

Retro Game GDD - Street Fighter

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Street Fighter

Retro Game GDD

Intended game systems: PC
Target age of player: 12+
Intended ESRB rating: Everybody

1 - Introduction

Street Fighter is one of the strongest franchises in the video game industry. It dominated arcades in the 1990s and set the gold standard for the entire fighting game genre. All told, the franchise sold over 24 million units. In recent years though, the series lost its course. Those developers who were the soul of the franchise left Capcom and the series never really recovered. Meanwhile, the success of other fighting games has proven that strong demand for the genre still exists.

Simplified controls designed for the console. Choose between “classic” arcade and “new millennium” control modes.

It's time for Street Fighter to return. This time it has a new soul, borne from its most devoted fans who were inspired to become game developers for this very opportunity. Even after 15 years, Street Fighter's 2D gameplay holds up well, and we want to preserve and enhance the classic gameplay while giving it a new twist. The game must make the difficult leap from 2D to the 3D and it must be designed with an eye toward online play and console controllers rather than the arcade environment and joysticks.

The Cast

The original cast of twelve is supplemented by Sakura, Killer Bee (before she became Cammy), the head student at Ibuki's ninja village, a Chinese bodyguard, and the mysterious Akuma. Even the choice of cast reflects a flashback to Street Fighter's past, but with some new twists.

The Flashback Theme

The concept of the flashback repeats itself throughout the game. The story mode takes place during Ryu's flashback to SF2, allowing us to highlight classic Street Fighter moments and revisit familiar characters. A new game mechanic called flashback lets players rewind time to undo mistakes. And in a grand tribute to Street Fighter's past, we'd like to include emulated versions of all 12 major Street Fighters as unlockables. (SF1, SF2 series, SF Alpha series, and SF3 series.)

Story Mode

A good story can draw in a wide audience. Our story focuses on Ryu's journey to become a warrior, which is meant to mirror the player's own journey toward better understanding competition as a method of self-improvement. The spirit of the dead master Gouken teaches the player fighting techniques, while the sinister Akuma teaches Ryu what victory is really about. 3D roaming sequences link the battles together. The short roaming areas have designer-controlled cameras, like in God of War.






















World Tour

Single player content is important and usually lacking in fighting games. The World Tour mode lets players choose any character and progress through the ranks against many opponents and special challenges. Some challenges are almost like WarioWare mini-games, while others resemble more standard fights. This mode is intended to teach the player nuances about the fighting system in general and about tactics useful for their particular character.



Controls

The game is designed with the PS3 and Xbox 360 controllers in mind. There are 4 main attack buttons, rather than the traditional 6, so that all the main attack buttons can fit on the face of the controller.

			
New Millennium	 	 	 
Classic	   	   	   

Also, we offer players both a classic control mode (where you throw fireballs with the oldschool “quarter circle” motion on the d-pad) and a new, simplified control mode that we’re calling “New Millennium” mode. Many versions of Street Fighter have attempted to offer easier control schemes. They’ve always been either way too weird (CvS2 EO) or too weak (SF Alpha1 limited easy mode to level 1 supers, while regular mode could do much more powerful level 3 supers). The best attempt to date was SF Turbo Revival on GBA. In this game, the optional easy control mode replaces the qcf+p motion for fireballs with just forward+p. Dragon punch is down+p, and helicopter kick is back+k.

Note that in SF Turbo Revival, there is no reason to play Classic Guile over New Guile. New Guile can perform Sonic Booms and Flash Kicks without holding back for one second, and has no drawbacks to counter this advantage. In this game, characters with charge-up moves and 360 moves (such as Guile and Zangief) have a “special move gauge.” Classic Guile has to “charge-up” (hold back on the joystick) for 1 second before he can sonic boom. New Guile can Sonic Boom instantly at any time, but then he must wait, say, 1.3 seconds before he can do another special move. This and other balancing techniques will be used to keep the Classic and New characters competitive with each other in tournament play. New Millennium control mode is not intended as the usual throw-away mode, but instead is intended as an integral part of the game: tournament-legal and tournament-balanced.

Fighting System

The fighting system is more like a “greatest hits” of Street Fighter than a radical departure. Each character has all the most useful versions of moves from previous Street Fighter games, plus some new twists. The new mind-bending Flashback feature (described in a previous section) is the biggest twist of all.

Here are the basic features of the fighting system:

- Throws
- Counter-hits
- Air Juggles
- Staggers
- Wall Bounces and Floor Bounces
- Super Meter and Super Moves

New Moves:

Many characters have new special and super moves. Lots of old special moves have new properties. The spirit of what each character is about is still intact.

Throws:

To throw, players simply hold toward or away and press either fierce punch or roundhouse kick, just like in Street Fighter 2. Throws work even against blocking opponents, so they punish defensive play. Like in Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo, the enemy has a short window of time after a throw where he can enter his own throw command to reduce damage. This is called a “tech hit.”

Counter-hits:

If players hit an enemy out of the beginning of a move (rather than the recovery), there is a dramatic hit-pause, similar to that used in Street Fighter Alpha 3. Also, the enemy’s hit reaction is different; allowing for him to be juggled by additional attacks.

