

The Fighting Game Glossary by Infil

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A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z # ?

Demon Flip



One of Akuma's trademark special moves; he jumps up into the air while performing a front flip, and then can choose several different unique attacks on the way down, including a divekick, a low attack, and a throw. It is one of the main examples of the relatively rare command jump in fighting games, and is a crucial way that Akuma approaches and mixes up his opponents.

Like many other moves (such as the dragon punch), other characters may have a move that gets called a Demon Flip. As long as it's a special move where you leap into the air with a front flip,

with unique follow-ups available while airborne, the name will apply. Other characters with Demon Flips include Gouken from Street Fighter 4, Charlotta from Granblue Fantasy Versus, and Gato from King of Fighters.



百鬼襲 (hyakki shū) – *Lit.* hundred demon assault

See video



Health Bar



A visual representation of your character's life points. Taking damage will lose health points, and if your health bar reaches the end, you will lose the round. You should be pretty used to health bars if you've played any video game in the last twenty years.



体力ゲージ (tairyoku gēji) – *Lit.* health gauge

Numpad Notation



A way to describe joystick inputs using numbers instead of letters or words. Each direction is mapped to a number, following the same layout as a keyboard's numpad. For example, holding down is "2", and if you wanted to talk about a crouching medium kick, you'd call it "2MK". Or, holding forward and pressing punch would be "6P" (a common Guilty Gear anti-air). You can also describe special move inputs this way. For example, a standard quarter circle forward would be 236, and a DP motion would be 623. Note that numpad notation always assumes you are facing right; QCF is always 236, no matter which way your character is pointing.

Numpad notation can be used for pretty much every game, although the Mortal Kombat and English-speaking Tekken communities use numbers for attack buttons (rather than directions) in their notation, so be careful of that. In particular, it is preferred among fans of anime games since it is language independent, letting people share combo notation and strategies between cultures in ways that "qcf" can struggle to do. It also lets you describe moves or techniques with wacky inputs very precisely, which makes it versatile and succinct.

While some people find it easier to parse notation when English abbreviations are used, there's no denying that numpad notation has some strong advantages. You should be comfortable understanding both methods, especially since it only takes a few minutes to learn.



テンキー表記 (tenki hyouki) – *Lit. ten key notation*

See image



Wall Bounce



Using a specific move to smack your opponent into the edge of the screen, causing them to bounce off of it back to the middle of the stage. Most team games have moves that will cause a wall bounce (for example, Dragon Ball FighterZ's Vanish), and they act as ways to extend a combo.

In games where wall bounces are frequent, you usually can only wall bounce once per combo, and if you try to do more than one, they'll just fall over instead. When planning or labbing combos, you'll usually think about when and how to "use" your wall bounce for the most damage. But the mechanic is not limited only to high-octane team games. Street Fighter, King of Fighters, Guilty

Gear and many other games have moves that cause wall bounces. In KoF specifically, you may hear the term "wire" or "critical wire" for a wall bounce move, or "counter wire" if a move wall bounces only on counter hit.



壁バウンド (kabe baundo) – *Lit.* wall bounce



X-Ray



Mortal Kombat X's super move. It costs you all three bars of your super meter, but the attacks are often very fast and have armor, making them powerful offensive tools.



X-Ray (written in English)

Shell

A core combination of characters that work very well together in a team game, and can easily accommodate lots of strategies. For example, Doctor Doom and Vergil are a fantastic shell in Marvel vs. Capcom 3, and you can put almost any point character in the game with them and have a competitive team. They have fantastic assists, very flexible DHCs, and can cover for the weaknesses of whoever you pair them with.



Poke

An attack that's thrown out to occupy the space in front of you and remind your opponent not to try and come closer. Usually, this is a far-reaching and safe normal move with little risk. Pokes are

often used to harass your opponent into doing something stupid, not unlike prodding a bear with a stick. If you use a poke to hit your opponent's poke, that's called a "counter poke".



牽制 (kensei) – *Lit.* feint / check

置き (oki) – *Lit.* to place / to put

置き技 (oki waza) – *Lit.* placing / putting (an attack) technique

See video



Jump Cancel



Cancelling a move with a jump. You'll just stop right in the middle of your normal or special move and immediately leave the ground. Not every game lets you do this; the ones that do tend to be high-octane team games or anime games where aerial combat is much more common than, say, Tekken or Street Fighter.

Another common application of this term is when you cancel a jump into something else before you leave the ground, usually in your pre-jump. As long as the game lets you do something during your pre-jump, your attempt to jump will stop and you'll get the grounded action instead. This is commonly how you'll do 360 motions, for instance, but depending on the game you might also transfer the throw invincibility property of your pre-jump to the new move. For example, in SFIII: 3rd Strike, you can use a "high jump cancel" to phase through throws while doing grounded normals or special moves.



ジャンプキャンセル (janpu kyanseru) – *Lit.* jump cancel

ジャンキャン (jankyan) – *Lit.* abbreviation of ジャンプキャンセル

[See video](#)

OD

New York slang that means "too much" or "very powerful". This is not a term that originated from fighting games, but you'll hear it used when someone loses to something really cool, strong, or ridiculous. Stuff like "that mixup was OD" is commonly heard from east coast personalities.

In Street Fighter 6, you will often hear "OD" to talk about an Overdrive Move, which is basically just an EX move rebranded.



Command Dash

A dash that is not input by double-tapping forward, but rather some motion input. You'll also usually have some unique attacks you can perform while doing the dash. Command dashes are usually pretty good because you can threaten with an attack while moving forward, and you can cancel these dashes from normal attacks, which can lead to some surprise approaches.

I'm also bundling "Command Run" in here, which is just doing a run with a motion input, with similar follow-up attack ideas. Forward dashes and runs are kinda two peas of the same pod, just that one stops after a set distance while the other keeps going. Command runs can lead to interesting pressure and combos, like El Fuerte's Run Stop Fierce.



移動技 (idou waza) – *Lit.* movement technique (general term for any special moves that move the character with no attack, including warp)

[See video](#)

Infinite Worth



A powerful super attack in the Under Night In-Birth series. Usually abbreviated to IW, they take your entire EXS gauge to use, and the command is universally half circle forward + D for all characters. There's also a more powerful version called Infinite Worth EXS.



インフィニットワース (infinitto wāsu) – *Lit.* infinite worth

Button Buffering



Pressing a button while another button is being held down. Tekken will register the single button press as if you had pressed both the new button and the held button together, which can be useful for consistency in certain multi-button inputs.

Instant Kill



A Guilty Gear super that instantly wins you the round. You first must press all attack buttons except Dust to enter Instant Kill mode, which turns your Tension gauge into a timer and prevents you from using your Tension for anything else (although you can revert this state to normal by pressing the buttons again). You then get one shot to try and hit your Instant Kill attack, and if you use it but it doesn't land, your Tension bar disappears until next round.

Normally, it is very hard to hit with an IK. They have very slow startup and are easily avoided.

However, in Guilty Gear Xrd, if you are one round away from winning the match and your opponent is low on life, your Tension gauge will turn gold. When this happens, your IK attack will freeze the screen for longer than normal, allowing you to combo into your Instant Kill. Since the round was almost over anyway, this can make for some stylish finishes.



一撃必殺技 (ichigeki hissatsu waza) – *Lit.* one hit killing technique

See video



Air Tech



Recovering from being hit in the air and returning to neutral. Maybe the best way to think about it is like quick rising in the air once you've run out of hit stun. Air teching is usually only in games with a high focus on aerial mobility, like anime games or team games. It's almost always shortened to just "tech", which makes it overlap with (several!) other terms, but you can usually figure out what people mean based on context.



空中受け身 (kūchū ukemi) – *Lit.* air receiving body

Homing TK SC



An attack in a 3D game that forces the offensive character to turn and face you while you are sidestepping or running. In Tekken for instance, most moves will just attack forward, and you will have to rely on that move's tracking properties to see if it can hit a sidestepper. Homing moves don't have this issue; they will rotate the attacker to point at the moving defender during the move's startup, and there's not much dodging it. To beat homing moves, or the similar circular in

Virtua Fighter, you'll have to try a strategy not involving sidestepping. Maybe just try blocking for once!



ホーミングアタック (hōmingu attaku) – *Lit.* homing attack

ホーミング (hōmingu) – *Lit.* homing

See video



Gouki



The Japanese name for Akuma. Like with Vega, M. Bison and Balrog, there are some naming differences between some characters in the Japanese and English versions.



豪鬼 (gouki) – *Lit.* great demon

Babality



A finishing attack performed after winning a game of Mortal Kombat that turns the opponent into an infant. Usually you have to satisfy some extra condition in the winning round to be able to do one; in Mortal Kombat 9's case, for example, you have to win the final round without blocking. It's a play on the Fatality.



ベイバリティ (beibariti) – *Lit.* babality

Skill Floor



The minimum amount of knowledge and practice needed to progress past basic button mashing and start getting better. It's important that there's some intentionality to the actions, since any game could be played without thought. The skill floor usually refers to a player trying to understand basic game interactions and act with purpose, even if they are not super good yet.

A game with a low skill floor means even super beginners can start doing strong things with their character in no time. Meanwhile, a high skill floor means you'll need to invest a fair bit of time, practice and knowledge into the game before you can even engage in basic strategy. A related concept is the skill ceiling.

Reverse Beat



Being able to cancel normal attacks into each other in decreasing strength (for example, a medium attack into a light attack). In most games that allow universal canceling of normal attacks into each other, like Magic Series or Gatlings, you can usually only go up in strength, never down. The Under Night and Melty Blood franchises let you also go in reverse order, but you can only use a given normal once per string, so you can't loop it infinitely (and in Melty Blood, your combo gets a "Reverse Beat Penalty" and does slightly less damage). It allows for a bit more freeform offense and canceling a riskier heavy attack into a safer light attack; in Under Night, this whole system is called Passing Link.



リバース ビート (ribāsu bito) – *Lit.* reverse beat

Open Up



To successfully hit someone with a mixup, or to overcome your opponent's defense and hit them with an attack. They tried to block, but you cracked them open.



崩し (kuzushi) – *Lit.* to break/destroy



Party Starter

A specific move a character wants to land that lets them start scary offensive pressure or a nasty vortex. It might be something as innocent as a sweep or a throw, where that specific knockdown gives the character a whole bunch of scary mixups.

Usually, people will try to fish for this move, since the reward for hitting it is just so incredibly high. Most snowball characters will have a party starter that you want to avoid at all costs. You don't want to let them nudge that snowball over the cliff.

String TK SC MK



A somewhat generic term that means multiple attacks performed in sequence. In the general fighting game sense, you'll see it used in terms like block string, and you'll often hear people casually call things like chains or target combos strings depending on their background. In a 3D game like Tekken or Soulcalibur, a string more specifically means a pre-made series of attacks you'd find in a character's move list. But you're pretty safe to use the term whenever multiple attacks get lined up and performed quickly back-to-back, no matter the game.



連携 (renkei) – *Lit.* cooperation

[See video](#)

Shield Drop



Dropping through a platform while shielding in Smash Bros. Normally when not shielding, you can drop through a platform easily by just hitting down. However, when your shield is up, strongly tapping down will give you a spot dodge, so you have to finesse the joystick at a particular angle and speed to get this to work. In fact, for Melee in particular, some Gamecube controllers are better at hitting this magical angle than others, and many players will carve notches into their controller to help them hit the angle more reliably.

In general, shield dropping is pretty powerful because it puts you airborne immediately, giving you access to air attacks without having to go through your jump squat animation. In a game as fast as Melee, these split seconds saved make a huge difference, letting you punish certain approaches, or get out of pressure much more easily.



シールド ドロップ (shirudo doroppu) – *Lit. shield drop*

[See video](#)

Stock



In most fighting games, refers to a bar. In the Smash Bros. series, refers to a character's "life" during a match. When a character is KO'd, they lose one of their remaining stocks. When a player

runs out of stocks, the game is over.



ストック (sutokku) – *Lit. stock*

Invalid Combo



A "combo" in some anime games that the opponent could have air teched out of. This happens when you mess up the timing of your air combo, but the opponent does not correctly air tech when they were able, so you got to continue hitting them anyway. Invalid Combo is the general term, but some communities will have a name specific to their game, and it's usually related to how the color of the combo counter changes when an invalid combo happens. For example, Dragon Ball FighterZ players will call it a "Blue Combo" and the Guilty Gear community calls it a Black Beat Combo.

Edge Cancel



Cancelling the recovery of an air attack by landing on the very edge of a platform and then using your existing momentum to slide off. Instead of incurring your normal landing lag, you'll slide off the platform and become airborne again, able to attack immediately. It's not easy to pull off though, since you have to land with some pretty high precision right near the edge, and it's even harder if your character doesn't like to slide very much.

In Smash 64 and Melee, you can edge cancel any aerial attack and open up new combo opportunities. In Brawl and beyond, however, you can only cancel special moves (like your up-B recovery move) and air dodges, so it's now less about combos and more about making survival a little easier.



エッジキャンセル (eiji kyanseru) – *Lit. edge cancel*

崖キャンセル (gake kyanseru) – *Lit. edge cancel*

崖キャン (gake kyan) – *Lit. abbreviation of 崖キャンセル*



Sauce

The general cool factor of a character, or the ability for that character to let player expression shine through. Usually this amounts to characters doing really cool combos or moving around the screen super fast and fluidly. You kinda just know when a character "has the sauce".



Custom Combo

A mechanic that lets players repeatedly cancel normals and specials into each other with no limitation. The mode will also give you unlimited juggle potential so you can bounce the opponent around as much as you like. Usually custom combos are possible when you activate a super, and then you get a limited time to perform your creative combo of choice. They aren't so common in modern games, but Street Fighter Alpha, Capcom vs. SNK 2, and Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike all had powerful custom combo options.

Historically, custom combos have been pretty broken in almost every game they've been in. They usually lead to extremely high damage, guaranteed guard crush moments, and turn the activating character into an offensive powerhouse that is brutal to try and stop. Some custom combos even get cool names, like Paint the Fence.



オリジナルコンボ (orijinaru konbo) – *Lit. original combo*

オリコン (orikon) – *Lit. abbreviation of オリジナルコンボ*

[See video](#) 

Window



A period of time. It's usually used to describe how much time you have to perform a certain action; for example, "you have a window of 5 frames to perform a reversal" or "after performing a special move, you have a window of 30 frames to Meter Burn it". It's related in some ways to buffering, but that usually implies a much more technical meaning than window, which can be used really generally if you want.

Force Function



A unique ability for each character in Under Night In-Birth, done by pressing B+C. Depending on the character, it might be an attack, a throw, a new movement option, a dodge, or something else entirely. Force Functions are powerful, so they will cost you one square of your GRD gauge to use (or, if you don't have any GRD, it will build one square for your opponent). It's best to think of them like a cool special move that isn't mapped to a motion command, a bit like Street Fighter V's V-Skill.



フォースファンクション (fōsu fankushon) – *Lit. force function*

[See video](#) 

Hop Check



A pre-emptive, fast attack you use when you're scared that your King of Fighters opponent might short hop at you. Often times, anti-airing short hops in KOF is really hard to do on reaction, so instead, you'll just stick a fast jab out and hopefully hit them if they try it.

Marvel Second



The length of an in-game second in a Marvel vs. Capcom game. These seconds are longer than one real-life second, so usually you'll joke about how a long combo "took 10 Marvel seconds", implying that it was actually an eternity. The length of a Marvel second can also make close matches near time out extra tense, since nobody is really sure when the last second will tick off the clock.

As a side project, I did a fun experiment measuring how long in-game seconds are in various fighting games. So if you want to see the actual length of a Marvel second, feel free to check out the results.

Range



A general term to describe how far away the two fighters are, or to talk about a location on the screen. If someone makes an attack whiff, you might say "they were just out of range", or if they find a way to make an attack connect just at its tip, you might say "wow, nice range on that poke". If you are standing at a distance where a lot of your moves are effective, you'd be "standing at a good range".

You can talk about specific points on the screen by using terms like "close range" (from point blank to a step or two back), "mid range" (somewhere around 1/3 to 2/3 screen away), or "long range" (3/4 of the screen away or further). If someone talks about "ranged fighting" in the long-distance sense, they're usually talking about zoning. There's lots of uses for this term, but most of them should make reasonable English sense.



間合 (ma ai) – *Lit. range*

距離 (kyori) – *Lit. distance*



Hitstop

An extremely brief moment where the game pauses for dramatic effect whenever an attack successfully hits. If you increase how many frames an attack's hitstop lasts for, you can greatly exaggerate the power and force of a strike, and usually when you feel like an attack is "beefy", it's because of this.

The frames of hitstop exist outside the standard startup, active and recovery measurement of a move's properties; think of it like the game putting the characters on hold while someone shakes the camera a bit. There's a similar mechanic for blocked moves called, you guessed it, blockstop.



ヒットストップ (hitto sutoppu) – *Lit. hitstop*



Phantom Hit



A strange phenomenon that can occur in Super Smash Bros. where an attack kind of "half hits". The move will do either half damage or zero damage (depending on which version of Smash you're playing), you might hear some small half-hearted sound cue, and the attack will not cause any knockback or hitstop. Like the name implies, it's kind of like you were hit by a ghost.

This happens when the hitbox of an attack baaaarely makes contact with an opponent's hurtbox; we're talking like a millimeter of overlap in game units here. The precision is so strict that is more or less impossible to do on purpose, which makes phantom hits almost always an accident and a surprise when they happen. In later versions of Smash Bros., this may also be called a Glancing Blow.



チップ (chippu) – *Lit. chip*

かすり当て (kasuri ate) – *Lit. glancing hit*

See video

Universal Controller Fix



A software mod for Smash Bros. Melee that adjusts two aspects of Melee's code to work better on all Gamecube controllers. The mod tweaks two specific things: it changes the dashback buffer to work the same as forward dashes (no longer requiring a 1-frame window to do a turn-less back dash), and it makes shield dropping easier when you roll the stick from left or right to down-left or down-right, making it harder to get accidental spot dodges.

The reason this is needed is because all Gamecube controllers are not made equal; small changes in build quality between factories and production year can change how easy it is to perform these

incredibly precise Melee techniques. Historically, players have had to buy and test multiple controllers or try finicky hardware mods to use a "good" controller. UCF makes all controllers equally able to perform these techniques, and is used at virtually all Melee tournaments today.



UCF (written in English)

MAX Mode (Melty)



A mechanic in Melty Blood: AACC that automatically launches as soon as you fill your super meter to maximum and powers up your character. It's available only to Crescent and Full Moons; if you fill up your super gauge while in Half Moon, you'll just directly enter Heat instead. While in MAX, your super meter changes to a timer and slowly ticks down. EX moves are a little cheaper, and you'll get access to your special Arc Drive super as well.

You might be thinking "this sounds an awful lot like Heat"; they both have a timer that ticks down, Arc Drive becomes available, and EX moves are cheaper. The main difference is that Heat will recover your red life (while MAX does not), and in MAX you can also perform a Circuit Spark (basically a Guilty Gear burst) as a one-time escape from a combo, which ends your MAX immediately. If you're in MAX and you try to turn on Heat, you'll instead enter Blood Heat, which is slightly more powerful than regular Heat.

I've separated this discussion from the MAX mode that applies to King of Fighters to hopefully keep things a bit cleaner.



ゲージMAX (gēji makkusu) – *Lit. gauge max*



Danger Time

A state that a Guilty Gear Xrd match will sometimes enter when two attacks clash. The match will pause, the screen will go dark, and a 3 second countdown appears. After the countdown finishes, the match resumes and the stakes are cranked way, way up. Damage is increased 20%, but more importantly, pretty much every hit you land from a neutral state will be a "Mortal Counter", a juiced up counter hit state that gives ridiculous hit stun and crazy combo possibilities. Danger Time happens completely randomly, so you can't control when it starts, but it almost always results in someone getting smoked. Just be sure it's the other guy and not you.



デンジャータイム (denjā taimu) – *Lit.* danger time

See video 



Double Jeopardy

Losing in a double elimination tournament to the same player twice. This is particularly common when the tournament is broken up into smaller pools; if the person who knocked you into the Losers bracket also loses before the pool ends, you will be on a collision course to meet them again very quickly. Tournament organizers developed the 3-out system to try and avoid this issue from happening so commonly early in events.



Fly

A special move in some team games which allow the character to hover in the air for a set amount of time. While flying, you can typically attack, move around, and air dash until you get hit or you

run out of flight time. Fly is often very strong in neutral to move around unpredictably, and you will usually use Fly and Unfly in combos if you manage to land a launcher.



飛行 (hikou) – *Lit.* fly



Function

A character's moveset or playstyle on a functional level, completely devoid of any attachment to their appearance or name. This term became a meme after an interview with longtime FGC player Combofiend while he was working on Marvel vs. Capcom: Infinite, who had to repeatedly answer questions about roster exclusions for the press despite not having any control over that himself.

When a website asked why popular characters like Magneto were not in the game, Combofiend remarked that Ultron plays very similarly and "these characters are just functions". He was implying that if you really want to have an 8-way air dash like Magneto, just play his replacement character instead because it's all the same in the end. This answer took on a life of its own immediately, and you might hear someone snidely remark that a shoto archetype in a non-Street Fighter game is just a "Ryu function" on occasion.



Hard Knockdown

A specific type of knockdown where the time you spend on the ground is set in stone and you typically do not have any extra options (like rolling) to choose from when you are waking up. This is in contrast to a soft knockdown, where you can choose to rise faster if you like. Hard knockdowns are typically a property of the move; for example, in Street Fighter IV, all successful

sweeps earn a hard knockdown, but each game will have their own rules here.

They tend to lead to the scariest mixups and set play, since the offensive player has lots of time to launch any strategy they like, and they know exactly when you will be rising from the ground so there's not much you can do to trick them. Try not to get hit by these if you can!

In Street Fighter 6, certain moves will cause a Hard Knockdown state, which will prevent you from performing a back roll on your wakeup. You will instead be forced to rise in place, although the timing will remain the same as a normal knockdown.



強制ダウン (kyousei daun) – *Lit. forced down*



Gauge



Mostly synonymous with meter. Basically, it's the physical on-screen representation of how much of some resource you have (for example, a measure of how much super meter you have). You'll hear this called your "meter", "super meter", or "super gauge" kind of interchangeably. Meter is the much more common English term, while gauge is used in Japanese.



ゲージ (gēji) – *Lit. gauge*

Mental Stack



How much focus a player can devote to different strategies in a match. It's common that a player will struggle to do seemingly easy tasks because their mind is trying to focus on multiple things at once. For example, a player might be trying to play footsies on the ground, while at the same time watching for a jump so they can anti-air, while at the same time trying to hit confirm a basic poke. Each task is doable by itself, but after trying to balance all these tasks for a while, the opponent jumps and they don't anti-air, because their mental bandwidth was simply too taxed to handle it.

Managing your mental stack is something that takes a lot of practice and time. Don't feel bad if you practice something in training mode for hours, yet struggle to implement it in real matches when it's not your only focus. It also explains why very good players get hit by theoretically reactable mixups. People aren't robots, and you just can't be ready for everything.



意識配分 (ishiki haibun) – *Lit. conscious distribution*



Build Meter

The act of earning super meter. Usually the term is used to describe specific actions a player is taking to increase their meter beyond just normally fighting. For example, if a player is stunned, you might whiff a few special moves in front of them to earn a bit of risk-free super meter before you attack them. Or, if you have blocked your opponent's dragon punch and they will die to any hit, don't pick just any old random attack to finish the round! Instead, pick the attack that builds you the most super meter. Both of these examples are extremely common in games like Street Fighter.



ゲージ溜め (geiji tame) – *Lit. gauge storing*

[See video](#)

Shadow Meter



What Killer Instinct calls their super meter. The shadow meter gauge contains 2 bars of meter, and each bar can be spent on a shadow move or a shadow counter. You can learn more at ki.infil.net.



シャドーゲージ (shadō gēji) – *Lit.* shadow gauge

Undizzy



A Skullgirls system that is designed to prevent long, touch of death combos. After a brief opening section of the combo where you are allowed to do what you want, the game will begin to fill a green bar located under your health bar (called the Drama Meter) for each hit in your combo. Once the bar gets full, the opponent can burst for free, ending your combo. The bar goes down slowly when a combo is not happening, so you cannot do long combos and then land a reset to bypass the Undizzy system.

It's the second system in Skullgirls designed to protect against infinite combos, the first being the appropriately-named Infinite Prevention System. While that did a good job preventing true infinites by forcing variation, characters still died to one combo anyway. These two systems put together ensure that combos need to be varied *and* that they can't be too long. Undizzy was originally a system in Marvel vs. Capcom 2, which prevented certain infinites from going on too long.



アンディ ジー (andiji) – *Lit. undizzy*



Hajiki Screw

A specific hand motion for executing 360s very quickly on an arcade stick. One way to do this is to hold right on the stick, pinch the ball of the stick between your thumb and index finger, and then "snap" or "flick" the stick down with your thumb. The momentum will carry the stick all the way around to the up direction (without touching your hand again), giving you enough inputs to complete the 360 incredibly fast. The namesake comes from Screw Piledriver, which is the Japanese name for an SPD.

You don't need to learn how to do a Hajiki Screw to do SPDs without jumping, and many good grappler players do not use the technique. It's more common if you play older games, like Super SF2 Turbo, since the speed of a Hajiki Screw lets you more consistently whiff punish attacks with Zangief or T.Hawk's SPDs, making you even scarier.



はじきスクリュ – (hajiki sukuryū) – *Lit. repel/flick screw*

See video



Anime Game

A particular style of fighting game that often employs frantic, highly aerial-based combat (including air dashing) and wild character designs, often drawn with a Japanese anime aesthetic. There are many popular anime fighting games on the market, from original properties like Guilty Gear or Under Night In-Birth, to famous licensed IPs like Dragon Ball FighterZ.

Fans of anime games typically like them because they promote high degrees of creativity and decision making, and often have strange and interesting character designs. Anime games are sometimes called "airdashers" because, well, air dashing is such a big part of why people like them. But there are some games with a heavy anime aesthetic that do not focus on air dashing, so the term can mean slightly different things depending on which community you're talking to.

Staircase Combo



An air combo that either steadily increases or decreases in height, like you were bounding up or down a set of stairs. Usually you end up repeating the same sequence of attacks in order to bring them up or down the staircase. They exist largely in team games or anime games, since those are the games where characters can fly or have multiple air dashes, which usually help you achieve the prolonged air mobility needed for this type of thing.

See video

Auto Combo



When a game lets you perform several simple button presses (often even the same button), and it automatically generates a combo composed of multiple different moves. Lots of different games have auto combos, from Dragon Ball FighterZ to BlazBlue: Cross Tag Battle to Persona 4 Arena.

Some people cast these in a negative light, thinking they are there just to help beginners do cool things they couldn't otherwise do. But really, auto combos usually come with benefits and

drawbacks just like any other game system. They may be easier to do, but they might deal less damage than a harder combo, for instance. Or in some games like Under Night In-Birth, their "Smart Steer" auto combo system gives you new ways to break the rules of the way UNI combos and block strings are structured.



オートコンボ (ōto konbo) – *Lit.* auto combo

超コンボ (chou konbo) – *Lit.* super combo (for Dragon Ball FighterZ)



Microdash

Dashing forward (really, running forward) for a very short amount of time, usually 1 or 2 frames. It's almost identical in practice to the microwalk, which means you'll use it to gain a few extra pixels of distance so certain attacks or combos will reach. Using a dash or run instead of walking can help you cover a few extra pixels of distance, or can be used in situations where walking is not possible (for example, you may be able to cancel a move into a dash).



微ダッシュ (bi dasshu) – *Lit.* microdash



Rekka

A type of special move that allows for multiple stages with successive inputs. Rekkas tend to have exactly three distinct parts and will move your character forward along the ground with each new input. Usually the first part is safe on block, and you'll only continue into the later parts as a hit confirm, although some games will tinker with this formula a bit. Originally named for Fei Long's "Rekka-Ken" special move in Street Fighter II, the term is now used for any move of this type in any game.



烈火 (rekka) – *Lit.* raging fire

烈火拳 (rekkaken) – *Lit.* raging fire fist

See video



Battery

A character or move whose objective is to build a resource, usually super meter. It's commonly used in team games where you'll choose a point character that can fight without using meter, so your latter characters can run wild with lots to spare. Killer Instinct has a "battery ender" which doesn't do much damage but builds tons of shadow meter.



Breakaway

A defensive mechanic that lets you escape an air combo. Also called an Air Escape (especially in Injustice 2). In Mortal Kombat 11, press down plus the block button to quickly fall to the ground while you are being juggled. You'll be permanently armored on the way down, so you can only be hit by attacks that defeat armor, and it will cost both bars of your defensive meter. It's in a similar vein to other combo escape mechanics, like Killer Instinct's combo breaker and Guilty Gear's burst.



ブレイクアウェイ (bureiku awei) – *Lit.* breakaway



Flipout

Hitting someone out of the air so that they flip and land on their feet, rather than landing on their back with a knockdown. Each game handles its aerial hits differently; in some games, every aerial hit automatically causes a flipout, while in some games flipout doesn't exist at all, and every aerial hit ends in a knockdown.

Most games, though, will have some moves specifically marked as able to flip out and others marked as knockdown. When you cause a flipout, usually it's because you're trying to perform an air reset, which can lead to a powerful mixup situation. After a flipout, you might walk under the opponent as they're falling, and then as soon as they land, you force them to guess what side you'll end up on. This mixup is very similar to a cross-up, but people will call it a cross-under in these situations.



空中復帰 (kūchū fukki) – *Lit.* aerial return/reset

See video

Tripping



A mechanic featured in Smash games since Smash Bros. Brawl where your character falls over while standing on the ground, knocking them down and forcing them to choose a wakeup option, like standing in place or rolling. Some attacks will always trip you, like Diddy Kong's banana peel, while others will have a chance to trip (for example, in Smash Ultimate, Bowser's down tilt has a 30% chance to cause trip).

Tripping is most controversial in Brawl, where characters would have a 1% chance to trip every time they executed a dash. This means characters would randomly fall over while trying to fight,

and they'd often be heavily punished when it happened. Still no idea what they were thinking with this one.



転倒 (tentou) – *Lit.* fall down



Mind Game

Trying to trick your opponent into taking the wrong action, usually by making it look like you will do one thing, and then doing another. A common mind game in a Street Fighter game would be knocking someone down and then threatening to attack them when they wake up. This threat might make them do a reversal to escape, but instead you just do nothing and block, which leads to a huge punish combo. Mind games are in all facets of a fight, and being crafty and unpredictable is how you win more of these situations than you lose.



Tension Pulse



A Guilty Gear system mechanic that changes how much Tension (that is, super meter) you gain from taking actions. Unlike many other fighting games where the meter you gain from a given attack is fixed, Guilty Gear will increase this value if you've previously been taking aggressive actions like attacking or running forward, or decrease it if you've recently been defensive, like doing a lot of walking or dashing backwards.

Your current Tension "modifier" value is hinted at by arrows traveling through your Tension gauge. The faster they move, the higher your Tension Pulse is. If you perform a Guilty Gear Strive wall break and then look at your Tension gauge, you'll see the arrows quite clearly!



テンションバランス (tenshon baransu) – *Lit.* tension balance



Combo Video

A video containing combos, what else! Most of the time, these won't be practical combos you'll want to learn to do in real matches. Instead, they'll be outlandishly difficult or stylish combos, sometimes requiring the cooperation of both players and often set to music, just to show people how cool fighting games can be. If you're curious, here is the first combo video I ever watched back in the early 2000s, and you should probably familiarize yourself with some of the classics while you're at it. Or just search Youtube for "Marvel vs. Capcom 3 combo video" and set aside an afternoon.



コンボムービー (konbo mūbi) – *Lit. combo movie*

コンボ動画 (konbo douga) – *Lit. combo video*



Special Move

A move that typically requires a joystick motion and a button press to execute (note the difference from a command normal). These moves are typically a character's most recognizable, signature attacks, such as Ryu's Hadouken, Shoryuken, and Hurricane Kick. Usually a special move will come in multiple different strengths depending on the attack button pressed (including EX moves), which can vary the effect of the move.

While most special moves involve some motion on the joystick plus a well-timed button press, some specials use weird inputs, like holding down a button for a while and then releasing it (for example, Balrog's Turn Around Punch). While special moves were usually the holy grail of awesome when 8-year-old you was mashing on a SNES controller, in reality normals tend to form the most important core of your offense.



必殺技 (hissatsu waza) – *Lit. killing technique*



Okizeme

The moment during a fighting game when your opponent is knocked down and you get to attack them as they stand back up. The defender's options are limited, so the offensive player gets to attack with all sorts of mixups or apply any mind game they choose. Some options include attacking with a basic meaty, doing a cross-up, or trying to bait their opponent's desperate dragon punch by simply doing nothing and blocking.

Okizeme (pronounced *oh-kee-zeh-meh* and often shortened to "oki") means "wake up offense" in Japanese, so the term mostly focuses on the offensive choices. If you hear someone ask "what's the *oki* going to be?", they are wondering what method of attack (or non-attack) the offensive player will choose to assert their advantage. It's closely related to the term wakeup, although that tends to focus more on the defensive choices (you might hear "I can't believe they did a wakeup DP!").

If someone asks "do I get *oki* after this move?", they're asking whether that move leaves them close enough, and with enough time, to threaten multiple different offensive options. Moves that "don't give you *oki*" will leave you far away and mostly end your offensive pressure.



起き攻め (okizeme) – *Lit. wake up offense*

See video





Aerial Attack

An attack in Super Smash Bros. done by pressing A button in the air with an optional direction (or by using the C-stick). Like smash attacks, you append a letter for the direction (or "n" for neutral) and write "air" after it. So a down-aerial is written as "dair" and pronounced as one syllable.

These are effectively your character's air normals and they are some of the strongest, most useful, most spammable moves in any Smash Bros. game. Many characters have extremely potent killing moves on at least one of their aerials, and they can be used for prolonged juggles, stage control, edge-guarding, and playing Smash's version of footsties. Of all the attacks to understand for your character, your aerials should probably be first on the list.



空中攻撃 (kuuchū kougeki) – *Lit.* aerial attack



Pizza Cutter

Slang for a specific jumping normal where a character with a sword does multiple somersaults with their sword extended. The animation kinda resembles rolling a pizza cutter in a circular motion. The original pizza cutter normal was Zero's jumping heavy attack in the Marvel vs. Capcom 3 series, but since then, some other characters have adopted the name, including Shadow Jago's jumping HP in Killer Instinct.

See video 



Dust

One of the five attack buttons in Guilty Gear. Dust is kind of a multi-purpose button; on the ground, it is used as a universal overhead which can launch the opponent up for an air combo. If you hold down while pressing it, you'll get a sweep attack that hits low. In Guilty Gear Strive, it is also used as part of the throw command. Some famous combos in Guilty Gear use this button, like Sol's dust loop.



ダスト (dasuto) – *Lit.* dust

ダストアタック (dasuto atakku) – *Lit.* dust attack

6-Button Fighter



A fighting game that uses 3 strengths for punch attacks (light punch, medium punch, heavy punch) and 3 strengths for kick attacks (light kick, medium kick, heavy kick). The various entries in the Street Fighter series are by far the most common 6-button fighting games. There are some team games that use 6 distinct buttons, like Marvel vs. Capcom, but some of those buttons are dedicated to calling assists. You could probably make the definition fit if you were in a pinch, but it's not how most people will use the term. There are many fighting games that only use 4 primary attacks as well.

Chicago Punish



Correctly blocking a very unsafe move from your opponent (like a dragon punch) and then punishing it with a low damage, sub-optimal offensive move (like a throw). Normally, this should be a huge swing of momentum in a match and you should retaliate with huge damage. However, because you panicked or weren't ready, you just reflexed into some weak "default" option that makes you look a bit silly. This term was popularized in the Midwest as a self-deprecating joke,

but feel free to replace Chicago with your own hometown, since if we're honest, we're all equally bad.

Sidewalk



Sidestepping in a Tekken game, and then continuing to hold up or down so you begin to walk in that direction after your initial step completes. Sometimes it's useful to sidewalk if you want to avoid a long, multi-hitting string that doesn't have great tracking, since if you stop after the sidestep, you might get caught as the string completes.



横歩き (yoko aruki) – *Lit. side walk*

Shatter Strike



An armored technique in King of Fighters XV that blows through incoming attacks and crumples the opponent on hit. Shatter Strike is performed with QCF+HP+HK and costs one bar of meter, although you'll get back half your bar as a rebate if it hits.

Landing the attack as your first hit (that is, in neutral) will cause follow-up hits to launch or air reset the opponent, so the combos tend to be a bit shorter. But if you can cancel attacks into Shatter Strike in the middle of a combo, further hits will keep the opponent on the ground for a nice combo extension. If you anti-air with Shatter Strike, you will wall bounce the opponent and be able to juggle them.



シャッターストライク (shattā sutoraiku) – *Lit. shatter strike*

[See video](#)

Wong Factor



A phenomenon that occasionally happens to opponents of legendary fighting game player Justin Wong in big tournament matches. They'll play well for most of the match, and then right when they need to solidify their win, they'll just crumble in the heat of the moment, usually by dropping an easy combo or letting Justin wrestle momentum back for a huge comeback.

Whether it's tournament nerves or just Justin's ability to put a vice-like grip on his opponent's emotions through his gameplay, it seems like many people just can't keep it together when it matters most. Perhaps the original Wong Factor moment was this legendary comeback against IFCYipes at the EVO 2007 Marvel vs. Capcom 2 tournament.

Infinite Combo



A combo that can continue forever in theory, but in practice will end because either the clock or your opponent's health will run out. Infinite combos are generally seen as a poor design choice, and most games try to prevent infinites through various means, including hit stun deterioration, gravity scaling, juggle potential, or game-specific approaches like Killer Instinct's KV meter. Most infinite combos involve looping a sequence of moves over and over, and in modern games typically require a convoluted setup or a bug to trick the game into letting it happen.

Infinite combos have a long and contentious history; most people consider it cheap and

frustrating, but a surprising number of popular games have had their best strategies shaped by unintended infinite combos, including Marvel vs. Capcom 2, Street Fighter Alpha 3 (with Crouch Cancel Infinites), Ultimate Marvel vs. Capcom 3 (with TAC Infinites), and many kusoge, perhaps most famously Hokuto No Ken.



永久コンボ (eikyū konbo) – *Lit.* infinite combo



Sonic Boom

A specific type of projectile that travels horizontally and is traditionally input using a charge command. Notably, they have considerably faster recovery than a fireball, but needing to have charge to throw one really limits the situations in which you can use them. Sonic Boom is the specific name of Guile's famous projectile, but it will often refer to any projectile with very little recovery. You'll often see the term used in sentences like "stop throwing Sonic Booms" and "please stop throwing Sonic Booms".



ソニックブーム (sonikkubūmu) – *Lit.* sonic boom



V-Shift

A Street Fighter V mechanic that lets you defensively dodge an attack and follow up with a counter-attack. For the cost of 1 V-Gauge bar (a meter also shared with doing V-Reversals and V-Triggers), pressing MK + HP in neutral will perform a V-Shift. You will emit a blue aura and do an invincible backdash, slowing down time if your opponent happened to attack at the same time.

At the end of the backdash, you can then do an automatic follow-up attack called V-Shift Break, or any attack of your choice, which might punish the opponent based on what you dodged. You

get a rebate of one-half of the V-Gauge spent if you successfully dodged an attack too! But if your opponent did not attack, you won't get the slow motion effect, you won't get the V-Gauge rebate, and you'll be punishable. V-Shift was added late into the lifecycle of Street Fighter V and gave some situational ways to dodge and punish some common frame traps and powerful close-range moves.



V-シフト (V shifuto) – *Lit. V-shift*

See video

Throw Loop



Throwing someone, and then being close enough to throw them again immediately as soon as they wake up. In essence, if your character has a throw loop, it means you will be able to apply strong oki after you land a throw, mixing between a strike-or-throw 50/50 until the defender guesses correctly and escapes. In some cases, you may throw them multiple times in a row if they do not correctly defend, which is why it's called a loop.

Most fighting games have the ability to apply offense after a throw, which at the very least involves the threat of another throw but might lead to even scarier offense like unblockables or touch of death combos. Street Fighter V is a notable exception to this rule, so often it was advised to "take the throw" if your opponent got close in that game; if you accepted being thrown once, your opponent would be too far away to apply more offense afterwards, letting you escape. If you're finding yourself being throw looped, some basic defensive ideas like delayed teching may help you out.



投げループ (nage rūpu) – *Lit.* throw loop
柔道 (jūdou) – *Lit.* Judo

See video



Chicken Block

Holding up-back while you are being attacked so that you jump as soon as there is any gap in your opponent's sequence. This works only in games that let you block in the air, like most team games, so holding up-back lets you jump *and* keep blocking.

In essence, you are "chickening out" of trying to guess whether to block high or low, so you try to get into the air (where attacks are all blocked the same way) to escape your opponent's scary close-range pressure instead. You can typically defeat chicken blocking by going low and catching their feet as they try to jump, but that's easier said than done in the heat of a match.

See video



Ditto

What Smash Bros. players call a mirror match.



ミラーマッチ (mirā macchi) – *Lit.* mirror match



Magic Pixel

A term used to describe an opponent who has no visible health remaining on their health bar, but are somehow still alive and fighting. It's normally only a big deal if someone is making a huge, unlikely comeback with no life remaining. Especially in games with chip damage, these usually end up being pretty exciting.



ドット (dotto) – *Lit. dot* (only have a single dot, or pixel, of health left)



Offensive Move



A more aggressive form of sidestepping in Virtua Fighter, primarily used to get positioning at your opponent's side or back. Almost always shortened to "OM". To perform this, do a Defensive Move (that is, do a sidestep), then immediately press P+K+G at the same time.

Offensive Moves look very similar to Defensive Moves, but they go a lot farther and your character makes a whooshing sound. Unlike DMs, which are specifically programmed to avoid (most) attacks, an OM is unable to avoid any attacks at all. In other words, you sacrifice the ability to dodge attacks in order to go further with your sidestep, hopefully putting yourself closer to your opponent's side. If you can successfully get to the side, your offensive options are stronger; your attacks gain damage bonuses, can generate more frame advantage, and your opponent's defensive options get worse as well, so a well-timed OM can be worth the risk. You'll also find OM used in some combos!



オフェンシブムーブ (ofenshibu mūbu) – *Lit. offensive move*

See video

Wall of Pain



A technique in Smash Bros. games (but especially Melee) where Jigglypuff performs several back-air attacks while jumping repeatedly. This will either keep you walled out in neutral, or she can use it as an edge-guard by knocking you continuously farther and farther off the stage until you die. Meanwhile, Jigglypuff's excellent recovery lets her safely come back to the stage.

Octo Gate



A plastic device under the joystick of your arcade stick that dictates how it can move. An octo gate is shaped like an octagon, which gives you 8 grooves matching all 8 cardinal directions to nestle your joystick into. If you've played on a Gamecube controller before, you know what an octo gate is. Some people much prefer octo gates to the default square gate you'll find on most arcade sticks, although many others find doing motions like quarter circles on it harder because of the added ridges.



八角ガイド (hakkaku gaido) – *Lit. octagonal guide*

Psychic



A way to describe a read that is so perfect to the situation that the only possible explanation is that you are a mind reader. To call something psychic, it usually has to be really risky (and also highly rewarding). Don't waste the power of the term if you knew something was coming but took a very safe approach to handling the threat. You gotta go all-in and be right. The classic example of this is the Umeshoryu.



Optimal

Responding to a situation with the best possible action. It's almost always talked about in terms of combos that give you the maximum possible damage, and you may even have several different optimal combos that use varying amounts of super meter (for example, an optimal 1-bar combo if you wanted to save the rest of your meter for later), or have different starting attacks.

You always *want* to be optimal, but the fast, stressful pace of fighting games and you losing control of your mental stack means that sometimes you'll just mess up. Players who are consistently optimal under pressure, especially when the optimal choice has high execution and is easily dropped, are super impressive. It's not easy.



最大 (saidai) – *Lit.* maximum



Startup

The period of time that occurs after pressing your attack button, but before your attack is capable of making contact with the opponent. It's one of the three stages of an attack, along with active and recovery, and is measured in frames. It's best to think of startup as your attack's "windup" period. It's also a pretty important number to get comfortable with when learning frame data, since the "speed" of an attack is often used when formulating strategies. You'll often hear people say "how fast is that move?" to ask about its startup.

The communities for many games will double-count the first active frame in the startup frames, so a move that has 8 frames of startup will hit on the 8th frame (as opposed to the 9th frame). This makes it easy to understand punishes for moves, because an 8-frame attack will punish

something that is -8 on block. So just ask which way of documenting startup is preferred for your game if you're unsure.



発生 (hassei) – *Lit.* to occur/to generate

See video



Force Stand

When an attack forces a crouching opponent to stand up when it hits them. This is particularly useful when a follow-up combo does not work against a crouching opponent. Including an attack that "forces stand" in the combo will make sure the opponent is no longer crouching and that the rest of the combo works fine.



強制立たせ (kyousei tatase) – *Lit.* force stand

See video



Microwalk

Walking for an *incredibly* short amount of time, usually 1 or 2 frames. This will reposition your character by a few pixels and sometimes allow certain combos to work where they normally would not (because the hitboxes and hurtboxes would otherwise miss each other by a millimeter). Microwalk combos are often incredibly difficult; if you don't walk at all, or walk slightly too much, the combo won't work and they can often trigger unwanted input shortcuts because of the

added forward input. Fortunately, they are rarely mandatory to learn and are usually reserved for combo video fare.



微歩き (bi aruki) – *Lit. microwalk*

See video



Jab



Another name for light punch. This one is pretty common and easy to understand. You might also hear this called "One Jab" in a game like Tekken, based on Tekken's notation using 1 for a left punch. They're super fast check moves you can use to keep your opponent off balance. You might also hear "dick jab" to refer to a crouching jab, typically in 3D games. I probably don't need to explain that one.



小パン or /JP (ko pan) – *Lit. small punch*

Reactable



An attack that has slow enough startup that a human can react to it and correctly defend (either by blocking or intercepting with their own attack). A good example of a reactable move would be a jump – good players will have enough time to see these coming and input an anti-air before the jump completes... most of the time.

It's important to note that very few attacks in fighting games are actually reactable! In fact, most of them are unreactable because they are well below the best case human limit for reaction. But

fortunately, most attacks aren't mixups, so it's okay to just pre-emptively block. I'd say if you can reliably react to moves that have around 20 frames of startup, you're doing a super great job. And don't worry if you sometimes get hit by something that is theoretically reactable. Fighting games are hard, and nobody is perfect.

Plus, if everything was easily reactable, fighting games would not be interesting at all. When players don't always know what's coming, you get exciting moments of reads and a player's personality really starts to shine through. That's the truly interesting stuff.

Run



Running across the screen continuously, usually instead of dashing which goes a short distance and then stops. Some games, like Mortal Kombat, will have a dedicated run button (maybe even tied to stamina), while other games like King of Fighters replace forward dashing with running. You'll often have a bit of recovery after you stop running, leaving you open to punishment unless you use tricks like Guilty Gear's Faultless Defense, so be careful. Not every game allows you to run, but a surprising amount do!



走り (hashiri) – *Lit. run*

Strong



Another name for medium punch. It's a strong attack, but not the strongest.



中パン or 中P (chū pan) – *Lit. medium punch*



Infinite Prevention System

A Skullgirls system that, as you might have guessed, is designed to prevent infinite combos. In Skullgirls, your combos are built off repeated chains, separated by air attacks and special moves. After a certain number of hits, the game keeps track of which normals you use in your combo, and if you ever start a chain with a normal you've previously used, the game lets the opponent burst and escape for free.

The idea is to force the opponent to vary the combo (thus, making sure it is not an infinite loop of the same sequence), but in practice, many combos just killed before the IPS made any difference. In the end, Skullgirls implemented a second system called Undizzy to help keep combos shorter.



永久コンボ防止システム (eikyū konbo boushi shisutemu) – *Lit.* infinite combo prevention system

無限コンボ阻止システム (mugen konbo soshi shisutemu) – *Lit.* infinite combo prevention system



Magic 4

When a character's basic 4 attack causes a launch when it counter hits. Not every Tekken character has a magic 4 – for some characters, pressing 4, even on counter hit, won't cause a launch or anything special to happen. And not all magic 4s are made equally, since some characters get a fat combo when it hits, while others don't get much. But when your character has a fast 4 that you can easily fish with, you have the beginning of a useful strategy that even beginners can work with.

[See video](#)

Downplayer



Someone who constantly says the character they play isn't very good, even though there is plenty of evidence to the contrary. Downplayers tend to focus primarily on all the ways their character might lose, and tend to brush off where their character is strong, often insisting that people can easily avoid or react to all their offensive choices, even when it's not true.

The heart of the matter usually comes down to ownership. If players admit they are playing a strong character, they might have to start admitting that when they lose, it's their own fault, and nobody likes that.

Circuit Spark



A defensive Melty Blood: AACC mechanic where you turn yourself invincible while you are being hit in a combo or being put in block stun. You'll blast your opponent away and you'll get to escape. It is extremely similar to Guilty Gear's Burst, and you might hear this called a "burst" colloquially for this reason.

Like virtually every Melty Blood mechanic, sparks work a bit different depending on your chosen Moon. Firstly, you can't spark unless you've first earned full super meter and entered either MAX mode (C or F Moon) or Auto-Heat (H Moon). In C or F, you can choose to spark when you want, but it zeroes out your gauge and leaves MAX. In H Moon, though, you will *automatically* spark

the very second you get hit while in Auto-Heat. You don't have any choice in the matter, but H Moon sparks are considerably more invincible, even during recovery, so they're going to be pretty hard to bait.



サーキットスパーク (sākitto supāku) – *Lit.* circuit spark

See video



Delayed Tech



Trying to defend against being thrown by inputting a throw tech a little late on purpose. Delayed tech (also called "late tech") is an option select; you want to try and block in case they attack, and if they throw, pressing the buttons slightly late means you will still successfully throw tech, since the window for teching throws can be a little bigger.

This is one of the first defensive techniques new players should learn if they are playing a Street Fighter-like game, since it lets them defend against basic attacks and basic throws at the same time. Powerful stuff! It's not foolproof though – once you get into intermediate play, a player can just slightly delay their *own* attack to counter hit your late tech attempt. But when your opponent hesitates like this, that can open up other ways for you to defend too! You'll start to see the mind games of offense and defense when you get good at stuff like this, but start with delayed techs first!



遅らせグラップ (okurase gurappu) – *Lit.* delay grapple

[See video](#)

Utility Super

A super that gives you some sort of setup or positional advantage rather than pure, raw damage. The goal is not simply to add more hits to a combo like many supers, but rather to put yourself in a strong favorable position.

This might mean more damage later (via some mixup) or just letting you safely control the screen so you can, for example, run away and start zoning again. Classic examples of utility supers include Urien's Aegis Reflector (3rd Strike), Dhalsim's Yoga Catastrophe ultra (Street Fighter IV), and Faust's Item Toss (Guilty Gear).

[See video](#)

Stop Sign

Slang for a fantastic poke, either from the ground or from the air, that seems to always stop everything in its tracks. Think of the poke putting up a giant stop sign in front of itself, as if to say "sorry, no opponents allowed".

The quintessential stop sign in my mind has always been E. Honda's neutral jumping heavy punch from Street Fighter. This move has an absurd hitbox and is almost unchallengeable in the air, and it probably helps that Honda's hands look a bit like a stop sign while he's attacking. But

really, you can use this slang for any attack that just puts up a huge, seemingly impenetrable wall in front of your character.

See video



Projectile Invincible



A state where projectiles cannot hit you, but all other attacks or throws will. Usually the projectile will just pass right through your body, sailing harmlessly into the background, as you throw your hapless self full throttle towards whatever zoner is frustrating you today. It's not as good as being fully invincible, but it gets the job done in lots of situations, and moves with this property are especially powerful to use on reaction when you see someone throw a projectile from a bad range.



弾無敵 (tama muteki) – *Lit. bullet invincible*

Auto-Double



A two-hit normal attack during a Killer Instinct combo. After any opener is performed, you can simply press a single button to get one of these two-hit attacks. You can then input a special move to perform a linker. Repeating this process over and over (auto-double > linker > auto-double > linker > ...) is the core structure of a KI combo. Auto-doubles (often called "autos", "doubles", or "ADs") can be done in light, medium, or heavy strengths and are always combo breakable.



オートダブル (ōto daburu) – *Lit. auto double*



Safe Jump

A very well-timed jump attack on a character who is rising from a knockdown. Your goal is to attack extremely close to when you land so that, if the character performs an invincible reversal attack, you will land and be able to block. The opponent is then forced to block your jumping attack, since reversing doesn't work, which will give you some nice pressure and hopefully an opening.

A safe jump is an option select; with the same set of inputs, you can both attack your opponent and block if they reversal. Pretty useful! The inner workings of a safe jump rely on how much recovery you have when you land from a jumping attack. In most games, it's pretty small, so as long as you have less recovery than the startup of your opponent's reversal move, you can make it to the ground and block in time. Some games have extremely fast reversal attacks though, so if you try to safe jump those with standard methods, you'll just get smoked. Because your attack has to be so well-timed for this to work, it's really hard to just do a safe jump randomly. That's why most people have setups for them so they work consistently.



詐欺飛び (sagi tobi) – *Lit. trickery/deceit jump*

See video



Cash Out

The act of performing an ender in Killer Instinct to convert all the white life sitting on your opponent's health bar into pure damage. Any combo involving an ender, as long as it is not

opener-ender, will always cash out the damage automatically. You'll mostly use the term to describe strategy, like "look at all that white life, he needs to cash it out!"



ポテンシャルダメージを確定ダメージに変える (potensharu damēji wo kakutei damēji ni kaeru) – *Lit. convert potential damage to confirm damage*

Command Normal



A normal that requires a direction alongside the button press, usually forward or back. While crouching attacks technically fit this description, we just call those crouching normals instead and we reserve this term for special-use normals that are quite different from the standard suite of standing, crouching, and air normals your character has. It's common, for instance, that if your character has a grounded overhead attack, it will be a command normal. You may also see some games refer to these as "unique attacks".



特殊技 (tokushu waza) – *Lit. unique technique*

Reward



A discussion around what could go right in the best case scenario when you make a certain decision, often measured by damage earned. Not every fighting game attack needs to earn a high reward; for example, it's common for safe moves to earn very low damage. These attacks would be low risk, low reward, and we will commonly talk about risk and reward as a pair for any decision. Ideally you want to find something that is low risk and highly rewarding when it works, but those pesky game developers usually try to avoid such degenerate options if they can.



リターン (ritān) – *Lit. return*



Sweet Spot

A specific hitbox of an attack that sends the opponent considerably farther away than any other part of the move. Some Smash Bros. sweet spots are sensitive to timing (they only appear during a few specific frames), while others depend on your range to the opponent. Marth's tipper and Captain Falcon's forward aerial knee attack are probably the most recognizable sweet spot moves in the Smash series. The opposite is a sour spot.



本當て (hon ate) – *Lit.* real/clean hit



Overhead Attack

An attack that *must* be blocked while standing. In most fighting games, this means holding directly away from your opponent on the analog stick. Most air normals are overhead attacks (especially the classic instant overhead), but usually the term refers to moves that you use while on the ground. Examples include command normals like Jago's Neck Cutter (back + HP) and Ryu's Collarbone Breaker (forward + MP), or special moves like Ky's Greed Sever.

Not all characters are blessed with the privilege of having a grounded overhead attack. Overheads are best used on opponents after they've settled down a bit and try to block your repeated fast low attacks, and because of this, overhead attacks are usually much slower than other attacks. Be sure to tell your opponent to "watch your dome" after you hit with one. See also mid attacks.



中段攻撃 (chūdan kougeki) – *Lit.* mid level attack

See video 



Deep

An attack that hits very close to the center of your opponent's hurtbox, leaving you extremely close. It's a term used to almost always describe jumping attacks, especially ones that are performed close to the ground during a safe jump.

Turnaround-B



A technique in Smash Bros. that causes you to face the other way as soon as you perform a special move. To do this, tap the direction opposite your character's momentum first, then immediately perform your B special move. You will keep your momentum traveling the same way, but you'll point in the new direction before doing the move.

Turnaround-Bs have existed in all versions of Smash Bros., and you'll commonly see it on retreating characters, like Melee's Falco doing lasers pointed at your face while moving backwards. The unfortunately named B-Reverse is a very similar technique, except you change the direction you're facing *and* your momentum. You can even do both at the same time, which is called a wavebounce.



振り向き必殺ワザ (furimuki hissatsu waza) – *Lit.* turnaround killing technique

See video 



3-Out System

A format used for pools in double elimination tournaments that sees one player on the winners side and two players (rather than just one) on the losers side qualify to the next set of pools. In essence, instead of the two players on the losers side playing to try and get out of the pool, they will both qualify to opposite ends of the next bracket, so they won't have to face each other. This lets you avoid a bunch of annoying double jeopardy situations where it's quite likely someone will lose twice to the same player. Many big tournaments now use this method.



3人抜け (sannin nuke) – *Lit.* 3 people pass

Assist



Asking one of your off-screen characters in a team game to come on screen briefly and perform an action for you. Most team games will have dedicated buttons for "calling" your assists, and they'll usually perform some short attack and then leave the screen. In most team games, you can call an assist at any time, as long as you aren't getting hit or blocking, and then they enter a short cooldown before they can be called again.

Because you are free to do other things while your assist is acting, they are useful for all sorts of things, from extending your pressure to creating wildly ambiguous mixups to continuing a combo. Be careful, though; your assist can get hit while they are on the screen, which can lead to incredibly rapid losses.



アシスト (ashisuto) – *Lit.* assist

See video 



Rejump

Doing an air combo where you land from your jump while the opponent is still airborne, then jumping a second time and continuing the combo with more air attacks. It's important that the opponent doesn't touch the ground between you landing and jumping again. Rejump combos are quite common in anime games; for example, the famous Sol dust loop involves several rejumps. They're less common in more grounded games like Street Fighter, but even there they might occasionally pop up.

See video



Sandori MB

A specific type of cross-up attack in Melty Blood: AACC that defeats the game's cross-up protection. Normally in Melty, you can block both away from your character *and* in the same direction as the offensive character is facing. That means if you do a "normal" Street Fighter-style cross-up, you can block this by holding either direction, making it useless.

To do a sandori, you jump over the opponent, perform a double jump, and then immediately cancel the double jump into a backwards air dash. Double jumping turns the offensive character around; this is the key reason why it beats cross-up protection and forces only one blocking direction to work. Then, quickly air dashing lets you stay very close to the opponent's head, leaving the mixup unreactable. One reliable way to input this (facing right) is 4756; 4 is the first input of the backdash, 7 double jumps (and turns you around), and 6 completes the backdash in your new direction.

Sandori is shorthand for the Japanese pronunciation of "Thunder Drift", which is the nickname given to this type of air dash movement thing. Some people think "sandori" is Japanese for "3-way mixup", but it's not.



サンダードリフト (sandā dorifuto) – *Lit.* thunder drift
サンドリ (sandori) – *Lit.* abbreviation of サンダードリフト

See video



Starter



The first hit in a combo. Depending on the game, which attack you use to start a combo can make a pretty big difference in how much damage your combo does! The first hit is not affected by damage scaling and it might change the proration of future hits, so you want to make sure you start with the juiciest, highest damage starter you can whenever possible.

The term is most commonly used in anime games or team games like Dragon Ball FighterZ. If you hear a phrase like "this 2M starter is really going to hurt" and you don't know why numbers are getting involved, you'll want to check out numpad notation.



始動技 (shidou waza) – *Lit.* starting technique
[move] スタート ([move] sutāto) – *Lit.* [move] start

Pot Monster



A person who enters tournaments but knows they are going to lose early. The term comes from the fact that their entry fee contributes to the pot for the eventual winner, so it ends up just being more "free money" for the stronger players.

While the term is sometimes used as an insult, the vast majority of fighting game fans are nowhere near strong enough to threaten to win big tournaments, so really, almost all of us are pot monsters. And yet, it's important for the health of tournaments that people enter who just want to have a good time and experience good vibes with their friends and fellow players, regardless of their success. As such, most people in the [FGC](#) treat the label as an endearing term for those who enjoy hanging out at tournaments just for the love of the games.

Frame Data



A complete list of the inner workings of every move in a fighting game. Pretty much everything will be measured with [frames](#), a fighting game's fundamental building block of time. You can learn the [startup](#), [active](#), and [recovery](#) frames of each move, what the [frame advantage](#) is when the move hits or is blocked, how much damage each move does, and any other special properties the move might have, like hitting [overhead](#) or [low](#).

Frame data can intimidate people, because it's a [giant spreadsheet](#) that looks pretty overwhelming. But, really, frame data is not intended to be memorized like a list of formulas for your high school math class. The two most important numbers are the [startup](#) of a move ("how fast is it?") and how [safe](#) or [unsafe](#) the move is if it gets blocked ("how risky is it to use?"). When you're getting started with frame data, you can generally skip all the other numbers and focus on these. Look for fast moves, and safe moves, then try these out in matches and see how you do!

Then, when you get more practice with the game, the other numbers will make more sense naturally.



フレーム表 (furēmu hyou) – *Lit. frame table*

See image



Weapon Flipping Technique

A super attack in Samurai Shodown available only when you are in Max Rage. Often abbreviated to WFT. On hit, you will leave Max Rage with your Rage meter emptying to 0, and your opponent will get disarmed (a pretty big deal). On whiff or block, you get to keep your Max Rage going and perform more WFTs later, although you might get punished. Instead of randomly throwing it out, try landing a hit confirm, perhaps off a throw.



武器飛ばし技 (buki tobashi waza) – *Lit. weapon flipping technique*

See video



Tick Throw

Making someone block a fast, close-range normal and then immediately throwing them. This is often a good strategy because light normals are usually plus when blocked, and you won't get pushed very far away after, so following up with a throw is a strong offensive option. Since the quick switch between attacking and throwing can be pretty difficult to stop sometimes, tick

throws are particularly effective against beginners. Learning to defend against them (for example, by using delayed tech) might save a few controllers from being tossed against a wall.



当て投げ (ate nage) – *Lit. hit throw*

See video



Taunt

A special technique that causes your character to stop fighting and perform an act of showmanship, often disrespectful. In some rare cases (such as Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike), taunts can have a character-specific in-game effects such as increased attack or defensive power, but for the most part, they exist only to aggravate your opponent... and they do a fantastic job of that.



挑発 (chouhatsu) – *Lit. taunt*

See video



Moon Drive MB

A unique install power-up mode in Melty Blood: Type Lumina. When your moon gauge is 50% full or more, press B+C to activate moon drive (make sure no directions are held, or you'll get a moon skill instead). Your moon gauge turns red and starts ticking down on a timer, giving you several new abilities until your timer runs out.

The main advantage you'll gain are new air mobility options. You can air dash twice and jump three times in (mostly) any combination you want, giving you much improved evasion or nutty mixups. Your super meter will also slowly gain over time, your moon skills will be cheaper, and depending on your character, some of these moon skills might be able to power through attacks using clash frames.

You can cancel into moon drive activation pretty much any time you want, leading to combo extensions or keeping attacks safe. You can also pop it as a reversal, using the screen freeze to check out what the opponent is doing and immediately input an invincible move to beat them. It's a versatile tool, but you'll have to build your moon gauge back up from scratch when it's over.



ムーンドライブ (mūn doraibu) – *Lit. moon drive*

See video



Nitaku



A mixup in Virtua Fighter where the offensive player is at strong frame advantage and can primarily choose between two options (a common combination being a fast mid or a throw), each of which requires a different defensive action to avoid taking damage. Nitaku is Japanese for "2 choices", indicating the binary 50/50 nature the defender finds himself in. You might also hear this called Forced Choice, or 2AFC (2-Alternate Forced Choice).

Due to the wealth of defensive options in Virtua Fighter (including jumping, crouching, backdashing, using Defensive Move, and many more), each offensive action usually has multiple

ways to defend. However, if you can generate enough plus frames (in VF5, +6 or higher is the magic number), you can eliminate a lot of these defensive choices. To take the mid-or-throw example, a defender facing a nitaku would be left with a more or less binary guess; block the mid (and lose to throw), or try and attack so the throw doesn't work (and get counter hit by the mid); picking any other defensive choice is very likely to lose to both offensive options. The guess is heavily in the offense's favor, leading to big reward if they are correct.

Sometimes you'll hear "reverse nitaku", which is the same situation but talking about it from the defender's point of view. That is, rather than say "you can attack or throw", reverse nitaku suggests "the defender can block or attack". More advanced situations can crop up that branch into three options. You might have guessed this is called "santaku" for "3 choices".



