

= Fighting game =

Fighting game is a video game genre in which the player controls an on @-@ screen character and engages in close combat with an opponent . These characters tend to be of equal power and fight matches consisting of several rounds , which take place in an arena . Players must master techniques such as blocking , counter @-@ attacking , and chaining together sequences of attacks known as " combos " . Since the early 1990s , most fighting games allow the player to execute special attacks by performing specific button combinations . The genre is related to but distinct from beat ' em ups , which involve large numbers of antagonists .

The first video game to feature fist fighting was arcade game Heavyweight Champ in 1976 , but it was Karate Champ which popularized one @-@ on @-@ one martial arts games in arcades in 1984 . In 1985 , Yie Ar Kung @-@ Fu featured antagonists with differing fighting styles , while The Way of the Exploding Fist further popularized the genre on home systems . In 1987 , Street Fighter introduced hidden special attacks . In 1991 , Capcom 's highly successful Street Fighter II refined and popularized many of the conventions of the genre . The fighting game subsequently became the preeminent genre for competitive video gaming in the early to mid @-@ 1990s , especially in arcades . This period spawned numerous popular fighting games in addition to Street Fighter , including successful and long running franchises like Mortal Kombat , The King of Fighters , Tekken , Virtua Fighter , Marvel vs. Capcom , Guilty Gear , and Killer Instinct .

The genre 's popularity stagnated as games became more complicated and as arcades began to lose their audience to increasingly powerful home consoles near the end of the 1990s , though new franchises such as Dead or Alive and the Soul series achieved success . In the new millennium , the genre remains popular but retains a much smaller proportion of enthusiasts than it once did , due to the increasing popularity of other genres .

Fighting games are almost always asymmetric games as each player fights in a different way .

= = Definition = =

Fighting games are a type of action game where on @-@ screen characters fight each other . These games typically feature special moves that are triggered using rapid sequences of carefully timed button presses and joystick movements . Games traditionally show fighters from a side @-@ view , even as the genre has progressed from two @-@ dimensional (2D) to three @-@ dimensional (3D) graphics . Street Fighter II , though not the first fighting game , popularized and standardized the conventions of the genre , and similar games released prior to Street Fighter II have since been more explicitly classified as fighting games . Fighting games typically involve hand @-@ to @-@ hand combat , but may also feature melee weapons .

This genre is distinct from beat ' em ups , another action genre involving combat , where the player character must fight many weaker enemies at the same time . During the 1980s publications used the terms " fighting game " and " beat ' em up " interchangeably , along with other terms such as " martial arts simulation " (or more specific terms such as " judo simulator ") . With hindsight , critics have argued that the two types of game gradually became dichotomous as they evolved , though the two terms may still be conflated . Fighting games are sometimes grouped with games that feature boxing , UFC , or wrestling . Serious boxing games belong more to the sports game genre than the action game genre , as they aim for a more realistic model of boxing techniques , whereas moves in fighting games tend to be highly exaggerated models of Asian martial arts techniques . As such , boxing games , mixed martial arts games , and wrestling games are often described as distinct genres , without comparison to fighting games and belong more into the Sports game genre .

= = Game design = =

Fighting games involve combat between pairs of fighters using highly exaggerated martial arts moves . They typically revolve around primarily brawling or combat sport , though some variations

feature weaponry . Games usually display on @-@ screen fighters from a side view , and even 3D fighting games play largely within a 2D plane of motion . Games usually confine characters to moving left and right and jumping , although some games such as Fatal Fury : King of Fighters allow players to move between parallel planes of movement . Recent games tend to be rendered in three dimensions and allow side @-@ stepping , but otherwise play like those rendered in two dimensions .

Aside from moving around a restricted space , fighting games limit the player 's actions to different offensive and defensive maneuvers . Players must learn which attacks and defenses are effective against each other , often by trial and error . Blocking is a basic technique that allows a player to defend against attacks . Some games feature more advanced blocking techniques : for example , Capcom 's Street Fighter III features a move termed " parrying " which causes the attacker to become momentarily incapacitated (a similar state is termed " just defended " in SNK 's Garou : Mark of the Wolves) . In addition to blows such as punches and kicks , players can utilize throwing or " grappling " to circumvent " blocks " . Predicting opponents ' moves and counter @-@ attacking , known as " countering " , is a common element of gameplay . Fighting games also emphasize the difference between the height of blows , ranging from low to jumping attacks . Thus , strategy becomes important as players attempt to predict each other 's moves , similar to rock @-@ paper @-@ scissors .

