

Phantasy Star Online Force Character Guide

by Thyanura

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Thyanura's Guide To Phantasy Star Online
or, My Life As A Force

by Thyanura, level 100 FOMarl
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Introduction

A lot of players don't seem to like Forces. "They're too weak, it makes them too hard to play" being the most common complaint. Not exactly true. Forces are more difficult to play than Rangers and Hunters. They start off physically weaker and can be much more expensive to play since MAG development and Technique Point replenishing fluids are so important. However, towards the middle levels, a well developed Force becomes quite capable at physical combat, and will start to realize the advantages of strong magic capability. At high levels, the differences between the classes becomes minimized, and a Force can hold her own with anyone.

In an online (team) game, Forces will initially be limited mostly to supporting their other teammates rather than taking a leading role in combat. If this doesn't sound very appealing, but you'd like to eventually develop strong Techniques, consider playing a HUnewearl instead.

This guide contains just about everything that a new player might want to know about Phantasy Star Online from the perspective of a member of the Force class. However, there may be some things of interest to advanced Force players, and even non-Forces who want to learn more about Technique usage.

Character Attributes (v1.2)

There are six main character attributes.

ATP How much damage physical attacks will do to enemies.
Attack Power

DFP How much damage an enemy attack will do to you.
Defense Power

MST Determines number of Technique Points and to some extent
Mind Strength how powerful Techniques are.

ATA Affects likelihood of a physical attack succeeding.
Attack Accuracy

EVP Affects likelihood of evading a physical attack.
Evade Power

LCK Definitely seems to affects chance of getting a critical
Luck hit. May affect the chance of weapon Extra effects
 occurring (instant death, freeze, % damage). Rumored to
 affect the probability of finding special weapons and
 other goodies. Probably does not affect Megid or barta
 freezing in Technique usage.

There are, in addition three sets of "points":

HP A gauge of how much damage can be sustained before
Hit Points death.

TP A reservoir of magic available to be used for casting
Technique Points Techniques.

XP A measure of character "experience" -- e.g. how much
Experience Points stuff you've killed.

For a Force, the highest attribute will usually be MST. ATP and ATA are the most important attributes for attacking in physical combat. DFP and EVP are the most important attributes for avoiding damaging in physical combat.

Aside from these six attributes, there are also five magic resistance attributes. These are important to reduce damage from magical attacks.

When viewing attribute statuses, there are two sets of numbers. For example, you might see "ATP: 500(400)". The number in parantheses is the base value. If it is in yellow, it is at the maximum. The first number is the modified value. In the case of ATP, the modified value is because of the weapon equipped, or because Shifta has been cast, or a combination of the two.

The first five main attributes and HP will be raised when you gain a new experience level, or they can be raised through the use of "materials" found during the game.

LCK can be raised only through the use of Luck Materials. For reference, the other material types are: Power (ATP), Def (DFP), Mind (MST), Hit (ATA), Evade (EVP), and HP (HP).

Maximum TP can be raised only by raising MST. MST that is boosted over the character's normal MST (by use of a MAG, equipment, or a weapon) yields less TP than natural MST.

XP can be raised by killing monsters. Doing a lot of damage or dealing the

killing blow to a monster will give you more XP than doing a little bit of damage. However, even if you do 0 damage to a monster, you will get some XP if someone else kills it. When you have enough XP, you will gain a level.

Types Of Forces (v1.2)

FOMarl: human Force (female)

I'm a FOMarl, so maybe I'm biased, but I think this is the best type of Force. FOMarls are definitely the most balanced. The FOMarl's max ATP and ATA are the highest of all Forces, at the expense of slightly lower MST than the newmen. The higher ATA of the FOMarl isn't all that significant to hitting in combat, but it does permit the FOMarl to use better guns than the newmen.

maximum base attributes:

ATP: 483 / DFP: 290 / MST: 650 / ATA: 132 / EVP: 450 / LCK: 100

FONewm: newman Force (male)

Looking like Fairy Pimps, the FONewm trade slightly weaker attack for slightly stronger Techniques. I'm uncertain if that extra 20 MST allows the FONewm to learn higher level Techniques than the FOMarl.

maximum base attributes*:

ATP: 463 / DFP: 290 / MST: 670 / ATA: 121 / EVP: 450 / LCK: 100

FONewearl: newman Force (female)

Winner of the stupid pants award, FONewearls level up with better defense and lower attack than the other Forces. This is actually not that bad a tradeoff, since the FONewearl's lower ATP, ATA, and MST level increases can be compensated for with a MAG.

maximum base attributes*:

ATP: 463 / DFP: 290 / MST: 670 / ATA: 120 / EVP: 450 / LCK: 100

For comparison, here are some maximum base attributes for some other classes*:

HUMar: human Hunter (male)

ATP: 710 / DFP: 310 / MST: 590? / ATA: 142 / EVP: 450 / LCK: 100

HUNewearl: newman Hunter (female)

ATP: 710 / DFP: 310 / MST: 590 / ATA: 138 / EVP: 450 / LCK: 100

HUcast: android Hunter ("male")

ATP: 710 / DFP: 310 / MST: 0 / ATA: 150 / EVP: 450 / LCK: 100

The high ATP of Hunters makes them the most damaging class in the game. Even though modified ATP (character base ATP+weapon+Shifta) only displays to a maximum of 999, it can in fact be much higher. Thanks to ChaosHunter for pointing this out, and I've verified it with my HUNewearl. HUNewearls gain more EVP when they level up, HUcasts gain more ATP and ATA.

RAMar: human Ranger (male)

ATP: 551 / DFP: 280 / MST: 500 / ATA: 165 / EVP: 450 / LCK: 100

RAcast: android Ranger ("male")

ATP: 553 / DFP: 280 / MST: 0 / ATA: 167 / EVP: 450 / LCK: 100

RAcaseal: android Ranger ("female")

ATP: 553 / DFP: 280 / MST: 0 / ATA: 167 / EVP: 450 / LCK: 100

RAcaseal's gain more DFP when they level up. RAcasts gain more ATA and

ATP.

Although I attempted to get some info on maximum HP for different classes, unlike the other statistics, maximum HP is based in part on level, so a level 100 character has a higher maximum HP than a level 50 character.

* Note: Except for the F0marl, I have to rely on other people to get the numbers for the maximum attributes. So, I have no way to know if these numbers are correct.

Basic Physical Combat

Attack Types

There are three types of attacks:

Normal: The normal type of attack. It is also the fastest attack.

Heavy: A heavy attack. Slower than a normal attack and less accurate, but does about 190% to 200% of normal damage. A successful Heavy attack also will push most enemy monsters back a short distance.

Extra: Not available for all weapons, but an extra attack generally has about half the chance of hitting that a normal attack does, and will only do 50% of normal damage. The value of doing an Extra Attack depends on the weapon's Extra. For example, a Hell Saber's extra attack has a good chance of killing an enemy in a single hit. A Blizzard Saber's Extra Attack will also inflict cold damage to an enemy, plus may freeze it.

Any type of attack also has the possibility of being a "critical hit". This is based on LCK (LCK appears to be a percentage in this case), and will cause 150% of damage normally expected.

Combos and Recovery

After an attack, there is a recovery period during which you cannot do anything and are vulnerable. You can reduce the overall amount of time you spend in recovery by using combos.

As soon as you finish an attack, you can attack again, up to three times, with very little recovery time in between each attack. A set of sequential attacks is called a combo (presumably short for combination attack). The timing on this is not particularly difficult, but new players may have trouble getting the hang of it. As an example, if you have a cane and do a Normal attack, when the cane stops moving, immediately press another attack button to swing a second time. Heavy and Extra attacks have a slight pause at the beginning of the swing.

I suggest you spend a little time practicing combos by yourself until you are comfortable using them.

Combos can be comprised of any mix of three attack types. The second and third hits have an increased chance of successfully hitting (I've been told +25% and +75% respectively) so are better for using Heavy and Extra Attacks. You don't actually have to hit with a preceding blow for the next one to gain the hit accuracy bonus.

Commonly used combos:

Normal -> Heavy -> Heavy: This is your bread & butter combo. Tends to be optimal for the chance of hitting and maximizing damage.

Heavy -> Heavy -> Heavy: When your ATA increases (or you get a weapon with a good hit % attribute) this maximizes the amount of damage you can do.

Normal/Heavy -> Heavy -> Normal: When monsters start to get faster (Normal Ruins; Hard and Very Hard difficulties) ending the combo with a Normal gives you a better chance of successfully completing the combo instead of being interrupted by a monster's counterattack.

If you are weak or are using a slow weapon, you may not want to use the third attack at all, since it seems that recovery is faster after the second hit, plus monsters are usually a little farther away. Many times, stopping after the second hit will give you a chance to move out of a monster's range and set up a new attack sequence without getting hit.

Targeting

When a monster enters into your attack range, you will see a colored cursor over it. This color corresponds to the color of the attack button which can hit it. For example, let's say you're equipped with a cane and have Foie set to the yellow button and Normal attack set to the red button. A Booma is walking towards you. When you turn towards it and see a yellow cursor appear over the Booma, it is in range to be hit by your Foie. As it gets closer, the cursor will appear red, meaning it is now in range to be hit by your cane's Normal attack. (Though if you wanted, you could also use Foie.) A monster without a cursor on it is not targeted and usually cannot be hit. However, for melee attacks against fast monsters, you can usually start a weapon swing right before the monster enters your attack range and still hit it. Learning this timing will become important at higher difficulty levels.

More On Physical Combat, And Weaponry

Thyanura's First Rule Of Fighting As A Force: Don't Get Hit

Ok, on to the next section...

Just kidding :) But unlike other classes, with the better attack, defense, evasion, and hit points, you want to avoid situations where you can get hit, and this should be your highest priority in a fight. The biggest mistake I see most Force players make is pretending they're a Hunter and trying to go toe-to-toe with a monster with some stupid stick. Running in front of your Ranger buddy and poking a Sinow Beat with a twig won't do much but get it mad and make you the target. Run away and leave rooms when you need to.

Melee Fighting: Hit And Run (v1.2)

As a Force, if you somehow end up as the main melee fighter (or if you're playing by yourself), you are almost always going to have to use a hit and run tactic by the time you get to the Ruins on Very Hard. Attack with a two or three hit combo, then run away, turn around, combo again, run, and so on until everything chasing you is dead. After a combo, count out the minimum number of steps you have to take running away before you have enough space to attack again or use a Technique. Yes, you can learn to estimate the distance, but by counting, you'll remove the guesswork if you have a bad camera angle, and you won't have your timing thrown off if the game gets a

bad case of slow-down.

You don't actually have to run all out to make some space so you can get another opportunity to attack. You can let the monster enter your attack range and then juke it so that it attacks and misses, giving you the opportunity to attack while it's recovering. If you finish your attack so the monster is about a step from you, wait for it to swing, take a step out of its range, spin, and attack. If you're running, you can slow down to a walk to let it almost catch up to you. This is actually easier to do on Very Hard, where the monsters move faster. Basically, after you attack, you can just walk away and back in a very tight circle to position yourself for another attack. I think most Hunters are familiar with this, but a lot of other Forces have asked me how I manage to fight without having to run away a lot and without getting hit.