二抯 (nitaku) – *Lit.* two choices

See video

Low Crush



A move that is designed to avoid low attacks. In games with a crush system, this is because your move is specifically programmed to be unhittable by any attack marked as a low hit. In some communities, though, it's also used to describe a move that pulls your hurtbox up a bit so it just avoids attacks that are low to the ground. This can also be described as "lower body invincibility" to indicate that your lower body will phase through attacks. The opposite effect is a high crush. You might very, very rarely hear the term high profile used instead of low crush, but it's so rare that I wouldn't worry about it.



足元無敵 (ashimoto muteki) – *Lit.* foot invincible



Drive Parry

A more powerful form of blocking in Street Fighter 6 that costs Drive gauge to use. By pressing MP+MK, you will enter a unique stance while flashing blue at the initial cost of 0.5 of a drive bar, and you can continue to hold the buttons to maintain this stance for as long as you like, spending drive at a constant rate as you hold them. While you are parrying, you will automatically block all attacks, including all overheads, lows and cross-ups, and when an attack strikes you, you'll gain back drive gauge instead of lose it like you would with normal blocking. Once you let go of the buttons, you will start a brief recovery period where you can't move or attack, but you can still safely use your normal block. Being thrown while trying to parry is brutal, as you will take huge punish counter damage and lose even more drive gauge.

The name "parry" is a bit of a misnomer for this mechanic, since Drive Parry is more like "EX blocking" than a traditional 3rd Strike parry. When you parry something in Street Fighter 6, you enter the normal block stun of the attack, so the frame advantage doesn't change compared to a regular block. The benefits instead come from being safe to all attacks and regenerating your drive gauge, as long as you don't think you'll be thrown. That said, if you want a parry system that allows you to counterattack immediately after deflecting an enemy's strike, all you have to do is press the Drive Parry buttons very close to when the attack hits you. You'll then get something called a Perfect Parry.



ドライブパリィ (doraibu pari) – *Lit.* drive parry

See video



GRD 

A wholly unique system mechanic in the Under Night In-Birth series, representing a mini tug-of-war between the two players several times per round. In the bottom middle of the screen, you will see a GRD gauge (pronounced "grid"), with six squares for each player, meeting at a circular timer in the middle. As the players fight, they will fill (and lose) squares on this meter by taking specific actions. For example, you can earn GRD meter by blocking (or shielding) and landing hits, so playing aggressively and defending correctly are rewarded. You lose GRD meter by actions like backdashing, taking hits, or using your Force Function.

When the timer completes a full cycle every 16.5 seconds, the person with more squares filled will "win" the cycle. They will enter a state called Vorpal, which grants them a damage boost and some other important benefits (like Chain Shift) for the entirety of the next cycle.

The cool thing about GRD is that it changes the risk and reward for mechanics in a very interesting way. If the timer is about to finish its cycle, you may stop attacking a blocking opponent, because you are filling their GRD meter and you don't want to help them win Vorpal. A smart opponent will recognize this, know you are going to stop attacking, and do something really bold like run up and throw you. GRD gives Under Night an extremely unique flavor that isn't in any other fighting game.



グラインドグリッド (guraindo guriddo) – *Lit. grind grid*

GRD (written in English)

See video





Guts Scaling

A game mechanic that causes all of your attacks to do slightly less damage if your opponent's health bar is below some threshold. The purpose is to make the later periods of a round more exciting, since you might survive attacks that feel like they "should" kill you. Most 2D fighting games employ guts scaling – the Guilty Gear series is especially famous for its extremely pronounced guts system. There are also a few other common ways damage can be decreased, including proration, damage scaling, and stale moves.



体力補正 (tairyoku hosei) – *Lit.* health correction

根性値 (konjouchi) – *Lit.* guts value (more general term for power-up at low health)

See video



Tomahawk

Smash Bros. slang for an empty jump followed by a throw. Short hops in Smash are a huge part of close-range offense, almost always accompanied with a powerful aerial attack or projectile, so when you jump without attacking, it's easy to catch people off guard. Some people use the term to just mean the empty jump part (so you don't *have* to throw when you land), but throw is a super common option so it tends to get bundled into the term.



すかし (sukashi) – *Lit.* to make an opening / to leave a space (usually refers to empty jump in fighting games)



Unblockable

An attack that cannot be blocked. As you probably figured out, trying to block the attack will cause you to get hit instead. While technically all throws are unblockable, the term usually refers to a physical strike or projectile that has this property. Some examples include certain charge moves in the Soul Calibur series, Level 3 Focus Attacks in the Street Fighter IV series, and Sentinel's laser barf in Marvel vs Capcom 2. Usually unblockable attacks are either very slow, or the precursor to a fist coming your way at the arcade.

You'll also use the term to talk about setups that cause a move to hit you both high and low, or left and right, at the same time and bypass your ability to block. These are pretty common in games like SFIII: 3rd Strike, Marvel vs. Capcom 3, and older Guilty Gear titles, but more and more modern games are using unblockable protection to try and avoid these situations.



ガード不能 (gādo funou) – *Lit. impossible to guard*

ガーフ (gāfu) – abbreviation of ガード不能

See video



Meter Burn



A term for enhancing a special move that is specific to NetherRealm Studios games, specifically the Mortal Kombat and Injustice franchises. Basically, it's NRS lingo for an EX move, but unlike Street Fighter's EX moves that requires two button presses immediately, you can press a button to enhance your special within a window *after* your special move has started. This means, for some specials with large enough windows, you might even be able to Meter Burn them as a hit confirm! You'll also hear this called an "amplified" move from time to time.



Screen Freeze

The period directly after a super (or certain other powerful techniques) where the game pauses for dramatic effect. Usually the screen gets darker, the camera angle might change, and the character does some special pose. The in-game action stops during this time, and depending on the game, you might be able to use what you see during a screen freeze to your advantage after it's over. They aren't always just for show!



暗転 (anten) – *Lit.* darkening

強制停止 (kyousei teishi) – *Lit.* forced stop (less commonly used)

See video



Divekick

An aerial attack that accelerates quickly towards the ground, foot first. Divekicks are potent offensive weapons because they change how you can move through the air, and often characters can choose multiple angles for the divekick's approach, making it super annoying to anti-air them. Playing a character with a good divekick means you should be spending a lot of time in the air, irritating your opponent who just wants to live their best life on the ground.



ダイブキック (daibu kikku) – *Lit.* dive kick

雷撃蹴 (raigekishu) – *Lit.* lightning kick (Yun/Yang divekick)

See video



Balance

A measure of how strong a game's characters are, compared to each other. If most characters in a game have relatively similar chances to win, then you might say the game is pretty balanced. If there are a couple particularly broken strategies or characters that dominate all others, then the game would be pretty imbalanced. Perfect balance is impossible to achieve, and it's debatable whether balance is that important to fun factor anyway, since many of the genre's most exciting games have some pretty dominant characters. But imbalanced games fall apart pretty quickly without a fair bit of game design luck, so I wouldn't recommend designing it that way on purpose.



バランス (baransu) – *Lit.* balance

Chain Grab



A Smash Bros. combo where you throw someone many times in a row. Chain grabs are dependent on a lot of factors, including your opponent's character, stage positioning, how much damage they've taken, and which direction you throw them after grabbing them. Sometimes your opponent can make continuing the chain grab difficult by using DI, forcing you to react and change your followups, but other times the chain grab is just guaranteed to work with no problems until a certain damage threshold has been reached.

Famous chain grabs include Melee's Marth on the space animals and Brawl's Dedede on, well, pretty much everyone. Starting in Smash Bros. 4 and onward, being thrown once makes you impossible to throw again for about 1 second, effectively eliminating this technique.



投げ連 (nage ren) – *Lit.* continuous throw

[See video](#)

Rapid Cancel



A mechanic in BlazBlue that lets you cancel any attack (as long as it hits or is blocked) back to a neutral state. It costs 50% of your super meter and is performed by pressing A+B+C. The mechanic is incredibly similar to Guilty Gear's Roman Cancel, and they even have the same "RC" abbreviation! BlazBlue, however, does not have any colored versions that have reduced meter costs or can be performed outside of an attack that makes contact. So it's always analogous to just a regular red Roman Cancel, which lets you extend combos, get creative with your pressure, or keep reversals safe.



ラピッドキャンセル (rapiddo kyanseru) – *Lit.* rapid cancel

Cross-under



Walking or dashing under a character who is descending from the air, so you switch sides with them. You usually use this term to talk about a mixup after you flipout your opponent at the end of a combo and then subtly walk under them at the last second before they hit the ground (or stop walking and choose to stay on the same side). This variation on the traditional cross-up can be incredibly ambiguous and hard to defend against, so good luck.



裏回り (ura mawari) – *Lit.* go around the back (see uramawari)

[See video](#)

Smash Directional Influence



A method for you to change the position of your character during the very brief moments of hitstop in platform fighters like Super Smash Bros. Commonly abbreviated to "smash DI" or "SDI". While you are being impacted by an attack, moving the analog stick can subtly shift the location of your character and, for example, avoid the latter stages of a multi-hit move.

It's related to directional influence as a concept, since in both cases you are impacting your character's position after being hit, but smash DI is done in a very short window *while* you are being hit (before you are sent flying), while "regular" DI only impacts your flight path after the hit has fully resolved.



ずらし値 (zurashi chi) – *Lit.* slide value

Moon Charge



A system ability in Melty Blood: Type Lumina that lets you manually charge your super meter and your moon gauge at the cost of some of your health. Simply press and hold down+A+B for as long as you'd like to charge, but you'll be open to attacks while you're doing it, so maybe try to be far away from your opponent. It's similar to Under Night In-Birth's Concentration mechanic.

In Melty Blood: AACC, if you pick Full Moon, you can do a very similar thing called a Circuit Charge. By pressing A+B+C (the same command as Heat activation in other Moons), you'll stop

in place, focus your energy and charge up your super meter. This gives you more uses of EX moves while also helping you reach MAX mode faster.



ゲージ溜め (gēji tame) – *Lit. gauge storing*



Slide Input

A certain style of input in Soulcalibur and Tekken which requires pressing one button, and then one or two frames later, pressing another button. A lot of players who play on pad will slide their finger from one button to the other in one fluid motion to reliably input these moves; you might hear this called a "Slide Roll". On Soulcalibur movelists, a Slide input will show one of the inputs smaller than the other. It's not too dissimilar to Plinking in Street Fighter IV, but in Soulcalibur it's designed for specific moves and not a general input method.



スライド入力 (suraido nyūryoku) – *Lit. slide input*



Barrier Block

A defensive mechanic in BlazBlue that lets you perform a stronger block. To use this mechanic, you must spend some meter from your Barrier Gauge, a special gauge that is separate from your super meter and only used for this purpose. Like Guilty Gear's Faultless Defense, you can negate chip damage, increase pushback, and block normally unblockable attacks while in the air, making it a powerful and extremely common technique in tournament play.

If you Barrier Block too much, your gauge will deplete; you'll take extra damage and won't be able to try again until it fully recharges over time. Barrier Block also increases your block stun by 1 frame, so there are some attacks you won't be able to punish if you use a Barrier Block on them.

Lastly, you can perform Barrier Block in tandem with Instant Block, which grants you even more pushback than normal. This is usually called "Instant Barrier" or some similar combination of the two terms.



バリアガード (baria gādo) – *Lit. barrier guard*

Layered Mixup



A mixup that has more mixups behind it if you manage to successfully block the first one. As you fight stronger players, they will have better defense, so you'll need some backup plans once your first attempt to hit them doesn't work. Multi-way, layered mixups are commonplace in the Versus games, which is why basically nobody manages to escape when Zero's got them cornered.

Max Mode



An install possible in many different King of Fighters titles that can lead to highly damaging combos. The specifics depend on the game; often times, it will let you cancel certain special moves into other special moves (much like KoF13's HD mode). In a game like KoF14, it costs you 1 bar of super meter to enter Max, and you can use EX moves only while in this mode. These act as powerful combo tools themselves, so the effect on the match is kind of similar to doing lots of special move cancels.

Your Max Mode usually runs out over time, or if you perform a strong Desperation move, which often costs less meter than normal but will end Max mode immediately. If you cancel a normal attack into Max Mode, this is called "Quick Max" and there is often an extra cost with that (for example, in KoF15, your Max Mode timer will be half as long as normal).

MAX Mode is also a mechanic in Melty Blood, and I've moved that discussion over to its own term.



MAXモード (max mōdo) – *Lit.* max mode

See video



Moral



A Virtua Fighter playstyle that greatly prefers to attack while you are at plus frames and defend while you are at minus frames. It is a solid, low-risk style that always "does the right thing" in a sense (that is, you act "morally"); you aren't looking to surprise someone by trying to steal a turn unexpectedly. It is the opposite of abare, which is the act of attacking while you are negative. It really just comes down to whether you want to listen to the angel on your shoulder, or the devil.

Mixup



A situation where the offensive player has several ways to attack that each require a different defensive action to stop (such as blocking in different directions and avoiding throws). Most mixups contain several fast options that are extremely difficult, or impossible, to avoid on reaction, and thus the defensive player must make a read to escape taking damage.

Simple mixups that only require choosing between two defensive options are often called 50/50s. Very powerful mixups can exist which force a defender to choose between four or five

different options – for example, the attacker might attack high or low on both sides and could also throw.



択 (taku) – *Lit. choice*

See video



Gentleman

A slang term for Captain Falcon's neutral A attack when it ends on the third hit, a fast knee to the face, and does *not* continue to the rapid punches part of the move you'd normally get if you were mashing A. This "shortened" version of Falcon's neutral A is a better option during combos and pressure, but in Smash Bros. Melee, it is notoriously difficult to perform and players tried to develop their own methods for doing it more consistently. The name comes from a Japanese player with the tag "gentleman", who won a bet with American Smash legend Isai on who could perform the technique more frequently.



マッハパンチキャンセル (mahha panchi kyanseru) – *Lit. mach punch cancel*

See video



Option Select

A situation where performing the same inputs can lead to several different outcomes depending on how the characters interact. Often abbreviated as "OS". A common option select is the buffer:

press a normal attack and then try to cancel into a special. If you do this from far away, the normal attack will whiff and your special cancel does nothing. However, if your opponent gets hit by your attack, the special cancel will work automatically, without any extra thought or changes to the input on your part.

Good option selects tend to reduce the burden on a player to perfectly predict or react to everything happening in the game. You can perform one set of inputs, and the game will "select an option" automatically depending on what the other character did. Some OSes are common enough that we even give them names: delayed tech (try to block and throw tech), safe jumps (try to attack and block), and fuzzy guard (try to block multiple directions) are all specific examples of option selects that will help the player cover multiple choices at the same time.



自動二択 (jidou nitaku) – *Lit.* auto two choices/auto mixup

仕込み (shikomi) – *Lit.* preparation (mainly used for buffer option select)

See video



Burnout



A state you enter after you've spent all your drive gauge in Street Fighter 6. Your gauge will flash with the word "empty" and your character will be tinted gray and appear more fatigued. Your drive gauge gets replaced with a timer that slowly increases, indicating when you'll be back to normal. While in burnout, you can't use any drive techniques (including drive rush, drive impact, parry or OD moves), you will start taking chip damage from all specials and supers, and every move you block will inflict 4 more frames of block stun, which can greatly limit your defensive options. If you get splatted against the corner with a drive impact while in burnout, you will also

be stunned, giving your opponent a huge combo.

If that's not bad enough, burnout lasts a long time. It takes over 20 seconds to recover from burnout normally, although attacking and blocking will lower your burnout timer a little bit so in practice it's probably closer to 15 seconds or so. And if you got stunned from a drive impact, you will also immediately end burnout after your opponent finishes their combo. Burnout is the severe penalty you'll be forced to pay for mismanaging your drive gauge, and it makes SF6's system mechanics much more interesting.



バーンアウト (bān auto) – *Lit. burnout*

See video



Single Elimination



A tournament format where losing just one match means you are immediately eliminated. There's no mercy of the double elimination system here; the winner of the tournament will have won every single match they played. This structure is typically run for very small events, where a double elimination format doesn't make sense, although formats like round robin also work there.

Virtually all major tournaments no longer use this structure. Even though it's fast to run, the unforgiving nature and higher focus on luck make it a difficult sell in the modern era. The most famous single elimination tournament was Super Battle Opera.



シングルエリミネーション方式 (shinguru eriminēshon houshiki) – *Lit. single elimination system*



Crush Counter

A unique counter hit state specific to Street Fighter V that leads to highly damaging combos. If you counter hit your opponent with certain heavy attacks (each character will have their own list of Crush Counter moves), they will violently spin around as a glass-shattering sound effect plays, and they'll get put in a ton of hit stun. Many characters will be able to dash forward and still continue the combo with something beefy.

You can think of them kind of like a "super" counter hit, but tied to specific moves. SFV also tags dragon punches as counter-hittable during their recovery, which means you can wind up with your crush counter move and earn a huge punish when you block one.



クラッシュカウンター (kurasshu kauntā) – *Lit. crush counter*



Taco

A slang term that describes Iori's aerial back+LK attack. In general, you can use this to describe any air attack that has a hitbox well behind the character, such that it can only ever hit as a cross-up, but this specific Iori attack is by far the most common use of the term. It originated from the Spanish word "tacón", referring to the "heel" of Iori's foot.

[See video](#)

HD Mode



A unique custom combo install mode in King of Fighters XIII. When your Drive Gauge (the green bar above your super meter) is full, press LK + HP to activate Hyper Drive (HD) mode. While it is active, all of your normals now become cancelable into specials or supers, even if they weren't before. Drive Cancels become much cheaper, letting you string together long freeform combos. And lastly, you can cancel a Desperation Move directly into a Neo Max (called a "Max Cancel") for huge damage and at a cheaper cost than doing the moves individually.



ハイパー ドライブ モード (haipā doraibu mōdo) – *Lit. hyper drive mode*

[See video](#)

Super Battle Opera



A famous yearly Japanese fighting game tournament that started in 2003 and lasted until 2012. It's often abbreviated to SBO, or called by its Japanese name, Tougeki. SBO was famous for its incredibly unforgiving conditions; only a small number of players could qualify, each tournament was single elimination, and each match was first to 1, meaning absolutely perfect play (and a whole lot of luck) was needed to do well in this event.

While it was largely a tournament for Japanese players, a small number of foreign spots were

open each year. American teams often fought to qualify and travel to Japan, only to lose their first game and be eliminated. The atmosphere of SBO is perhaps its signature, though. If you made Top 8, you would be introduced to theme music, allowed to give a pre-match speech, and you'd play in front of a crowd on a platform with arcade machines. It's worth watching a match to see why SBO was enjoyed, despite the format.



闘劇 (tougeki) – *Lit.* dramatic fight

Footstool



Jumping off someone's head, using them as a springboard and sending them downwards. As soon as you are right above your opponent's head, simply press jump and bounce off their head.

This technique was first introduced in Smash Bros. Brawl and has been in every Smash game since. People have found creative uses of footstooling in combos and during edge-guarding, particularly for gimps, but it's a little tough to use properly since you will not be able to footstool someone downwards if they are doing an attack.



踏み台ジャンプ (fumidai janpu) – *Lit.* stool/springboard jump

踏みつけ (fumitsuke) – *Lit.* step on

See video 



Download

Figuring out your opponent's strategy in the middle of a match and then using that information to beat them. Maybe you'll notice a certain pattern they always do and exploit that, or maybe you play in a certain way just to get information on how your opponent plays before turning it around (e.g., jumping a lot to find out whether they can anti-air properly). When a player starts a match poorly but begins to turn it around with several dominating rounds, you might say "the download is complete".

DP Motion



The motion used to input a dragon punch, and many other special moves. It starts at forward, goes to down, then to down-forward, followed by an attack button. In numpad notation, it's 623. Some people think of it as the "Z-motion", and others try to think of the input as a quarter circle after starting to walk forward. On occasion you will also see "reverse DP" motions (421 in numpad notation, and sometimes abbreviated as "rdp").



昇竜コマンド (shouryū komando) – *Lit.* Shoryu command

See image



EX Move



A more powerful version of a special move, enhanced by spending some super meter. These moves have better properties than the base version of the special move, which may include more invincibility, more damage, or faster startup. The character often glows a different color, like yellow, while performing an EX move, just to make it extra clear what's happening.

While the term originated in Vampire Savior, and was made popular by the Street Fighter games, it's now a common staple of the genre, even if the game gives it a different name, like Mortal Kombat's Meter Burn. The letters 'E' and 'X' are pronounced separately.

Street Fighter 6 renames the EX move to the Overdrive Move to match the Drive System theme.



EX必殺技 (ex hissatsu waza) – *Lit.* EX killing technique

See video



Box Jump



Jumping either straight up or forward, then immediately air dashing in the forward direction, almost always followed by a strong air normal as you fall back to the ground. It takes its name from the character's trajectory as they jump, then dash, then fall to the ground, which resembles a rectangle. Box jumps (or box dashes) are common in the Versus series as a means to approach from long distances, and also as fast mixups, although you'll see it called an instant air dash or IAD a bit more commonly. See also tri-jump.



低空ダッシュ (teikū dasshu) – *Lit.* low altitude dash

EVO Moment #37



A moment from EVO 2004's Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike tournament that has become one of the most famous moments in fighting game history. Down to a sliver of his remaining health, Japanese fighting game legend Daigo Umehara precisely parried 15 hits of Chun-Li's super,

launched by American legend Justin Wong in an attempt to chip Daigo out. Daigo would then punish Justin and win the game, and eventually the match.

This moment has transcended the fighting game genre, inspired millions of fans and, in many ways, is responsible for the modern popularity of fighting games as a whole. The phrase "Let's go Justin!", shouted by an onlooker right before the parry begins, has also reached infamy in fighting game circles. The only way to understand the excitement of the moment is to watch it yourself.



背水の逆転劇 (haisui no gyakuten geki) – *Lit.* last-ditch turnabout play

レツツゴージャスティーン (rettsugō jasutīn) – *Lit.* let's go Justin

Normal



A basic attack usually activated by a single button press. In most fighting games, you will have different normals if you are standing on the ground, holding down to crouch, or jumping (a normal used while jumping at the opponent is often called a "jump in"), and some characters may have special attacks, called command normals, if you hold a direction while pressing a button. Some fighting games also have different normals depending on how close you are standing to your opponent. Normals aren't nearly as flashy as special moves, but they are extremely important, and will often form the backbone of your strategy. Don't overlook them!



通常技 (tsūjou waza) – *Lit.* normal move

Neo Max



A super in King of Fighters XIII that costs 3 bars to use (as well as all of your Drive Gauge). Depending on the situation, you can cancel regular special moves or supers (in Kof games,

they're often called Desperation moves) into a Neo Max attack; when you do this, it's called a "Max Cancel".

Throughout the years, King of Fighters' level 3 supers have had many different names, from "Dream Canceling" into a "Super Special Leader Move", to "Climax Canceling" into a "Climax Super Special Move". The particulars of how you can use them in each game differ slightly, but the overall idea is the same; spend 3 bars to do a ton of damage, often by canceling other attacks into it. Like all fighting games, they try to throw as many variations on the term as possible at you, just to see if you can keep up.



NEO MAX超必殺技 (neo max chou hissatsu waza) – *Lit.* neo max super killing technique

See video 

Proximity Normal



A normal that you can only use when you are point blank to your opponent. If you walked backwards a little bit, this normal would change to a different version (the "regular" or "far" version you use anywhere else on the screen). We tend to notate these normals as "close" or "cl." (for example, Ryu's "cl.MP"), since you have to be close to do them. The far version is usually notated with "f" (for example, Sol's f.S).

Having proximity normals is a design choice; not every game has them! When a game chooses to use them, close normals tend to be faster and more useful in pressure and combos than their far counterparts, but it can also be frustrating when hurtbox oddities cause the game to think you aren't close enough to get the version of the normal you're expecting. So, some modern 2D games

will instead just make one version of each normal that works the same way no matter where you are on the screen, and then maybe give you a few extra command normals for some variety.



近距離X (kinkyori [normal attack]) – *Lit.* close range [normal attack]

近X (kin [normal attack]) – *Lit.* close [normal attack]

(For example: 近距離大P (kinkyori daipan) or 近大P (kin daipan) means close range heavy punch)

See video



Valle CC

An unblockable attack in Street Fighter Alpha 2, discovered by and named after American fighting game legend Alex Valle. If you activated your custom combo (CC) mode and noticed your opponent was not crouch blocking during the screen freeze, you could immediately attack them low and they could not block, which could lead to huge damage with your custom combo turned on. For more on this and other famous fighting game bugs, check out my blog post on the topic .

See video



Wakeup

The act of rising from the ground after you've been knocked down. Since you are usually invincible when you are on the ground, there's a specific period of time when you become hittable again; this moment in time and the decisions around it from both players comprise the

"wakeup game".

The term "wakeup" usually focuses on the choices the defender makes as soon as they stand up. If they choose to do a risky reversal attack like a dragon punch, you might say "man, *another* wakeup DP from this guy?" Or, if they press buttons and keep getting counter hit, you might hear "you gotta stop mashing on wakeup". The term okizeme is very closely related, focusing more on the offensive choices.



起き上がり (okiagari) – *Lit.* wake up

Kara Throw



A specific type of kara cancel where the second move is a throw. In games where kara throws are possible, you'll pick a normal attack that moves your character forward a little bit during the first few frames, and then you immediately input the throw; it will feel like you're pressing the attack and the throw buttons almost simultaneously. Your character will then lurch forward suddenly and throw, greatly increasing its range.

In fact, you'll often be able to throw from way outside the opponent's throw range which, as you might guess, makes defending against throws very hard. The running joke is that Chun-Li in SFIII: 3rd Strike, a character with a super powerful kara throw, is the game's best grappler, but it certainly won't feel like much of a joke when you're playing.



移動投げ (idou nage) – *Lit.* moving throw

空キャンセル (kara kyanseru) – *Lit.* empty cancel (general term for kara cancel)

[See video](#)

Magic Series



Cancelling normals into each other in ascending order (from light to medium to heavy). The odd Street Fighter title will have this as a universal system feature, like Street Fighter Alpha 1 and Street Fighter x Tekken (also called "Boost Chains" there), but it's particularly prevalent in Marvel vs. Capcom, where comboing light, to medium, to heavy shows up very often in pretty much every character's BnB combo.

Like most terms in fighting games, there are multiple ways to refer to the same mechanic, depending on the game. Guilty Gear fans will often call this a Gatling, for instance, and you may even hear generic words like target combo, chain, or string used. Trying to keep all of it straight is difficult, but in practice they're all somewhat interchangeable.

Hurtbox



A predefined area (usually a group of rectangles or circles) that tells the game how your character is allowed to get hit by any incoming attack. Specifically, you'll get hit by (or block) an attack if that attack's hitbox ever overlaps your hurtbox. You can't see your hurtboxes during a match, but some training modes will let you check them out, and most of the time, they will try to match your character's model pretty closely so things don't feel funky.

Hurtboxes will almost always be green if you're able to see them using an online tool or training

mode. They may change to other colors (for example, red or yellow) if you can dodge certain types of attacks (for example, being projectile invincible). And usually there will be a second hurtbox that indicates where throws can hit you (in the KI video example below, it is hollow blue). As you might expect, if a throw's hitbox overlaps this "throw hurtbox", you will be thrown. It's not necessarily the same hurtbox as the one that tests for regular hits!

It should be noted that a lot people will often just call this a "hitbox" (for example, "I couldn't hit you, your hitbox is messed up"), which sometimes makes it hard to distinguish between the thing that is doing the attacking (the attack's hitbox), and the thing that is being hit (your character's hurtbox). But usually, through a bit of context, you can figure out which meaning is meant here.



喰らい判定 (kurai hantei) – *Lit. receiving detection*

やられ判定 (yarare hantei) – *Lit. receiving detection*

See video



Dashback



Dashing in the opposite direction you're facing in Smash Bros., causing your character to turn around and start a dash in a new direction. Doing this seems easy on paper (simply smash the analog stick behind you), but in Smash Bros. Melee in particular, dashing backwards is considerably more difficult than just dashing forwards, since you have to enter a brief "turnaround" animation, slowing the whole process down. This makes certain techniques like dash dancing and tech chasing more difficult.

To avoid being slowed down by turning around, you have to smash the analog stick from neutral all the way to left or right in 1 frame (sometimes called a "Smash Turn"). This is extremely difficult, but it's made worse by the fact that some Gamecube controllers are more capable of doing this based on random factors about their build quality. This is one of the issues the Universal Controller Fix software mod for Melee addresses, allowing all controllers to be able to do this equally well.



反転ダッシュ (hanten dasshu) – *Lit.* inverted dash



Back Roll

The act of rolling away from the opponent in a soft knockdown situation, although not every game allows for you to roll when your back hits the ground. Usually the term is reserved for these situations, even though games like Smash Bros. allow you to roll at any point during the fight.



後ろ受け身 (ushiro ukemi) – *Lit.* backward receiving body



Movement

Moving your character around the screen. This is not a particularly hard term to figure out, but I figured I'd throw it in here because everybody loves movement in fighting games! Being able to move your character fast and with high precision is probably the most satisfying feeling in the entire genre, and it's no coincidence that basically all of the most beloved fighting games have tons of fast, often highly technical movement options.



移動 (idou) – *Lit.* movement



Piano

Pressing multiple different buttons in a row in rapid succession, often by "drumming" or "sliding" your fingers across the buttons of an [arcade stick](#). It looks a bit like [double tapping](#), except none of the buttons are the same and, generally, you're planning to hit all three punches or all three kicks in ascending or descending order.

You can use this technique to input [special moves](#) with rapid fire commands, like Honda's Hundred Hand Slap, or use it to get multiple chances for a [super move](#) to come out. This is particularly common in SFIII: 3rd Strike, a game where several characters regularly use tight [links](#) to combo into super. In these cases, using a piano input will try to execute the super on several consecutive [frames](#) and really increases the chances that you'll get the combo to work.



ずらし押し (zurashi oshi) – *Lit.* shifting press

See video



Unblockable Protection

A game mechanic that some games use to try to prevent certain types of undesired [unblockables](#), most specifically the ones where two different attacks hit you both [overhead](#) and [low](#), or both [cross-up](#) and not cross-up, on the exact same [frame](#). This particular type of unblockable can be easy to set up in certain [team games](#) where you and an [assist](#) can attack at the same time.

Typically, in situations where the game determines two attacks about to hit you simultaneously, the game will just accept any block input as correct. While this can prevent "true" unblockables, you might be left with situations that are still pretty [messed up](#).



Combo

A sequence of hits that are unavoidable once the first hit lands. If you want to get technical, a hit will "combo" from a previous hit if you are still in hit stun from the other attack when the new one lands. Combos are a staple of virtually every fighting game of the last 30 years, and fun, flashy combos are often the selling point for getting players to try a new game.

You can't just press any two random buttons and have them combo together, of course. The most common ways you will construct combos involve linking or chaining normals together, or canceling a normal attack into a special or super attack. In Tekken, strings that will always combo are called Natural Combos (NC), or if the first hit needs to be a counter hit for this to work, they'll call it a Natural Counter Combo (NCC).

You may also hear the term "full combo", as in "this move launches the opponent for a full combo". All the "full" means here is that your combo choice won't be limited to only a few short, low-damage options, but rather, you'll be able to do more or less any combo you want, including many of your character's bigger damage routes.

Some games give you specific ways to get out of a combo, like Killer Instinct's combo breaker, Guilty Gear's burst, or directional influence from Smash Bros, but it's pretty rare. And hopefully your favorite game's designers have thought of a way to make sure your combo can't go on forever. That's usually pretty bad.



コンボ (konbo) – *Lit. combo*



Real

A situation (usually a mixup or a block string) that does not have an easy way out that always works no matter what. Usually you'll hear this word used to describe what is *not* "real" (some people will call something that isn't real "fake"). For example, "that setup isn't real/that setup is fake, you can always just jab me out of it" describes something that looks really scary, but actually has an easy defensive answer that always just works. The threat is simply smoke and mirrors. It is not real.

Meanwhile, if something *is* real, you will have to make a legitimate defensive choice, and mashing a fast button or holding up to jump won't automatically let you escape.

Vanilla



The basic, first version of a game. Vanilla Street Fighter IV, for instance, is the initial version that came to consoles in 2009, not any of the updated versions like Super Street Fighter IV. Use it when you want to be clear which version you're talking about. Sentences like "Sagat was really good in Vanilla" are fine.

Faultless Defense



A defensive mechanic in the Guilty Gear series that lets you spend your Tension gauge (a.k.a., super meter) in exchange for a stronger block. Commonly called "FD". While blocking and holding two buttons, your character gets a green bubble around them and will continuously spend Tension, but you will prevent chip damage, be able to block certain normally unblockable attacks while in the air, your RISC gauge will not increase, and your opponent will get pushed away faster, giving you more room to breathe.

It's not a perfect solution to all problems, though. You will be stuck in block stun for slightly longer (2 frames) when you FD in all games except Strive, so you won't want to FD every attack all the time. Overall though, FD is a powerful use of your Tension that has lots of applications, including creative ones like FD Brake, and is very common to see at high level play. In Guilty Gear Strive, you can Instant Block and FD at the same time for even more pushback; you'll hear this called IFD or IBFD (for Instant [Block] Faultless Defense) or other similar abbreviations. BlazBlue has a very similar mechanic called Barrier Block.



フォルトレスディフェンス (forutoresu difensu) – *Lit.* faultless defense

See video



Floor Break



Punching someone through the floor, falling to the level below. Only a few Tekken stages will have destructible floors, so this is less common than the wall break or the balcony break, but if you do land one, you'll be able to continue the combo when you both land on the stage below. As with all Tekken "breaks", only certain moves can trigger a floor break.



床破壊 (yuka hakai) – *Lit.* floor break

Charge Character



A character that relies mostly on charge inputs to execute their special moves. There are some charge characters that have quarter circle inputs for some moves, so not *every* special move needs to be a charge command, but usually their most common, essential special moves will be.

Playing a charge character usually feels a bit different than a character with motion inputs, since you will have to find creative times during a match to sit still and build your charge. This often includes "hiding" your charge while you are doing normal attacks. As a result, some players who prefer to move around a lot can have a difficult time with this playstyle, while it will come quite naturally to others.



タメキャラ (tame kyara) – *Lit. charge character*

Hitbox (controller)



A type of controller that has the layout of an arcade stick for its attack buttons, but replaces the joystick lever with four buttons that control up, down, left and right. Usually, the button for up is placed low on the controller, within reach of the thumbs of both hands, which can make tiger knee inputs very easy. Since Hitbox is a specific brand name and many companies produce devices in this style now, you'll also often hear generic terms such as "leverless controller", "all button controller", or "button box".

Hitbox can be rather difficult to get used to at first, since a lot of your muscle memory for a regular stick or a controller is lost. But the benefits for some games can be very high; games like Tekken where there are difficult just frame inputs for moves like electrics are now much easier, since pressing two buttons is much more consistent than timing the movement of a joystick to a button press. It also takes less time to press a button than to move a joystick, which means some moves can simply be done faster, great for doing moves on reaction. Mixbox is also a very similar device.



レバーレスコントローラー (rebāresu kontorōrā) – *Lit.* leverless controller

ヒットボックス (hitto bokkusu) – *Lit.* hitbox

See image



Charge



The act of holding a direction (usually back or down) for about one second, for the purposes of executing certain special moves like Guile's Sonic Boom. Because charge inputs take a bit of time to prepare before you execute them, they tend to be relatively powerful compared to special moves input using other methods, like a quarter circle, which can be input more quickly and in more situations. Some people find charge inputs and charge characters more intuitive and easier to use, while others find them harder to use; it really just comes down to your personal taste.



溜め (tame) – *Lit.* store, accumulate

Red Parry



A mechanic specific to Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike that lets you parry while you are in block stun. The input is the same (tap forward or down), but the timing for this is significantly harder than just a regular parry, so when you see a character flash red when parrying, you'll know it was extra tough. It's not risk free to attempt, either; SFIII has no absolute guard, so if you stop blocking to try a red parry and mess up, you're just getting hit.



ガードブロッキング (gādo burokkingu) – *Lit.* guard blocking

赤ブロ (aka buro) – *Lit.* red blocking

[See video](#)

Tech

Most commonly is shorthand for a throw tech. It can also refer to the act of quick rising after being knocked down, as in "you should tech when you hit the ground". In Smash Bros. in particular, teching when you hit the ground lets you stand up in place or roll either left or right, which is super important for trying to escape offense.

It can also refer to recovering in the air after you've been hit by an air combo. Or, if all these definitions aren't enough, it's also used to talk about cool new strategies developed for a character, like "did you see that new Ryu tech posted to Twitter?" Confused at why so many fighting game terms have ambiguous meanings? You're not alone.



受け身 (ukemi) – *Lit. receiving body* (this is a common Judo, Aikido term)

移動起き上がり (idou okiagari) – *Lit. moving while waking up* (used for forward/backward tech rolls)

移動起き (idouoki) – abbreviation of 移動起き上がり



High Profile

A move that shifts your hurtbox high up so that you can't get hit by moves that attack close to the ground (usually low attacks). This term is really rare, and most people just use the much more common low crush, which means the same thing in the vast majority of instances. Why is low

profile a super common fighting game term but high profile isn't? It's just the way it worked out, I guess.



Two Frame Punish

A method to punish characters who try to grab the ledge in Smash Bros. 4 and Smash Bros. Ultimate. When you first grab the ledge, there is a two frame window where you have not yet gained invincibility, and if your opponent is surgical, they can hit you away.

The timing is super tight though, so it requires a pretty strong read to predict when the ledge will be grabbed. If you have an attack that is strong at hitting below the stage, like perhaps a down tilt, you can stand safely on ground and try to get your two frame punish without a ton of risk.



崖の2F (gake no ni furēmu) – *Lit. 2 frames of edge*

See video 



Magnet Hands

Grabbing the ledge from very far away. Each character and recovery move has a different hitbox which indicates how they can grab the edge, and in some games like Super Smash Bros. Brawl, these hitboxes can be so large that you'll kinda zip to the ledge seemingly from a different area code. I wish you the best of luck trying to stop these recoveries.



Meaty

A term with two distinct but sometimes overlapping definitions.

The most common definition of meaty is an attack that hits an opponent on the very first frame possible after they rise from a knockdown (or other similar situations, like being flipped out). This guarantees the opponent *must* either block the attack, or immediately do an invincible move (like a dragon punch). If they just press any random button, they will get counter hit because their attack still has to go through its non-hitting startup, but your attack is already active on top of them. Learning how to time a meaty is extremely important to fighting game strategy, and you can often just beat beginners by meatying them over and over as they insist on attacking at all times.

The other definition of meaty is an attack that makes contact with the opponent not on its first active frame like normal, but on a later active frame instead. This will generate the same hit stun or block stun, but you'll recover sooner and you'll generate more frame advantage, and possibly unlock some new combos. These two definitions often go hand in hand! When you attack someone as they rise from a knockdown, sometimes your attack won't hit on the first active frame, but rather some later frame. That would be a meaty that hits meaty. A little confusing, for sure, but just wait until you try to understand what a fuzzy is.



重ね (kasane) – *Lit.* to stack/overlap

持続当て (jizoku ate) – *Lit.* continuous / lasting hit

See video

Land Cancel



Cancelling the frames after you land from a jump into some other technique. This is a pretty general term that can apply to lots of things. For example, the crouch cancel infinite in Street Fighter Alpha 3 involves canceling landing frames into a crouch to trick the game into thinking you never landed. Meanwhile, games like Skullgirls let you cancel air blocking into attacks right when you land, so you might prefer to jump and block something in the air on purpose so you can counterattack faster than you could if you blocked it on the ground. Even just general techniques like L-canceling in Melee or using trip guard are technically "land cancels", although the term itself is pretty rarely used.



着地キャンセル (chakuchi kyanseru) – *Lit.* landing cancel

着キャン (chakukyan) – *Lit.* abbreviation of 着地キャンセル



Awakening

A powered-up state your character can enter when they are low on health in both Persona 4 Ultimax (under 35% health) and DNF Duel (under 30% health). In P4U, your character will get a huge defense buff, extra super meter, as well as some new supers to use that meter on. In DNF Duel, your character gets an entirely new ability, called an Awakening Effect; your attacks might do more chip damage, you might have better movement speed, or your moves might cancel into new things. You'll also gain access to your super attack. Awakening is strong in both games and your goal should be to smother your opponent before they can make use of it.



覚醒 (kakusei) – *Lit.* awakening



Solid

A playstyle that involves lots of good decisions rooted in strong game knowledge, without taking lots of unnecessary risks. A solid player will be hard to crack open on defense, and their offense will be safe and stable. Their gameplan is to wait for *you* to make all the mistakes, and then capitalize with high damage punishes. It takes quite a bit of experience to play solid and win; you have to be good at slowing the game down to the right pace and forcing the opponent into errors, while making few errors yourself.

Side Wall



Hitting someone into a wall when you are not directly in front of them, but rather off to the side a bit. The opponent will splat off the wall usually at a weird, awkward angle relative to your character, which makes continuing the combo very difficult. Converting surprise side walls into meaningful damage is really tough, so you'll hear people say "side walls save lives" as a way to try and cope with the fact that this pesky wall cost you yet another round.



横壁 (yoko kabe) – *Lit.* side wall



Mid Dispenser



A character who relies mostly on strong mid-hitting safe pokes to do damage, rather than trying to hit you with gross mixups that have to be blocked overhead attack or low. These pokes will often control tons of space and might lead to a high damage combo if they hit you, but as long as you're safely blocking, you shouldn't get hit too often. All they can do is just constantly dispense mids, after all.

This term's often used as a bit of an insult towards a character whose mixup game is weak, and labeling your own character as a mid dispenser is also kinda meant to insult your opponent, since they refused to block and constantly got hit by easy-to-defend mids. But don't be too fooled; many mid dispensers have very strong footsies tools that can make fighting against them suffocating, and they'll often have a very powerful strike/throw gameplan to back up their offense if they get close to you. It won't be the flashiest offense you've seen, but it can easily get the job done.

Spacing Trap



Doing an attack that is minus on block, but being far enough away from your opponent that if they try to attack you, they will whiff. You can then immediately whiff punish them for trying to take their turn back.

Spacing traps are pretty similar to frame traps, both in name and in execution. You're trying to create a situation where your opponent believes they should attack, but they really can't; here, you're adjusting your spacing (or range) to do so, rather than trapping them between your own plus on block attacks. Often times you don't have to judge the correct spacing for your attack by feel alone, you can go into training mode and plan a specific block string to push you back to the perfect range automatically.

See video



Overhead

See overhead attack. You'll usually just call it "overhead" for short.



中段 (chūdan) – *Lit.* mid level



Lariat

A style of move named after a prominent wrestling technique, often given to grapplers. There are two types of lariats in fighting games. The first is when your opponent spins in circles with both arms extended, often seen with Zangief (Street Fighter) and Haggar (Marvel vs. Capcom 3). These moves are often projectile invincible at the very least, and in some cases, even fully invincible, but your character is mostly planted in place while spinning.

The second type of lariat is a move that causes a character to run forward, one arm extended, ready to give a clothesline when they reach their opponent. These forward-advancing moves are often strong combo finishers or may even be a scary approach tool, depending on the game. You'll see examples of this with Hugo (Street Fighter), Bardock (Dragon Ball FighterZ), and Ladiva (Granblue Fantasy Versus).



ラリアット (rariatto) – *Lit.* lariat

ダブルラリアット (daburu rariatto) – *Lit.* double lariat



Merry Christmas 

Hitting all three characters at the same time in a team game. This is extremely rare, because you need to have all three characters on screen at the same time, and this usually only happens if you get hit during the start of a team super in games like Marvel vs. Capcom 3. When it happens though, barring a combo drop, the game is almost always immediately over, as all three characters just get nuked. There is a less severe version called the Happy Birthday, but even that is pretty crippling.



メリークリスマス (merī kurisumasu) – *Lit. merry christmas*

See video



IASA 



A term commonly used in Super Smash Bros. to indicate when an attack's recovery can be interrupted with another action before it's complete. Stands for "interruptible as soon as", and often comes with a frame number after. It's also commonly called FAF, which stands for "first actionable frame".

For example, a move may take 50 total frames (including startup, active and recovery) to complete, but if it is "IASA frame 40" or "has a FAF of 40", then that means you can end the move early and do anything you want on the 40th frame or later. If you've seen Street Fighter V's supers, where characters often do some long pose after their super is complete but it can be "skipped" during matches by players moving early, it's the same idea.



IASA (written in English)

Issen



A powerful super attack in Samurai Shodown available only when you are in Rage Explosion.

Sometimes you'll hear this called Lightning Blade as well. If you hit A+B+C, you will lunge super far across the screen very quickly, spending the rest of your Rage Explosion gauge.

You're invincible at the start of the attack, and projectile invincible while traveling. On hit, you will turn the screen a dark red and run through the opponent with your weapon. Early on in your Rage Explosion timer, Issen attacks will do monstrously huge damage, but will get weaker the longer your RE is active. If blocked, though, you'll be left hugely punishable, which in a high damage game like this is probably the end of you, so watch out.



一閃 (issen) – *Lit. flash*

See video 

Moonwalk



A Smash Bros. Melee technique where you slide backwards while trying to dash in the other direction. If you pick the right character, the end result really does look like you're moonwalking like Michael Jackson. It's not a super important competitive technique, but people like to do it to style and show off their execution.

You perform this by performing an initial forward dash, and then immediately tiling the control stick backwards. In order to avoid just turning around, though, you have to master some precise control stick magic involving a backwards half circle, which gets the game caught halfway

between moving your character forward with a dash and sliding them backwards with your new direction. Hey, half circles are used in more than just traditional fighters after all!



ムーンウォーク (mūn wōku) – *Lit.* moonwalk

See video



Crush Trigger



A special attack in BlazBlue that will instantly guard crush the opponent if they do not use Barrier to block it. Crush Triggers cost 25% of your super meter and will guard crush the opponent a different amount of time, depending on how long you charge the move before letting it go. Depending on the character, they can also be used as combo extensions, so they're a versatile tool.



クラッシュトリガー (kurasshu torigā) – *Lit.* crush trigger

Disarm



Dropping your weapon in Samurai Shodown and having to fight without it. You will lose access to Rage Explosion and any attack that uses your weapon (which is almost all of them), and you'll have to go pick your weapon up off the ground before you can use it again, which may be difficult if it's lying next to your opponent or off-screen entirely. You can be disarmed in a few ways, perhaps most commonly being hit by a Weapon Flipping Technique, having one of your heavy attacks Deflected, or losing a Sword Clash. Your weapon will fly a random distance in a random direction when disarmed, so go pick it up as soon as you can.



武器捨て挑発 (buki sute chouhatsu) – *Lit.* weapon drop taunt



Gold Throw

A throw that you attempt while your opponent is in block stun, or has very recently left block stun. Several gold rings will appear around the opponent to indicate this "worse" version of a throw. Gold throws allow for considerably longer throw tech windows, making it possible to tech throws on reaction, and therefore making tick throws in Under Night quite a bit less valuable. BlazBlue has a very similar mechanic, and the indicator in that game is purple exclamation marks over your head, so it's called a Purple Throw there.



金投げ (kin nage) – *Lit.* gold throw



Lockout

What happens when you fail a combo breaker in Killer Instinct. You'll get a giant X over your head and you can't try to combo break again until 3 seconds have passed. Meanwhile, your opponent can see that you've locked out and pummel you for huge damage, knowing you can't break.

You can get locked out in three ways. If you input a breaker that doesn't match the strength of your opponent's attack, the X will be either blue, yellow, or red with a giant L, M, or H letter inside to indicate the strength you *should* have used. If you try to break when there is no allowable break window, you'll get a gray X with a clock icon (this is usually called a "timing lockout", since you mistimed the input). And lastly, if you get counter broken, you'll get a purple X over your head. This lockout lasts 4 seconds instead of 3 and you're in for some serious pain.

ロッカウト (rokku auto) – *Lit.* lockout

See video



Point Character



The character that starts the match in a team game. In a 3v3 team game, you'll also have your middle character (creative name), and your anchor who will be your last character standing. Alternatively, when not talking about team composition, the phrase "point character" is used to describe the character on screen that is being controlled by the player. For example, if someone is explaining to you how to block their dirty mixup involving a character and an assist sandwiching you from both sides, they might say "block away from the point character", which means hold back relative to the character on screen and not the assist.

先鋒 (senpou) – *Lit.* vanguard

NRS Game



A fighting game made by NetherRealm Studios, whose modern franchises are Mortal Kombat and Injustice. Games made by NRS share a lot of similarities, including graphical style, animations, combo possibilities, and game flow. They also handle frame data a bit differently than most games, where being hit while you are in hit stun does not guarantee you will be comboed (only certain strings can do that; other hits will just jail you and force you to block). In many ways, NRS games are kind of a hybrid middle ground between 2D games and 3D games.



Super Dash

A movement and attack option in Dragon Ball FighterZ, done by pressing H+S. Your character tracks the opponent and flies directly at them, deflecting Ki blasts along the way. Sometimes you'll end up taking a wide, arcing path that threads the needle between all the action on the screen, and other times you'll just sail directly into your waiting opponent's anti-air. You can use it for mixups, to extend combos, and to close the gap quickly.



超ダッシュ (chou dasshu) – *Lit. super dash*

See video 



Stale Move

A Smash Bros. mechanic where a move progressively loses damage and knockback strength if you use it multiple times in a row. Once you use enough other moves, or if you get KOed, your moves will return to full strength. It's one approach a developer has taken to reduce players spamming moves, although whether that's actually a problem or not in the first place is up for discussion. In most Smash games, the reduction due to staling does not impact the gameplay or decision making that much anyway, so it's pretty much a non-factor.



ワンパターン相殺 (wan patān sousai) – *Lit. one pattern offset*



Launcher

A move that launches the opponent high into the air, usually for more combo opportunities. Most modern fighting games have moves that launch the opponent and allow for some type of

combo extension. For example, the Tekken series uses launchers as a staple combo mechanic that most characters frequently use; having a fast or safe launcher in Tekken can be the sign of a strong character. Marvel vs. Capcom 3 cuts directly to the chase and simply has a universal button called "launcher" that can start all sorts of fancy air combos.



浮かせ技 (ukase waza) – *Lit.* floating technique

See video



Randall



The nickname for the cloud platform which cycles in and out of the Yoshi's Story stage in Smash Bros. Melee and Ultimate. In Melee, this platform rotates on a 20 second timer, always appearing from inside the stage when the final digit in the round timer reads "4" (more specifically, it appears at :44, :24, and :04 on the left side of the stage, and :34, :14, and :54 on the right). Because of its predictability, good Smash players will use it as part of their recovery game in clever and creative ways. Why is it called Randall? Sometimes, random forum posts just gain cult status.



雲 (kumo) – *Lit.* cloud

See video



Unsafe



A move that, when it is blocked, will let your opponent hit you for free before you can block or otherwise avoid their move. It is the opposite of being safe. You might also say the move is punishable. Moves that are unsafe are usually risky to use, but they tend to be pretty strong... maybe they're highly damaging, able to start a long combo, or invincible in some way.

Much like measuring whether a move is safe, the inner workings of being unsafe is a race between the block stun of a move and the recovery of a move. If the recovery takes a long time and the opponent leaves block stun much earlier, they'll have enough time to wind up a move and hit before the recovery completes. Knowing whether a move is safe or unsafe when it is blocked is one of the first steps to using frame data well.



反擊確定 (hangeki kakutei) – *Lit.* counter attack confirm

反確 (hankaku) – *Lit.* abbreviation of 反擊確定

See video



Air Normal



A normal that you can only use while airborne. Basically, it's a jumping attack. There are some rather complicated terms in this glossary, but this isn't one of them.



空中攻撃 (kūchū kougeki) – *Lit.* air attack

Kusoge



Literally "shitty game" in Japanese. The term tends to somewhat lovingly refer to highly broken fighting games that end up being fun to play despite bad design choices or bugs that are so severe that they impact every aspect of strategy. Many kusoge have small but devoted followings in Japanese arcades. If you can bounce your opponent off the ground like a basketball for 99 seconds any time you hit them, there's a strong chance you are playing kusoge.



クソゲー (kusogē) – *Lit.* shitty game

See video



Concentration



A move in Under Night In-Birth where your character focuses in place, rapidly charging up their GRD meter while stealing GRD from their opponent. While you are using Concentration, you won't be fighting, but you can start and stop it quickly, letting you slightly increase your GRD here and there (maybe after a combo ends, or during a knockdown). These small gains might just be enough for you to win the GRD cycle and earn Vorpal!



コンセントレーション (konsentorēshon) – *Lit.* concentration

Overdrive



What Guilty Gear calls its supers. There's nothing too special about how these work. They tend to cost 50% of your Tension gauge, and in Guilty Gear Xrd, you can spend a full Burst gauge at the same time as your Tension to do a Burst Overdrive for some extra damage.

Overdrive is also a powerful install state in BlazBlue, activated by spending your entire Burst gauge. Each character will get some benefits unique to only them, all your combos will be unburstable, and because the timer gets frozen, you can also extend your Active Flow state. You'll also get access to a special super called "Exceed Accel" while in this state. Using Overdrive effectively can turn around the state of a match quickly.

Lastly, Overdrive can refer to a Street Fighter 6 Overdrive Move, which is basically just an EX Move.



覚醒必殺技 (kakusei hissatsu waza) – *Lit. awakening killing technique* (Guilty Gear)

オーバードライブ (ōbādoraibu) – *Lit. overdrive* (BlazBlue)

4-Button Fighter



A fighting game that uses only 4 primary attack buttons. This will commonly be 2 punch buttons and 2 kick buttons, as you'll see in King of Fighters and Tekken, but you may also see some other creative layouts; Blazblue and Under Night In-Birth use three attacks (light, medium, heavy) and a special "Drive" button that controls various system mechanics. Despite having fewer buttons than their 6-button counterparts, 4-button fighters are still plenty deep, complex, and engaging.

Focus Attack Dash Cancel



Holding a focus attack and then, rather than releasing the buttons and attacking, inputting a dash to cancel the attack and dash instead. Specifically, FADC is used to refer to the 2-bar focus attack, those that were canceled off other attacks. You would then immediately dash cancel the

focus, often before seeing any animation besides a quick yellow flash, and then continue the combo with other attacks or make yourself safe.



セービングキャンセル (sēbingu kyanseru) – *Lit.* saving cancel

セビキャン (sebi kyan) – *Lit.* abbreviation of セービングキャンセル

See video



Throw Tech



The act of defending against a throw, usually by pressing the throw input at the same time as your opponent tries to throw you (so, in many modern fighting games, that would be pressing light punch and light kick). If you get the timing right, both characters will get pushed apart to a neutral position and the fight continues. You have to be careful though, since if you try to throw tech every time someone is near you, you could get baited and you might end up just whiffing your own throw, or getting counter hit, if your opponent is clever.

In some games, you might hear this called a "throw break" or a "throw escape". Usually, some form of delayed teching can help make throw defense a little easier. In Street Fighter II, teching was not a thing, but in some versions of the game, pressing throw at the same time as being thrown would "soften" it. The throw would inflict about half of its damage and you would flipout onto your feet instead of being knocked down, so if you hear the term "throw softening", this is what people are referring to.



投げ抜け (nage nuke) – *Lit.* throw escape

グラッブ (gurappu) – *Lit.* grab ("grab defense" is the official term for throw tech in SFIII,

so people just say grab for throw tech)

See video 



Low Attack

An attack that *must* be blocked in a crouching position. Since most games don't let you block both low and high at the same time, low attacks (usually crouching kick normals) are intended to beat a standing guard. In most fighting games, this means you need to hold both down and away from your opponent on the analog stick, which means you cannot walk backwards while trying to block a low attack. Low attacks are good! You use them to catch people who try to walk backwards out of your pressure, or who expect to be hit by an overhead instead. See also mid attacks and overhead attacks.



下段攻撃 (gedan kougeki) – *Lit.* low level attack

See video 



Sako Combo

An advanced, high execution combo popularized by Japanese fighting game player sakonoko. There have been many "Sako combos" across many different games, but the main thing they have in common is Sako found them via extensive labbing, and they're often so difficult to perform consistently that Sako is the first one to prove they are viable in real matches.

The first Sako combo was probably an infinite combo for Bulletta in Vampire Savior, an incredibly precise looping combo consisting of multiple just frame inputs. Since then, Sako has developed famous combos for Evil Ryu in Street Fighter IV and Menat in Street Fighter V, among many other games.



sako コンボ (sako konbo) – *Lit.* sako combo

See video



Reset



Intentionally stopping your combo before its natural conclusion, and trying to hit your opponent with a surprise mixup while they are confused or overwhelmed. For example, you might stop a combo and throw someone, since they will not be expecting the need to throw tech while they are being hit. Or you might stop and use an overhead suddenly, since your opponent will not be thinking about changing their blocking direction.

In some games, resets are very powerful – if they work, they might start a new combo which resets the damage scaling and leads to extremely high damage, and in fast-paced games like Marvel vs. Capcom, they can come at you too fast to stop reliably.



補正切り (hosei giri) – *Lit.* correction cutting

ダブルアップ (daburu appu) – *Lit.* double up

See video





Hit Stun Deterioration

A game mechanic in some games, including the Versus series, where the character who is being hit in a combo will suffer increasingly less hit stun as the combo gets longer. After a while, the hit stun will be so low that you won't be able to keep the combo up with any attack, and they will recover out of the air. It is one of several ways games try to prevent infinite combos, although inventive people have found ways around this in some games.



受身不能時間補正 (ukemi funou jikan hosei) – *Lit.* untechable time correction

See video



Stubby

How you might describe an attack, usually a normal, that has very short range. Not every short-range attack is stubby though... it's more about the expectation of the move. Usually it's because you intuitively feel like the move should have longer range – maybe because other characters have similar moves that reach farther than yours, or because the move's hitbox doesn't seem to quite line up with the animation, making it whiff when you think it should hit.



短い (mijikai) – Lit short



G-Cancel

A way for you to stop inputting your current string in Virtua Fighter and start inputting a new one from the beginning. To do this, simply press G any time you're attacking to "clear" the game's memory of your current string; because of that, you'll also hear this called G-Clearing.

As an example, let's say that you want to hit neutral punch (P), and then neutral punch again as soon as the first attack is over. This is difficult, because the large input buffer in Virtua Fighter will always try to give you your character's unique 2-hit PP string instead. Instead, hit G after the first P to perform a G-Cancel. You won't see any guard animation, but your second P will now be treated as if it was pressed in neutral, allowing you to "start over" with a new string whenever you want. G-Canceling is a crucial tool for inputting certain juggle combos that need to deftly avoid getting the wrong string.



Gキャンセル (G kyanseru) – *Lit. G cancel*

See video



Sparkling



A once-per-match mechanic in Dragon Ball FighterZ that gives your team several benefits. In addition to faster super meter gain, increased damage and allowing your on-screen character to heal recoverable life, you can hold buttons while performing a vanish to teleport without doing the automatic attack, which can extend combos and open up new mixups.

Sparkling lasts longer if you have fewer characters left on your team, which kind of makes it a bit of a comeback mechanic, although its most common use among good players tends to be earlier in matches rather than later. They've discovered that losing members of their team can destroy their core gameplan, so they've decided that using sparkling to save their first character from dying tends to work out better.



スパークリング (supākingu) – *Lit.* sparkling



Pringles

Slang for someone who has bad defense and is easily opened up. It's one of many common FGC terms coined by Yipes, an EVO champion from New York known for his smooth and energetic trash talking. It makes light of the fact that once you hit someone who is pringles, it's super easy to land more hits, just like it's easy to pop another Pringles chip in your mouth. It's pretty old school slang at this point, and it's hard to deliver the term with the right energy unless you're Yipes, so most people play it safe and leave it to the professionals.

Sidestep



Moving towards or away from the camera in a 3D game. Most 3D games will make this style of movement a core strategy to learn, since you can make moves whiff in ways that you can't if you are locked to a 2D plane. In a game like Tekken, you might hear "sidestep left" (SSL) or "sidestep right" (SSR) to indicate which of their own shoulders the character is stepping towards. This can be important knowledge versus certain characters, as your opponent's most powerful moves may be weak to being sidestepped in a specific direction. In Virtua Fighter, sidestepping takes two forms: the Defensive Move and the Offensive Move.



横移動 (yoko idou) – *Lit.* side movement



Crosscast Veil Off

A more powerful version of Veil Off, often shortened to CVO. To activate this, you need to be in Vorpal and you must cancel an attack by pressing A+B+C; if you try to just press these buttons in neutral or while blocking, you'll just get a regular Veil Off instead. In addition to all the normal benefits of Veil Off (such as increased damage and being able to use meter more liberally), the main bonus of CVO is that it will launch the opponent into the air on hit, giving you a nice combo extension that is only possible because you won Vorpal.



クロスキャストヴェールオフ (kurosukyasuto vēru ofu) – *Lit. crosscast veil off*

See video



Initiative Heat MB



A Melty Blood: AACC mechanic that lets you cancel any normal or special move and return to neutral. It shares a lot in common with Guilty Gear's Roman Cancel, but it's only available to Full Moon, and only after you've filled your super meter and activated MAX mode. It's got similar applications to a Roman Cancel too, including extending your combo or making moves safe.

Also, after Initiative Heat cancels your move, you immediately enter Heat mode. It's generally the preferred way for F Moon characters to enter Heat, since it's so safe and allows continued offense, and Heat is especially good for F Moon since they will instantly recover all their red life rather than slowly heal it over time! As a footnote, F Moon characters can choose to enter Blood Heat mode instead if they want, simply by performing the activation in neutral instead of canceling an attack, but it's generally riskier for not as much benefit.



イニシアティブヒート (inishiatibu hito) – *Lit. initiative heat*

[See video](#)

Reversal

An attack that is launched on the first possible frame after your character recovers from a state where they weren't allowed to attack, such as being knocked down or trapped in block stun. If you input a special move or super in this way, most games will usually display a "Reversal" message to indicate that you hit the timing correctly, meaning there was no way the move could have come out earlier.

Reversals can be any move, but you will usually pick a move with invincibility, like a dragon punch, so that you can successfully avoid an opponent who is trying to attack you. If you hear someone asking if a character "has a reversal", they're basically asking if they have an invincible move that can be used to escape pressure in this way. In most modern games, you can input your special move a little earlier than the reversal frame, and the game will save and apply your input as a reversal. This extra leniency means you don't have to nail a just frame timing to get out of sticky situations.

The Tekken and Virtua Fighter series borrow the term Reversal to describe a counter, so if you hear this term used in the context of a 3D game, it's not the same thing you just read about.



リバーサル (ribāsaru) – *Lit.* reversal

[See video](#)



Redizzy

The ability to stun someone, and then using your free chance to attack to perform another combo that immediately stuns them again. This can often be repeated until death. Dizzying someone multiple times in one sequence is something that is largely absent from modern games; the fix is simply to not let new attacks cause stun while you are stunned. Pretty simple! But for several older games, such as Street Fighter II and Street Fighter Alpha 1, some characters' redizzy combos could cause more or less instant death from any stun.

Tri-Jump



Jumping forward, and then immediately using a multi-way air dash in the down-forward direction. It is so named because the character's trajectory is similar to a triangle. After a tri-jump, you can attack out of the air as an overhead, land with an empty jump into a low or throw, or perform another tri-jump with the threat of a cross-up. These rapid, overwhelming mixups are common in the Versus series and are extremely difficult to defend against.



三角飛び (sankaku tobi) – *Lit. triangle jump*

See video 

Drive



One of the four attack buttons in BlazBlue. It operates differently for each character in the game, acting as powerful attacks, movement options, wacky status effects, and everything in between, depending on who you are playing. It's one of the defining reasons why BlazBlue's character

diversity is celebrated.

In Street Fighter 6, the word "Drive" is used a lot to describe a bunch of very important system mechanics. You can find more about that by reading the [Drive System](#) entry.



ドライブ (doraibu) – *Lit.* drive



Super Special Move

An incredibly high damaging [cinematic super](#) attack in Samurai Shodown. Unlike the game's other two supers which must be done in their respective Rage modes ([Weapon Flipping Technique](#) and [Issen](#)), you can do your SSM at any time, even the first second of round 1 if you want! But, you only get one per match, so you'll have to use it wisely.

Super Special Moves are the granddaddies of supers in the game. They're pretty [slow](#) and very [unsafe](#), so just throwing it out there isn't going to work too often, and they're hard to [combo](#) into. Instead, you're best off trying to [punish](#) your opponent's very unsafe move with it, or use it after a successful [deflect](#) or [spot dodge](#). The reward is going to be 70% damage or more, though, so if you pick the right spot you can turn around a losing round in an instant.

