

NieR:Automata

Combat SySTem

The **combat system** in Nier Automata is a multifaceted and dynamic experience, **blending elements of hack-and-slash action with bullet hell mechanics**. The player engages in **fast-paced battles** against a variety of enemies, ranging from small drones to massive bosses, across diverse environments. Central to the combat system are the **protagonist's agility and versatility**, allowing for **fluid movement** and a **greater range of attacks**.

The player can execute light and heavy attacks to create **combos**, chaining together strikes to deal damage to enemies. **Dodging and evading enemy attacks are skills that the player has to mastery to perform better during the combat**, requiring precise timing and positioning to avoid incoming damage. Nier Automata employs **bullet hell mechanics** (*especially during boss battles*) where players must navigate intricate patterns of enemy projectiles while simultaneously dishing out their own attacks.



Pod companion ([System: Nier Automata - Companion System](#)) provides additional firepower and support through **specific Pod Programs** that range from **simple projectile attacks** to **powerful laser beams** and defensive maneuvers, adding **strategic depth** to combat encounters.

The combat system also features different weapon types ([System: Nier Automata - Equipments](#)), each with its own unique moveset and characteristics. The player can wield swords for **close-quarters combat**, spears for **extended reach**, and heavy weapons for **AoE attacks**.

Switching between weapon types adds variety and depth to gameplay, allowing the player to experiment with different strategies and tactics (**discovery** and **strategy** progression).

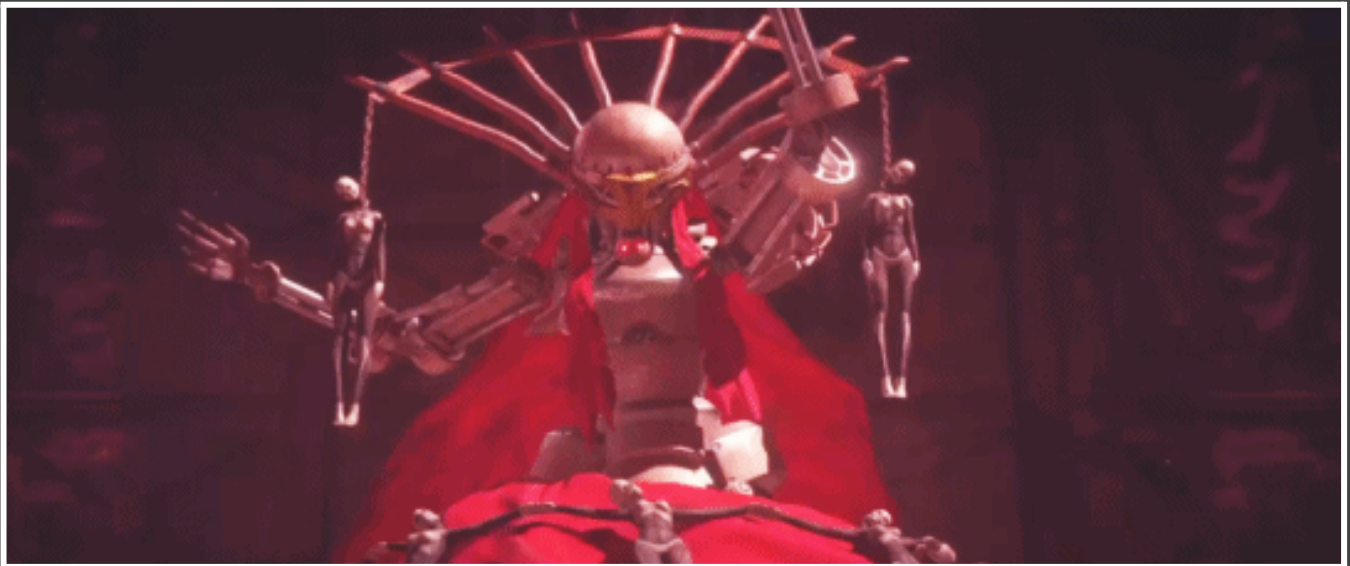
Fusion Combat System

Hack n' Slash

Nier: Automata's hack-and-slash combat aspects are a cornerstone of the gameplay offering players a deeply immersive experience characterized by **fluid controls** and **dynamic combat sequences**. The combat system is built upon **intuitive controls** that allow the player to execute a variety of **melee attacks** ranging from **rapid light strikes** to **powerful heavy blows**.

This versatility extends to the **combo system** which enables players to string together intricate sequences of attacks to unleash combos upon their enemies. The protagonist's agility and mobility and the pace of the combat system (**high pace combat**) empower the player to **dash and evade enemy attacks** with precision (reactivity is the main physical skill required of the player during combat) adding an element of **strategy and intensity**.

Weapon diversity is another key aspect of the combat system, offering players a wide array of weapons to choose from, each with its own distinct moveset and characteristics, allowing for player **customization** and **discovery** during the combat.