It has come to my attention that there are way too many players who have no idea how to fight properly with a melee weapon. This includes not only Forces, but also an astonishing number of Hunters. (This probably explains the large number of punk Hunters who upon hitting level 40 either start begging for Spread Needles or fall back on the Gameshark crutch to make one.)

The longest recovery time happens after the third attack in a combo. Unless you kill, incapacitate (with an Extra weapon property), or are attacking from the side or behind, most "grunt" enemies (Boomas, Sharks, Sinows, Dimenians, Delsabers) are going to be able to hit you while you are recovering from that third attack. The solution should be obvious, but apparently it's not: do not use a third attack in a combo. If you attack twice (Normal -> Heavy) you will have enough time to recover and dodge the enemy counterattack. With Dimenians on Very Hard, this is incredibly easy because you don't even have to time the counterattack, it comes so fast. So, Normal -> Heavy, you walk a step back, Dimenian swings and misses, you turn back around and combo again. When you get proficient with this, you will be able to use a Heavy attack instead of a Normal. Keep track of how much damage you are doing, so when you know an enemy will die, you can do the three hit Heavy -> Heavy -> Heavy as a finisher. With Shifta and a fully ground (+35) Soul Eater, a Force should do about 220 damage per Heavy attack, more on critical blows. This means even Online Very Hard, doing Heavy -> Heavy, Heavy -> Heavy, Heavy -> Heavy -> Heavy should be more than enough to kill any type of Dimenian.

And of course, the obvious. Always try to keep the group monsters that you're fighting in between you and anything else that is coming towards you. In other words, don't get surrounded, and let the monsters block each other off (Rabarta if you must). If you do get surrounded, your only hope really is to get knocked down and use Techniques as you're standing up. Or I suppose you could hope you have a teammate who will rescue you...

Oh, and for what it's worth the God/Battle won't help you with this, so you people who are hopping in and out of games and begging for them, you might as well stop. Even if someone is foolish enough to give you one, there is no improvement that I can discern on final recovery time with any of the Battle units.

Technique Support

You've got good magical power. Take advantage of it to help bolster your physical combat.

Use Techniques to damage all the monsters before finishing them off with

melee attacks. In a tight spot, use a barta Technique to freeze enemies.

Shifta is mandatory. Deband, less so. At high levels, they will boost their affected attribute (ATP and DFP, respectively) by about 25%. This is significant enough that you want to have at least Shifta active all the time you are fighting.

I'll cover Technique usage more in the Techniques section.

Weapon Types

Each class (Hunter, Ranger, and Force) has weapons that can only be used by members of that class. There is also a group of weapons that may be used by all classes. All weapons have usage requirements which correspond to a minimum attribute value that the player must have to use that weapon.

All weapons can be grouped into one of two types: melee (hand-to-hand) and distance (guns and throwing knives).

All Force specific weapons are of the melee type.

There are two advantages of using Force weapons instead of generics. First, usage requirements are based on MST, so a relatively high ATP weapon can be used with no trouble. Second, certain wand type weapons will give MST bonuses, so total TP is increased as well as damage done by attack techniques.

That said, personally I find Force weapons to be useless. They're all short range, slow, and can only hit a single enemy. Beginning Forces especially are best off using a gun.

Handguns and mechguns are the two families of guns that can be used by all classes. The usage requirement for guns is in ATA, so FOMarls have an advantage over the newmen Forces. Hanguns have better accuracy and range, mechguns do much better damage.

In my lower levels, my weapons of choice were handguns with TP recovery. There are four types of these: Heart, Mind, Soul, and Geist, which respectively recover 3%, 4%, 5% and 6% of your TP. It's debatable whether or not TP recovery is all that important at higher levels (I tend to think not), but it's useful at low levels when physical attacks are their weakest and you have little money for TP restoration fluid.

Be careful with TP restoring melee weapons. Monsters tend to hang out in crowds, and Extra attacks don't hit as often as Normal and Heavy. It's a big risk to attack enemies for TP unless they're paralyzed, frozen, or being stunned by another player.

Weapon Attributes And Extras (v1.2)

There are a lot of players drooling over the thought of owning some very rare weapons, but for the most part, having a common weapon with high attribute percentages is a lot better.

Weapons can have any of five attributes. Four of these are percentage damage to monsters in specific areas (Native, A.Beast, Machine, and Dark; corresponding to Forest, Cave, Mine, and Ruins). The fifth is Hit %, and affects overall hit probability. I've never seen a legitimate percentage higher than 60% or lower than -40%, or a weapon with more than three attribute modifiers. There are hacked weapons with all five attributes

set, up to 125%. If you have an unidentified weapon (name is in blue and starts either with ?Special or ???), by refusing to accept a Tekker's evaluation, you can sometimes get better percentages on a re-evaluation (an additional 10% on any non 0% attribute, and one step better of Extra modified, are the best I've been able to do). Check your unidentified weapon for percentages before taking it for identification otherwise you won't know what attribute values you can expect.

Weapons can also have a Extra Attack effect. The known categories of extras are:

foie	Fire damage, "Burning" is best.
barta	Cold damage & freeze status, "Blizzard" is best.
zonde	Lightning damage, "Tempest" is best.
confusion	May cause enemies to wander or attack each other but confused monsters are still capable of hitting players, "Chaos" is best.
paralysis	Prevents enemies from moving or attacking, "Arrest" is best.
instant death	Causes enemies to die immediately, "Hell" is best.
damage percent	Reduces enemy hit points by a percentage, "Demon's" is best.
TP recovery	Restores a percentage of the user's maximum TP, "Geist" is best.
HP recovery	Restores a percentage of the user's maximum HP, "Gush" is best.
XP leech	Gives a percentage of the monster's XP value, "King's" is best.
payment	Trades Meseta (Charge), TP (Spirit), or HP (Berserk) for a "powerful attack". Meseta used is gone, but TP and HP can be restored in the usual manners.

Monsters can have multiple negative statuses. Any negative status for a monster, except for Jellen and Zalure, will usually expire very shortly after it is attacked by a player, otherwise the negative status can last longer.

Weapons that can hit multiple times or multiple enemies have their reported Extra Attack percentages divided by three for each individual hit. For example, a Geist Saber will restore 6 TP to a Force with 100 TP max. However, a Geist Mechgun (which fires three shots per attack) will only recover one third (2 TP) per successful hit. A Geist throwing knife seem to work the same (one third of the reported percentage, per hit, though it's possible to hit 4 or more enemies with one throw). I don't know if Swords, Partisans, and Shotguns are the same. I'm also not really sure how these affect something like damage percent, or the status Extras like paralyze and instant death. Probably these are cut in third as well; there's definitely less chance of them succeeding than with a single hit weapon.

These days, I don't really care about Extras too much for most weapons. Generally speaking, for weapons which hit a single enemy, TP recovery and instant death seem the most useful to me, maybe paralysis for those times when you really need to stop a powerful monster like a Garanz or Chaos Bringer. An Arrest extra really is pretty good at stopping a monster, but overall, I think tossing off a few high level Rabarta is more effective (better range than melee weapons, can affect multiple enemies, no need to aim).

For weapons that can hit multiple enemies (which for a Force is limited to

throwing knives like the Diska), I would have loved to find one with TP recovery when I was at a low level. Extras which stop enemies (Blizzard, Arrest) are useful in general, and damage percent and instant death are worth a shot.

The other Extra categories I think aren't too worthwhile, although payment Extras can do amazing damage. Some Hunters swear to me that a payment weapon like a DB's Saber with the rest of the DB kit (DB's Armor and Shield) can do a fantastic amount of damage, and I know a few android Rangers who like Charge rifles.

Hallelujah, I am a believer in Charge weapons! My HUnewearl with a Vjaya 50% does about 900 with Extra attack, over 1500 on a critical Extra. For a Force with the relatively low ATA, Charge mechguns are amazingly damaging, but without a high hit % attribute, you may miss the Extra attack a lot.

Rare Weapons (v1.2)

Thyanura's Second Rule Of Fighting As A Force: Melee Weapons Suck
(see Rule One)

There is only one melee weapon that I think is worth using on a regular basis: the Soul Eater. This is one of the few rare weapons that all players are guaranteed to get through normal play of the game, so it's easily available to anyone who wants to use one. (See Miscellaneous section for instructions on getting this.) Most Hunters and Rangers disparage the Soul Eater, and for those classes, rightly so. The Soul Eater has good but not great ATP (though it can be ground up to +35), it has a useless Extra (Berserk -- the last thing a Force needs is to be in melee combat reducing her HP), and it very slowly drains its user's HP. However, for a Force, it is the only melee weapon I know of which can hit more than one enemy in a single swing. Not only that but it has excellent range and a very wide arc over which it will connect with those monsters. This ability to hit multiple enemies is huge advantage over those crappy wands and canes. With a Soul Eater, a Force can safely enter into melee combat and hold her own. I recently got a Soul Eater from a Hildeblue! Unlike the Soul Eater from Kileek, from a Hildeblue, you can get a Soul Eater with an attribute percentage.

The only other melee weapon (thus far) that I would consider using is the Double Saber, and that only when fighting slow enemies (Forest, Mine). The Double Saber has a 4% TP recover Extra attack, plus the large number of potential hits and wide arc means that with the extra attack, you can keep a number of enemy monsters pushed back. However, you won't be doing a whole lot of damage with the Double Saber. Unless you really need that TP recovery, it's more something to show off with, although these really aren't all that rare to find.

I spoke too soon. The Pan Arm's Blades are nice for a Force. These are dagger style weapons with a whole lot of ATP and a paralyze Extra. Like all single hit melee weapons, be careful if you use these. They're fun to use, but a three attack combo will move you forward quite far and can leave you in a very bad spot.

The Varista (handgun), Vise (mechgun), and Justice (mechgun) are all very common special guns for me (Purplenum). The paralysis Extra and range of the Varista are nice, but these guns are generally pretty weak. For some reason I tend to find Vises with good percentages, so for the Ruins on solo or when there's already two good Hunters, I may use a Vise with high dark %

instead of my Soul Eater. The same Vise is also my preferred weapon to use against Dark Falz. When I'm playing with very low level teammates or with Hunters, I also prefer to use a mechgun in the Mine. Gatlings and Vulcans are the best of the normal mechgun family. (I mistakenly said Repeaters and Vulcans in an earlier version, oops.)

The Slicer Of Assassin is an instant death throwing knife, I think it's essentially the equivalent of a Hell Diska. If I'm throwing one into a large crowd, I'll give Heavy -> Extra -> Extra a try and usually kill a few monsters. As with all Diskas though, they are slow and don't do great damage, so it's best to toss these from behind someone else. Check the Bestiary for Megid resistance to decide whether or not a particular monster is worth trying to go for the instant death.