= = = Special attacks = = =

An integral feature of fighting games includes the use of " special attacks " , also called " secret moves " , that employ complex combinations of button presses to perform a particular move beyond basic punching and kicking . Combos , in which several attacks are chained together using basic punches and kicks , are another common feature in fighting games and have been fundamental to the genre since the release of Street Fighter II . Some fighting games display a " combo meter " that displays the player 's progress through a combo . The effectiveness of such moves often relate to the difficulty of execution and the degree of risk . These moves are often beyond the ability of a casual gamer and require a player to have both a strong memory and excellent timing . Taunting is another feature of some fighting games and was originally introduced by Japanese company SNK in their game Art of Fighting . It is used to add humor to games , but can also have an effect on gameplay such as improving the strength of other attacks . Sometimes , a character can even be noted especially for taunting (for example , Dan Hibiki from Street Fighter Alpha) .

= = = Matches and rounds = = =

Fighting game matches generally consist of several rounds (typically " best of three ") ; the player who wins the most rounds wins the match . Fighting games widely feature life bars , which are depleted as characters sustain blows . Each successful attack will deplete a character 's health , and the game continues until a fighter 's energy reaches zero . Hence , the main goal is to completely deplete the life bar of one 's opponent , thus achieving a " knockout " . Beginning with Midway 's Mortal Kombat released in 1992 , the Mortal Kombat series introduced " Fatalities " in which the victor kills a knocked @-@ out opponent in a gruesome manner . Games such as Virtua Fighter also allow a character to be defeated by forcing them outside of the fighting arena , awarding a " ring @-@ out " to the victor . Round decisions can also be determined by time over (if a timer is present) , which judges players based on remaining vitality to declare a winner . Fighting games often include a single player campaign or tournament , where the player must defeat a sequence of several computer controlled opponents . Winning the tournament often reveals a special story ? ending cutscene , and some games also grant access to hidden characters or special features upon victory .

= = = Character selection = = =

In most fighting games , players may select from a variety of characters who have unique fighting styles and special moves . This became a strong convention for the genre with the release of Street Fighter II , and these character choices have led to deeper game strategy and replay value . Although fighting games offer female characters , their image tends to be hypersexualized , and they have even been featured as pin @-@ up girls in game magazines . Male characters in fighting games tend to have extra @-@ broad chests and shoulders , huge muscles , and prominent jaws . Custom creation , or " create ? a ? fighter " , is a feature of some fighting games which allows a player to customize the appearance and move set of their own character . Super Fire Pro Wrestling X Premium was the first game to include such a feature , and later fighting games such as Fighter Maker , Soulcalibur III , Mortal Kombat : Armageddon , and Dragon Ball Z : Budokai Tenkaichi 2 adopted the concept .

= = = Multiplayer modes = = =

Fighting games may also offer a multiplayer mode in which players fight each other , sometimes by letting a second player challenge the first at any moment during a single player match . A few titles allow up to four players to compete simultaneously . Several games have also featured modes that involve teams of characters ; players form " tag teams " to fight matches in which combat is one @-@ on @-@ one , but a character may leave the arena to be replaced by a team mate . Some fighting games have also offered the challenge of fighting against multiple opponents in succession , testing the player 's endurance . Newer titles take advantage of online gaming services , although lag created by slow data transmission can disrupt the split @-@ second timing involved in fighting games . The impact of lag in some fighting games has been reduced by using technology such as GGPO , which keeps the players ' games in sync by quickly rolling back to the most recent accurate game state , correcting errors , and then jumping back to the current frame . Games using this technology include Skullgirls and Street Fighter III : 3rd Strike Online Edition .

= = History = =

= = = Late 1970s to 1980s = = =

Fighting games find their origin in boxing games but evolved towards battles between characters with fantastic abilities and complex special maneuvers . Sega 's black and white boxing game Heavyweight Champ , which was released in 1976 , is considered the first video game to feature fist fighting . 1979 's Warrior is another title sometimes credited as one of the first fighting games . In contrast to Heavyweight Champ and most later titles , Warrior was based on sword fighting duels and used a bird 's eye view . In 1983 , Sega released another boxing game Champion Boxing , which was Yu Suzuki 's debut title at Sega . However , Data East and its related developer Techn?s Japan 's Karate Champ from 1984 is credited with establishing and popularizing the one @-@ on @-@ one fighting game genre . In it , a variety of moves could be performed using the dual @-@ joystick controls , it used a best @-@ of @-@ three matches format like later fighting games , and it featured training bonus stages . It went on to influence Konami 's Yie Ar Kung Fu , released in January 1985 , which expanded on Karate Champ by pitting the player against a variety of opponents , each with a unique appearance and fighting style . The player could also perform up to sixteen different moves , including projectile attacks . The martial arts game The Way of the Exploding Fist , released in June 1985 , achieved critical success and subsequently afforded the burgeoning genre further popularity on home systems . Numerous other game developers tried to imitate the financial successes of Karate Champ , Yie Ar Kung @-@ Fu and The Way of the Exploding Fist with similar games ; Data East took unsuccessful legal action against Epyx over the computer game International Karate . Also in 1985 , Elite 's Frank Bruno 's Boxing introduced high and low guard , ducking , lateral dodging , and a meter which was built up with successful attacks , and when full enabled a special , more powerful punch , to be thrown .

