point is 100/hour, so the increase is 10/hour, and this will take 50 hours to hit break-even in food. On the other hand, Lumbering1 costs 500 lumber 100 iron 1200 gold, with a bonus of 2400 gold, so in terms of wood alone it will break even in only 5 hours (increase of 100/hour since base is now 1000). When your base production is higher, the payback time for production research gets shorter. You should not feel obligated to do long-payback research immediately.

Other research may have no direct payback at all, but be necessary for strategic capabilities. We'll explain these as we get to them. One of our main goals will be improving Archery, since it enables archers (at level 1), archer towers (at level 3), and ballistae (at level 6).

While waiting for academy, do the Correspondence quests and collect the bonuses.

11. IRONING

Then iron:

- Ironmine2 *
- Ironmine1 *
- Ironmine2 *
- Ironmine1 *
- Ironmine3 !
- Click My Items, click Produce, click Blower, click Apply

Note that we built an Ironmine3 above even though it's less efficient. This is to enable Forge in the next section. It is probably possible to upgrade Farms some at this point, but at the moment I don't.

12. THE WALL

- Forge1 * !
- Forge2
- Workshop1 !
- Walls1 !!

Note that you will need Forge and Workshop later to support research. (In a secondary city, you might choose to follow the "minimal footprint" approach: build Forge2, build Workshop1, and then demolish the Forge.) You need to keep a Workshop1 in every city until the Walls are maxed at 9 (or 10); after that, you can demolish the Workshop too. These buildings are required for *researching* certain technologies, but not for *using* them after they have been researched.

13. OH LORD!

Check your resources, and what's required for TownHall3 (12000 wood, 10000 stone). You should have enough extra to add a few more resource producers. (If you don't, don't build them yet.)

- Sawmill2 *
- Sawmill1 *
- Sawmill2 *
- Quarry2 *
- TownHall3 !!

While it is building, go into Town Hall, select Comforting, and do a Blessing. This allows you to buy a small amount of food (dependent on your cottages) at 0.1 gold per food. Soon you will be able to sell (or buy) food on the market for much more than that, so this is a good deal. (You can do comforting once every 15 minutes, so repeat this if desired.) Collect the Consolation bonus. After TownHall3 finishes,

- Click on My Items, Chest, Lords Package, Apply, Close.
- Click on Junior Medal Box, Apply, Close.
- Collect bonuses.
- Promote yourself to rank Lieutenant.
- Promote yourself to title Knight.

With the title of Knight, you are now allowed to build or capture a 2nd city. However, you're not quite ready to do that yet. (Patience, grasshopper!) Also, around here you will max out your research (at Agriculture1 Lumbering2 Masonry2 Mining3). This is OK; take a brief break until we get to Sawmill3.

14. ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL

(Note: This section and the following ones are new and have not been as extensively tested as what came before. They are probably not quite right yet.) Another generous bonus comes from Walls3, so next we push for that. (If you didn't build all the resources in the previous step, try to add them here first.)

- Sawmill3 *
- Start researching Lumbering3
- Quarry1*
- Quarry2 *
- Farm2 *
- Walls2 !!

You still won't have enough Stone for Walls3 yet, so build res and wait.

- Quarry3 *
- Start researching Masonry3
- Sawmill1 *
- Sawmill2 *
- Ironmine2 *
- Marketplace1 !!
- Academy3 !!

While Academy3 is building, sell something in your marketplace. Collect the bonus. Then buy something in your marketplace. Collect the bonus.

15. BUY BUY BABY

(Some stuff missing before here.) Collecting the Primary Guidelines bonus enables the Item Purchase quest.

- Click on Shop, Chest, Buy Amulet (costs 5 game cents).
- Enter Amount 1, click OK.
- Collect bonus (including 10 game cents).

16. FUTURE PERFECT

That's as far as this guide goes. However, I can give you a general outline of what comes after.

For the rest of the first day, you need to interleave building resources with building other buildings that you need. One main goal is building archers, which requires Forge4, Academy4, Barracks4, and Archery1. Once you can build Archers, you can easily capture level 1-3 valleys with zero losses.

I usually spend about the first 12 hours of day 2 doing *nothing* except building resource production. You want to reach a minimum of 100K lumber per hour, because once you start building Archer Towers, the ATs alone will use up about 80K lumber 40K stone 20K iron per hour, and you really want as many ATs as possible when you come out of BP.

Late in day 2 I would normally start pushing for Ballistas, which require Archery6 and Barracks9. Once you have 25 Ballistas, you can loot level 1 barbarian cities (NPC1s) for resources. Note: Since you will only have one high level barracks at this time, you should start building transporters as soon as you have Barracks6. That way, when you finally reach Barracks9, you will already have transporters and can concentrate on Ballistas. Before you make your second permanent city, in fact, you may want to build some NPC1-NPC5s around yourself.

When BP starts ending on day 7 or 8, then (assuming you started on the first day the server was up) there should be a lot of weak players around you. Loot them. Join an alliance if you haven't already.

In the mid game, you will need a *minimum* of Walls9 maxed out with ATs plus 20K archers per town, just for defense. Many players ignore ballistas and go directly for armies of 100K or more archers. Such an army can take down a wall full of ATs and thus eventually destroy or conquer a player city. Large armies require more food than any city can supply; you need to be looting NPC5s for food by then.

In the late game, many players just stop playing. Sometimes Evony even merges servers to make the game less boring.

Good luck and good hunting.

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