King of Fighters sometimes calls their 2 bar super attacks "Super Special Moves" as well. I've lumped that discussion over in [Desperation Move](#).



秘奥義 (hiougi) – *Lit.* super secret technique





Archetype

A way to categorize a character's general playstyle, based on their best moves. For example, zoners want to keep their opponent far away. Grapplers want to get real close and give you a giant hug. Hit and run characters look for small hits at all ranges, and constantly move around to make themselves a hard target. Certain series even have their own unique lingo for archetypes common to their games. Street Fighter has the shoto, Tekken has the Mishima, and Smash Bros. has the space animal.

Veil Off



A technique that powers up your character in Under Night In-Birth, often shortened to VO. You need at least half of your EXS gauge filled, and then you press A+B+C. You will enter an install state where you get a 20% damage boost, and all your super meter drains on a timer. While the timer is draining, your EX moves and Infinite Worth super attacks will cost less meter than normal, allowing for combos that wouldn't usually be possible!

The activation for Veil Off can also be used defensively. It is invincible at the start, so you can use it as a reversal, and you can also do it while blocking as a "get off me" move. If your Veil Off hits the opponent, you will GRD break them! But if they block it, you'll be in for a big punish. Activating Veil Off will immediately clear your own GRD break as well, so once you get half super meter, you can spend it to reverse an unfortunate GRD break if you like. There's also a stronger version of this called Crosscast Veil Off.



ヴェールオフ (vēru ofu) – *Lit.* veil off

[See video](#)

Heavy Punch



One of the attack buttons in a 6-button or 4-button fighter. Commonly abbreviated as HP or called fierce. Heavy punches are usually slow, but have long range and high damage. They are often great normals to use when you punish a very unsafe move from your opponent, or want to take up a large amount of space in front of your character if you are willing to accept some risk. It's the button you mashed the most as a kid, because you thought the most damaging attack was the best.



大パン or 大P (dai pan) – *Lit.* big punch

Blind Pick



Forcing both players to submit their character choices for an upcoming match to a third party, like a tournament organizer, so neither player knows which character the other will pick. It is any tournament player's right to request a blind pick at any time, and you may want to do it if you suspect your opponent will counter pick you once you reveal your character choice. Best to make them pick their character without knowing yours first!



ブラインドピック (buraindo pikku) – *Lit.* blind pick

Anchor



Your final character in a team game. In games with assists, your anchor is often a character that can fight well on their own, or perhaps make the best use of the game's comeback factor, like X-Factor. In a game like King of Fighters, your anchor is likely just the character you are most skilled with, giving you the best chance to close out the fight, or the character that can do the most damage with all the super meter that's gone unused from the rest of your team.



大将 (taishou) – *Lit.* general



Salty Suite

A big room where many players go to play money matches after a tournament day concludes. There will usually be large bets placed on grudge matches, or games between international players who don't get a chance to play each other offline that much. Salty suites are often streamed and tend to have an afterparty vibe to them, but the games are still a big part of the experience.



Instant Overhead

Hitting someone with a jumping attack the instant you leave the ground. In most games, this will be an overhead (like all jumping attacks are), and because it happens more or less instantly, they are very hard to block, especially if this character does not normally have a grounded overhead. However, these attacks are usually low damage and quite unsafe, since you'll be flying in the air helplessly after your attack. Try to use them to finish off a round if you can.



昇り中段 (nobori chūdan) – *Lit.* ascending overhead

[See video](#)

Blast Zone



An invisible area around the edges of a platform fighter stage that will instantly kill a character if they touch it. Most stages will have blast zones in all four directions, meaning getting sent flying with enough power will be the end of you (even if you use directional influence to try and save yourself). Not all stages have the blast zones in the same place! Some stages are "taller" or "wider" than others, and skilled Super Smash Bros. players will know which stages suit their character's strengths. For example, if your character has strong attacks that launch high vertically, you'll like playing on stages where the top blast zone is short so you can smack your opponent into them faster.



擊墜ライン (gekitsui rain) – *Lit. shoot down line*

Command Jump



A special move where your character leaps into the air. It is different from a normal jump in two important ways. Firstly, because it's a special move, you can cancel into this jump from normals and become airborne when a normal jump would not work. And secondly, you will almost always have access to special follow-ups while you're in the air that your character can't do otherwise. Akuma's Demon Flip is probably the most famous example of a command jump.

Double Tap



Pressing the same button twice in a row as fast as possible. On an arcade stick, you will generally use two different fingers and "drum" them down quickly, one after the other, over the same button. Some players like to double tap every single button they press, since it makes them feel comfortable, but that's probably a bit overkill and it's not necessary to do this to play well.

Where it does help, though, is when you need to execute a move in a tight window; often times, double tapping will give you more "chances" to hit the window correctly (and negative edge might give you even more). If you're slightly early with your first press, maybe the second hit of the double tap will be right on time.



ピアノ押し (piano oshi) – *Lit.* piano press (pressing one button with two fingers)

L-Cancel



A technique specific to Smash Bros. 64 and Melee that let you reduce the recovery when you land during an aerial attack. By pressing L (or Z) a few frames before you hit the ground, you will cut down the normal landing recovery significantly, letting you start your next attack much more quickly. Virtually every aerial attack in these games is L-canceled by good tournament players (usually as part of a SHFFL). Smash games after Melee do not have L-canceling, instead opting to rely more heavily on auto-canceling.



着地キャンセル (chakuchi kyanseru) – *Lit.* landing cancel

着キャン (chakukyan) – *Lit.* abbreviation of 着地キャンセル

Overdrive Move



A more powerful version of a Street Fighter 6 special move, performed by spending 2 bars of drive gauge. Simply press two punches or two kicks instead of one while inputting your special move. You'll flash yellow and then perform a version of the move with better properties, such as more invincibility, faster startup, better combo possibilities due to launching the opponent, and many more. OD moves are very powerful in SF6, so you'll want to experiment with your character to find out how to use each of them in a match.

An OD move is functionally identical to an EX move in past Street Fighter titles, they just rebranded the name a bit to fit the "drive" theme. Because the term EX has been around for so long, you'll hear people refer to these moves as both "OD" and "EX" interchangeably, but they're the same thing. You'll have to be a bit careful, as OD can be used as slang to mean something a bit different.



オーバードライブ (ōbā doraibu) – *Lit. overdrive*



Meter

Almost always a shorthand for super meter, but it can also extend to any gauge on the screen as long as it's clear from context which gauge you're talking about.



ゲージ (gēji) – *Lit. gauge*



Round Robin

A tournament format best suited for a small number of players (typically 4-8) that sees each player play every other player. The winner is the player with the best record after any tiebreakers are applied. Round robin works great for small invitational tournaments where time is less of a

concern and players want to see lots of matches between excellent players. They're less well suited for large open-format events because they just take too long.



総当たり (sou atari) – *Lit. round robin*



Buff

When the developers make a character better. There's lots of aspects they can change, from giving the character more health, more damage, better advantage on important moves, or many other things. When to buff characters and when to nerf them is a very inexact science that takes a lot of skill, and a lot of learning from mistakes. Buffing a character too much when their strategy is still underexplored is a classic error that can cause balance problems.



強化 (kyouka) – *Lit. strengthen*



SHFFL

A Smash Bros. Melee technique that lets you perform multiple extremely rapid-fire aerial attacks in a row. SHFFL stands for Short Hop Fast Fall L-Cancel and is pronounced "shuffle". The acronym kinda explains how it works; you do a short hop and input your aerial attack quickly. Then, you fast fall back to the stage so you spend as little time in the air as possible, and L-cancel the recovery so you can act again immediately. Being able to perform this technique flawlessly, multiple times in a row while still moving your character around the stage takes a lot of practice, but you can't break into competitive Melee without learning it.



Defense

The act of trying to prevent your opponent from doing damage to you. Defense is a broad, encompassing term that can include using a strong invincible dragon punch or backdash to escape, using reads or reactions to effectively block your opponent's attacks, and having fast attacks with long range that can interrupt your opponent's normals. Players and characters with strong defense tend to be able to survive long offensive sequences from their opponent and take little overall damage, and will be slippery and difficult to pin down. They won't have very many friends at the arcade, but their quarter will last the longest.



守り (mamori) – *Lit. defense*

Clone



A character in Smash Bros. that has an extremely similar moveset to another character on the roster. Some clones (or "echo fighters") are almost identical characters, down to the attributes of nearly every move (for example, Dark Samus and Samus in Smash Bros. Ultimate), while other characters are quite a bit more distant in playstyle; even if their moves kind of look the same, they function pretty differently and use very unique strategies while fighting (for example, Falco and Fox in Smash Bros. Melee).



モデル替えキャラ (moderu kae kyara) – *Lit. model swap character*

ダッシュファイター (dasshu faitā) – *Lit. dash fighter* (for some clones in Smash Bros. Ultimate)

Circle Gate

A plastic device under the joystick of your arcade stick that dictates how it can move. A circle gate has no notches or ridges at all, allowing perfect unrestricted movement in any direction, like

the analog stick on most modern controllers. Old arcade machines in the United States and very early home stick models, like the MAS stick, used circle gates, though they have largely fallen out of favor now for the default square gate or hybrid octo gate. While it might make quarter circle inputs slightly easier, it's just a lot harder to consistently find "the corner" when you need to quickly crouch block something.



丸形ガイド (marugata gaido) – *Lit. circle guide*

Snowball Character



A character that becomes more deadly the more often they hit you. These characters tend to start the match at their weakest, and once they get their momentum going, they will just get more powerful, like the proverbial snowball rolling down a hill.

This is sometimes tied to a specific resource; for example, Killer Instinct's Spinal starts the match without any of his unique "skull" resource, and earns skulls as he hits you. He can then use these skulls to make his offense safer, open up new mixups, and deny you precious resources to fight back, all while continuing to build more skulls. If you can't stem the tide early and let Spinal build up, you might just get totally flattened.

Corner Carry



Pushing your opponent close to the corner, usually during a combo. Moves with "good corner carry" will push the opponent a great distance forward, which is great because cornering the opponent usually puts you on the fast track to a win. Sometimes you'll be forced to choose

between moves that do lots of damage, and moves that do strong corner carry, so you might sacrifice damage now for improved positioning and hopefully more damage later.



画面端に運ぶ (gamen hashi ni hakobu) – *Lit. carry to the screen edge*

Hood Perfect



A win that was almost a Perfect, but you only took chip damage. Your friend didn't "really" hit you, did they?

Cooldown



The inability to use a move for a set amount of time after you've used it. Usually there will be some sort of timer or gauge on screen indicating when you'll be allowed to use the move again.

Cooldowns will be extremely familiar to anyone who plays a lot of video games, but they're surprisingly uncommon in fighting games! In most games, moves can be used as often as you want, or they are tied to some resource like your super meter. It's really only in recent years that we've seen games like Rising Thunder, Granblue Fantasy Versus and Mortal Kombat 11 give cooldowns an honest try, and the results are up for debate.



クールタイム (kūru taimu) – *Lit. cool time*

Shoto



An archetype in the Street Fighter series for a character that has a fireball, a shoryuken, and a tatsu. Their main gameplan is to play solid footsies with fireballs and pokes, and then uppercut you when you jump at them. Ryu, Ken, and Akuma are the quintessential shots that appear in virtually every Street Fighter title, and the subtle variations in their moves make a big difference in how they play. The term is an abbreviation of Shotokan, a style of karate, since it was the main inspiration behind the costume and moves for Ryu in the original Street Fighter title.

Outside the most obvious examples, asking whether a given character is a shoto is a common question. Sagat is usually not considered a shoto, since he has multiple fireballs and is focused more on zoning. Sakura is... maybe a shoto? She has all the tools necessary on paper, but her shoryuken is not often used for anti-air. You can ask whether non-Street Fighter characters are shots, too. For example, Killer Instinct's Jago and Under Night's Hyde fit the shoto archetype well.



道着 (dougi) – *Lit.* Japanese martial arts uniform

Freefall



A Smash Bros. state where your character can do nothing but fall towards the stage. You can steer left and right a little bit, and maybe fast fall, but you can't attack or air dodge; you're just in a total free fall, open to all punishment, until you touch the stage or you hit a blast zone and die. Most characters will enter this helpless state after doing their up+B or side+B recovery special moves, or (in some games) do an air dodge. It's not such a big deal as long as you have a plan for how you're going to land or grab the edge, but if you don't, don't expect to survive.



しりもち落下 (shirimochi rakka) – *Lit.* pratfall/fall on one's behind



Square Gate

A plastic device under the joystick of your [arcade stick](#) that dictates how it can move. A square gate, unsurprisingly, looks like a square and gives you hard corners around the diagonals. This lets you jam the stick into the corner easily when trying to crouch block or jump diagonally. Virtually all arcade sticks ship with square gates as the default, although some people might choose to manually replace them with [octo gates](#) or [circle gates](#).



四角ガイド (shikaku gaido) – *Lit. square guide*

Perfect Parry



A [parry](#) mechanic in Street Fighter 6, performed by pressing MP+MK (the same input as [drive parry](#)) at most 2 [frames](#) before an attack hits you. If you successfully perfect parry a [strike](#), you will freeze the screen briefly and then recover almost immediately, letting you [punish](#) even very fast attacks. If you perfect parry a projectile, the screen won't freeze. Instead, you will see a large visual effect explosion and you'll recover faster than if you blocked or drive parried it.

Perfect parries have one major catch; if you punish the attack you parried, your combo will only do [50% of its normal damage](#). This compensates for the fact that perfect parries are quite strong, since every time you attempt a drive parry, you have a chance to get a perfect parry if you press the buttons very close to when the attack would hit you. If you miss the perfect parry timing window, you'll either block or get a normal drive parry as a backup plan, making it relatively safe to attempt. Perfect parry is much closer in application to how parries work in more traditional games like SFIII: 3rd Strike, although the timing is much tighter in SF6.



ジャストパリィ (jasuto pari) – *Lit. just parry*

[See video](#)

Hard-to-Blockable



A nonsensical combination of words meant to convey a situation that is almost an unblockable, but can be defended through extremely precise blocking (often changing your blocking direction as a just frame input). For example, in games with unblockable protection, instead of overlapping an overhead and a low attack on the same frame, you might try to offset one or the other by a frame or two, forcing the defender to guess which attack is coming first and then rapidly switch their blocking direction to cover the other. While these sequences are "technically" humanly blockable, they are so difficult that they are often effectively unblockable, hence this hodgepodge word soup of a term.

Fuzzy Attack



An offensive technique where you exploit a character trying to crouch block an attack, but the game still thinks they are standing up. It's one of a few possible ways to use the term fuzzy, along with fuzzy guard.

There are two common reasons for this "mismatch" between your inputs and your character's standing or crouching state. One reason is that, in many games, your character's hurtbox will be locked in position for as long as they are in block stun from the previous attack. This means if you hit a very deep jumping attack, the character will be stuck standing up for quite a while, even if you move your joystick to a crouch block position. The other possible reason is that in some

games, after you block an attack while standing, there is a 1 frame "transitional" period where trying to crouch block keeps your hurtbox briefly the same as your standing state.

Either way, this mismatch exists for a small window – your character is standing up, but you are holding down-back, trying to crouch block. And no matter the reason, the end result is the same too! You can be hit by attacks that would normally whiff on a crouching character, even though you are trying to crouch. It's easiest to see when you block a jumping attack, then try to play good defense by switching to crouch block. You'll find you can be hit by some instant overheads during this brief "fuzzy" state you find yourself in.

These fuzzy setups tend to be extra effective on super tall characters, whose standing hurtbox is tall enough to be exposed to more attacks. And they often need a specific setup to work, as it's hard to pull them off on a whim. But fuzzy attacks are scary and powerful when used correctly, and these mixups are especially potent late in a round.



F式 (efu shiki) – *Lit. F style/technique* (F is a famous Guilty Gear Venom player who introduced this technique to many people)

See video 

Beat Edge



The ability to cancel normals into other normals in Melty Blood: Type Lumina. There aren't a ton of restrictions, except you can't use the same normal twice in a combo (except some light attacks), so feel free to mix and match crouching, standing, and command normals of any strength in almost any order! If you go from a higher strength to a lower strength, that's called a reverse beat.

While Beat Edge is the official name in the game's tutorial, nobody really calls it that in practice. We just call them strings, chains, or gatlings. It's basically the same as Passing Link in Under-Night In Birth. Companies really should just stick to one name for stuff like this.



ビートエッジ (bito eiji) – *Lit. beat edge*

S OCD



Stands for Simultaneous Opposite Cardinal Directions. When playing on leverless controllers like Hitbox or Mixbox, you'll be able to do normally impossible things like press both the left and right, or up and down, buttons at the same time. If the game is not programmed to handle these instances of SOCD, you might be able to do really powerful things, like block in both directions at the same time (a big oops for Marvel vs. Capcom 3!).

The important question is how to handle these inputs. Should left + right be equal to neutral? Should the first direction be replaced with the second direction, or maybe instead the first direction should be kept active until the button is released? Each solution will have different implications for what players can do (especially charge characters).

Every game should have a plan for what to do when it receives a SOCD input, but some controllers will choose to "clean" these inputs before sending them to the game, resolving them in a consistent way that might be different than a specific game's choice. Either way, the issue needs to be carefully addressed at some point or there could be game-breaking consequences.



反対方向同時入力 (hantai houko douji nyūryoku) – *Lit. simultaneous opposite directions input*

Cross Combo



A technique in BlazBlue: Cross Tag Battle where you get to bring both characters out on the screen and attack simultaneously. After you've called an assist (BBTag calls them "Partner Skills"), you can press two buttons to keep that character on the screen and control both at once.

You have two choices here; you can let your backup character automatically attack with their normal assist every time you press a button, or you can hold down the assist button to *prevent* them from attacking. This lets you set up crazy combos where each character attacks in turns, letting you sandwich the opponent for huge damage, as long as you have the dexterity to pull it off.



クロスコンボ (kurosu konbo) – *Lit. cross combo*

Self-Destruct



Accidentally sending yourself into a blast zone in a platform fighter like Super Smash Bros, killing yourself and losing a stock. Usually abbreviated to SD or called a "suicide". There are lots of ways you can SD, but maybe the two most common ways are trying to edge-guard someone a little too aggressively and not making it back on the stage yourself, or trying to smoothly slide off the stage to quickly edge hog, but messing it up and instead falling to your death.

SDs are pretty unique to platform fighters, actually. Outside of ringing yourself out in Soulcalibur, there's not really a way to lose a round in a more traditional fighting game without the opponent hitting you. The threat of messing up some advanced execution and losing a stock makes games like Super Smash Bros. Melee particularly intense. It happens even to the best players.



自殺 (jisatsu) – *Lit.* suicide



Crouch Cancel

In **Smash Bros.**, holding down while on the ground to greatly reduce knockback from attacks. The specifics vary based on the game, but in general you will receive less hitlag from the attack, and you won't be sent flying as far. This often means, when you have low damage, you won't be sent flying *at all*, and can punish the opponent as you appear to simply shrug off the attack.

Crouch Cancel (sometimes also called "Recover Crouch Cancel", or RCC) has meanings in other games as well. In **Tekken/Soulcalibur**, you can input a sidestep while you are crouching in order to completely bypass the While Standing state and get access to your standing moves immediately. The goal is to input your attack super fast after the sidestep so you don't even see the step on screen at all. In **Street Fighter Alpha 3**, crouch canceling is how you trick the game into letting you do an infinite combo.



のけぞり キャンセル (nokezori kyanseru) – *Lit.* lean back cancel (Smash)

See video



gg

An abbreviation for "good game" (or its plural, ggs, for "good games"), often said at the end of a long set of matches. Saying "gg" is not a fighting game-specific thing by any means, and sometimes you'll be forced to say ggs even if they were actually bgs. It's just how it goes.



Hover Dash

A forward dash that doesn't move your character along the ground, but rather sends them into the air at a sharp angle. It's also commonly called a "Morrigan Dash" after the Darkstalkers character who often uses this style of approach. Hover dashes are scary, because they can grant very fast air actions without needing to jump, which tends to lead to scary overhead mixups. The downside, though, is that it can be more difficult for these characters to cover horizontal distance if they want to get closer. Every time they dash forward, they have to go into the air.

See video

Out of Shield



The act of performing some attack or movement option while you are shielding in Super Smash Bros., commonly abbreviated to "OoS". An easy example is to simply grab your opponent by pressing the A button, since shield + A is an acceptable input for a grab. This will allow you to punish some attacks that leave your opponent close range.

But perhaps the most common option is to jump, which immediately stops your shield and enters your jump squat. While jumping, you can do things like fast aerial attacks, wavedash in Melee, or jump cancel directly into an up-smash, leading to high damage and potent punishes. Some other techniques done out of shield, like shield dropping, are important enough to have their own name.



ガードキャンセル (gādo kyanseru) – *Lit. guard cancel*

ガーキヤン (gākyan) – *Lit. abbreviation of ガードキャンセル*

[See video](#) 

Purple Roman Cancel



A type of Roman cancel in Guilty Gear Xrd and Guilty Gear Strive, commonly abbreviated to PRC. The effect is slightly different depending on the game, although it costs 50% Tension in both.

In **Guilty Gear Strive**, you will get a purple shockwave from your Roman Cancel whenever you RC a move that is during its startup or its recovery. Use this powerful technique to set up tricky offense or save yourself if you badly whiffed an attack. They just decided to unify Xrd's Yellow Roman Cancel and Purple Roman Cancel as one color, since the yellow version acts differently in Strive.

In the **Guilty Gear Xrd** series, PRCs are done when your opponent is not blocking or being hit by any move and your attack is in its late active or recovery frames (that is, you're whiffing it). If you RC it early, during its startup before it has a chance to hit, it will be yellow in Xrd and also cost less Tension.



紫色ロマンキャンセル (murasaki iro roman kyanseru) – *Lit. purple roman cancel*

[See video](#) 



Reverse Aerial Rush

Running forward at your opponent, and then turning around at the last second, jump canceling your turn around animation, and attacking them with a back air. RAR became a thing starting in Smash Bros. Brawl, and has been in each Smash game since. It's a useful technique in neutral because most back-air attacks have great hitboxes for controlling space, and this lets you do them quickly after running at your opponent.



反転空後 (hanten kū go) – *Lit. reverse back air*

ダッシュ反転空中攻撃 (dasshu hanten kūchū kougeki) – *Lit. dash reverse aerial attack*



Unbreakable

An attack or combo that can't be combo broken. In Killer Instinct, your first attack in a combo, or any stray hit in neutral, is always unbreakable. And almost always, your combo will be unbreakable up until you use a special move (called an opener), which means you can front-load a lot of damage before the opponent can try to combo break if you want! Most projectiles are also unbreakable, so you'll see some characters like Jago using a bunch of projectiles in combos without any risk.

In order to cash out a combo in KI, you will need to give at least one break chance to your opponent, so unbreakable combos won't be able to touch that juicy white life. If you try, you'll trigger a mistake called opener-ender and that's bad. The Mortal Kombat series has its own rules about which combos can be broken; in a game like MK11, if you keep your opponent on the ground (and do not launch them), the combo will be unbreakable.



ブレイク不可のコンボ (bureiku fuka no konbo) – *Lit. unbreakable combo*



Counter Pick

Intentionally picking a character that has a better matchup against your opponent's character than the character you'd normally use. Sometimes this means intentionally picking a very favorable matchup, and then planning to use the imbalance to stomp your opponent into the ground. Or, if *your* character is going to be on the receiving end of a beatdown, you might counter pick to just try and bring the odds closer to even so you don't get stomped yourself.

Choosing to counter pick is a perfectly viable way to gain an advantage in a tournament, as long as you've put the work in to properly exploit the weaknesses. But be careful, your opponent has probably fought a thousand matches against their bad matchups while practicing, and if you try and coast to an easy victory, it'll be you who gets run over. If you don't want to be counter picked in a tournament, you might want to ask for a blind pick.



被せ (kabuse) – *Lit.* to cover



Roll Cancel

A famous game-defining bug in Capcom vs. SNK 2 that allowed all special moves to be strike invincible (and in some cases, fully invincible). It only worked in 3 of the 6 Grooves (the ones that allowed a roll), but it was so powerful that it largely defined how the game was played at the tournament level. It worked because rolls have invincibility, but if you were fast, you could kara cancel a roll into any special move of your choice, and it kept the invincibility. Oops. If you want to read more, check out this blog post on famous fighting game bugs .



前転キャンセル (zenten kyanseru) – *Lit.* forward roll cancel

前キャン (zenkyan) – *Lit.* abbreviation of 前転キャンセル

[See video](#)

Punish

Attacking someone when they are unable to block, making the damage guaranteed. Maybe you made them whiff an attack and then hit them before they could recover. Or maybe you blocked a very unsafe move and earned some big damage on a free counter-attack. In any case, the opponent made their mistake and now have to own up to the receiving end of some pain. Street Fighter 6 rewards you handsomely for punishing your opponent's misplaced attacks through the punish counter mechanic.



確定反撃 (kakutei hangeki) – *Lit.* confirmed counter attack
確反 (kakuhan) – *Lit.* abbreviation of 確定反撃

[See video](#)

Opener

Any Killer Instinct attack that triggers KI's unique combo (and combo breaker) system. Every jumping normal and every special move are openers; in KI, hitting with a special move is usually the key point that transitions between "regular" unbreakable Street Fighter-style attacks to combo breakable, KI-specific techniques. After openers, you can usually transition into auto-doubles, linkers, or manuals, do a combo that cycles between normal attacks and special attacks, then finish off with an ender.



オープナー (ōpunā) – *Lit.* opener



Vortex

An offensive sequence that starts with a very difficult to block mixup, which then causes a knockdown (usually) if it works and loops back into the same mixup over and over again. You might also hear this called a "blender". The important aspect here is that it loops into itself; if you guess wrong on the mixup, you should be put back into gross situations repeatedly until you guess right. If you can "escape" by getting hit in a way that doesn't lead back into the blender, it's not that good of a vortex.



セットプレイ (setto purei) – *Lit.* set play (originally from soccer's free kick/corner kick where you set and play)

See video



Win Condition

A specific situation you're hoping to achieve with your character to maximize your chances of winning the round. Usually, the decisions you make should be informed by what your win conditions are. For many characters, this can simply be described by a position on the screen (for example, cornering your opponent), or by standing at a specific range where you have a world-class move that you should be using often. Characters that have great set play will be trying to land a specific knockdown to apply their scariest mixups. Some characters want to earn a specific resource that will greatly increase their power, so they might pass up on damage in order to build

this resource so they can steamroll later. Knowing your character's win condition will help you come up with a more focused plan while fighting.



Meteor Smash

An attack that hits the opponent at a sharp downwards angle. These are great for interrupting a recovering opponent and maybe even gimping them when they have low damage.

In Smash Bros. Melee and Brawl, characters were able to jump or use an up+B recovery move right after being hit by a meteor smash, which canceled their downward momentum and could maybe save them from death. This is called "meteor canceling". In the other Smash Bros. titles, meteor canceling is not possible, so you'll have to get sent the full downward distance before you can try to recover. A downward hit that can't be meteor canceled is called a spike, and since meteor canceling is not a thing in modern Smash games, "meteor smash" and "spike" are often used interchangeably. For older titles like Melee, though, there is a difference between the terms.



メテオスマッシュ (meteo sumasshu) – *Lit.* meteor smash



Ki Blast

A basic projectile common to most characters in Dragon Ball FighterZ. Executed with just a single button press on the ground or in the air, ki blasts are useful for basic hit and run style gameplay and to annoy your opponents from a distance. As you get better, you can even hit confirm a ki blast into a vanish and start a combo to earn some extra damage!



氣彈 (kidan) – *Lit.* spirit shot



Disjointed Hitbox

A specific type of hitbox that isn't close to any hurtbox. Normally when a game designer puts hitboxes around an attack, they'll also put some hurtboxes in a similar space. This means if you whiff the attack, the opponent has something hittable sticking out for you to whiff punish. A disjointed hitbox ignores this rule and just puts out a fat hitbox that has no way to be hit back; it is "disjointed" from the juicy meat of the attacking character's hurtbox. This is common for some sword moves in, say, Super Smash Bros, and most projectiles will be disjointed as well. You can't hit a fireball with your fist and do damage to the person who threw it, after all.



Shield Poke



Poking at the outer extremities of a character's hurtbox that is sticking out of their shield. As the shield gets smaller due to prolonged use, it won't cover your entire body anymore. This gives a small area for certain attacks to hit you, even though you are trying to block. If you're unlucky, your character's default hurtbox might be so big that it extends outside your shield a bit, even at full power.



ガード漏れ (gādo more) – *Lit.* guard leakage (this term refers to what happens to the shield, not the attack that hits you)



JV



Winning a match in Smash Bros. when your current stock is at 0%. Imagine that you're about to win a match with 4 stocks remaining, but your opponent manages to kill you. You jump back into the match and immediately finish the job with 0% and 3 stocks left; this is a JV 4-stock (or JV4). You were pretty close to an actual 4-stock victory, but you failed, so you have to settle for the consolation prize. JV sounds like it might stand for "junior varsity", and indeed you might hear school-related inside jokes around the term, but its name comes from Michigan Smash player "Jv3x3".

Pineapple



Trying to recover in Smash Bros., but hitting the underside of the stage and dying instead. It tends to happen somewhat often on Dream Land due to the odd geometry on the stage's lower half, and since the texture of the bottom kind of looks like a pineapple, the term was born.

Wavebounce



Doing both a B-Reverse and a Turnaround-B during the same special move. If your eyes rolled back in your head while reading that sentence, you're not alone. Let's break it down a little bit.

B-Reverses let you perform a special move in the opposite direction, while also reversing your momentum. Turnaround-Bs will do a special move in the opposite direction, but not reverse your momentum. The combination of these techniques means your character will reverse their direction, but *not* the direction they're facing. So, the character is pointing at you, drifting backwards, and then suddenly they're pointing at you, coming forwards while attacking.

To do this, you need to tap away with the analog stick, then do your special move, then tap

forward quickly. It's harder than doing either technique individually, and the benefits of the movement aren't quite as nice, so you tend to not see it too much.



ベクトル反転 (bekutoru hanten) – *Lit.* vector invert

空中ダッシュ (kūchū dasshu) – *Lit.* aerial dash

空ダ (kūda) – *Lit.* abbreviation of 空中ダッシュ

地ダ (chida) – *Lit.* ground dash (abbreviation of ground version of 空中ダッシュ)

See video



Airborne



The state of being in the air. This one seems like it should be pretty easy! I mean, you're airborne if you jump, and that's that, right? Well, yes, but sometimes games will consider you airborne as a property of a move, even if it looks like you're pretty much on the ground. For example, in some games, backdashing will briefly put you in an airborne state, which might change which moves you'll choose to use when trying to hit a backdash. It *is* mostly used for jumps like you thought, but just be careful about these weird edge cases.



空中 (kūchū) – *Lit.* in the air

Ambiguous



Describes an attack which may cross up, but also may not, depending on extremely subtle and often imperceptible differences in timing or spacing. A good ambiguous attack is extremely difficult to block because the defender cannot visually determine on which side they'll be getting

hit. Even the attacker may not even know whether the attack will be a cross-up or not, as the changes in timing and spacing can happen both on purpose and accidentally. Very ambiguous cross-ups will usually require a guess to block correctly. Good luck, you'll need it.



ガ一困 (gākon) – *Lit. trouble guard*

表裏 (hyouri) – *Lit. front (or) back*

疑惑のめくり (giwaku no mekuri) – *Lit. suspicious/doubtful cross-up (used for attacks that hit in the back but land in the front, or vice versa)*

See video



Low



See low attack. You'll see it used like "must be blocked low!" or "hits low." It can also refer to the crouching version of a normal, for example, "low medium kick".



下段 (gedan) – *Lit. low level*

Teleport



A move that turns your character invincible and warps them to a new position. Akuma from Street Fighter has probably the most famous teleport in fighting games, raising on one foot and sliding forward or backward, while many other characters will actually disappear from the screen and just reappear somewhere else. It's important that some part of the teleport is invincible, usually while you are doing the repositioning part, otherwise there wouldn't be much distinguishing it from a glorified dash.

There are lots of ways to use teleports. Akuma can only travel in two directions, while a character like Killer Instinct's Fulgore can pick one of three locations on screen to warp to. You can use these defensively to reposition yourself while dodging attacks, or offensively by suddenly showing up behind your opponent and causing a mixup.



ワープ (wāpu) – *Lit.* warp

テレポート (terepōto) – *Lit.* teleport

阿修羅閃空 (ashura senkū) – *Lit.* asura flashing air (for Akuma's teleport)

See video



Assault



A short hop towards your opponent, input with forward + D. It's pretty reminiscent of a King of Fighters short hop or hyper hop, although it can also be done in the air. Grounded Assaults will always try to land in front of your opponent (up to a maximum distance traveled), so if you do it from point blank, you'll basically just hop straight up. You'll also gain a bit of GRD for doing one. If you are GRD broken, you can't do Assault at all.



アサルト (asaruto) – *Lit.* assault

See video



Tension Gauge



What Guilty Gear calls its super meter. Lots of different game franchises like to name their specific gauges something unique to give flavor to the product, and to confuse people who are learning multiple games.



テンションゲージ (tenshon gēji) – *Lit.* tension gauge



Tiger Knee

A method to perform a special move in the air as fast as possible after you leave the ground. Almost always abbreviated to TK, and sometimes called an Instant Air Special (IAS). If you wanted to do an instant quarter circle forward air move, for example, you would instead do the quarter circle while on the ground, and then continue to roll your joystick to up-forward to jump. Then, you can simply just press your attack button and the game should save your quarter circle input long enough to have it count as the air move. Using numpad notation, this would be 2369, or 2147 for quarter circle back moves.



In essence, rather than jumping and then inputting your special move, you input the special move first, and then jump. The technique is named after the input for Sagat's Tiger Knee Crush, which was 2369 in Street Fighter II (even though it has been changed to a DP motion in modern games, which makes this term's meaning even more difficult to figure out).

See video



Just Guard



A mechanic in some Soulcalibur titles where you block attacks by tapping the Guard button right before an attack hits you. It debuted in Soulcalibur V where it was very strong; a successful Just Guard acted more like a parry, letting you punish all sorts of otherwise safe attacks. In Soulcalibur VI, your frame advantage is the same whether you did a regular guard or a Just Guard, and instead you just gain a bit of super meter and slightly heal your guard meter. If you want to parry an attack, instead try using Soulcalibur's signature mechanic, Guard Impact.



ジャストガード (jyasuto gādo) – *Lit.* just guard



Extension

Generally speaking, continuing with more attacks. It's almost always used to talk about combos. For example, you might choose to spend some meter to make the combo a little longer than it would be otherwise, and you might hear something like "nice combo extension" or "I chose to extend the combo so I could get a knockdown". Occasionally, someone might refer to doing the later stages of a multi-hitting attack (like a rekka) as an extension as well, but more commonly, these will be called follow-ups.



追撃 (tsuigeki) – *Lit.* pursuit, additional attack on a weakened enemy



Cinematic

A situation where neither player has control over their character, but some pre-programmed series of attacks, punctuated by camera cuts, are happening anyway. Many modern-day supers, after the initial hit lands, will break out into a cinematic and show one of the characters taking a cool and stylish beating. I'm sure it helps sell copies of their game, and as long as the cinematics aren't too long, they're usually pretty cool.



演出 (enshutsu) – *Lit.* performance



Pushblock Guard Cancel

A mechanic in Skullgirls (and also some Marvel vs. Capcom games) that lets you ignore block stun from attacks that make contact with you while you are pushblocking. Commonly shortened to PBGC. In Skullgirls, for instance, whenever you pushblock something, you will shove your opponent away for exactly 25 frames. If you block another attack during this time, the block stun from this new attack is *not* applied, and instead you just continue along with your pushblock animation.

This means you will recover as soon as pushblock ends, which is almost certainly faster than you'd recover from blocking the second attack normally! For example, if you block a new attack on the 24th frame of your pushblock animation, you only have to serve 1 more frame and then you're free to attack, jump, or do whatever you want. So even if your opponent did a second attack that was technically safe, you get to ignore all this and immediately punish them. Use this to interrupt multi-hit attacks and escape the brutal pressure sequences that Skullgirls is known for.



アドキヤン (ado kyan) – *Lit.* abbreviation of advance guard cancel



Counter Hit

Hitting someone while they are in the startup of an attack. A giant message will appear on the screen, usually something like "Counter!", to let you know that you beat them to the punch and now they'll have to pay for it. Most counter hits get enhanced by dealing more damage and giving

more frame advantage, which can open up new combo possibilities. If you're really good, you might even be able to hit confirm certain combos that only work if the start was a counter hit.

Some games even take this notion a bit further by implementing extra powerful counter hits. For example, Street Fighter V has the Crush Counter, which is a counter hit that grants even more favorable properties than normal. Games like SFV can even extend the definition of counter hit beyond just getting hit at the start of a move, and make certain moves recover in a "counter hit state", so you can get a super fat punish on them. Keep an eye out for the abbreviation "CH" in combo notation or strategy discussion.



カウンターヒット (kauntā hitto) – *Lit. counter hit*

See video

Sabaki

An attack in many 3D games, including Virtua Fighter and Tekken, that will automatically parry certain attacks briefly during their startup. In Tekken, the moves they are allowed to parry are almost always limited to fast punches that hit high, like your jab, while in Virtua Fighter, different sabakis are designed to work against highs, mids, lows, and "styles" of attacks, like elbows or kicks.

The attack doesn't need to parry anything to work, but it will have the added property of blowing through certain moves in case the opponent was getting antsy and tried to attack. In that sense, it's really comparable to armor in a 2D game, but kinda "attack-specific" armor. Similar to the sabaki is the inashi and the reversal (no, not that reversal, the other one).



さばき (sabaki) – *Lit.* handling

See video



Desperation Move

What most King of Fighters games call their supers. These will cost you 1 bar of your super meter to perform, and sometimes KoF will call them a "Super Special Move" instead (which is also a term in Samurai Shodown, just to confuse you). Some versions of KoF let you spend 2 bars to perform a more powerful version; to denote this, you'll stick a short term in front of it, usually EX (similar to an EX move) or MAX. Like most fighting games, you can cancel special moves into Desperation moves.



超必殺技 (chou hissatsu waza) – *Lit.* super killing technique

超必 (chou hi) – *Lit.* abbreviation of 超必殺技



Wall

The edge of the stage in a 3D game like Tekken or Soulcalibur. Not all stages will have walls, and even if they do, not all stages will have walls evenly around the boundary. Being put next to the wall is pretty similar to being put in the corner in a 2D game; your options for movement become more limited, making defense harder, and if you get hit, you risk getting hit into the wall for a bunch of extra damage. Depending on the game, you might be able to hit someone through the wall! This will take you to a new part of the stage and open up a ton of extra damage on your combo.



壁 (kabe) – *Lit.* wall



Side Switch

Any move that reverses the screen position; if you were facing left, you are now facing right, or vice versa. It's really only used to talk about situations where you had your back in the corner (bad), but you did something that puts your opponent in the corner instead (good). This can be as simple as just doing a back throw, some special move that puts you behind your opponent, or any number of other ideas. Good players will apply corner pressure in a way that won't allow for a side switch most of the time, but everybody gets got sometimes.



入れ替え (ire kae) – *Lit.* switch



Collapse



The specific way you fall to the ground, or "crumple", after being hit by a Virtua Fighter attack. There are multiple different types of collapses in VF, usually prefaced by which part of the body was hit by the strike. These include head collapse, gut (or stomach) collapse, jaw (or chin) collapse, leg (or foot) collapse, and vital point (or vital area) collapse.

Each of these sees your character crumple to the ground in a slightly different way, and each of them will have slightly different properties. For example, head collapses will cause the person being hit to snap their head back violently, then fall forward onto their face, giving the offense plenty of time to hit a slow, powerful follow-up. The vital point (i.e., groin) collapse will cause you to double over in pain, and juggles will work differently on you when you fall in this way.



崩れ (kuzure) – *Lit. collapse*

頭崩れ (atama kuzure) – *Lit. head collapse*

腹崩れ (hara kuzure) – *Lit. belly/stomach collapse*

顎崩れ (ago kuzure) – *Lit. jaw/chin collapse*

足崩れ (ashi kuzure) – *Lit. leg/foot collapse*

急所崩れ (kyūsho kuzure) – *Lit. vital spot collapse*

See video

Risk



A discussion around what could possibly go wrong when you make a certain decision. Usually a risky attack is one that is likely to be blocked and would be unsafe. We often talk about risk in combination with reward; if your attack is very risky and there is not much reward even if it works, then you should be rethinking your strategy. High risk matched with high reward is a valid playstyle, although you'll get a lot of gray hairs doing that. If this is your jam though, look into characters that are designed for this, like glass cannons.

If you've heard of "risk" in a Guilty Gear context, you might be trying to learn about RISC, a mechanic that increases damage after you've been blocking for a while.



リスク (risuku) – *Lit. risk*

Passing Link



Cancelling normals into each other in the Under Night series. These cancels can be extremely freeform, as long as you don't use the same normal more than once in the sequence. You can go from standing to crouching, and unlike Gatlings from Guilty Gear, you can even go in descending order of strength if you want (often called Reverse Beat). Whenever you press a normal in UNI, you're pretty likely to use this system in some way.



パッシングリンク (passhingu rinku) – *Lit. passing link*

See video



Dial-A-Combo



A string that must be input in its entirety extremely quickly, all up front. Essentially, you "dial in" the combo's inputs, and then just watch it all play out on the screen. Because you can't really delay the latter hits of the string, these combos are basically impossible to hit confirm. You just have to input the whole thing and let it rock, for better or worse.

Air Reset



Hitting someone out of the air in such a way that you land before them, and then can mix them up right as they land (usually by choosing whether or not to cross them up by walking under them as they descend). You'll need to make sure the air hit causes a flipout and not a knockdown so you can force them to immediately guess. Sometimes this air hit will be in the middle of a combo, which means it's just a fancy version of a reset, but you'll often see lone, stray hits (like air-to-airs) lead to the same situation.



Hellsweep

A Tekken attack typically belonging to Mishimas that hits low and is so fast that it's unreactable, but is big time punishable if it gets blocked. Some Hellsweeps knock down and maybe lead to a combo, while others leave the opponent standing but lead to more mixups, but either way, they are powerful threats and a core part of a Mishima's gameplan. In the English move list, you'll see this called Spinning Demon and it's an option you can do out of a Crouch Dash, the move that lets Mishimas wavedash and perform electrics, so it's kind of extra scary.

Because players tend to default to a standing block in Tekken, these fast lows really add a huge wrinkle to the offense, even if they don't do a ton of damage. While Mishimas are the source of the namesake, you can use it to refer to any low move that is super fast and dangerous. This is in contrast to the Snake Edge, which is also an unsafe low, but is slow and always leads to huge damage.



奈落 (naraku) – *Lit. hell/abyss*

奈落払い (naraku barai) – *Lit. hell/abyss sweep*

See video 



Dash

Tapping the forward or backward direction twice to move your character a short distance across the ground quickly. While dashing, you cannot block, making dashing a riskier way to cover ground than simply walking. In many modern fighting games, dashing backwards (called

"backdashing") grants you some brief invincibility, which can give you a way to escape your opponent's close range pressure. In some fighting games, it is possible to dash in the air, too.



ダッシュ (dasshu) – *Lit. dash*



Layer

A way to classify how deep your mind games are against your opponent. For example, if you knock someone down, you might try to apply basic pressure by using a simple strike/throw mixup. You could call this the "first layer"; it's relatively easy to defend against, but you want to test whether your opponent can stop this before you try other, riskier things.

If they pass the test and defend well, you might go to the next "layer", which could involve slower moves like overheads, or delaying your button for a frame trap. If they can't stop your first mixup though, there's no need to advance to the next layer. You may also hear the term outside of the mind game context and talking about how many times you have to guess correctly before you can escape your opponent's mixup. Statements such as "that mixup has so many layers" are talking about layered mixups.



Hyper Hop



One of the many ways to jump in a King of Fighters game. By pressing down, then up-left or up-right and quickly releasing the joystick, your character will travel low to the ground (at roughly short hop height), but travel much further horizontally. Lots of people input down after the up direction to make this complicated input more consistent; something like 393 in numpad notation should work great. Hyper hops are fantastic at covering long distances (much like the

super jump), but low to the ground. Mixing up all these jump angles will constantly keep the opponent off balance and is a huge part of KoF offense.



中ジャンプ (chū janpu) – *Lit.* medium jump

See video



Whiff



An attack that neither hits nor is blocked. You swung and you missed entirely. Good players will often punish you for this, but it's not always bad – sometimes, whiffing fast attacks can be good for faking people out or controlling space.



空振り (karaburi) – *Lit.* swing at the air

Faultless Defense Cancel



Kara canceling the startup of a Guilty Gear move directly into Faultless Defense. There are a few reasons you'd want to do this, but one common use is to change your air trajectory and try to trick your opponent with a different angle of approach.

For example, Faust in Guilty Gear Xrd can FDC his air drill attack. This attack would normally send him back towards the ground, but when FDCed, it stops the upward momentum of his jump he can immediately attack with an air normal. This is such a common strategy for Faust that people call this a "Drill Cancel". You can also FD Cancel while running forward; you might hear this called FD Brake, since it stops your run momentum immediately.

In Guilty Gear Strive, you can use FDC after air dashing at your opponent as a method to fall towards the ground without attacking. While air dashing, press your two FD buttons normally; the game will apply a normal attack for one frame, which forces your character to start descending, and then you'll begin FDing like normal on the next frame. You can then attack again later while you're falling, except now you'll be closer to the ground and can hit your opponent with new moves that would otherwise be too high to reach. It's a good way to change your air trajectory while still letting you choose another attack later on.



フォルトレスディフェンスキャンセル (forutoresu difensu kyanseru) – *Lit. faultless defense cancel*

フルキャン (foru kyan) – *Lit. abbreviation of フォルトレスディフェンスキャンセル*

FDキャンセル (fd kyanseru) – *Lit. abbreviation of フォルトレスディフェンスキャンセル*

See video

Notation



A common language used to refer to directions and attacks so it's easier to talk about fighting games. I'll use this glossary entry to outline a few of the familiar notation styles that every player should know.

Attacks: You shouldn't use the names of your console's buttons (like X or Square) to talk about attacks, since this is not universal. Instead, use abbreviations for the moves themselves. A 6-button fighter will use LP, MP, HP for punches, and LK, MK, HK for kicks. Anime games might

use ABC or LMH for light, medium, and heavy attacks, as well as a "unique" attack button like S or D. Tekken and Mortal Kombat use numbers for their attacks, specifically 1 and 2 for punches and 3 and 4 for kicks.

Directions: Many games use one lowercase letter for each cardinal direction: d (down), u (up), f (forward), and b (back). Leaving your stick in a neutral position is "n", or some games like Tekken will use a star (★). Note that nobody uses "left" or "right", but rather terms that are relative to where your opponent is. Diagonals, like down+back, will be "db" or "d/b". Common special move inputs will also have abbreviations, often with a direction attached: quarter circle (qcf or qcb), half circle (hcf or hcb), and DP (dp or rdp – "reverse DP"). It's also quite common to see numpad notation, which uses numbers instead of letters. It's unfortunate that sometimes numbers will mean a direction and sometimes they will mean an attack, but like most confusing things in fighting games, you'll get used to the context over time.

Modifiers: Here are some common ways attacks can be modified. Talk about close and far normals with "cl" and "f" (for example, cl.HP). Talk about standing and crouching normals with "s"/"st" and "cr" (for example, cr.HP). If you see "c" by itself, this usually means crouching but is ambiguous with "close" so we try to avoid it. Talk about jumping attacks with "j" (for example, j.HP). Moves that are canceled from a previous attack are separated with "x" or "xx" (for example, cr.MK xx qcf+HP).

This isn't an exhaustive list, but hopefully it gives you enough to understand most examples!



表記 (hyouki) – *Lit. notation*

コマンド表記 (komando hyouki) – *Lit. command notation*



Broken

A strategy or character that is so utterly dominant and wins so easily that there is little or no reason to play the game in any other way. Describing a strategy as broken is an extremely strong statement about the balance of the game. Usually, frustrated beginners will throw the word around referring to any time any character hits them with any move, but truly broken strategies or characters are becoming less common in modern games as developers get more experience (and are able to patch any brutal mistakes they do make).



クソ (kuso) – *Lit.* shitty

壊れ技 (koware waza) – *Lit.* broken technique



Major Counter

What Virtua Fighter calls its counter hits. You can counter hit in the "standard" way, by hitting an attack during its startup, or also by hitting players trying to Defensive Move, hitting a whiffed reversal (the catch counter variety), or a few other ways. Major counters earn a percentage damage increase which scales higher if you picked a high-damage attack (the "Counter!" notification will be yellow or red in VF5US, depending on the damage), so big swings and gutsy reads are greatly rewarded! If you're curious about "minor counters" (colored blue in VF5US), that's what VF uses when you punish something.



カウンタヒット (kaunta hitto) – *Lit.* counter hit



Boxer

A common name for the Street Fighter character Balrog. We aren't just describing his profession for fun, though; his Japanese name is M. Bison, so we need a clear way to describe which character we're referring to. See also Dictator and Claw.



バイソン (baison) – *Lit.* bison



Character Specific

A strategy (usually a combo) that will work only if your opponent is playing certain characters. There are many reasons for this, including hurtbox differences between characters of varying sizes, characters that fall at different rates while being juggled, characters that reel back in an awkward way after being hit which dodges future attacks, and much more.

Some games try to standardize hurtboxes as much as they can so there is not as much character specific jank, while in other games, it can feel like the wild west and you'll have to remember multiple combo routes depending on your opponent's character. But no matter the game, there will always be at least *some* character specific stuff to learn.



キャラ限 (kyara gen) – *Lit.* limited character



Four Finger Tech



A close-range defensive technique in Street Fighter IV where you would press four buttons, namely LP+LK+MP+MK, and then input backdash quickly afterwards. This was a powerful

option select which overlaps the command for a throw tech (LP+LK) with a focus attack (MP+MK). If the opponent tried to throw you, you would tech the throw. If they tried to attack you, instead the focus attack would come out and you would absorb the hit and immediately use your invincible backdash to get to safety. In many matchups, this was a powerful catch-all defensive option that required some real study, or a strong read, to defeat.



セビグラ (sebi gura) – *Lit.* saving grapple

Hitbox



A predefined area (usually a group of rectangles or circles) that tells the game how any given attack can come in contact with a character. Hitboxes are invisible to the player when normally playing, although some training modes will let you view them, but most hitboxes try to cover the area where the strike is causing impact, so it "makes sense" to players when and how they get hit.

Hitboxes define a lot about how moves work. For example, the active period of a move is defined to be when a hitbox is present (there are no hitboxes during a move's startup or recovery). The size of the hitbox defines the move's range, so if you're getting smoked by a move that feels like it hits everywhere on the screen at once, it's probably because its hitbox is just very large. To determine whether a move connects with an opponent, the game will see if its hitbox intersects with the opponent's hurtbox. To keep some consistency, hitboxes are almost always red when viewed using training mode or online tools.

You may also be interested to check out a controller that shares the same name.



攻撃判定 (kougeki hantei) – *Lit.* attack collision

当たり判定 (atari hantei) – *Lit.* collision detection (general use for both hitbox and

hurtbox)

See video 



Tier List

A subjective ranking of a game's characters from strongest to weakest. You can try to take a statistical, numerical approach to this, like through a [matchup chart](#), or you can simply rank the characters by feel or intuition. Most tier lists assume that the game is being played by players of equal skill and a high level of proficiency, otherwise the rankings can't carry much meaning. As the name suggests, characters tend to fall into "tiers", a letter grade category that conveys a relative sense of strength. The meaning of these tiers is subjective itself, but here is a common interpretation:

SS: Incredibly, game-breaking strong. No losing matchups and easy strategies that can lock down the game.

S: Usually the game's best characters. Not very many losing matchups, but not strong enough to overrun the game.

A: Able to win tournaments without needing a [counter pick](#). Has a few losing matchups that are generally tolerable.

B: Can make [top 8](#) at a tournament but might struggle to get over the top without a dedicated specialist. Does okay for the most part.

C: Needs a dedicated specialist to see tournament success. There is likely a character in the game that has a similar [archetype](#) but is just strictly better.

D: Pretty darn bad. Loses most matchups and is invalidated by several other characters. Play at

your own risk.

There are some people who think that because tier lists are subjective, or reliant on finding strong players of equal skill, that they don't hold any weight. Don't be one of these people. There is real value in thinking about character strength, as it advances the community's knowledge and promotes interesting discussion. As long as you understand the context of the tier list, they are pretty useful!



キャラランク (kyara ranku) – *Lit.* character rank

See image



Cargo Throw

Donkey Kong's throw in Smash Bros. where he picks you up and carries you on his back. He's able to walk around and reposition himself before he chooses which direction to throw you, which is pretty unique to DK. This throw allows him all sorts of new strategies, such as carrying you off the stage and trying for a gimp, or jumping before throwing you for interesting air combos. These "grab and move" throws are very uncommon in traditional fighting games, but Rash in Killer Instinct has something similar.



Dash Dance

Canceling the initial frames of your dash into a dash in the other direction, then rapidly repeating this process so you wiggle left and right. Dash dancing gives you tons of unpredictability in your movement, especially for characters like Melee's Marth, who travel very

far in their initial dash and can change direction for a long time. Mixed with wavedashing, you can be almost anywhere on the screen at any time, facing the direction you choose.



ステステ (sute sute) – *Lit. step step*

ダッシュダンス (dasshu dansu) – *Lit. dash dance*

Instant Block



A Guilty Gear and BlazBlue mechanic where you press back to block immediately before an incoming attack hits you. With correct timing, you will flash white, build a bit more super meter, and not push your opponent away as much. In Guilty Gear Xrd, you will also recover a little faster out of block stun than you normally would, while in Guilty Gear Strive, you are at the same frame advantage whether you Instant Blocked or not. But in either game, you might be able to punish moves you wouldn't be able to with a normal block!

The Guilty Gear series displays the "Just!" message on the screen to let everybody know you Instant Blocked; this makes sense considering that this mechanic is pretty similar to Just Defend in SNK games. In Guilty Gear Strive, you can also combine this with Faultless Defense for even more blocking goodness.



直前ガード (chokuzen gādo) – *Lit. just before/last minute guard*

直ガ (chokuga) – *Lit. abbreviation of 直前ガード*

See video 



On Block

How you describe what happens after a move is blocked. You can talk about general strategy, like "in Killer Instinct, Riptor's Shoulder Charge will cause a stance change on block". But by far, the most common use of this phrase is to discuss frame advantage, like "crouching MK is -2 on block", since how safe or unsafe a move is on block is one of the most important considerations for how you'll use that move. Not surprisingly, you can talk about what happens on hit too.



ガード時 (gādo ji) – *Lit. on guard*



Guess

Taking an action when you aren't sure if that action will have a good outcome. For example, you might have to guess which direction you will block for an ambiguous cross-up attack, since you don't know which side you'll get hit on, or you might be getting rushed down by offensive characters and have to make a guess on whether to throw tech or block. If your guess is based on some specific information from your opponent, you might call it a read instead, but the two terms are pretty similar.



Zoner

A character whose main gameplan involves zoning their opponent to death. Zoners will have some powerful method of attacking from long range, whether it's a projectile or some far-

reaching normals, and they'll often have a strong way to move backwards. Examples include Dhalsim from Street Fighter, Axl from Guilty Gear, and Morrigan from Marvel vs. Capcom 3.

Even though they are stronger from long range, most zoners will not be helpless up close! They can rush you down, at least a little bit, if they're forced to play at close range. But it won't be their first choice, and they'll probably back up as soon as they can.



遠距離キャラ (enkyori kyara) – *Lit.* long range character



Trap

A stationary attack placed on the screen that has a lingering hitbox, and stays there for a set period of time or until the opponent runs into it. Traps are usually considered projectiles, and sometimes they're even invisible! If you're playing against Guilty Gear Accent Core's Testament, for instance, you'll just have to remember where all those traps were placed so you don't run into them later. Characters who focus on littering the screen with these nuisances are called "trap characters".



設置技 (secchi waza) – *Lit.* install/set up technique

設置キャラ (secchi chara) – *Lit.* install/set up character



3D Game

Any fighting game where you can move anywhere in 3D space – that is to say, you can move left, right, up, or down, as well as "in" and "out" of the camera. All 3D fighting games need to use 3D models, but some 2D games will use 3D models as well, so check the game's movement options to make the proper classification.

The most popular 3D fighting game franchises are Tekken, Soulcalibur, Virtua Fighter, and Dead or Alive. Some prominent 2D franchises have tried 3D games as experiments, like King of Fighters: Maximum Impact, but their modern entries have gone back to 2D movement. Most 3D games tend to focus more on up-close brawling, where learning how to sidestep around moves instead of blocking them is a big part of the strategy.



3D格ゲー (3D kakugē) – *Lit.* 3D fighting game



Standing 720

Inputting a 720 motion while standing on the ground, without hiding the input in any whiffed move and without jumping. This is also sometimes called a Tachi Gigas, after the name of Hugo's super in Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike. There's not really that much of a trick to it; you just have to use whatever shortcut the game allows for the 720 input and then be *incredibly* fast. As long as you can complete the input before your character finishes their pre-jump, the game should give you the move. But this pretty much means you have to complete a full rotation (or more) of the input in just 4 or 5 frames. This is the type of thing a Hitbox makes a little easier.



立ちギガス (tachi gigasu) – *Lit.* standing Gigas



Damage Over Time

A status effect where you slowly take damage, even if your opponent isn't attacking you. Commonly abbreviated as DOT, and pronounced as one syllable. If you play any other videogame genres, you'll be used to this type of effect, but it's not terribly common in fighting games. FANG in Street Fighter V and General RAAM in Killer Instinct are examples of characters that can do damage over time.



毒状態 (doku joutai) – *Lit. poison state*

スリップダメージ (surippu damēji) – *Lit. slip damage*



Stage Ultra

A version of the Ultra Combo that can be done at certain positions on certain stages. Instead of doing your normal Ultra, you'll knock your opponent into some stage hazard to finish the match. They are effectively identical to Ultras in terms of strategy and usage otherwise, it's just an extra flourish.



ステージウルトラ (sutēji urutora) – *Lit. stage ultra*



Balcony Break

Punching someone through a wall that acts as an overhang to a new part of the stage below. It is effectively a combination of a wall break and a floor break, and only possible on a select few stages. Like the other "breaks", you need to use a specific move to break the wall and you'll get to continue the combo afterward. A lot of these stage destruction abilities have extremely similar uses in matches, just different aesthetics to match the various stage locales.



バルコニーブレイク (barukoni bureiku) – *Lit. balcony break*



Stance Checking

Being able to tell what foot position (or "stance") your opponent's character is in during a Virtua Fighter match. Of course it's useful to know which attacks your opponent is capable of, but it's also important since certain combos will only work against opponents in certain stances. When you land a hit, you'll have to make a quick judgment on the stance your opponent is in, and then adjust your combo accordingly. Often this involves looking at very subtle cues for how their feet or legs move as they reel from being hit in a juggle, so it takes some practice to do well.



Drive System

The overarching system that governs most of Street Fighter 6's offensive and defensive techniques. There is a green gauge that lies underneath your health bar, split into 6 segments, and you can spend this gauge to do a variety of things.

On offense, you have access to Drive Impact (an armored attack that can lead to big openings), Drive Rush (a special dash with enhanced properties), and Overdrive Moves (what SF6 calls its EX Moves). On defense, you can Drive Parry (a more powerful block), Perfect Parry (your more traditional parry mechanic), and Drive Reversal (a "get off me" move you can do while blocking). Even just blocking normally will reduce your drive gauge, taking the place of chip damage from traditional titles.

If you ever lose all your drive gauge, you will enter a state called Burnout, which will prevent you from using any drive techniques for around 20 seconds and leave you with a lot of problems. SF6's drive system is core to basically every decision made in the game and you'll get to know the ins and outs very well as you play.



ドライブシステム (doraibu shisutemu) – *Lit.* drive system



Vanish

A technique in Dragon Ball FighterZ where you disappear in place, appear on the other side of your opponent and hit them away. Vanish is performed by pressing M+H and costs 1 bar of super meter. It will wall bounce when used after certain moves, making it a great combo extender, and since it is plus on block, you can cancel attacks into Vanish to try and make yourself safe (but be careful, if done poorly you can be anti-airied). While in Sparking, you can hold the Vanish buttons and *not* perform the automatic strike after the teleport, which lets you get some extra juice by freestyling mixups and combos.



バニッシュムーブ (banishu mūbu) – *Lit.* vanish move

See video



Circuit Break

A property of some attacks in Melty Blood: AACC that will "break" your Magic Circuit gauge (a.k.a., your super meter) and prevent you from gaining or using gauge for a short period of time. Your gauge will turn purple, appear all cracked, and have "Circuit Break" stamped on top of it; the appearance is pretty similar to getting GRD broken in Under Night In-Birth, another game from the same company. You don't lose the meter you already had, though, you'll just temporarily be prevented from using it.



サーキットブレイク (sākitto bureiku) – *Lit. circuit break*
サキブレ (sakibure) – *Lit. abbreviation of サーキットブレイク*



Throw

A fast close-range move that cannot be blocked. Throws are usually animated by the attacker performing a unique grapple attack and knocking the opponent down. In most modern fighting games, throws are input with a two-button command (usually light punch and light kick together), but in some older games, you input throw with just one-button (usually forward + a heavy attack). You can defend against a throw with a throw tech, but watch out for command throws, which work a little bit differently! Jumping is also another way to avoid being thrown.

Throws are an important piece of the rock-paper-scissors interaction with blocking and attacking. They are usually incredibly fast and unreactable, so you can't just sit there and block all day.



投げ (nage) – *Lit. throw*
掴み (tsukami) – *Lit. grab*

See video



Snapback



An attack in a team game that sends your opponent's current character out of the fight, and brings in a reserve character of your choice. You can use this if you want to mess up their team order, bring in a low-health character and try to finish them off, or just set up some gross mixup.

when the new character enters the screen. Especially in Marvel vs. Capcom games, the mixup on incoming (when your character first enters the stage) can be the most brutal offense you can face, so watch out.



スナップバック (sunappu bakku) – *Lit. snapback*

One Chance Combo



A Killer Instinct combo that has exactly one breakable attack between its opener and its ender. One chance combos are short, fast, and don't do a lot of damage, but they are good at throwing curveballs at your opponent so they don't know when and how to attempt a combo breaker. They're also useful if you have a good setup ender and want to put your opponent in a lot of gross mixups, since it's the shortest possible combo where the ender can be used.

Heat



A powered-up state you can enter in Melty Blood. While in Heat, your super meter will turn into a timer and tick down to zero and you'll be able to perform EX moves at a reduced cost (similar to Under Night's Veil Off mechanic). Importantly, you'll also start healing the recoverable life accrued from past attacks, making it an important method to prolong your health bar. There's also a slightly more powerful version called Blood Heat.

In **Melty Blood: Type Lumina**, you can activate Heat manually by pressing A+B+C any time after you've earned 1 gauge of super meter. The game officially calls activating Heat "Forced Release", but don't worry about this, since everybody will just say Heat instead. You can turn Heat on in neutral, or while you're blocking as a sort of "get off me" move. This activation is both invincible

and unblockable (although you can shield it), but it's got short range and if it whiffs, you're going to get punished. You can use your Arc Drive any time while Heat is active, but you'll drain the rest of your time.

In **Melty Blood: AACC**, Heat changes depending on what Moon you've selected. Crescent Moon works largely the same as Type Lumina's Heat mode; it is the only Moon that can manually activate Heat without needing full super meter. The other two Moons must fill their super gauge all the way before Heat is an option. In Half Moon, you'll automatically enter Heat at this time (sometimes called "Auto-Heat"). In Full Moon, you'll first enter MAX mode at full gauge, which starts to drain your super meter. You can now enter Heat by performing a powerful Roman Cancel-like technique called Initiative Heat, or just pop your Blood Heat raw instead.



ヒート (hīto) – *Lit. heat*

ヒート状態 (hīto joutai) – *Lit. heat status*

See video



Wombo Combo



A famous Smash Bros. Melee combo that you can watch here. The original meaning of "Wombo Combo" was simply Fox's Reflector attack (a.k.a. Shine) into an up-smash, but once this video hit the internet, nobody cared about that anymore.



ウォンボコンボ (wonbo konbo) – *Lit. wombo combo*



Longcut

Intentionally using more steps than necessary to do a motion input's command. It's kind of the opposite of a shortcut, which gives you a special move with a shorter than normal input sequence. Most often, you will use a longcut to make sure the game doesn't interpret your input as the wrong move.