Both Karate Champ and Yie Ar Kung Fu later provided a template for Capcom's Street Fighter in 1987. Street Fighter found its own niche in the gaming world, partially because many arcade game developers in the 1980s focused more on producing beat 'em ups and shoot 'em ups. Part of the game's appeal was the use of special moves that could only be discovered by experimenting with the game controls, which created a sense of mystique and invited players to practice the game, although similar controller motions used for grappling maneuvers in the earlier Brian Jacks Uchi Mata were deemed too difficult. Following Street Fighter's lead, the use of command-based hidden moves began to pervade other games in the rising fighting game genre. Street Fighter also introduced other staples of the genre, including the blocking technique as well as the ability for a challenger to jump in and initiate a match against a player at any time. The game also introduced pressure-sensitive controls that determine the strength of an attack, though due to causing damaged arcade cabinets, Capcom replaced it soon after with a six-button control scheme offering light, medium and hard punches and kicks, which became another staple of the genre. In 1988, Home Data released Reikai D?shi: Chinese Exorcist, also known as Last Apostle Puppet Show, the first fighting game to use digitized sprites and motion capture animation. Meanwhile, home game consoles largely ignored the genre. Budokan: The Martial Spirit was one of few releases for the Sega Genesis but was not as popular as games in other genres. Technical challenges limited the popularity of early fighting games. Programmers had difficulty producing a game that could recognize the fast motions of a joystick, and so players had difficulty executing special moves with any accuracy.

=== Early 1990s ===

The release of Street Fighter II in 1991 is often considered a revolutionary moment in the fighting game genre. Yoshiki Okamoto's team developed the most accurate joystick and button scanning routine in the genre thus far. This allowed players to reliably execute multi-button special moves, which had previously required an element of luck. The game was also highly successful because its graphics took advantage of Capcom's CPS arcade chipset, with highly detailed characters and stages. Whereas previous games allowed players to combat a variety of computer-controlled fighters, Street Fighter II allowed players to play against each other. The popularity of Street Fighter II surprised the gaming industry, as arcade owners bought more machines to keep up with demand. Street Fighter II was also responsible for popularizing the combo mechanic, which came about when skilled players learned that they could combine several attacks that left no time for the opponent to recover if they timed them correctly.

SNK released Fatal Fury a few months before Street Fighter II. It was designed by Takashi Nishiyama, the creator of the original Street Fighter, which it was envisioned as a spiritual successor to. Fatal Fury placed more emphasis on storytelling and the timing of special moves, and added a two-plane system where characters could step into the foreground or background. Meanwhile, Sega experimented with Dark Edge, an early attempt at a 3D fighting game where characters could move in all directions. Sega however, never released the game outside Japan because it felt that "unrestrained" 3D fighting games were unenjoyable. Sega also attempted to introduce 3D holographic technology to the genre with Holosseum in 1992, though it was unsuccessful. Several fighting games achieved greater commercial success, including SNK's Art of Fighting and Samurai Shodown as well as Sega's Eternal Champions. Nevertheless, Street Fighter II remained the most popular, spawning a special Champion Edition that improved game balance and allowed players to use additional characters. The popularity of Street Fighter II led it to be released for home game consoles and allowed it to define the template for fighting games. Fighting games soon became the dominant genre in the arcade game industry of the early 1990s.

