

Back Home – Game Rules & Mechanics

Overview

Back Home is a 2D pixel-art platformer about a wounded warrior fighting his way back to his family. The player begins the journey already injured, which makes survival, timing, and smart movement essential, because one hit would mean the end. The core theme of the game is perseverance — even when you are at your weakest.

Core Gameplay Rules

1. Health & Lives

- The player starts each run with **3 lives**.
 - The warrior fights in a wounded state and has very limited health.
 - Taking damage reduces health.
 - If health reaches zero, the player loses one life and respawns at the last activated checkpoint.
 - The fact that the player is injured means that it takes one hit to reach zero health.
 - If all lives are lost, the game ends.
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2. Movement

- **Move Left / Right** to traverse the level.
- **Jump** to overcome obstacles.
- **Double Jump** allows one additional jump while in the air.
- Coyote time and jump buffering are implemented to make movement feel responsive and forgiving.

Movement precision is a key part of surviving difficult sections.

3. Combat

- The player uses a sword to attack enemies.
- Attacks must be timed carefully.
- Some enemy projectiles can be **reflected** with a well-timed attack.
- Defending can temporarily reduce vulnerability.

Combat is skill-based and rewards good timing rather than button mashing.

4. Enemies

There are multiple enemy types, such as:

- Ground patrol enemies.
- Floating enemies that shoot projectiles.

Enemies follow specific behaviour patterns. Learning these patterns is necessary to progress safely.

5. Projectiles & Reflection

- Certain enemies launch fireballs.
- Fireballs damage the player on contact.
- If the player attacks at the correct timing, the fireball can be reflected toward enemies.
- Reflected projectiles can damage or defeat enemies.

This mechanic adds depth and creates high-skill moments.

6. Checkpoints (Family Photos)

- Glowing family photos act as limited checkpoints.
- The player must **hold a key** to activate a photo.
- Activating a checkpoint consumes one photo resource.
- Upon death, the player respawns at the last activated photo.

Checkpoints are limited, encouraging strategic decisions about when to use them.

7. Doors & Level Flow

- Certain doors transition the player between scenes (e.g., level completion or return to menu).
- A prompt appears when the player is close enough to interact.

Win & Loss Conditions

Win Condition

- Reach the end of the level and successfully progress through the final door.

Loss Condition

- Lose all lives.
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Design Philosophy

Back Home is built around tension and hope:

- The player is fragile but not powerless.
- Precision and timing are more important than speed.
- Limited checkpoints increase emotional weight.
- Reflection mechanics reward skill and confidence.

The core message of the game is:

Hope Keeps You Alive.