For example, if you tried to walk forward and do a fireball with a quarter circle command, many modern games will interpret this as you trying to do a DP motion, and you'll probably get yourself killed by doing a shoryuken in the middle of nowhere. To avoid this, players will intentionally longcut the fireball motion to be a half circle forward instead. By starting all the way at back, the game will be much more likely to think your command is a quarter circle. King of Fighters players in particular are well known for using longcuts to avoid input overlap.



Quick Rise

The act of rising off your back quickly when you first hit the ground during a soft knockdown. In most games, you can press a button or the down direction right when your back makes contact with the ground to do this. You might also hear this called a tech.



受け身 (ukemi) – *Lit.* receiving body (this is a common Judo, Aikido term)



Mirror Match

When your opponent picks the same character as you, except they got the good color. The term originates from the original Mortal Kombat, where you had to fight your own character near the top of the arcade ladder.



ミラーマッチ (mirā macchi) – *Lit.* mirror match



Tournament Winner

The painfully slow jump your character does if you press jump while holding a ledge in Smash Bros. Melee. Doing this is almost always an accident; usually, after grabbing the ledge, you'll want to do something like quickly fall off and then jump towards the stage with an attack. If you mess up the input though, you'll sometimes get this non-invincible jump that leaves you wide open for punishment. It's mockingly called the "tournament winner" because you won't be winning any tournaments if you do this with any regularity. Note that ledge jumps in other non-Melee Smash games are balanced differently and might be a good idea!



Ball Top

A style of joystick used in an arcade stick that looks like a giant gumball on top of a small rod. This is the common style used in Japanese arcades, and is the default joystick on pretty much all of the stock arcade sticks you'll buy today (although you can still find bat tops around too).

There are many ways to hold a ball top; you'll typically rest part of your wrist on the base of the stick and subtly push and pull the ball with different parts of your hand as necessary, not using a ton of the wrist. Or, you might see some players hold it like a wine glass, which uses more wrist for basic movement. Just don't try to use it by grabbing the ball with your hand elevated off any support. You can't be precise enough and you'll get sore pretty fast.



ボール型 (bōru gata) – *Lit.* ball model

[See image](#)

Input Lag



When your button presses happen on screen after a delay, rather than immediately. Input lag can come from a variety of sources, including limitations of the game engine, your big screen TV processing the image before showing it, or even netcode solutions intentionally delaying inputs to compensate for network problems.

All games suffer from some inherent input delay, but as long as the delay for all factors combined is around 3 to 5 frames, this is considered acceptable performance by fighting game standards.

When the input delay fluctuates during matches, though, that's when it really starts to feel awful.



入力遅延 (nyūryoku chien) – *Lit. input delay*

Footsies



A complicated, often nebulous term that refers to the battle for controlling the space in front of you, often by using good pokes. In essence, you are trying to get to a range you like, while trying to deny your opponent getting to a range that they like. How you do this varies wildly based on the game, but it often involves using strong crouching kick attacks to pester your opponent as they are trying to walk around. This dance of playing mind games with your feet is the source of the term's name.

In reality, footsies can mean different things to different people, and often combines lots of

adjacent concepts. Some people think that footsies *needs* to be a grounded affair, between characters that don't jump and fight for space only by walking. While this is a good example, I think applying the term narrow-mindedly to only these situations is falling out of favor. As more people play more diverse fighting games, they are realizing that you get the "feel" of footsies in lots of different ways, and this battle for space can extend to the air, or to movement options beyond walking, quite easily. That said, using amazing footsies to perform an awesome whiff punish will never fall out of style.



地上戦 (chijousen) – *Lit.* ground fight

差し合い (sashi ai) – *Lit.* the act of attacking while weaving in and out of each other's attack range

刺し合い (sashi ai) – *Lit.* stabbing match

足払い合戦 (ashibarai gassen) – *Lit.* leg sweep battle

See video

Quarter Circle



A motion used to input many common special moves that starts at down and moves in a circular motion, ending at left or right. The version towards your opponent is down, down-forward, forward, or 236 in numpad notation. It's commonly abbreviated QCF for "quarter circle forward", or maybe just called "fireball", since the vast majority of fireballs use this command. Similarly, down, down-back, back, or 214, is called QCB for "quarter circle back", and commonly referred to as the "tatsu" input, since it matches Ryu's Tatsumaki special move.



- 波動コマンド (hadou komando) – *Lit.* fireball command (only for QCF)
竜巻コマンド (tatsumaki komando) – *Lit.* hurricane kick command (only for QCB)
逆波動コマンド (gyaku hadou komando) – *Lit.* reverse fireball command (only for QCB)

See image



Pushblock



An action you can take while blocking which pushes the offensive character away from you. It's largely used in team games with extremely oppressive offense, so that you can turn a successful block into "please get the heck away from me".

In games like Marvel vs. Capcom 3, you simply press buttons while in block stun from a point character's attack and they will be pushed back about half screen away. In Vampire Savior, you still press buttons to pushblock, but the result is random; you have to press several buttons each time you block to increase your chances of the pushblock happening. And in Blazblue: Cross Tag Battle, pushblocking is strong enough that it costs meter to perform.

Pushblocking is not as powerful as it might seem on the surface, since these are games where characters can be anywhere on the screen in one second flat. So while it might briefly stop Magneto from tri-jumping on your head, it won't be long until he's back for more.



- アドバンシングガード (adobanshingu gādo) – *Lit.* advancing guard



Space

Generally speaking, an area on the screen. Usually you talk about space in relation to your character, like "the space above my head" or "the space in front of me". The best pokes will preemptively take up important space that your opponent wants to stand in. It's a pretty similar concept to range.

It's also common to talk about "spacing", which is the skill of putting yourself at a good range for your best attacks. A player who has good spacing will subtly change where they stand using movement, and they always seem to magically be at a range where their attacks hit, but yours somehow don't. Spacing is a critical concept for playing footsties.

Auction Tournament



A special style of tournament where character names or teams are pulled from a hat one at a time, and players engage in a real-time auction on the spot, putting up real money for the right to buy that character and then use them in the event. Auction tournaments are usually short side events at larger tournaments, are limited to a small number of players, and may even have a special twist, like players only getting a hint for what the character is until they win the auction. All the money wagered in the auctions is collected to form the prize pool for the event.

Auction tournaments tend to be pretty high-stakes, often being single elimination first to 1 and only the top two players winning any money. They're not the main draw of an event, but they can be very silly fun, especially for spectators who just want to watch other players risk a lot of money or try to outwager each other for their favorite character.



オークショントーナメント – *Lit. auction tournament*



Hitfall

A Rivals of Aether mechanic that lets you fast fall to the ground as soon as you hit your opponent. Specifically, you have the duration of hitstop to tap down on your analog stick to immediately start falling, even if you haven't reached the apex of your jump yet. This is different from how fast falling works in Smash Bros. titles (for example, SHFFLing), and it lets you string together some pretty freeform combos, as long as you keep hitting your opponent and reading their DI.

See video



Fatality

A violent finishing attack you can perform after you have won a game in Mortal Kombat. Even if you don't play fighting games, it's pretty likely that you know what a Fatality is, as they have been well known in the videogame landscape for 25 years. There have been tweaks on the formula over the years, including the Babality and the Friendship.



フェイタリティ (feitariti) – *Lit.* fatality



Stagger

Any move that causes a super prolonged state of hit stun, usually with the opponent staggering over their feet while you get free rein to do whatever you want. It's a common word in Killer Instinct as there is a specific state called "stagger" that allows for opponents to be hit or thrown freely, but it can be used in any game where giant hits occur.

Stagger can also be used in its more common English meaning to describe attacks that are slightly delayed or off-beat from each other. Basically, you leave gaps between your attacks in tricky and unpredictable ways so your opponent thinks they're free to attack, then you smoke them with a devastating counter hit. You might hear something like "he staggered that heavy punch" or "nice stagger pressure" to indicate this.

Round



The act of playing until a single health bar is depleted. Usually you need to win multiple rounds to win a game, and in most fighting games, winning a round will reset character positions and health bars. In team games, the definition doesn't really make much sense, so we usually say there aren't any rounds and just jump straight to winning or losing a "game".



ラウンド (raundo) – *Lit. round*

Pandora



A comeback mechanic in Street Fighter x Tekken where you could sacrifice the character currently on screen to bring in your reserve character. You get a 30% damage boost and your super meter maxes out, but you have 10 seconds to kill your opponent, or you instantly lose the round.

Pandora is pretty weak as far as comeback mechanics go. Activating it raw is more or less suicide, as the opponent just has to run away for 10 seconds (which is relatively easy in SFxT already), and your cinematic supers do not freeze this 10 second timer, so you'd have to avoid using super

entirely if your character had a long cutscene. It was really only useful in incredibly situational combos, where you wouldn't kill them normally but the 30% damage boost would be enough. You'd better be right on your on-the-spot damage calculation though; if you're wrong, you lose.



パンドラ (pandora) – *Lit. pandora*

Taunt Jet Upper



An extremely difficult but powerful technique for Bryan in the Tekken series. Bryan's taunt contains an unblockable hit which can be canceled into other attacks, including his Jet Upper, a high damage launcher. However, performing the taunt and then correctly inputting the Jet Upper is incredibly precise, composed of multiple sequential just frames. Your reward, though, is the threat of a mid unblockable that leads to tons of damage and has nasty other fakeouts attached to it. It's just really hard to do.



挑発ジェットアッパー (chouhatsu jetto appā) – *Lit. taunt jet upper*

挑発ジェッパー (chouhatsu jeppa) – *Lit. abbreviation of 挑発ジェットアッパー*

See video 

Critical Edge



The term for a super attack in the Soulcalibur series. Starting with Soulcalibur V, characters could spend half of their super meter by performing an attack with a standard super input of two quarter circles with A+B+K (though in SC VI, they dropped the motion and just let you press the buttons). You'll do a standard cinematic attack that does high damage.



クリティカルエッジ (kuričikaru ejji) – *Lit. critical edge*



Auto-Correct

An input technique for performing a special move (but usually a dragon punch) in the opposite direction immediately as your opponent jumps over your head. The idea is to input the entire special move's input in the normal direction, juuuust before the opponent switches sides with the jump, but then wait a split second until the opponent clears your head to press the attack button. In games with generous input buffers, the game will register your special move successfully, but "automatically correct" you to face the new direction before doing it.

It shares similarities to the cross cut and, in practice, it's usually pretty hard to tell which technique was used to get these "instantly behind you" DPs. In fact, sometimes your inputs "get auto-corrected" even if you didn't want them to, especially if you are facing a tricky mixup character who can switch sides quickly. You may try to do a quarter circle forward move, but accidentally get a quarter circle back move, which might just get you killed.



自動振り向き (jidou furimuki) – *Lit. auto turn around*



Recoverable Life

Damage that you've taken that can be recovered or healed in some manner. It's usually referred to by the color the game uses to represent this damage on your health bar, so you'll hear it called any number of things including white life (KI), gray life (SFV), red life (MvC3) and blue life (DBFZ).

KI also might call it "potential health/damage".

How you can recover this life is wholly dependent on the game. In some team games, you might have to tag your character out before they can start healing. In SFV, it will recover over time unless you get hit, then you'll lose it all. In KI, it will slowly heal until your opponent cashes out by hitting you with an ender. It's important to learn the ins and outs of your game's system, since these gains and losses will really add up over time.



リカバリーアブルダメージ (rikabariaburu damēji) – *Lit. recoverable damage*

白ダメージ (shiro damēji) – *Lit. white damage*

回復可能ゲージ (kaifuku kanou gēji) – *Lit. recoverable gauge*

FGC



An abbreviation for the Fighting Game Community. Anybody who enjoys playing, talking about, or watching fighting games is a part of the FGC, no matter how good you are or which game is your favorite. The FGC is a bit unique compared to other video game communities because rather than focus on exactly one specific game, there are dozens of fighting games that people love to play, so you'll see a lot of diversity in discussion and interests.



格闘ゲームコミュニティ (kakutou gēmu komyuniti) – *Lit. fighting game community*

RPS



Stands for Rock Paper Scissors, the classic game where each option beats one thing and loses to one thing. You can think of close-range attacks, throws, and blocking as a basic application of RPS, where attacks beat throws, throws beat blocking, and blocking beats attacks. While there are

some situations where each option is equally likely, and you just pick something and see if you win or not, fighting games are usually more nuanced.

Most of the time you will try to weight the RPS in your favor, so if you win the exchange, you will get a lot of damage, but if you lose it, it won't matter too much. You can stand at a good range so that your attacks won't be punishable if they're blocked, for instance. Or you might option select a few options at the same time to cover multiple scenarios.

In general, if someone says they are "playing the RPS", it means they are just trying to cycle options in an intelligent way to win more exchanges than they lose. You can also talk about which side the RPS "favors", and that side will probably have an easier time picking an option that has high reward without too much risk, so their opponent should be scared of being put in that situation.



三すくみ (san sukumi) – *Lit. 3 deadlock*
ジャンケン (janken) – *Lit. rock paper scissors*

Counter Assault



A defensive technique in Blazblue where you can cancel your block stun and attack, pushing your opponent away. It costs 50% of your super meter and does zero damage, but it will give you some breathing room if you're being smothered by pressure. It shares a lot of similarities to mechanics in other games like Alpha Counter, Dead Angle and V-Reversal.



カウンターアサルト (kauntā asaruto) – *Lit. counter assault*



Arc Drive

The Melty Blood term for a super, often abbreviated to AD. In **MB: Type Lumina**, your Arc Drive costs 3 bars of super meter and they all have the same input (236 B+C) no matter the character. They can be used any time you like, including canceling from normals, specials, or EX moves. You can also do Arc Drive while you are in Heat (even if you activated Heat with less than 3 bars), and it will drain the rest of your gauge.

In **MB: AACC**, you can't do an Arc Drive until you've filled your gauge to full and entered Heat or MAX mode, depending on which Moon you've chosen. After doing an Arc Drive, your Heat or MAX mode immediately ends. In C and F Moons, if you enter the more powerful Blood Heat mode after filling up your gauge to max, you'll do a more powerful version of your Arc Drive, called Another Arc Drive (or AAD). These will animate your normal AD with a bit more zest, kind of like an "EX Super", and do more damage as well.



アーク ドライブ (āku doraibu) – *Lit. arc drive*



Touch of Death

A combo that is guaranteed to kill you if it hits (assuming no combo drop), even if you started with full health. Commonly abbreviated to "TOD". These were decently common in older games, but in most modern games, you'll be hard-pressed to find a ton of true TODs that can be used in fights against actual human opponents (although some team games will have a few kicking around). Note that while all infinite combos are TODs, not all TODs will be infinites. Sometimes a TOD will have a theoretical end, but will just do enough raw damage to kill first.



即死コンボ (sokushi konbo) – *Lit. instant death combo*

[See video](#)

Teabagging



Repeatedly crouching and standing up again as a means to aggravate or taunt your opponent. You can do it while standing over a knocked down opponent for extra impact, but doing it anywhere on the screen will get the message across just fine. Just like in first-person shooters or other genres, teabagging is usually seen as bad manners and will get people riled up when you do it.



屈伸 (kusshin) – *Lit. bend and stretch*

Losers Bracket



All the players who have lost once in a double elimination tournament, lined up and ready to fight to the death. Getting knocked out of the Winners Bracket early is tough, since not only will you be one loss away from elimination, but you'll also have to fight a lot more matches along the way. A politically-correct alternate term you might hear is the "Lower Bracket", but it's generally not used too often. Fighting game players can handle the truth; you lost, you're in the losers bracket.



ルーザーズ側 (rūzāzu gawa) – *Lit. losers side*

Directional Influence



A mechanic in Super Smash Bros. (and many other [platform fighters](#)) that allows you subtly adjust which direction your character travels when they get hit. Often abbreviated as "DI". After being hit (that is, on the very last frame of [hitstop](#)), the game will read the direction you're holding the analog stick and adjust the angle you get launched. Specific details depend on the game in question; for maximum effect, sometimes you'll want to influence your direction parallel to how the move naturally launches you, and other times you'll want to hold the stick 90 degrees away from this angle. For example, to survive a strong vertical up-smash in Melee, you need to hold left or right – holding up or down will do nothing.

You can use this to save yourself from hitting a [blast zone](#) and dying, or to avoid follow-up hits from certain [combo](#) attempts. DI is a very important part of most platform fighters, and learning to DI in specific directions to counter certain powerful moves, and learning to punish players who DI poorly, is mandatory learning to get into competitive Smash. Smash games have a separate but related mechanic called [Smash DI](#).



ベクトル変更 (bekutoru henkou) – *Lit. vector change*

ベク変 (bekuhen) – *Lit. abbreviation of ベクトル変更*

Drive Reversal



A defensive Street Fighter 6 technique you can perform any time you have [blocked](#) a move and entered [block stun](#). While blocking (or [parrying](#)) a move, hold forward and press HP+HK to launch a special attack that is [invincible](#) to everything and pushes your opponent away if it hits, giving you breathing space. This technique costs 2 [drive bars](#) to perform though, so you'll want to use it thoughtfully.

Drive Reversal is extremely similar to Street Fighter V's V-Reversal, and these "attack while blocking to gain space" mechanics have been in many different games, starting with the alpha counter. When compared to V-Reversal, Drive Reversal can't be thrown which is nice, but it is unsafe on block so if your opponent throws out a super fast move, they may be able to block your relatively slow Drive Reversal and then punish you.



ドライブリバーサル (doraibu ribāsaru) – *Lit. drive reversal*

See video

Reel



The animation that plays when a character gets hit. Most of these animations will have the character reel backwards in pain a little bit, and in many games, the way they reel can have very profound impact on their hurtbox and make following up your hit with a combo difficult or impossible. Various standing or crouching reel animations are a large contributing factor to why character specific combos are possible.

See video

Save That Shit for Nationals



A phrase that advises players to keep newly found strategies to themselves since it can give them a competitive edge, especially if you surprise everyone with it for the first time at an important tournament. Commonly abbreviated to STSFN. This is a pretty old-school adage, long before

Twitter or Youtube were used to share tech easily with everyone in the entire world instantly. Nowadays, typically the communities that share everything they know as soon as they find it end up being the strongest, since it's the fastest way to make everyone better.

Air Throw



A throw that can be input in the air, and only works against airborne opponents. In some anime games and in the Versus series, pretty much every character will have an air throw, but in other fighting games, a very small number of characters will have this ability. Note that the term can also refer to specific, rare command throws where the attacker is on the ground and targets an airborne opponent.



空投げ (kū nage) – *Lit.* air throw



Sandbagging



Intentionally playing below your ability, usually to troll your opponent or because you want to try and hit some cool, but impractical move or combo. If you're an experienced player and you're playing against beginners, sometimes it's okay to sandbag to let them get some practice in. But some players really don't like it and would prefer their opponents always try as hard as they can.



舐めプレイ (name purei) – *Lit.* going insultingly easy on an opponent

舐めプ (namepu) – *Lit.* abbreviation of 舐めプレイ



Free

Being super easy to beat. Calling someone free is a pretty big deal, so you better be able to back it up if they challenge you. It's kind of related to getting bodied, but I think being called free feels worse.

Free can also mean using a move as a guaranteed punish. You might hear "that move is -3 on block, so you get a free DP" to indicate that doing a DP after blocking the move will always hit the opponent.



楽勝 (rakusho) – *Lit. easy win*



Hit Confirm

Performing an attack, seeing that your attack successfully hit, and then reacting to this information by continuing the combo. That is to say, you "confirm" that your first attack hit before you launch further attacks, and if the attack was blocked instead, you stop and don't follow through with anything else. This is important because, usually, you will be canceling into a move that would be unsafe if it was blocked, so you only want to do it if it won't get you killed.

In some games this can be a pretty advanced skill, since you might not have a ton of time to recognize if your attack hit or not. In really fast cases, good players may even employ special tricks, like looking at the opponent's health bar or using special audio cues, to help them react as fast as they can.



ヒット確認 (hitto kakunin) – *Lit. hit confirm*

[See video](#)

Dave's Stupid Rule



A rule in Smash Bros. tournaments that prevents you from picking a stage you've already won a game on during the current match. Commonly abbreviated to DSR. The goal is to prevent players from repeatedly counter picking the same stage that gives them a huge advantage and beating their opponent handily because of it. You'll get to win at most once on this stage, and then you'll have to go elsewhere. Some tournaments have a "Gentleman's Rule" that lets the players bypass DSR and play on a previous stage again, but only if they both agree.

Execution



The physical act of moving the joystick and pressing the buttons with the correct timing and speed to get your character to do cool things. We usually talk about it in terms of "easy" or "hard" execution – a combo that has hard execution will require very precise, often fast joystick movements, and the button presses will have to be exact. Slight mistakes in these things will make the combo drop, maybe even in a way that gets you killed for trying it. In fact, Smash Bros. players sometimes intentionally use a strategy that has a known high execution counter-strategy, just to see if their opponents are even capable of doing it. You might hear this called an "execution test".

A common thought is that games or characters shouldn't have hard execution, and that a fighting game battle should take place entirely in the mind. While there is definitely some execution that

is needlessly hard (maybe, for example, a pretzel motion), execution is an inextricable part of fighting game design. Asking whether a player can perform difficult (or even relatively easy!) sequences under pressure is valuable to competitive integrity, exciting to players and spectators, and allows players to carve out an identity. Players wouldn't have combos named after them if everyone could do them with zero practice, after all.

Frame Kill



Whiffing attacks on purpose in order to very specifically time another attack. Let's say that, after you've knocked down your opponent, you want to try to perform a safe jump. But if you were to jump immediately, you'd be too early and your opponent would still be knocked down. After a bit of clever math and the help of some frame data, you realize you need to wait for 17 frames and then the timing will be perfect.

One option is to just try and get a sense for what 17 frames "feels like" and time it manually, but this is pretty difficult so people quickly tried to find something more reliable. For example, if you know that one of your moves takes exactly 17 frames to execute from start to finish, this is way better – simply whiff that move and you'll have "killed" those 17 frames perfectly with no need for guesswork or eyeballing anything. If you see people whiffing moves nonsensically when their opponent is knocked down, they're almost certainly setting up the timing for a future attack.



フレーム消費 (furēmu shouhi) – *Lit. frame consumption*

See video



Short Hop



A jump that has less height than your character's regular "full" jump. In Smash Bros., you can do a short hop by pressing and releasing the jump button quickly. In the King of Fighters series, you short hop by pressing up, up-left, or up-right and then quickly letting go (some players will go from up to down to make this command less finicky). You can also super jump or hyper hop for even more options. In either game, short hopping is an extremely common strategy to get to where you need to be a little faster, and ensuring the defense has less time to react and try to stop you.



小ジャンプ (shou janpu) – *Lit. small jump*

Quick Step



A movement option starting in Soulcalibur V that lets you quickly dodge a vertical attack by pressing up or down twice in a row. Unlike 8 Way Run, the standard way of moving in the SC series, this lets you do what is basically a Tekken sidestep, a quick burst of speed in a direction to dodge an attack. It only works in the up or down directions though, so you can't do stuff like Tekken's Korean backdash to put horizontal space between you and your opponent.



クイックムーブ (kuikku mūbu) – *Lit. quick move*

Notation (VF)



A specific set of abbreviations that Virtua Fighter players use to talk about defensive option selects. Each letter (or set of letters) describes one defensive option, and if you perform each of them in a row quickly, you'll cover multiple offensive options.

Some of the component parts are **E** ([evade](#)), **R** ([reversal](#)), **G** ([guard](#)), **FG** ([fuzzy guard](#)), **TE** ([throw escape](#)), **DC** ([dash cancel](#)), and **CD or CDC** ([crouch dash cancel](#)). So if you see a sequence like **GTE**, this means "guard, then throw escape immediately after", which is a way to try and defend against attacks and throws at the same time.

There's lots of examples here, including EDC (evade, then dash cancel) and ECD (evade, then *crouch* dash cancel); both of these let you turn evades into dashes which can be canceled into blocking or other techniques. If you want to try and sidestep/evade (E), while teching a throw (TE), and then guard at the end (G), you might call this ETEG. If you want more examples, I'll point you to this [handy forum thread](#).

Attack Cancel



A Smash Bros. Ultimate technique where you [kara cancel](#) the startup of any grounded attack into a jump (for dash attacks specifically, you can do a jump or a [grab](#)). These cancels aren't often used for added [range](#) like kara cancels in other games, but rather they tend to be used to give you more control over your momentum.

You can, for example, [run](#) forward and kara cancel your dash attack into a jumping [back air](#). This stops your forward momentum immediately and lets your attack cover more distance behind you than you could just by jumping normally out of your run.



アタックキャンセル (attakku kyanseru) – *Lit. attack cancel*

攻撃キャンセル (kougeki kyanseru) – *Lit. attack cancel*

[See video](#)

Renda Cancel



A specific way to cancel a chain into further attacks in Street Fighter II series of games, most notably Super Street Fighter II Turbo. If you are chaining crouching normals together, and you want to cancel into a special move or super, the trick is to switch to a standing normal of the same strength first. Then, very quickly, kara cancel this standing normal into your special or super of choice. You won't see the final normal, but rather just two crouching normals and your canceled attack. This kara cancel trick lets you bypass SFII's restriction that you cannot usually cancel chained attacks, and this restriction is why we need to do this convoluted technique.



連打キャンセル (renda kyanseru) – *Lit. mash cancel*

Yomi Counter



A mechanic for avoiding throws in Fantasy Strike. Rather than try to throw tech by pressing buttons, instead you're asked to input nothing – no directions on your joystick and no button presses at all. If someone tries to throw you in this state, you will do damage by automatically throwing *them* instead. Like most throw systems, you can use common option selects like delay tech (in this case by alternating between blocking and not blocking) to make it easier to avoid being thrown.



ヨミカウンター (yomi kauntā) – *Lit. yomi counter*



Forced Knockdown

A system in Street Fighter 6 where hitting someone out of the air with a normal in certain situations causes a knockdown rather than a flipout. Typically, powerful airborne special moves will have this property attached to them (for example, Ken's Dragonlash Kick, Blanka's Horizontal Ball, or Dhalsim's Teleport), and if you manage to hit them with a normal during this move, you'll be rewarded with a chance to juggle the opponent before they hit the ground. Watch for the "Forced Knockdown" message to appear in these situations. You can likely get more damage than you expect!

See video 



Aerial Control

The ability to change your character's trajectory after being hit into the air in Soulcalibur. By holding a direction on the joystick, you might be able to steer yourself away from a potential Ring Out, or just avoid other follow-up hits in a juggle. It is reminiscent of directional influence in Smash Bros.



空中制御 (kūchū seigyo) – *Lit. aerial control*



High

Short for high attack. Be careful how you use this term, since it changes meaning depending on the game. A "high" in Tekken is a move that won't hit a crouching opponent, but a "high" in most Street Fighter games is an overhead.



上段 (joudan) – *Lit.* high level



Bombo

Slang for a cool-looking or particularly powerful combo. It's not a super common word, but if you spend time on fighting game social media, you'll probably encounter it occasionally.



Drill

A common name for a type of attack that quickly lunges forward at the opponent's feet, with the attacker spinning like a drill bit. Cammy's Spiral Arrow special move from the Street Fighter series is probably the most recognizable drill move in fighting games. Drills often hit low, which makes them strong moves to catch people who are walking around thinking everything is fine.



突進技 (toshin waza) – *Lit.* rushing/plunging technique



Bug

A programming mistake that causes an unintended side effect. Bugs are common in video games, but in fighting games (especially older ones), they are especially prevalent. From moves being accidentally unblockable to oversights allowing infinite combos, many famous fighting game bugs have drastically shaped the core of the genre. If you're interested in more examples, you can read this blog post that thoroughly discusses several famous fighting game bugs.



不具合 (fuguai) – *Lit.* bug

バグ (bagu) – *Lit.* bug



Puppet Character

A character that also controls a secondary entity (their "puppet" or "doll") alongside them. Puppet characters tend to be rather advanced, since learning how to separate commands and strategy for two different characters at once can be a little overwhelming at first. Commanding the puppet is often done by holding down or negative edging buttons, so it's often not only a strategic challenge, but difficult execution as well.

Examples of puppet characters include Zato in Guilty Gear, Carl in BlazBlue, Chaos in Under Night, and Pom in Them's Fightin' Herds. Characters that summon other entities and mostly let them walk around and do their own thing, like Gargos in Killer Instinct or Jack-O in Guilty Gear, are usually not considered puppet characters, although the distinction isn't that big of a deal.

See video

Linker



A special move performed during a Killer Instinct combo. After any opener is performed, perform one of your character's special moves to get (usually) a 1, 2, or 3-hit version. After the linker completes, press a single attack to transition into an auto-double. Repeating this process over and over (auto-double > linker > auto-double > linker > ...) is the core structure of a KI combo.

Linkers can be done in light, medium, or heavy strengths; to get a heavy linker, you must do your joystick motion and then press and hold either the L or M button (if you press the heavy button, you'll get an ender instead). Linkers are always combo breakable at any point after their startup.



リンクー (rinkā) – *Lit. linker*

Special High Attack



A type of attack in Virtua Fighter that acts like a regular high (that is, you can crouch under it), but can hit opponents trying to do a crouching attack. Normally crouching attacks will also duck under highs, so special highs, or "EX Highs", give you a little extra offensive juice out of your high attacks. There are also special mids and special lows to take a look at, although these terms are used by other 3D games as well, whereas Special High is mostly a Virtua Fighter thing.



特殊上段 (tokushu joudan) – *Lit. special high attack*

Active



The period of time that a move has a hitbox and is capable of doing damage to the opponent. It's one of the three stages of an attack, along with startup and recovery, and is measured in frames. After your move undergoes some brief startup (the windup phase), then the active period starts, where your character's fist is finally able to connect with your friend's jaw. Then, you have to suffer the recovery (the cooldown phase) before you can move again.

Despite the active frames being the only time a move can do damage, it makes up a surprisingly small percentage of a move's total duration; usually moves only have around 1-4 active frames, even though the move itself might take 30 frames from start to finish. You don't have to focus on this number too much while you're learning how to read frame data, but you'll learn it's most useful for picking a good meaty attack.



持続 (jizoku) – *Lit. continuous*

[See video](#)

Stuff

Interrupting an attack. "I can't believe that move stuffed my jab" means you tried to jab but your opponent hit you first.

Drift Roman Cancel



Moving slightly up, down, left or right during a Guilty Gear Strive Roman Cancel. To do this, input a dash in your desired direction slightly *before* you input the RC (as a plink); if you try to do the dash at the same time, or after, it won't work. It's much easier to do this if you use the dash macro.

Drift RC has a lot of uses, particularly in combos where you are slightly too far away to hit your opponent with the slow-mo effect of the RC blast. If you drift in their direction, you can extend the range of the RC and keep the combo going. You may also find some really cool ways to send your character flying with increased momentum if you experiment with Drift and Quick RC at the same time!



ダッシュ入力ロマンキャンセル (dasshu nyūryoku roman kyanseru) – *Lit.* dash input roman cancel

[See video](#)



Kumite

Mostly used in the fighting game context as a synonym for "battle" or "competition". Some tournaments, like Red Bull Kumite, use the word as part of their brand. You'll sometimes see it used to refer to a series of exhibition matches against a single opponent, often a visiting foreign player that the local players want to test their skills against. If Tokido comes to your town to win all your lunch money, you should at least schedule a Tokido Kumite and force him to beat all of you in a row.



組手 (kumite) – *Lit. sparring*

SGGK



A famous option select found in Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike. Players would attempt do a parry and a kara throw at the same time – if the opponent was blocking, they would get thrown, but if they tried to attack, the parry would work and the kara throw input would instead become a normal that would lead into a super. In essence, the opponent can neither block nor attack to avoid taking damage. While most characters had some application of SGGK, Chun-Li, the strongest character in that game, had the most potent use.

Some say SGGK stands for "Slide Grab Gyakunitaku Kick", but more likely it is an abbreviation of the Japanese term.



しゃがみグラップ逆二択キック (shagami gurappu gyaku nitaku kikku) – *Lit. crouch tech reverse mixup kick*

Gorilla



A character who wants to get in your face by whatever means necessary and start swinging wildly, knowing that whatever move they randomly choose will be very hard to stop. Gorillas tend to not care about trifling things like "thinking" or "playing neutral"... no, they're going to do some full screen move that is unnecessarily hard to punish and then do something wild that seems to always hit you. Gorillas can be very fun to play, but also very frustrating to play *against*. Playing solid against them can work, but sometimes you just need to try and match their level of crazy instead.



ゴリラ (gorira) – *Lit. gorilla*

Safe



A move that, when it hits or is blocked, lets you successfully block (or avoid) any possible retaliation from your opponent. Basically, as long as you make contact with this move, you cannot be punished. Sometimes a move may be safe because your opponent is too far away to do anything, even if the frame data says you can be punished in theory. So while the numbers are most of the story, sometimes good range plays a factor. Safe moves play a hugely important part of the offense in basically every fighting game.

If you want to know the science behind a move being safe, it's a race between the block stun of your move and the recovery of your move. You don't necessarily have to recover *before* the block stun ends (such a move is not only safe, but plus), you just have to make sure the gulf is smaller than your opponent's fastest move. So, you can be minus and safe, as long as you're not *too minus*.



反撃できない (hangeki dekinai) – *Lit. cannot counterattack*

反撃されない (hangeki sarenai) – *Lit. won't get counterattacked*

[See video](#)

V-Skill



A character-specific Street Fighter V technique, activated by pressing medium punch and medium kick together. You can basically think of it like an alternate special move that builds your V-Gauge (used for V-Reversals and V-Trigger) if it connects with your opponent. Each character has two V-Skill options, and they'll pick one on the character select screen to use in the fight.



Vス キル (V sukiru) – *Lit. V-skill*

Guard Meter



A gauge that fills up as you block attacks, and begins to decrease if you do not block for a set amount of time. It's common in some older Street Fighter titles, as well as the King of Fighters series. If your guard meter fills up to its maximum value, you'll get guard crushed and the sweet embrace of death will often not be far behind.



ガードゲージ (gādo gēji) – *Lit. guard gauge*

ガード耐久値 (gādo taikyūchi) – *Lit. guard endurance number*

Pushbox



A hidden collection of rectangles or circles that define the non-overlapping space your character takes up on the screen. This is not your character's hurtbox (i.e., the part that can be attacked), it

is simply the part that prevents your model from overlapping with another character. We call it a pushbox because if you were to walk face first into another character, you would begin to push them backwards when their two pushboxes meet.



押し当たり (oshi atari) – *Lit. push collision*

押し合い判定 (oshiai hantei) – *Lit. jostle detection*

Poverty Game



A fighting game that is mostly supported by a small but passionate community. These games tend to not have big tournaments or large payouts, hence the term, and you may have to use resources like Discord to find opponents to play against, but those who stick around are usually welcoming and excited to play a game they love.

Scrub



Someone who thinks they're much better than they are and makes excuses whenever they lose. The classic scrub believes that the only reason they aren't winning is because the opponent isn't following some self-defined set of "honorable" rules (like not spamming whatever move is hitting them today), not through any lack of skill on their own part. Some people use the term to refer to any beginner, but really the core of the term is an insult towards people who refuse to learn.

Quotes from scrubs are still one of the only good uses of Twitter found by mankind to date.



ザコ (zako) – *Lit. small fry / nobody / unimportant person*

初心者 (shoshinsha) – *Lit. beginner*

パンピ – (panpi) – *Lit. an ordinary or unskilled person (slang)*

(Note: these terms are not as focused on the player's mentality as Scrub is, but they are the closest terms in Japanese)

Infinite



Usually refers to an infinite combo. You might also see it used sarcastically, like "got him in the infinite"; this is when a bad player constantly gets hit by an easily avoidable technique many times in a row. If this happens to you, give blocking a try.



永久コンボ (eikyū konbo) – *Lit.* infinite combo

Juggle Potential



A game mechanic in some Street Fighter titles where moves that can normally be used to juggle the opponent will simply start to whiff after the combo has gone on long enough. For some games, like Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike, this is implemented with a hidden timer, whereas for other games, it's based on how many times you've hit the opponent. It is one way to keep combos from being too damaging and remove the possibility of infinite combos.

Empty Jump



The act of jumping without doing any air attack. There are lots of cool strategic reasons why you might want to do this. For example, if you're a slow moving character with beefy air attacks, you can close the gap by empty jumping. Your opponent might think you want to press one of those wonderful long-range air attacks and try to anti-air you, but since you didn't press anything, they'll swing and miss. This is called a grappler jump.

Since jumping attacks are overheads, another option is empty jumping and then doing an immediate, fast low attack instead as a mixup. We call this "empty jump low" and you can also try doing similar ideas like empty jump throw if you want (Smash players call this a tomahawk). I know that everytime you jump you want to attack, but sometimes less is more.



空ジャンプ (kara janpu) – *Lit. empty jump*

スカシジャンプ (sukashi janpu) – *Lit. whiffed jump* (スカシ literally means whiffing something, but it is often used for empty jump. Can be combined like スカシ下段 (sukashi gedan) for empty jump low and スカシ投げ (sukashi nage) for empty jump throw)

Proximity Unblockable



An unblockable attack that can only be performed from extremely close range. If you are not close enough, the attack is not possible and the game will treat your inputs as some other attack (usually just some normal). They really feel a lot like command throws but they are technically classified as attacks.

These are extremely rare in fighting games, and mostly seen in older King of Fighters titles like KoF98 and KoF2002UM. In those games, they are extremely potent attacks since it's really difficult to get them to whiff, so from close range you'll either get hit by the unblockable, or you'll somehow avoid it and the opponent could immediately hit you some other way. Your main hope is a very well-timed roll.

See video 



Negative Edge

The act of releasing a button (instead of pressing it) to perform a special move. You might be surprised to learn that, in pretty much all fighting games, you can throw a fireball by first pressing and holding a punch button by itself, then doing your quarter circle input, and finally releasing the button. This input leniency helps quite a bit to correct for sloppiness on when you press the button during your motions, and you can use negative edge to your advantage with, for example, piano inputs. You might also hear the term used to talk specifically about specials that *only* activate on a button release, like Cody's Zonk Knuckle.



離し入力 (hanashi nyūryoku) – *Lit.* release input

See video



Moon System MB

A system in the Melty Blood Actress Again series that changes foundational mechanics for your character, and may even give you entirely new moves too (if you're looking for Type Lumina information, check out Moon Gauge). You can think of them kind of like a cross between Street Fighter Alpha's ISMs or Capcom vs. SNK 2's Grooves and Mortal Kombat's Variations. There are three different Moons, and you pick your flavor on the character select screen. It's too hard to give an exhaustive list of all differences between Moons, but here's a summary for you. Hope you like clicking links.

In **Crescent Moon** (or C Moon), your character is kind of a versatile jack of all trades. You can reverse beat, dodge, circuit spark, and use EX guard, EX shield and shield bunkers. You have a

maximum of 300% meter, and you can choose to manually activate Heat any time after it reaches 100%, or wait until it hits full to automatically enter MAX mode (which allows the stronger Blood Heat mode). Crescent Moon is the only moon that can manually activate Heat early.

In **Half Moon** (or H Moon), decision making around meter management is a bit more automatic. Your super meter only goes to a maximum of 200%, and Heat will automatically activate when it reaches the top instead of being able to choose when Heat starts. If you get hit during your Heat, you will instantly Circuit Spark, so this process is hands-off too. You won't have access to EX guard and you can only try to shield attacks by tapping the button, unlike other Moons that can hold it down for much bigger windows. But you'll gain access to a universal string (6AAA) that starts combos.

In **Full Moon** (or F Moon), your character is more of a powerhouse, with emphasis on stronger hits and buffed normals with better frame advantage. Notably, this Moon can't Reverse Beat, dodge or use EX shield. Your meter goes to 300% and you automatically enter MAX mode when it hits the top, but unlike other Moons, you can use Circuit Charge and manually charge your meter to get there faster. You don't have access to normal Heat, but instead have to wait until you hit MAX and enter the stronger Blood Heat. Most importantly, this moon also has exclusive access to Initiative Heat, a mechanic similar to Guilty Gear's Roman Cancel. Coupled with no Reverse Beat, offense from this Moon should feel more familiar to players of other anime games.



スタイルセレクト (sutairu serekuto) – *Lit. style select*

クレセントムーンスタイル (kuresento mūn sutairu) – *Lit. crescent moon style*

フルムーンスタイル (furu mūn sutairu) – *Lit. full moon style*

ハーフムーンスタイル (hāfu mūn sutairu) – *Lit. half moon style*



Bracket Reset

When the grand finals of a double elimination tournament sees the player coming from the Losers Bracket win the first set. Because the Winners Bracket qualifier hasn't lost yet, losing the first set just means both players must play again, resetting the score to 0-0. This new, final set where the winner wins the tournament is sometimes called "true grand finals".



ブラケットリセット (burakketo risetto) – *Lit.* bracket reset



Abare

Attacking while you are at negative frame advantage. Pronounced ah-BAR-ray, at least by English speakers. Normally attacking while your opponent is plus is a bad idea, since if they press their fastest attack, they're going to win. But... sometimes opponents don't press their fastest attack! Maybe they want to stretch their advantage a little too far and, say, take extra time to walk up and throw. If you abare in these situations, you'll probably land some hits.

Just be careful, though. There's always some risk that your opponent will just attack quickly and counter hit you. Abare is very closely tied to the concept of turns, and was first brought over as a loan word from Virtua Fighter. In fact, VF has a related concept called moral, which is kind of the opposite of abare.



暴れ (abare) – *Lit.* to rage/act violently





Team Game



Any fighting game where you select multiple characters and use them together to win a match. The most common use of the term will involve games where you can switch team members on the fly and use your backup characters as assists, like the Versus series or Dragon Ball FighterZ. You may also hear it used for games where your team members play multiple 1-on-1 fights in a row in isolation, like the King of Fighters series.

Jump Test



A quick and dirty way to get a sense of how plus or minus on block an attack is. In training mode, pick the same character for both P1 and P2. Then, record the dummy character to do the move you're testing, and then hold up for a few seconds after. Lastly, take control of the first character, block the move in question, and then hold up yourself.

If the dummy character (that is, the attacker) jumps first, your attack is plus. If you (the defender) jump first, your attack is minus. You won't really know the exact number, but you can usually get a sense of whether it's plus by "a lot" or "a little" very quickly, and that's often enough to make a rough gameplan.

Of course, if your game has frame data built into training mode, you don't always need to do this method, but not all games have that, and you might also want to test some meaty situations where the frame data gets altered a bit. Fun fact: when fans want to verify the frame data for a game, one method is to record video of a jump test of the attack, then study the frame-by-frame footage using video software to get the exact number!

[See video](#)

Roundhouse



Another name for heavy kick. A little annoying to say because it's two syllables, but compared to some of the other normal attack names, it's perfectly fine.



大キック or 大K (dai kikku) – *Lit.* big kick

大足 (dai ashi) – *Lit.* big leg (only used for low attacks)

Wine Glass



A method of holding a ball top joystick on an arcade stick that involves putting the joystick rod between your middle and ring fingers (or maybe ring and pinky), like you were holding a wine glass. Some people keep their palm pointing mostly upwards while playing this way, while others turn their wrist kinda to the side and rest it on the base, while keeping the rod firmly held.

Some people will tell you the wine glass method is the only way to "properly" hold a joystick; don't listen to them. Many top tournament players prefer to keep all of their fingers free of "pinching" the joystick rod and just push and pull the ball top with their fingers, keeping their wrist rested on arcade stick's flat base. Do what feels most comfortable to you.



ワイン持ち (wain mochi) – *Lit.* wine holding

[See image](#)



V-Trigger

A central comeback mechanic in Street Fighter V. Your "V-Gauge" fills up as you take damage or successfully use your V-Skill, and when it's full, you can activate your V-Trigger, which usually powers up your character in a unique way for a good length of time (or, for some fighters, it is just simply a strong one-time use move with no powerup).

At the character select screen, you can choose between two unique V-Triggers to bring into battle – some characters may switch up their V-Trigger depending on the matchup, while others tend to find the most success just sticking with the same one, no matter who they're fighting. V-Triggers are strong tools that can drastically turn the tide of battle, but to use them, you can't spend your gauge on V-Reversals or V-Shifts, so it's a trade-off.



V トリガー (V torigā) – *Lit.* V-trigger

See video 



Reduce

A system in Melty Blood: AACC that lets you reduce incoming damage by 30% if you time a button press as soon as you take a hit. You'll see a flashing "Reduce!" icon above your super meter on each hit, letting you know you should be trying to press buttons. You can't just mash, though, you have to time within 4 frames of the opponent's hit landing. But you can do it for each hit in a combo if you want, turning Melty Blood into a pseudo-rhythm game for the defender as they try to take less damage.



レデュース (redyūsu) – *Lit.* reduce



Versus Game

Any game from the collection of Capcom-published titles that involves team-based combat using assists. Usually this refers to a game in the Marvel vs. Capcom series, which has had successful tournament games for decades. They share many similarities to anime games in gameplay but with a focus on comic book characters. Versus games are notoriously fast and unforgiving, usually with combos that can kill characters with one opening and multi-way mixups that happen at light speed and are almost indefensible. A hallmark of versus games is their fast and fluid movement, which keeps players coming back for more, no matter how salty they get.



VS. シリーズ (bāsasu shirīzu) – *Lit. versus series*



Throw Reject Miss

A system where, if you try to throw tech and no throw happened, you aren't allowed to try another throw tech for a short period of time. For example, if you were in block stun, you can't mash throw tech to try and save yourself, since as soon as your first attempt does not successfully tech, you'll be locked out of trying again for a bit, and any throw will work. This tends to mean you must throw tech late, rather than early, and it opens up different types of offensive pressure.



スローリジェクトミス (surō rijekuto misu) – *Lit. throw reject miss*



Desync

The ability to separate the two Ice Climbers characters and control them independently in a round of Super Smash Bros. Normally, the backup Ice Climber will follow the attacks of the main Ice Climber on a short delay, but there are several ways to mess up this delay in order to issue

commands to only one climber. It's needed to do stuff like wobbling and will be used for many advanced Ice Climber strategies. You may also hear this term used to talk about similar techniques for other characters, like Rosalina and Olimar.

In netcode parlance, a desync happens when two machines playing an online match against each other can't agree on the state of the game, often due to network trouble or other internal engine difficulties. Desyncs will make each player see a different match until, eventually, the games give up and force a disconnect.



切り離し (kiri hanashi) – *Lit. tear-off, separate*



Launch

Hitting an opponent who is on the ground high into the air. You might chase after them into the air to perform an air combo, or you might stay on the ground and juggle them for more damage. In either case, you probably used a launcher to start the whole thing.



浮かせ技 (ukase waza) – *Lit. floating technique*



Mexican Uppercut

Old school slang for any normal that looks like Ryu's crouching heavy punch, a giant upwards swing of the fist. It's not as powerful as a regular uppercut, but it can be easier to perform and still anti-air pretty effectively.



Corpse Hop

Switching sides over a knocked down character by doing some move that hops over their body while they are still on the ground. You gotta find a fast move that raises you off the ground a little bit, like a tatsu, in order to pull this off, and you usually have to earn a hard knockdown to have enough time to make it work.

See video 



Cheap

A word used to describe an especially strong move, tactic, or strategy. Fighting game veterans tend to use the term endearingly more often than not; you might hear "wow that's cheap" used as a compliment towards a player who uses a strong move well.



Fighting game scrubs, though, bite off more than they can chew with this word, calling every move under the sun cheap and unstoppable, despite not knowing which end of the fight stick points up yet. As you're learning, lots of stuff will feel cheap, but practice and game knowledge go a long way to overcoming this feeling, and soon you'll be the one making every move look cheap.



Minus

When you cannot freely act, but your opponent can (usually because you're too busy recovering from your own move). It's not too much fun to be minus (or "negative") in a fighting game. First of all, if you're *too* minus, you can be punished. And even if you're only slightly minus, if you and your opponent attack as soon as possible with attacks that have the same startup, you'll always lose the race and get hit.

Being minus and being plus are two sides of the same coin – when you are minus, your opponent is plus, and vice versa. You'll almost always use it with the phrase "on block", as in, "my fireball is -3 on block". This means you will fully recover 3 frames after your opponent leaves block stun. Being slightly minus is not the end of the world, but you'll probably have to block after and not try to take your turn.



不利 (furi) – *Lit.* disadvantage



Target Combo



A character-specific attack that lets a normal cancel into another, different normal. Some target combos go on for longer too, sometimes stringing together 3 or 4 normals into a long attack sequence. It's important to note these are specifically programmed to only certain characters, and often appear in their move lists as a unique ability.

It's pretty similar in concept to a chain, and depending on who you talk to and what game you're playing, that term might be used instead. The term "target combo" also tends to only apply to titles like Street Fighter; you'll hear "string" used for 3D games, or perhaps game-specific lingo like "gatling", to describe a similar concept.



ターゲットコンボ (tagetto konbo) – *Lit.* target combo

[See video](#)

Double Jump Cancel



Cancelling the very early stages of your Smash Bros. double jump directly into an aerial attack. Often shortened to DJC. This only works in Smash 64 and Melee, and only for the four characters with "loopy" double jumps that start with a downwards trajectory: Ness, Yoshi, Peach, and Mewtwo. By attacking quickly out of your second jump, you will not travel upwards and instead cancel all your momentum, immediately landing on the ground after your aerial.

It's an even faster way to do low-to-the-ground aerials than SHFFLing them, and it lets you apply really scary pressure. From Smash Bros. Brawl and onward, doing an aerial at the start of a loopy double jump doesn't cancel your upwards momentum, so the technique no longer applies except for a few extremely character specific tricks.



最速2段ジャンプキャンセル (saisoku ni dan janpu kyanseru) – *Lit. quickest two steps jump cancel*
ぺち (pechi) – [unknown English translation]

[See video](#)

Bound



A state in Tekken where you get bounced off the floor and are open to more combo hits. It was primarily introduced in Tekken 6, where many characters had access to combo extenders by using a Bound move. It still remains in Tekken 7 to an extent (for example, a low parry will put your opponent in a Bound state), but as a combo system, it has largely been replaced by Screw.



バウンド (baundo) – *Lit. bound*



Distortion Drive

What BlazBlue calls its supers. Like Guilty Gear's Overdrives, they're fairly standard as far as supers go, taking 50% of your super meter and usable in a wide variety of situations. Games just love to make sure they reinvent terminology for basic concepts each time.



ディストーションドライブ (disutōshon doraibu) – *Lit. distortion drive*



Double Jump

Jumping into the air, and then jumping a second time before you hit the ground. Not every game lets you do this, but it's very common in Smash Bros., anime games like Guilty Gear, and team games like Dragon Ball FighterZ and Marvel vs. Capcom. You can use double jumps to vary your approach, apply mixups, and be hard to anti-air. In Smash Bros. games, some characters can double jump cancel for extra trickery, and in Melty Blood, you can super double jump by pressing down then up to get more height.



2段ジャンプ (ni dan janpu) – *Lit. two step jump*



Pop Off

Getting so excited about winning a match that you directly rub it in your opponent's face. Maybe you jump out of your chair and run around, or maybe you just start trash talking them loudly. However you do it, pop offs tend to be some of the most entertaining moments for spectators of fighting game tournaments.



試合に勝って興奮すること (shiai ni katte koufun suru koto) – *Lit.* Get excited after winning a match

興奮 (koufun) – *Lit.* excitement (if context is understood)

See video



Spot Dodge

A defensive dodge in platform fighters like Super Smash Bros that keeps your character in place as they lean into the background. Performed by pressing down while you are shielding. While you are spot dodging, you are briefly invincible to all attacks, but you can be hit during your recovery, so you won't be able to abuse it against a smart opponent. While it's known mostly as a Smash mechanic, other games have implemented this as well, from classics like Capcom vs. SNK 2, to Melty Blood (where it's just called "Dodge"), to Kilgore in Killer Instinct.



その場回避 (sonoba kaihi) – *Lit.* dodge on the spot (for Smash Bros.)

避け (yoke) – *Lit.* avoid (for Samurai Shodown)



Edge Hog

Grabbing onto the edge in a platform fighter so that your opponent can't. Very useful in the older Super Smash Bros. games in order to snag the edge from a recovering player who is trying to grab the edge to survive. In Melee in particular, you can grab the edge and then roll back onto the stage; the game thinks you are grabbing the edge for the duration of your roll, allowing you to continue hogging it from your opponent while being invincible from the roll. In later Smash Bros titles, they removed this mechanic in favor of ledge trumping.



崖つかまり阻止 (gake tsukamari soshi) – *Lit.* cliff grab prevention

See video



Hadouken



The specific name for Ryu and Ken's fireballs in the Street Fighter series, but it can be used to talk about any generic, forward-traveling projectile that is not a charge move.



波動拳 (hadouken) – *Lit.* wave motion fist

Main



The character you're the best with and play the most. Sometimes you might be forced to switch off this character if they have a bad matchup, but it's the character you'll hope to ride with most of the way in a tournament. People switch mains all the time as the game's meta changes, or as new patches come out that nerf or buff your favorite move. If you never switch mains, maybe you're a character loyalist.



メインキャラ (mein kyara) – *Lit.* main character



Bodied

Losing really badly. It's kind of taken on an endearing quality when used by the fighting game community, where it's okay to say you got bodied even if the matches were kinda close.



処られた (shorareta) – *Lit.* to be disposed of



Whiff HKD Bug



A Killer Instinct bug where you can cause a hard knockdown while hitting with a move that normally doesn't give you one. Also called the "whiff sweep bug" or the "ghost sweep". To do this, you have to create a scenario where you whiff a move that causes a hard knockdown (usually a sweep) during the hit stun of any other soft knockdown move. The game will get confused and override the normal knockdown with the hard knockdown of your whiffed move instead. Not all characters can use this bug equally well, but with enough lab time and the right situation, you can create some mixup or set play opportunities that would otherwise be impossible.

See video



Local

An offline gathering of people that play fighting games together, usually meeting at regular intervals like weekly or monthly. There could be a small tournament involved, but even without that, there will be several people meeting up at a friend's place or finding a venue like a bar or

restaurant where they can accommodate a slightly larger group. The goal is mostly to just play casuals, meet other people who like the genre, and make new friends in a setting that is much more personal than online play can often be.



対戦会 (taisenkai) – *Lit.* competition, competitive bouts

オンライン対戦会 (ofurain taisenkai) – *Lit.* offline competition

オフ対戦会 (ofu taisenkai) – abbreviation of オフライン対戦会

Guard



An alternate term for blocking. Japanese players will always refer to blocking as guarding.



ガード (gādo) – *Lit.* guard

Max Rage SS



The state you enter in Samurai Shodown when your Rage meter fills up from taking damage or Just Defending. During Max Rage, your attacks gain additional damage, one of your special moves gains additional properties (similar to an EX move), and you gain access to a super move called Weapon Flipping Technique, which will empty your rage if you hit with it. Otherwise, your Rage meter will slowly drain over time.



怒り頂点 (ikari chouten) – *Lit.* peak/climax rage

Double KO



When both players get KOed at the same time. The more interesting conversation is who should get credited with a win if this happens in the final round and a Draw Game is announced?

Depending on the game (and the tournament), sometimes both players get a win, and sometimes neither player gets a win and the match must be replayed. There've been examples of players not knowing the rule for the event they're attending and getting eliminated from the tournament incorrectly, so make sure that doesn't happen to you.



ダブルK.O. (daburu kē ō) – *Lit. double ko*



High Jump

A jump that has a higher trajectory than a "normal" jump. You usually input these by hitting down, then up in your chosen direction. Team games, anime games, and even many Street Fighter games will have this mechanic as part of their movement options. You'll also hear this called a Super Jump at times.



ハイ ジャンプ (hai janpu) – *Lit. high jump*



Top Tier

A character or strategy that is among the best in the game. It's a bit of a subjective opinion rooted in tier lists, but there's usually a decent consensus on which characters are pretty darn strong. If you want to do well in tournaments, you should probably just pick a top tier.



上位キャラ (joui kyara) – *Lit. higher rank character*



Shield (Melty) MB

A defensive blocking mechanic in Melty Blood that you activate by holding down the D button during a normal standing or crouching guard. Trying to shield will cost you some resources – moon gauge in Type Lumina, super meter in AACC – but on a successful shield, you'll usually earn back more than you spent. You can't tech throws or switch between standing and crouching guard while shielding, but you'll prevent chip damage, be able to shield normally unblockable attacks (like Heat activation), and have the chance to counter-attack with a shield counter. If you get hit or thrown while you are shielding, you'll suffer a fatal counter, taking more damage and maybe giving your opponent a new combo opportunity.

In **MB: Type Lumina**, if your attack gets shielded by the opponent, you can (most of the time) cancel it directly into shield yourself! This lets you play a little mixup with your opponent where you might shield their attempted shield counter and strike back.

In **MB: AACC**, shield works slightly differently depending on your moon. For example, Half Moon can't hold shield indefinitely; it's only active for a small window when you first tap the button. Shield counters are available only to Half and Full Moons. Meanwhile, Crescent Moon has access to "EX Shield", which is just simply pressing shield right before an attack like a parry (like EX Guard, this does not cost super to try despite the "EX" name). If an attack hits your EX shield, you can cancel directly into normals and specials and get a big punish, or if you're in the powerful Blood Heat state, it will instead instantly launch your Last Arc for monster damage.

The term "Shield" is used in other games, too, which you can read about here.



シールド (shirudo) – *Lit. shield*

[See video](#)

Kara Cancel



The ability to very quickly cancel a move into another move, before the first move completes its startup. Normally, in order to cancel a move, you'll have to make contact with your opponent, but kara (or "empty") cancels bypass that restriction and cancel immediately, often before you even see the first move on screen at all. The reason you want to do this is added range; the first move is chosen specifically because it will move your character forward during its first few frames. Then, if you quickly transition to the second move, it will be executed from this new position.

Not every game allows kara cancels, but when it does happen, it's usually the result of the game engine allowing sloppy inputs. They intentionally permit moves to cancel into other moves within the first few frames so players do not have to be incredibly precise in case they fat-finger some buttons. Depending on the game, this can have wild effects, including famous bugs like roll canceling. The most common use of kara canceling is the kara throw, but often times you can kara cancel special moves or supers as well.



空キヤンセル (kara kyanseru) – *Lit. empty cancel*

[See video](#)

Armor Break



An attack that is specifically designed to go through armor as if it wasn't there, hitting the character normally. In Killer Instinct, for example, all grounded heavy normals will always break armor, so they are strong tools to use against a character like Aganos who likes being armored for most of the match. Some games will play a special visual or audio effect if armor gets broken. If you break the armor from a Street Fighter IV focus attack, for instance, the game plays a glass shattering sound effect.



アーマーブレイク (āmā bureiku) – *Lit. armor break*

2-in-1



Old-school slang for canceling a normal into a special move. The name comes from the fact that you turned 1 hit into 2 hits. I think it's more common to just use the term "cancel" or "special cancel" these days, but you'll come across this term often when reading discussion on older games.

Reversal Edge



A move in Soulcalibur VI that starts a rock-paper-scissors "minigame" when it hits. You'll first see your weapon sparkle, and then you'll glow red as you launch a vertical strike. On hit, the match stops and both characters come together. Each player inputs a direction: either one of your attacks (horizontal, vertical, or kick), or a joystick direction to dodge. If you both attack the same way, you'll enter a "second phase" where you do it again with higher stakes for the winner (succeeding will grant a Lethal Hit).

If both characters enter different commands, a winner emerges based on an RPS structure.

Trying to dodge is riskier than attacking, but if you correctly dodge, you can usually whiff punish for huge damage. Succeeding with an attack will hit your opponent in a unique way per character, so maybe one character's horizontal RE has good Ring Out potential, while another's vertical RE is a strong launcher, and you'll just have to know these things. Or, you can try to dodge the initial RE strike entirely, since it's a slow vertical attack and can be dodged more easily.



リバーサルエッジ (ribāsaru eiji) – *Lit.* reversal edge



Button Check

Testing that your buttons are correctly set by booting up a match and messing around. This is super common in tournaments where you need to change the button configuration of the last player who played on the communal station. Even though you can see that your buttons are working properly on the config screen itself, most players want the confidence of seeing their character move and behave as they expect in a match setting.

The one big downside of button checks is how much down time they add to tournaments. With the loading times needed to go in and out of matches, it's often 1 or 2 minutes per match, which adds up to huge amounts of time lost over an event. Even in games where every controller is configured the same (like Smash Bros. Melee), players want to warm up their hands by loading into a match and trying high execution stuff a bunch. You'll hear this called "hand warmers" in this context, but it's mostly the same thing.



ボタンチェック (botan chekku) – *Lit.* button check



Air OK

A way to say that a move can also be performed in the air (as well as on the ground). You'll tend to see this on movelists, just to let you know that it's okay if you're in the air, you can still do the move. This "OK" terminology can be extended to other properties too. If you see something like "EX OK", that means the move has an EX version in addition to the regular version.



空中可 (kūchūka) – *Lit.* possible in the air



Guard Thrust

A defensive technique in Under Night In-Birth that lets you attack while blocking. By inputting quarter circle back+D while in block stun, you will perform some attack that knocks the opponent away for some space. It's a bit costly though; if you're in Vorpal, you'll immediately leave the mode, and if you're not in Vorpal, it costs half of your super meter and you will GRD break yourself. It's similar to other mechanics like V-Reversal and Dead Angle, but each game gives it a unique name.



ガードスラスト (gādo surasuto) – *Lit.* guard thrust



Counter Breaker

A Killer Instinct technique that is designed to directly counter the combo breaker mechanic and get massive, game-changing damage. Trying a counter breaker is risky; you have to stop your combo right in your opponent's face and enter a parry-like stance that tries to catch any break attempt. If you're correct and the opponent did try to break, you'll blow right through it, lock them out for 4 seconds, and earn huge damage with any combo you want. If they didn't try to break, though, you'll be left vulnerable right in their face and they can punish you heavily.

Counter breakers are the juice that make the combo breaker system sing in Killer Instinct. They feel amazing to land and feel terrible to get hit by, which is all you want out of such an emotional system. The shout the announcer gives on a successful counter breaker will never grow old.



カウンターブレイカー (kauntā bureikā) – *Lit. counter breaker*

See video



Super



A strong, often cinematic attack that costs a percentage (usually all) of your super meter to perform and announces its activation with a screen freeze. Supers are usually a character's strongest attack, but they use more of your super meter compared to, for example, EX moves. You might also talk about a super's "level", which is how much super meter you spent to activate it. So, a "Level 3 Super" in a game like Dragon Ball FighterZ will cost you 3 full bars and will be more powerful than a "Level 1 Super".

There are many different ways supers are used in fighting games. Usually, they're just fast, high-damage moves and that's kind of it. But other uses exist too, including installs that power up your character for a limited time, and in many team games, you can use a DHC to chain multiple supers across each of your characters. They also are called a huge number of game-specific names, like SFV's Critical Art or King of Fighter's Desperation move. But it's pretty much all the same thing.



超必殺技 (chou hissatsu waza) – *Lit. super killing technique*

超必 (chou hi) – *Lit. abbreviation of 超必殺技*

[See video](#)

Spam



Using one attack over and over again. Calling something "spam" or someone a "spammer" is the hallmark cry of the scrub, who is unwilling to find a strategy to beat any attack that hits them, no matter how telegraphed it is. Fighting game veterans will still use this term, but mostly in jest, or to give praise to a legitimate strategy. If you think someone is bad for using one move repeatedly to beat you, I'd recommend looking inwards and re-evaluating your strategy and game knowledge before lashing out. You might save a bit of embarrassment *and* you'll probably improve at the game at the same time.



連発 (renpatsu) – *Lit.* consecutive fire

Beam



A specific type of projectile that travels from one end of the screen to the other more or less instantly. They are quite common in the Marvel vs. Capcom series, and are especially common when used as assists to protect your character as they approach. Characters in other games can have beams too, like Fulgore's Devastation Beam (sometimes called Hype Beam) in Killer Instinct. Beam attacks are not seen in the Street Fighter series; in order to keep an appropriate sense of realism, they prefer to keep projectiles limited to merely throwing plasma balls from your bare hands.



ビーム (beam) – *Lit.* beam

Just Defend



A mechanic, originally popularized by Garou: Mark of the Wolves, where you press back to block immediately before an attack is going to hit you. It's also present in some other SNK-published games, like Samurai Shodown and some modern King of Fighters titles. The input is pretty similar to a parry, except if you miss the timing, you'll often just safely block, so it's not nearly as risky to try. As a result, the reward usually isn't nearly as good as a parry either; usually you just build a little bit of extra meter and perhaps avoid taking any chip damage. There are similar mechanics in other games too, like instant blocking in the Guilty Gear series.



