

# REFACE

Tekken isn't an easy game to master, but if you take the time to properly **practice** and **study**, you'll be more likely to become a versatile and skilled Tekken player versus one that gets their ass handed to them on a frequent basis.

Most people cringe at the sound of the words “study” and “practice,” but I hate to tell ya. It ain't gonna come naturally. It's not like studying for a test, but it'll take some dedication and focus. I'm not telling you to spend hours upon hours in your room - the last thing you want to do is overkill, but an hour or two here and there will suffice.

People don't realize how important it is to study and memorize the characters' moves and attacks just as you would for a Math exam. While there are no mathematics involved, patience, memorization, timing and practice will be your best friend.

What you are about to read has *\*NOT\** been officially been recommended, endorsed or reviewed by Namco. This guide is a set of guidelines based on my opinion and experiences. I have gone through all of these steps to reach the level of play I currently maintain, but it may not be for everyone. Feel free to fine tune my guidelines to suit you best.

If you are ready to learn how to become a better Tekken player, scroll down!

# CHAPTER 1

## Learning to be the Best

### Pre-studying Preparations

Before you can actually begin studying, you need something to study from *right*? I recommend Prima's Official Strategy Guides for the Tekken series. They're colorful, detailed and give you extra goodies like storylines. There is NO way you will become a skilled Tekken player by attempting to "figure out" the moves on your own, unless you *are* that kid that spends 24/7 on the PS2.

Strategy guides detail everything from throws to special combos to other useful tips and strategies. Having a guide hard copy is a good reference for when you have a mental block and can't remember how to execute an attack. Believe me, it will happen.

While I find Prima's series to be useful to me, buy a guide that you like best, but be sure to shop around for the best guide. Some guides may not have all of the tricks of the trade you might need to be a successful Tekken player!

Some people would rather hop onto the Internet and search for "move lists," which are usually plain black and white text files that are written instructions of moves, attacks and throws. They're easy to download, free and just as effective as a strategy guide.

However, I tend to avoid them simply because they are usually poorly written, contain inaccurate information, and hard to read on the computer screen (unless I print them). It's all up to you.

### Knowing the Characters

I believe it is important to familiarize yourself with the historical background of the character you are trying to learn. That way, you can see how one character relates to another and elaborate on your character usage. For example, Nina and Anna Williams are twin sisters and they therefore have very similar moves. If you can use Nina, you can definitely use Anna.

Understanding how a character's network works will allow you to be prepared from one installment to the next as well as character relationships.

### Playing the Early Games

I found it easy to become a more skillful and versatile player by playing and learning the earlier games in the series. Although it's not necessary that you purchase them, I do believe mastering the earlier games will give you a good grasp on the series as a whole and will also prepare you for those days where your friend only has Tekken 2. Ultimately, it's your choice.

## Learning the Basics

Before diving into the more complicated attack strings, it's a good idea to start with the simpler and basic moves. They will become your best friend, believe it or not.

Overloading is a common mistake people make. Forcing yourself to remember tons of attack in as little time as possible is the worst thing you can do. Just as you wouldn't cram for a test, *don't* cram for Tekken.

With a strategy guide in hand, pick one character that you would like to learn. For Tekken Tag, you'll most likely have to choose two. This is going to require some studying, patience, time and practicing, but if you lose your temper and focus, you're not going to get anywhere.

## Chapter 1 Review

- Mastering the earlier games of the series might help you become a more well-rounded, better prepared and versatile player. Not everyone has the latest Tekken installment.
- Buy a decent strategy guide to study from.
- Read up on your characters to learn their historical background as well as their relationships.
- Pick a character to start learning.

# CHAPTER 2

## Start Studying

I'm not going to lecture you, but speaking from experience, if you want to be a good Tekken player, you have to be emotionally prepared and mature enough to sit down and study. I've seen many people who ignore the strategy guides available, don't look at move lists and disregard my advice. Of course that is their right, but they are the ones who end up frustrated.

**Part of learning Tekken is memorization.**

Anyone can tell you that if you don't memorize the moves, there's no way you can pull them off when you need them. The trick is to learn a little bit at a time until it snowballs in your memory.

### Setting up the Controller

In the Options menu, which can be accessed from the Title Screen, you have the option of changing your controller settings. The moves in Tekken are far more advanced and complicated than just using the basic O, X, Triangle and Square buttons alone.