Input Controls

The controls are designed to be highly responsive to the inputs and provide the player with a **seamless** and **responsive** gameplay experience. The game's animations are also crafted to convey a **sense of fluidity and weight**, ensuring that combat sequences feel natural and dynamic with input buffering techniques that register player inputs and **reduce the risk of missed commands**.

The dynamic camera system dynamically adjusts to the action on screen and provides the player with a **clear view of the battlefield**, allowing for **smooth transitions between different camera angles** (

System: Nier Automata - Camera System) during combat encounters and ensuring that he can maintain situational awareness and react swiftly to changing circumstances.

The open world of Nier Automata emphasizes **player agency** allowing the player to experiment with **different combat strategies** and **playstyles** to find what works best for them.

Bullet Hell

Bullet hell combat revolves around enemy projectiles that come in different **shapes, sizes, and patterns**, creating **visually stunning and challenging fights**. This dynamic requires **quick reflexes** and **spatial awareness**. Environmental hazards are obstacles to the bullet hell encounters and add an **extra layer of challenge** to combat scenarios with **moving platforms, collapsing terrain, or traps** that require the player to **adapt his movement patterns** and **evasion strategies** during the combat (*adaptability and logic*).

The **Pod companions** (analyzed in **System: Nier Automata : Upgrades**) are a versatile support unit accompanying the player character and provide valuable assistance by **firing projectiles at enemies**, deploying defensive maneuvers to protect the player or offering supportive abilities to aid in navigation through hazardous environments.



Combo

The combo system offers the player a wide range of options for **chaining together attacks and unleashing combos on their enemies** to **damage them or apply debuff**. Each weapon in the game has its own unique set of combo attacks, ranging from **fast-paced slashes** to **slower strikes**.

This dynamic allows the player to have a **high agency regarding his fighting style**, offering him not only a set of weapons for **customization** on an aesthetic level of the weapon and character or on a **structural level** (*weapon stats*), but also a **set of combos** (*each with its statistics and effects*).

The player must carefully chain their attacks to maintain momentum, maximize damage output and support the timing dynamics (*a target system is combined that supports the player during a combo.*)

Combo Effects (Combat System/Enemies Interaction Depth)

The combo system encourages **experimentation** and **mastery** rewarding the player who invests time and effort into learning the intricacies of each weapon's moveset. As players progress through the game, he unlock **new weapons and abilities that expand his arsenal and open up new possibilities for combo chains** (**progression** and **accomplishment**). These are the most frequent Combo Effects in the game:

- **Damage Output:** Combos allow the player to deal increased damage to enemies compared to individual attacks. Chaining together light and heavy attacks in succession can result in empowered damage output especially when targeting enemy weak points\
- **Stun and Crowd Control:** Specific combos have the ability to **stun** or **stagger** enemies, temporarily interrupting their actions and leaving them vulnerable to follow-up attacks. This can be particularly effective against large groups of enemies.
- **Knockback and Launch:** Some combos have knockback or launch properties, causing enemies to be pushed back or lifted into the air upon impact.
- **Area of Effect (AoE) Damage:** Certain combo attacks have **AoE properties**, allowing players to damage multiple enemies within a certain radius.



Triggers

In the open world combat encounters are **triggered by a variety of factors**. The player encounters enemies while **traversing different regions**, whether they're **patrolling specific areas** or **randomly spawning** as players explore.

Quest objectives often involve combat, requiring the player to defeat specific enemies or clear out hostile zones to progress. **Exploration** is rewarded with **hidden treasures and resources**, sometimes guarded by enemies, prompting combat encounters when players interact with these points of interest.

Ambushes and traps set by enemies keep the attention of the player always during the **exploration phase** adding **elements of surprise to combat encounters**.

Optional challenges and mini-games scattered throughout the open world offer additional combat encounters rewarding players with **unique rewards and experiences** and they break the combat pattern so as not to make the entire system of fighting enemies boring during the discovery of the open world.



Gates

Hard Gates

- **Story Progression:** Specific combat encounters are **gated behind story progression**, meaning players **must reach specific points in the narrative to unlock access to new areas or events** where combat occurs. This ensures that players experience combat encounters in a **structured manner that aligns with the overarching storyline**.
- **Key Item Requirements:** Some combat encounters require players to obtain **specific key items** or **complete specific objectives** before they can access them. These key items might unlock access to *new areas, trigger events, or provide access to powerful weapons or abilities* that are essential for overcoming challenging enemies.
- **Level Requirements:** In some cases, combat encounters may have **level requirements** that players must meet in order to engage in them effectively. This prevents players from attempting encounters that are **too difficult for their current level of progression**, ensuring a balanced and challenging gameplay experience (*reduce the agency of the player*).