The Spread Needle is probably the overall best gun any non-Ranger can use. The Spread Needle is a shotgun with a very fast fire rate and excellent damage. On top of this, its Extra is paralysis. This is one of the few truly powerful rare weapons, and the number of times it's been cloned is quite astounding. These days almost half the players I see in open games (even level 20 and 30 players) are running around with a Spread Needle and a hacked Opa Opa or Pian MAG. Which is a pity, because this absolutely ruins team gameplay. A number of people have written to me that this weapon is not usable by Forces, and I've confirmed it. Oh well, I'm not shedding any tears over this..

The C-Sorcerer's Cane and Psycho Wand are two interesting wands. The C-Sorc's Cane can be obtained from a Chaos Sorcerer body party, and gives a 10% TP discount on casting Techniques and has a TP recover Extra attack. The Psycho Wand is supposedly only available as a Japanese tournament prize, and gives a 50% TP discount and has a Extra which will randomly cast an attack Technique. I borrowed a Psycho Wand to play with for a little while. It's not too great as a melee weapon but it is a lot of fun to use one and go nuts with Techniques without feeling any TP pressure. These are getting to be fairly popular cloned and hacked items.

I don't really have much use for handguns anymore, but the Holy Ray gives range equivalent to a rifle, and has a paralysis Extra. I mostly find this to be useful against Dark Falz. Another useful distance weapon that is useable by a Force is the Inferno Bazooka, which is about equivalent to a Devil's Rifle: long range, 50% damage Extra attack, though the description indicates the Extra attack is not likely to hit.

A few people have written asking what I think of Technique casting wands like the Caduceus (Foie), Technical Crozier (Barta), and Magical Piece (Zonde). I don't like them. They're ok for Normal and Hard difficulties, but Simple Attack Techniques are just too weak for Very Hard.

For other classes: Hunters, I like sword and partisan class weapons. The Vjaya, a partisan with Charge Extra, is my new favorite for Hunters. Otherwise I have no preference for these, though generally speaking, swords have higher ATP, and partisans have higher ATA. Rangers, I like the Soul Eater, and the Chain Sawd. Both are multiple enemy hitting weapons. Otherwise, I suppose its just a matter of taste for a Ranger. Androids can benefit greatly from a Crush Bullet (shot with HP recovery) but really need a Battle unit for this (or any kind of shot) to be useful.

Mates Vs Resta

Normally you'll want to use Resta. Not only is Resta almost guaranteed to refill your entire HP gauge, but it can also help your allies. However,

Resta (like all Techniques) has startup time and recovery time, whereas use of Mates (Monomate, Dimate, Trimate) does not. When fighting extremely damaging opponents (bosses, or that last room on the Mine where there are two Garanz's), you may wish to have some Mates available on a customize button.

High Defense As A Liability (v1.1)

High DFP is usually not a problem, and in fact is desirable since it reduces the amount of damage you will take from being hit. Occasionally though it can be a liability. Very powerful attacks from monsters will normally knock you down. While you're on the ground and getting up, you can't be hit. If your defense is very high, you won't be knocked down even by a powerful blow. Against some monsters which have rapid multiple hits per attack (Gillchics, Delsabers), or in a crowd, this can be fatal.

Don't discard your old armor until you see how the upgrade is going to affect you. You can also reduce your DFP by not casting Deband on yourself.

If you are surrounded, aren't getting knocked down, and are in trouble, if nothing else, you can use a Telepipe and escape that way.

Avoiding Slowing To A Walk

When you run near a monster or a trap mine, you automatically slow down to a walk. The slowdown actually happens because you have something on a customize button that causes the monster or mine to be targeted. To avoid slowing down, you can either place no offensive capabilities on your shifted customize buttons and hold the shift trigger (usually R) as you run, or you can press Start and have the menu up while you run. Both of these methods prevent targeting. This is a useful trick to let you run straight down those mine filled hallways or weave through a big crowd of monsters (or spikes).

Fighting At A Doorway

Doors are interesting, because they're like invisible barriers. When you leave a room, any monsters chasing you immediately stop and will move to reset to their original positions. You can't hit any monster inside a room with a physical weapon from the outside, and you can't target monsters with magic from the outside.

Sometimes strange things happen around doors. Certain monsters with range attacks (Hildebear's foie, the Dark Belra's arm rocket, the Garanz's rockets) can hit you outside the room, if they fire while you are still inside the room. I've been killed once or twice by this, and I've seen it happen innumerable times, so if you're low on health and fleeing a room, don't immediately stop in the doorway and assume you're safe.

If a monster that jumps, such as the Sinow Beat, makes a jump at you while you're going out a door, they will get stuck in the doorframe. They'll be capable of hitting you if you get too close, and very rarely, you might have one follow you right into a hallway!

The worst effect of doorways is that when monsters have their "home" spot right in front of one, it often seems that you are unable to attack them until you've entered into the room a significant distance. (You can of course determine when you can attack them by the appearance of a targeting cursor.) Unfortunately in that "neutral zone" the monsters can still attack you.

The good news is that Techniques that are untargeted can cross doorways. Gifoie, Razonde, and Rabarta can hurt and kill monsters standing on the other side of a door. Make use of this to clear a crowded doorway, or to kill monsters that are chasing you.

Calculating Damage (v1.2)

To figure out how much damage you should be doing to enemies, use the following formula: total ATP (including Shifta affect) times weapon modifier times attack type modifiers divided by 5.61. Subtract the monster DFP, and you have the amount of damage done.

$$(ATP * WeaponAttrib * AttackType / 5.61) - DFP = \text{total damage}$$

Attack Type modifiers are:

- .5 for Extra
- 1.5 for Critical Hit
- 2 for Heavy
- 4 for Charge

So, let's say you're HUnewearl with maxed ATP (710) swinging a Dragon Slayer (+318) +40% doing a Heavy (x2 modifier) attack against a Very Hard Booma (about 33 DFP) and you have level 15 Shifta cast (28% ATP improvement). That'll be... $(710 + 318) \times 1.40 \times 1.28 \times 2 / 5.61 - 33 = 624$. If it's a critical hit, damage will be about 950. This isn't an exact formula, but it's in the ballpark, and damage for physical attacks is always a little random anyway.

Anyone who can come up with a better estimation of damage, feel free to let me know.

Techniques (v1.2)

Ah yes, the entire reason you wanted to be a Force..

Techniques have levels of power. The higher the level, the more powerful it is.

Before using a Technique, you must first learn it from a disc. Each disc allows you to learn a Technique of a specific level, and has a MST requirement you must meet before being able to use it. You can skip levels -- there is absolutely no need to learn levels for a particular Technique in sequential order. You can also use any Technique that you've learned, even if your MST drops below the disc's requirement. (As opposed to weapons, which automatically unequip if you stop meeting their equip requirement.)

Technique levels range from one to fifteen. For support and healing magic, level three and higher can affect other teammates. I have never seen a disc above level 13 for Hard Attack Techniques for sale at the item shop, and it is rumored that the only way to obtain level 15 discs for Hard Attacks is to find them in a Very Hard game created by a PINKAL Section ID. Grants and Megid discs also cannot be bought. I've only found these in Very Hard games. Aside from being more powerful, a higher Technique level also results in your being able to cast the Technique more quickly.

Casting a Technique has three stages. During the whole time, you will be immobile. First, there is a startup period, during which you are vulnerable

to attack. If you're hit during the startup, the interruption will prevent the casting. Next is the actual casting, during which you are invulnerable from attack. Finally there is a recovery period, also during which you are vulnerable to attack. If you start casting a Technique immediately after getting up from being knocked down, you will normally not be hit until after the spell is completed. Make use of this especially when casting Resta. By the way, contrary to popular belief, casting Techniques without a weapon equipped will NOT speed up the casting.

In Normal difficulty level, it doesn't much matter which attack magic you use against most monsters except for bosses. For Hard and Very Hard, monster magic resistance becomes important. Refer to the Bestiary for information about what monsters are vulnerable to which Techniques.

Attack Techniques can be considered to be either targeted or not targeted. A targeted Technique requires that there be a target in range and "locked" with a targeting cursor. When a monster is targeted by an attack magic, unless it moves out of range, it will almost always be hit even by non-targeted Techniques. Likewise, a monster that is not targeted by a non-targeted Technique will usually be missed unless it is an "area" Technique. Area Techniques will affect all monsters within the area in which the Technique is used.

When you use a Technique, you will consume Technique Points. You can replenish these points through the use of fluids (Monofluid, Difluid, and Trifluid), by gaining enough XP to go up a level, by visiting the Medical Center on Pioneer 2 (costs 10 Meseta, or free if you died), by dying and being revived, by using a weapon with a TP drain, by the use of some types of gear, or by standing within the occasionally found green replenishing rings.

Simple Attack

Foie The Force shoots a single fireball in front of her. Higher levels do more damage and appear to have better range. This is not a targeted attack, but doesn't have a very good chance of hitting without a target.
Level 15 maximum damage: 159

Barta The Force casts a slow moving and narrow cone of cold a short distance in front of her, in a path along the ground. (Yes, "along the ground" means that Barta cannot hit flying monsters.) Any monster in this path will be hit and have a low chance of being frozen. Higher levels do more damage and have a wider spread. This is an area attack, but is not targeted.
Level 15 maximum damage: 104

Zonde A bolt of lightning strikes the target closest to the direction in which the Force is facing, which includes boxes and traps. However, Zonde will also hit a monster to the sides or behind the caster if the monster is in range. When you cast Zonde, you will be turned in the direction of the monster that the spell targets. This even happens if you are immobilized by a Grass Assassin. This is a targeted attack.
Level 15 maximum damage: 180

Normal Attack

Gifoie This creates a swarm of fireballs which circle around the caster for a period of time, hitting all monsters within range. Higher

levels improve damage and area covered. Gifoie can be useful, but it can take a while for the fireballs to hit an enemy monster, and it seems to have a slightly longer recovery time than most other Techniques. It is an area attack, but is not targeted.

Level 15 maximum damage: 141

Gibarta A more powerful version of Barta in every way: faster, larger, more damaging, higher chance of freezing. Gibarta is capable of hitting airborne monsters. Higher levels are more damaging and have better range. Gibarta is an area attack but is not targeted.

Level 15 maximum damage: 183

Gizonde A bolt of lightning strikes a target in front of the caster, then arcs out to hit other nearby targets. You can't target an enemy that's behind you like with Zonde, but if you're surrounded, casting Gizonde at an enemy in front of you will usually cause the lightning to strike anything to your immediate sides and rear. Higher levels improve damage and range. This is an area attack, and is targeted.

Level 15 maximum damage: 171

Hard Attack

Rafoie The nuclear bomb of the foie set. This throws a firebomb at a target in front of the caster that will explode and damage all enemies caught in the explosion. Higher levels increase the damage and blast radius -- the big orange ball doesn't get any bigger, but an orange ring of fire will spread out farther, and monsters that are touched by this ring of fire suffer the same damage as those caught within the main blast. This is an area attack, and is targeted.