I leave the O, X, Triangle and Square buttons the way they are by default, but I change the top L1, L2, R1, R2 buttons to make the throws and double-button attacks more accessible. With this setup, I have my two throws and multiple-button attacks right on top of the controller I can easily access them.

My setup is as follows:

**X, O, Triangle, Square** = Default  
**Analog 2 (right analog stick)** = Change or Tag  
**L1** = RP+RK (Throw)  
**R1** = LK+LP (Throw2)  
**L2** = RK+LK (Attack1)  
**R2** = RP+LP (Attack2)

### Learning the Basic Moves

Learn the general basic moves for ALL characters; these moves are usually located at the beginning of the guide and they range from tackles, dives, basic punches and kicks as well as basic throws. You'll use these for the rest of your Tekken career so it's best that you know them like the back of your hand.

Some strategy guides also detail information about each of the characters' advantages and disadvantages.. I've never really used this because I've been playing Tekken for so long, I figured these characteristics on my own, but if you don't have 7 years of experience under your belt like I do, you might want to read up on these small tricks of the trade.

## Starting to Study

Once you have chosen a character to learn, turn to that character's page in the guide and enter **Practice Mode**. **Practice Mode** is a mode of play that sets two characters facing each other. One is you, and the other is a non-active character. The dummy character will not attack you.

Starting at the very top of the move list, pick a few attacks to start out with (no more than 5), examine and try to execute them, one right after the other.

Let's call the group of moves you are learning and executing consecutively "cycles." Each time you go through one cycle without messing up, add one more attack into the loop. Don't move on to the next attack until you execute the previous one correctly.

If you are confused, let me clarify. When I first started, I chose the first 5 moves listed as my cycle. I executed them all until I was able to refrain from looking at the guide as well as my hands. At that point, I added another attack into my cycle, making a total of 6. Once I was able to execute all 6 without looking at the guide or my hands, I added on more. And so on.

## Attack String Cycle Method (Example)

**If the book reads:**

Uppercut LP + RP  
Jabbercut LP, LP, LP  
Triple Kicks LK, RK, LK  
Double Kicks LK, LK, LK

**FIRST you start with:**

- Uppercut LP + RP

**SECOND you learn:**

- Uppercut LP + RP
- Jabbercut LP, LP, LP

**THIRD you learn:**

- Uppercut LP + RP
- Jabbercut LP, LP, LP
- Triple Kicks LK, RK, LK ...and so on.

Follow this process until you can stop looking at the guide for help. It's okay to look at the guide and your hands when you are adding a new attack into the cycle, but the more you practice, it's best not to rely on it as much for moves you've already been practicing in the cycle. The more cycles you go through, the bigger your "cycle string" or series of attacks you are learning will become.

The key here is to trigger your memory. It's important to keep your eyes on the screen and not on your hands. If you become too dependent on the guide, you'll eventually become self-defeating and won't be able to put the moves into memorization.

**NOTE:** Tekken Tag Tournament has a nice feature called "COMBO TRAINING" that displays the buttons sequence for an attack and tests you on your coordination and ability to pull it off.

It may take you sometime to develop the coordination... and if you already have it, it may take some time for you to get used to the button timing to execute the attack or combo correctly. Don't expect to be busting out combos and attacks your first few times of practicing. It may take some time before you can actually get something accomplished, but the key is to be patient and confident.

As you go down the movelist, the combos will most likely grow larger and more complicated. Usually at the bottom of the movelists in any player's guide are a series of long attack strings called "ten-strings" or "ten-hit combos." As their name says, they are usually a string of attacks that span for about ten hits.

Just like above, you have to study a little bit at a time, but the difference is with 10-hit combo strings is that you break the combo string up into several parts and learn each part until you've learned the whole attack string. Here is an example:

**If The Combo Is:**

LK, RK, LP, LP, LP, RK, LK + RP, RP, LK, RP

**FIRST you learn:**

LK, RK, LP, LP, LP

**THEN you add MORE to the combo:**

LK, RK, LP, LP, LP, RK, LK + RP

**THEN you add MORE to the combo:**

LK, RK, LP, LP, LP, RK, LK + RP, RP, LK, RP

Got it? Good! It's not so bad once you get the hang of it. Really. As often as you can, practice these moves until they are burned into your memory. Set realistic goals and expectations for yourself. You're not going to learn a whole character in a day or maybe even in a week. Space your studying habits over the course of a week. You might even want to learn 2 in that span of time.