Soft Gates

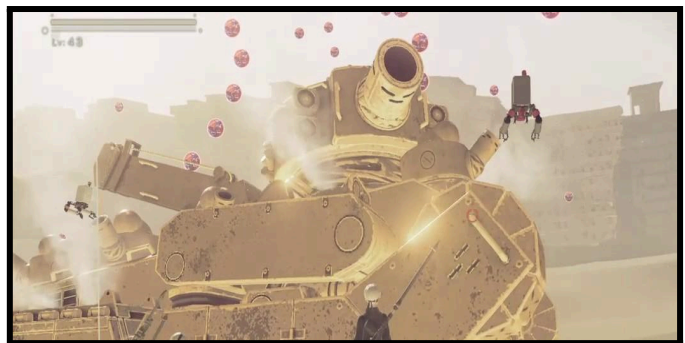
- **Enemy Difficulty:** The difficulty of combat encounters in NieR: Automata may act as a soft gate, with certain enemies being more challenging to defeat than others. Players may encounter enemies that are too powerful for them to defeat early in the game, encouraging them to level up and improve their skills before attempting those encounters.
- **Environmental Hazards:** Some combat encounters may feature environmental hazards or obstacles that act as soft gates, requiring players to overcome them in order to progress. These hazards might include traps, barriers, or hazardous terrain that must be navigated or deactivated before players can engage in combat.
- **Player Choice:** NieR: Automata offers players a degree of freedom in how they approach combat encounters, allowing them to choose when and where to engage in battles. This flexibility gives players the option to avoid combat if they prefer, allowing them to focus on exploration, questing, or other activities instead.



Area of Influence

The **open world is connected constantly with combat encounters** offering to the player a **dynamic and immersive** challenge during the exploration phase. Key areas such as **City Ruins, Desert Zone, and Forest Zone** feature numerous combat encounters against **machine enemies, hostile androids, and biomachine**.

Combat encounters are primarily situated within **designated enemy spawning zones** scattered across landscapes, desolate deserts, lush forests, urban ruins, and industrial complexes. These zones serve as the focal points where players encounter enemies.



Enemy Behavior and positioning

The layout of the environment impacts combat with natural features (like terrain elevations, structures, and obstacles) influencing **enemy behavior (systemic independence)** and player tactics. Combat encounters are intricately linked to quest objectives and story progression, as certain missions trigger specific battles or require players to engage with enemies in designated areas, thereby expanding the scope of combat within the game world.

The enemies positioned in the various points of the open world have the main reason to provide challenges to the player to allow him to increase the amount of mastery obtained up to that moment and prepare for the next area foreseen by the gameplay. In addition to varying their difficulty, the enemies present an interactive adaptation to the lore events that the player has faced, significantly increasing the immersion and simulation of a non-player-centric real world.



Rules of Engagement

Mandatory Combat

Mandatory combat encounters are those that the player must engage in to progress through the main storyline or complete certain quests and objectives (**hard gates**). These Enemies are typically scripted and occur at specific points in the game's narrative (central moments in the story's progression).

The player has to **defeat enemies or overcome challenges to advance to the next stage of the game**, whether it's navigating through hostile environments, facing off against boss enemies, or completing mission objectives.

The **engagement rules** for this type of fight are active since the player decides when to attack them (*being mandatory they present an anticipation of their presence*) and do not present disengagement rules, **forcing the player to conclude the challenge successfully or restart from before the battle.**

Optional Combat

Optional combat encounters are those that the player can choose to engage in at their discretion, often providing opportunities for **additional challenges, rewards, or exploration**. They are **not essential to the progression through the main storyline** but can offer valuable **resources, experience points, or unique loot** for the player if he wants to grind or boost his equipment before fighting a boss or progressing. The player has the **freedom to decide whether to participate in optional combat encounters** based on their preferences, playstyle, and objectives at any given time (*soft gates, passive rules of engagement*).



Open World Impact

The **fluidity of the combat system** is an element that strongly links the player with the exploratory and interactive phase of the open world. By providing a **mixed hack n' slash and bullet hell combat**, NieR Automata ranges greatly on the different types of enemies, providing gradual game mastery and greater motivation for the player towards the search for new combat strategies and new encounters to face.

The fights allow the player to set gates in exploration and a method of **communicating to the player** how prepared he must be to face a certain area, **directing him towards the development of the game path**.

Enemies serve to create **opportunities** for the player to use combat mechanics to experience excitement in combat, use logic to overcome enemies and obtain materials, resources and currency dropped by enemies to strengthen themselves and continue the gameplay (for more detailed description of the Enemy System look at the [System: NieR Automata - Enemies](#)).

The system of upgrades ([System: NieR Automata : Upgrades](#)) and the interactions that occur with the game world are strengthened, pushing the player towards customization and discovery of the proposed systems.

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