ジャストディフェンス (jasuto difensu) – *Lit. just defense*

Stun

Getting hit so many times in a row that your character gets knocked over, then stands up with stars swirling around their head. Also often called "dizzy". You're wide open for a free combo while you're stunned, but you can try to mash buttons and rotate the joystick furiously to "shake out" of stun early if you're feeling adventurous. Not every game has a stun mechanic, and even of the games that do, not every game shows you how close you are to being stunned! If the game shows you a stun gauge, at least you can prepare for the worst when it happens.

Getting stunned in older games was especially brutal. Sometimes you might just immediately die because of a redizzy combo, while other times the follow-up combo did so much damage that you just melted anyway. In most modern games, getting stunned still sucks, but you'll be at least a little bit protected by damage scaling softening the blow of your punishment.



スタン (sutan) – *Lit. stun*

[See video](#)

09er



Someone who started playing fighting games in 2009 with the release of Street Fighter IV, pronounced "oh-niner". It's supposed to be a bit of an insult, since 09ers were the new kids on the block who didn't know how fighting games worked. But many years later, all those players are veterans now, so the term is just generally used to joke about when someone started playing. You can take the joke further by changing the year as needed, so a 16er would be someone whose first game is Street Fighter V.

Combo Breaker



A famous Killer Instinct mechanic that lets combos be escaped while you are being hit. After you've performed an opener, the combo becomes "breakable", and you can extend the combo with more hits at the risk of being combo broken. As long as the opponent presses buttons of the correct strength (light, medium, or heavy) that matches your current attack, you'll get blasted away and the famous c-c-c-combo breaker voice line will play. If they mistime their break attempt, press the wrong buttons, or get counter broken, they'll get locked out and eat a ton of damage without being able to break. This is how the 2013 version of KI works, anyway; you're on your own for the older games.

Killer Instinct's combo breaker system is pretty unique in that it doesn't require a gauge or resource. Any time you're allowed to break, you can try if you want, and as long as you're never

wrong, it will always work. Other games have adapted the idea of escaping combos to their own style, like Guilty Gear's burst and Mortal Kombat 11's breakaway. If a combo can't be broken, for whatever reason, we'll say it's unbreakable (or, in Guilty Gear's case, burst safe).



コンボブレイカー (konbo bureikā) – *Lit.* combo breaker

See video



Planking



Constantly grabbing, releasing, and then regrabbing a ledge, refreshing your invincibility and (usually) stalling out the clock. It's a common strategy in Melee, but it's especially prevalent in Brawl, where many characters have magnet hands around the edge and stalling for time was the name of the game.

It got so bad that Brawl tournaments had to introduce limits on how many times you could grab the ledge over the course of a match, complicating everything. This strategy is considerably less effective in Smash 4 and Ultimate as, after multiple regrabs, you will no longer refresh your invincibility and you'll be open to some serious gimps.



崖待ち (gake machi) – *Lit.* cliff waiting

Delay-Based Netcode



An approach to implementing netcode in a fighting game that accounts for network delay by also delaying the local player's inputs to match. This input delay is variable, since it fluctuates if the

network conditions get better or worse, which makes it incredibly difficult to be consistent with reactions or muscle memory, and generally feels like you're playing "underwater", since your inputs are not responsive. A better approach is to use rollback netcode, which solves many of these issues, but is more complicated for developers to implement. For a more thorough look at this topic, check out this article on netcode.



ディレイネットコード (direi netto kōdo) – *Lit.* delay netcode

ディレイ方式 (direi houshiki) – *Lit.* delay system

DACUS



A technique in Smash Bros. Brawl (and its fan project Project M) that lets a character kara cancel a dash attack into an up-smash. Stands for, predictably, Dash Attack Canceled Up Smash. This is super useful for characters that get a lot of forward momentum out of the initial frames of their dash attack; all that momentum gets saved while you are doing your up-smash, so you'll slip and slide all over the screen while attacking. It almost kind of looks like a wavedash, but you don't get to act freely out of it. It was a particularly common (and fun!) strategy for Snake, as he had easy execution and an extra long slide.



ダッシュ攻撃空振りキャンセル上スマッシュ (dasshu kougeki karaburi kyanseru ue sumasshu) – *Lit.* dash attack empty strike cancel up smash

空キャン (kara kyan) – *Lit.* empty cancel / abbreviation of ダッシュ攻撃空振りキャンセル上スマッシュ

Ladder Combo



A Super Smash Bros. combo that slowly raises your opponent upwards, often by repeated use of up-airs and strategically landing on platforms in order to get more height. The hope is that you can eventually kill them by hitting the upper blast zone. Ladder combos go back to Captain Falcon in the original Smash 64 title, and are still prominently used in modern games like Smash 4 and Smash Ultimate where they can lead to KOs at frighteningly low percents. Aesthetically they're pretty similar to a staircase combo.

See video 

Smash Attack



A powerful, chargeable attack in Super Smash Bros, performed by quickly "smashing" the analog stick in a direction and pressing A (or, alternately, using the C-stick). You'd say "down smash" out loud for the down version, but you'd write it like "dsmash".

Smash attacks are great for doing lots of damage and sending the opponent flying, often leading to kills, but they also tend to have lots of recovery so if you use them poorly, you might get punished. Still, they are powerful options that can define how a character tries to deal a finishing blow. Rivals of Aether calls these "strong attacks" to gracefully dodge any legal action.



スマッシュ攻撃 (sumasshu kougeki) – *Lit. smash attack*

Esports Button



An incredibly powerful attack. The joke is that the move is designed for people who want to win esports tournaments, so they can press it thoughtlessly and it will kind of just do everything for

you. It's maybe not quite as strong as saying the move is broken, but it's the same idea.



Recovery (Smash)

The act of trying to return to the stage in a platform fighter after you have been launched off by an attack. In these games, you don't die until you hit a blast zone, so you can prolong your current stock if you can return to the stage, no matter how much damage you have taken.

Every character has a mid-air jump they can use (or more than one!), and almost always an additional special move (usually their up-special), that helps them cover the vertical or horizontal ground needed to reach the stage. Meanwhile, you have to contend with your pesky opponent who is trying to edge-guard you, constantly interrupting your attempts to return and hit you back out above the abyss. Characters with "good recoveries" tend to have multiple jumps and special moves that cover lots of distance in unpredictable ways, making them extremely difficult to intercept.

Note that the traditional fighting game definition of recovery tends to be called "endlag" in Smash in order to avoid confusion between these two terms.



復帰 (fukki) – *Lit. return/comeback*



Screw

A move in Tekken 7 that causes your opponent to be put in an aerial "spinning" state. These are usually a part of most characters' bread and butter combos; you perform some initial launcher, juggle them for as long as you can until you get pushed too far away, then perform a Screw to

tailspin the opponent toward the ground. You then have enough time to run up and deliver one final hit (or short string) to finish the combo off. You only get to perform one Screw per combo (with the exception of some Rage Drives), and it largely replaces Bound, a similar combo extending system from previous Tekken games.



きりもみ (kirimomi) – *Lit. spin*

See video



Dragon Rush

What Dragon Ball FighterZ calls its throw. Your character will emit a green pulse during the startup of a dragon rush, and if your opponent successfully techs it, your characters will trade blows before bouncing away. Unlike most throws in most fighting games, dragon rushes tend to be techable on reaction by players who are great defenders, due to the green pulse and the relatively long startup period. No player will tech every single one, but you'll be able to get a few if you know what to look for.



ドラゴンラッシュ (doragon rasshu) – *Lit. dragon rush*



Gap

How long your character has returned to neutral in between blocking (or getting hit by) two attacks. Like all discussions of time in fighting games, it's measured in frames. While you're in neutral, you can take any action, but be careful! If you are only in neutral for a few brief frames, there are some actions you won't want to take, especially if your opponent is looking to do a

frame trap.

If your character blocks two attacks and there is no gap at all, we'll call that a true block string or say the offense is tight (it's also quite related to the Tekken concept of jailing). Sometimes players will just ask "is there a gap in that string?" just so they know whether they even have the *option* to do anything except block. Maybe if there's a gap they'll sometimes try a reversal to escape.



隙間 (sukima) – *Lit.* gap

See video



Pretzel Motion



The command for some supers in games relating to the King of Fighters franchise, perhaps most notably Geese's Raging Storm. The input is down-back, followed by half circle back, followed by down-forward, or in numpad notation, 1632143. The origin of the name should become clear by looking at an image of the joystick's path.

Not many games have pretzel motions because they're pretty annoying to do and easy to miss, especially when canceled off some normal attacks, and the end result doesn't really seem to justify the difficulty. In fact, in King of Fighters XIV, they changed Geese's Raging Storm to be a different input (although it's still a pretzel motion for Geese's guest appearance in Tekken 7).



レイジングストームコマンド (reijingu sutōmu komando) – *Lit.* raging storm command

See image



RISC



A mechanic in the Guilty Gear series that increases the damage you'll take from future attacks if you block long enough. As you block attacks, your RISC gauge fills up (in Guilty Gear Strive, the gauge is a little hard to see; check the small pink meter under your burst gauge). As you stand around or get hit by attacks, your RISC gauge lowers.

As long as your RISC gauge is at 0, combos will have regular damage scaling rules applied to them and everything should be fine. But if you have RISC accumulated from blocking, damage scaling is *not* applied, making the combo hurt more until your RISC gets pummeled out of you. If you've blocked enough for your RISC gauge to start flashing, it's even worse; every hit becomes a counter hit, nuking your health bar for massive chunks of damage with each attack. The message is clear – blocking is fine, but don't mess up after blocking for a long time, or you'll pay for it.



R.I.S.C. (written in English)



Projectile



A type of attack that travels independently from any character and does not have a hurtbox attached to it. Usually, projectiles are represented as giant balls of energy, screen-filling beams of light, or other similarly realistic ways of attacking your opponent. Once a projectile has been thrown, your opponent just has to deal with it, either by countering with his own projectile (usually, they destroy each other), blocking it, jumping over it, or using a move to turn himself projectile invincible and go straight through it.

Projectiles can travel at many different speeds and angles, and using them smartly on offense while dodging them gracefully on defense is an important strategy in the vast majority of fighting games over the last 25 years. They're also a sore spot for many beginners and scrubs in the genre, who will quickly find their way to Twitter when you use them too effectively.



飛び道具 (tobi dougu) – *Lit.* projectile/firearm



Money Match



Playing a set where each player puts up some cash and the winner takes it all. There have been some incredibly high profile money matches in FGC history, with some pot totals exceeding \$10,000. But most money matches will be for small amounts like \$10, and you can use them as a way to get experience handling your nerves while playing, or to settle a grudge with a rival.



マネーマッチ (manē macchi) – *Lit.* money match

Netcode



Describes the exact method a fighting game uses to implement online play. There are two primary methods used for fighting games, delay-based netcode and rollback netcode. In short, delay-based is slightly easier to implement, but does not feel good in practice, while rollback is more work for the developers, but allows for online play that feels very close to offline. For an extremely thorough breakdown and discussion of these two netcode methods, you're best off reading this article on netcode.



ネットコード (netto kōdo) – *Lit.* netcode



Baroque

A Tatsunoko vs. Capcom mechanic that lets you cancel attacks back to a neutral state, but sacrifices all your red health. It's pretty similar to Guilty Gear's Roman Cancel, except tied to your health rather than a super meter.

After activating Baroque, your character will flash a rainbow of colors. If you are not hitting your opponent (for example, maybe because you whiffed a move or you were doing a block string), you just return to neutral and continue on with your day. However, if you're hitting your opponent, you'll stay rainbowed up and your current combo will get a damage boost proportional to how much red health you sacrificed on activation. Watch out for incredibly damaging combos on basic hit confirms if your opponent is sitting on lots of red health.



バロック (barokku) – *Lit. baroque*



Air Combo

The act of comboing an airborne opponent while you are also in the air. Air combos are a staple of most anime games and the Versus series.



空中コンボ (kūchū konbo) – *Lit. air combo*



Imbalance



Poor balance. The game might not be all the way to broken, but maybe the strong characters are way better than the weak characters, or some other strategy is just so good that it dominates play.



ゲームバランスが悪い (gēmu baransu ga warui) – *Lit.* Bad game balance



Pokemon Style

A format used in team tournaments where a player must keep playing until they lose. It's possible for a single player to win multiple games in a row and eliminate multiple players from the opposing team. Once a player loses, the team will discuss among themselves at that time who to send up next – since the other team's player and character are known from the previous match, you might want to try and counter pick them. If a single player beats the entire team without losing, they've performed an OCV. This style is typically used in American tournaments (and Smash Bros. Crew Battles), while its alternate format, Waseda style, is used more often in Japanese tournaments.



勝ち抜き (kachinuki) – *Lit.* tournament, winner stays



Ground Bounce

Bouncing your opponent off the ground, rather than knocking them down. It's pretty common in team games as a stylish way to keep a combo going. Like wall bounces, you usually only get to do it once per combo.



床バウンド (yuka baundo) – *Lit.* ground bounce



Roman Cancel

A universal and game-defining mechanic in the Guilty Gear series that lets players cancel a wide variety of moves and return to a neutral state. Players can use this for many offensive strategies, including to extend combos, to apply pressure, or to make certain moves safe. Roman cancels usually cost 50% of your Tension, and are often shortened to "RC".

When a character performs a roman cancel, a colored circle of light surrounds the character, and the game slows down for a brief moment to let players recognize what's happening. Roman cancel always has the same input (any three attack buttons not counting Dust), but depending on how the characters are interacting and what iteration of Guilty Gear you're playing, the color (and cost) of the RC will be different. Pay close attention here because this is a little confusing:

Guilty Gear XX AC has a "normal" RC colored red and a cheaper but more difficult Force Roman Cancel colored blue.

Guilty Gear Xrd has a "normal" RC colored red as long as your opponent is in block stun or hit stun, and versions colored yellow (for attacks before they hit) or purple (for attacks that you whiffed).

Guilty Gear Strive uses similar colors as before, but changes the meaning of each color a bit. The normal red RC is still used for attacks that hit, but now there is a blue version for when you aren't attacking, the yellow version can be performed while you are blocking, and the purple version is for moves during their startup or recovery. There's also the Drift Roman Cancel and the Quick Roman Cancel.

Learning to use roman cancels is a big part of Guilty Gear strategy, and the primary offensive use of your Tension.



ロマンキャンセル (roman kyanseru) – *Lit.* roman cancel

ロマキャン (romakyan) – abbreviation of ロマンキャンセル

See video 



Charge Buffering

The act of trying to charge as soon as possible after taking other actions. For example, if you release your charge to jump forward, you should immediately hold down-back as soon as you leave the ground so when you land, you'll have built the charge back up again.

Importantly, while you are performing a charge move, you can begin charging for your next one before you press the attack button! To do this for a back-forward charge move, build your charge like normal, then press forward. Then, return to down-back and press the attack button at the same time. The game's input buffer will still give you the leeway needed to execute the charge move, but you'll get a head start on your next charge, as you're in down-back much sooner. You can, for example, throw Guile sonic booms with seemingly superhuman speed using this technique.



Chip Damage

Damage dealt to a character while they are blocking. Most special moves will deal chip damage when blocked; the amount varies by game, but it is usually between 10-25% of the move's regular

damage. Many games let you K.O. an opponent via chip damage, although Street Fighter V is a notable modern day exception. Street Fighter Alpha 3 tried to scold players who performed chip damage KOs by flashing "Cheap!" on the screen, but nobody *actually* felt bad about it.



削りダメージ (kezuri damēji) – *Lit.* chip damage

See video



Kill Confirm



A series of attacks that leads to a character with high damage being KOed. Usually the combo will start with a pretty safe move, and if that move hits, you move into an automatic sequence that leads to death; in many ways, this is a Smash Bros. hit confirm, but specifically planned for situations involving high percentage characters.

Note that directional influence can sometimes make these kill confirms harder, and they can be character specific as well, due to the multitude of different weights and falling speeds Smash characters have. Examples in Melee include Captain Falcon's neutral air or throw to his devastating forward air knee attack, or Fox's up throw to up-air on floaty characters.



撃墜コンボ (gekitsui konbo) – *Lit.* shoot down combo

Falling Speed



How fast your character moves downward while in mid-air. Every Smash Bros. character has an inherent falling speed, from the super quick fast-fallers to the slower floaty characters, and by

pressing down while in the air, you will fast fall and accelerate your falling speed instantly to its character-specific maximum value.



落下速度 (rakka sokudo) – *Lit. falling speed*



Gimmick

A plan of attack that requires either the element of surprise or a lack of knowledge from your opponent to work. The term is often meant in a negative way towards a strategy that wouldn't possibly work against well-prepared opponents, or something that can only work in the short term until your opponent understands the trick.

The term can also refer to a player who uses one linear but mostly effective strategy to beat lower skilled opponents, but who loses convincingly, with no backup strategy, when playing against better players who can defend properly. It may sound like gimmicks are kinda bad, but there's no better feeling in fighting games than to hit someone with a good one.



ネタ (neta) – *Lit. trick, secret*

わからん殺し (wakaran goroshi) – *Lit. killing someone with something they don't understand*



0 to Death



A Smash Bros.-specific term for a touch of death combo. Since Smash health bars are measured in percent starting at 0%, this just describes the same phenomenon of your health bar getting nuked in a slightly different way. Smash usually has stuff like directional influence to let you escape combos, but 0 to death sequences will sometimes include when the offensive player

correctly reads the DI escape attempt and keeps the combo up (and in some cases, a "true" 0 to death won't have any DI escape possible).



即死コンボ (sokushi konbo) – *Lit.* instant death combo



Flash Kick

An invincible charge move made famous from Guile in Street Fighter. Hold down, or down-back, for about a second and then hit up plus a kick button to fly into the air foot first. It's a very common reversal and anti-air, but because it's a charge move, it needs more planning to use than a dragon punch. The term "flash kick" itself extends into other games too, as it's common to use it to describe any down-up charge move that can be used in this way.



サマーソルトキック (samā soruto kikku) – *Lit.* somersault kick



Sword Clash

A button-mashing minigame that occurs in Samurai Shodown when two weapon normals collide. As long as there is more than 16 seconds left in the round and one character is losing by at least 160 HP, these trades will trigger a clash and both characters will have to mash buttons. The person who didn't press buttons fast enough will lose the clash and get disarmed. Only one Sword Clash can happen per round, but be ready when they do happen so you can keep your weapon.



鍔迫り合い (tsuba zeri ai) – *Lit.* pushing each other's sword



Platform Fighter

Any fighting game where the primary goal is to knock characters off a series of platforms that comprise a stage. Super Smash Bros. invented this concept and remains the most popular platform fighter to date, but games such as Rivals of Aether and Brawlhalla are gaining popularity.

Platform fighters have many unique elements that aren't shared by other 2D fighting games, and sometimes more closely resemble platforming games. Characters are not forced to face each other and can turn themselves around at will. The camera is often pulled way back, focusing on the stage and its surroundings more than the characters. Once you have been knocked off the stage, you'll spend time trying to get back on safely while your opponent tries to intercept you. Despite these differences, the core DNA of a fighting game is firmly in place and the majority of traditional concepts and terms will apply just fine to this genre.



大乱闘ゲーム (dairantou gēmu) – *Lit.* brawling game

スマブラ風ゲーム (sumabura fū gēmu) – *Lit.* game like Smash Bros.



Ledge Trump

Grabbing the edge while another character is holding it, which lets you grab it from under them and forces them into the air. Ledge trumping is only present in later Super Smash Bros. titles like Smash 4 and Smash Ultimate, and is a replacement for the edge hog mechanic of earlier Smash games. Maybe Nintendo wanted to give recovering players an easier time returning to the stage,

but ledge trumping still allows edgeguarding tricks, since you can hit players after they float off the edge.



崖奪い (gake ubai) – *Lit.* cliff takeover

See video



Bullying



Forcing someone to block repeatedly, often by using the same attack many times in a row. For example, you might have a strong close-range plus on block move that you can repeat over and over. Or, you might stand in the mid-range and repeat the same poke from a distance where your opponent cannot easily counter-attack, forcing them to figure out how to escape. Characters that are good at doing this might be called "bully characters".

In general, if you think of it like a school bully exerting their dominance over someone weaker, you'll get the gist of the term. Sometimes you'll even bully someone while trolling them, using a move that isn't really that great but your opponent can't figure it out. Bullying is one of those terms that's a little hard to define, but you know it when you see it.

Crouch Confirm



A special version of a hit confirm where you also verify that your opponent is crouching, and then you do a specific combo that only works on crouching opponents. Crouch confirms are common in older games like 3rd Strike, where certain powerful techniques (like linking certain

overheads into super) will only work on someone who is crouching, so you have to process more information than simply seeing if they got hit.

Edge



The edge of a stage or platform in a platform fighter. People will often say "ledge" as well, but this specifically means the edge of the stage (not a mid-stage platform). If you get launched off the stage, the stage edge will be the closest part of the stage you can aim for during your recovery, and in Smash Bros., you can grab onto any ledge and pull yourself up as part of your recovery efforts.

Stopping people from grabbing the edge effectively is a huge part of edge-guarding, the cat-and-mouse game of a launched opponent trying to safely return to the stage. In some games you can edge hog and in others you can ledge trump, but the focus is usually around the edge because grabbing it gives your character a short period of invincibility, which is pretty useful for not getting smoked.



崖 (gake) – *Lit. cliff*

Deflect



A Samurai Shodown mechanic that lets you attempt to parry an incoming normal sword attack. By inputting a quarter circle forward and A+B, you'll raise your weapon and attempt to catch the opponent's attack. If successful, you'll stagger the opponent briefly, sometimes able to punish. Deflecting a heavy slash is the best outcome, since you will also disarm them. If you're unarmed when you try this, you'll perform a weapon catch.

Deflect is also a mechanic for Tusk in Killer Instinct, where all of his sword attacks will have a brief "deflect window". If you attack Tusk as he flashes white, instead of being counter hit like normal, Tusk will just brush you aside and keep his own attack going, which will end very painfully for you. It shares similarities with a guard point.



武器弾き (buki hajiki) – *Lit.* weapon repel

Tech Chase



Knocking your opponent down and then predicting or reacting to how they choose to tech roll, chasing them down, and smacking them again. It's basically how okizeme is handled in platform fighters.

In Smash Bros. Melee, tech chasing is incredibly effective because of the relatively long duration of the roll animation, and the fact that you are vulnerable at the end and open to punishment. Some characters can tech chase you from 0% damage up to high percents before you can escape. It's less effective in newer Smash titles since rolls are shorter and harder to predict.



受身狩り (ukemi kari) – *Lit.* receiving body hunting

Frame



A unit used to measure time in a fighting game. Most fighting games operate at 60 frames per second, which means one frame is 1/60th of a second, or about 16 milliseconds, and you can't break this unit down any further. A frame is the core unit used in frame data, which measures the properties of moves in a fighting game, such as how long they take to execute, or which character

gets to act first if a move is blocked.

Some players, especially beginners, get intimidated when the word "frame" comes up, as if it's some arcane magic. If this is you, instead try to think of a frame as a relative unit. Let's say move A starts up in 3 frames and move B starts up in 4 frames. You might think why do we care about a 16 millisecond difference? There's no way to visually tell the difference between these... and you'd be absolutely right! Don't think of it that way. Instead, think that move B is "1 frame slower" than move A, so in situations where both fighters get to attack at the same time, move A is going to hit first. Imagine it as a way to compare two moves, rather than something you're supposed to notice visually, and you'll find yourself making sense of it more quickly.



フレーム (furēmu) – *Lit. frame*

See video



Vorpal



A powerful state you enter every time you win a GRD cycle in Under Night In-Birth. While in Vorpal, you'll do 10% more damage while also gaining access to a unique Vorpal trait for your character (for example, more chip damage or a cool new property on an attack). You stay in Vorpal for the duration of the next GRD cycle, until you get GRD broken, or until you manually end Vorpal by using your Chain Shift.



ヴォーアパル (vōparu) – *Lit. vorpal*

Instant Double Jump



A Smash Bros. Ultimate technique where you jump and then immediately double jump (within 4 frames of your first jump, before you leave the ground). You'll usually attack with an aerial at the same time. Compared to most characters' normal first jump, you'll gain a bit of extra vertical height by using IDJ while also making sure your aerial attack comes out as fast as possible when you leave the ground. It also halts your forward momentum much like attack canceling, so you can use it to turn around on a dime if needed. Don't mistake this for a double jump cancel, which is a pretty different thing.

See video 

Super Art



What Street Fighter III calls their supers. You get to pick one of three super arts when you pick your character. There are a few characters where more than one super is viable at the highest level of play, although much of the time, your character will really only have one strong choice.



スーパー・アーツ (sūpā ātsu) – *Lit. super art*

X-Factor



A mechanic in Marvel vs. Capcom 3 that greatly powers up your characters, allowing for huge damage, incredibly fast movement, and combos that aren't normally possible. You can use X-Factor only once per match and it lasts longer (and is more powerful) if you use it when more of your team has died. It can allow for extremely fast comebacks, even if you only have one

character left. Make sure your anchor has powerful uses of X-Factor, or else you'll win fewer games.



X-FACTOR (written in English)



Chain Shift

A powerful option available to an Under Night In-Birth character once they have won a GRD cycle and have entered Vorpal. By pressing the D button twice, you will immediately end your Vorpal state and convert all of your current GRD squares into tons of EXS gauge. In addition, you'll get a powerful screen freeze, so if you do this while in neutral, you'll get to see what your opponent is doing and choose any counter-attack of your choice.

You don't have to use it from neutral, though. You can cancel pretty much any hit or blocked attack (and even some whiffed ones), from the ground or in the air, using Chain Shift. Use this to make attacks safe or to extend your pressure in creative ways. In this sense, it shares a lot of similarities to Guilty Gear's Roman Cancel, but you only get one per Vorpal.



チェインシフト (chein shifuto) – *Lit. chain shift*

See video 



Burst

A mechanic in the Guilty Gear and BlazBlue series that lets you escape a combo. In Guilty Gear, each character will have a Burst Gauge that starts the match full. Once used, it fills up as you get

hit, and also slowly over time. You can activate your burst at (almost) any time by pressing the Dust button and one other attack, even while being hit! It's an invincible attack that does 0 damage but will send the opponent away.

Bursts come in two flavors, Blue and Gold, indicated by the color of the blast your character emits. Blue bursts happen during those defensive situations (like blocking, during a combo, etc) and if your opponent stops their combo and blocks your burst, you're in for a world of hurt. Gold bursts are done any time you are in neutral, and hitting with it will fill your Tension Gauge to max immediately. Even if your gold burst is blocked, you will be safe, although you'll have wasted your burst and have to wait for it to refill before using it again. Some combos will just naturally avoid the hitbox of a burst attack, which makes them great choices for when you think your opponent might try to burst. These are called, predictably, burst safe combos.



ベースト (bāsuto) – *Lit. burst*



Top 8



The last 8 players remaining in a tournament. If the format is double elimination, there will be 4 in the Winners bracket and 4 in the Losers bracket. Tournaments will usually schedule a special time to play down from top 8 to the champion, often times the Sunday of a weekend tournament, and it's usually the most exciting part of an event.



ベスト8 (besuto 8) – *Lit. best 8*



Nerf

When the developers make a character worse. They might adjust the character's health, make moves slower or do less damage, remove certain combos from being possible, or any number of other things. Some people don't like when characters get nerfed and would prefer the weaker characters get buffed to match, but sometimes characters are too powerful for the game's own good and need to be toned down a bit. Nerfs don't always feel great, but they are often needed.



弱体化 (jakutaika) – *Lit. weaken*

Armor



A state where a character can absorb a hit without entering hit stun, which lets them continue to attack or move. Armor isn't quite as good as being invincible; usually, armor can be thrown, and often a game will also have a set of moves that can break armor directly. And depending on how many hits of armor you have, sometimes super fast multi-hitting moves can get through too. But armor is usually still a powerful property, since for most attacks, it will plow through without trouble. It's often called "super armor" or, if you can take unlimited hits without flinching, "hyper armor".



アーマー (āmā) – *Lit. armor*



Crew Battle



A Smash Bros. match where two teams play against each other, trying to eliminate all members of the other team in a Pokemon style structure. These are common ways to hold money matches in Smash, and each "crew" is often a group of players from the same region. In an interesting twist to normal team events, the winner of a match doesn't start the next match with a full number of stocks. Instead, the number of stocks they ended the last game with is how they begin the next game, which makes every stock important.



- クルーバトル (kurū batoru) – *Lit.* crew battle
団体戦 (dantaisen) – *Lit.* team competition

Air Dodge MB

A Smash Bros. mechanic that lets you turn yourself invincible in the air, dodging attacks. The specifics change depending on which version of Smash you're playing, with each game having its own flavor of air dodging which allows for various offensive and defensive strategies.

In some games, you can air dodge as many times as you want in the same jump, while in others, you can only air dodge once and must touch the ground before you can do it again. Sometimes you can do other actions in the air after an air dodge, while other times you will start to freefall. In some games, you just air dodge in place, while in others (notably Melee), you can steer your air dodge in a direction. This is the primary mechanic that allows wavedashing to work. The mechanic really takes a unique identity in each game.

Melty Blood also uses an Air Dodge system. It makes you briefly invincible like you'd expect, but it's fast and also shifts your aerial momentum slightly, which is a powerful tool for adjusting your angle of approach in an aerial-based fighter like Melty.



空中回避 (kūchū kaihi) – *Lit.* air evade



Forward

Another name for medium kick. "Low forward" means crouching medium kick and is a common phrase you'll hear in Street Fighter games. And, of course, it could also mean holding forward on the analog stick. Yes, that means if you want to talk about a command normal that uses medium kick while holding the forward direction, you might have to parse the phrase "forward forward" at some point.



中キック or 中K (chū kikku) – *Lit.* medium kick

中足 (chū ashi) – *Lit.* medium leg (only used for low attacks)



Fireball

A specific type of projectile that travels horizontally and is traditionally input using a quarter circle command. Ryu, Sagat, Jago and Sol all throw fireballs, and they are perhaps the most iconic special moves in all of fighting games. Beams that travel the whole screen instantly and Sonic Booms that require a charge motion aren't usually called fireballs. "Fireball" can even be used as shorthand for "quarter circle forward", if you're trying to quickly describe a special move input. "The input for your command dash is fireball + kick" would be a valid sentence, for example.



波動拳 (hadouken) – *Lit.* wave motion fist

See video





OCV

One player beating an entire team in a Pokemon style team tournament without losing. Stands for "One Character Victory", since one player playing one character did all the damage. If they are the last player standing for their team and manage this, it's called a reverse OCV. Try not to let this happen to you.



OCV (written in English)

Shortcut



An alternate motion for inputting special moves that is often shorter and sometimes easier than the default motion. A common shortcut in modern games for the DP motion, normally 623 in numpad notation, is 323. This lets you "rub the corners" and can let you do a dragon punch from a crouching pose, without needing to stand up. Shortcuts are common in pretty much every game in order to give input leniency and improve playability, so be sure to look into whatever shortcuts are possible in your favorite game and see if they help you out.

Whiff Punish



A particular kind of punish that will hit an opponent after they have whiffed an attack, and are left recovering in the open. Some whiff punishes are possible on reaction, if the attack has lots of recovery or you have a strong read on when your opponent will try to attack. At other times, if you stand at a good range and use strong pokes, you can whiff punish fast attacks without needing a reaction. Whiff punishing is one aspect of playing footsie; walk closer to your opponent so they think it's fine to attack, then walk backwards and watch them swing and miss like a dummy.



差し返し (sashikaeshi) – *Lit. return the strike*

See video



360

A joystick motion used to execute some special moves, almost always a command throw like a Spinning Piledriver. On paper, it requires a full 360-degree rotation of your joystick, starting at any one direction and ending at the same place. In practice, most games have a shortcut for this input; usually a 270-degree input will do. So, for example, you could do a half circle forward, and then keep going and end at the up direction, and that will probably work just fine. You might think it's hard to do this motion and not get an accidental jump, but if you do it fast enough, you'll be fine.



一回転 (ikkaiten) – *Lit. 1 rotation*

立ちスクリュ – (tachi sukuryū) – *Lit. standing Screw* (a 360 motion done from the ground without jumping)



Ratio

A system for allotting power to members of your team in Capcom vs. SNK 2. Each team was given 4 "ratio points" to assign to up to three characters. If you played with the full complement of three, as most did, two of your characters would be "ratio 1" while the final one was "ratio 2". If you played with a team of two, you could split the ratio points 2-2 or 3-1, and if you played with just one character, they would be beefed up to ratio 4. Higher ratio characters had more health and did more damage, so it was common to put your highest ratio character as your anchor.



レシオ (reshio) – *Lit.* ratio



Fish

Using a highly rewarding move multiple times in a row, hoping your opponent will run into it so something really good happens. A good example is using a good poke and buffering a strong attack behind it, like a super. If you see your opponent swing multiple times with this poke, you might hear a commentator say "you can see him really fishing for super". The line has been cast and they are hoping to reel in the big catch.



Crush

A system where certain moves are programmed to always ignore opponent attacks of a certain type. For example, if you perform a high crush move, that means any opponent move that hits high will simply phase through you (you are effectively invincible to attacks marked with the "high" property). Similarly, there are also low crushes.

Some communities will use "crush" to refer to a move that shrinks your hurtbox such that it will dodge many attacks with a hitbox that is "high" or "low" on the body. That is, there is no programmed check for "if the move is a low, avoid it", but rather you hope that the interactions between all possible hitboxes and hurtboxes produce a similar effect. The difference is kind of subtle and the two methods often give similar results, but just be warned that they are not *quite* the same thing.

In Street Fighter 6, if you Drive Impact someone into the corner, it will say "Crush".



Defensive Meter

A meter in Mortal Kombat 11 that can only be used for defensive techniques. You can hold a maximum of 2 bars of defensive meter, and it gradually regrows over time at a fixed rate, just like your Offensive Meter. Performing a breakaway costs you both defensive bars, while performing a Getup will cost you one bar. You'll have to decide whether you want to attack as a reversal or escape an air combo after being hit, since once you do one, you won't be able to do the other for a while.



ディフェンスゲージ (difensu gēji) – *Lit. defense gauge*

Special Low Attack



An attack in a 3D game that can be blocked both standing and crouching. What's the difference between this and a special mid? Special lows tend to strike the lower half of your body, such that low crush moves (like a hop kick) will still work against them. So it's basically a low, without actually having to be blocked low.



特殊下段 (tokushu gedan) – *Lit. special low attack*

特殊中段 (tokushu chūdan) – *Lit. special mid attack*

Modern Controls



A control scheme in Street Fighter 6 that changes the standard 6-button layout to make it easier for beginners to control. Instead of six different attack strengths, you are only given three, a generic "light", "medium", and "heavy" attack. Each character has a standing and crouching version chosen from their normal movelist. You also have access to a single special move button,

and together with a direction, you can input special moves similar in style to Smash Bros. You'll also get dedicated Drive Impact and Drive Parry buttons, and a special "Assist" button which will help you do some auto combos.

Modern controls simplify each character's move list down to some core moves and remove many execution barriers, allowing people to pick up the game while feeling less intimidated. As a result, certain normals and special moves will be unavailable for each character, as there aren't enough buttons to assign to them all. Moves performed with the special move button also only do 80% of their normal damage, a penalty for allowing incredibly fast execution of strong moves like DPs or invincible supers. SF6 has two other control schemes called Classic and Dynamic.



モダンタイプ (modan taipu) – *Lit. modern type*



Time Out

A round being decided by the clock running out before either player's health bar reaches zero. The player with the most remaining health wins the round.



タイムアップ (taimu appu) – *Lit. time up*



Trade

When two opposing attacks hit each other on the same frame. Typically, both characters will animate getting hit at the same time and then the fight continues, although in games with a priority system, some attacks may be programmed to simply beat other attacks in these situations. Super clever fighting game players may even find a way to continue a combo after some trades, if they pressed a heavy attack with a lot of hit stun.



相打ち (aiuchi) – *Lit. simultaneously striking one another*



Tilted

Being so frustrated during a match that you start playing really badly. You'll hear common phrases like "they're on tilt" or "I would be so tilted after getting hit by that". It's a little different from being salty, which is just kind of general anger from losing after the match. Being on tilt tends to be from some specific, dumb thing that keeps hitting you, and it rattles you enough to impact how you are currently playing.

This term isn't unique to fighting games; I'm sure anyone who has played a MOBA has spent more of their time playing tilted than not. The origin of the term comes from poker, where losing a big hand to a bad player puts you in such a rotten mood that you won't be able to stick to your gameplan.



あったまってる, あったまつた (attamatteru, attamatta) – *Lit. to warm up (fighting game slang for being tilted)*



Tech Trap

The act of hitting someone trying to air tech during an air combo in an anime game or team game. If you intentionally leave a bit of a gap in your air combo, you can maybe trick someone to air tech at a poor time, and then hit them. It's a bit of an advanced strategy though; as a beginner I'd just focus on trying to not drop your combos.

Tech trap is also used in Tekken for situations where you knock your opponent down, and then

trick them into getting hit by an unblockable of some sort. You could, for example, simply do a raw unblockable that tracks them in case they try to roll while standing up. Or, you could move in such a way that they will stand up with their back to you, which means they cannot block or tech throws. These situations take some practice and knowledge to set up, but will certainly trick people who don't recognize the situation.



受身狩り, 受け身狩り (ukemi kari) – *Lit. receiving body hunting*

めくりネタ (mekuri neta) – *Lit. cross-up trick (Tekken)*

壁めくりネタ (kabe mekuri neta) – *Lit. wall cross-up trick (Tekken)*

Turn



A general notion of when you "should" or "shouldn't" be attacking, based on whether you are plus or minus. Basically, if you are plus (and both players know it), it makes sense that you "should" be asserting your advantage and attacking, while the opponent "should" be respecting your advantage and blocking. You'll hear people say you are "taking your turn" if you attack like this. If the defender wanted to try and "steal their turn", they would attack even though you were plus, which runs the risk of them getting counter hit or getting a hail mary dragon punch blocked.

Very aggressive players can be frustratingly good at stealing turns through various means, which constantly makes you second-guess your own gameplan and causes you to play out of your comfort zone. On the other hand, solid players will often take few risks, respecting whose turn it is and doing simple block strings or defending accordingly. Then, when both players return to neutral, they'll systematically wear you down there instead. Both playstyles work and it's why fighting game players can have such diverse personalities.



ターン (tān) – *Lit. turn*



Auto-Cancel

Automatically skipping the landing recovery of an aerial attack entirely, as long as you land on the ground during a specific time during the aerial. It's very similar to L-canceling, except the game does it for you without pressing a button and each aerial has unique, move-specific windows where it applies; the good auto-cancelable moves will have a window right after the active frames so you can let the move finish attacking and then recover quickly.

Auto-canceling is in every version of Smash, even in Melee where L-canceling is common (since not every move has a useful auto-cancel window). In versions after Melee, where L-canceling was removed, your only choice to dodge landing recovery is to find aerials with good auto-cancel windows, or let the aerial fully complete before you land.



オートキャンセル (ōto kyanseru)



Matchup Chart

A collection of all of a game's matchups in a spreadsheet. Each character's row represents their matchup spread against the characters in the columns, with numbers above 5 meaning favorable, and numbers below 5 meaning unfavorable. The row is then summed together to give a general score related to how they compare to an "average" row of all 5s. Matchup charts are one statistical approach to making a tier list.

Like most attempts to rank character strength, these are not the be-all and end-all when it comes to discussing game balance. Factors such as character difficulty, degeneracy and tournament stability are not easily reflected in the numbers, and people will often disagree about the values

themselves, but they do a good job of prompting interesting discussions in the game's community.



ダイヤグラム (daiyaguramu) – *Lit. diagram*

See image



Tatsu

The name of a shoto special move where the character travels forward with their foot extended, usually spinning like a top while doing so. It is sometimes called "Hurricane Kick" in English, but many in the community call it "tatsu", a shortened version of the Japanese name. Tatsus are often briefly projectile invincible which can help you win fireball wars, and they're often good combo enders too.

You can use the generic term "tatsu" to refer to a move in any fighting game where the character leads with their foot, flying forward; bonus points if they're spinning and if the command is mapped to quarter circle back. Also, like the term "fireball", you can also just use "tatsu" as a shorthand for "quarter circle back" itself, if you're trying to describe an input quickly (even if the resulting move is not a spinning kick thing).



竜巻 (tatsumaki) – *Lit. whirlwind*

See video





Shield Bunker MB

A defensive move in Melty Blood: AACC that tries to briefly shield an attack from your opponent, and then launch a counter-attack. Input with 214D, shield bunkers are usually done while you are in block stun from your opponent's offense, which makes them pretty similar to "get off me" moves like Street Fighter's alpha counter or Killer Instinct's shadow counter.

Importantly, if the shield works in catching an opponent's attack, the follow-up is guaranteed to hit, but even if the shield doesn't catch anything, the (now blockable) follow-up will still happen. You can even do a shield bunker while in neutral if you want, but if you try it in block stun, it'll cost you 50 super meter (or 100 meter in some Moons).



シールドバンカー (shirudo bunker) – *Lit.* shield bunker

See video



Degenerate

When a character has only a singular strategy that actually works in competition. Whether it's a single good button, one really abusable special move, or even just being abnormally evasive, you've only got one viable path to having any success. Degenerate strategies aren't necessarily broken or even imbalanced, but they do make that character really one-dimensional and usually pretty boring to play or watch.

Especially in the modern age of esports, developers need to be pretty careful about having a lot

of degenerate stuff in their games, since it's not overly spectator-friendly to have a character do one or two moves for 99 seconds, even if they aren't going to win the tournament.



Glass Cannon

A character that has very low health, but a ton of exceptional tools for movement, offense, damage, and often defense too. They're kind of an "all or nothing" character; you have all the tools necessary to implement lots of different gameplans and do huge grips of damage if you land a hit, but if you make a mistake and get touched yourself, you might explode.

Glass cannons usually end up being strong characters, but like their related cousins, the pixies, they can be very stressful to play in tournament since you are on the knife's edge in every match. Examples include Mira from Killer Instinct, Akuma from many Street Fighter titles, and Phoenix from Marvel vs. Capcom 3.



Parry

A mechanic that lets you brush aside an incoming hit and recover more or less instantly. Usually a successful parry will grant a huge opportunity for a counter attack, even if the move would normally be safe if it was blocked. It's made most famous by the Street Fighter III series of games, and immortalized in gaming history by fighting game legend Daigo Umehara.

Usually you have to take some risk to try a parry. In SFIII, you had to leave block and press forward or down within a tight window around the attack, and in other games like Yatagarasu, parry attempts will have a short animation and leave you open if you didn't catch anything.

Similar mechanics in fighters include counters, reflect, and Just Defend. Street Fighter 6 repurposes this idea for its Drive Parry and Perfect Parry mechanics.



ブロッキング (burokkingu) – *Lit.* blocking (to refer to holding back to block strikes, Japanese players will always use "guard")
ブロ (buro) – *Lit.* abbreviation of ブロッキング

See video



Super Meter



A special gauge that measures a resource you can use to enhance your attacks, usually through EX special moves or super moves. The super meter is typically separated into "bars", which measure how much of the gauge is required to spend for these actions. You often build this resource by just playing the game normally (attacking and blocking). Spending it to perform stronger attacks is the most common use, but some games will let you spend it on defensive tools too, like Guilty Gear's Faultless Defense and Killer Instinct's Shadow Counter. Each game may rebrand the meter using their own specific term, like Tension, but really, it's all the same thing in the end.

You might hear the term "meterless" to describe a combo or other technique which does not spend any super meter (usually because you'd like to save it for something stronger later). For example, "Ryu does good meterless damage" is a nice quality, since it means Ryu does not have to constantly rely on spending super meter to make his openings hurt.



ゲージ (gēji) – *Lit.* gauge (often understood by context to mean super gauge)
パワーゲージ (pawā gēji) – *Lit.* power gauge (more uncommon)



Frame Trap

Two attacks back-to-back that leave a very small gap between them. The gap will be shorter than the defender's fastest attack, which means if they try to attack with a normal, they will get counter hit. Finding effective frame traps requires some basic understanding of frame data (or finding a good Youtube tutorial that has done the work for you!); you'll usually be looking for an attack that is plus on block, which lets you attack before your opponent afterwards, then swinging with a fast attack that "traps" your opponent who foolishly thought they could swing themselves.

Frame traps aren't foolproof, though. You can usually just continue to block and be fine until your opponent gets pushed out of range. Or, if you're feeling risky, you can try to get through the opponent's attack with an invincible reversal, which doesn't care about your opponent's pesky frame advantage.



暴れ潰し (abare tsubushi) – *Lit. rage crusher* (see abare)

See video



Juggle

The act of comboing an airborne opponent while you are on the ground. Moves that work well in juggles tend to launch the opponent high into the air and keep them close to the offensive player, so they can be hit again as they fall to the ground. As with a lot of fighting game terminology, the line between a juggle and an air combo is sometimes up for debate, so you may see the term used to describe any situation where you're comboing someone in the air.



空中コンボ (kūchū konbo) – *Lit.* air combo

See video



Light Kick

One of the attack buttons in a 6-button or 4-button fighter. Commonly abbreviated as LK or called short. Light kicks are often fast and crouching versions hit low, but they have short range and low damage. They are good for fighting in close quarters, especially against opponents who try to walk backwards.



小キック or 小K (shou kikku) – *Lit.* small kick

小足 (ko ashi) – *Lit.* small leg (only used for low attacks)



Last Arc MB

The granddaddy of all supers in Melty Blood. The primary way you'll be landing this is by first entering Blood Heat and then shielding an attack (in MB: AACC, you must use EX shield). Your Last Arc will automatically launch and is guaranteed to punish your opponent for 50% damage or more. In MB: Type Lumina, you can also manually activate your Last Arc at any point by spending 4 bars of super meter and pressing A+B+C+D at the same time. You can't cancel attacks into this move though, so you'll have to find a way to land it raw.



ラストアーケ (rasuto āku) – *Lit.* last arc



Respect

To predict that your opponent will do an option and pre-emptively defend against it. Or, put another way, to give credit to your opponent that they are going to make a decision that beats you, and backing off instead. A common way this is used is on wakeup, when you think your opponent will do a reversal dragon punch. If you don't attack them and back off, you might say "I respected your DP". You'd say this even if they didn't end up doing a DP after all!

You can also say things like "my opponent isn't respecting me at all", which means they are doing whatever they want without fear of how you might counter-attack, because they just simply don't care. Of course, you can also use respect for its standard English meaning, as in "I respect Daigo for his accomplishments as a player", but when talking about fighting game strategy, it's usually the first meaning.



Classic Controls



A control scheme in Street Fighter 6 that uses the 6-button layout the series has been long known for. You have three punch attacks and three kick attacks, and must input special moves using their traditional motion or charge commands. If you've played any older Street Fighter title, this will feel right at home. SF6 offers two other control schemes, called Modern and Dynamic.



クラシックタイプ (kurashikku taipu) – *Lit. classic type*



Weapon Catch



Trying to catch your opponent's weapon in Samurai Shodown and rip it out of their hands. It's basically the disarmed version of Deflect; it's the same input and it tries to counter the same moves, but if you happen to catch a move while you are disarmed, you will immediately disarm your opponent as well, sending their weapon flying to a random spot on the screen, and knock them down. Fighting without your weapon isn't very fun in SamSho, but at least this high-risk move can make your opponent feel the same pain.



白刃取り (shirahatori) – *Lit.* stopping a sword stroke between one's bare hands

Daipan Loop



An advanced combo for Yun in Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike. While in Genei Jin, Yun rapidly performs several heavy punch attacks (or "daipan"s) in a row, each of them kara'ed from a standing medium punch in order to keep Yun moving forward.

This combo loop requires very precise timing and spacing, which changes depending on which character you're hitting and whether they are standing or crouching. The damage is massive though, especially on crouching characters, and very advanced Yun players will nuke health bars with this whenever they can. It's similar to another Yun combo called Keeper Jin, but this one does more damage and tends to be the go-to for more situations, if you've practiced the timing.



大Pループ (dai pan rūpu) – *Lit.* heavy punch loop

See video 



Chicken

A Tekken mechanic that lets you get out of a reversal (Tekken's version of a catch counter) by pressing specific inputs as soon as your attack is caught. Basically, it's a reversal of a reversal. You need to press forward plus the punch and kick button on the same side as the caught attack. This means if your 1 attack was caught, you need to press f+1+3, and if your standing 4 was caught, press f+2+4 instead.

You will push the opponent away and deal a bit of damage to them, while the announcer says "Chicken" (why? who knows) to verify what happened. The timing is pretty fast, so rather than reacting, you might be able to option select a chicken input after your strikes in case they get reversed. Like all fighting game concepts, chickening has exceptions, so some reversals will be "unchickenable" for certain types of attacks.



返し技返し (kaeshi waza kaeshi) – *Lit.* return technique return

当身返し (atemi kaeshi) – *Lit.* receiving body return

See video 



Animality

A finishing attack performed after winning a game of Mortal Kombat where your character turns into an animal and mauls the other character. It's just a twist on the classic Fatality format, alongside the Babality and the Friendship. Animalities have only shown up in Mortal Kombat 3.



アニマリティ (animariti) – *Lit.* animality



Skipping Neutral

The ability for a character to go from a long range away to extremely close very quickly. Typically you'll be using a move that is pretty fast and probably also safe on block to do this. Your opponent, who is probably expecting you to close the gap by playing footsties or navigating the neutral game in a clever way, will be surprised when you come flying at their face with a relatively risk-free move that skips past all that space. Your opponent will have to try to intercept or avoid your move, or if that's not an option, go complain on Twitter about how thoughtless your character is.



Damage Scaling

A system that reduces the damage for each hit in a combo more and more as the combo gets longer. So for example, maybe the first two hits of your combo do 100% of their regular damage value, but then the third hit does 80%, the fourth 70%, and so on down to some minimum, like 10%.

Its goal is to try and keep the damage of long combos in check; in a system without damage scaling, open-ended combo systems would get wildly out of control as creative players come up with techniques the developers didn't foresee. Pretty much every single fighting game beyond the truly ancient ones has some form of damage scaling. It's also similar in concept to proration, which is kind of a "per move" version of this system, and some games will do both at the same time!



ダメージ補正 (damēji hosei) – *Lit.* damage correction

[See video](#)

Blue Roman Cancel



A type of Roman cancel in Guilty Gear Strive, commonly abbreviated to BRC. It costs 50% Tension and can only be done when your character is in neutral. As with all Roman cancels, you'll get to slow the screen down a bit, which lets you see what your opponent is doing and immediately counter it. You can Roman cancel from neutral in Guilty Gear Xrd as well, although it was colored yellow in that game.



青色ロマンキャンセル (ao iro roman kyanseru) – *Lit. blue roman cancel*

青キャン (aokyan) – *Lit. abbreviation of 青色ロマンキャンセル*

Soul Charge



An install super in Soulcalibur VI that costs 50% of your super meter. Each character powers up in a unique way until a timer runs out, letting you earn more damage, gain new movement options or attacks, and other wacky effects.

You can enter Soul Charge in two ways. One is to simply hold back and press A+B+K. You will emit a shockwave that indicates you are powering up. This shockwave is safe when it's blocked, making it a good defensive way to enter the mode. You can also input a quarter circle with A+B+K to do a Soul Attack. This is an offensive attack that leaves you in Soul Charge when it's done, but it's much riskier to use, so you'll have to find a combo that lets you use Soul Attack so you can stay close and start your pressure.



ソウルチャージ (souru chāji) – *Lit.* soul charge



Guard Point

A state that allows you to block automatically while continuing to perform another move. Basically, for some window during your attack, you can be hit by your opponent but will "shrug off" the damage and keep attacking, rather than be counter hit and probably die. Guard points are relatively rare in fighting games, usually relegated to specific characters where it thematically fits rather than a system mechanic that applies to everyone.

It's similar to armor, except armor might lose to armor breaking moves and you usually still take the damage while armoring through attacks. Examples of guard points include Tusk in Killer Instinct (they call it a Deflect), Master Roshi in Dragon Ball FighterZ, and Anji in Guilty Gear.



ガードポイント (gādo pointo) – *Lit.* guard point



Pad

A console controller. People might say "I play on pad" to indicate they use a PlayStation or Xbox controller instead of an arcade stick or other device like a Hitbox.



パッド (paddo) – *Lit.* pad



Stance Break

An attack you can perform directly after Just Defending your opponent in Samurai Shodown. You deal zero damage, but you'll knock the opponent down and get some breathing space. If you pick the wrong time to do this and your attack whiffs or gets blocked, though, you'll be open to punishment. There are lots of other "attack while blocking" mechanics in fighting games too, including V-Reversal and Dead Angle. This one costs no super meter to try, but Just Defending is riskier than blocking to even it out.



押し返し (oshi kaeshi) – *Lit. push back*

Groove



A set of mechanics you apply to your team in Capcom vs. SNK 2. When you pick your characters, you also pick one of six "grooves" (similar to ISMs in an older game), which apply different universal mechanics and playstyles to your team. Since it's a crossover game, three of the grooves (C, A, and P) approximate systems from Capcom games, and the other three (S, N, and K) approximate systems from SNK games.

C-Groove: Uses a more traditional super meter, giving access to level 1, 2, and 3 supers. Probably the second-strongest groove.

A-Groove: A custom combo groove that allows for huge damage and nasty tricks. The strongest groove.

P-Groove: Has access to a parry and one long super meter. Situationally decent but not used too often.

S-Groove: Gives access to an in-place spot dodge, has super meter that is manually chargeable, and unlimited level 1 supers when you are low on life. Despite that, the worst groove in the game.

N-Groove: Has three "stocks" of super meter, where one can be spent to charge your character up. Not the best, not the worst groove.

K-Groove: Has just defend and a rage meter that charges up when you take damage for a very powerful super attack. Probably the best SNK groove.

It's worth noting that you can execute the incredibly powerful roll cancel technique only in C, A, and N grooves, which is one of the main reasons C and A are so lopsidedly strong.



グルーヴ (gurūvu) – *Lit. groove*

Kire



A motion that combines a tiger knee input with an instant air dash input. This will let you do a very low to the ground air dash, and then instantly execute your air special move. The numpad notation for this move would be 236956, which overlaps the TK (2369) and the IAD (956). You'll hear this used mostly in Guilty Gear, and primarily to describe executing powerful air attacks like Baiken's "Tatami Gaeshi" special move. With a kire input, these can be performed low to the ground at high horizontal speed.



キレ畳 (kire tatami) – *Lit. angry tatami*

See video 



Tipper

Any attack where a sword user in a platform fighter hits with the tip of their blade. It's almost always used to discuss Marth, since hitting with the sweet spot at the very tip of his sword during, for example, his forward smash attack will cause extreme knockback and probably kill you. You'll sometimes hear this term used to discuss move properties for Marth's clones as well.



先端ヒット (sentan hitto) – *Lit.* hit at the tip

GTE



A Virtua Fighter acronym that means "guard throw escape". As explained in the VF notation entry, this is a defensive option select that means "guard for a brief window, then try to input throw escape", which lets you defend against many attacks and throws with the same set of inputs. You'll also hear this called a "lazy tech" or "yutori defense", and it's very similar to delayed teching in many 2D games. It's a super common defensive tool for VF players.



ゆとり抜け (yutori nuke) – *Lit.* relaxed escape

See video



Dynamic Controls



A control scheme in Street Fighter 6 that is targeted at players who just want to have fun without learning any of the characters' moves or any of the game's main systems. Dynamic mode only lets you move the character with the joystick and press one of three buttons; each button will do a different attack chosen by the game, depending on how close you are to your opponent. The same button might throw a fireball, might make your character jump and attack with a basic

combo, or might try to throw. Basically, you are controlling the logic for an AI fighter, and you get to watch your character do flashy things while you mash the buttons. Dynamic controls are not available during online play; you'll have to use Classic or Modern for that.



ダイナミックタイプ (dainamikku taipu) – *Lit.* dynamic type



Electric Wind God Fist

An iconic move from the Tekken series belonging to Mishimas. It's often abbreviated to EWGF, simply called an "Electric", or called a "Dorya", mimicking the iconic voice clip when the move is performed. The command is forward, neutral, down, down-forward + 2 (essentially, a DP motion where you must also hit neutral), but then you must enter the down-forward direction and press your 2 attack on the exact same frame. If your timing is even slightly off, you will get the non-Electric version of the attack, which has considerably worse properties and, let's be honest, doesn't look *nearly* as cool.

Electrics are powerful moves in Tekken. They are high attacks, which makes them susceptible to crouching, but they are otherwise very fast, plus on block launchers that lead to a massive amount of damage. While the execution is quite difficult, being able to do this attack on command is important to learn for Mishima players.



最速風神拳 (saisoku fūjinken) – *Lit.* quickest wind god fist

See video 



Dead Angle

A defensive technique in Guilty Gear that lets you attack while you are blocking. For the cost of 50% of your Tension, press forward plus any two attacks while in block stun and you will do a basic attack that knocks the opponent away from you, giving you some room to breathe. It's quite similar to the alpha counter and the V-Reversal, and similar ideas are in many games, just with different names. In Guilty Gear Strive, Dead Angle is replaced by Yellow Roman Cancel, but the idea is very similar.



デッドアングルアタック (deddo anguru atakku) – *Lit. dead angle attack*



Focus Attack

A system-wide mechanic in Street Fighter IV which let you absorb incoming attacks by holding MP and MK. You could then release the buttons at any time for a special attack, which might cause a crumple and a huge combo if timed correctly, or you could dash in either direction at any time and not activate the attack. While this has a lot of uses in neutral, its main use was canceling an attack directly into your absorbing pose for 2 stocks of super meter, which you could then dash out of to extend combos. Using it in this way was called a focus attack dash cancel, or FADC, and it was an extremely common tool used many times per match in SFIV.

Focus attack, and in particular FADC, was a divisive mechanic. On one hand, it allowed for flashy, interesting combos and brightened up the otherwise fairly boring combo game of SFIV. On the other hand, it was the cause of several extremely strong defensive mechanics, such as making many dragon punches safe on block and lead to extremely high damage on hit, and the use of the four finger tech. For better and worse, focus attacks contributed to SFIV's unique feel and it has

both its fans and its detractors. In Ultra SFIV, the final version of the game, a new mechanic called red focus was added.



セービングアタック (sēbingu atakku) – *Lit.* saving attack

See video



Tight



A block string that has no gaps. This means there is no opportunity for an opponent to try and attack during your offense, so once they block the first move, they're gonna be trapped in block stun for a while. Tight offense typically doesn't last too long, but you'll often be able to apply some chip damage or choose your next mixup pretty safely.



固め (katame) – *Lit.* to harden

Magic Number



A specific frame advantage number that allows you to divide all moves in a game into one of two categories. For example, if the fastest common attack in a game is 3 frames, this means that all moves that are -2 on block or better are safe (not counting the rare exception). You might say that "-2 is the magic number". It means that if you want to lump moves broadly into "safe" (-2 or better) or "unsafe" (worse than -2) categories, all you care about is what side of this magic number it falls on.

Each game has different magic numbers depending on their frame data and how the mechanics

operate. For example, 10 is a magic number in Tekken (because the jab starts up in 10 frames, so you'll be looking for gaps of 10 frames or more in your opponent's pressure), and +6 is a magic number in Virtua Fighter (since that is when nitaku situations start to work due to the startup of throws and attacks).

Grab



Another term for a throw. "Throw" tends to be the more common term for regular throws, but "command grab" tends to be more popular for special move throws. Don't worry about it too much though, both are fine.



投げ (nage) – *Lit. throw*

掴み (tsukami) – *Lit. grab*

Challenge



To attack your opponent as they are trying to attack you. The most common way this is used is when you attack after you leave block stun, trying to remind your opponent that you're still playing. This isn't always a good idea, but if it works, you might hear "oh, nice challenge".

You can also try to intercept someone who's moving in while you're playing neutral. So if your opponent starts dashing in, or if they do some full screen special move like a gorilla, you can press a button to try and hit them before they reach you. In this case, you're "challenging" their approach.



暴れ (abare) – *Lit. to rage/act violently (see abare)*

Pivot



Attacking while you are turning around after a dash in all Smash Bros. games except Ultimate. When switching dash directions, you have a few brief frames where you can input any attack, and it's a pretty fast way to get to a spot and attack (maybe even slightly faster than wavedashing, depending on the situation).

In Smash 4, there was a technique called "Perfect Pivoting", where you went from standing still to dashing, then quickly pivoted in the opposite direction. You could then attack immediately. It ended up just looking like you moved forward or back a bit without changing direction, like a mini Melee wavedash. It was really hard to do though, so you didn't see it all that much.



TANIステ (tani sute) – *Lit.* abbreviation of TANIステップ (TANIステ is the most used term)

TANIステップ (tani suteppu) – *Lit.* tani step

立ちキャン (tachi kyan) – standing cancel

Moon Gauge



A resource available in Melty Blood: Type Lumina. Located near your portrait in the top left or right corner, the moon gauge (or "moon icon") is a circle that fills with yellow segments and controls your Moon Skills and Moon Drive abilities. While it looks like a continuous gauge, the moon gauge is actually segmented into 10 individual bars that fill from bottom to top.

Each time you hit your opponent in neutral, you will *both* gain one stock of moon gauge (the combo after doesn't matter). If you land a fatal counter, you'll get two stocks, and your opponent loses one! Performing a moon skill costs 3 stocks (although you'll get 1 back if you hit them), a

failed shield costs 1 stock (if you have it), and entering your moon drive mode can be done any time you have 50% gauge or more. You always start the match with full moon gauge, so go nuts!



ムーンアイコン (mūn aikon) – *Lit.* moon icon



Commentator's Curse

When the commentator for a match says that something is very likely to happen, only for the exact opposite to happen instead. Try not to say things like "oh, he's for sure dead" or "there's no way she loses this match, right?" – you're just asking for trouble. Even though the commentator has no impact on the match, it's best to own up to how badly they jinxed the situation and apologize. It's just the right thing to do.



Recapture

Any attack that brings the opponent from an airborne state to a grounded state. Recapture is Killer Instinct's version of the restand, and because the KI combo system only lets you perform auto-doubles and linkers against grounded opponents, recaptures are an important way to transition from a juggle combo into these elements.



リキヤプチャ – (rikyapuchā) – *Lit.* recapture



Winners Bracket

All the players who have not yet lost in a double elimination tournament, paired off and ready to fight. Lose, and you go down to the Losers Bracket. Try not to lose. You might hear the

politically-correct term "Upper Bracket" used here sometimes, but it lacks the punch (and clarity) of Winners Bracket.



ウィナーズ側 (wināzu gawa) – *Lit. winners side*



Mash

The act of pressing a ton of buttons rapidly without any thought. Lots of beginners will randomly mash, because they don't know what attacks they should be using. Try not to do this if you can! Even if you're confused, it's better to try and find one or two useful attacks and use those. That said, mashing is a mechanic in some fighting games. You can usually mash buttons to reduce the amount of time you are stunned, and in some Versus games, mashing will increase the damage done by certain super attacks.



連打 (renda) – *Lit. striking repeatedly*

擦る (kosuru) – *Lit. to rub*

こすり連打 (kosuri renda) – *Lit. the act of sliding the hand across buttons rapidly*

ガチャガチャ (gacha gacha) – *Lit. rattling noise*

ガチャプレイ (gacha purei) – *Lit. playing a game by mashing buttons randomly*



Ring Out



Losing a round in a 3D game by being knocked out of the boundaries of the stage, rather than through the normal means of K.O. or time out. How much health you have remaining doesn't matter, so there can be some pretty big turns of fortune if you catch someone with the right move at the right time. Not very many games have ring outs; of the modern games, it's really only

Soulcalibur and Virtua Fighter. And if you go really far into the annals of fighting game history, you might even find the odd 2D game with ring outs!



リングアウト (ringu auto) – *Lit.* ring out

See video



Medium Kick



One of the six attack buttons in a 6-button fighter. Commonly abbreviated as MK or called forward. Medium kicks tend to be strong close-range attack buttons since they often have good frame advantage on block. Crouching medium kick is often your character's most useful low attack, so you'll learn to love this button.



中キック or 中K (chū kikku) – *Lit.* medium kick

中足 (chū ashi) – *Lit.* medium leg (only used for low attacks)

Ultimate



An extra flashy way you can end your Ultra Combo, as long as you have earned a Supreme Victory. Simply press LP and LK together shortly after starting the ultra, and you'll transition to a cinematic finisher. Only 15 of the 29 characters in the 2013 version of KI have an Ultimate Combo.



アルティメット (arutimetto) – *Lit.* ultimate



Instinct

A comeback mechanic in Killer Instinct that greatly enhances each character's fighting abilities. You build your Instinct gauge by taking damage or by performing combo breakers, and usually when you have about 30% life remaining on your first life bar, you'll have filled it. You'll almost always be able to build and use your Instinct mode twice in a game, as long as you use your first instance soon after you build it.