## **Continuing to Practice**

The only way for you to exercise your skills and put yourself to the test is to practice these moves. Play your friends or the computer and apply what you have learned. One of the best methods of practicing is setting the computer on a harder level until it's challenging for you. Use a wide variety of moves and make the level harder each time you defeat the computer. Once you feel comfortable with the computer, there should be no way your friends will be a problem!

# CHAPTER 3

## The Don'ts

### DON'T spread yourself too thin!

Limiting yourself to very few attacks during game play will put you at risk. Your opponent may pick up the pattern and quickly learn how to avoid them. That includes repeating the same attacks over and over again in a short amount of time. Some players might refer to this as "cheesing," which I'll touch on later.

The key thing to remember is if your opponent knows what moves you are going to execute next, you're doomed. By using a wide range of moves that are cleverly spaced out, there is NO WAY your opponent will remember what everything you've executed. In my case, combos that I have seen over and over are easy for me to counter or avoid.

### DON'T repeat your attacks too often!

As mentioned above, if you do the same attack over and over in a short amount of time, your opponent will eventually pick up on the pattern and use it to their advantage. What will you have left to do if your opponent knows all of your moves? Nothing. Besides, you look more impressive if you can pull off a lot of flashy moves and combos... take my word for it. :)

### DON'T Hesitate!

Hesitating to attack can be a very bad thing. Usually, when you hesitate, you temporarily let your defenses down, leaving yourself wide open for an attack, but if you are wise, you can use hesitation to your advantage.

### DON'T hesitate too little!

I'll sound hypocritical here, but hesitation can also have positive effects on your game play. Hesitation can be used as a "fake out" causing your opponent to let's say execute an attack or counter thinking they are going to get you. Sometimes, when you hesitate, your opponent will too. It's another skill to manage your hesitation and fake-outs, but be wise about when and why you use these techniques!

### DON'T overload yourself!

An "overloaded player" knows way too much for their own good... If you are overloaded with attack strings, your **gameplay reaction time** will decrease because your mind will take extra time to think about which move to execute. This often happens to me, so if it happens to you, don't feel bad. It just means you know a lot. What you'll have to do is make your decisions wise and quick.

### **DON'T get stuck!**

One of the worst things you can do to yourself is get stuck on performing a specific move. If you set your mind to say "I MUST complete this move before the round is over," it will actually let your defenses down. If you try to execute a move for your own personal gratitude, you will lose concentration of the game. Sometimes, getting "stuck," as I call it, can also lead you to perform repetitive attacks as you are trying to pull this single move off. From that point on, your opponent can pick up what you are trying to do and quickly learn how to evade your attack.

### **DON'T unbalance your offense and defense!**

Some people prefer to block over attacking. That's okay, but if you want to win, you're going to have to attack your opponent sooner or later. You won't achieve anything by blocking the whole time.

On the other hand, you can't totally neglect defensive techniques because you will be open for attack as your defense is down. I've found that it is smart block RIGHT after you attack. Usually after you attack (especially if it's not a combo), your opponent throws a counter attack.

ALWAYS be ready to block and don't stop blocking until you are no longer being attacked. Protect your character!

### **DON'T tag out at the last minute!**

\*Tekken Tag Players\* Letting your character's life bar deplete to the last hit before tagging out is a big risk and mistake people make in Tekken Tag Tournament. The more you change characters during a round, the longer you can extend your stay in the game. Tagging your characters in and out not only allows you to juggle between 2 lifebars, but when one character is tagged out to the sideline, he or she will regain some energy while they are not fighting.

### **DON'T allow for outside distractions!**

Not much needs to be said here, but I know I cannot have a conversation and play Tekken at the same time. If you are going to win, tell everyone to 'shut up' so you can concentrate!

Personally, I prefer to have the game's sounds turned on. Sound effects should be important to all players as they are to me. Outside music and noise can easily break your concentration and distract you from winning so if your friends mute the television and put on their own music, please ask them not to. Some people enjoy playing their own music while playing Tekken because it gets them pumped up. It's just a matter of preference.

### **DON'T try too hard!**

Trying too hard is only going to unnecessarily raise your blood pressure and weaken your concentration. Anger and frustration will be the first thing to screw with your performance. Playing Tekken should be an enjoyable experience so RELAX! Don't let your



emotions escape you, but if they do, take deep breaths in between matches to calm yourself down. It's okay to be tense, but it's not okay to get out of control.

