

Consistency

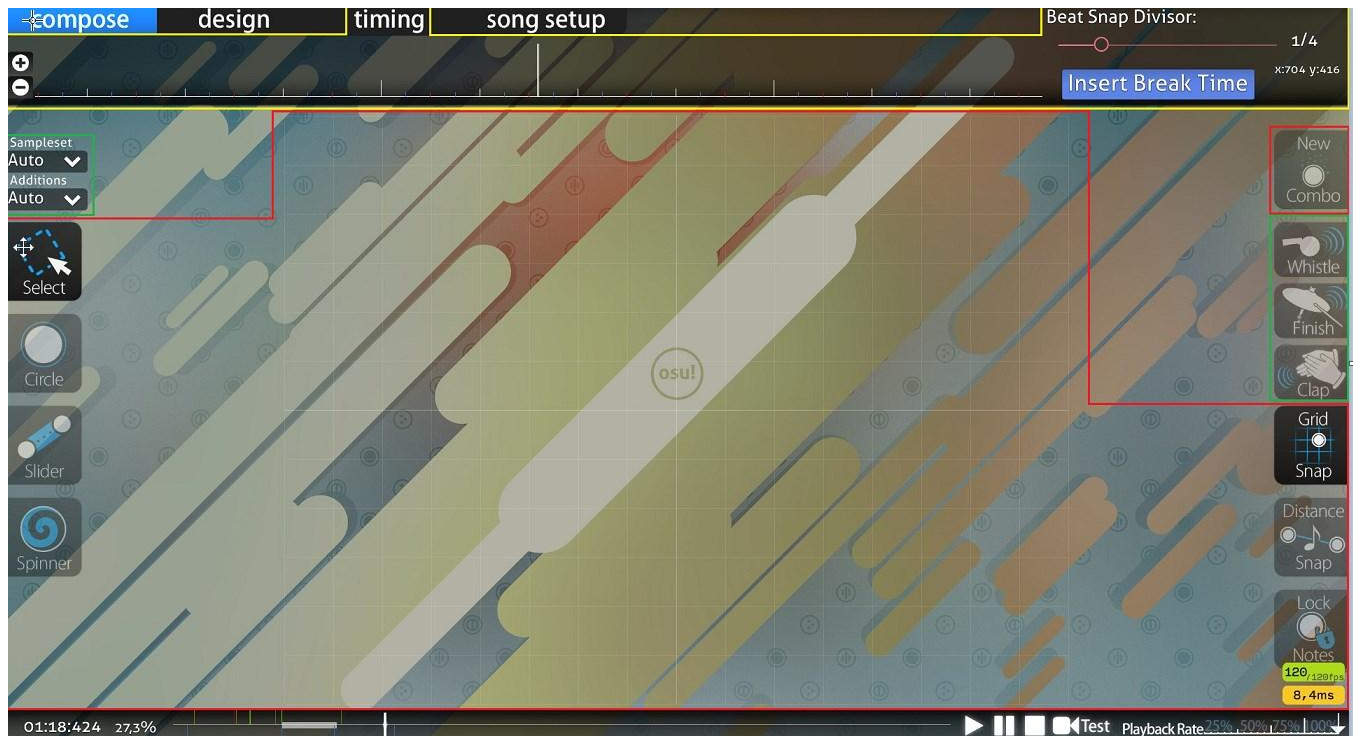
Consistency is an ambiguous term in mapping. Not only because everyone has a different standing on how it contributes to the value of a map, but also because it encompasses a very broad subject in mapping. For starters, being consistent means that you position objects in a way that it is recognizable as a sort of regularity for people - Or short: You form patterns with objects.

In mapping, you can break consistency down into three major branches:

Visuals: Basically anything that has to do with putting gameplay objects on the playfield goes in here.

Rhythm: Anything that includes the timeline and the timing of the map.

Hitsound: Anything that involves putting hitsound additions and sample sets on objects and volume control



As a good mapper, you want to keep consistency in all three of them to a certain degree.

Why does consistency matter? Because it makes your map structurized.

It is what makes your map look aesthetic, what makes it an enjoyable experience to be played; what makes it being able to be played. It is also something almost every new mapper struggles with, and why you might've gotten the 'It looks chaotic and messy' comment - a lack of consistency. Be it in all three of the parts, or just a single one of them which results in a flawed experience.

So in order to make a good map, you need to learn how to be consistent in all three of them.