Air Juggles:

Some attacks (and all counter-hits) put the enemy into a juggle state where they can be hit more times before they land. We’d like to incorporate this popular fighting game mechanic, but keep it much more limited than the over-the-top version from the Marvel vs. Capcom series.



Staggers:

Some moves have the ability to “stagger” the opponent, usually when they counter-hit a standing or ducking opponent. When staggered, you temporarily lose control of your stumbling character. An icon of a wiggling joystick appears above your character’s head, signifying that you can “mash” the d-pad and buttons to escape faster. This is a very useful design mechanic used in the Guilty Gear series.

Wall Bounce and Floor Bounce:

When certain moves register a counter-hit, they have the ability to bounce the enemy off the floor or off a wall, allowing for juggle combos. Guilty Gear and Soul Calibur make good use of this feature, and even Street Fighter 3 used it well.

Super Meter:

The super meter, first used in Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo, has become a standard mechanic in almost every fighting game. It allows the designers to give the players very powerful, limited-use tools. The super meter in this game can hold a maximum of “level 2.” The meter starts empty and resets to empty at the beginning of each round. Players can fill the meter by doing almost any offensive move, including walking towards the enemy. Whiffed moves build little to no meter (in many versions of Street Fighter, players avoid fighting so they can do whiffed moves to build up super meter, a play pattern we’d like to avoid). Characters have three to five super moves each, many of which are completely new in SF4.



Training, Arcade, Survival, Single Match Modes

Training Mode

Dan Hibiki hosts the tutorial mode in his dojo. The joke here is that Dan is the weakest character in the Street Fighter universe. Even if he can't do the tutorial exercises himself, Dan can still teach them to the player. This mode takes the player through a "textbook" of lessons about the game system. It's similar to the excellent lessons in Virtua Fighter 4 and Soul Calibur 3.

Story Mode

This mode allows the player to play through a gauntlet of opponents similar to a traditional "arcade mode," but with cut-scenes and short events between each fight. Each character's story is intertwined with main storyline of the Ryu's Journey mode.



Survival Mode

In survival mode, players fight a stream of enemies one at a time. There are challenges to defeat 5, 10, 20, 50, and 100 enemies, as well as an endless mode. It's important that when each enemy dies, the next one jumps in right away without any loading time or stopping of the action.

Single Match Mode

In single match mode, players select their character, then the computer's character, play a single match, and then return to the character select screen. This is useful for practicing against a particular character over and over.

World Tour Mode

World Tour mode is a full single player experience which allows the player to play any character. (Note that in the story mode, only Ryu is playable.) You start out at Rank 1 with a menu of challenges. Each challenge rates you from 1 to 5 stars. Once you get enough stars, you become Rank 2 and gain access to all the new Rank 2 stars.

Note that you do not get more powerful as your rank up, because the entire concept of Street Fighter is that you must improve your personal skills, not gain artificial advantages like in an RPG. This system does give the player the same feeling of progression as an RPG, though. You always have clear goals (complete challenges to get stars) and a clear measure of your progress (your Rank). Along the way, you unlock many special items, such as alternate costumes and trophies.

Examples of challenges in World Tour mode:

- Defeat the dummy opponent in under 7 seconds
- Defeat the enemy using only super moves
- Fight the onslaught of Kens, who all attack with jump fierce (teaches you anti-air moves)
- Fight a series of 10 opponents, your lifebar does not replenish
- As Dhalsim, attack the falling leaves (teaches you the angles of his attacks)
- As Chun Li, attack the falling watermelons with standing roundhouse (teaches you the angles of her attacks)
- As Honda, defeat the stubborn Ryu who will only throw fireballs and dragon punch (this is the basic strategy to beat Honda, so the player must learn to overcome it)



Saving and Downloading Match Replays

The ability to very easily save movies of matches is an important, overlooked feature in fighting games. Ideally, players could tell the game to record every single versus match they play and save it to the hard drive, or they could set the game to prompt after each match whether that recording should be saved.

The players are really the content creators, and they will create movies of amazing combos and amazing matches long, long after the scripted story content of the game has run dry. Players love to learn from each other, and to gloat about their wins by showing each other who they beat and how. We will create a mechanism that allows them to share their content with each other, and they will stay interested in Street Fighter for years. This might be the single most important feature of the game, and a huge competitive advantage.

The Total Package

Our work is cut out for us because fighting games have always had terrible single player modes, and only spotty online support. Fighting games are also notoriously bad at delivering story and at teaching players how to actually play.

Street Fighter 4 will be the complete package. We offer an interesting story that actually has something to say. Ryu's development as a warrior mirrors the player's development. The life-lessons of winning and losing are difficult, but definitely interesting. Our World Tour mode features many activities and learning tools designed to teach the player nuances of the game that other fighting games don't bother with.

Our online support will include the ability to save and trade replays of matches. This will enable users to create their own content. All of this will result in a passionate, educated, and involved player-base. With controls designed for the console, rich single player modes, and serious online support, we will deliver the total package this genre-king needs to surround the solid base gameplay.