Many American developers tried to capitalize on the template established by Street Fighter II, but it was Chicago's Midway Games who achieved unprecedented notoriety when they released Mortal Kombat in 1992. The game featured digital characters drawn from real actors, numerous secrets, and a "Fatality" system of finishing maneuvers with which the player's character kills their opponent. The game earned a reputation for its gratuitous violence, and was eventually adapted

for home game consoles . The home version of Mortal Kombat was released on September 13 , 1993 , a day that was promoted as " Mortal Monday " . The advertising resulted in line @-@ ups to purchase the game and a subsequent backlash from politicians concerned about the game 's violence . The Mortal Kombat franchise would ultimately achieve iconic status similar to that of Street Fighter with several sequels as well as movies , television series , and extensive merchandising . Numerous other game developers tried to imitate Street Fighter II and Mortal Kombat 's financial success with similar games ; Capcom USA took unsuccessful legal action against Data East over the 1993 arcade game Fighter 's History . Data East 's largest objection in court was that their 1984 arcade game Karate Champ was the true originator of the competitive fighting game genre , which predated the original Street Fighter by three years .

Sega AM2 's first attempt in the genre was the 1993 arcade game Burning Rival , but began to attract attention with the release of Virtua Fighter for the same platform the same year . It was the first fighting game with 3D polygon graphics and a viewpoint that zoomed and rotated with the action . Despite the graphics , players were confined to back and forth motion as seen in other fighting games . With only three buttons , it was easier to learn than Street Fighter and Mortal Kombat , having six and five buttons respectively . By the time the game was released for the Sega Saturn in Japan , the game and system were selling at almost a one @-@ to @-@ one ratio . Meanwhile , the 1993 title Mortal Kombat II captivated Western audiences , and a 2008 review considered the best Mortal Kombat game in retrospect .

The 1994 PlayStation launch title Battle Arena Toshinden is credited for taking the genre into " true 3 @-@ D " due to its introduction of the sidestep maneuver , which IGN described as " one little move " that " changed the fighter forever . " The same year , SNK released The King of Fighters ' 94 in arcades , where players choose from teams of three characters to eliminate each other one by one . Eventually , Capcom released further updates to Street Fighter II , including Super Street Fighter II and Super Street Fighter II Turbo . These games featured more characters and new moves , some of which were a response to people who had hacked the original Street Fighter II game to add new features themselves . However , criticism of these updates grew as players demanded a true sequel . By 1995 , the dominant franchises were the Mortal Kombat series in America and Virtua Fighter series in Japan , with Street Fighter Alpha : Warriors ' Dreams unable to match the popularity of Street Fighter II . Throughout this period , the fighting game was the dominant genre in competitive video gaming , with enthusiasts popularly attending arcades in order to find human opponents .

= = = Late 1990s = = =

In the latter part of the 1990s , the fighting game genre began to decline in popularity , with specific franchises falling into difficulty . Electronic Gaming Monthly awarded the excess of fighting games the " Most Appalling Trend " award of 1995 . Although the release of Street Fighter EX introduced 3D graphics to the series and continued the success of Street Fighter II and Street Fighter Alpha , the Street Fighter : The Movie arcade game was regarded as a failure . Street Fighter : The Movie used digitized images from the Street Fighter film . While a home video game also titled Street Fighter : The Movie was released for the PlayStation and Sega Saturn , it is not a port but a separately produced game based on the same premise . Capcom later released Street Fighter III in 1997 which featured improved visuals and character depth , but was also unable to match the impact of Street Fighter II . Despite excitement in Japan over Virtua Fighter 3 in arcades , the limited hardware capabilities of the Sega Saturn led Sega to delay a console release . Sega eventually released the game for its Dreamcast console , but the company became unprofitable and was forced to discontinue the console . Meanwhile , SNK released several fighting games on their Neo @-@ Geo platform , including Samurai Shodown II in 1994 , Real Bout Fatal Fury in 1995 , The Last Blade in 1997 , and annual updates to their The King of Fighters franchise . Garou : Mark of the Wolves from 1999 was considered one of SNK 's last great games , and the company announced that it would close its doors in 2001 .

In retrospect , multiple developers attribute the decline of the fighting genre to its increasing

complexity and specialization . This complexity shut out casual players , and the market for fighting games became smaller and more specialized . Furthermore , arcades gradually became less profitable throughout the 1990s due to the increased technical power and popularity of home consoles . Even as popularity dwindled , the fighting game genre continued to evolve ; several strong 3D fighting games also emerged in the late 1990s . Namco 's Tekken (released in arcades in 1994 and on the PlayStation in 1995) proved critical to the PlayStation 's early success , with its sequels also becoming some of the console 's most important titles . The Soul series of weapon @-@ based fighting games also achieved considerable critical success , beginning with 1995 's Soul Edge (known as Soul Blade outside Japan) to Soulcalibur V in 2012 . Tecmo released Dead or Alive in Japanese arcades in 1996 , porting it for the PlayStation in 1998 . It spawned a long running franchise , known for its fast paced control system and innovative counterattacks . The series again included titles important to the success of their respective consoles , including Dead or Alive 4 for the Xbox 360 . In 1998 , Bushido Blade , published by Square , introduced a realistic fighting engine that featured three @-@ dimensional environments while abandoning time limits and health bars in favour of an innovative Body Damage System , where a sword strike to a certain body part can amputate a limb or decapitate the head .