Consistency I - Visual Consistency

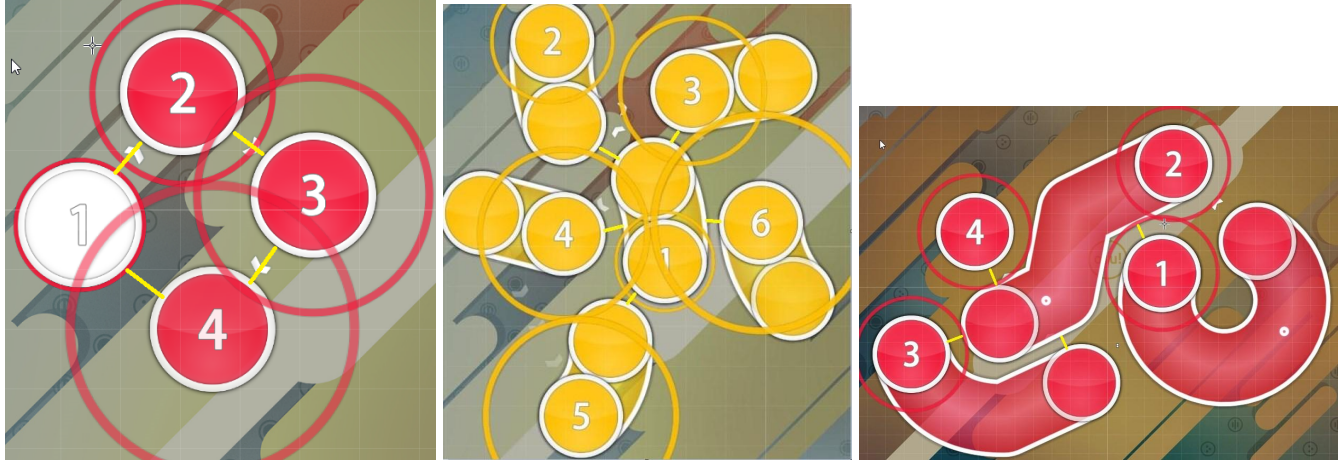
Achieving visual consistency means that you keep your patterns visually consistent. It is what most mappers identify with 'structure' when they talk with you about it.

There is one golden rule you can keep in mind when you want to make patterns visually appealing:

1. "The distance between the closest, adjacent objects should be about the same length."

The most simple patterns you might think off that fulfill this condition are triangles and squares.

Notice how the distance between the objects (yellow lines) are very similar to each other. It is what makes patterns aesthetic; what makes objects feel connected to each other.



From this rule, every other mapping 'technique' that aims to provide structure to a map is derived from - be it symmetric patterns (left), Interlocking (mid and right), parallel sliders and distance-snapping in the lower difficulties.

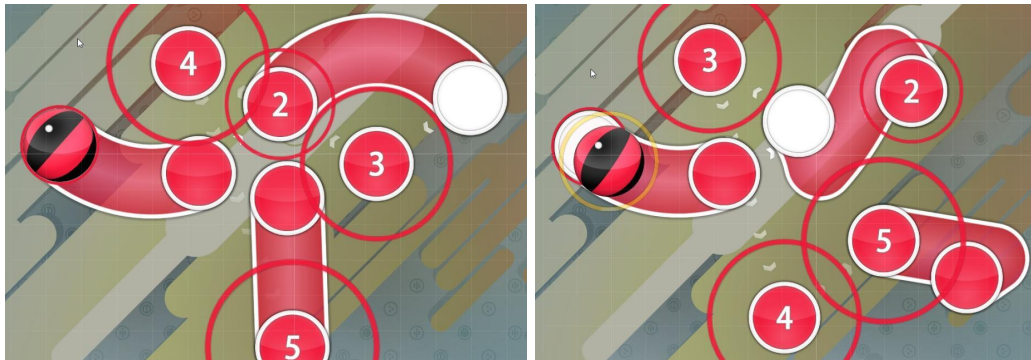
The next two are also essential, but are more addressed to new and adept mappers since they struggle with them the most:

2. Be aware of what type of sliders you are using.

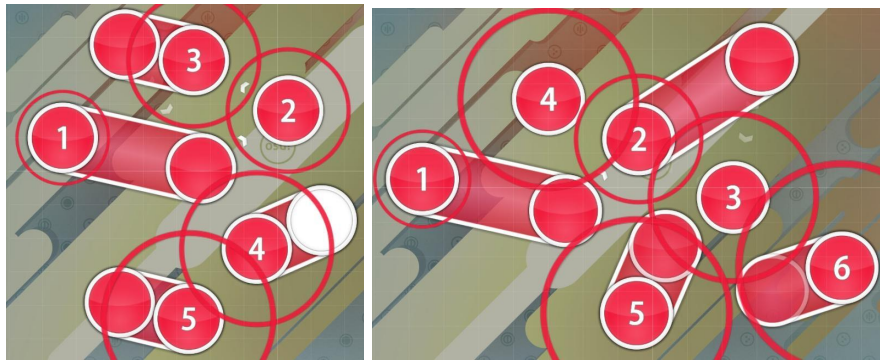
There's a saying going around that the most simple map is the most enjoyable map. A major contributor to that saying is your choice of slidershapes in a map.