Just as a drunk should NOT drive a car, an outraged videogamer should not have a controller in hand.

**You aren't the best until you've FOUGHT the best.** Don't go into matches assuming that you are going to beat everyone without a hitch. Always expect a challenge, but mentally prepare yourself for the worst. That way, if you lose, you won't become frustrated or angry!

# CHAPTER 4

## CONCLUSION

### Maintain Your Skills

Those who have lost weight say "losing the weight is easy, but keeping it off is the hard part." The same can be said for playing Tekken. The easy part is learning the moves, but the hard part is applying what you've learned from then on.

I'm not saying that you have to play Tekken everyday of your life because from time to time, I'm sure you'll forget a move here and there, but if you are very devoted, popping in the disc every once in a while won't hurt. If you've been playing Tekken for 7+ years like me, you'll eventually remember what you need to know, even though it's been months and months since you've played Tekken.

Don't be embarrassed to have to refer back to your player's guide to refresh your memory. If you find that you forgot some things, bust out that guide and practice for a few minutes to fill in what you forgot.

### Stay Current

Everybody has their favorite game out of the Tekken series. I personally like Tekken 2 the best for its whole package and Tekken 3 for its gameplay. I am not really a fan of Tekken 4. However, if you are going to remain a skilled player, you will have no choice but to stay current with recent installments.

That means you will have to follow this guide for each of the new games, especially if they add a lot of new moves to the characters. Chances are, the characters are going to have a lot of the same moves, but there may be a few new ones that you won't know. A good example of this is how Jin Kazama from Tekken 3 and Jin Kazama from Tekken 4 are practically 2 different characters!

### Choose Your Characters Wisely

What character will you use the most? Male or female?

I find that the female characters are a lot quicker than most of the male characters but most of them are a lot weaker. Jun's strength, for example, does not compare to Nina's. Speed is a necessity, but sometimes you need the strength of male characters such as Gun Jack or Bryan Fury to really end the round quickly. It all depends on your preference. I use all of the female characters primarily but I throw in the robots every now and then. Use who you like to use.

## **Dude, that character SUCKS!**

I do not believe that there is one character in Tekken that "sucks." Some might be boring or lacking, but I believe the word "suck" is just a front that people put up to hide the fact that they can't use a specific character. The character that you may not like might be in someone else's top 3. Remember that "slow" or "big" does not mean bad. All characters have their advantages and disadvantages... it just depends on HOW you use them to your advantage. You never know, you might be able to rock the arcade with Doctor Boskonovitch if you put your mind to it!

## **Hey! Quit cheesing all the time!**

Ah, the word "cheesing" is often thrown around like a ragdoll. According to the Tekken Dictionary, "cheesing" is defined as follows:

*Cheese (Cheese) v. A form of gameplay, which is considered unfair by most players, in which a person will "unfairly" win a match by being "cheap." This can include cornering an opponent, refusing to let the opponent retrieve from a fall or repeating moves consecutively and avoiding attack-variety in a battle. Can also be called "mashing" or "cheap."*

The first 4 words of this definition are key. It IS a form of gameplay. Nothing more and nothing less.

But to say it's unfair and cheap I have to argue against. If it were unfair to "button mash" or use "cheap" tactics, why would Namco allow such a technique to be used? Simple: it's legal, it doesn't violate any rules of the game and it works for some people.

I don't believe anyone has the jurisdiction to judge the way a person plays their game. A real skilled player would have no problem with one who chooses to use this method of game play. I think the word "cheesing" is yet another front people put up to hide their insecurities of their own game play. I'm not saying I choose to use the "cheesing" technique, but if someone pulls it on me, I don't mind one bit because it's a level of gameplay that unexperience and unskilled gamers use... and that's SO easy for me to stop.

## **Wow! You suck, dude!**

Big mistake. Downing others, especially at the arcades in today's time can lead you into a fight if you're not careful. Now, friendly joking might be one thing but blatant cockyness is a no no in my book. People who are overly competitive are like time-bombs waiting to explode any minute. If you're dealing with a stranger, keep your cool and they will keep theirs.

I know I don't like it when people smug me so I don't do it to others, unless they were talking loads of garbage to begin with... and they are my friend. Otherwise, if you happen to win a match, leave your opponent with a "nice game" remark so nothing ugly happens.

Just some advice, but it's up to you to take it or not.