Video game enthusiasts took an interest in gaming crossovers which feature characters from multiple franchises in a particular game . An early example of this type of fighting game was the 1998 arcade release Marvel vs. Capcom : Clash of Super Heroes , featuring comic book superheroes as well as characters from other Capcom games . In 1999 , Nintendo released the first game in the Super Smash Bros. series , which allowed match @-@ ups such as Pikachu versus Mario .

= = = Early 2000s = = =

The early part of the decade saw the rise of major international fighting game tournaments such as Tougeki ? Super Battle Opera and Evolution Championship Series , and famous players such as Daigo Umehara . Several more fighting game crossovers were released in the new millennium . The two most prolific developers of 2D fighting games , Capcom and SNK , combined intellectual property to produce SNK vs. Capcom games . SNK released the first game of this type , SNK vs. Capcom : The Match of the Millennium , for its Neo Geo Pocket Color handheld at the end of 1999 . GameSpot regarded the game as " perhaps the most highly anticipated fighter ever " and called it the best fighting game ever to be released for a handheld console . Capcom released Capcom vs. SNK : Millennium Fight 2000 for arcades and the Dreamcast in 2000 , followed by sequels in subsequent years . Though none matched the critical success of the handheld version , Capcom vs. SNK 2 EO was noted as the first game of the genre to successfully utilize internet competition . Other crossovers from 2008 included Tatsunoko vs. Capcom and Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe . The most successful crossover , however , was Super Smash Bros. Brawl , also released in 2008 for the Wii . Featuring characters from Nintendo 's various franchises , the game was a runaway commercial success in addition to being lavished with critical praise .

In the new millennium , fighting games became less popular and plentiful than in the mid @-@ 1990s , with multiplayer competition shifting towards other genres . However , SNK reappeared in 2003 as SNK Playmore and continued to release games . Arc System Works received critical acclaim for releasing Guilty Gear X in 2001 , as well as its sequel Guilty Gear XX , as both were 2D fighting games featuring striking anime inspired graphics . The fighting game is currently a popular genre for amateur and doujin developers in Japan . The 2002 title Melty Blood was developed by then amateur developer French @-@ Bread and achieved cult success on the PC . It became highly popular in arcades following its 2005 release , and a version was released for the PlayStation 2 the following year . While the genre became generally far less popular than it once was , arcades and their attendant fighting games remained reasonably popular in Japan in this time period , and still remain so even today . Virtua Fighter 5 lacked an online mode but still achieved success both on home consoles and in arcades ; players practiced at home and went to arcades to compete face @-@ to @-@ face with opponents . In addition to Virtua Fighter and Tekken , the Soul and Dead or

Alive franchises continued to release installments . Classic Street Fighter and Mortal Kombat games were re-released on PlayStation Network and Xbox Live Arcade , allowing internet play , and in some cases , HD graphics .

= = = Late 2000s to present = = =

Street Fighter IV , which incorporated online multiplayer modes , was released in early 2009 to critical acclaim , having garnered praise since its release at Japanese arcades in 2008 . The console versions of the game as well as Super Street Fighter IV sold more than 6 million copies in total . Street Fighter 's successful revival has sparked a renaissance for the genre , introducing new players to the genre and with the increased audience allowing other fighting game franchises to achieve successful revivals of their own . Tekken 6 was positively received , selling more than 3 million copies worldwide as of August 6 , 2010 . Other successful titles that followed include BlazBlue : Calamity Trigger , Marvel vs. Capcom 3 : Fate of Two Worlds , Mortal Kombat (2011) , Street Fighter X Tekken , The King of Fighters XIII , and Guilty Gear Xrd .

Despite the critically acclaimed Virtua Fighter 5 releasing to very little fanfare in 2007 , its update Virtua Fighter 5 : Final Showdown has received much more attention in 2012 due to the renewed interest in fighting games . Dead or Alive 5 , is notable for making extensive use of destructible environments . Other titles following in the wake of the fighting game renaissance include Persona 4 Arena , Tekken Tag Tournament 2 , Soulcalibur V , and crossover titles such as PlayStation All Stars Battle Royale and Tekken X Street Fighter .