Using a lot of different shapes at once is an indicator for chaotic structure if you aren't able to manage it well. Exotic slidershapes such as wobble sliders and anchored sliders may add another level of depth to the map, but for newer mappers this is usually a big hurdle.

Sometimes it even is unnecessary depending on your song choice. For example, light-hearted pop songs go along well with simple straight and curved sliders only already.

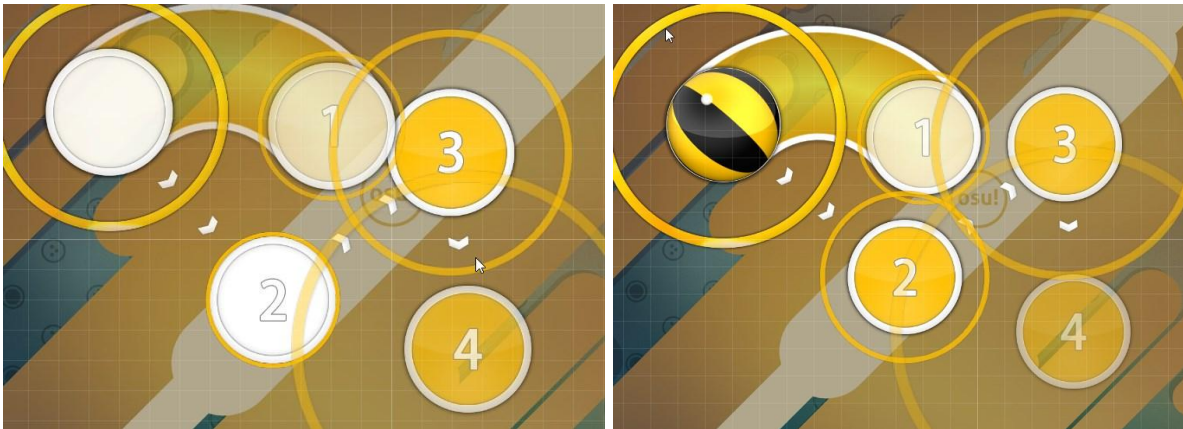


Left side only contains simple shapes. Right side has more complex shape choices.



Left side only contains parallel and mirrored sliders. Right side utilizes more different-angled sliders.

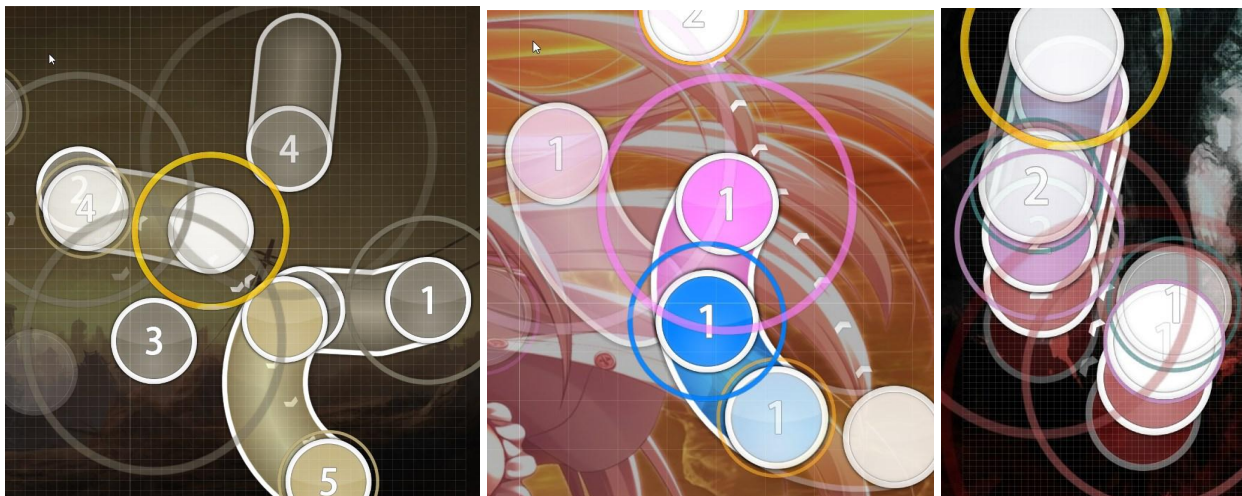
3. Be aware of your overlapping.



This is probably the most common thing you will see happen in a new map: unintentional overlapping, also known as having objects cross each other's borders. Though it might not have a major impact on the gameplay of the map, it does in editor view; looking unpleasant and hitting hard on the aesthetics of the map, as well as a torture for everyone who is modding it for you.

It is easier as a starter to avoid them at all costs, and stick closer to the golden rule (picture on the right).

This is not to say overlapping is a bad thing - at all. Again, it comes down to whether or not you are able to manage overlapped objects, and how well you can apply them consistently. Overlapping allows you to add more diversity and creativity in patterns, and make for a great experience:



(Props to you if you know the maps these are coming from)