Instinct mode lasts for 15 seconds and is effectively a game-changing install that is unique to each character; possibilities include more damage, new attacks, new movement options, more invincibility on things, unlimited use of resources, you name it. They take strong KI characters and make them even stronger, so watch out.



インスティンクト (insutinkuto) – *Lit. instinct*

See video 



Jump Install

An advanced Guilty Gear technique that lets you access air mobility options, usually double jumping, after doing a move that is supposed to prevent you from doing them. This is common particularly in GG Accent Core and GG Xrd.

One way to do this is to cancel a grounded normal into a jump, but then before you leave the ground, do another grounded attack. You've now tricked the game into thinking you have the normal air options you'd get after a jump, even though you haven't actually jumped yet. Later in

your combo, if you do something that would restrict your air options (like a super jump or a special move like Chipp's teleport), your earlier "jump install" takes precedence and you can now double jump! It takes a bit of practice to get used to, but jump installs can unlock cool new combo opportunities and more damage.



ジャンプ仕込み (janpu shikomi) – *Lit.* jump stocking/preparation

See video



Raw



An attack done purely by itself, with nothing preceding it, often when you least expect it. It's a common word when the move is usually risky by itself, so you'd normally expect it to be used as a follow-up or hit confirm from a previous attack. You'll hear stuff like "he killed me with raw super".



ぶっ放し (buppanashi) – *Lit.* to fire off

ブッパ (buppa) – *Lit.* abbreviation of ぶっ放し

パンナシ (panashi) – *Lit.* abbreviation of ぶっ放し

生 (nama) – *Lit.* raw

Block Stun



The period of time when your character cannot perform any action after blocking an attack. Instead, you have to wait for your character to stop reeling from the blocked attack for a small window before getting control back. All moves cause varying amount of blockstun, and if

consecutive attacks leave little or no gap there (called a block string), then sorry pal, you're just stuck blocking for a while.

In some games, you are allowed to take unique actions during block stun; in SF3: 3rd Strike you can red parry, in Marvel vs. Capcom 3 you can press a button to pushblock and create distance, and in Killer Instinct you can shadow counter. The duration of block stun, coupled with your opponent's recovery on their attack, determines a very important number in fighting games - the amount of advantage a blocked move will have.



ガード硬直 (gādo kouchoku) – *Lit. guard stiffness*

See video



Floaty



A character that does not fall very fast towards the stage. A common strength of floaty characters, like Jigglypuff for example, is that they can use their floatiness to be deceptive in the air, drifting in and out of range and maybe even attacking multiple times before landing. This is the opposite of being a fast-faller.



軽いキャラ (karui kyara) – *Lit. lightweight character*

Corner



The far left and far right edges of the screen in a 2D fighting game. The corner is a bad place to be. You can't walk any further back, but your opponent has all the space in the world and can

easily choose what range they want to fight at. Lots of characters have special combos that do way more damage and work only if their opponent is in the corner. You're trapped, and you have to look for a way to escape. The best case scenario would be to find a way to side switch – now it's your opponent whose back is to the wall!



画面端 (gamen hashi) – *Lit.* screen edge



Bread and Butter

A common, practical combo that you will use often in matches. It's almost always shortened to "BnB". You'll probably learn an easy BnB for your character for situations that come up a lot, such as landing a jumping attack or a hitting with a crouching jab. It may be possible to do more advanced, situational combos, but BnBs are the dependable staples that every player should know and will put you on the fast track to character mastery.



Rage Drive

A special, powerful attack introduced in Tekken 7 that is available only when your character is in rage. Your character will flash blue and suddenly launch a strong attack; each character has a unique Rage Drive but they are commonly safe moves that can extend an existing combo or cause a launch. They're kind of similar to one-time-use EX moves. Once you use the attack, you will be taken out of rage and will no longer get the passive damage boost or be able to use your Rage Drive or Rage Art again until the next round.



レイジドライブ (reiji doraibu) – *Lit.* rage drive

[See video](#)

Instant Air Dash

Doing an air dash as fast as possible after jumping. Usually abbreviated to IAD. Instant air dashing is great for closing the distance quickly. If your game has a dash macro, it can make the technique easier to execute, but if not, try jumping with up-forward, which will count as the first input of your dash. Then go to neutral and hit forward a single time to do the IAD with as few inputs as possible.



低空ダッシュ (teikuu dasshu) – *Lit.* low altitude dash

[See video](#)

LCQ

A last-minute tournament held at the venue of a big invitational event, where the winner gets a spot in the main tournament. Stands for Last Chance Qualifier. These LCQs are not needed for events where anyone can sign up (including mainstays like EVO), but you'll often find them happening on the day before the year-end finals for certain events like the Capcom Pro Tour or the Tekken World Tour. It's the last opportunity for people who didn't qualify for the event throughout the year, and it's a giant bloodbath of high-stakes matches for the final spot.



ラストチャンス予選 (rasuto chansu yosen) – *Lit.* last chance qualifier

最終予選 (saishū yosen) – *Lit.* final qualifier



Delayed Wakeup

The ability to slightly extend how long you stay on the ground after you've been knocked down. This is different from soft knockdown vs. hard knockdown, where you either rise immediately or stay on the ground for a set amount of time. In games with delayed wakeup, you can choose to make your hard knockdown ever so slightly longer, in the hopes that your opponent won't be able to easily meaty you or otherwise run their planned set play. Games like Ultra Street Fighter IV and Mortal Kombat 11 implement delayed wakeup.



ディレイスタンディング (direi sutandingu) – *Lit.* delay standing (official name for USFIV)

時間差起き上がり (jikansa oki agari) – *Lit.* time difference raise up



Spike

An attack that hits the opponent at a sharp downwards angle, and cannot be meteor canceled (that is, your trajectory after being hit cannot be stopped by a jump or an up+B attack). In Smash Bros. Melee, an oversight in the game logic allowed certain famous downward attacks, like Falco's down-air, to travel at an angle outside what the game allowed to be meteor canceled. These attacks came to be known as spikes.

"Spike" and "meteor smash" are extremely similar in meaning. In games where meteor canceling does not exist, like Smash Bros. Ultimate, every meteor smash is effectively a spike even though

"meteor smash" is the preferred term. Spike is mostly a Melee term, because it is the only game that contains attacks that both *can* and *can't* be meteor canceled, so having two terms is necessary. In other games, either no downwards attacks can be meteor canceled (e.g., Ultimate), or they all can be (e.g., Brawl), so the community just sticks to using "meteor smash" for the whole lot of them.

Like some other famously confusing fighting game terms, such as trip guard, it's really the intention that matters more than whether the term is perfectly accurate to its original meaning. If you call a downwards attack a spike in a modern Smash game, people will know what you mean.



裏メテオ (ura meteo) – *Lit.* back side/secret meteor



Mercy



A way to extend a Mortal Kombat match after you have already won it. Instead of performing a Fatality or accepting your win by doing nothing, you can instead input a command which will give the opponent a small percentage of their life back and let them keep fighting. If you're looking to humiliate your opponent, this is a quick way to do it, but be sure to not lose the round after showing mercy!



マーシー (māshī) – *Lit.* mercy

Slide



A common name for any attack that hits low and sees the character slide along the ground, aiming their attack at the opponent's feet. Slides are commonly mapped to both normal attacks and special moves, depending on the character. Common Street Fighter characters with slides include M. Bison, Vega, Rose, Rolento, Zeku, and many more. Some characters, like Guy, have both a normal and a special move slide for added confusion! Slides are often just "moving sweeps", but not all slides are mapped to the heavy kick button, and not all slides cause a knockdown. One thing that's common among all slides, though, is how annoying it is to get hit by them.



スライディング (suraidingu) – *Lit. sliding*

スライディングキック (suraidingu kikku) – *Lit. sliding kick*



First to

Playing a set where the overall winner is the first player to win a certain number of games. Commonly abbreviated to "FT" followed by the number of wins required, such as "FT10". Most tournament sets will be FT2 or FT3, depending on which game is being played.



?本先取 (? hon senshu) – *Lit. first to ? games*

?先 (? saki) – *Lit. first to ?*



Cancel

Removing the recovery of an attack, usually so that you can transition immediately into another move. By far the most common instance is canceling a normal attack into a special move. To do this, input the normal and then immediately input the special move. If the normal hits the opponent, it will kinda stop halfway through and the special move will start immediately. Some

people call this standard cancel a 2-in-1 and it has formed the basis of Street Fighter and other 2D games for decades. You'll typically see a cancel notated with "xx", like HP xx fireball.

It's far from the only type of canceling in fighting games, though. Sometimes you can cancel a normal into itself (called chaining), or a normal into other normals (called a target combo or a string). You might even be able to cancel a move into nothing, recovering instantly and able to take a new action of your choice (for example, with Guilty Gear's Roman Cancel). Canceling is a staple of the genre, and a concept every fighting game player should know.



キャンセル (kyanseru) – *Lit. cancel*

See video



K.O.



Draining a character's health bar to zero, causing a knockout and ending the round. Pretty much every fighting game round will end in someone getting KOed, although you will occasionally see some time out or ring out victories as well.



K.O. (kē ō) – *Lit. k.o.*

Tilt Attack



A standard attack in Super Smash Bros. performed by gently moving the stick in a direction and pressing the A button (or, in some games, using the C-stick). They are effectively your character's normals. You usually write it with one directional letter and the word "tilt", like "dtilt" or "utilt".

Like most normals in fighting games, tilt attacks aren't as flashy as your character's specials or smash attacks, but they have tons of uses; they are surprisingly effective damage dealers, they can be used for gimping someone off-stage, and they're usually much safer harassment tools. It takes a bit of finesse to use tilts and not accidentally get dashing attacks or smashes, since the commands kinda overlap, but it's a necessary skill to learn.



強攻撃 (kyou kougeki) – *Lit.* heavy attack



Buffer

A term that has two distinct, important meanings in the fighting game space.

- 1) Buffer can refer to a window of time where the game allows you to input a move. Check out Buffer Window for more on that.
- 2) Buffer can also refer to a character attacking empty space with a normal, hoping to cancel into a different attack if it hits. Learn more about that at Buffered Attack.

It's a bit unfortunate that the same word is used to describe two pretty different but common concepts in fighting games, but hopefully context will be able to help you figure out which meaning applies.



先行入力 (senkou nyūryoku) – *Lit.* preceding input (for buffer window)
仕込み (shikomi) – *Lit.* preparation, stocking up (for buffered attack)



A state where you're unable to earn any GRD gauge or use any of the systems that require the D button (including Assault and Shield). You can become GRD broken in a number of ways, but the most common way is if you get hit or thrown while trying to Shield. Other ways include getting hit by your opponent's Veil Off, using a defensive Guard Thrust, or launching your massive Infinite Worth EXS super attack.

Being GRD broken sucks. Not only are you less effective in battle, being unable to Shield or use movement options like Assault, but you can't win the GRD cycle while you are broken, basically handing Vorpal to your opponent. You'll be GRD broken for a set amount of time shown next to your GRD gauge. You can speed this timer up by blocking attacks, or clear it to 0 immediately by using Veil Off.



GRDブレイク (GRD bureiku) – *Lit.* GRD break

See video

Shadow Move



An enhanced special move in Killer Instinct that costs one bar of shadow meter to perform. They're essentially EX moves with the added touch of a screen freeze, so they're kind of a combination of EX moves and supers.

Tracking



The ability for an attack in a 3D game like Tekken or Soulcalibur to hit you as you are sidestepping. A large part of defense in these games is moving laterally to make certain attacks

whiff, but moves with good tracking tend to have beefy hitboxes extending laterally to one (or both!) sides of the character, so it's just extra hard to use sidestepping to get out of the way.

Because tracking is hitbox-based, it's kind of a sliding scale. Depending on the defender's dash speed and the size of the hitbox, some moves will be able to fully track a character no matter which direction they sidestep, or maybe it will hit if you step one direction but miss if you step the other. There's also the homing attack, which forces the offensive character to turn and face you, no matter how you tried to move to avoid it, and you basically can't sidestep these at all.

See video 

Follow-up



An optional extension that can occur if you press more buttons after certain attacks. You may only have one option to extend (as is often the case with the classic rekka special move), or you may be able to choose between multiple follow-ups using different commands (like with most command dashes and demon flips). You can even use the term for concepts like target combos or strings, like "after pressing MP, press MP again to do the follow-up".

You might also hear this used to mean "the next course of action" in a general English sense, such as "they earned the knockdown, now what's the follow-up?" or "your opponent is cornered, you need to follow up with some pressure".



追加技 (tsuika waza) – *Lit.* additional technique (used for extension attacks that have only one option)

派生技 (hasei waza) – *Lit.* derivative technique (used for extension attacks that have two or more options)



Ledgedash

Falling off a ledge in Smash Bros. Melee, then jumping and wavelanding onto the stage very quickly. If you do this correctly, you'll retain the invincibility you get from grabbing the ledge, and slip back onto the stage without a ton of risk.

You can even attack during this invincibility period, which makes this method of recovery pretty strong! Smash players have a term for how many frames your character is both invincible and able to attack after a ledgedash; they call it GALINT for Grounded Actionable Ledge INTangibility. It's a bit of a mouthful, but having lots of GALINT is good, so try to do your ledgedashes crisply to maximize the GALINTial benefits.



崖絶空 (gake zekkū) – *Lit.* ledge wavedash



Double Snap

A Marvel vs. Capcom 2 technique where you start a combo on two characters at once, and then perform a snap. You will snap the point character out as expected, but the assist will remain on the screen in a vulnerable state where they can be hit infinitely until they die. Marvel 2 is a game where one-touch kills like this are pretty rare, so getting your assist caught and instantly losing it, even from full health, is extremely devastating.

[See video](#)

Conditioning



Behaving a certain way over a decently long period of time, so that you can act unpredictably at a crucial moment later. You can condition your opponent to, for example, always expect a certain style of pressure or a pattern of how you throw fireballs, and train them to think they have it figured out. Then when the match is on the line, you surprise them by switching it up and catching them in the old habit. Conditioning is related to baiting, but in a "long con" kind of way.

Blood Heat MB



A slightly more powerful version of regular Heat in Melty Blood. Both your super meter and the entire screen will turn a shade of red to indicate you're in Blood Heat. In **MB: Type Lumina**, you'll get Blood Heat if you try to activate Heat when you have 4 bars of super meter (which is only possible if you're on your last round). In addition to the normal benefits of Heat, if you shield an attack, you will instantly launch your Last Arc, guaranteeing a ton of damage.

In **MB: AACC**, it's pretty similar to Type Lumina, but only applies to Crescent and Full Moons (basically, Moons that have access to MAX mode). Once you've earned full meter and entered MAX, popping Heat any time before your gauge drains will activate Blood Heat. The speed at which you recover your red life is even faster (or in Full Moon, instant), and your Arc Drive is replaced with a souped up version called "Another Arc Drive". Last Arc is a threat just like in Type Lumina, but you need to parry an attack with EX shield instead of just using normal shield.



ブラッドヒート (buraddo hito) – *Lit.* blood heat

ブラッドヒート状態 (buraddo hito joutai) – *Lit.* blood heat status

See video



Comeback



Winning a round after you've spent most of it losing horribly. Some of the most memorable fighting game moments of all time are improbable comebacks, because they often require a ton of skill (and a bit of luck) and it's easy to root for the underdog. Some modern games design specific mechanics that try to give a down-and-out player a chance at a comeback, like X-Factor.



逆転 (gyakuten) – *Lit.* turnabout

Rage



A comeback mechanic in recent **Tekken** titles that increases your damage when you are about to be KOed. For Tekken 7, you get a small damage boost when you are under 20% life left, as well as access to your character's Rage Drive and Rage Art abilities. You'll know you're in rage if your health bar is flashing red.

Rage is also a mechanic in recent **Super Smash Bros.** games. As you accumulate more damage (up to a maximum of 150%), your character's attacks will launch the opponent farther (up to a maximum of 1.1x the distance), although the damage itself does not get a boost. Characters start to smoke after taking 100% damage to remind you that they're becoming a bigger KO threat.



レイジ (reiji) – *Lit. rage*

Float



Hitting your Tekken opponent into the air in a way that doesn't involve using a launcher. For example, if you catch your opponent jumping and hit them with a quick attack, you will float them and can follow up with a combo almost as if you had launched them. There are other ways you can float your opponent, depending on which version of Tekken you're playing, so look out for them and capitalize with big damage.

Dark Ages



A period of time from around 2001-2009 when no mainstream Capcom fighting games were released. It's remembered as a time when fighting games were on the decline, as general interest in them was waning and the fighting game community was undergoing periods of serious uncertainty.

There are many factors that contribute to the Dark Ages; it's not only the fact that there were no Capcom games released (since other franchises like Tekken and Soulcalibur had prominent releases during this time). Arcades were dying and it became hard to find people to play games with, unless you lived in certain key hotspots. Console ports of fighting games were often very different from the arcade versions, if they existed at all, so everybody was playing a slightly different game. Online play was in its infancy and was a horrible, laggy mess. It was incredibly difficult to find good quality arcade sticks without importing Japanese parts from a sketchy website and building your own. As a result of these factors, and with industry leader Capcom showing no interest in supporting their franchises, being a competitive fighting game fan

required a ton of effort, and many fell out of the hobby.

The console release of Street Fighter IV in 2009 effectively ended the Dark Ages and ushered in the "modern age" of fighting games by bringing them back into the mainstream gaming consciousness. It solved the software and hardware divides; the port was arcade-perfect, and Madcatz revolutionized the arcade stick market with a high quality product. Online play was a main feature and, even without rollback, it greatly expanded the playerbase and grew the tournament scene ten-fold overnight. And perhaps most importantly, Capcom's renewed confidence in the genre spread to other developers who revitalized their own dormant franchises or birthed new ones, giving us many new games to play. All that remains of the Dark Ages are the stories of the people who lived through it.

Edge-Guard



Trying to keep an opponent who you've launched off the stage from returning back to the stage. You might jump off the stage yourself and try to intercept them as they get close, or you might stand right on the edge of the stage and poke at them as they are trying to grab the edge.

The strategies around one player edge-guarding and the other trying to recover safely are one of the main ways Smash Bros. is different from traditional fighting games, and the options each player has will change depending on which version of Smash Bros. (or which platform fighter) you're talking about. You'll hear terms like gimp, edge hog, ledge trump, and others used to describe strategies for edge-guarding.



復帰阻止 (fukki soshi) – *Lit. return prevention*

エッジガード (eiji gādo) – *Lit. edge guard*

[See video](#)

Throw Invincible



A state where throws cannot hit you, but all other types of attacks will. If someone tries to throw you, it will just whiff and you'll smack them in the face for trying. It's not quite the same as being fully invincible, but moves that are throw invincible are particularly potent in close-range mixup situations, since you can attack without fear of a pesky defensive throw getting through.

Command grabs, in addition to not being techable, often come with the added benefit of being throw invincible. Man, being in the face of a grappler sure is scary.



投げ無敵 (nage muteki) – *Lit. throw invincible*

Catch Throw



A special class of throw in Virtua Fighter that can't be teched and will also beat attacks that are in their startup. This last point is important, since Virtua Fighter's RPS system means attacks will always beat normal throws, so catch throws kind of break a cardinal interaction rule in VF. CTs aren't perfectly analogous to command throws in other fighting games, but they share some similar DNA in that they behave just differently enough from a regular throw to force your defense against them to change.



キャッチ投げ (kyacchi nage) – *Lit. catch throw*

Brutality



A stylish method to finish a match in Mortal Kombat. By landing the killing blow with a specific move (and perhaps meeting some other requirement, like not blocking during the final round), you will perform what is essentially an in-match Fatality. Because they take a bit of work to set up, landing one tends to be extra satisfying.



ブルータリティ (burūtariti) – *Lit.* brutality

Sour Spot



A specific hitbox of an attack that has much weaker knockback than other parts of the attack. It's the opposite of a sweet spot. Usually hitting with the sour spot is not what you want, but people have found uses for intentionally using some of these sour spots to keep the opponent close for a longer combo, or to set up a more powerful move later. Some sour spots though, like hitting late with Luigi's up+B, will just get you killed.



カス当て (kasu ate) – *Lit.* barely hit

Salt



Intense frustration, typically after losing a game. Fighting game salt is quite pronounced, since its nature as a 1v1 game means you have no one to blame for your loss than yourself. Of course, this doesn't stop most players from blaming the game, their opponent, or their dog for losing anyway.



イライラ (iraira) – *Lit.* irritation / upset



Link

A technique where two moves can combo into each other by letting the first move entirely complete (including its recovery) before starting the second move. It's different from a cancel, which interrupts the first move by skipping its recovery and going into the second move early. In order for two moves to link into each other, the first move needs to be plus on hit by at least as much as the second move's startup. This way, the opponent is trapped in hit stun the whole time and has to eat the combo.

Links are common in Street Fighter games, but some games are more focused on chains and strings and don't rely on links much at all. You'll hear phrases like "link together" or "you have to link it" to indicate that you need to wait for the first move to completely finish before trying the second move.



目押し (meoshi) – *Lit.* press button at the right time (slang from pachinko/slots)

See video



Raging Demon

An iconic super for Akuma (and related "Evil" characters) in many Street Fighter titles. Akuma travels forward and grabs you, the screen goes dark, and after some rapid-fire hits in the darkness, you appear knocked out on the ground. Akuma then poses with his back to the camera.

The input for this move is bizarre and unique: LP LP forward LK HP. Because you must whiff normal attacks if you wanted to perform this in neutral, good players will often hide the inputs

while their character is performing another move, then immediately launch the Demon when the move is complete (or, perhaps, as a [kara cancel](#)). It's a scary, high damage attack, especially when given to a high mobility character like Akuma, and it'll often get you when you least expect it.



瞬獄殺 (shun goku satsu) – *Lit.* instant prison murder

See video



Sakurai Angle



A specific property of many attacks in Super Smash Bros. that determines how a character gets launched away when hit by a move. Attacks programmed with the "Sakurai angle" will not launch a grounded opponent at all at low percents, but will send them away at a very specific diagonal angle (around 30 degrees, depending on the game) when enough force is generated, usually because the opponent is sitting at a high percent.

This specific angle was originally thought to be tied to how often a move caused a character to [trip](#), so it was named somewhat derisively after the creator of Smash Bros., Masahiro Sakurai, since most fans did not enjoy the tripping mechanic. Being the cause of tripping was later disproven, but this angle was common enough across dozens of moves that the name just stuck.



361度技 (sanbyoku rokujū ichi do waza) – *Lit.* 361° technique (it is the in-game parameter that's set for this type of move, instead of 0-360 they use 361 to specify this)

50/50



A mixup that has two possible primary options for the attacker, with each option requiring a different defensive action. Typically this is used to describe difficult to block cross-up attacks, which force you to choose between blocking left or right, or a mixup between a good low and overhead, which force you to choose between blocking high or low. Even being directly in your opponent's face can be a mixup between attacking and throwing; this is often called a "strike/throw" mixup.

They're named this way because it can feel like you have only a 50% chance of defending correctly. If you're struggling with these, you might check to see if any option selects exist in your favorite game that can help you deal with basic 50/50s, like fuzzy blocking or delayed throw teching.



2択 (ni taku) – *Lit.* 2 choices

Command Grab



Another term for a command throw. The term "command grab" is probably a bit more commonly used than "command throw", but they're both perfectly fine.



コマンド投げ (komando nage) – *Lit.* command throw

コマ投げ (koma nage) – *Lit.* abbreviation of コマンド投げ

Match



A tournament set between two players, usually a FT2 or FT3. The term "match" can also refer to a planned showmatch between two players, but it's not commonly heard outside tournaments.



試合 (shiai) – *Lit.* match



Rushdown

A style of play that focuses on getting close to your opponent and relentlessly attacking them until they die. It's kind of the opposite of zoning. Good qualities for a rushdown character include lots of ways to get around long-range attacks, tricky approaches like divekicks so you can be hard to anti-air, and lots of plus attacks so your opponent has to repeatedly guess on defense to survive. The ultimate rushdown character is a gorilla, but hopefully not too many games end up at that extreme.



ガン攻め (gan seme) – *Lit.* fully offense



Crouch Tech

A technique in some games where you try to tech a throw while you are crouching, and if a throw never comes, your tech attempt becomes a relatively low risk crouching normal instead. This only works in a few games though, since many modern games will simply force you to whiff a throw if you try to tech, even if you are crouching. Street Fighter IV is the most famous example of a game where crouch teching (and other throw tech option selects, like four finger teching) is a very common defensive strategy.



しゃがみグラップ (shagami gurappu) – *Lit.* crouch grab ("grab defense" is the official term for throw tech in SFIII, so people just say grab for throw tech)

しゃがグラ (shaga gura) – *Lit.* abbreviation of しゃがみグラップ



Shoryuken

The specific name for Ryu and Ken's dragon punches in the Street Fighter series, but it's used to talk about any generic uppercut-looking move in pretty much any fighting game. Very often shortened to just "shoryu".



昇竜拳 (shouryūken) – *Lit.* rising dragon fist

Select Plink



Using the select button as the second input to a plink. Because SFIV thinks select is the lowest priority button (despite it not being an attack), you can use it to duplicate any other button press, including light punch which has the lowest priority of all the attacks and normally cannot be plinked. People who want to use this technique will need to modify the internal wiring of their stick. If you map the select button to one of your unused attack buttons on the face of the stick, it will be a lot easier to press during your plink.

Gatling



A Guilty Gear term that just means canceling a normal attack into another normal attack. These are often called chains, strings, or target combos in other games, and the concept is pretty much the same here. How gatlings work depend on which version of Guilty Gear you're playing; in some games you can mostly cancel any attack into any other attack of equal or higher strength, whereas in a game like Guilty Gear Strive, you're more limited to only certain cancels.



ガトリング (gatoringu) – *Lit.* gatling

[See video](#)

Ukemizeme

Trying to specifically read which way a defender will rise after being knocked down (their "ukemi") and then choosing an appropriate offensive response. Because there are so many ways to get off the ground in Virtua Fighter, you'll have to lab specific ways to deal with each of these wakeup options. This can include using attacks that might cover multiple options at once, or trying to react to your opponent's choice and start offensive pressure that will give them a really hard time.

Ukemizeme is a subset of okizeme. While oki describes "general" mind games around how to attack a knocked down opponent, ukemizeme really focuses on the subtleties of when and how you call out your opponent's tech roll direction and timing.



受け身攻め (ukemi zeme) – *Lit.* receiving body offense

Restand



Bringing your opponent from an airborne state down to a grounded state, usually during a combo. Some restands will let you continue the combo, but even if they don't, restands will usually grant you some serious frame advantage so you can go for a mixup. For this reason, sometimes they are called "standing resets". Killer Instinct brands these as recaptures.



Invincible

A state where you are impossible to hit, fully impervious to everything. Invincible moves usually just remove all your hurtboxes so no incoming attack or throw can connect with you. As you can imagine, invincible attacks are very strong, so they are usually very unsafe or risky to attempt, and are commonly used as a reversal in situations where your opponent has a clear attacking advantage, like on wakeup.

Many dragon punches and supers have some period of invincibility to them, and these are common to see used in most fighting games. Also note that some moves may be invincible only to certain things and not others; you might see throw invincible, strike invincible, or projectile invincible moves, and you might see terms like high crush and low crush thrown around too.



無敵 (muteki) – *Lit. invincible*

See video



Guard Cancel



A technique in the King of Fighters series that lets you take an action while blocking for 1 bar of super meter. You can either roll forward or backward by pressing a direction with the A+B buttons (called Guard Cancel Roll), or you can perform an attack that knocks the opponent away by pressing C+D (called Guard Cancel Blowback). Since you can abbreviate Guard Cancel to GC, you'll see this called lots of things, like GC Roll or GCAB, referring to the buttons pressed. The Blowback attack is a common mechanic in many games, similar to things like Alpha Counters and V-Reversals.

You may also hear this term used in other fighting games to talk about any defensive move done out of block stun. Much like "Alpha Counter", it's taken on kind of a generic, catch-all meaning for this general class of technique, and you can ask questions like "does this game have a guard cancel?" pretty safely.



ガードキャンセル (gādo kyanseru) – *Lit. guard cancel*

ガーキャン (gākyan) – *Lit. abbreviation of ガードキャンセル*

See video



Scramble



A situation where some unlikely or surprising interactions happen, and both players start to panic a little bit and need to quickly improvise what to do. Scrambles are particularly common in fast-paced games where sloppy play is more likely and new situations that aren't often seen can spring up out of nowhere. Creative players with good game sense will often turn these "off the book" interactions into cool combo conversions or will always somehow be able to land the next hit despite the chaos. They're also pretty fun to watch when they happen!



グダグダ (gudaguda) – *Lit. not well-organized (often used to describe messy or sloppy play)*

Conversion



Turning an unlikely hit or a scramble into a combo through great situational awareness.

Sometimes you might hit your opponent with a random move that you weren't expecting to hit, but if you're really on the ball, you can invent some on-the-fly way to get more damage out of it. It's less common in games like Street Fighter, but in team games or anime games, characters are flying everywhere and stray hits at weird angles constantly happen, which makes wacky conversions commonplace at high level play.

Conversion is also a mechanic in DNF Duel that lets you spend all your gray life and cancel an attack back to a neutral state. You can think of it like a Guilty Gear roman cancel, except you spend life instead of your super meter. It's pretty similar to baroque from Tatsunoko vs. Capcom.



拾う (hirou) – *Lit.* pick up



Fierce

Another name for heavy punch. It's the most satisfying alternate name for a normal attack. Even just hearing the word makes you want to press the button.



大パン or 大P (dai pan) – *Lit.* big punch



DED OS

A specific option select made famous in SFIII: 3rd Strike where a super only comes out if you build enough meter on the preceding attack. In 3rd Strike (and most fighting games), attacks that hit will earn more super meter than attacks that are blocked. Let's leverage this effect to do something cool.

First, you'll need to have 0 bars of super meter, and be very close to building your first bar; the exact amount is kind of a sweet spot that you'll recognize with enough practice. Then, armed with this precise amount of meter, get near the opponent and cancel your favorite normal directly into super without thinking or hit confirming. If your normal hits, you will build enough meter to earn a super, and it will automatically be executed. If it's blocked, you won't earn enough meter, and nothing will happen. Using this, you can pull off seemingly inhuman reactions and impress your friends. A Japanese player named DED popularized this technique, and similar to other terms, being good at something tends to attach your name to it.



DED (deddo) – *Lit.* name of the player who made this technique popular

DED中足 (deddo chū ashi) – *Lit.* DED medium leg (i.e., DED crouching medium kick)

See video 



Plink Dash

Pressing two different buttons on nearly consecutive frames (like a plink) to dash around the screen super fast in Marvel vs. Capcom 3. You're allowed to press two buttons at the same time to dash in Marvel, and you are also allowed to cancel your dash's animation into a normal attack, which will stop your movement. So to plink dash, you dash, then cancel your movement with a normal (the first button in your plink), then immediately kara cancel this normal into a dash again with the second button of your plink. Plink dashing is usually much faster than a wavedash and you'll see it used at high level a lot.



ずらし押しダッシュ (zurashi oshi dasshu) – *Lit.* shifting press dash

[See video](#)

Waveland



Doing a wavedash in some way other than immediately after you jump. For example, you could do it after you've performed a jump and have started to descend. You can waveland onto the same surface you jumped from if you want, but it's much more common if you jump to a higher platform (usually directly through it), and then waveland on top of it.

Wavelanding keeps your movement unpredictable and gives you fast access to all sorts of attacks, including aerials if you intentionally slide off the platform. You can also do tricks from the ledge while recovering, such as a ledgedash, using this technique.



台絶空 (dai zekkū) – *Lit.* platform wavedash

[See video](#)

Fuzzy Guard



A technique where you try to change your block very precisely in order to cover multiple directions (like high/low, or left/right). One of a few possible definitions of the term fuzzy.

Let's take a theoretical example; suppose there's a character with a special move that has a high and low option at the end. If we check out the frame data, we find that the low attack starts in 20

frames, and the high attack starts in 23 frames. Rather than try to pull off some unlikely reaction to the high/low part, you instead block low for 20 frames, then switch to a high block between frames 21 and 23.

If you were successful, this will block both options and you didn't have to think! It does require some pretty precise timing though, and if your opponent can delay the attacks at all, it'll throw everything off and you'll probably get smoked. You also can't fuzzy two options if they can hit at the same time, since there is no window in between the attacks to do the switch. But a fuzzy guard is a player trying to hit this narrow window, where switching your blocking direction will catch multiple possibilities.



ファジーガード (faji gādo) – *Lit. fuzzy guard*

See video



Shield Counter



A possible follow-up attack you can do after a successful shield. In **MB: Type Lumina**, you have a choice between three different attacks: pressing A or C does a very fast launcher and leads to a combo, pressing B teleports behind your opponent's back (like DBFZ's vanish), and pressing B+C spends a good chunk of moon gauge to do a fast, invincible pass-through attack. Because (most) attacks that were shielded can be canceled into shield themselves, you'll have to play a mind game here. Once you shield an attack, the A launcher beats everything except an immediate shield back, whereas the B teleport will hit people trying to re-shield on the back of the head with a fat fatal counter and a combo.

In MB: AACC, you'll need to be in Half or Full Moon to have access to shield counters. Half Moon will automatically launch one on successful shield, no input required, whereas in Full Moon, you'll have to input 236D. In either case, they act pretty similarly to Type Lumina's shield counter A, a fast, invincible launcher that leads to a combo.



シールドカウンター (shirudo kauntā)

See video



Step Guard

A Soulcalibur technique that lets you start an 8 Way Run into the foreground or background (that is, do a sidestep) and then immediately block. Like Korean backdashing in Tekken, step guarding lets you both move and block at the same time, and because you are sidestepping, you also will dodge most vertical attacks.

It's not infallible, though. Step guarding loses to throws and low attacks, and in some versions of SC, you can be hit for a few brief frames at the very start of the step, before you're able to guard. Since this technique doesn't create distance between you and your opponent, you'll often be at risk for these specific counters, so be careful.



ステップガード (suteppu gādo) – *Lit.* step guard

See video





Dust Loop

The name of a combo in certain Guilty Gear games that repeats the jumping Dust (j.D) attack several times. It mainly applies to combos for Sol Badguy, but some other characters, like GG Xrd Baiken, can share in the fun too. The execution is different depending on the game, but it usually involves Sol trying to hit with j.D immediately after jumping, and then later again as he is descending. The combo only works in the corner, but it does a lot of damage and looks pretty stylish. The name has been used for the most popular anime game website resource, dustloop.com.



Dループ (D rūpu) – *Lit.* D loop

See video 



Swiss System

A tournament format where all players will get matched with another player that has an identical record, trying to earn a set number of wins before earning a set number of losses. After the initial set of matches, all players with 1 win will play against each other, and all players with 0 wins will play against each other. Then, after the next stage, players who are 2-0, 1-1, and 0-2 will fight, and so on.

The goal is not to decide a single winner, but to divide players into "groups" for future tournament stages; for example, if the goal is 3 wins, players who finish with records of 3-0, 3-1, or 3-2 will qualify for the next stage of the event, with 3-0 players earning the highest seeds. Meanwhile, those who won fewer than 3 games (with records of 2-3, 1-3, or 0-3) will be

eliminated. Swiss systems tend to eliminate about half the players, while allowing for more matches played than, say, a double elimination bracket, making it a nice hybrid format.



スイス式トーナメント (suisu shiki tōnamento) – *Lit.* swiss style tournament



Ledgetrap

Trying to hit someone who is hanging on a ledge while you are still on the stage. Ideally, you will be thinking about the many ways a ledge-grabber can get off the ledge, and your attack patterns will try to cover as many of them as possible without a ton of risk. Coupled with a solid read on your opponent's habits, you can make returning to the stage really difficult for them.



崖狩り (gake kari) – *Lit.* cliff hunting



High Crush

A move that is designed to avoid high attacks. "High", in this sense, can mean both an actual attack that hits high, or just a move that targets the "upper half" of a character's body, even if it may actually hit mid. In games with a crush system, this works because a high crush move is simply programmed to ignore all attacks that hit high.

In some communities, they may use it in a similar way to low profile, where the hurtbox is intentionally shrunk to dodge highs. You may also hear "upper body invincible" to describe this effect. Either way, you will "crush" the high attack and go right through it without any trouble. Check to see if your character has any low crush moves while you're at it.



上半身無敵 (jouhanshin muteki) – *Lit.* upper body invincible



EVO

The world's largest fighting game tournament. Hosted every summer in Las Vegas, the Evolution Championship Series is a multi-day, open event that hosts tens of thousands of competitors from all around the world in several games. In recent years, EVO has filled the Mandalay Bay arena on Sunday for the Top 8 finals of its more popular games and even been featured on TV channels like ESPN. Starting in 2018, EVO also hosts EVO Japan every January.



EVO (written in English)

エボ (ebo) – *Lit. evo* (rarely used)



Manual

A normal attack during a Killer Instinct combo that skips the regular cancel window for an auto-double. Instead of canceling your opener or linker into one of these two-hit auto-doubles, you instead wait longer until your character returns to neutral and perform a link.

Manuals are a relatively advanced part of the KI combo system and not needed to enjoy the game, but they do add some spice and depth to the game. Manuals are much harder to combo break due to smaller breaker windows, and the delayed timing is really good at causing lockouts. You can usually identify manuals because they will hit once (and a bit later), instead of auto-doubles which hit twice (and a bit earlier).



マニュアル (manyuaru) – *Lit. manual*



Paint the Fence

The name of a specific M. Bison combo in Capcom vs. SNK 2. Bison would activate A-Groove, the game's custom combo mode, and quickly take you to the corner before performing looped Psycho Vanish special moves until your health bar just melts. The reason for the combo's name becomes pretty apparent once you see a video of it in action, which I've conveniently provided for you below.



パニコン (pani kon) – *Lit. punish combo* (punish here is short for Bison's Psycho Punish special move)

See video



Critical Art



A strong super attack in Street Fighter 6 that costs all three of your super bars and can only be performed when you have below 25% life remaining (and your health bar has changed to yellow to indicate this). Normal level 3 supers (performed any time you are above 25% health) and CAs are extremely similar, but the CA version will add some extra flair to the animation and do more damage; it's usually 4000 damage for level 3 and 4500 for CA, although some characters have exceptions.

In Street Fighter V, every character only had one super, and they just called that Critical Art universally. Games like to switch the terminology around on you from time to time just to keep you on your toes.



クリティカルアーツ (kritisukaru atsu) – *Lit. critical art*



Negative Penalty

A mechanic in Guilty Gear and BlazBlue that punishes you if you are turtling too much. If you move backwards a lot and refuse to attack for long periods of time, the game will first give you a Negative Warning, and then if you don't start moving forward and attacking, it will actually inflict the Penalty by resetting your Tension Gauge or Barrier Gauge to 0, depending on the game. Negative Penalty tries to force its players to play offense much more than runaway, but in practice the penalty doesn't happen too often and the degree to which it actually prevents defensive playstyles is debatable.



ネガティブペナルティ (negatibu penaruti) – *Lit. negative penalty*

Jail



When you are forced to block an attack that you can normally avoid by crouching or sidestepping. You'll usually talk about a string that "jails"; the later parts of the string might be (for example) high attacks, and if the first part whiffs, you can crouch under them like normal. However, if you end up blocking the first hit, you'll be trapped in jail and stuck blocking all of it.



連續ガード (renzoku gādo) – *Lit. continuous guard*

連ガ (renga) – *Lit. abbreviation of 連續ガード*

See video



Mishima

A character archetype in the Tekken series, most notable for their ability to wavedash and perform Electric Wind God Fists and Hellsweeps. Usually, the character will share the last name Mishima, or be related to the Mishima family in some way. Kazuya, Heihachi, and Devil Jin are all Mishimas, and sometimes Jin is included in the list depending on who you ask. They're typically known for being high execution characters that are fun to watch when controlled by experts.



三島 (mishima) – *Lit. mishima*



Recovery

The period of time that occurs after your attack has finished hitting, but before you gain back control of your character for more actions. It's one of the three stages of an attack, along with startup and active, and is measured in frames. Recovery is the final stage of an attack, the part where your character is finishing the follow-through and usually left wide open if you whiffed.

Recovery is also a term often used in platform fighters to talk about returning to the stage after being launched off. You can read more about that here, if you like.



硬直 (kouchoku) – *Lit. become stiff*



Increase MB

The Under Night In-Birth term for charging up certain specific attacks by holding the button down. You'll add extra properties to the move, like more damage, extra frame advantage, or many other move-specific quirks. A lot of heavy normals and Force Functions in UNI have Increase versions, and you'll find them denoted with square brackets, like 5[C]. Melty Blood has a very similar mechanic to this called "Blowback Edge".



インクリース (inkurīsu) – *Lit. increase*

See video



Neutral



The stage of a fight where neither player is blocking or getting hit by anything, and you are trying to figure out the best way to start or continue your gameplan. There's also a bit of an implicit assumption that the characters are not point blank from each other, so there is some wiggle room to move around and use a wide assortment of attacks.

Footsies is one important aspect of playing the neutral game, and you'll often hear people talk about "the neutral". For example, "Ryu loses the neutral in that matchup" means that Ryu has a hard time finding a place on screen where he can start his gameplan without putting himself at risk.

Another common use of "neutral" is just any time your character is not blocking, being hit, or knocked down (even if you're point blank), and your character is able to take any action. If your opponent attacks you with a string, you might say "I return to neutral in the middle of that string". This implies there's a gap, so you have a chance to try evading or attacking (maybe with a

dragon punch).

As if that's not enough, neutral can *also* mean an attack that is neither plus or minus when it's blocked. You'll hear the terms "0 on block", "even on block", and "neutral on block" for this. Both characters will recover at the same time and can attack at the same time, which might lead to trades.



ニュートラル (nyūtoraru) – *Lit.* neutral

立ち回り (tachi mawari) – *Lit.* walking around



Infinite Worth EXS



An extra powerful super attack in the Under Night In-Birth series. Often abbreviated to IWEX. It costs you all of your EXS gauge, just like a regular Infinite Worth does, but you also need to have less than 30% health remaining. The command is A+B+C+D for all characters. Using IWEX GRD breaks you, so it's best to use it only if you're going to finish off the round.



インフィニットワースイグジスト (infinitto wāsu igujisuto) – *Lit.* infinite worth exist



Pre-Jump

The startup for a jump, usually a brief few frames. In most games, while you are "trying to jump", you are throw invincible but you remain on the ground, which means being hit by most attacks will keep you on the ground and open you up for big punishment. You can also usually complete the input of special moves during this time and the game will still give you a grounded attack. This is useful for special move inputs that involve the up direction, like a 360, so you don't always automatically jump while trying to do them.



ジャンプ移行 (janpu ikou) – *Lit.* jump transition

See video



Fundamentals

A collection of basic skills that will help you win in virtually every fighting game. These include the ability to keep a good range, play footsies, anti-air when the opponent jumps, react to moves with high startup, and condition the opponent so they panic before you. Good fundamentals are the bedrock of a solid player, and once you have enough practice, you can transfer these skills between games, even if the systems are very different.



基礎 (kiso) – *Lit.* fundamental



Blockstop

An extremely brief moment where the game pauses for dramatic effect whenever an attack is blocked. By messing around with how many frames an attack's blockstop lasts for, designers can change how "chunky" the move feels to block. The frames of blockstop exist outside the standard startup, active and recovery measurement of a move's properties; the characters get frozen in place briefly while the game accentuates the blocking effect. The version for moves that hit is called, not surprisingly, hitstop.



ガードストップ (gādo sutoppu) – *Lit.* guard stop



Buffer Window

A period of time where a fighting game will accept the input for an attack. Then, if you input a move any time during that window, it will wait and apply it on the first possible frame after the window passes.

A good example is a reversal after being knocked down. Normally inputting a reversal on exactly the first frame you wake up is pretty hard! So, modern games give you a buffer for several frames before you actually wake up. If you input your reversal special move at any point during this buffer, it will apply it as a reversal automatically, making the timing much easier. There are buffers all over the place in fighting game design, including for inputs during combos, just so that players can feel more confident the moves they execute will come out.

In practical use, people almost always just shorten this to buffer. That term has multiple meanings though, so be careful.



先行入力 (senkou nyūryoku) – *Lit.* preceding input



Bat Top

A style of joystick used in an arcade stick that looks like a mini baseball bat. Most old joysticks in United States arcades used bat tops, although they still find favor on modern day sticks, especially among Koreans who play Tekken. You may even hear this called a "Korean stick" for this reason. You'll probably grip the stick near the base and use your thumb and fingers to push and pull it as you play.



ナス型 (nasu gata) – *Lit.* eggplant model
ナスレバー (nasu rebā) – *Lit.* eggplant lever

See image



Advantage

Usually refers to frame advantage – that is, who is allowed to attack first after some move hits or is blocked. You might say "you can't press a button there, I'm advantage" to indicate that you are plus, or you can also talk about it from the perspective of the player who is minus, saying they are at disadvantage. It also might refer to who wins in a certain matchup, such as "I think Ken has an advantage against Ryu".



有利 (yūri) – *Lit.* advantage



GGPO

An abbreviation of "good game, peace out". While the term started as a phrase said to your opponent after finishing a session, it's now known primarily as the abbreviation for software that helps developers implement rollback netcode into their games. The terms "rollback" and "GGPO" are kinda interchangeable for this reason, even though you can code your own rollback solution without using the GGPO branded middleware.

GGPO is now free to use under the MIT license, and you can read more about it and download its open-source code on the GGPO website.



GGPO (written in English)



Reverse OCV

One player beating the entire opposing team in a Pokemon style team tournament when they are the last player standing on their own team. For this to happen, one team needs to get extremely close to an OCV of their own, and then the last player on the almost-defeated team needs to reverse the whole process. These are pretty rare but they are extremely exciting when they happen.



Special Mid Attack



An attack in a 3D game that can be blocked both standing and crouching. This is unlike a normal mid attack, which must be blocked standing or you're getting hit. Special mids aren't too common, but they're a lot closer to the standard Street Fighter definition of a mid attack which can be blocked any way you like. You've also got your high attacks and low attacks. If you're learning all this for the first time, we fighting game veterans apologize for how confusing this is. We couldn't stop it before it got out of hand.

特殊中段 (tokushu chūdan) – *Lit. special mid attack*

Jump

Leaping off the ground, usually by pressing up on the analog stick. If you press the up-forward or up-back directions, you will jump forwards or backwards, or you can press straight up to get a "neutral jump" where you land in the same place you jumped from. Some games, such as Guilty

Gear or Marvel vs. Capcom titles, will allow you to block while in the air, but most fighting games have no air blocking.

Jumping has a brief amount of startup, and may also have a brief amount of recovery when you land. Every character can attack with specific normals while they are jumping (a normal used while jumping towards the opponent is often called a "jump in"), and some characters also have access to airborne special moves. New players like to jump way too much, which means you can anti-air them for a lot of free damage.



飛び (tobi) – *Lit. flying, leaping*

ジャンプ (janpu) – *Lit. jump*

Uramawari



Getting around the backside of your opponent as they are trying to rise from a knockdown, which might trick them into accidentally performing a wakeup maneuver in the wrong direction. While Virtua Fighter doesn't have cross-ups in the traditional 2D game sense, this sort of left-right confusion plays a kinda similar role in VF's okizeme.



裏回り (uramawari) – *Lit. go around the back*



Skill Ceiling



The absolute peak of skill possible by a human in a game, assuming basically unlimited time and knowledge. If a game's interactions are pretty straightforward and easy to understand, or if there aren't a lot of interesting options that require practice, the skill ceiling will be pretty low. If a game is filled with tons of esoteric character knowledge, there are many interlocking system mechanics, and you'll have to make difficult snap decisions quickly, these things will give a skilled player a huge edge and the skill ceiling will be pretty high. We hope most games have a huge skill ceiling, or else they tend to stop being interesting much faster. You can also discuss a game's skill floor.

Double Luigi



When the last game of a set goes to the final round. Everything is tied up and one round decides it all. This is a funny English adaptation of the Japanese phrase "double riichi", which comes from Mahjong. In that context, "riichi" describes a state where a player is very close to winning, so people started to say "double riichi" on fighting game commentary to indicate that both players are very close to winning. It's particularly common in Japanese Tekken commentary, and like many fighting game terms, English players will adapt some version of it for their own use.



ダブル立直 or ダブルリーチ (daburu rīchi) – *Lit. double ready*

フルセットフルラウンド (furu setto furu raundo) – *Lit. full set full round*

フルフル (furu furu) – *Lit. abbreviation of full set full round*

Crouch Dash



A Tekken movement option given to Mishimas that makes them crouch low to the ground and dash forward a bit. The input is forward, neutral, down, down-forward, which is essentially a DP

motion. Performing multiple Crouch Dashes in a row is what Tekken players will call wavedashing, and each Mishima can attack out of their Crouch Dash with several powerful options, including the Electric Wind God Fist and the Hellsweep. Having a Mishima wavedash in your face is a pretty terrifying feeling, because you know as soon as you try to stop it, he'll make you pay.

Crouch dashing is also a technique in Virtua Fighter, simply by inputting 33 or 11. You will perform a dash from a crouching pose that is lower to the ground than a normal dash, so you might duck under some highs. This dash can also be canceled into other techniques. For example, you can cancel into guarding for more defensive options, or quickly cancel it into crouching or While Standing moves as an extra fast way to access these offensive options. You'll see "CD" or "CDC" used in VF notation.



風神ステップ (fūjin suteppu) – *Lit. wind god step (in Tekken)*

しゃがみダッシュ (shagami dasshu) – *Lit. crouch dash (in VF)*

See video

Hit Throw



An attack that animates like a throw if it hits you, but is blockable like any attack. Leave it to fighting games to put two opposite concepts together and call it a new thing, eh? They're pretty uncommon, and you can basically just think of them like normal, blockable strikes that have a special animation if they hit you. And because they don't operate like normal throws, you might be able to even combo into them!



打撃投げ (dageki nage) – *Lit.* strike throw

See video



Gougi

A system in Fighting EX Layer that lets you choose a set of 5 rule-breaking buffs to your character. Each buff individually triggers after you have met some condition in the middle of the match (like, attacking your opponent 10 times, or using a set amount of super meter). Some of the benefits are relatively mild, like increasing your super meter gain by 10% for the rest of the match, while others can be absolutely wild, like gain permanent hyper armor on everything, freely cancel blocking into any special or super move, or turning invisible every time you dash. You can't freely customize your Gougi, though, you must choose one of the preset "decks" containing 5 buffs and use that.



強氣 (gougi) – *Lit.* strong mind/will

See image



Setup

A situation that gives you ample time to plan a specific mixup. For example, if you land a hard knockdown on someone, you should have enough time to perform some pre-planned idea like a safe jump or maybe an ambiguous cross-up. If you hear people asking "do I get a setup after that?", they're basically asking if they have enough time to plan something devious. Setup and set

play are more or less the same idea, although the latter sounds a bit fancier.

Similarly, a "setup" might refer to the actual method of performing these pre-planned mixups. For example, maybe after a certain knockdown, you walk forward a step, whiff a jab, and then jump forward to perform a safe jump. This specific set of actions is called the setup, since they set up the timing and spacing requirements reliably. When you hear someone say "what's the setup for that mixup?", they're usually asking about this type of thing.



セットプレイ (setto purei) – *Lit.* set play



Fast Fall



Pressing down while in the air to instantly accelerate to your character's maximum falling speed. Attacking after a fast fall is a crucial skill in Smash Bros. Melee, since it lets many characters perform several powerful aerial attacks in rapid succession, hitting the ground between each one. It's part of the core of SHFFLing.



急降下 (kyuu kouka) – *Lit.* sudden fall

Light Punch



One of the attack buttons in a 6-button or 4-button fighter. Commonly abbreviated LP or called jab. Light punches are often fast and advantage on block, but short range and low damage. They are good for fighting in close quarters and when you are panicking uncontrollably.



小パン or プ (ko pan) – *Lit.* small punch

Green Shield



Performing a shield in Under Night In-Birth while already in block stun from a previous attack. Instead of the "standard" blue shield you get from neutral, your shield will be green and it will behave a little differently.

Unlike normal shield, you cannot hold a green shield for as long as you like; instead, tapping the D button will make the green shield active for 15 frames. As a bonus for even trying a green shield, you'll immediately generate a fair bit of pushback (think along the lines of Guilty Gear's Faultless Defense). Then, if an attack hits you while the green shield is up, cool! You get all the benefits of a normal shield, like being put in less block stun which may let you punish something that's normally safe, and negating chip damage.

It's not free to attempt a green shield though. All green shields cost a small amount of super meter to try, and if they don't attack you while your green shield is up, you will lose a block of GRD as an extra penalty. And of course, if you get thrown or hit while trying to green shield, you get GRD broken just like regular shield.

Green shield is pretty important for UNI defense, though. If someone is doing a long block string on you, you can green shield in the middle to push them far away, and if they keep attacking, they'll probably whiff an attack and you can punish! This will force them to mix up their string options, perhaps adding some delays to bait green shield, trying to force you to lose GRD unnecessarily. Then you might be able to escape some other way! This give and take makes up a large part of how pressure works in UNI.



ガードシールド (gādo shirudo) – *Lit.* guard shield

シールド (shirudo) – *Lit.* shield

See video



Fatal Blow



A powerful super attack in Mortal Kombat 11. They replace X-Rays from Mortal Kombat X. Unlike most games, Fatal Blow is not tied to your super meter. Instead, like Tekken 7's Rage Art, you can only use it when you are low on health. If your Fatal Blow is blocked or whiffs, you'll get it back and can use it again after a short cooldown. However, you only get one successful Fatal Blow per match. If it hits, you won't be able to use it for the rest of the match (even if you are low on health in future rounds). Fatal Blows are fast, have armor and do a grip of damage.



フェイタルブロウ (feitaru burou) – *Lit.* fatal blow



Unreactable

An attack that is too fast for human beings to react to.

If you're a beginner, it might surprise you, but most fighting game attacks are unreactable! Online reaction tests will tell you the average human reaction time is around 250 milliseconds (about 15 frames), and virtually all of your standard normal attacks will have startup way under this theoretical reaction limit. This means even the world's best players will need to just block preemptively a lot of the time.

But it's even more difficult than that. Because it's so easy to overwhelm your mental stack while playing, reacting to 15 frames in a fighting game is almost impossible. In fact, even world class players will miss anti-airing jumps extremely regularly, and these jumps can take 45 frames! This is why most mixups a fighting game developer want you to try and react to will give you way more time than 15 frames to see it coming (usually 20-25 frames is common). Anything less than that is just extremely difficult.



- 反応できない (hannou dekinai) – *Lit. cannot react*
反応不可能 (hannou fukanou) – *Lit. unreactable*

T.O.P.



A Garou: Mark of the Wolves system mechanic that makes your character stronger when their health reaches some value. It's an abbreviation of Tactical Offensive Position.

Before the match starts, you get to pick the beginning, middle, or end section of your life bar as the T.O.P. section. When your character reaches this amount of health remaining, they'll get some buffs, like slow health regeneration, added damage, and a new attack. It only lasts while your health is in this region though, so make it count. In some ways, it's similar to Capcom vs. SNK 2's ratio system.



- T.O.P. (written in English)
タクティカル・オフェンシブ・パワー (takutikaru ofenshibu pawā) – *Lit. tactical offensive power*

Ender



A special move executed with either heavy punch or heavy kick any time after you have hit with a Killer Instinct opener. Depending on which special move you do, your ender will have different perks, such as extra damage, more super meter gain, or a wall splat.

Your ender will also get powered up based on how much white life your opponent has, indicated by a number of green rectangles under the combo counter. Short combos without much white life will be "level 1" and give a small reward, while longer combos filled with heavy-hitting attacks can reach "level 4", greatly powering up your ender's effect. The ender will also cash out and remove any white life your opponent has, adding to the combo damage significantly. Just be sure not to do an opener-ender sequence.



エンダー (endā) – *Lit. ender*

Lethal Hit



An attack in Soulcalibur VI that gets powered up if certain conditions are met first. As an example, if your Break Attack hits a normal Guard Impact, you'll earn a Lethal Hit, which gives more damage and better combo extensions. But the conditions will vary wildly between characters for other Lethal Hits.

Some conditions include: hitting someone who whiffed an attack, hitting someone with a move enough times, or hitting someone in the *previous* round with a certain attack. Maybe my favorite Lethal Hit belongs to Ivy, who gains extra properties on a groin kick if the character is male. It's incredibly similar in concept and execution to Mortal Kombat's Krushing Blow.



リーサルヒット (risaru hitto) – *Lit. lethal hit*

[See video](#)

Fast-Faller



A character that has high falling speed and just naturally falls faster towards the stage than other characters. The space animals are common examples of fast-fallers. How fast you fall greatly impacts every aspect of the character; on offense, fast-fallers can quickly throw out aerial attacks and land on the stage, and on defense, opponents can often perform unique combos on them (like chain grabs), since they will fall back into range more quickly than other characters. The opposite of a fast-faller is being floaty. Note that this term is distinct from a fast fall.

Clash



Usually means when two attacks overlap on their hitboxes on the same frame, but do not collide with any hurtbox. This is different than a trade, where both players get hit because both attacks strike a hurtbox at the same time. In a game like Guilty Gear, your clashed attack will produce a special visual effect and you can cancel it in other moves (and in GG Xrd, it may even trigger Danger Time). In Samurai Shodown, there is a dedicated mechanic called Sword Clash.

"Clash" is also a dedicated attack button in BlazBlue: Cross Tag Battle (usually called C). It allows you to perform EX moves and, when done from neutral, acts as a universal overhead attack that triggers a little cinematic. In this sense, it has some similarities to Guilty Gear's Dust button.



相殺 (sousai) – *Lit. cancel each other out*

クラッシュアサルト (kurasshu asaruto) – *Lit. crash assault*



Moon Skill MB

A powerful special move mapped to a single direction plus B+C in Melty Blood: Type Lumina. In fact, each moon skill is a more powerful version of a regular special move your character has, and the moon skill inputs always line up the same way compared to the base special move's inputs. Along with B+C, press forward for a moon skill version of your character's 236 command, press back for 214, press down for 22, and press down-forward for 623.

Each moon skill will cost you 3 bars (30%) of your moon gauge, although you'll get one back if you hit the opponent. It makes a lot of sense to think of these as EX moves from a Street Fighter game, just tied to the moon gauge instead of the more usual super meter. Melty Blood: TL also has 1-bar EX moves (coupled with a screen freeze that makes them look kind of like supers), so in a cool twist, you get two ways to power up each special move!



ムーンスキル (mūn sukiru) – *Lit. moon skill*

See video



Shine SSB

A slang term for the down+B Reflector move given to space animals like Fox and Falco in Super Smash Bros. While the move's original intent was reflecting projectiles back at your opponent, people found that shines could be used for way more things.

They are incredibly fast, sometimes invincible attacks that can be jump canceled and knock opponents away at difficult angles. This means you can use them for combos, pressure, to gimp an

opponent, and everything in between. In Melee, if you jump cancel a shine and then wavedash out of it, that's called a "waveshine" and is a common staple of Fox's oppressive rushdown.

[See video](#)

Crouch



Holding down on the analog stick so your character crouches close to the ground. You have to crouch while blocking in order to block low attacks, but you'll get hit by overhead attacks. Your hurtbox is also usually a little wider while you're crouching, so sometimes certain combos will work on you that wouldn't if you were standing up. In Tekken, the state where you are actually crouching (and not animating between standing and crouching) is called "Full Crouch" (FC).



しゃがみ (shagami) – *Lit.* squat, sit

屈 (kutsu) – *Lit.* bend, crouch (only used as abbreviation of しゃがみ)

Loop



Any sequence of moves (or maybe even just one move) that repeats itself several times in a row, usually in a combo. Some famous fighting game combos are based on loops, like the Dust Loop in Guilty Gear, Daipan Loop in 3rd Strike, Paint the Fence in Capcom vs. SNK 2, and Run Stop Fierce in Street Fighter IV. If you're playing kusoge, you'll probably run into lots of infinite combos that use loops to sneak past certain game rules and keep the combo going forever.



ループ (rūpu) – *Lit.* loop



Wall Jump

Jumping off a wall. Nothing too surprising here. Some characters in 2D games like Street Fighter's Chun-Li can do this when in the corner to escape it, and it's a common mechanic in platform fighters, especially Rivals of Aether where wall jumping is core to the entire recovery game.



三角飛び (sankaku tobi) – *Lit. triangle jump*

Rage Art



A powerful attack introduced in Tekken 7 that is available only when your character is in rage. These are effectively Tekken's supers; your character will freeze the screen and launch an attack that has armor. If the attack hits, you'll start a cinematic where you do a lot of damage. Afterwards, like Rage Drives, you'll be taken out of rage and be unable to use its benefits until the next round. Rage Arts are effective as last-resort attacks when you need to make a big comeback, or as combo finishers after a juggle to close out a round.



レイジアーツ (reiji atsu) – *Lit. rage art*



Break Attack



A Soulcalibur attack that does a lot of damage to a character's guard meter when it's blocked. In modern Soulcalibur games, they also cannot be regularly Guard Impacted unless you spend some super meter to enhance the GI attempt, making them kind of an armor breaker as well. You can

check your move list to see which of your attacks have the Break Attack property. They tend to be a little slow, but safe if not avoided.



ブレイクアタック (bureiku atakku) – *Lit.* break attack



V-Reversal



A defensive mechanic in Street Fighter V that lets you attack while blocking. You consume one stock of your "V-Gauge" (which is also shared for use with your V-Trigger), and your character will do an attack which is invincible to all hits but can be thrown. Usually, your character will knock the opponent out of the way, dealing some gray life while you get some breathing space. This gray life isn't "real" damage until you land another attack, so you'll have to capitalize on your chance before the life heals a few seconds later.

V-Reversals are one of several different "attack while blocking" mechanics found across many games, starting with Street Fighter Alpha's alpha counter. The push and pull between using your V-Gauge for defensive V-Reversals and offensive V-Triggers is one of Street Fighter V's main strategic draws.



Vリバーサル (V ribāsaru) – *Lit.* V-reversal



EX Guard

An advanced form of blocking in Melty Blood: ACC where you press back to block just slightly before an attack reaches you. You'll briefly flash gold and improve your super meter gain, restore some of your guard meter so you don't get guard crushed so quickly, and recover from block stun slightly faster than normal, perhaps allowing new punishes. You'll also push the opponent a little farther away than normal, making it function a little like a pushblock in other games.

It shares a lot of similarities to Guilty Gear's Instant Block and Just Defend from games like King of Fighters. Despite the term's use of "EX", it does not cost meter to perform. Also, only two of the three Moons (Crescent and Full) can do it.



EXガード (ex gādo) – *Lit. ex guard*



Hit and Run



A playstyle that involves trying for lots of stray, low damage hits on offense, while using good movement options to keep the distance from your opponent the rest of the time. Contrasted with runaway, which is purely focused on evasion without basically any offense, hit and run mixes being evasive with occasionally sticking around and playing offense when you are at a good range for your character. It can be a frustrating playstyle to fight against, especially if you are unpredictable about when you hit and when you run.



ヒットアンドアウェイ (hitto ando awei) – *Lit. hit and away*

Drive Cancel



Cancelling a special move into another special move in King of Fighters XIII. Normally, this costs you 50% of your Drive Gauge, a green meter above your super meter. In HD mode, however, all Drive Cancels become much cheaper, around 10% of your Drive Gauge, allowing you to string together long combos filled with special move after special move. Drive Cancels are a huge part of KoF13 strategy, so if you play this game, you'll have to get the execution down.

If you're looking for information on Street Fighter 6, be sure to check out the Drive System entry.



ハイパー ドライブ キャンセル (haipā doraibu kyanseru) – *Lit.* hyper drive cancel

Spinning Piledriver



A classic Zangief command throw in the Street Fighter series, executed with a 360 motion. Zangief grabs you, jumps high in the air while spinning, and then slams you into the ground. Commonly abbreviated to SPD. It also is a catch-all term for any grappler's command throw executed with a 360, across virtually any game.

SPDs tend to be very fast, do tons of damage, and have long range, making them extremely scary up-close threats. The best way to deal with them? Don't be close enough in the first place. Keep those grapplers zoned out.



スクリューパイルドライバー (sukuryū pairu doraibā) – *Lit.* Screw Piledriver

Switching which character you are currently controlling in a team game. Usually you will hold down one of your assist buttons for a little bit, and that character will come flying in from the side and switch positions with who you were controlling. Doing this is often horribly unsafe, but there are moments when it can work, including sometimes during combos. If you want to try and switch out a character that's low on life and about to die, maybe try a safer method like a DHC.