Level 15 maximum damage: 180

Rabarta Waves of cold flow in a ring off the Force's body, damaging and possibly freezing any monsters surrounding her. Higher levels extend the radius of the cold, and improve damage and the chance enemies will freeze. Frozen enemies are incapable of attacking or moving, and this makes Rabarta the single most important attack magic for general use. It should have a permanent home on your customize buttons. This is an area attack, and is not targeted.

Level 15 maximum damage: 233

Razonde Lightning arcs out all around the Force's body. Any monster in range will take damage, and will also act as a conductor for the lightning to arc to targets near it. At higher levels, with enough intermediate targets, Razonde can arc across a fairly large room. With Trap Vision or TRAP/SEARCH, Razonde is the fastest way to clear out those pesky traps. This is an area attack, and is not targeted.

Level 15 maximum damage: 211

Grants A beam of holy light shines down and strikes a single enemy target, usually for very high damage. Level for level, Grants has the longest range of any Techniques, and can be used to attack any monster within range, regardless of which direction the caster is turned, though target preference seems to be for the nearest target in the direction the caster is facing.

Unfortunately, this Technique has a very long recovery time. Higher levels increase damage and range. This is a targeted attack.

Level 15 maximum damage: 513

Megid The Force shoots a scuzzy looking cloud towards a monster. It's sort of like a Foie fireball, in that it can hit something without being targeted, but chances aren't very high. Either it will hit and kill, or it will miss completely. Higher levels of Megid increase range and the probability of success, plus the size of the Megid ball. I used to think Megid was completely worthless. I've changed my mind. High level Megid has a reasonably good chance of killing, and although I doubt it, this chance might increase as your luck increases. Plus, as the Megid ball grows larger, it becomes capable of hitting more than one monster if they're in a tight group. Megid seems to be more capable of killing monsters if they have been wounded already, and if the monster is not right in your face, but I haven't verified either of these feelings yet. This is not a targeted attack. This is an (extremely limited range) area attack.

Heal

Resta This is another Technique that should have a permanent home on your customize buttons. Starting with level three, the healing vibe will flow off you and heal your teammates. Higher levels of Resta increase the radius of effect and heal more damage. Like most healing and support Techniques, this is an area Technique, and though it is not targeted, you will be turned toward the nearest teammate affected.

Anti This acts to clear any negative status on yourself or your teammates, with the exception that you cannot cast it if you yourself are paralyzed or frozen. Starting with level three, it can affect your teammates. Higher levels of Anti have better range.

Reverser This will bring a fallen teammate back to life. You have to be fairly close, so be careful not to accidentally pick up his weapon and wallet. There are no levels to Reverser.

Support

Shifta Affected players will have a status with upward pointing red arrows, and will flash red. This can improve your attacks considerably. At level three, Shifta can affect your teammates. Higher levels improve casting range, length of time Shifta will last, and the percentage ATP will increase. Forces should not consider physical combat without this spell active! Shifta will counteract the affect of Jellen.
Level 15 improvement: 28%

Deband Affected players will have a status with upward pointing blue arrows, and will flash blue. This can improve your defense considerably. At level three, Deband can affect your teammates. Higher levels improve casting range, the length of time Deband will last, and the percentage DFP will increase. Be careful with Deband. If it raises your DFP so that powerful attacks won't knock you down, it could do you more harm than good. Deband will counteract the affect of Zalure.

Level 15 improvement: 28%

Jellen This will cause monsters to lose attack power. Affected monsters and players will have a status of downward pointing red arrows. Monsters will also appear an off-color with Jellen cast on them. I find Jellen to be mostly a waste of time. Higher levels will affect monsters in a larger radius with more power.

Zalure This will cause monsters to lose defensive power. Affected monsters and players will have a status of downward pointing blue arrows. Monsters will also appear an off-color with Zalure cast on them. Zalure can be useful if you otherwise are having trouble clearing out large groups of monsters. Higher levels of course have a stronger affect and wider range. This spell is especially useful against enemies with very high DFP, like Pan Arms and the Dragon.

Ryuker This will create a telepipe back to Pioneer 2. It's quite useful to have (no more having to remember to carrying around telepipes), especially when adventuring alone. There are no levels to Ryuker.

Customize Buttons (v1.2)

Time critical Techniques go on customize buttons. Learn to cast all other Techniques from the menu system. It helps a lot if you learn where these Techniques are and memorize the digital pad movements to use them. I prefer to leave the menu selection on "remembered" and with Techniques selected but you may not. For example, to cast Anti: Start, A, Up, Up, A, Down, A.

You can "stack" a second Technique to be cast immediately after the first is finished by using the menu system by selecting the second Technique any time after the startup portion of the first Technique. However, you must wait until the startup portion of the second Technique before hitting Start to close the menu, otherwise the second Technique won't be cast.

Configuring your customize buttons in a consistent manner will help you in the heat of combat -- you won't be flailing around hitting the wrong key. There is nothing more annoying than trying to use the red button when you're surrounded by items. Do not put critical (healing) functions on this button!

usual setup: Forest, Cave, Mine

Standard: Rabarta, Normal or Heavy Attack, Heavy or Extra Attack
Shifted: Resta, Rafoie, Razonde

Physical attack configuration is dependant on what weapon I use and if it has a Extra. With the Soul Eater I use Normal/Heavy. With a gun or diska with a Extra, I use Heavy/Extra.

boss setup: Forest, Cave, Mine

Standard: Mate, Heavy Attack, Attack Technique
Shifted: Resta, Reverser (in a team), fluid

The Attack Technique used is dependant on which boss I'm fighting. Against the Dragon, Rabarta; against De Rol Le, Razonde; against Vol Opt, Razonde.

usual setup: Ruins

Standard: Rabarta, Heavy Attack, Grants or Extra

Shifted: Resta, Rafoie or Gifoie, Razonde or Grants

I prefer Rafoie in the Ruins to Gifoie because of range and damage, plus nothing stops a Chaos Bringer quite like Rafoie. However, if I expect to be doing a lot of fighting from doorways or on the run, Gifoie is the better choice. I always want to have Grants available in the Ruins (useful for killing Dark Gunners and for when a Bulclaw grabs you), so if I'm using a weapon with an Extra, Grants replaces Razonde.

boss setup: Dark Falz (stage 1)

Standard: Mate, Normal Attack, Grants

Shifted: Resta, Reverser, Anti

boss setup: Dark Falz (stages 2 and 3)

Standard: Mate, Heavy Attack, Rabarta

Shifted: Resta, Reverser, Anti

boss setup: Dark Falz (stage 4)

Standard: Mate, Heavy Attack, Grants

Shifted: Resta, Reverser, Anti

In Normal and Hard, you can replace Grants with Rafoie, since it does sufficient damage to clear out the spikes and is good to clear out a bunch of them at once. At Very Hard, you need Grants at a decently high level to kill a spike in one hit. Some people prefer Rabarta for killing spikes in the first stage, but its range isn't particularly good, and on Very Hard, it takes two hits to do kill a spike compared to one for Grants. Rabarta is better for the second stage, where it's used mostly just to keep the spikes from getting out of hand, and for the third stage, where it's the most damaging Technique available. Anti is important to clear slow and frozen status.

Unlike many Forces, I do not usually keep fluids on a button. Fluids aren't time critical because you can tell in advance when you'll need to use one. For fast fluid use, use the manual sort function to put Fluids at the top of the item list. I always put Trifluid at the top with Difluid second. Antiparalysis and Telepipes also get sorted to the top of the item list, just in case.

Sometimes instead of trying to balance physical and magical combat, it's fun to play either an all Techniques or all physical style.

technique setup

Standard: Rabarta, Megid, Grants

Shifted: Resta, Rafoie, Razonde

Shifted (Cave): Resta, Foie, Gifoie

Shifted (Mine): Resta, Zonde, Razonde

The use of weak and normal techniques will help stretch out your TP. I strongly suggest only trying to play like this in a group, or you will most likely get stomped on very quickly.

physical setup

Standard: Zalure, Normal Attack, Heavy or Extra Attack
Shifted: Resta, Jellen, Anti

You can stick Rabarta in place of Zalure if you need the freezing, otherwise Jellen and Zalure will make fighting a bit easier.

MAGs (v1.1)

MAGs are the little floating creatures that follow players around. Aside from being an aesthetic accessory, MAGs will help you out. First, MAGs will charge up for a Photon Blast as you dish out and take damage. Second, MAGs will help you under certain circumstances. These circumstances are: going to a boss fight, filling the PB gauge, going under 10% HP, and dying. Helpful actions include granting invulnerability, or casting Shifta & Deband, Resta, or Reverser. Finally, and most importantly for lower level players, a MAG can be used to raise your attributes. All of these things depend on the MAG's attributes, which depend on what they are fed.

MAG attributes:

- SYNCH: How "in synch" your MAG is to you. Basically, how much physical damage is channeled into the charge for a Photon Blast. Maximum is 120%.
- IQ: How smart your MAG is, and affects how likely the MAG is to help you when you're in trouble. Feeding your MAG on a regular basis (even at level 200) seems to increase the likelihood of your MAG helping you.
- DEF: For each level, your DFP is improved by one point.
All MAGs start with level 5 DEF.
Trimates and Trifluids will improve DEF, and usually at least one type of Atomizer will.
- POW: For each level, your ATP is improved by two points.
All mates will improve POW.
- DEX: For each level, your ATA is improved by one point.
All antis will improve DEX.
- MIND: For each level, your MST is improved by two points.
All fluids will improve MIND.

A MAG's overall level is equal to the sum of last four individual attribute levels. The maximum overall level a MAG can have is 200. Based on the relationship between the attributes, the owner's Section ID, the owner's class, and the MAG's level, the MAG can evolve to different forms. The first evolution occurs at level 10, to one of three types, depending on class. The second evolution occurs at level 35. The third evolution may occur at level 50. Every five levels after level fifty, the MAG can evolve again, depending on how the statistics are arranged. Every time your MAG evolves, it can gain a new type of Photon Blast, to a total of three. Don't worry if you don't have a third evolution, Photon Blasts aren't really very important to a Force. If you have a level 200 MAG with only two Photon Blasts and you really want that third Blast, you can give it to a friend with a different class (or Section ID) and have him feed it at level 200. The MAG will immediately evolve and get its third Photon Blast, at which point your friend can give it back. If you feed the MAG again, it will revert to its prior type, or you can leave it as it is. However, if you feed a MAG a MAG cell, it will permanently change to a special type. These special types will not evolve to other forms, and do not get photon blasts of their own, so don't use a MAG Cell on a MAG with only two blasts (if you care about getting a third, that is).

In my life as a Force, if I had one thing to do over again, it would be in how I raised my first MAG. I raised it (ultimately, a Kabanda type) with the idea of having high Mind (MST boost). Whenever I got a better gun, I'd switch to raising Dex (ATA boost) until I could use that gun. This made my Techniques fairly strong, and gave me a fair amount of TP. However, my physical attacks were very weak. Somewhere close to level 40, I realized that I wasn't capable of hurting much of anything at Hard difficulty except with Techniques, making solo play a long ordeal of hit and run or trips to Pioneer 2 for TP recharge. So I set a five minute alarm and over the course of a day of work and other things, I raised a second MAG (a Naraka type) and feed it nothing but Moon Atomizers to boost Power (ATP) and Dex to the point where my ATP and ATA stats were maxed. Having this put me to near parity as a melee or gun fighter to many Hunters and Rangers of an equal level, and superior to those with underdeveloped MAGs.

