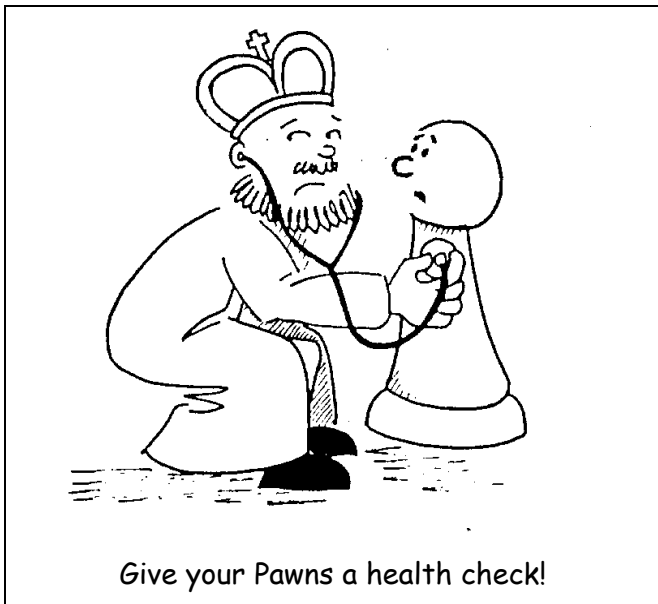


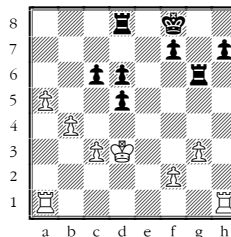
9. Give your Pawns a health check!

Some Pawns are easier to look after than others. Are your Pawns strong and healthy or are they weak and feeble?



What should you be checking? What do healthy Pawns look like? Healthy Pawns are Pawns that are protected, are in a safe group and look as though they might become Queens one day.

Let's have a look at how healthy the Pawns are in this diagram.



Are White's Pawns healthy?

Here White has two groups ('islands') of Pawns. Both islands form Pawn chains, pointing away from the centre. White can protect the base of the chains with pieces.

White's a-Pawn is *passed*. This means there are no opposing Pawns in front of it or to the side, and it might advance to the eighth - it is already well up the board. It is part of a **Pawn island**, and *connected* to a *Pawn chain*. It is also a long way from the Black King.

This a-Pawn is the healthiest Pawn on the board: *protected*, *passed*, *advanced* and *distant*.

The worst White Pawns are the c- and f-Pawns. They are **backward**, and if they are attacked must move or be defended by a Rook. Also, the square in front of a backward Pawn is a strong square for your opponent's pieces. You can imagine if Black got a Rook to c4 this could be very awkward. An important square like this which cannot be attacked by Pawns we call an **outpost**.