パートナーチェンジ (pātonā chenji) – *Lit.* partner change (for Marvel vs. Capcom)

Zチェンジ (z chenji) – *Lit.* z change (for Dragon Ball FighterZ)

アクティブチェンジ (akutibu chenji) – *Lit.* active change (for BlazBlue: Cross Tag Battle)

Casuals



Playing matches for fun where the results don't matter. Casuals are basically everything that isn't a tournament match or a money match, and you might ask to get some casuals in whenever you go to a local gathering or during downtime at a tournament.



野試合 (noshiai) – *Lit.* casual match

Burst Safe



A combo that avoids the hitbox of a burst attack, making it safe to perform even if the opponent wanted to try and escape it. How easy it is to make your combo safe from bursts depends on the character. Sometimes your highest damage, best combo option is just naturally very burst safe, while other characters need to do a much lower damage version or change their combo path considerably.

Against characters that are good at this, you'll need to have good game knowledge and burst only

at very specific points in the combo, or else you will just waste your burst and get hit for even more damage than you were trying to avoid. Sometimes that means not being able to burst at all, and the damage is just guaranteed.



バースト対策コンボ (bāsuto taisaku konbo) – *Lit. burst countermeasure combo*

See video



Block String



A series of multiple attacks that work well against a blocking opponent. Generally, a block string will be composed of several plus on block or cancelable attacks performed in quick sequence. When blocked, these will slowly push your character out of range and prevent the opponent from counter-attacking, which makes them a very good default, low-risk option when trying to apply offense. Good block strings may even let you hit confirm into more damage if the opponent flinches and stops blocking!

Some people think a block string must leave no gaps; that is to say, you will be able to keep attacking your opponent trapped in block stun with multiple attacks until you get pushed too far away. Not everyone uses the term in this way, though – some people are okay using the term even if there are small gaps between some attacks that might frame trap your opponent, as long as the gap isn't very big. Because of this, you might hear "true block string" used to refer to a block string that has no gaps, to avoid confusion.



固め (katame) – *Lit. to harden*

連續ガード (renzoku gādo) – *Lit. continuous guard*

連ガ (renga) – abbreviation of 連續ガード

See video 



Mid Attack

An attack that can be blocked in either a standing or crouching position. The vast majority of attacks in 2D fighting games are mid attacks. To show just how confusing fighting game terminology can be, in the Tekken series, hitting mid instead refers to an attack that must be blocked standing (what most other games would call an overhead attack). See also low attacks.



上段攻撃 (joudan kougeki) – *Lit.* high level attack (in 2D games, can be blocked standing or crouching)

中段攻撃 (chūdan kougeki) – *Lit.* mid level attack (in 3D games, must be blocked standing)

See video 



Deadly Rave

A super that requires multiple inputs to keep going after the super has connected. These are pretty rare, but notable characters that have supers like this are Geese Howard (whose super "Deadly Rave" is where the name comes from), Hibiki from The Last Blade, and Djeeta from Granblue Fantasy Versus. Think of them as the manual transmissions of super attacks. They

require a little bit of extra work to drive, but some people simply find them fun to input, while others always release the clutch too early and stall out.



デッドリーレイブ (deddori reibu) – *Lit.* deadly rave

See video



Snake Edge



A slow, reactable low attack in the Tekken series that leads to a launch and huge damage if it hits, but is very unsafe if it's blocked. Bryan specifically has a move called Snake Edge, so it's where the namesake comes from, but people will use it to refer to any low attack that can be theoretically blocked on reaction, but hurts a lot when you don't.

You might also be interested in reading about the Hellsweep, a low that is fast and unsafe, or Bryan's Orbital, a mid that nicely complements Snake Edge in his wheel of options.



スネークエッジ (sunēku ejji) – *Lit.* snake edge

See video



Backdash



Inputting the back direction twice to dash backwards. In many modern fighting games, you are briefly invincible while backdashing, which can let you escape your opponent's pressure. But

even if that's not the case, backdashing is often very useful to suddenly create a good amount of space between you and your opponent. If they attack at the right time, you can make attacks whiff and maybe even score a punish.



バックスステップ (bakkusuteppu) – *Lit.* back step

See video



Foxtrotting



A movement technique where you begin a dash, release your stick to neutral as your initial dash animation completes, then do it again. You never truly enter your full run animation, but instead just repeat your run's startup over and over, which for some characters can be faster and trickier than actually running. It's just yet another way to move around in Smash Bros., like the dash dance or wavedashing.

Anywhere Juggle



A property for some moves in a King of Fighters game that lets them bypass the normal juggle limits and always hit no matter what. Originally a programming quirk of some moves to improve their reliability in weird juggle cases, it's now a design choice with balance considerations across several different characters. It even works in flipout situations (such as anti-airing with certain normal attacks), where no other move in the game is allowed to juggle except these specially marked ones.



特殊追撃判定 (tokushu tsuigeki hantei) – *Lit.* special pursuit detection



Variation

A system in some Mortal Kombat games that gives multiple ways to play a character. Each variation for a character will have some common moves that are always available, and then add some unique moves you can't find in other variations, such as new attacks, movement options, or changes to the properties of existing moves. There are preset variations built by the developers, and some MK games even let you customize your own variation from a collection of all the character's possible moves.



バリエーション (bariēshon) – *Lit. variation*



Promove

A more powerful version of a special move in Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe. Rather than powering up special moves with a system like EX moves (which MK did later adopt with their meter burn mechanic), MK vs. DC required a unique input for each individual special move on a case-by-case basis. You might have to mash buttons really fast, hold a button, or even input an entirely new command part-way through the move (in some cases with extremely tight timing).

The end result would be your special move doing more hits, earning higher damage, launching the opponent for a combo, performing a unique follow-up attack, or many other esoteric new properties. The name comes from wanting to give pro players more depth to find with their character, although whether this system succeeded in that goal is up for debate.



Robbery

A term used when you lose a round you think you definitely should have won because your opponent "stole" it from you with a massive comeback. It's a salty term that's almost always used as an insult towards your opponent or the game, maybe because you aren't happy with how strong the game's comeback mechanic is. In all honesty, though, you probably should have just played better, rather than claiming you got robbed by something we all know is in the game.

Friendship



A finishing attack performed after winning a game of Mortal Kombat that shows some playful act of friendship between the two characters. This is in stark contrast to the Fatality, which gruesomely murders the opponent, but they serve the same purpose.



フレンドシップ (furendo shippu) – *Lit. friendship*

KV Meter



A meter in Killer Instinct that limits how long your combo can be. Once the gauge hits 100, the next attack that isn't a throw or a shadow move will cause a blowout and knock the opponent down. The KV stands for Knockdown Value.

V-Shift Break



An automatic follow-up attack you can perform after you successfully dodge an attack with V-Shift. By pressing MK+HP (again) during the slow-motion dodge animation, your character will lunge forward with a basic punch or kick that keeps your full invincibility from the V-Shift, causes a knockdown and deals some gray life. It's a way for you to get some breathing space if you

don't have a good invincible attack to follow up with, like a dragon punch or a super, or you are worried about being out of range of those attacks. It's a slow attack, but fortunately it will be safe if it's blocked.



V-シフトブレイク (V shifuto bureiku) – *Lit.* V-shift break

See video



Genei Jin



An install super for Yun in the Street Fighter series. I'll be talking about the version in Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike, which is notably one of the most powerful supers in fighting game history. Yun activates a special custom combo mode that lets him cancel attacks together repeatedly, gain huge frame advantage on all his attacks, and string together long juggle combos that can do huge damage. In addition, the length of the super gauge is short, which means it is quite common for Yun to finish one activation and use it again only a few seconds later.

The super is so powerful that building meter for Genei Jin is Yun's plan for the start, middle, and end of every round. When he doesn't have the meter, he will often run away and build meter safely from a distance so he can activate it and charge in. When he does have meter, he will create virtually inescapable mixups involving strikes and command grabs, deal damage, then repeat the process. Despite how degenerate Genei Jin is, using it effectively takes quite a bit of practice and experience (especially for things like the daipan loop), so you'd best get to training.



幻影陣 (gen'ei jin) – *Lit.* phantom formation

[See video](#)

Pushback

How far the offensive character gets pushed away from the opponent when an attack hits or is blocked. Getting "pushed out" is very important to fighting game balance. For example, if a move is very unsafe but you get pushed halfway across the screen when it's blocked, the opponent usually won't have any punish that will reach you, so it doesn't matter that much.

Similarly, if you have a plus on block move that doesn't push you out at all, you can use it repeatedly and make the defender's life miserable. Moves that are this strong are pretty rare, though, which is why blocking is a good defensive option; if you hold your position and block, usually the defender will get pushed out after a few attacks and you'll have breathing room again. Some mechanics in games will push the opponent extremely far when used, like Marvel vs. Capcom's pushblock.



ノックバック (nokku bakku) – *Lit. knock back*

ガードバック (gādo bakku) – *Lit. guard back*



Checkmate

A situation where you have no options to avoid losing the round. For example, you might be knocked down and only have a sliver of life, and the opponent performs a safe jump on you, forcing you to block, and then does a dragon punch, chipping you out. In games where chip

damage can kill, sequences like this can be unavoidable. The real way to avoid getting checkmated is to not get put in the situation in the first place.



チェックメイト (chekkumeito) – *Lit. checkmate*

詰み (tsumi) – *Lit. checkmate*

See video



Super Jump

One of the many ways to jump in a King of Fighters game. By pressing down and then up-left or up-right, your character will reach a similar height to a normal jump, but fly much further horizontally toward or away from your opponent. Use these to cover big distances more easily than with normal jumps, but you can still be anti-airied. You may also want to check out the short hop and the hyper hop.

Super Jump is also a common term to describe any "higher than normal" jump in any fighting game (usually input with down, then up), including some characters in Street Fighter, anime games and Versus games. Sometimes we call it a High Jump, but Super Jump is equally common.



スーパージャンプ (sūpā janpu) – *Lit. super jump*

See video



Uppercut

Yet another blanket term that almost always means a dragon punch or shoryuken. It's probably more common than those other terms if the move's official name has Uppercut in it (like, for example, Sagat's Tiger Uppercut), but really, it's all the same thing.



アッパー カット (appā katto) – *Lit.* Uppercut



Proximity Block

A mechanic which forces a character who is walking backwards to stop in place and attempt to block when your opponent attacks. In essence, instead of just continuing to walk backwards while trying to block, games with proximity guard will glue you to a spot on the screen the instant the opponent attacks, even if the attack whiffs. The range where this happens is move dependent; for some moves it can be half the length of the screen or more, while for other moves it will be extremely short.

Not all games have proximity guard! In games like Tekken or Injustice, you can always freely move unless your opponent's attack actually made contact with your body, which makes setting up whiff punishes a little easier.

See video



Krushing Blow



A system in Mortal Kombat 11 that greatly powers up certain moves, but only if a unique condition is met before using it. For example, if you crouch under a high attack and then use a down+2 uppercut to punish, your uppercut will get Krushing Blow properties and launch the

opponent high in the air for a huge combo. Krushing Blows are always shown by zooming in on some bones breaking.

The conditions for triggering the KBs are different for each character (and for each move!), and some of them are pretty wacky. It might be as simple as using a certain special move while fully charged, or maybe you have to use a move three times first, and the fourth time will Krushing Blow. You'll have to take a look at the move list to see what KBs your character has, and how to activate them. Soulcalibur has a similar mechanic called Lethal Hit.



クラッシュブロウ (kurasshu burou) – *Lit.* crushing blow

Soft Knockdown



A specific type of knockdown that offers more options for when (and often where) you can choose to stand up, compared to a hard knockdown. If you press a button right as your back hits the ground, you will quick rise and get back into the fight faster. In some games, you can also hold a direction while quick rising to roll in that direction, making your wakeup more unpredictable and giving you extra space and time to prepare for the next sequence.

Most knockdowns in fighting games will be soft, and only moves or mechanics with specific properties will enforce a hard knockdown. Soft knockdowns are not nearly as unforgiving as hard knockdowns, but you'll still find yourself in uncomfortable situations if you get put on your back too often.



ダウン (daun) – *Lit.* down

[See video](#)

Perfect Shield



Pressing shield a few frames before a Smash Bros. attack hits you. In Melee, you'll hear this called a "Powershield". While you'll still suffer all the normal shield stun of the attack, you'll be granted the ability to cancel the mandatory 15 frame animation that happens when you release the shield button into an immediate attack. It typically means you'll be able to attack quicker and with more options while your opponent is still recovering. If you perfect shielded a projectile, you'll also reflect it back at your opponent! Overall, it's pretty analogous to a parry in a traditional fighter.

In Smash Ultimate, the mechanic works a bit differently; rather than pressing shield, you instead try to release an already-held shield right when the attack hits you. There will be a big flash around your character and you'll strike a little pose, although you will still be able to attack faster than you normally would if you just did a normal shield.



ジャストシールド (jyasuto shirudo) – *Lit. just shield*

ジャストガード (jyasuto gādo) – *Lit. just guard*

ジャスガ (jyasuga) – *Lit. abbreviation of ジャストガード*

Foot Position



The orientation a character is standing in Virtua Fighter. You can have your left foot forward (LFF) or right foot forward (RFF), and you can switch between these freely, including by using certain attacks which switch your foot position. Thinking about it in terms of feet is a little tricky

though, so you might just want to think whether you can see your opponent's "front" or "back", and you'll learn how this influences the direction you want to do your Defensive Move in.

You might also hear discussion about "open" or "closed" stances. A closed stance is when both characters have the same foot position (that is, you can see one character's front and the other character's back), and an open stance is when they have opposite foot positions (you see both fronts or both backs). This has subtle implications on the fight, including making some juggle combos impossible if you're facing the opponent the wrong way.



足位置 (ashi ichi) – *Lit.* foot position

平行 (heikou) – *Lit.* parallel (for closed stance)

八の字 (hachinoji) – *Lit.* figure of eight (for open stance; characters in opposite foot positions can be drawn like / \. This looks like 八 ("hachi", *Lit.* eight), which is the origin of this term)

Arcade Stick



A common controller used to play fighting games. The left side has a joystick (with a certain top and gate), while the right side has a set of 8 buttons. Arcade machines will have input devices like this, although versions that plug into consoles and sit on your lap have been popular for a long time now. You'll probably also hear this called a "fight stick", or even just a "stick" (as in, "I prefer playing on stick").

There are often debates about whether playing on an arcade stick will improve your performance. Some people largely prefer them, since they have muscle memory finely tuned to it, while others prefer to use a standard controller or other input device. I think tournament results

have shown over the years that it's really just down to preference. Use what you feel most comfortable with.



アーケードコントローラー (akēdo kontorōrā) – *Lit. arcade controller*

アケコン (akekon) – *Lit. abbreviation of アーケードコントローラー*

See image



Offense

The act of trying to do damage to your opponent, typically from ranges closer than full screen away. Offense is a broad, encompassing term that can include your ability to apply effective mixups, keep good frame advantage during your attacks, and convert openings into high damage. Players and characters with strong offense tend to be able to win rounds quickly when they get into their favorite spot on screen, and will usually make defensive players throw their controller at the nearest wall.



攻め (seme) – *Lit. attack*



Sweep

Usually crouching heavy kick, but typically refers to any normal that knocks the opponent down by sweeping their legs out from under them. Watch your toes.



足払い (ashi barai) – *Lit. sweeping leg (general term for crouching kick)*

大足 (dai ashi) – *Lit. abbreviation of heavy (大) + 足払い*



Ranbu

A style of super where your character rushes at the opponent in a straight line and then starts rapidly punching them in place before launching them away. It's most common in the King of Fighters series, specifically Ryo's "Ryuko Ranbu" super where the term gets its name.



乱舞 (ranbu) – *Lit.* boisterous dance

See video 



Runback

Playing the opponent you just lost to, hopefully to redeem yourself by playing better and winning. You can also hear it used like "let's run it back". The odds of winning the runback won't be very good if you're salty, not that I would know from experience or anything.



再戦 (saisen) – *Lit.* runback

リベンジマッチ (ribenji macchi) – *Lit.* revenge match



Z Combo

The technical term given to the system in Dragon Ball FighterZ that allows your character to cancel normals into other normals. There are rules in place about how you can do this, such as not repeating attacks and generally always increasing in strength, but stringing together multiple normals will make up a large portion of DBFZ combos. Most players will not use the official "Z Combo" name in regular conversation though, and will just call them much more general terms like a "string", a "chain", or a "gatling".



Zコンボ (Z konbo) – *Lit.* Z combo



Arena Fighter

A style of fighting game where the action takes place in a large 3D arena and the camera is focused behind your back like a more traditional 3D videogame. Arena fighters tend to be based on anime IPs, since they employ extreme movement styles and powerful long-range attacks that suit this subject matter. Common modern examples include Jump Force and Kill la Kill - IF, and many of you reading this will have grown up on games from the Dragon Ball Z: Budokai Tenkaichi series, which are maybe the most famous arena fighters.



3D対戦アクションゲーム (3D taisen akushon gēmu) – *Lit.* 3d fighting action game



Hit Stun

The period of time when your character cannot perform any action after getting hit by an attack. Instead, you have to wait for your character to stop reeling from the hit and recover before you can take new actions. If the offensive player manages to land another hit before their opponent leaves hit stun, then that's how combos get formed! It's rare and super game-specific, but sometimes you can take actions during hit stun. Examples include combo breaking in Killer Instinct and bursting in Guilty Gear – it usually takes the form of some sort of risky combo escape. If you're not playing a game like this, then you just gotta sit there and hold the damage.



のけぞり (nokezori) – *Lit.* to bend/lean backwards

See video





Offensive Meter

A meter in Mortal Kombat 11 that can only be used to perform offensive techniques. Like your Defensive Meter, you can hold 2 bars and it gradually refills at a set rate over the course of the match. You commonly use your Offensive Meter to do Meter Burn moves, amplifying your special moves, and a Getup Attack also costs you one Offensive bar. Unlike other fighting games though, your Fatal Blow (which is effectively MK11's super) is not tied to your Offensive Meter, instead separated into another resource.



オフェンスゲージ (ofensu gēji) – *Lit. offense gauge*

Positive Bonus



A state in Guilty Gear Strive that will grant your character a bunch of positive effects for 10 seconds, including much faster Tension gain, a damage boost on attacks, and improved defense. It always occurs whenever you do a wall break, and this is by far the most common way you'll get the effect. It's possible to achieve Positive Bonus without a wall break, but it involves doing a lot of instant blocking and supers and is very uncommon to see in regular play.



ポジティブボーナス (pojibutu bōnasu) – *Lit. positive bonus*



Drop



An input mistake that ends a combo before it was supposed to finish. Whether you mistimed an attack, input the wrong special move by accident, or just froze up and forgot what you were

supposed to do, you blew it. Some drops aren't so serious – you might end up just losing a small bit of damage, but the match continues normally otherwise. But some drops can be pretty catastrophic and leave you wide open for punishment. Try to avoid those if you can.



ミス (misu) – *Lit. miss*



Flawless Block



An advanced blocking technique in Mortal Kombat 11. By pressing the block button right before you are attacked, you will briefly flash white and reduce the chip damage you take. Once you've successfully done a Flawless Block, you can spend 1 Defensive Meter and 1 Offensive Meter by inputting up+2 or up+3 to immediately counter-attack, much like you would do as one of your Getup options. This can let you punish certain attacks that you normally wouldn't be able to. This mechanic is similar to Just Defend and Instant Blocking in other games.



フローレスブロック (furōresu burokku) – *Lit. flawless block*



Rollback Netcode

An approach to implementing netcode in a fighting game that plays your own inputs immediately, and then rewinds and resimulates (or "rolls back") the game if network delay causes inconsistencies. Rollback is the best known netcode solution for fighting games; since all your local inputs come out without delay, the game feels like offline play, and clever design choices can often hide any network trouble as well, leaving you with a close to flawless online experience even across long distances.

The main downside is the added development cost, since rollback is more difficult to implement

than delay-based netcode and often requires changes that impact the entire game's code structure. Fighting game fans have been pushing developers in recent years to invest in rollback for their games, and everybody who has played a game with a good implementation of rollback is hoping it becomes the industry standard sooner rather than later. For a more thorough look at rollback's strengths and weaknesses, check out this article on netcode.



ロールバックネットコード (rōru bakku netto kōdo) – *Lit. rollback netcode*

ロールバック方式 (rōru bakku houshiki) – *Lit. rollback system*

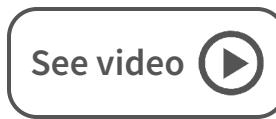


Cross Cut

An input technique for performing a dragon punch right as someone is jumping directly over your head. The regular numpad notation for a dragon punch is 623, but as soon as the opponent clears your head, your inputs need to be facing the opposite direction. If you input 621 (or the much smoother 6321, essentially a half circle back), with the 1 directly as the opponent is overhead, this final input will count as a 3 in your new direction and the DP will successfully come out. This technique to perform a DP "behind you" is quite similar to the auto-correct.



振り向き昇竜 (furimuki shouryū) – *Lit. turn around dragon punch*



Red Focus



A new way to use Street Fighter IV's focus attack in the game's final version, Ultra Street Fighter IV. Instead of pressing MP+MK, you instead press LP+MP+MK. Your character turns red and

you will now absorb all incoming hits, instead of just one, and releasing the buttons will instantly cause a crumple on hit no matter what. Red focus was more expensive to perform though, costing you 2 bars of super meter even for a neutral use (instead of being free), and 3 bars when canceling into it from a move (instead of 2). This meant you couldn't use it haphazardly and had to save up meter to even attempt it.

Like focus attack before it, red focus was divisive. Some characters benefitted greatly from being able to crumple off commonly used moves at will, and in some cases it led to some degenerate strategies.



赤セービングアタック (aka sēbingu atakku) – *Lit.* red saving attack
赤セビ (aka sebi) – abbreviation of 赤セービングアタック

Hop Kick



A Tekken move that hops off the ground and kicks into the air, dodging lows and launching the opponent if it hits. Not every character in Tekken has a hop kick, but you'll find them among several members of the cast, including characters like Claudio, Shaheen, and Law in Tekken 7. The input is usually up-forward with the 4 button.



ライジングトゥーキック (raigingu tū kikku) – *Lit.* rising toe kick
ライトゥー (raitū) – *Lit.* abbreviation of ライジングトゥーキック

See video 

John



A Smash Bros.-specific term meaning "excuse". You'll hear Smash players saying "No Johns" to each other to remind them not to blame the game or the sun in their eyes for their loss, and to take responsibility for their gameplay and knowledge. To be honest, a lot of fighting game communities could stand to learn this lesson.

Alpha Counter



A technique in the Street Fighter Alpha series that lets you attack while blocking. The input differs depending on the game, including a wacky 412 motion in the earlier titles to a more natural forward+(P+K) in Alpha 3. Your character will spend some super meter and perform a pre-determined attack out of block stun, usually knocking the opponent down and creating some space.

The notion of "doing a get-off-me move while blocking" has appeared in tons of different fighting games since Alpha. Killer Instinct has Shadow Counters, Street Fighter V has V-Reversals, and Guilty Gear has Dead Angle. Sometimes players will use "Alpha Counter" as a colloquial phrase to refer to any of these types of mechanics.



ZEROカウンター (zero kauntā) – *Lit.* zero counter

See video 



Motion Input

Any special move command that requires a multi-way joystick input without any charge time. This is just a way to group the quarter circle, half circle, DP motion, and 360 inputs in a nice package. Characters that use these commands for their special moves might be called "motion characters" (as opposed to charge characters).



コマンド技 (komando waza) – *Lit.* command technique



Churning Butter

Spinning the joystick in circles super fast, usually because you want to do a 360 or a 720 attack. If you're doing a block string on a grappler and as soon as you stop they immediately do an SPD, then you can bet they were churning the whole time.



グルグル (guru guru) – *Lit.* turning round and round

スティックを回す (sutikku wo mawasu) – *Lit.* rotate/spin the stick



Cross-Over Combination



Performing a super with every character on your team at the same time in Marvel vs. Capcom 3. Basically everybody just calls this a "team super" instead of the official name. It's really easy to do; just press both of your assist buttons at the same time, no joystick motion necessary. You'll spend one bar of super meter for each character that comes out (if you don't have enough meter, some members of your team won't participate), and you'll dump a ton of damage into the opposing character.



ヴァリアブルコンビネーション (variaburu konbinēshon) – *Lit.* variable combination

[See video !\[\]\(6a7e5a3b818a6ad86e99224123610a95_img.jpg\)](#)

Counter



Often used as shorthand for counter hit, especially if you are reading an on-screen message during a fight.

It's also a move that looks to catch an incoming attack, deflect it away, and automatically launch a counter-attack. You'll sometimes hear it called a "catch counter". You might just get one hit that sends the opponent flying, but some counters will let you get a full combo if it works. Lots of games have counters, from Street Fighter to Killer Instinct to Tekken to virtually every sword character in Super Smash Bros. It's kind of like parrying, except you don't return to neutral or get to choose your next attack.

Counter can also be used in the general English sense, as a technique that specifically wins against another technique. For example, you can counter pick your character matchup. Or you might say "that move is a hard counter to my strategy" if it stops everything you're trying to do.



当て身技 (atemi waza) – *Lit. body-striking technique*

当て身 (atemi) – *Lit. body-striking (technique)*

(This is a Japanese martial arts term that has been used wrongly in fighting games. It started from Geese Howard's 当て身投げ (atemi nage) which means throwing the opponent's body-striking technique)

[See video !\[\]\(dad9e236ecb93d87a6ec91cca140ed2a_img.jpg\)](#)

Fuzzy

A confusing term with two main meanings.

Sometimes people try to block two directions (like high and low, or left and right) nearly at the same time so it's harder to land a mixup on them. I talk about this over at fuzzy guard. Other times, people will try to hit players trying to crouch block with an attack that only hits on standing characters. I talk about this at fuzzy attack. Most people refer to both of these things just as a "fuzzy" though.

Generally, whenever somebody uses the term "fuzzy", they are talking about a situation where a character is trying to be in two states "at once" (that is, kind of a fuzzy middle ground between the states). So, maybe a character tries to block multiple directions at once, or you exploit a character who is trying to crouch but is actually standing. Some people will freestyle with the term a bit, talking about, maybe, a "fuzzy backdash" (trying to backdash while doing something else, like blocking). If you think of the term in this context, you'll be alright.



ファジー (faji) – *Lit. fuzzy*

ファジーガード (faji gādo) – *Lit. fuzzy guard*

F式 (efu shiki) – *Lit. F style/technique (refers to a fuzzy attack)*



Turtling

Playing overwhelmingly defensively, with as few offensive risks as possible. Players who turtle will largely prefer blocking, putting up strong defense with powerful, pre-emptive pokes or projectiles, and in general will almost never instigate an offensive attack. Their goal is to win long, grueling rounds, often by time out, where the opponent feels like they have no way to get close. The term is often intended as an insult, but many turtling players take pride in their playstyle.



待ち (machi) – *Lit. wait* (Machi Guile is a famous term in the SFII era)



OTG

Using specific moves to hit the opponent while they are knocked down. OTG stands for "off the ground" (or "on the ground", depending on who you ask). Not every game has OTG as a mechanic, and even those that do, usually only a few specially marked moves can do it. OTG moves are pretty common in team games like Marvel vs. Capcom 3, where knocking your opponent down isn't the *end* of your combo, it's the *start* of it.



ダウント追撃 (daun tsuigeki) – *Lit. down pursuit*



Blitz Shield GG

A parry mechanic in Guilty Gear Xrd. Pressing Heavy Slash and another button (like Slash) will put up a blue shield in front of you, and you will parry strikes for a brief window. Trying to Blitz Shield costs 25% Tension and if it works, you'll put your opponent in a huge reel animation, wide

open for punishment. But be careful, your opponent can input a Blitz Shield back at you from this stunned state, so you might want to vary the timing of your punish a little bit if you can. There is also a safer version of this, called Blitz Attack.



ブリッツシールド (burittsu shirudo) – *Lit.* blitz shield

Delayed Hyper Combo

A mechanic in most team games that lets you perform a super with one character, then tag into another character by performing a second super. The first character will leave the screen immediately, while the second character jumps on the screen directly at the start of their super. This is almost always shortened to "DHC", even though it might technically have another name in some games (Dragon Ball FighterZ calls it "Ultimate Z Change", but it's the same thing).

DHCs are frequently used for combo extensions, and in Marvel games specifically, they are great at tagging in a backup character safely at the cost of 2 bars. The technique is so common that in the average Marvel match, you'll probably see half a dozen DHCs between both players. They've also been the source of a bug or two, notably the appropriately named DHC glitch in Marvel vs. Capcom 3.

See video 

Plink

An input trick where you press two different buttons on two consecutive frames. If you use an arcade stick, the best way to do this is to "drum" two different fingers across the two buttons

extremely quickly. It will kind of feel a bit like a piano input. It's often notated with a ~, so pressing MP and then LP right after would be MP~LP.

This technique was especially common in Street Fighter IV, where the buttons you'd pick would descend in strength (for example, HP and then MP). A quirk in SFIV's input handling system would treat these two separate button presses as the same button (that is, the second input would "copy" the first). Giving you the same button on two consecutive frames was a very important way to double your chances at hitting your 1-frame link, and it became a near-mandatory skill to learn to improve past the beginner ranks in SFIV. You could even use the Select button to do this!

"Plink" is pronounced as one syllable, but it is short for "priority link" (or "P-link"), since it makes use of how SFIV prioritizes your button presses when they are exactly one frame apart. While the term originated in SFIV, it's now the common phrase for this type of input across several other games. You'll use it for techniques like FD Canceling in Guilty Gear, and it even finds its way into the name of other important mechanics, like plink dashing in Marvel vs. Capcom 3.



辻式入力 (tsujishiki nyūryoku) – *Lit.* crossing technique input
辻式 (tsujishiki) – *Lit.* crossing technique

See video



Comeback Mechanic



A system in a fighting game that tends to help the losing player and allow them to make a comeback a bit more easily. Some people will also define this as a mechanic that can only be used (or gets significantly stronger) when you've taken enough damage. Not all games have such a

system, but many modern games do, including X-Factor in Marvel vs Capcom 3, Rage in Tekken 7, and V-Trigger in Street Fighter V. Sometimes comeback mechanics can be too strong and reward the losing player too much, but many times they introduce fun new mechanics that both players use equally often and make the game more interesting.



逆転要素 (gyakuten youso) – *Lit. comeback element*



Lab

The training room. It's here where you'll practice your combos, learn how your moves work, and try to create strategies for how to play against certain characters. You'll hear people say things like "I have to lab that later" when they get hit by a strong move or mixup and they need to figure out what to do about it. Not everyone is a "lab monster" and loves to spend dozens of hours in training mode, but every player should at least know their way around it so they can practice the basics of the game.



練習 (renshū) – *Lit. training*
研究 (kenkyū) – *Lit. research*



Stamina

A meter under your health bar that measures how much you are allowed to run in Mortal Kombat X (and some older games like Mortal Kombat 3). Running quickly drains your stamina meter, so you'll have to ration how you use this powerful movement technique. Stamina is also needed to do powerful super moves like X-Ray or to use MKX's Breaker system, so you'll have to weigh these tradeoffs.



スタミナ (sutamina) – *Lit.* stamina



Read

A sub-class of a guess where your decision is not wholly random, but instead informed by some knowledge about the game or your opponent's tendencies. In reality, though, they are pretty closely linked. You might say, for example, "I knew he likes to throw in that situation, so I made a read and jumped to avoid it." Some people think a read is just a guess that worked... and there is probably more than just a little truth to that.



読み (yomi) – *Lit.* read



Limit Break



A comeback mechanic in Dragon Ball FighterZ that increases your damage by 20% when you have only one character left. This damage boost is automatically applied and doesn't have a time limit; you get it as soon as you're on your last character, and you keep it until you die. This can even be amplified a bit further if you still have access to Sparking. Because comebacks in DBFZ are pretty hard to make normally, this added juice is supposed to make your last character a bit scarier and help the match not be a foregone conclusion.



リミットブレイク (rimitto bureiku) – *Lit.* limit break



Resonance Blaze



A comeback mechanic in BlazBlue: Cross Tag Battle that can only be accessed when one of your two characters has died. By pressing your assist button from neutral, you'll activate this powered up state. You get much increased chip damage, the timer stops, the opponent can no longer burst, you get access to way more super meter, and you can perform new types of cancels leading to bigger combos. Your Resonance Blaze gets stronger depending on how often you used your partner before they died (shown by the diamond "Resonance Gauge" near your super meter), so the game definitely encourages finding synergy between your characters.



レゾナンスブレイズ (rezonansu bureizu) – *Lit. resonance blaze*

Tournament Combo



An easy, nearly risk-free version of a BnB combo that you will always feel comfortable executing, even when you're playing in a tournament and your nerves are high. Tournament combos will probably do less damage or needlessly spend more resources than your optimal combo, but the value of never dropping it in the clutch means they are great backup plans when you feel your heart racing.

Similarly, a "tournament character" is a character that has many safe, relatively low-risk attacks and options so you can maintain stability in a long tournament run. In contrast to this, characters like glass cannons can succeed in tournaments as well, but you might get a few more gray hairs along the way.

Homie Stock



Voluntarily self-destructing (that is, running off the stage to your death) in Smash Bros. when your opponent messes up and accidentally dies at a low percentage. Some players consider it an act of sportsmanship in friendlies, especially in games like Melee where tons of characters live on a knife's edge between life and death with difficult execution and accidental SDs are common. In tournament matches though, all bets are typically off and there's nothing wrong with accepting the free gift and trying to win.

Tumble



A state in Smash Bros. where your character rotates end over end while falling through the sky. Tumble happens in a variety of situations, usually after being knocked back suitably far (the exact details vary based on the game), but being in this state gives your character access to certain system mechanics, like teching into the ground. Tumbling has changed a lot throughout the various Smash games, where it is a pure detriment in some and not so bad (or even situationally beneficial) in others.



くるくる落下 (kuru kuru rakka) – *Lit. spin falling*

Wavedash



A slang term for a certain type of movement that looks like your character is sliding along the ground. Wavedashes almost always move in discrete, repeated chunks (or "waves"), hence the name. They usually result from using some way to move forward, canceling that movement option halfway through, then repeating it over and over.

How wavedashes work differ depending on the game. In Super Smash Bros. Melee, you can slide

along the ground by jumping and using a low, angular air dodge repeatedly. In Marvel vs. Capcom 3, you can use a forward dash and cancel it by crouching before dashing again (although plink dashing ended up being a superior movement option). In Tekken, Mishimas can repeat a certain special move called a Crouch Dash over and over to skitter across the stage, tracking your character and threatening with many dangerous attacks. The main thing in common is just how the characters look while they're moving.



ウェーブダッシュ (wēbu dasshu) – *Lit.* wavedash (used in MvC3)

ステステ (sute sute) – *Lit.* step step (used in Tekken)

絶空 (zekkū) – *Lit.* abbreviation of 絶低空・空中緊急回避 (zetteikū kūchū kinkyū kaihi) – *Lit.* low attitude air emergency dodge (used in Smash)

See video

Grappler Jump



Doing an empty jump from a specific range with a slow moving character with big air attacks (usually a grappler). Grapplers tend to have a hard time approaching, so they're given beefy air moves to make jumping scary. You, as the defender, should rightly be trying to anti-air them. However, if a grappler finds the sweet spot where a forward jump would hit with the tip of one of these air attacks, you're in trouble; if they empty jump instead, your anti-air will probably be out of range and you'll whiff, leading to a big punish.

If you ever see a match between two skilled players, watch for how often the grappler gets to jump forward and press an air attack without being anti-airied. The fear of a potential empty

jump causing whiffs is the reason why. The alternative of simply not trying to anti-air is even worse, though. You don't want grappler players getting free approaches.

[See video](#)

Anti-Air



Hitting someone who is jumping at you while you are on the ground. Because you can't block in the air in most fighting games, a smart opponent will swat you out of the air if you jump at them too predictably. Each character usually has a few moves that hit at an upward angle, perfect for intercepting those pesky jumpers; perhaps the most powerful such move is the dragon punch. People who jump at you too much are giving you free damage, so you'd better learn to take it.



対空 (taikū) – *Lit. anti-air*

[See video](#)

Frame Advantage



Describes who recovers first when a move hits or is blocked. If you use an attack that recovers before the opponent leaves block stun (or hit stun), you get control of your character back first and can attack before the opponent, if you want. This means you "have frame advantage", and it's the same thing as being plus. You can also just ask "what's the frame advantage on that move?" to find out if you are plus or minus.

Having positive frame advantage is a bit stronger than just merely being safe, since being safe will also include a few moves that are minus (just not *so* minus that they can be punished). You'll hear people give advice like "I'm advantage there, don't press a button" and when you're first picking up fighting games, you should pay attention.



有利フレーム (yūri furēmu) – *Lit.* advantage frame



Command Throw

A special move that acts as a throw. In the vast majority of games, you cannot throw tech to defend against them. Command throws are often much longer range than regular throws and can lead to combos or mixups that regular throws cannot, and the added difficulty defending against them makes them extra scary. It's an ever-present staple of the grappler toolkit.



コマンド投げ (komando nage) – *Lit.* command throw

コマ投げ (koma nage) – *Lit.* abbreviation of コマンド投げ

See video



Grappler

A character whose primary offensive tools are throws and command throws. Grapplers usually move and jump slowly and fight poorly from long distances, but are terrifying when they get close to their opponent and apply their very strong throw-based mixups. Examples include Zangief from Street Fighter and Potemkin from Guilty Gear.

A character that frequently uses command throws, but has better ways to move around the screen than traditional grapplers, are sometimes called "hybrid" or "pseudo"-grapplers. Grappler players live for that one moment when they can get close and win back all the damage they took trying to close the gap.



投げキャラ (nage kyara) – *Lit. throw character*



On Hit

How you describe what happens after a move hits. You can talk about general strategy, like "When you use standing HK, you should cancel into V-Trigger on hit". Or, very often, you'll use it to talk about frame advantage, like "Standing HK is +4 on hit". As you might expect, there is also on block.



ヒット時 (hitto ji) – *Lit. on hit*



Keeper Jin 🔥

An advanced combo for Yun in Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike, named after Japanese player Keeper. While in Genei Jin, Yun rapidly switches between crouching medium kick and standing heavy punch (that has been kara'ed from a standing medium punch). This combo requires very precise timing and spacing, but does quite a bit of damage and can lead to further mixups. It is also closely related to (and often mistaken for) Yun's daipan loop, which does more damage and is more commonly seen in today's 3rd Strike matches.



キ一パ一陣 (kipā jin) – *Lit. keeper jin*

[See video](#)

Random

Acting extremely unpredictably and seemingly without a coherent strategy. Calling someone random usually has a tinge of salt behind it, because when it works, it can be pretty frustrating. The world's best players need to throw a bit of randomness into their gameplans to keep opponents off-guard, but don't go too wild or you'll just lose for no reason.

Random can also refer to picking your character using the Random Select feature on the character select screen. In theory you should have an equal chance to play anyone in the game, but in reality you'll get yet another character you don't know how to play for the seventh time in a row.



ブッパ (buppa) – *Lit.* abbreviation of ぶっ放し (buppanashi – to fire off), used for doing a raw special move randomly (see raw)
ランダムセレクト (randamu serekuto) – *Lit.* random select



Shield

How you block in **Super Smash Bros**. Holding one of your shield buttons will put a round bubble around your character, blocking any attack that hits it. If you hold it too long or take too many hits, your shield will decrease in size; if it gets too small, it will shatter and leave you stunned for several seconds. Shielding is not foolproof; like most fighting games, you can still be thrown while shielding, and even attacked by a shield poke.

Shield is also a special form of blocking in the **Under Night In-Birth** series. While blocking, press or hold the D button to eliminate chip damage and decrease block stun from incoming attacks slightly; you might even be able to punish some attacks you couldn't before by shielding them. Successful shields even gain you GRD. But the kicker is, if you get hit or thrown while shielding, you will be GRD broken, which is often super devastating. If you try to shield while in block stun, you'll get a Green Shield, which works a bit differently.

Shield is also a concept in Melty Blood, but I've moved that definition over to its own term because this one's getting pretty long already.



シールド (shirudo) – *Lit. shield*

Priority System



A mechanic in select games where certain attacks will always beat other attacks if they collide on the same frame. For example, in Street Fighter V, heavy attacks will beat medium attacks, and mediums will beat lights. Killer Instinct has a similar system, with special moves and shadow moves having higher priority still. Meanwhile, a game like Street Fighter IV has no priority system, and attacks of all strengths can freely trade.

A lot of beginners will use the term "priority" to talk about when a move "beats" another move, but that's usually for a bunch of reasons other than a true priority system coded at the system level. For example, the move might just be very fast and good at interrupting opponent attacks, or it might have a really large hitbox. Older fighting game veterans might have used "priority" in

this way in the past, but I think in modern times, they won't use the term to talk about strong moves in this sense, especially now that games are better understood.



技強度 (waza kyoudo) – *Lit.* technique strength (i.e., this attack has more strength than the other)

Active Flow



A state you can enter in BlazBlue if you attack with your character often enough, which provides a few nice passive benefits. When you've done enough offensive actions and finally land a certain attack, your gauges will all turn purple and you'll be in Active Flow for around 14 seconds. You'll get a small damage boost and your Burst gauge will regenerate faster, among other positive effects. You can even extend this timer by using your Overdrive if you like.



アクティブフロウ (akutibu furou) – *Lit.* active flow

Crouch Cancel Infinite



A famous game-defining bug in Street Fighter Alpha 3 that let some characters in V-ISM perform an infinite combo. After landing a certain type of custom combo, you could continuously juggle the opponent with air normals until they died or, perhaps more likely, until time ran out. The trick is that you need to land from your air normal while holding down (i.e., crouching) in order to trick the game into keeping the combo alive. If you want to read more about this, check out this blog post on famous FG bugs.



着地キャンセル (chakuchi kyanseru) – *Lit.* landing cancel

着キャン (chakukyan) – *Lit.* abbreviation of 着地キャンセル

[See video](#)

Yellow Roman Cancel



A type of Roman cancel in Guilty Gear Xrd and Guilty Gear Strive, commonly abbreviated to YRC. The uses are different in each game.

In **Guilty Gear Strive**, performing the Roman Cancel input while you are blocking makes your character emit a yellow shockwave, which slows down your opponent briefly before pushing them away. This costs 50% Tension and will grant you a bit of breathing space from an opponent who is smothering you with attacks. It can only be used while blocking, and it replaces Dead Angle from Guilty Gear Xrd.

In the **Guilty Gear Xrd** series, Yellow Roman cancels apply to moves that are still in their startup (that is, not able to hit the opponent yet), as long as your opponent is not currently being hit or blocking something. They are the cheapest Roman cancel option, costing only 25% Tension instead of the usual 50%, which makes them similar to older Force Roman Cancels but with easier timing. Try YRCing a projectile and then running up behind it to attack your opponent! You can also press the command for YRC while your character is doing nothing (in GG Strive, this option is colored blue instead). You won't cancel any move, but you'll still get a short screen freeze; use this brief slowdown to see what your opponent is doing and input a guaranteed counterattack.



イエローロマンキャンセル (ierō roman kyanseru) – *Lit. yellow roman cancel*

黄色ロマンキャンセル (ki iro roman kyanseru) – *Lit. yellow roman cancel*

黄キヤン (kikyan) – *Lit.* abbreviation of 黄色口マンキヤンセル

See video 



Macro

Assigning a single button to act as pressing multiple buttons. For example, if you have a hard time pressing all three punch buttons in a Street Fighter game, you can assign a spare button to be a 3 punch macro, making it a lot easier to do EX moves or similar attacks. Most games will let you macro several common multi-button commands, like throw, in your controller settings.

Note that "macro" can also mean a long series of pre-programmed inputs automatically played by the computer. With special software, you could program a macro to do a complicated combo that will never fail, and then just press one button to watch it all happen. Using macros in this sense is extremely illegal in tournaments, and I'd better not catch you doing it online either. The general rule is to stick to what the in-game controller options allow.



マクロ (makuro) – *Lit.* macro



Kubota Escape

A bug in Ultimate Marvel vs. Capcom 3 that tries to tag your character for a dead character. For this to work, you need to have exactly one dead character on your team and be in neutral. Then, during the screen freeze of an opponent's super, press and hold your first assist button, then perform a QCF followed by pressing and holding your second assist button. Your point character will try to tag out, and then after a few seconds, they will come back into the fight as if they were

tagged in.

The Kubota Escape was named after Kubo, a Japanese player who found the technique. You can use it to avoid having to block certain supers or team supers which would normally cause a ton of chip damage or setup a gross mixup, and your character might even be able to punish the opponent when they come back in. It's a pretty niche technique not often seen at high-level play, but it can be situationally useful.



クボタエスケープ (kubota esukēpu) – *Lit. kubota escape*

See video



Buffered Attack



Whiffing a normal attack in front of you, and inputting another attack as a cancel afterwards. When your attack whiffs, nothing further happens, but if your opponent accidentally runs into the attack, the cancel happens automatically. This is a very common option select that will really help you get more mileage out of your strong pokes, and you don't have to take any extra risk! You just do the same inputs and let the game take the correct action based on what your opponent does.

This technique is always just called a "buffer", but because buffer has a few meanings, I've separated this into its own entry.



仕込み (shikomi) – *Lit. preparation, stocking up*

[See video](#)

Incoming



When your opponent's character in a team game is forced to come on screen while you are free to act. This happens in one of two main ways: from a snapback, or when your opponent's point character dies and the next character in line must jump into the fight.

In games like Marvel vs. Capcom, the mixups you can generate "on incoming" are some of the strongest, most difficult to block sequences in all of fighting games. It's a very scary part of the fight and if you can survive the incoming, you'll be in good shape. Some games try to remove the incoming mixup, like Dragon Ball FighterZ, which resets to a "round start" position each time a character is defeated. But you still have to worry about being snapped, so no matter how hard you try, people will find ways to make incoming scary.



出現 (shutsugen) – *Lit. appearance*

Gimp



Intercepting a character who is trying to recover back to the stage and killing them, usually with a weak attack or technique not meant to deliver powerful knockback. The general goal is to interfere with their preferred method of recovery so they are at risk of dying at low percentages. Maybe you will knock Donkey Kong downwards so his mostly-horizontal recovery doesn't have the height to get back on the stage, or maybe you will try to absorb Ness's PK Thunder so he falls helplessly to his death. Early gimps can cause huge momentum swings in a match, so be careful.



ギンブ (ginpu) – *Lit. gimp*

低パーセントで撃墜する (tei pāsento de gekitsui suru) – *Lit. low percent kill*

See video



Yomi



To read your opponent's intentions and counter them. Yomi is the Japanese word for "read", but unless it's used in the name of a term (like Yomi Counter), it's not commonly heard in regular fighting game parlance. We usually just say something like "nice read" or "he's in my head" instead.



読み (yomi) – *Lit. read*

1-Frame Link



A link that only has a 1-frame window to succeed, the smallest possible time interval in a fighting game. You'll know you have a 1-frame link on your hands if the on hit advantage number for your first move matches the startup number for the second move (for example, a +5 on hit attack linking into a move that hits on the 5th frame).

In some games, it's as tight as it sounds; you'll just have to hit the link perfectly with a just frame input with no tricks to save you. But in most games, you'll get a bit of help to make the link easier. For example, there are input tricks like plinking and pianoing that will give you multiple shots to hit the window. And the game itself might have an input buffer which will save and apply your

input on the correct frame if you hit it a little early. So despite how hard it may sound, hitting the exact 1-frame window isn't always necessary.



猶予1フレーム目押し (yūyo ichi furēmu meoshi) – *Lit.* 1 frame period button press



Set

A group of games. Usually in a tournament, you will have to win a set against your opponent to move on (usually the first to win 2 or 3 games), just to make sure nobody can fluke a single win and send you packing. Most of the time, you'll see the letters FT used to talk about how long a set is – for example, a FT10 is a set that ends after someone wins 10 games. You don't have to be this formal about it, though, you can also just ask your friend to "run a set" and play until they kick you out of their house.



?本先取 (? hon senshu) – *Lit.* first to ? games

?先 (? saki) – *Lit.* first to ?



Flowchart

A basic strategy that can be followed in steps: if the current game state is X, just always do Y. Flowchart is usually used in a derogatory way to indicate a person that never thinks and always does the same thing (and usually loses in the same ways each time). But that said, there's certainly value in following a basic flowchart when you're learning a game. It can reduce the burden of learning everything up front and give you meaningful practice quickly.

A set of mechanics you apply to your character in Street Fighter Alpha 3. They change a few rules around and also give you different types of supers to work with.

X-ISM: One long super bar, no air blocking, and no alpha counter.

A-ISM: Three levels of super. Called **Z-ISM** in Japan.

V-ISM: Instead of a standard super, you have access to a "variable combo" mode (i.e., a custom combo). A popular ISM among top players due to the crouch cancel infinite bug.

This sort of "pick your system" mechanic spread to other games shortly after, such as CvS2's Grooves.



イズム (izumu) – *Lit. ism*

Gravity Scaling



A game mechanic where the opponent in a prolonged air combo or being juggled will start to fall towards the ground faster as the combo gets longer. Eventually, the character gets too heavy and will thunk to the ground faster than the opponent can attack, ending the combo. It's not a super common system, usually implemented in NRS titles or the occasional anime game, but it's one way to prevent infinite combos.



重力補正 (jūryoku hosei) – *Lit. gravity correction*





Wall Break

Punching someone through a wall. In Tekken, this specifically means any of the destructible walls on several of the stages, as long as you stay at the same horizontal level (if you also fall down to a new level, that's called a balcony break). Only certain moves can cause a wall break, but they usually open up new combos as the opponent reels from the massive impact of being sent through a wall.

Guilty Gear Strive brings the concept of a wall break to a 2D game as well. When you have your opponent near the corner, you can use certain attacks multiple times to "damage" the corner. Eventually, the opponent will splat painfully against the screen edge, then use any attack to send them through, transitioning to a new stage. You will get a Positive Bonus when you do this, earning you Tension at a much faster rate for the next several seconds. And some rare attacks (usually supers) can wall break from a really long distance away.



壁破壊 (kabe hakai) – *Lit. wall break*



Wall Splat

Attacking someone into a wall; if you use the right move, they will splat against the wall and crumble in front of it, open to more hits. In Tekken, this works against any wall that is not designated to break (most of them will work fine). Ideally, you want to hit them directly backwards into the wall so you don't get a side wall. In Killer Instinct, you can wall splat against the corner of a stage if you use a move marked with the wall splat property. For most characters, that is likely to be their designated wall splat ender.



壁貼り付け (kabe hari tsuke) – *Lit. wall stick*



Matchup

The strategy and game knowledge that applies for one specific character against another specific character. You can use the term generally, such as "I struggle in the Ryu vs. Guile matchup" or "in the Sagat matchup, try not to jump very often". It's also quite common to try to measure one character's advantage over another by stating how many games out of 10 they should win if two high-level players of equal skill played against each other. Opinions differ on exactly how to interpret the numbers, but here's a generally accepted meaning:

5-5: An equal matchup.

6-4: A favorable matchup, but the disadvantaged character can still win without huge difficulty.

7-3: A quite favorable matchup, the winning character does not have to take many risks to win, but can still lose with a few key reads by the opponent. Most modern games have a few 7-3s but not much worse.

8-2: A very favorable matchup, the winning character almost wins by default with one or two dominating strategies.

9-1: The matchup is so favorable that there is almost literally nothing the opponent can do to stand any chance of winning. These basically don't exist in modern fighting games.

10-0: The worst matchup in fighting game history. An incredibly easy strategy dominates the match with absolutely zero counter-play possible.

Matchup numbers are often up for debate, especially since people of different skill and knowledge are discussing it, but there is real value in the discussion nonetheless. You can make matchup charts this way, which might give insight into a game's balance.



組み合わせ (kumi awase) – *Lit.* matching / pairing



Route

The specific choice of moves you use in a combo. Really, it's mostly a synonym for "combo". It's more common to use the term "route" or "combo route" in an anime game or other titles with a bigger reliance on air combos.

You might say something like "that combo doesn't work on Sol, you need to use a different route" to imply that some moves in the combo need to change. You might have a few different routes for your BnBs depending on which character you're facing and whether you're midscreen or in the corner.



ルート (rūto) – *Lit.* route

Vorpal Strip



The act of ending someone's Vorpal by hitting them with a Veil Off in a combo. The explosive blast that occurs when you Veil Off will end their Vorpal state immediately, but it's a slow move so it's not easy to use in a combo. You'll have to find some way to link the Veil Off, typically after a high juggle, in order to strip your opponent of their Vorpal.

Note that you can't land a Crosscast Veil Off, the special Vorpal-enhanced version of Veil Off, to cause a Vorpal strip. CVO is special because you can cancel it from normal attacks, making it trivial to combo into, so the developers chose to not allow this to work as a Vorpal strip. You'll have to make sure it's the raw Veil Off you get when your character is in neutral.

See video 



Impact Frame

A specific way to talk about a move's startup. If a move has 7 frames of non-hitting startup, and then has its first active frame on frame 8, you'll often see this notated as "i8" to indicate that the move can first make impact with its opponent on frame 8. This notation is common in Tekken, but you'll also hear "impact frame" used in Super Smash Bros. from time to time.



発生 (hassei) – *Lit.* to occur/to generate



Reaction

The act of noticing that a certain action has occurred, and then taking a specific action as a result. On defense, you'll use reactions to do things like see an overhead and change to a standing block, or see a jump and anti-air with an uppercut. On offense, you can force people to swing and miss and then whiff punish them, or you can hit confirm your attacks when they land. Reactions can come from visual or audio cues (usually, it's some combination of both).

Not everything is reactable in fighting games, since humans have physical limits. Because of the struggle of dealing with your mental stack, even very good players will often get hit by moves that have 20 frames of startup or more, so don't feel bad when it happens to you. The opposite of doing something "on reaction" is a guess, and both halves of this coin are vital to fighting game design.



反応 (hannou) – *Lit.* reaction





Mixbox

A type of controller that has the layout of an arcade stick for its attack buttons, but replaces the joystick lever with up, down, left, and right arrow keys from a keyboard. It is, effectively, the keyboard arcade stick. These are less common than a Hitbox but have similar benefits; converting directions to button presses instead of moving a joystick can allow for faster reactions and easier execution for certain moves.



Mixbox

See image



Reflect



A defensive mechanic in Dragon Ball FighterZ that pushes your opponent away if you can successfully parry an attack. It's performed by pressing back + the S button while in neutral, and if your opponent doesn't attack, you'll whiff the attempted parry and most likely get punished.

The end result is similar to pushblocking, although you can't do this technique while blocking like in other team games, and it's quite a bit riskier because you leave yourself open if you're wrong. But if the opponent did attack, you'll create some much needed space, and you can even cancel the end of a successful reflect with some attacks, which might give you a punish opportunity of your own!



リフレクト (rifurekuto) – *Lit. reflect*



Shadow Counter

A defensive technique in Killer Instinct that lets you parry an attack during block stun and launch your own counter-attacking shadow move. It costs one bar of shadow meter to try, and if successful, is always a very strong reversal of offense and defense. You can read more about the mechanic on ki.infil.net if you'd like.



シャドーカウンター (shadō kauntā) – *Lit. shadow counter*

See video 



Game

A collection of rounds after which a winner will be decided. In most fighters, a game is decided after a player wins 2 rounds, but in some other fighters such as Tekken, it is more common to win 3 rounds. In fighting games with multiple health bars, such as Killer Instinct and the Marvel vs. Capcom series, a game ends after all health bars for one player have been depleted.



Drive Rush

A special green-colored dash in Street Fighter 6 that has several important roles on offense. Often abbreviated to "DR". To execute a drive rush, first do a drive parry by holding MP+MK, then tap forward twice like a normal dash. This will cost you 1 total drive bar to use; you might hear this called "parry rush" or "raw drive rush". Alternatively, you can cancel any cancelable normal directly into drive rush by simply pressing forward twice, no drive parry necessary (you can also tap MP+MK by itself when the normal connects as an alternate command). This more

powerful technique will cost you 3 drive bars, and might be called a "drive rush cancel".

You can attack very quickly once your drive rush has started, and any normal attack you do while rushing will deal 4 extra frames of both hit stun and block stun, giving drive rush lots of utility to extend combos or apply block string pressure. In addition, you will slide along the ground with a bit of added momentum, so drive rushing into a normal attack is a great way to close the distance or attack from very far away. You'll likely find that drive rush is the most common way you'll spend drive meter in SF6.



ドライブラッシュ (doraibu rasshu) – *Lit. drive rush*

See video



Canadian Burst



Bursting while your character is at the top of the screen, and your opponent is nowhere near you. It's just the worst burst ever. It had no chance of hitting at all, and now you're gonna get massively punished too. Were you even looking at the screen?

Usually this happens because you panicked or were too slow to realize what was happening, but there are some legitimate reasons too! Some combo paths launch you at strange angles and you might have to try bursting before the opponent gets near you, so you can look mighty silly if they didn't continue the sequence. You'll sometimes hear this called a "Domi Burst" after the strong Japanese anime player Domi, who for some reason seems to do this a lot. Like the Chicago Punish and other self-deprecating regional terms, feel free to replace "Canadian" with your own region.



- 脊髄バースト (sekizui bāsuto) – *Lit.* spinal (reflex) burst (used for bad burst in general)
ドミーバースト (domī bāsuto) – *Lit.* domi burst (the player who is known for doing 脊髄バースト)
汚い花火 (kitanai hanabi) – *Lit.* dirty fireworks

See video 



Wager

A system in Injustice that lets you escape a combo once per match, as long as you're on your second health bar. Also called a "Clash". Press forward plus the Meter Burn button when you're getting hit to initiate a Wager. Your character will break the combo and initiate a close-range struggle with the opponent. After delivering some witty lines, both players choose how many bars of super meter they'd want to wager (even 0).

After both players have input their choice, the characters push each other apart. If the defender wagered more meter, they will get health back. If the original attacker wagered more, they will deal damage. The amount of health gained/lost depends on how many more bars of meter you wagered than your opponent, up to a maximum of 33% health if you won by a 4 bar margin.

If you start the Wager with more super meter than your opponent, you hold the cards because you can guarantee a win by wagering it all. But your opponent may not wager anything, knowing they will lose, which means... maybe you can get away with wagering less than everything and still win? Should you risk it? These are the types of decisions you'll have to make with this

system, but even if you lose the wager, at least you'll always escape the combo, which is the primary goal.



ウェイジャ – (weijā) – *Lit. wager*



Port Priority

When certain game mechanics give an advantage to a player, simply because they are Player 1 instead of Player 2 (or higher). The term comes from Super Smash Bros., where your player number is determined by which port you plug your controller into. The player closest to the P1 port gains some small advantages over all other "higher" players in many Smash titles, such as winning interactions when throws collide on the same frame.



Traditional fighters are not immune from first player advantage either! Mortal Kombat 9 famously made Player 1 automatically win all trades, which affected game balance and forced tournament players to play rock-paper-scissors for who got to be Player 1 at the start of each set.



Down Back

Slang for blocking. Often used in reference to people who turtle a lot, just sitting there waiting for you to do something stupid.



ガンガード (gan gādo) – *Lit. strictly guard*



Midscreen

Any space on the screen where neither player is in the corner. This term is mostly used to describe combos that will work even if you don't have the benefit of pushing your opponent against the corner. You'll hear phrases like "you can do that midscreen", even if you're not at the direct center of the stage.



画面中央 (gamen chūou) – *Lit.* middle of screen



Shimmy

Tricking someone into thinking you're going to throw them by walking close, and then, at the last second, walking backwards out of range so they whiff a throw tech attempt like a dummy. You can then pummel them with a huge punish. Shimmying is easier to do in games with small throw ranges (so you can walk out of range easier) and games without crouch teching (so they can't defend against throw while also hitting you as you walk away), which makes it a pretty common strategy in a game like Street Fighter V. It's one way to enforce a very basic "throw or not" 50/50 on someone, and you'll see this style of throw bait used pretty often.



シミー (shimi) – *Lit.* shimmy

投げシケ狩り (nage shike kari) – *Lit.* leaked throw hunting (less commonly used)

See video



Inashi

A move that will catch (certain) incoming attacks, then push your opponent away, leaving you very plus. You'll be able to start offensive pressure with your frame advantage, or in some cases,

maybe even get a guaranteed combo.

Basically, an inashi is a reversal (the 3D game catch counter kind), but without the automatic follow-up attack. Instead of knocking your opponent down, an inashi leaves them standing up, so they're susceptible to different kinds of pressure. The inashi tends to be the rarest of the three "I know you're going to attack, so check this out" techniques in Virtua Fighter, with the most common being Aoi's "Tenchi In'you" command. The other two techniques are the reversal and the sabaki.



いなし (inashi) – *Lit.* to dodge (an attack) skillfully

天地陰陽 (tenchi in'you) – *Lit.* heaven-earth yin-yang (Aoi's inashi move)

See video



Air Dash



Using a dash while in the air. Some characters with air dashes can only dash in one direction, while others can dash in up to all 8 cardinal directions. Air dashes are very common in anime games and the Versus series but are quite uncommon in other fighting games. When they exist, they greatly speed up the pace of the game and generally make playing defense pretty hard, especially if you do it instantly.



空中ダッシュ (kūchū dasshu) – *Lit.* air dash

Timer Scam



A strategy where you intentionally bleed time off the clock by activating a super. In some games, a super's screen freeze will not stop the timer, so all you have to do is get a life lead, wait until 3 or 4 seconds are left in the round, then launch your super. The timer will run out while both characters are frozen in place, and you win. Just make sure you know how the timer works in your game of choice, since some games pause the timer during all screen freezes, so this strategy wouldn't work.

See video 

Auto-pilot



Acting without thinking, usually in a predictable way that gets you killed. Usually you use it to describe to a beginner situations where they constantly do the same thing by force of habit. The skilled opponent will quickly pick up on it and bait the response every time, and the beginner will need to work on recognizing when they go auto-pilot and actively try to stop it. It takes a while, though, especially when you are pretty new and don't know how to play creatively yet.

Knowledge Check



Testing whether your opponent understands how to beat a certain attack or strategy. If they don't, you loop it until they die. Gimmicks are often good examples of knowledge checks; these attacks tend to have somewhat non-obvious answers that need very specific practice to stop, but knowledge checks don't have to be obscure or wildly unsafe.

You can test more basic things too, like whether your opponent knows there is a gap in your

string, or if they know how to punish certain marginally unsafe attacks. You're basically asking your opponent "how well do you understand the basics of this matchup?" and if they answer poorly, you'll win pretty easily.

Honest



A way to try to describe a character that beats you "fair and square", instead of by using tricks or broken, overpowered moves. It's the type of adjective you'd hear from someone trying to downplay their character, saying that nothing they have is overly strong.

In reality, I think you can safely substitute "honest" for "bad" in more or less every situation. There are no strong characters that are honest. Strong characters will have some combination of gross mixups, pokes with absurdly large hitboxes that let them take control of the neutral easily, or moves with low risk but high reward. These things are not honest. You won't have much fun (or much success) playing a character without strong tools, and don't let people trick you into thinking a game full of honest characters is what everybody should want.

Secondary



An alternate character that isn't as well-practiced as your main, but you've still put in a fair bit of time to learning them. Maybe your main character has some bad matchups so you learn a new character to help deal with those in tournament. Or maybe you just think the character is really cool and you want to learn them. Either one works. You might also hear this called a "pocket"; it's just a character you've got stored away in your pocket for a rainy day.



サブキャラ (sabu kyara) – *Lit.* sub character



While Standing

A move that needs to be input as you are transitioning from a crouching state to a standing state (that is, "while you are in the process of standing up"). Usually abbreviated to WS, for example "WS 4" would mean to press your 4 attack while you are in the WS state. You can do these pretty easily after blocking low; simply release the down direction and attack.

You might also hear "instant While Standing" or "iWS", which means you do it from an already-standing state by quickly crouching first, then quickly releasing that crouch, then attacking. This state is also called "While Rising" a lot of the time (in Soulcalibur, for instance), but if you try to abbreviate it as WR, some people will confuse that with "While Running". Terminology sure is fun.



立ち途中 (tachi tochū) – *Lit. halfway standing*

See video 



Strike

A physical attack. "Strike" and "attack" are used pretty much interchangeably in fighting game lingo, but sometimes "strike" will be used to include physical attacks but exclude projectiles, especially when you're talking about a move that is invincible to certain things but not others. Importantly though, throws are not strikes (and don't try to get tricky by asking about hit throws).



打撃 (dageki) – *Lit. strike*

Team Aerial Combo



A Marvel vs. Capcom 3 mechanic available during any air combo that will launch the opponent in one of three directions, then tag in a teammate to continue the combo. Often abbreviated to "TAC". You get to pick the direction you launch (whether up, to the side, or down), and your opponent can counter this and escape the combo entirely if they guess the direction, kind of like a mini combo breaker.