For a long while, I used the Naraka with Mind units when fighting the normal monsters, and switched to the Kabanda for the bosses. I've raised a few other MAGs out of curiosity, including an Andahka and a Bana, and I've come to think that high defense MAGs are kind of a waste of time for a Force. As you progress in levels, you will be able to obtain better defense through body armor.

If I started over again, I would raise my first MAG for Pow and Dex, and the second for Mind. Actually, that's maybe not true. Having a lot of TP is quite useful on Normal difficulty, especially when playing with other people. However, I definitely wish I had started a second MAG for power much earlier. Physical combat is the beginning Force's biggest weakness. Do not discount the importance of well raised MAG. The additional 250 ATP that my Naraka gave me, Shifta, and a decent mechgun, along with an ever more powerful array of Techniques, let's just say that an awful lot of Hunters and Rangers who always complained about how weak Forces are suddenly found new respect for my class.

Oh, and though I wish it didn't need to be said, I've played with far far too many people who think nothing of making teammates wait while they feed MAGs. If you can't do most of your MAG feeding during non-team play, please learn to feed your MAGs while you're moving so you don't slow everyone down. The single most annoying thing one of my friends does is stay in town waiting the four minutes so he can feed his MAGs a second time.

Need a convenient way to keep track of MAG feeding time? Use Shifta or Deband as a simple timer. At level 15, these are a few seconds short of a MAG feeding cycle.

Gear (v1.2)

Protective gear comes in two types: body armor and hand-held shields. Forces are limited to Frames and Barriers, which have less defensive power than the Armor and Shields that Hunters and Rangers can use. Body armor can have up to four slots, in which you can place various types of status boosting Equipment. Protective gear has usage requirements based on experience level. As you play, you'll find gear with requirements above your current level. Hold on to these for those times that you will be able to use them. Having slotted body armor is actually more important than having better armor, especially for a Force. Hold off on upgrading to a better Frame type if it means you'll be losing all your slots. Always keep Frames and Armor with three or four slots. Even stuff you're not going to use, because there will always be other players who will want it. Many

Hunters and Rangers will hold good slotted Frames, and are happy to trade for slotted Armor.

My highest priority for a slot Equipment Unit is a Trap/Search. These can usually be purchased at your Armor Shop on Hard and Very Hard difficulty, so keep checking there until you can buy one. They allow you to see all traps in a room, just like a permanent Trap Vision. Aside from the merely annoying traps which cause damage and poison, there are ones which can freeze or confuse you. The negative status traps are often in rooms filled with monsters and are the ones that will get you killed. As an alternative, androids can see traps automatically and most RAcasts I've played with are happy to shoot traps for you. Remember that you don't need a Trap/Search when fighting a boss, so replace it with something more useful right before you get into a boss fight, like a HP or DFP enhancer.

Other slots can be filled with whatever you find useful. If you take my advice and are playing with a MAG that enhances ATP instead of MST, then use MST boosting Equipment. Against bosses, DFP and HP boosting Equipment is good. Photon Blast, HP, and TP regenerating Equipment I find to be worthless since it takes so long for these to have any measurable effect. Resist Equipment I also think is worthless, except for Resist/Saint, which can make the difference between life and death when fighting Dark Falz on Hard and Very Hard.

Of the rare Units, the more useful ones I've seen include Hero/Ability and God/Ability, which boost all attributes, although by the time you find these, many of your attributes will already be maxed.

I finally had a change to try a God/Battle. Without a doubt, the ones I used were hacked and/or cloned (does anyone have a God/Battle they found themselves?), so it may be that a "legitimate" God/Battle behaves differently. All the Battle units (Hero, Devil, God) will improve the speed of physical attacks. Most significantly, they will improve the startup time for Heavy and Extra attacks. The advantage of a Battle unit is that you can use Heavy or Extra attacks where you'd otherwise use a Normal. For example, if you're swinging a Sword at a VH Booma, you can use Heavy -> Heavy -> Heavy even if it's standing right in front of you, without worry about a counterattack interrupting you. However, recovery time is still just as slow! I did some timing tests with two and three God/Battles to see if there was really any improvement in overall speed. My conclusion is that there is no difference between one and two God/Battles, but maybe my timing is bad. (The test comprised of firing a standard handgun as quickly as possible for as many combos as possible in one minute.)

Wizard/, Devil/ and God/Technique will raise all your Technique casting levels by one, two, or three. "EV-9>9.3" wrote me with a warning about /Technique units. If you use a disk with one equipped, the Technique learned will not take into account the presence of the /Tech unit. This means the level will drop if the unit is unequipped. (In other words, if you use a Megid lv 15 disk with a God/Tech equipped, when you remove it, you will only have Megid lv 12.) I was wrong about the Technique units giving levels above 15 -- 15 is the maximum. It is only possible to have Technique levels over 15 by cheating.

The most useful protective gear a Force can get is a Sacred Guard barrier. Supposedly, Bulclaws on Very Hard are the most likely source (this how I got mine). The Sacred Guard is a type of barrier, with decent DFP and EVP, and good ELT. But what makes the Sacred Guard so desirable is that it makes the wearer immune to all negative status. No more slowed, frozen, confused,

or paralyzed! Poison Lilies, Gillchics, Sinows, Dark Belras, and Dark Falz all become much less threatening. Hunters and Rangers who regularly play with a particular Force teammate should give first dibs on these to the Force -- after all, she can't be very effective casting Resta or Anti on them if she's paralyzed or frozen. There is also supposed to be a Unit called State/Maintain that prevents negative status, but I have not seen one of these yet.

One piece of gear that I would like to try is the Force Field. Although this is not particularly good armor by itself, when playing with a user of a Ranger Field and Hunter Field, defense is dramatically improved -- or so the rumors go..

At earlier levels, the Invisible Guard (req: lv 17) is probably the best barrier you can get. It's unlikely that you'll be able to find one yourself (I've only found them on Hard and Very Hard in the Ruins). I've seen a lot of higher level players join newbie games to give these away. While I normally would discourage low level players from taking rare weapons, Invisible Guards are obviously intended for low level people (there are much better barriers, but they all have high level requirements), so don't feel bad about taking one, or handing yours down when you outgrow it.

The following are hacked units, and can no longer be used in play (and thank goodness for that): God/HP++, God/TP++, any/Technique++ or --

Team Games

Androids love playing with Forces, or at least the smart ones do. Androids are all power and no Technique, Forces are all Technique and no power. Well, maybe that's an over-simplification, but the point is, they complement each other perfectly. When looking through open games, I'll pick a team with HUCasts and RACasts over a team of HUmars and RAmars.

Much of the appeal of Phantasy Star Online is that it is a cooperative game. So, to get the most of out PSO, cooperate. And keep in mind that not all of the following are applicable only to Forces. Common courtesy is applicable for all classes.

How To Be A Good Teammate As A Force

Don't split the party. Try to stick with the other people in your group, and avoid running off by yourself, even if you're capable of fighting alone. If they're headed in the wrong direction, say so, don't just leave them behind. After fights, even if you have no interest in picking up items, show a little patience to your teammates. Otherwise if you really wanted to play alone, then you should play alone.

During fights, keep an eye on where everyone is, and try to keep your teammates in range of your support magic spells. This means in battles, don't go running off to the corners to pick stuff up while your teammates fight. It's very annoying when anyone does it, but it's worse when it's the team's Force. If you have one teammate who is the guy running for the boxes while your other teammates fight, support the guys who are playing as a team first and take care of the other guy second. If everyone in your game is a treasure hog, go find another team.

Always make sure you have enough TP to cast at least two Restas in a row! If your teammates are expecting you to keep them healed, they will be less likely to heal themselves. Often when the fighting gets close, my Hunter

and Ranger friends will attempt attacks to keep enemies off my back instead of taking the time to heal or evade monsters. I don't want to let them down and get them killed because I'm running around without the capability to cast Techniques. If you do run out of fluid in the heat of battle, let people know! You can hotkey "no TP" in the (what should be extremely rare) event you run out of TP. Remember, if you don't put fluid on a customize button, you should place your fluid stock at the top of your item list (use the manual sort) so that you can use it from the Items menu as quickly as possible. At higher levels, although you want to stretch those Trifluids out, go ahead and use Difluids every now and then. You'll usually find enough to keep you fully stocked.

Resta any player who gets injured. When I got over about 300 TP, I started healing anyone who was hurt, no matter how lightly. Doing this might seem like a waste of TP, but crowds of enemies or enemies which attack several times in quick succession can kill an ally very quickly, and if you're lagged, waiting might be fatal. Besides, healing quickly lets teammates know they can rely on you to keep them alive so they can focus on attacking. While you're actually casting Resta, you won't be hit. So even when you're surrounded by enemies, if you can get enough time to start casting, you'll complete the spell. If you get knocked down, usually you can Resta immediately when you get up.

Keep Shifta and Deband cast on all team members, all the time. These spells have a huge effect on physical combat. For that matter, if you plan on engaging in physical combat yourself, make sure you are Shifta'd in a solo game. I personally find alternating Shifta and Deband bubbles to be distracting. If you "stack" Deband to cast right after Shifta, the red and blue bubbles will display simultaneously.

You should always cast Anti immediately for any negative status that prevents a teammate from defending himself. Most important to Anti are paralysis, confusion, and freezing. Less important are slow and poison. This also means, always carry around Antiparalysis for yourself just in case... If you run out of Antiparalysis and you're fighting a Poison Lily, let it poison you. You can only have one negative status at a time.

Sometimes teammates die. Your goal is to have this happen as infrequently as possible, but sometimes, especially if you're playing with new or greedy teammates, it will happen. Reverser your teammates when it's safe to do so. Usually, this means take care of that big crowd of monsters surrounding your dead comrade's body before you Reverser, otherwise you might find yourself dead as well. Make sure you're not too close when you try to cast Reverser or you might inadvertently pick up someone's weapon -- a real problem in the heat of battle. The exception is when fighting a boss, in which case you want to keep all your allies alive as much as possible, especially if the boss is close to expiring. Dead players receive no XP, and there's nothing quite so disappointing as fighting a boss for 10 minutes with nothing to show for it...

Sometimes you might die yourself. I always carry at least one Scape Doll just in case this happens, mainly because almost all the time when I die, I'm the last of my group to have died. For the most part, my Hunter and Ranger teammates tend to be fighting slightly ahead of me, so they take damage before I do. Anything that kills me will usually have taken them out first, and having a Scape Doll means we avoid the trip to Pioneer 2 and a long walk back to our stuff. One tactic that a lot of early level Forces have is to permit themselves to be killed a lot so that they can be revived with a full TP meter. I think this is lame -- the idea is to learn how to stay alive while fighting as effectively as possible. If you do this

though, let your teammates know what you're going to be doing before you do it. It really sucks to rely on a Force who is always lying dead on the floor.

Until you get some decent weapons or become more powerful, you probably aren't going to be all that capable of destroying monsters by yourself. The best way to fight early on is to provide backup to the more powerful combatants. For example, line yourself up behind that Hunter and use Heavy attacks to push back the monsters coming at him from the sides. Or watch for when his attacks are over and attack the monster while he's recovering to keep him safe. This isn't always too precise because of lag between players. If you use a gun, try not to use Heavy attacks against targets someone is attacking with a melee weapon, because you can push the monster out of range (this is especially true of fallen Gillchics in the Mine). Rangers are easier to fight with since they aren't running around so much, but remember, you're supporting first, fighting second.

This doesn't mean you aren't capable of dishing out some punishment yourself. Sometimes a good offense is the best defense. Use your offensive magic to disrupt enemy attacks, knock down flying opponents, push back crowds of enemies (especially zonde in the Mine), and most importantly, freeze your enemies in their tracks. If you or a teammate is surrounded or in danger of taking a pounding from enemies, you should let fly with a flurry of barta spells. Regardless of whether or not the monsters are susceptible to cold, high level barta (primarily, Gibarta and Rabarta) can hit and freeze anything close to you. Any time you're feeling pressed for space, or encounter an especially dangerous opponent (Hildebears, Garanz/s, Sinows, Delsabers, Chaos Bringers, etc) go ahead and try to freeze it. At higher levels especially, you have a pretty good chance of success for at least a few enemies, and in a crowd, the frozen monsters will slow down the rest of them from getting at you. Even if you're not in a good position to take advantage of the frozen monsters, hopefully your teammates usually will. For what it's worth, you do get XP for hitting a monster with a Technique, even if it does zero damage...

Share treasure with your teammates and before you sell something good, ask your teammates if they want it. This even applies to common weapons if you find one with high percentages. Anything with 30% attributes or better you might want to hold onto for a while anyway just in case.

Finally, after you become the world-class assbeater that Forces can become, don't be an XP hog. It is really embarrassing to see a high level Force join a Normal or Hard game with lower level characters for support, and then zapping all the monsters before the other players can even come near them. High level Forces should not be in Normal games at all; virtually all offensive Techniques kill in a single hit. If you are going to enter a Hard game, be aware of how much damage a monster can take before dying, and let someone else kill it!

I much prefer to join teams with players of roughly the same experience as I have. If you join newbie games when you're much more powerful, you usually end up carrying the team, and you prevent the other players from learning how to fight properly.

Communication

If you don't have a keyboard, you're missing out on a lot of the fun of PSO. You can either buy the official Sega Dreamcast keyboard (retail is about US\$20 on this), or you can buy one of those multi-adapters for about US\$30. Those multi-adapters can let you use a ps/2 style keyboard or mouse,

or a Playstation or Saturn controller, but be aware that they do have some problems, including imperfect key mapping. Letters are usually ok, symbols and some punctuation may not be. Plus, although the Playstation controllers generally work ok, the Saturn adapters I've seen don't work well at all (missing buttons).

Even if you have a keyboard, it's useful to set up some "hotkey" shortcuts, using the D-pad to send an assigned message. Try to avoid symbol chat during combat. The large windows obscure vision and making fighting a little bit harder. Common hotkey messages: "yes", "ok", "no", "thanks", "take this", "follow me", "help". Many people also hotkey symbols for "hi" and "hooray".

When entering a game, it's usually polite to ask if people already there mind if you join. Please do not arbitrarily join open games just to ask people if they want to trade items -- the lobby is much more appropriate for that.

Team Strategy

There's really not much strategy to this game beyond what I've outlined above. Stick near teammates, watch their backs. Be careful with Heavy gun attacks pushing monsters out of the range of melee fighters, or into another player. Freeze large groups of enemies. If you see a teammate surrounded by monsters and in trouble, help that person out.

Sometimes its fun to play "Monster Roundup" also known as "pulling a train". This is best with at least two players, and most useful in rooms where monsters warp in from all sides. One player will act as bait and get all monsters chasing him or her. The other players stand outside the room and wait for the bait to come running towards them, with all the monsters in tow. When they're all together in a group, the monsters can be easily delt with, either through Techniques or with multiple enemy hitting weapons.

Playing With Another Force

I rarely join teams that already have a Force. Normally, a team of four only needs one Force. On Very Hard especially, physical attacks routinely do more damage than magical, leaving the Force to use Techniques primarily to heal, freeze enemies, and disrupt some enemy attacks. This means a second (or third, or fourth) Force is mostly superfluous. Multiple Force games tend to be of more value on Normal and Hard, where Techniques, relatively speaking, are more powerful.

However, multiple Forces can be effective together if communication is good and the players know what they're doing. To avoid duplication of effort, the Forces should decide on who will perform what duties. For example, the Force with the highest level Shifta and Deband will be responsible for keeping those cast, or if levels are close, they can alternate. The Force with the highest TP can be responsible for Resta, or if Resta levels aren't high, then whoever is closest to the injured teammate will Resta. Or, if one Force has high ATP and is mostly using melee attacks, the other is responsible for Resta.

With three or four Forces, Techniques can be used to a greater extent than if there were just a single Force. All Force players should be familiar with what Techniques are most damaging to which monsters, and with about how many Hit Points each variety of monster is likely to have (see the Bestiary for a list of all monsters in the game and tips on fighting them).

Using a Monster Roundup strategy, each Force can cast the appropriate Technique one or two times to take out an entire group. A well coordinated group of Forces can make for an entertaining and spectacular game (picture six or eight Rafoies going off at the same time), not to mention a very fast one. Unfortunately if the Forces aren't so well coordinated, or tend to scatter and run, you'd best have some decent physical attack capability, or you may be in serious trouble.

Money

Forces are the most expensive class to play, and in the early levels, money comes dear. Between an always pressing need for fluids and the pressure to raise MAGs, you may constantly find yourself short of Meseta. Even at higher levels, Trifluid is expensive, and there will come a time when you'll be wanting to buy some very expensive high level Technique discs.

Since TP replenishment is the main cost of being a Force, learn to be sparing in your use of Techniques. You won't need to use Techniques so much if you have good physical power -- yet another reason to invest in raising a power boosting MAG. Also when playing by yourself, obtain Ryuker as soon as you can and teleport back to Pioneer 2 to replenish TP instead of using fluid. Finally, when you come across fluid that you can't carry (or don't want to carry) use it immediately -- even the mere 70 points that monofluid replenishes will help a little.

Don't buy most types of Technique discs unless they're several (at least three) levels above your current Technique level, or unless they are very high. If you can use them, it's always worth buying the "Ra"'s, Resta, and Shifta at level 12 or higher.

Don't ever buy frames or barriers. Even if it's slotted, defensive gear is ridiculously expensive, and you'll almost always be able to find better. By making a habit of holding at least two tiers of higher level gear for later use, you'll never have to buy it until you can really afford it. Buying weaponry is also a waste. You can find all types of weapons, grinders are usually quite common, and the best weapons have attribute percentages, which you can almost never buy anyway.

Still short on money? Solo play through the levels and in quests will usually help your bank account. A trip through the Mine and Ruins will almost always bring in lots of Meseta through sold items. When grabbing stuff for cash, keep in mind that Armor and Frames are worth the most. (For what it's worth the shops buy items for about 12.5% of what they sell at.)

If you still can't make ends meet, and you don't want to annoy your teammates by constantly piping back to Pioneer 2 for trips to the Med Center, ask your teammates for cash for fluids. I usually didn't ask for cash, but let everyone else know that I was going to be grabbing everything I could get to sell. If you are going to be an item hog though, offer your teammates any particularly good items you picked up (for free please) before you sell them off. What's good? Rare items, slotted armor, weapons with high percentages, and weapons with powerful specials. Pluses don't mean much.

Most Hunters and Rangers tend not to spend much money except on their MAGs, so they're usually happy to help a Force out, especially if that Force is keeping them healed and casting Shifta and Deband. This is especially true of teams of androids, which otherwise have to endure the hassle of relying on mates.

Don't worry... Eventually you'll be like everyone else, with more Meseta than you know what to do with. For what it's worth, you can put up to 999,999 Meseta in the cloak room, and you can carry up to 999,999 Meseta on your person. Completing the Ruins by myself on Very Hard usually nets me somewhere around 300,000 from sold items.

Bestiary (v1.2)

Following is a list of all monsters and bosses, including tips on how to beat them and what Techniques they are weak to.

HP and Techniques have been moved to a table, to make my life easier..

HP have been updated to be (hopefully) accurate through calculation with either a Demon or Devil weapon. I'm pleased to note that except in one case where I was under by a few HP, all my old HP numbers (from versions 1.0 and 1.1 of this Guide) were reasonably close, and were over the amount needed to kill the monster. The calculations of HP were all done for Offline monsters, so the HP are 75% of what the Online monsters have. The number in parens should be a little more than what the actual HP should be Online (Offline x 1.34).

Technique damage percentage is fairly rough estimate, but 0% always means no damage from that particular type of magic and 100% means maximum damage for your level of Techniques in the elemental class. I'm judging percentage based on damage done compared to the maximum damage for that Technique (level 15, 670 MST). For Megid, I'm still compiling numbers for success rate. Since there's some randomness involved, your results may be different from mine, and for the sake of not driving myself crazy right now, I'm categorizing as "poor" (in the neighborhood of 25% kill rate), "average" (50% kill rate), "good" (65% kill rate) or "excellent" (90%+).

I am not convinced that Technique resistance is based on a strict percentage system, but it's close enough for legitimate players.

Forest (v1.2)

All Forest inhabitants are of Native attribute.

Monster	HP	foie	barta	zonde	Grants	Megid
Booma	724 (970)	100%	0%	40%	80%	good
Gobooma	756 (1013)	0%	40%	100%	80%	average
Gigobooma	788 (1055)	0%	100%	40%	80%	excellent
Savage Wolf	706 (946)	100%	20%	100%	80%	average
Barbarous Wolf	730 (978)	100%	10%	100%	80%	good
Hildebear	874 (1172)	0%	100%	50%	80%	good
Rag Rappy	688 (920)	100%	100%	30%	80%	excellent
Monest	1024 (1372)	60%	40%	100%	80%	average
Mothmant	480 (643)	70%	50%	100%	80%	average
Dragon	4700? (6300?)	10%	80%	20%	40%	never

Booma

Large apish badger. They are reddish brown in color and attack with a claw swipe. Even on Very Hard they move slowly and are easy to beat down. However, Boomas are unique of "footsoldier" monsters in that they have very fast hit recovery on Very Hard. You cannot do a Normal -> Heavy combo against a Booma that is in range to attack you, because it will be able to hit you before your Heavy attack comes out.

Gobooma

Yellow/tan colored Booma that is weak to lightning.

Gigobooma

Purplish colored Booma that is weak to cold.