TACs can be useful to bring in a teammate when you are low on life, but in competitive play, players found an exploit and primarily use them to do infinite combos.



チームエリアルコンボ (chīmu eriaru konbo) – *Lit.* team aerial combo

American Reset



When somebody accidentally drops their combo, but a follow-up attack hits the opponent anyway because they simply weren't blocking or, indeed, paying attention to the screen at all. It's kind of like a reset, but with no underlying mixup behind it, which means it should "never" work... except for the times it does.

Untech Time



The amount of hit stun you inflict on an airborne character in an anime game. Often in these games, you will have to manually tech in the air (that is, recover and be able to take actions) once your hit stun runs out. If you don't tech, your opponent can keep comboing you, even though you could have prevented it (Guilty Gear players will call this a Black Beat combo). Untech time, therefore, is the amount of time where your opponent *can't* manually tech, and follow-up hits are

guaranteed.

In some games, the game automatically forces you to tech whenever hit stun runs out, so there can be no "fake" combos because you didn't tech correctly. In these games, untech time and hit stun are identical.



受身不能時間 (ukemi funou jikan) – *Lit. untechable time*



Bar

A small segment of super meter. Also often called a stock. The entire super meter is typically divided into several bars, which can each be individually spent on actions such as EX moves.



ゲージ (gēiji) – *Lit. gauge*



Absolute Guard

A game mechanic that forces your character to block all incoming attacks while you are trapped in block stun, even if you let go of the joystick. As long as your opponent attacks you with a true block string, you're just stuck.

Most games will typically have absolute guard, but a game like SFIII: 3rd Strike, which lets you red parry while you are blocking, will not have absolute guard so you can be hit if you mess it up. Some games will even automatically switch your block from low to high or auto-block cross-ups while you are in block stun, but this is a game-specific choice.



連続ガード (renzoku gādo) – *Lit. continuous guard*

連ガ (renga) – *Lit. abbreviation of 連続ガード*



Cross-up

Attacking your opponent immediately after changing which horizontal side you are facing, usually by jumping over them. Because blocking requires holding the direction away from your opponent in most fighting games, cross-up attacks will force players to quickly switch their blocking direction from left to right or vice versa, or else they will get hit.

It most commonly describes jumping attacks that will hit on top of the opponent's head, sometimes so ambiguously that the defender must guess which direction to block. You might also find other ways to get on the other side of your opponent, like walking under them while they are above you in the air, which we call a cross-under. These are all variations on the standard two-option mixup called the 50/50.



めくり (mekuri) – *Lit. turning, flipping*

裏回り (ura mawari) – *Lit. go around the back* (see uramawari and cross-under)

See video



Clean Hit



When certain attacks in **Guilty Gear** hit a very specific part of an opponent's hurtbox. These well-aimed attacks will cause some positive benefit for the attacker, like a higher launch or a wall bounce. It's basically like the sweet spot from Super Smash Bros., but rather than the desired

hitbox being on the attack, it's on the person being hit instead. In GG Accent Core, Sol Badguy makes common use of clean hit combos for his most damaging BnBs.

Clean Hit is also a mechanic in **Tekken**, but there it is based on proximity. Attacking from essentially point blank range with select moves such as Paul's Deathfist will grant you some new properties (usually extra damage) and a "Clean Hit" message on the screen.

You can also use this phrase just for its standard English meaning, as in a hit that was landed unobstructed or with finesse. You shouldn't have too much trouble figuring out which meaning is intended from context.



クリーンヒット (kurīn hitto) – *Lit.* clean hit

See video

720



A joystick motion used to execute some supers that requires two complete spins (a full 720-degree rotation) of your analog stick. The supers that take these inputs are almost always lightning fast command throws that do a huge grip of damage.

Unlike the 360 motion, it is very difficult to do this motion without accidentally jumping, even if the game has a slight shortcut for the command. As a result, you usually need a bit of a trick to input it, like jumping first and doing the motion as you land, or whiffing a move on purpose and "hiding" most of the input while your character is swinging. This is intentional, because a move this strong needs to take a bit of time to input and require some planning, or else it will just be

way too good. If you're an absolute beast, and the game allows it, you can try to do a standing 720, but good luck.



二回転 (nikaiten) – *Lit. 2 rotations*

立ちギガス (tachi gigasu) – *Lit. standing Gigas* (a 720 motion done from the ground without jumping)

State of Nothingness



A mechanic in Samurai Shodown V Special that you can use when you're down to your last bit of health in your final round. By pressing B+C+D, you will dramatically slow down time for your opponent for a few seconds, allowing all sorts of tricks from new combos to new punish opportunities and everything in between. You must also have activated this special "Time Slow" mode to use this game's version of your Issen, so it shares similarities with Rage Explosion in later iterations.

What's more, in the early stages of the fight, you can choose to "bank" your super meter by holding down buttons to charge it away, rather than letting it reach Max Rage like normal. If you do, you'll convert this super meter to a more powerful Time Slow mode later in the fight! You'll be able to activate Time Slow earlier in your final round, and it will last longer as well, so strategically balancing your super meter between buffing your Time Slow and "normal" uses like your Weapon Flipping Technique is important.



無の境地 (mu no kyouchi) – *Lit. state of nothingness*

Umeshoryu



A psychic shoryuken done at an unexpected time that hits your opponent, made famous by fighting game legend Daigo Umehara. You gotta make sure the shoryu is done pretty much out of nowhere, like while you are applying pressure or while you are jockeying for position during footsties, and it can't be a reaction to something; it has to be done purely on anticipation. Oh, and it has to actually hit. It's not an umeshoryu if it doesn't work.

To be honest, you can apply this "ume" prefix to pretty much anything if it comes out of nowhere and looks like a genius move. If nobody has thrown a fireball for 30 seconds, but you somehow just magically jump the instant one is thrown, you might call that an "umejump".



ウメ昇竜 (ume shouryū) – *Lit.* Umeshoryu

Half Circle



A motion used to input many common special moves that starts with the joystick at left or right, and moves in a semi-circle motion to the other side. The version towards your opponent is 41236 in numpad notation and is commonly abbreviated HCF for "half circle forward".

Similarly, 63214 is called HCB for "half circle back". Half circles are somewhat common as inputs in fighting games, but there is no famous half circle move that is often used as a shortcut name, like "fireball" might be for the quarter circle.

It's also common for games to have a shortcut for the motion which lets you start at down-back or down-forward, just to make it easier to do from a crouching position. You might think this is getting awfully close to a quarter circle input, so why not just use that command instead? And, well... lots of games would agree with you, as the half circle is falling out of favor in several modern titles.



ヨガフレイムコマンド (yoga fureimu komando) – *Lit.* yoga flame command (for HCF)
逆ヨガフレイムコマンド (gyaku yoga fureimu komando) – *Lit.* reverse yoga flame
command (for HCB)
半回転 (hankaiten) – *Lit.* half rotation

See image



TAC Infinite

A bug in Ultimate Marvel vs. Capcom 3 that let players ignore hit stun deterioration after landing a TAC, leading to long infinite combos and plenty of dead characters. Just after Marvel 3 had patched out the DHC glitch, things were looking good until players learned that performing a TAC temporarily turned off hit stun deterioration until you touched the ground. It didn't take long for players to figure out a way to trick the game into thinking they *never* touched the ground, leading to a combo with no HSD and practical infinites for a large portion of the cast.

I outline the specifics of how this glitch works in my blog post on famous FG bugs , but it was never patched and the final version of UMvC3 still sees it employed regularly at high level play. The one saving grace is that, for some characters, the combo is decently hard, so even if you get it started, not dropping it under pressure is gonna be tough.

See video



Opener-Ender

A Killer Instinct combo that has zero breakable attacks between its opener and its ender. These combos are mistakes! They are always breakable for "free" by pressing both heavy attacks – you can't counter break it or correct the error in any way, so the defense always gets to escape without any risk.

When you're first learning KI's combo system, it can be hard to realize what is an opener-ender combo, so my advice is to always press HP+HK every time you see an ender, no matter what. You'll break any opener-ender mistakes your opponent makes, and nothing bad will happen to you on "legitimate" combos. Don't let opener-enders slip past you!



オープナー・エンダー (ōpunā endā) – *Lit. opener-ender*



Brave Edge



A mechanic that lets you enhance certain moves at the cost of 1/4 of your super meter in Soulcalibur. By pressing A+B+K with good timing during very select moves, you would gain extra properties on the move, like a follow-up attack. It's basically SC's version of an EX move. They were introduced in Soulcalibur V and still exist in Soulcalibur VI but with fewer examples.



ブレイブエッジ (bureibu ejji) – *Lit. brave edge*

Chain



The ability to cancel a normal into itself. In many 2D fighting games, most characters will be able to chain their light punch or light kick attacks together to create a basic combo (or block string). Chains usually involve crouching normals, but can also use standing normals, and may even mix and match them!

The difference between a chain and a target combo is that a chain deals with the same normal, where target combos deal with different normals, but the distinction is pretty skin deep and you'll hear some people talk about any normal canceled into any other normal as a chain, especially in team games or in some older titles like Darkstalkers. If you apply this looser definition, "chaining" becomes basically the same thing as a string or a gatling. You might also hear people talk about linking normals together instead of chaining them.



連打キャンセル (renda kyanseru) – *Lit.* repeated attack cancel

連キャン (renkyan) – *Lit.* abbreviation of 連打キャンセル

See video



Bait



Doing something specific to induce a certain move from your opponent, and then countering it perfectly. In other words, it's tricking them into thinking some attack or movement option was a good idea, and then showing them very clearly that it wasn't. Perhaps the most common bait is walking up to an opponent you've knocked down, threatening to attack, then blocking their reversal dragon punch; doing this successfully is "baiting the DP". You can also bait attempts to throw tech by walking up to them, pretending to throw, then walking back. This is a common enough strategy that we've even given it a name.



狩る (karu) – *Lit. hunt*

Caliburst



Bursting when you are extremely low on life and your opponent has most of their health bar remaining (assuming it's not the final round, of course). It's a super aggressive play... are you really going to make that comeback? Bursts don't grow on trees, so you're usually better off saving this super precious resource for a round you actually have a chance at winning! If you lose, you're down a round *and* without your Burst, so now you're in real trouble. But then again, since many Californian players love to play all-in rushdown styles, it seems to fit the namesake pretty well.

See video



Check



A low-risk, fast attack you'll do (usually in close-range situations) to try and interrupt the opponent if they're insisting on playing very aggressively. If your frame advantage is slightly positive or around neutral, or you expect they'll do some fast movement option like a dash or roll, you might throw out a quick jab or two to test the waters.

You probably won't get a combo or big damage out of this, but the mere act of attacking tells your opponent to not overstep their bounds; you're just "checking" that they understand you want to assert your position. Check can be used both as a noun and a verb, like "nice check on that dash" or "they keep checking me after blocking my string". You might also hear a pretty good poke called a check from time to time.



FD Brake

A Guilty Gear technique that lets you stop your forward run animation and block immediately. If you hold down-back after you start running, normally you have to skid to a stop, and you can't block at all while this is happening. Instead, if you briefly tap Faultless Defense (a.k.a. FD) while holding down-back, you'll immediately stop the run without sliding, allowing you to block much sooner.

You don't have to hold FD, a simple tap and release will do – although, if you want to continue to use Faultless Defense on your opponent's offense, you can choose to hold it down if you like. Using FD brake to approach your opponent is much safer than the alternative, and you should get used to doing it often!

You might also hear this called "dash brake", since you are putting the brakes on your dash. This more general term may apply to some other non-Guilty Gear games if there are mechanics in place that let you cancel a dash or air dash.



フォルトレスティフェンスキャンセルダッシュ (forutoresu difensu kyanseru dasshu) –

Lit. faultless defense cancel dash

FCD – abbreviation of faultless defense cancel dash

See video 



Styling

To perform a flashy and unnecessarily difficult combo or pressure sequence in order to impress the crowd or show disrespect for your opponent. "Styling on" someone shows that you're more interested in getting a good clip for your Youtube channel than you are just closing out the match with something easy and reliable. And as long as you don't drop the combo, these moments can be pretty fun to watch.

Perfect

Winning without taking any damage at all. In some games, winning with a perfect is really hard, since rounds are long and it's hard to avoid taking chip damage, whereas some other games are built to steamroll opponents quickly, making perfects much more common. You might hear this called "7 golden letters", since a surprising amount of fighting games use gold fonts.



パーフェクト (pāfekuto) – *Lit.* perfect

Dictator

A common name for the Street Fighter character M. Bison. We have to call him this because, in Japan, they call him Vega, so this helps us be clear about which character we're talking about. We have this same problem with Boxer and Claw.



ベガ (bega) – *Lit.* vega

Universal Overhead

An attack available to every character in Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike that hits overhead. The character leaps off the ground briefly and strikes downward. It's a low damage attack meant to irritate people who are low blocking, and in some situations with perfect spacing or timing, the UOH can even combo into some supers. Some other games like Granblue Fantasy Versus have also adopted a similar universal attack.



リープアタック (ripu atakku) – *Lit.* leap attack

See video



Meta



The general state of a game's strategy. Is rushdown the best way to play? Are zoning really strong this patch? How do people generally use their super meter? Who are the best characters, and what impact are they having on how the game is played? These are common questions you'd want to have answered when asking about a game's meta.

Some language purists hate the use of this term, since the traditional definition of "metagame" tends to reference things outside of the game itself, like messing with your opponent's confidence by asking for a blind pick. Using the term to directly discuss in-game strategy seems to be misusing it a bit. But sometimes words shift their meaning as they find a common use by speakers, so I'd say not to worry about it too much. We don't really have a better word to use anyway.



メタ (meta) – *Lit.* meta



Dragon Punch

A powerful rising uppercut attack that is great for anti-air and is usually invincible, making it great for reversal attacks. A dragon punch, or "DP" as it is commonly abbreviated, is a big catch-all term for any motion attack (usually a DP motion) that sees the character attack towards the air with their fist, usually leaving their feet.

They were first seen with Ryu and Ken's shoryuken attacks in Street Fighter II, and as such usually most photos have a version of it, but this style of attack is now extremely common in dozens of fighting games and hundreds of fighting game characters. This term is basically synonymous with shoryuken and uppercut, although "DP" is the most common just because it's catchy and short.



昇竜拳 (shouryūken) – *Lit.* rising dragon fist

See video



DHC Glitch

A bug in the original version of Marvel vs. Capcom 3 that let players ignore damage scaling and led to pretty easy touch of death combos. The goal was to perform a combo that puts the opponent in a certain "capture" state, then DHC in a particular way which would cause the opponent to spiral up in the air. The game would incorrectly remove damage scaling and hit stun deterioration and let you just absolutely smoke the character for free.

The bug was short lived; it was patched out in Ultimate Marvel vs. Capcom 3 less than a year

later, but it was extremely powerful while it was in the game and defined a lot of top tier teams. There are two ways to learn more about this bug – either read my blog post on [famous FG bugs](#), or learn everything in just 16 seconds from the [master himself, Chris Hu](#).

See video 

Getup



A set of system-wide actions you can take in Mortal Kombat 11 as you are [waking up](#). You can do a "Getup Attack", which is effectively a [reversal](#) attack; this costs 1 [Defensive Meter](#) and 1 [Offensive Meter](#) and you can pick between an [invincible](#) but low damage attack, or an attack that starts a combo but isn't invincible. You can also [tech roll](#) either backwards or forwards for just 1 Defensive Meter, although like most rolls, this can be [thrown](#) if your opponent predicts it. You can also do a [Delayed Getup](#) (for free), which keeps your back on the ground a little longer and might mess up your opponent's attack timing.



起き上がり (oki agari) – *Lit. raise up*

Roll



Tumbling either forward or backward to move around the screen. Some characters will just have a roll [special move](#) (like Abel in Street Fighter IV), while rolling can be a central system mechanic in some games, like King of Fighters and Super Smash Bros. Sometimes, you'll be able to roll as a [wakeup](#) option too. Capcom vs. SNK 2's roll mechanic was responsible for one of the more famous bugs in fighting game history, the [roll cancel](#).



緊急回避 (kinkyū kaihi) – *Lit.* emergency dodge

前転 (zenten) – *Lit.* forward roll

後転 (kouten) – *Lit.* backward roll

前方回避 (zenpou kaihi) – *Lit.* forward dodge

後方回避 (kouhou kaihi) – *Lit.* backward dodge

Trait



A dedicated button in Injustice that does something unique for each character. For some characters, they are attacks; Batman, for example, can summon mechanical bats and then send them flying at his opponent. For other characters, they can be powerup states, like Superman, who gains extra damage and can ignore armor with his attacks for a few seconds. After a trait has been used, there will be some cooldown period before you can use it again.

TO



Stands for Tournament Organizer. It's the main person in charge of running your favorite event, which could mean things like booking the venue, deciding which games to run, seeking out sponsors, and everything in between. Most TOs have a team of people working with them to make the event run smoothly, but they are kind of the front-facing entity of the tournament.



大会の運営者 (taikai no un'eisha) – *Lit.* tournament operator/administrator

B-Reverse



A technique in Smash Bros. that causes you to face the other way *and* also reverse the direction you're traveling as soon as you perform a special move. It was first introduced in Smash Bros. Brawl and has been in all versions of Smash since. To do this, input your special move, and then immediately tap the opposite direction after.

B-Reversing lets you do a bunch of cool things, like running away from the opponent and then suddenly changing your momentum to fly back at their face while attacking with a projectile. It's common to get B-Reverse confused with Turnaround-B (gee, I can't imagine why) and the wavebounce. It helps to remember that if "reverse" is in the name of the term, it's the one that reverses everything (both your momentum and the direction you're facing).



ベクトル反転 (bekutoru hanten) – *Lit. vector invert*

空中ダッシュ (kūchū dasshu) – *Lit. aerial dash*

空ダ (kūda) – *Lit. abbreviation of 空中ダッシュ*

地ダ (chida) – *Lit. ground dash (abbreviation of ground version of 空中ダッシュ)*

See video

Orbital



A safe mid attack in the Tekken series that causes a launch and hops over low attacks. The downside is that they are usually pretty slow, so strong players may be able to block them on reaction. It shares similarities with the hop kick, except those attacks are fast and unsafe instead of slow and safe.

The move is named after Bryan's Orbital Heel, where Bryan hops upwards and swings his foot

down in an orbit on top of your head. Like many fighting game moves, though, lots of other characters have a similar looking move with similar effects, and they're all just called "orbitals". From Snake Edge to Taunt Jet Upper, Bryan sure has a lot of famous techniques named after him!



フライングヒール (furaingu hiru) – *Lit.* flying heel
フラヒ (furahi) – *Lit.* abbreviation of フライングヒール

See video



2D Game



Any fighting game where your movement is locked to a 2D plane – that is to say, you can only move left, right, up, or down. Note that it doesn't matter if the game's art style is pixel-based, or rendered with 3D models; all that matters is how the characters are allowed to move. Although, some people will call a 2D game that uses 3D models a "2.5D game".



Most fighting games are 2D, including popular franchises like Street Fighter, Smash Bros., King of Fighters, and Marvel vs. Capcom. They differ from 3D games in that they often have considerably more aspects of space control, like zoning and fireballs, and jumping is usually a way more prominent fixture.



2D格ゲー – (2D kakugē) – *Lit.* 2D fighting game



Cowardcopter

Using the air version of a shoto's normal or EX tatsu to escape being cornered, flying safely back to the middle of the screen. This tends to work better in older games, where they let air tatsu have a lot of horizontal momentum if you perform the move immediately after jumping forward. Air tatsu's properties are different in many modern games, though, since they realized it allowed people to escape the corner too easily. The name comes from players looking for an easy way out of the corner, and how air tatsu's animation resembles a helicopter propeller.

See video 



Blitz Attack

A less risky way to try and parry incoming attacks in Guilty Gear Xrd. Rather than doing a Blitz Shield, which has only a brief window of success but leads to a huge punish of your choice, you can do a Blitz Attack by holding the buttons down. You will parry attacks the entire time you're holding the buttons, putting your opponent in the same stunned state as a Blitz Shield does, but at the end you will perform an automatic hit and knock the opponent away, rather than get to act freely. You can choose when to release the Blitz Attack too, in order to keep yourself unpredictable from easy counter Blitzes.



ブリッツシールドチャージアタック (burittsu shirudo chāji atakku) – *Lit. blitz shield charge attack*



Defensive Move

A fancy name for Virtua Fighter's sidestep, moving either towards or away from the camera. Almost always just shortened to "DM", or called an "Evade".

VF's sidestep system (like most systems in the game) is a bit more "hardcoded" than other 3D games. If you do a DM, the game checks if the opponent is attacking, and whether they're doing a move that is allowed to be sidestepped (some moves, like Circulars, aren't). If so, your DM successfully avoids the attack, and your character makes a grunting noise, leaving you at positive advantage. If not, you've done a "failed evade" and you're at risk of being counter hit. If you prefer, you can think of DMs like a crush system that is simply programmed to beat most attacks. You can also check out the Offensive Move.



ディフェンシブムーブ (difenshibu mūbu) – *Lit.* defensive move

避け (sake) – *Lit.* avoid

See video

Zoning



The act of using long-range attacks to try and prevent your opponent from coming closer, typically by using long-distance normals, fireballs, and backwards movement. Generally, your goal is to frustrate your opponent into doing something stupid to close the gap, like jump, which is when you use a move like a dragon punch to gently place your fist into their face. Zoning can be seen as a mixture of offense and defense, since you are both trying to damage your opponent while preventing them from getting to a range where they can comfortably begin trying to attack you.

Notorious zonders include Dhalsim from Street Fighter (stretchy arms), Nu from Blazblue (summoning magic sword things), and Morrigan from Marvel vs. Capcom 3 (Soul Fist x infinity).

Most new players really hate dealing with zoners, usually expressing their frustration by calling you a fireball spammer and unplugging their console.



遠距離戦 (enkyori sen) – *Lit. long distance fight*

Install



A powered-up state some characters can enter that will change move properties and maybe grant new moves entirely. Installs are almost always on a timer that tells you how much longer you get to enjoy the benefits before you return to your mortal self. Custom combo supers like Genei Jin or A-Groove and systems like Street Fighter V's V-Trigger and Killer Instinct's Instinct mode are common installs you will find.

You'll hear the word "activate" or "pop" often used when people turn on these modes, as in "Yun players like to do shoulder into activate" or "don't forget to pop Instinct once per round". The source of the term probably comes from Sol Badguy's "Dragon Install" super move.

See video



Sharking



Attacking someone through the stage while you are below it. Your attacks kinda resemble the dorsal fin of a shark breaking the surface of the water, hence the name of the term. It's not enough to simply attack someone through a normal on-stage platform – you need to be in an area where the opponent cannot drop through (even if you might be able to pass through going

upwards). Sharking's a bit risky, because a well-timed meteor smash will probably send you to your death.



もぐら行為 (mogura kōi) – *Lit.* mole action



Pressure

The act of repeatedly attacking your opponent from close range. Pressure usually includes the use of block strings, safe on block moves, and generally just not giving your opponent any space while you make them scared of getting hit. Toss in a mixup when they least expect it, or vary the timing and pace of your button presses to keep your opponent super confused about what you're doing, and you'll have good success.



プレッシャー (puresshā) – *Lit.* pressure



Heavy Kick

One of the attack buttons in a 6-button or 4-button fighter. Commonly abbreviated as HK or called roundhouse. Heavy kicks have slow startup, but are often high damage and cover good space. Crouching heavy kicks, called sweeps, usually hit low and knock down. Jumping heavy kick followed by crouching heavy kick was the first combo you found in your first Street Fighter game, and many people still don't use better combos decades later.



大キック or 大K (dai kikku) – *Lit.* big kick

大足 (dai ashi) – *Lit.* big leg (only used for low attacks)



While Running

The state you're in while you are running forward. In games like Tekken, certain attacks can only be performed While Running (WR), and there are techniques to go from standing still to performing a WR move very quickly; this is called "instant While Running" and abbreviated "iWR". You have to be careful of the notation though, since in games like Soulcalibur, WR can mean While Rising, whereas Tekken calls that state "While Standing" and abbreviates it WS to try to dodge the confusion.



走り中 (hashiri chū) – *Lit.* while running



Reversal (3D)

What some 3D series like Tekken and Virtua Fighter call a counter. Basically, you catch an incoming attack, then perform an automatic strike for some small damage. In Tekken, the type of attack you're allowed to catch is usually restricted to just straight punches and kicks; if your opponent does a move that's animated as a knee, or a headbutt, or a shoulder charge, these usually aren't counterable. In Virtua Fighter, the possible "classes" of move a reversal can catch is different for each reversal, so you'll have to check your favorite move's properties.

If you get caught by a counter in Tekken, you have a second chance to escape damage! The game gives you a way out with a mechanic called a Chicken, which lets you reverse the reversal and push the opponent away. Note that this way of using the term "reversal" is very different from a reversal in a 2D game like Street Fighter. You might also want to read up on the sabaki and the inashi, which are a little similar.



返し技 (kaeshi waza) – *Lit.* return technique

[See video](#)

Guard Crush



A game mechanic where blocking too many attacks in a short period of time, or a special attack marked with the guard crush property, will shatter your defense and leave you wide open to a big attack. How close you are to disaster is usually measured by a guard meter. In general, guard crush gives another reason for players to not try to block forever, and instead encourage them to attack back or move out of the way. Guard crush, or variations on the mechanic, have been in Street Fighter, King of Fighters, Soulcalibur, and many other titles. The Guilty Gear series has its own unique take on a guard crush mechanic through something called RISC.

In some games, notably Marvel vs. Capcom titles and Melty Blood, "guard crush" can refer to simply hitting with an unblockable (as in, the unblockable defeats their guard). This often comes up when you make them block something first, then hit them with an unblockable while they are trapped in block stun (for example, hitting an airborne opponent with a grounded normal while they are trapped blocking something else, like a projectile).

In Guilty Gear Strive, certain attacks cause a special state called "Guard Crush", which causes your character to reel back painfully after blocking it. In essence, these moves just cause a lot of block stun – your guard is not defeated and you can continue to block normally, but the game takes away some other defensive options from you, like Yellow Roman Cancel, while you're reeling.



ガードクラッシュ (gādo kurasshu) – *Lit. guard crush*

ガーカラ (gā kura) – *Lit. abbreviation of ガードクラッシュ*

[See video](#)

Rage Explosion



A powerful state you can enter in Samurai Shodown that acts as a more powerful version of Max Rage. By pressing A+B+C, you stop the timer and invert the colors on the stage. Your attacks do even more damage than during Max Rage, and in addition to the Weapon Flipping Technique, you'll get access to a new type of super attack called Issen. You can even enter Rage Explosion while you are being hit, giving you access to a Guilty Gear-style Burst mechanic!

The drawback is severe, though. You consume your entire Rage meter, which means when you leave Rage Explosion, whether its time runs out or you land your WFT or Issen, you won't have access to Max Rage for the rest of the match. Be careful about using it too early in the match, or your opponent will be able to fight without fear of your comeback mechanic coming to the rescue.



怒り爆発 (ikari bakuhatsu) – *Lit. rage explosion*

Interactable



A system mechanic in modern Mortal Kombat and Injustice games where you reach into the stage background and interact with something. Some stages have offensive-minded interactables, where you can pick up a weapon and throw it at your opponent or extend a combo, while others have defensive-minded ones where you can run off stage elements to create distance. In Injustice,

it even depends what character you're playing, as different character "classes" will use the interactables in different ways.



フィールドオブジェクト (firudo obujekuto) – *Lit. field object*

インタラクト (intarakuto) – *Lit. interact*

Plus



When you are able to freely act, but your opponent cannot (usually because they are still trapped in block stun from your attack). Being plus (or "positive") in a fighting game is quite strong; it means you always have a headstart on your next attack, even if it's only by a very slim margin.

Being plus and being minus are two sides of the same coin – when you are plus, your opponent is minus, and vice versa. You'll commonly use it in tandem with "on block", as in, "my medium kick is +1 on block". This means you will fully recover 1 frame before your opponent leaves block stun. That doesn't sound like a lot, but just think about it as a relative value. If you and your opponent attack with moves that have the same startup, your headstart means you will always hit first, and that's great.



有利 (yūri) – *Lit. advantage*

See video



Guest Character

A character in a fighting game that comes from some other franchise. Sometimes it's from another fighting game franchise (for example, Tekken 7 has Akuma from Street Fighter), while other times it's from another genre entirely (for example, Nier's 2B in Soulcalibur, or Halo's Arbiter in Killer Instinct). They're good cross-promotional tools that can convince new players to pick the game up, and they'll usually add some fun, unique playstyle to the game.



ゲストキャラクター (gesuto kyarakutā) – *Lit. guest character*

Proration



A mechanic in many fighting games (especially anime games) that reduces the damage for future hits in a combo whenever a specific move is used. It's like a more advanced damage scaling, but instead of a combo gradually getting weaker because it goes on for longer, it's the use of very specific attacks that apply a damage penalty.

For example, if you start a combo with a strong up-close move like a crouching light punch, it may make all future moves do 80% of their damage value. BlazBlue has "Same Move Proration" where using a special or super move more than once in the same combo will impact its damage. It's another way designers can try to control how damaging combos can be, tailored specifically to which attacks are fantastic at starting (or continuing) combos.



コンボ補正 (konbo hosei) – *Lit. combo correction*

Pixie



A character that has extreme movement and mixup options, but pretty low damage output and low health. If you liken a character to a fly buzzing around your head that you can't seem to swat,

chances are they're a pixie character. They're similar to [glass cannons](#), but their movement options are even more exaggerated at the cost of doing very little damage. Examples include Chipp in Guilty Gear, Twelve from SFIII: 3rd Strike, and Sonic from Super Smash Bros.

8 Way Run



The governing method of movement in the Soulcalibur series that lets you freely and easily move in all 8 directions. You can hold any direction and start to [run](#) that way; left and right move you closer to or further from your opponent, down and up move you toward and away from the camera respectively (you can also [Quick Step](#) vertically), and the diagonals will do both at once. You can freely change your direction while you are moving.

Some commands can only be performed out of certain directions in an 8WR, so check your move list carefully. Because there is a brief bit of startup on the movement, if you want to quickly access these 8WR moves from a standstill, you will typically double-tap (and then hold) the direction before pressing your button.



8WAY-RUN (written in English)

See video



Five Gods



A term of respect used to refer to five legendary Japanese fighting game players: [Daigo](#), [Tokido](#), [Nuki](#), [sako](#), and [Haitani](#). All five of these players have been dominant in multiple fighting games dating back to the 1990s; the moniker started to gain prominence when they

were competing to be the strongest in Vampire Savior, a 1997 Capcom title. Even more impressively, all five players are still active (and dominating) into the 2020s.

Interestingly, Smash Bros. Melee has its own set of Five Gods: [Armada](#), [mang0](#), [Mew2King](#), [Hungrybox](#), and [PPMD](#). From 2008-2015, these players won virtually every single tournament they entered, basically only ever losing to each other during that stretch. And while some of these players have retired from competitive play, many of them are still big tournament threats into the 2020s, which is a remarkable feat of longevity in such a [technically demanding](#) game.



格ゲー五神 (kakugē goshin) – *Lit.* fighting game 5 gods

スマブラ五神 (sumabura goshin) – *Lit.* smash 5 gods



Medium Punch

One of the six attack buttons in a [6-button fighter](#). Commonly abbreviated as MP or called [strong](#). Medium punches are often excellent at controlling [space](#) in front of your character without taking much risk, and they also tend to be good during close-range offense. Basically, they're usually very good buttons.



中パン or 中P (chū pan) – *Lit.* medium punch



High Attack

Synonymous with an [overhead attack](#) in most 2D fighting games, although "overhead" is the term more frequently used for these games. A "high" is a much more common term in Tekken, Soulcalibur, Virtua Fighter and Mortal Kombat, referring to an attack that will [whiff](#) on

crouching opponents. You'll hear phrases like "you can duck the high" often. Like the similarly confusing mid attack, it's especially difficult to keep straight if you play both 2D and 3D games often.

Note that in Street Fighter 6, the word "High" is used in its training mode to refer to an attack that can be blocked both standing and crouching (basically, what most people would call a mid). Wow, this really is a mess, isn't it?



上段攻撃 (joudan kougeki) – *Lit.* high level attack

See video



Knockback



How far you get sent flying when you get hit in a platform fighter. Each move has its own base knockback value and angle, which gets amplified as you take more damage, until eventually you get launched so far you hit a blast zone and die.

In most Smash games, you can change the angle with directional influence, but not the distance you get sent. In some cases, you can prevent being knocked back by using crouch canceling. The term "knockback" is also used occasionally in more traditional fighters, but if you are getting hit on the ground, we tend to use the term pushback a bit more often.



ふっとばし力 (futtabashi ryoku) – *Lit.* blow off power



Crumple

A state of super prolonged hit stun that sees the character reel over painfully, usually falling to the ground at the end. It's mostly used to describe what happens when you hit with Street Fighter IV's Focus Attack or Street Fighter 6's Drive Impact, although you might hear the word used in other games too. More common is the stagger, which is pretty similar conceptually.



崩れ (kuzure) – *Lit. collapse*

Guard Impact



A classic Soulcalibur mechanic that lets you parry incoming enemy attacks, pushing your enemy back and usually allowing a punish. While the enemy is reeling, though, they can always input a Guard Impact of their own, trying to start a GI war until someone outsmarts the other.

A staple of the franchise, it's been implemented a few different ways over the years. In Soulcalibur VI, your opponent will get knocked back in three different ways, depending on what "type" of attack you parried (usually, the fastest attacks cause the most forceful knockback and allow the biggest punish). You can't GI Break Attacks, which act as a kind of armor breaker unless you also spend some super meter (if you do spend the bar, this is called a Resist Impact or Red Impact). Guard Impacts can whiff if your opponent doesn't attack, so be careful.



ガードインパクト (gādo inpakuto) – *Lit. guard impact*

See video





Supergun

Hardware that lets you play the original circuit boards for arcade games without needing a full cabinet. In many ways, you can think of a supergun like a console, and each arcade board is a cartridge that plugs in.

A supergun will give you audio and video outputs to connect to a monitor or TV, and let you connect your own controllers pretty easily. They're also pretty portable, so you can bring your 3rd Strike arcade board to a local gathering and play on authentic hardware. If you don't have the space or money for a full arcade cabinet, but want to play arcade games, a supergun is your next best choice.



コントロールボックス (kontorōru bokkusu) – *Lit. control box*

Cボックス (C bokkusu) – *Lit. c box*

コントロールパネル (kontorōru paneru) – *Lit. control panel*

See video



Pool

A small group of double elimination tournament players, separated into their own mini-tournament. A pool is usually 8 or 16 players, who will then play until two players are left (or three players in some systems). These players will advance to a new set of pools with the other winners, and will keep qualifying until top 8 has been decided. This way of grouping the players really eases the burden on tournament organizers, especially in large tournaments with

thousands of players. If a good player fails to qualify from their initial pool, it's said they've "drowned in pools".



プール (pūru) – *Lit.* pool

プールを泳ぎ切る (pūru wo oyogikiru) – *Lit.* to finish swimming out of pools

ルーザーズで泳ぎ切る (rūzāzu de oyogikiru) – *Lit.* to get out of pools from the losers side

プール敗退 (pūru haitai) – *Lit.* to be defeated/drown in pools

Recoil



When your character reels back forcefully after your opponent blocks one of your normal weapon attacks. How much you reel back depends on which attack you used, with heavy attacks being very pronounced and very unsafe. However, the recoil animation itself can be canceled into special moves, which lets you engage in a mind game of whether you will double down on your mistake and perhaps do an invincible move, or maybe try to deflect your opponent's swing.



弾かれ (hajikare) – *Lit.* be repelled

Set Play



Performing a pre-planned, calculated setup after you've knocked your opponent down. There's no winging it by the seat of your pants here; set play often involves some frame kills to set up very specific timing that will make your mixups extremely ambiguous and often avoid reversals. Think of it like drawing up a "set play" in a sport like American football. The plan of attack is well thought out and all possible outcomes are computed in advance.

A "set play character" is a character that thrives on knocking you down and putting you in super gross set play situations. The best part about set play is, unless you're a training mode monster and enjoy the challenge, you typically don't have to find these mixups yourself! The kind folks on Youtube and Twitter will find them for you and tell you how to use them for maximum effect. People sometimes confuse this term with vortex; a good vortex is usually set play, but set play doesn't *have* to loop into itself.



セットプレイ (setto purei) – *Lit.* set play

ハメ、ハメる (hame, hameru) – *Lit.* fit snugly into position, to entrap/set someone up, to screw someone over (used for set play that is basically inescapable)



Stance

A mode some fighting game characters can enter that changes the attacks or movement they have available. You might change to a new stance by directly inputting a special move, or maybe because some other specific move was blocked. The stance could just be a limited-time thing (perhaps just until you input your next attack), or the switch could be permanent until the player chooses to switch back. Stances aren't super common in games like Street Fighter, but they are regular occurrences for most characters in 3D games like Tekken and Soulcalibur.



構え (kamae) – *Lit.* stance, posture, style



Circular

A Virtua Fighter attack that hits players trying to perform a Defensive Move (that is, trying to sidestep). It is pretty similar to the Tekken concept of homing; these moves are animated to look like they're hitting in a "circle" around you, but they are also programmatically built to hit DMs

no matter what.

Circulars, or Spinning Attacks, come in two flavors. The "half circular" will only hit opponents trying to DM in one of the two specific directions, as the name implies. So if you correctly DM away from the direction of the attack, you can avoid half circulars. "Full circulars" will hit all DMs in either direction, making them strong options against players who love to sidestep.



- 回転打撃 (kaiten dageki) – *Lit. rotation strike*
- 半回転 (han kaiten) – *Lit. half rotation*
- 全回転 (zen kaiten) – *Lit. full rotation*

See video



Runaway



A defensive playstyle that involves constantly trying to move far away from your opponent. It has similarities to other defensive ideas, like zoning or turtling, but the focus of runaway is to use powerful movement to create space, usually after you've taken the life lead. Then, your opponent is forced to try and chase you, which will no doubt annoy them into making mistakes. Good runaway players will often win by time out, even if it's not very exciting.



- 逃げる (nigeru) – *Lit. run away, get away*

Quick Roman Cancel



Doing a Guilty Gear Strive Roman Cancel, and then immediately canceling the RC with an attack. The attack can be a normal (ground or air) or a special move, and it works no matter the color of your RC (except the defensive yellow version), and whether you do the drift version or not. In fact, doing the fast version of Drift RC from the air can send you flying with crazy momentum.

The execution for Quick RC is a little tricky, but it cancels the RC animation almost as soon as it starts, which lets you really surprise your opponent with a mixup. It's particularly good if you cancel the RC with a command throw, since most defenders will instinctively try to block when they see a Roman Cancel happen. This mechanic might be called "Fast Roman Cancel" by some players, but FRC is a technique in past Guilty Gears, so abbreviating it to QRC is a bit clearer.



ロマンキャンセルキャンセル (roman kyanseru kyanseru) – *Lit. roman cancel cancel*

See video



Strike Invincible



A state where strikes cannot hit you, but throws will (and, depending on the game, projectiles might too). It's not as good as being fully invincible, but it's pretty darn close since beating all physical attacks defeats the majority of a fighter's arsenal, especially if they are not in range to throw you. Strike invincibility is actually not all that common in most fighting games; usually the developer will just go all the way and make the move fully invincible, but there are exceptions when they want to make a character weak to being thrown.



打撃無敵 (dageki muteki) – *Lit. strike invincible*



Shot Kill

Old school slang for Guile using his forward+HP command normal to punish a shoto after they both do a close-range projectile. From long range, Ryu's Hadouken, a motion input move, tends to slowly overpower Guile's Sonic Boom, since it takes time to charge. But from close range, if both players do a projectile at the same time, Guile will recover much faster than Ryu, and he can always smack him. Forward+HP is usually chosen for its strong damage and long range.

See video

Space Animal



A Super Smash Bros. slang term for characters from the Star Fox franchise, namely Fox, Falco, and Wolf. Because they have similar attacks, similar movement, and similar counter-play due to their weight and recovery options, many players decided it would be best to just group them all together. You'll hear stuff like "that combo only works on spacies" often, as these characters are usually strong and get extra attention devoted to them.

Low Profile



A move that shifts your hurtbox very low to the ground... so low, in fact, that you can use it to dodge many moves that try to target the middle of a character's body. You can also use this as a verb, like "I can't believe that move low profiles my jab". It's pretty related to a high crush.



低姿勢 (teishisei) – *Lit.* low pose

[See video](#)

Ki Charge



A move available to all characters in **Dragon Ball FighterZ** that stops them in place and starts earning super meter. It's not too easy to just use at any old random time, since you'll leave yourself wide open for a smack in the face as you're charging up, but you might be able to sneak a bit of charging in while your opponent is knocked down, or while certain assists are hitting them.

In the **Tekken** series, a Ki Charge is a taunt-like move that powers up your character's next attack, doing much more damage and automatically causing a counter hit. Unfortunately, you won't be able to block while you're charged up, and your opponent will also get higher damage and counter hit properties on their next attack. It's pretty uncommon to see ki charges in Tekken, apart from players trying to show off, or aggravate their opponent.



氣合溜ぬ (kiai tame) – *Lit. spirit charge*

Button Hold Trick



A trick in King of Fighters titles that lets you perform a special move on the first possible frame when returning to neutral. To do this, simply perform the special move slightly early, and then hold the attack button, rather than pressing and releasing it (or trying to double tap it).

Pressing and holding the button will basically act as a buffer, and the game will register your button for many consecutive frames. This is very useful in KoF combos, especially difficult juggles.

where there are very small windows to hit the opponent before they fall to the ground. The button hold trick is the key to making these combos consistent to perform.



押しっぱなし入力 (oshippanashi nyūryoku) – *Lit.* hold down input



Supreme Victory



Wobbling

An infinite combo performed by Ice Climbers in Super Smash Bros. Melee. The lead Ice Climber grabs the opponent and starts pummeling them, while the backup Ice Climber, who has been desynched, attacks in the background in an offset rhythm. Together, the pattern is inescapable and goes on forever, but to prevent running out the clock, most competitions will force the Ice Climbers to kill with a smash attack after enough damage has been dealt.

Named after Texas Smash player Wobbles, wobbling has a contentious history, as most infinite combos do. Some believe it is too much reward for a simple grab and is boring to watch, while others believe it gives the strength needed for an otherwise weak character to compete and is no worse than other guaranteed death sequences in the game. In the end, many tournaments chose to ban wobbling, but not without controversy.



ぱしづぱし (pashi pashi) – *Lit.* the sound of hitting something continuously

[See video](#)

Black Beat Combo



The Guilty Gear-specific term for an invalid combo. This means that the timing of your air combo was not precise enough, and you left a chance for your opponent to air tech. The combo counter goes dark (hence the name Black Beat) to indicate that the combo was escapable, but it's up to your opponent to be on the ball here. In some versions of Guilty Gear, they will even tell you which hit of the combo was the fail point by leaving a number under the combo counter. In BlazBlue, this situation is called a Blue Beat Combo, since the combo counter turns blue instead of black, but the idea is the same.



黒ビート (kuro bito) – *Lit. black beat (in Guilty Gear)*

青ビート (ao bito) – *Lit. blue beat (in BlazBlue)*

Claw



A common name for the Street Fighter character Vega. Because the Japanese call this character Balrog, we often use this more general name when discussing him so there's less confusion. It's a problem that exists due to a triple name swap between three characters in the Japanese and English versions of SF, the other two being Dictator and Boxer.



バルログ (barurogu) – *Lit. balrog*



Fireball War

Two players throwing lots of fireballs at each other, often without moving, while daring the other person to jump first. A lot of beginners will crack after throwing just one or two fireballs, while expert players can sit there chucking plasma for a long time without feeling the heat, knowing they will have good reactions to anti-air when the time comes. Subtle variations in timing, spacing, and strength of the fireballs used can make these battles fun and interesting, even if they look like boring spam to your average joe.



弾合戦 (tama gassen) – *Lit.* bullet battle

Short



Another name for light kick. So named because the original Street Fighter II cabinets were designed by people whose grasp on English was tenuous at best and offensive at worst.



小キック or 小K (shou kikku) – *Lit.* small kick

小足 (ko ashi) – *Lit.* small leg (only used for low attacks)

Trip Guard



The ability to cancel the recovery of a jump directly into blocking, as long as you didn't attack while you were in the air. In many games, there is a short recovery period when you land from any air attack, and smart players will hit you during that. However, you'll get to bypass that if you didn't attack, and you block low while landing. A common attack strong players would use to snipe your landing would be a sweep (a.k.a., a "trip"), and being able to guard that is the source of the term's name.

It's worth noting that, commonly, people will use this term to mean the opposite effect; that is, they will use it to describe someone getting hit as they land after performing an air attack. You might hear something like "nice, she used the sweep to trip guard him". This is not the original meaning of the term and fighting game pedants will be quick to correct you if you use it wrong (a "trip guard", after all, is the act of guarding, not the act of being hit). However, language is fluid and sometimes lingo can end up changing meaning in weird ways. It's not the end of the world, really. Some people have tried to avoid using the term and instead say "hit the landing frames" to dodge this confusion.



着地の隙がない (chakuchi no suki ga nai) – *Lit.* no landing gap

See video 

Knockdown



Being knocked off your feet and landing on your back. Certain attacks commonly cause knockdowns, like sweeps, throws, many special moves, and in some games, simply getting hit out of the air. There are generally two types of knockdowns, hard knockdowns and soft knockdowns, which describe how long you have to lie on the ground before you can get up and fight again, and what options you may have (if any) while standing up.

In most games, while you are lying on your back, you are invincible to all attacks (except if a game employs OTG moves). The moment when you stand up and become vulnerable again, called the wakeup game or okizeme, is an incredibly important cornerstone of virtually every fighting game. If you are on offense, you may choose to attack with a meaty or execute some planned

mixup or set play. If you are rising from the knockdown, you usually should try to block, but you may also choose to reversal to escape, or try to abare your way out. Knockdowns can lead to huge swings in the match and learning to maximize your advantage in these situations and play the mind games well will earn you lots of wins.



ダウン (daun) – *Lit. down*

Sex Kick



A certain style of aerial attack in Smash Bros. where the character politely sticks their leg out and holds that pose for a long amount of time. Sex kicks have very fast startup and a huge amount of active frames, making them great neutral tools for approaching, since a hitbox is basically always active as you're flying through the air. They are classically always neutral-air attacks, although the definition has extended to include some other attacks in the newer Smash titles.

See video 

Point Blank



The closest possible distance two characters can be from each other. If you try to walk forward, you'll actually just start pushing your opponent's character along with you. This is the range where grapplers are happy and zoners are extremely sad.



密着 (micchaku) – *Lit. glued together*



Just Frame

An input that must be performed on exactly one specific frame in order for it to work. For example, a 1-frame link is a combo that needs one frame timing to succeed (although sometimes input tricks can help make this easier), and advanced combos like Taunt Jet Upper will involve just frame precision. Even some basic moves on a character's move list might require a just frame; the Soulcalibur series has many moves like this, while Tekken has the Electric Wind God Fist.



ジャスト入力 (jasuto nyūryoku) – *Lit. just input*

Drive Impact



A long-range armored attack in Street Fighter 6 that is performed with HP+HK and costs 1 drive bar to use. Commonly abbreviated to "DI" (not to be confused with other uses of that term). If DI successfully absorbs an attack and then hits the opponent (or hits them raw as a punish counter), you will crumple the opponent and get a full combo of your choice. Blocking a drive impact while you are midscreen is fine, but if you are near the corner, blocking it will instead push you into the wall, which will break your guard and give your opponent a combo. This makes DI especially dangerous near the wall, as it turns effectively into an unblockable. If you are in burnout, being splatted into a wall this way will instead cause you to be stunned and open to a bigger combo.

Drive impacts have several counters. In most situations, you can jump over them, throw them right before they reach you, parry them, or perform any super attack which will break the armor instantly. Most importantly, though, if you input your own drive impact as soon as you see your opponent do it, the game will trigger a slow motion effect and watch one DI absorb the other before crumpling your opponent. This is the preferred way to handle DI, if you have the

reactions to do it!

Note that if someone was already in block stun from another attack when they block a DI (that is, you make DI a true block string after another attack), the game won't allow you to wall splat them. Instead, it will show the word "Lock" on screen and you will just get pushed away normally. You'll always have to leave a gap where your opponent has the chance to input something before the DI in order for this wall splat to work.



ドライブインパクト (doraibu inpakuto) – *Lit. drive impact*

See video



10-String



A Tekken string that almost always hits 10 times. Every character has at least one 10-string, although the inputs will be different between characters. They're kind of seen as a gimmick, since once the string begins, the sequence is the same each time. Some of the hits will be low and some might be high or mid, and it's up to the defender to just remember the sequence and switch their blocking direction as needed, like a game of Simon Says played from memory. If you forget the sequence, or are new to Tekken, odds are you're just going to get tagged instead.



10連コンボ (jū ren konbo) – *Lit. 10 continuous combo*

See video



Auto Shimmy



A string in Mortal Kombat that is good at baiting throw techs from the defender, because one of the later hits kind of looks like the start of a throw. This makes tick throws pretty hard to defend against; all you have to do is mix up between doing the full string, or doing the first hit (for example) and then stopping and throwing. It'll be really hard to react to which option is coming and you'll probably get hit.

It's named after the shimmy, another way of trying to bait a throw tech, but it's a bit easier to implement because the mixup is "automatically" built in to the string. You don't need to be creative with your character's positioning nearly as much.

Waseda Style



A format used in team tournaments where each team submits a complete player ordering before the match starts. Then, the two first players play against each other – the loser is eliminated and the winner goes to the back of his team's queue. The second members of each team will now play each other in the same way, and this continues until one team is completely eliminated.

This is different from the "winner stays on" mentality of a Pokemon style team tournament, since no player will play two matches in a row unless they are the last player alive on their team. It also ensures that even if one team wins every match, all the players on both teams will get a chance to play. This format is more common in Japanese tournaments, while Pokemon style tends to be more common in American events.



早稻田式 (waseda shiki) – *Lit.* waseda style

Back Turn



Facing away from your opponent, with your back to them. Some moves will leave you with your back turned to your opponent, and you can access special techniques while doing this (think of it almost like a stance if you like). Moves that have to be executed from a back turn are often labeled BT.



背向け中 (semuke chū) – *Lit.* having their back toward

Ranbat



A common abbreviation for "ranking battle", which is a series of tournaments where the players earn points for how they place. At the end of the ranbat schedule, the player with the most cumulative points will be declared the winner. Ranbats are almost always local to a city or region, and are a good excuse for playing games with your friends over the course of a couple months.



ランバト (ranbato) – *Lit.* ranbat

Double Elimination



A tournament format where each player must lose twice before they are eliminated. All players start in the Winners Bracket (often organized into smaller sub-tournaments called pools), and they are paired up against another player. If they lose, they drop down into the Losers Bracket and get paired up against other players with a loss. Losing again means the end of your day. The Grand Finals is always the last player standing in each of the Winners and Losers Brackets, with the Losers Bracket player having to win twice.

Double elimination tournaments are by far the most popular open-bracket tournament format for fighting game events. They take longer to complete, but let skill and consistency have much more of a say in determining the outcome. Other formats include single elimination, round robin, and Swiss system.



ダブルエリミネーション方式 (daburu eriminēshon houshiki) – *Lit.* double elimination system

RTSD



Rush That Shit Down. A phrase commonly used by American fighting game legend Alex Valle to describe games, life, and everything in between. I suppose it can be roughly translated to "just do it", but really, it's taken on a life of its own at this point.

Clash Frame MB



A move property in Melty Blood: Type Lumina that lets attacks clash with other attacks, even if your attack is not active yet. It's usually specified by talking about some duration of the move where this property occurs, measured in frames.

In practice, it feels a lot like armor, but because you cause a clash instead of "absorbing" the move, there are some small extra nuances here (the attacker is allowed to cancel their clashed attack into another move, for example). It's common for many Moon Skills to get clash frames as a buff when you've activated your Moon Drive, making them harder to stop in neutral and maybe even letting them act as a good reversal attack.



相殺判定 (sousai hantei) – *Lit.* offsetting detection

[See video](#)

Character Loyalist



Someone who plays only one character, no matter what. This means taking this character to battle even when they have a bad matchup and no matter where they are on a tier list. Highly skilled character loyalists tend to learn all the nuances and unique interactions their character can use to their benefit, and they can often overcome bad matchups when someone tries to counter pick them due to their huge experience. But this life is certainly not for everyone. You'll have to *really* love the character to overcome whatever struggles come with years of playing the game the same way.



单キャラ使い (tan kyara tsukai) – *Lit.* single character user

Block



The act of defending against incoming attacks. The attack makes contact with your body, but you take zero damage from the attack, or a small amount of chip damage in the case of special moves. While a few fighting games (Mortal Kombat, Soul Calibur) require you to hold a designated button to block, most games, like Street Fighter titles, will block if you hold the direction away, or both down and away, from your opponent.

When you block an attack, you are put in block stun. Some attacks cannot be blocked, while other attacks, such as lows and overheads, must be blocked a certain way or else they will hit. Blocking is a solid foundation of good defense and you probably don't block enough.



ガード (gādo) – *Lit. guard*

Force Roman Cancel



A type of Roman Cancel in the Guilty Gear XX series of games, commonly abbreviated to FRC. The good side: FRCs only cost 25% of your Tension gauge instead of the normal 50%, making them a very economical and powerful use of meter. The bad side: FRCs can't be performed on just any old move. It's only possible on a small subset of moves (often on projectiles), and the timing is notoriously tight, often just a couple frames of leeway during a very specific part of the move's animation. But when you get used to the precision needed, you can generate some pretty effective pressure at a very low meter cost. FRCs generate a blue circle around your character.



フォースロマンキャンセル (fōsu roman kyanseru) – *Lit. force roman cancel*

青色ロマンキャンセル (ao iro roman kyanseru) – *Lit. blue roman cancel*

青キヤン (aokyan) – *Lit. abbreviation of 青色ロマンキャンセル*

See video

Big Body



A character whose hurtbox is especially tall and wide. Usually these are grapplers who are slow-moving but super effective from close range. Sometimes unique combos will work on big bodies because their bigger hurtbox gets in the way of attacks that smaller characters would dodge. They also tend to have a harder time dealing with zoning since they're such a big target.



デカキャラ (deka kyara) – *Lit. huge/big character*



Punish Counter

A special state in Street Fighter 6 that occurs when you hit someone in the recovery of any move. When a move hits as a punish counter, it comes with three main benefits: you'll deal 20% more damage, you'll get +4 extra frames of hit stun on your attack which may allow new combo possibilities, and you will drain some of your opponent's drive gauge, putting them closer to burnout. Some specific moves may even deal more than 20% bonus damage (for example, throws deal 70% more), or they might get extra special properties like launching the opponent!

While punishing your opponent for mistakes is core to every fighting game, SF6 makes it a universal system mechanic that juices up your punishes for a lot of extra reward. It means getting whiff punished or having your DP blocked is even more brutal than normal. Strong players will maximize the benefits of punish counters and make all your mistakes hurt that much more.



パニッシュカウンター (panisshu kauntā) – *Lit. punish counter*

パニカン (panikan) – *Lit. abbreviation of パニッシュカウンター*

See video 



Let's Go Justin

A phrase some people will shout in excitement as soon as somebody starts parrying something difficult. This phrase was yelled during EVO Moment #37 by an onlooker cheering on Justin Wong, right before he launched the super that Daigo famously parried. It has since become a term of endearment in both the English and Japanese FGC alike regardless of the game being

played, but it holds even more significance if you are playing 3rd Strike against Chun-Li and you're low on life.



レツツゴージャスティーン (rettsugō jasutin) – *Lit. let's go Justin*

See video



Cross-up Protection



A system mechanic in Under Night In-Birth and Melty Blood where you are able to block cross-ups both directions for a brief window of time after your opponent switches sides. In order to have any chance of hitting your opponent with a jumping cross-up, you have to wait until your character turns around and faces the opponent. It also impacts a character like Seth, who likes to place a projectile on the screen and then teleport behind you. If he tries to do this so the projectile hits as soon as he goes behind, you'll block it no matter which direction you're holding.

In some versions of these games, there are tricks to try and bypass this system, usually by forcing the offensive character to turn around earlier than expected. The sandori in Melty Blood: AACC is one such example.

Ninja



A slang term used to refer to any of the male Mortal Kombat characters that dress up in ninja garb of a solid color. This includes Sub-Zero, Scorpion, Ermac, Smoke, and others across the franchise. While it's not really accurate to call it a gameplay archetype like the shoto or the

Mishima, they do often share hurtbox similarities which means certain combo paths tend to work on all male ninjas equally well.



忍者 (ninja) – *Lit. ninja*



Charge Partitioning

A mechanic that lets you stop charging a charge move briefly, then start charging again from where you left off. In the vast majority of games, as soon as you stop holding your charge direction, you will lose the charge and have to start over. But in extremely rare cases (most notably Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike), you can begin a charge, release it before it has completed, do an action such as dash or parry, then return to the charging direction quickly and finish the charge without starting over.

Letting you "split" or "partition" your charge over two intervals, doing a separate action in between, has lots of advanced uses in 3rd Strike for setting up tricky unblockables and doing difficult combos.



溜め分割 (tame bunkatsu) – *Lit. store partitioning*

See video



Run Stop Fierce

A looping combo for Street Fighter IV's El Fuerte that involves hitting with fierce over and over. After each fierce, you need to cancel into his Run special move, then stop it immediately, so you

can stay reasonably close. This combo is often abbreviated RSF.

Run Stop Fierce is not an infinite combo; eventually, you will be pushed out of range of close fierce and you will get far fierce, which does not combo. Therefore, the combo is a delicate balance of allowing the Run to move you forward as far as you can, while still giving enough time for the next fierce to combo. The combo is also more difficult depending on your opponent's character, due to hurtbox differences. Most expert El Fuerte players would land about 5 or 6 reps during real matches, before ending the combo in a knockdown. Anything above 9 or 10 is tool-assisted territory.



大Pループ (dai pi rūpu) – *Lit.* heavy punch loop

See video



Burst Overdrive

Performing an Overdrive in Guilty Gear Xrd with the Dust button instead of the normal attack button. Burst Overdrives will cost 50% Tension and also spend your full Burst (although, you get a small rebate if the super hits). They do 25% more damage than the regular super attack, making them great ways to finish off the opponent, as long as you don't need your Burst for next round!



バースト覚醒必殺技 (bāsuto kakusei hissatsu waza) – *Lit.* burst awakening killing technique



Korean Backdash

A method common to Tekken games that lets you backdash multiple times in a row extremely quickly. In Tekken, you can cancel the recovery of a backdash with pretty much anything (called, predictably, "Backdash Canceling"). Korean backdashing cleverly uses down-back to cancel a backdash in progress, and immediately count as the first back input for your next backdash. After backdashing once, repeat (down-back, neutral, back) in rapid succession to continually cancel your backdash into crouch, and then start a new backdash as fast as possible.

The technique is named for Korean players who discovered it in Tekken Tag Tournament, and used it to great success in some American events. The execution takes a fair bit of practice to get used to, but the fast movement it allows is very powerful, and it's often seen as a benchmark skill to transition into higher level Tekken play. If you want to learn more, I'd recommend this excellent video on KBD and its implications.



山田ステップ (yamada suteppu) – *Lit.* yamada step

山ステ (yamasute) – *Lit.* abbreviation of 山田ステップ

See video



Unfly

A special move in some team games that stops you from Flying and returns you to regular movement. It's usually mapped to the same input as Fly so that input simply turns your flight mode on or off as necessary. Especially in older Marvel vs. Capcom games, the pressure you could generate from repeated Fly and Unfly sequences was pretty ridiculous, and the execution was famously difficult.



飛行を中断する (hikou wo chūdan suru) – *Lit. stop the fly*



Fatal Counter

A more powerful version of a counter hit in the BlazBlue series. Certain moves are marked with the ability to deliver a Fatal Counter if they counter hit the opponent, and you'll get extra hit stun and a fatter combo when it hits. The announcer shouts "Fatal" to let you know when you're in business. It shares similarities with a system like Street Fighter V's Crush Counter.

Fatal Counter is also a mechanic in Melty Blood: Type Lumina. Landing any hit or throw against a shielding opponent, or a counter-hit against someone in the air, pops up the "Fatal Counter" message on the screen. You'll get slightly more damage and hit stun than normal, possibly allowing new combos depending on the situation. You'll also earn more moon gauge on a fatal counter, letting you use your powerful moon skills and moon drive more often.



フェイタルカウンター (feitaru kauntā) – *Lit. fatal counter*



Slashback

A parry mechanic in Guilty Gear Accent Core. While holding back or down-back, press S+H to put a gold ring around your character. If your opponent attacks you, you'll shrug off their attack and recover nearly immediately, usually allowing for a punish. If you're wrong, though, you won't be able to block for a bit, and you'll probably get hit yourself.

The timing needed for a Slashback is pretty precise, around 2 or 3 frames, so you should

probably only try it if you're sure you're gonna make it work. It's a high risk, high reward version of Guilty Gear's other parry-like system, Instant Blocking.



スラッシュバッく (surasshu bakku) – *Lit.* slashback



Happy Birthday



Hitting two characters at the same time in a team game. This usually happens because someone tried to call an assist but got hit immediately, and the assist gets caught up in the mayhem and has to go along for the ride too. In games like Marvel vs. Capcom 3, you can usually kill both characters if you recognize what's happening (especially if you have X-Factor available). The term comes from the wonderful, gracious gift your opponent gives you by making a bad assist call, although it's not quite as festive as saying Merry Christmas.



ハッピーバースデー (happi bāsudē) – *Lit.* happy birthday

See video



Jab Reset



Knocking your opponent down in a certain way (usually because your opponent missed a tech), then hitting them with a jab (in Smash Bros., this is just your neutral A attack). If you do it right, Smash Bros. Melee will force the opponent to stand straight up off the ground, where they will have lots of recovery time and will be wide open to a huge punish.

The act of hitting your opponent while they are in this weird prone, slightly-bouncing-off-the-

ground state is called a "lock", and each Smash game handles these locks differently. In Brawl, you could sustain the lock state more or less infinitely by constantly jabbing them or firing certain projectiles at them, and then finally force them to stand up into a free killing blow. It was basically a 0 to death combo. Smash Ultimate changes the mechanics a bit to prevent free kills, letting you optionally tech roll away after you've been jab reset out of the lock state.



叩き起こし (tataki okoshi) – *Lit.* to wake someone up forcefully

See video



Astral Heat

A special super attack in BlazBlue that instantly kills the opposing character if it lands. You need to be one round away from winning the match, have full super meter, and the opponent has to have less than 35% health remaining in order to use this technique. In BlazBlue: Cross Tag Battle, you need to be in Resonance Blaze and meet some other conditions to use this. It shares similarities with Guilty Gear's Instant Kill.



アストラルヒート (asutoraru hito) – *Lit.* astral heat

See video



Reversal Action

A BlazBlue: Cross Tag Battle mechanic that acts like a dragon punch by simply pressing two buttons, no joystick motion required. These attacks act like you would expect; they are invincible, making them great reversals, and they cannot be blocked in the air, making them great anti-airs. As a result, you might hear this just called a "DP", since it shares so much in common with dragon punches. Interestingly, it uses the same input as BBTAG's pushblock, which means if you mistime your pushblock attempt, you'll get a super high-risk DP instead and you might die for it.



リバーサルアクション (ribāsaru akushon) – *Lit.* reversal action



Ultra Combo

A special ender in **Killer Instinct** that immediately ends the match, as long as the opponent has 15% life or less remaining on their final health bar. Like all enders, you have to do an opener first, although because Ultras are not combo breakable, you can (and should!) do opener-ender as often as possible to finish matches without any break chance. Ultras are extremely important to KI strategy and they're used very often.

Street Fighter IV also has a comeback mechanic with this name. As you take damage over the course of a round, you build your "Revenge Gauge", which lets you perform one of two pre-selected Ultra Combos. They are effectively just flashier versions of a super that did a lot of damage. Comboing into them from a Focus Attack Dash Cancel was common for many characters.



ウルトラコンボ (urutora konbo) – *Lit.* ultra combo



Air-to-air

Attacking an airborne opponent while you are also in the air. If you try to intercept an airborne opponent while staying on the ground, that's just called an anti-air. Sometimes if you predict a jump, the best defense is to jump yourself and meet them in the air with a fast attack!



空対空 (kū tai kū) – *Lit.* aerial anti-air

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