Savage Wolf

Greenish striped wolf. These will leap into the field, and if you are in the way, you may be hit. These will usually try to circle around behind you before pouncing to attack. If you kill another wolf, a Savage Wolf may become suicidally unhappy and cast Jellen and Zalure on itself.

Barbarous Wolf

Bluish striped wolf. These are pretty much just a tougher version of the Savage Wolf.

Hildebear

Giant ape-bear. Hildebears will appear by jumping into the field. Once there, they have three methods of attack. From a distance, they have a tremendous leaping attack. From medium range, they spit Foie from their mouths. From up close, they will swat you with one of their huge arms. Hildebears are too large to push back with Heavy Attacks, and their punches cannot be interrupted with physical attacks. Hildebears have a bad habit of rearing up, as though to frighten you, that leaves them very vulnerable. There is a rare type of Hildebear called a Hildeblue.

Rag Rappy

Yellow penguin. These are slow moving little flightless birds. In a crowd they can be annoying. When you defeat a Rag Rappy, it will fall to the ground. After a while (or immediately, when you move far enough away), a fallen Rag Rappy will get up and scurry off. If you hit a Rappy while it's very far away, it will run immediately. Hitting a running Rag Rappy will cause it to drop something. It is rumored that on Very Hard difficulty, Rappies will sometimes drop a MAG cell. There is a rare mutant Rag Rappy called an Al Rappy which is blue, has quite a bit more HP, and is worth about 10 times the XP as a normal Rappy.

Monest

Mothmant hatchery. These look like giant pitcher plants and are carried onto the field by Mothmants. The Monest will spew Mothmants every so often. Damaging a Monest will cause it to collapse to the ground, but it will still hatch Mothmants until it is finally killed.

Mothmant

Giant wasp. These flying pests can be quite a problem if they get close. My recommendation is to zap Mothmants and Monest with Gizonde or Razonde as soon as you can.

Dragon (Forest Boss)

Like most forest denizens, the Dragon is not very fast or strong. Unless you stand right in front of it and take a full blast of flame breath, you don't have to worry much about taking damage. The Dragon initially is on the ground and attacks with its flame breath, or by stepping on anyone careless enough to be squished. The best way to handle the Dragon is to avoid the breath and run around to its side, where it cannot hit you. Hurting its legs will cause it to collapse to the ground -- be careful, it can crush you when it falls. On Hard and Very Hard, physical attacks should be directed at its head because other body parts have very high defense.

Forces have it easy, because Techniques will affect any part of its body. After getting up, the Dragon will fly. If it has not been damaged much, it will just try to breathe fire on you from the air, then land again. If it has been hurt a lot, it will dive underground and try to hit you with a burrowing attack. It will charge at players three times from under the earth. Avoiding these charges is usually a matter of sticking near the walls and running. After, it comes shooting back up into the air, lands, and the cycle begins again. Every time the Dragon burrows and reappears, a hot lava spot is left on the ground. Running over this will hurt you. Finally, be careful when finally killing the Dragon, it can fall and hurt you.

Forces can very easily kill the Dragon with cold attacks. You can even attack the Dragon while it is flying, and in fact if you do enough damage to it while it is up there, it will land without doing anything to try to hurt you.

Occasionally, the Dragon will leave a Dragon Slayer Sword after it is killed. The Dragon Slayer is the best Sword I've seen, but unfortunately, it cannot be equipped by Forces.

Cave (v1.2)

All Cave inhabitants are of Altered Beast (A.Beast) attribute.

Monster	HP	foie	barta	zonde	Grants	Megid
Evil Shark	756 (1012)	100%	0%	40%	80%	average
Pal Shark	774 (1037)	100%	40%	0%	80%	average
Guil Shark	812 (1088)	0%	40%	100%	80%	average
Poison Lily	738 (988)	100%	100%	0%	100%	good
Grass						
Assassin	824 (1104)	100%	0%	40%	80%	poor
Nano Dragon	900 (1206)	0%	100%	100%	80%	excellent
Pofuilly						
Slime	774 (1037)	100%	0%	100%	100%	good
Pan Arms	1400 (1876)	80%	80%	80%	80%	poor
Migium	700 (938)	100%	0%	0%	80%	?
Hidoom	700 (938)	0%	100%	0%	80%	?
De Rol Le	15000? (20100?)	80% (80%)	50% (20%)	70% (40%)	20%	never
De Rol Le (spike)	450? (603?)	50%	100%	100%	50%	?

Technique % in parens for De Rol Le are damage percentage through its "beak".

Evil Shark

Green colored shark beast. These are mutated Boomas with knife hands, big teeth, and a fin on the top of their heads. Evil Sharks are weak to fire.

Pal Shark

Purple colored Shark. Contrary to popular belief, foie Techniques are better than barta against these.

Guil Shark

Yellow colored Shark. These are slightly larger than other Sharks, and are weak to zonde.

Poison Lily

Poisonous white flower. The Lily is a stationary plant that will spit poison at you from afar, or try to bite you when you get too close. Fortunately the range of the spit is very short (a machine gun has better range), and the Lilies aren't very smart since they will try to bite you even if you are out of range. The real danger of the Poison Lily is that occasionally, it will try to cast paralysis on you. The paralysis attempt seems to occur more often if you (or someone on your team) uses a Technique on the Lily. If you are close enough, you can hit the Lily while it is in the process of paralyzing you, and prevent it from succeeding. However, be ready to use an Antiparalysis for yourself or to cast Anti for your teammates when these are around. If the Lily becomes very hurt, it will "stand up" straight and start to spin while making a chiming noise. If you let it stay this way, it will spin faster and faster, until it explodes in damaging purple smoke. As a strange quirk, if you stand on the blood-spot of a defeated monster, the Poison Lily will be unable to poison you. I'm not sure if this also prevents paralysis. Another odd feature of the Poison Lily is that hitting one with a Soul Eater or Sword, the first hit of the attack sequence will strike twice. There is a rare variant called the Nar Lily, which is red in color.

Grass Assassin

Giant Mantis. From a distance, the Grass Assassin will rear up (giving it temporary invulnerability) and charge headlong at its target. This charge can be stopped by causing any damage to the Assassin. The Grass Assassin's favorite tactic is to spit a white web that will root the victim to a spot. From there, it will slash at its prey with its long forearms. If you are able to hit the Grass Assassin while it is spitting the web, you will free yourself. Otherwise, though you can attack, you are stuck to the spot. If you press the controller in a direction while using an attack, you will spin to turn in that direction, for first hit of a combo only. Thanks to Archon Shiva for this correction (I thought you could not turn at all, except by casting Zonde).

Nano Dragon

Small brown dragon. The Nano Dragon prefers to keep its range, and will fly away if you approach too closely. It will attack with breath weapons. It will shoot either balls of blue flame, or a very powerful blue beam. The former will track the player and will almost always hit. The beam can be dodged. The Nano Dragon will sometimes attack other monsters, and according to Red Ring Rico's notes, the Nano Dragon becomes stronger as it kills other monsters. Nano Dragons are extremely annoying to fight with melee weapons, because often they will decide to fly away as you approach them. You must use a Normal attack as the first in a combo to keep them grounded. A Heavy or Special attack is too slow and will allow a Nano Dragon to fly off.

Pofuilly Slime

These slime creatures appear in Cave 2 and 3 only, and are probably the most annoying monsters in the game. They first appear in slime form, and slither around the floor, immune to any attack. When they pop up, they can attack by biting, hitting longer range with a "tail" of sorts. Slimes can reproduce by spitting a new slime onto the floor (if this spit hits a player, it will cause damage instead). When hurt, the Slime shrinks back down into a little pool of ooze and slithers around the floor once more, meaning that killing these things can take quite a while. Pofuilly Slimes should not be attacked with Techniques or elemental weapon specials. Barta will almost always cause the Slime to reproduce immediately. Foie and Grants will also cause splits but not as often. Zonde will rarely cause a

split. These creatures may be the best use I have for Megid, as Megid will only kill them, not cause a split. When attacking physically, always be prepared to use a combo, in a Heavy, Heavy, Normal pattern. If the Slime evades your first attack, it's probably going to reproduce if you don't hit it. Mechguns can hit a Slime twice if the first attack is evaded. There is a rare variant called a Poulyful Slime, which is red in color.

Pan Arms

Pan Arms are actually composed of two creatures. The purple Migium and the red Hidoom. They will pop up out of the ground together, and attempt to shoot either a red heat beam or a blue frost beam at the players from the green spots at their "front". While joined, the Pan Arms have very very high ATP and so are immune to most physical attacks. Use Techniques or a weapon's magical Special to attack, or cast Zalure. By staying behind the Pan Arms, you will not only avoid being hit by its beams, but its inability to hit you will cause it to split into the Migium and Hidoom. Any damage done to the joined Pan Arms will be divided equally to these. They have photon swords of a sort, and attack by dashing up to players and stabbing them. When hurt, the Migium and Hidoom will face each other and cast Resta. When you are stabbed by a Migium, it will be as though Zalure has been cast on you. Likewise, being stabbed by the Hidoom will confer Jellen on you. Pan Arms will occasionally drop an arm which can be used by Montague to Pan Arm Blades, a type of dagger which is usable by a Force.

De Rol Le (Cave Boss) (v1.1)

De Rol Le is a giant sewer worm with a variety of attacks. It starts by flipping spikes onto the raft. These spikes will remain located around one of the team members, making them difficult for that person to hit. Each spike has about 600HP. If the spikes aren't destroyed, they will explode and cause damage to players. This explosion will happen as De Rol Le is passing by the raft to spray purple mist across it. Together this can do considerable damage, but the spray can be dodged. Weak players should stand behind stronger ones to let them absorb the hits. Following this, De Rol Le will leap up onto the raft. He is very vulnerable to attack here, but will pick a player to hit with a whisker/tentacle. Usually you have time for three combos before having to move to evade the first tentacle attack, and then you can throw out one combo before having to dodge the tentacle. De Rol Le will then crawl across the cavern ceiling, dropping rocks on the raft. These also are fairly easy to dodge but can cause a lot of pain. If De Rol Le's still alive, the cavern will grow dark, and De Rol Le will spike the raft, shoot purple spray from the side again, then rear up in front of the raft. From here he will shoot a purple beam across the raft. By running from one side of the raft to the other before he does the beam attack, you can usually get him to miss you. You can attack him while he's reared up, though machine gun range is a little too short, and my Razonde only hits four of his body segments from this distance.

As you hurt De Rol Le's "head", you'll crack off an outer shell. It'll start grunting more when you hit it after that, and those hits will cause more damage.

For a Force, Zonde is probably the best weapon against him. High level Razonde does a good amount of damage plus has excellent range -- there's almost no time when you can't be hitting De Rol Le. In addition, his long segmented body all takes lightning damage, meaning you will really be hurting him quite badly. A number of people have written to me saying that Rafoie is better than Razonde, as at equal levels, Rafoie does slightly more damage. However, it seems to me that Razonde is much more likely to hit all body segments. I'm not sure how De Rol Le's HPs work -- it's

possible to kill him just by smacking hit head segment, and it's also possible to kill him by just hitting the tail portion. Using all Razonde and totalling up the damage to all segments, I came out to about 50000 HP. However, my HUNewearl friend Isepic can clear out De Rol Le with about 15000 HP(?) of damage just to the front three segments.

Occasionally, De Rol Le will drop "Parasite Wear: De Rol Le", a frame with good defense (10 higher DFP and 40 higher EVP than an Ultimate Frame), but which essentially poisons the wearer. It also has the disadvantage of having no resistance to Elemental Light (ELT) attacks, which is terrible against Dark Falz. Parasite Wear can have slots, but it's more common to get it without any. According to a HUmAr I played with (whose name I forgot, sorry), De Rol Le can be induced to drop the Parasite Wear by smacking him in the neck behind his head shell to break off the armor there before breaking off the head shell. After "calling" the appearance of Parasite Wear the first time, we fought De Rol Le again, and sure enough, another Parasite Wear. Make of that what you will.

Mine (v1.2)

All Mine inhabitants are of Machine attribute. Machines (except for the boss) can be paralyzed with electrical attacks.

Monster	HP	foie	barta	zonde	Grants	Megid
Gillchic	812 (1088)	20%	20%	70%	100%	average
Dubchic	838 (1122)	20%	20%	80%	100%	average
Dubwitch	300? (400)	100%	100%	100%	100%	excellent
Canadine	824 (1104)	0%	100%	60%	40%	average
Canane	900 (1206)	70%	100%	0%	40%	excellent
Sinow Beat	1100 (1474)	100%	0%	60%	40%	excellent
Sinow Gold	1000 (1340)	100%	50%	0%	40%	poor
Garanz	1500 (2010)	80%	40%	0%	40%	poor
Vol Opt	10000?					
(stage 2)	(13400?)	40%	55%	80%	50%	never

Gillchic

Black robots. These are very slow and will get knocked down and back by any kind of hit (be careful if you hit one while its back is turned to you -- it will fall towards you). While knocked down, you can hit the Gillchic, but while they are getting back up, they are invulnerable. Despite being slow, in a large group they can still be dangerous. From a distance, they will shoot a very damaging laser. From up close, they have a fast and powerful two hit "one-two" punch that can cause slow status. Because of the flurry of fast attacks, letting a bunch of Gillchics crowd around you can be fatal.

Dubchic

Grey robots. Dubchics are essentially indestructible Gillchics.

Dubwitch

The Dubwitch is a small hovering disk with yellow spikes protruding from it. Normally, these hover in an out-of-the-way location near the ceiling, invisible to your radar. When a Dubchic is destroyed, the Dubwitch will regenerate it, but at the same time, the Dubwitch will drop to the floor where it can be reached by melee weapons. Destroying the Dubwitch will also cause the Dubchics to fall apart (you will only get XP for the Dubchics that you've hit).

Canadine

Flying horseshoe. Canadines can be very annoying for users of melee

weapons. In their first mode of attack, they will float up out of striking range, and target a player with a reddish laser. A few seconds later, they will attack with a lightning strike. It's pretty easy to avoid the attack. The second mode of attack, the Canadine will zip around at player level, until it is close, at which point it will move up and deliver an electric jolt. I believe both of these electrical attacks are capable of causing electrical paralysis to androids.

Canane

Red controller of Canadines. Occasionally you will see a formation of Canadines surrounding a Canane. Destroying the Canane will cause any remaining Canadines to freak out, drill into you, and explode. This can hurt, but the simplistic action makes the uncontrolled Canadines incredibly easy to destroy. Hurting a Canane a lot without killing it, or killing most of the Canadines, will cause the Canane to disappear and take any surviving Canadines with it.

Sinow Beat

Purple attack robot. The Sinow Beat is one of the more dangerous inhabitants of the mine. Beats warp in near the ceiling (you can see their shadow before they appear) then drop to the floor. From a distance they have a leap attack, otherwise from up close they have a two hit punch that can cause confusion. Occasionally a Sinow Beat will jump backwards and create four illusions of itself. The illusions can be destroyed with any attack and aren't dangerous, but they can surround and trap a player.

Sinow Gold

Gold attack robot. The Sinow Gold is similar to the Sinow Beat, but considerably less dangerous and it's magic resistances are different. When it jumps back, instead of doing illusions, it will cast Resta on all monsters in range.

Garanz

Rocket launching tank. The Garanz is probably responsible for more deaths in the Mine than all other enemies combined. It is large and tank-like, and will launch slow moving rockets at a player. These rockets will home in on players, and hit for considerable damage. The danger of Garanz's is that when you attack them, their shells break off and they start launching more rockets. Meaning, less defense but a heck of a lot more offense. The Garanz's rockets can damage other enemies, including the Garanz itself, which sometimes can be useful. To attack the Garanz physically, use a long range gun, or run around behind it (running in circles around a Garanz can cause it to hit itself with rockets). Techniques only, if you can take an eight rocket hit, you can alternately cast Rafoie and Resta. My usual tactic with these is to cast Rabarta until the Garanz freezes, then kill it with a mechgun. If you're in between two Garanz's and you have teammates attacking both, just cast Resta as fast as you can.

Vol Opt (Mine Boss) (v1.2)

This is kind of strange one. There are two separate forms that must be beaten to defeat Vol Opt.

STAGE ONE: The heroes are warped into a hexagonal room with what looks to be a chandelier in the center and six sets of video screens in the walls. You can attack Vol Opt by hitting the "chandelier" (recommended: a gun). His "head" will also travel around the walls, in the video displays. While his head is on a screen, you can attack that bank of displays either physically or with Techniques. Oddly enough, when the head is travelling, you can hit it with untargetted Techniques like Rabarta or Razonde. To

attack you, Vol Opt will pop up some cones from the floor that will zap you with lightning every so often. The red cones appear to be the ones that are responsible for the lightning attack. Do enough damage to various stuff, and you move on to stage two. The best Techniques to use here seem to be Rabarta and Razonde.

STAGE TWO: Vol Opt itself appears in the center of the room and uses various attacks to hurt you. A lot of people consider Vol Opt's second stage to be ridiculously easy, and it is, in a group. However, it can still be dangerous. At its back, Vol Opt has a rocket launcher. The rockets are very slow, but they do track you, and they do a considerable amount of damage. To the sides, Vol Opt will put tracking a tracking laser on you. This is a cue to run, or you will be smashed by a large pillar that drops from the ceiling (you will be attacked up to three times sequentially by the pillars). In front, Vol Opt will occasionally spit a green ball which, if it hits, will imprison you in a circle of rock. This "jail" can be broken by a teammate, otherwise you are stuck until Vol Opt attacks you or dies. Incidentally, while imprisoned, you cannot use Techniques or attacks, but you can still use items.

Although Vol Opt is weak to Zonde, the easiest way to defeat Vol Opt's second form is to use physical attacks. Doing a significant amount of damage to any section will cause that section to break and drop off, so for a Force, a good mechgun with machine % bonus or the Soul Eater are your best bets.

Ruins (v1.2)

All Ruins inhabitants are of Dark attribute. As you might expect, the Ruins is the most difficult area in the game.

Monster	HP	foie	barta	zonde	Grants	Megid
Dimenian	988 (1323)	100%	0%	30%	80%	good
La Dimenian	1024 (1372)	30%	100%	0%	70%	average
So Dimenian	1064 (1425)	0%	30%	100%	60%	poor
Chaos Bringer	1212 (1624)	85%	20%	0%	10%	poor
Chaos Sorcerer	1024 (1372)	70%	0%	0%	20%	poor
Bee	838 (1122)	100%	100%	0%	100%	?
Dark Belra	1275 (1708)	0%	20%	70%	100%	average
Dark Gunner	924 (1238)	50%	50%	50%	100%	average
Claw	838 (1122)	100%	0%	70%	100%	average
Bulclaw	900 (1206)	80%	80%	0%	100%	average
Bulk	180? (240?)	100%	100%?	0%	100%	?
Delsaber	1150 (1541)	0%	100%	0%	40%	poor
Deravant	225? (300?)	50%	70%	0%	100%	never
Dark Falz						
(form 1)	9200? (12300?)	30%	0%	0%?	30%?	never
Dark Falz						
(form 2)	8600? (11500?)	0%	60%	0%?	25%?	never
Dark Falz	15000?					
(form 3)	(20000?)	30%	0%	10%	15%	never

Dimenian

Mutated Shark, with blue throats and knife hands. At Very Hard difficulty, Dimenians move as fast as you can when running. Be careful that you don't get surrounded by them or trapped in a corner. When attacking, the Dimenian will swing its arm once, and if the attacks are not interrupted, they will alternate between left and right hands. Use this to pick a direction to when dodging.

La Dimenian

Purple colored Dimenian. Similar to regular Dimenians but weak to cold.

So Dimenian

Large yellow colored Dimenian. These are weak to lightning.

Chaos Bringer

Ghostly centaur. This will warp into being, rear back, and then attack. If far away, it will charge at the player very quickly, stopping when it hits a wall. This charge will hurt anything in its path, including other monsters, and can confuse players. If close, it will swing it's sword. When near death, a Chaos Bringer will charge up its rifle by sucking TP from all nearby users, and then fire a ball which will does considerable damage if it hits. Hitting the Chaos Bringer while it is rearing to charge will prevent the attack; foie is best for this. As with many other large monsters, hitting the Chaos Bringer with a physical weapon while it is swinging at you will not interrupt its attack. Rarely, the Chaos Bringer will drop an arm which can be turned into a C-Bringer's Rifle (rifle with a Demon's Special).

Chaos Sorcerer, Bee R, Bee L

Ghostly magician. This has two floating diamond "Bees" floating next to it. The Chaos Sorcerer will warp in and out. When attacking, a Bee will rise, turn color to blue or red, and then will cast either Gibarta or Rafoie (depending on the color of the Bee). If the Chaos Sorcerer is hurt, the Bee can turn green, and then the Chaos Sorcerer will cast Resta. I'm uncertain, but I believe the Chaos Sorcerer cannot do anything without a Bee. If a Bee is destroyed, the Chaos Sorcerer can regenerate it by warping out & back in. Rarely, the Chaos Sorcerer will drop a piece which can be turned into a C-Sorcerer's Staff.

Dark Belra

Giant iron golem. These are very slow moving but have two dangerous attacks. The first type of attack, the Dark Belra will shoot one of it's claws towards you, doing a fair amount of damage. The claw will damage everything in its path, including other monsters, so occasionally this can be used to your advantage. The second attack is for when you are close. It will strike with both arms for considerable damage, and a good chance of paralyzing you. If you must fight one with a melee weapon, run around behind it where it cannot hit you.

VH 1100HP?, 100% grants, 75% zonde, 25% barta, 0% foie

Dark Gunner

Laser equipped waterbugs. These skitter about quickly and randomly, but tend to end up in corners (moving in a completely random direction does have its drawbacks). They cannot be attacked physically unless they are frozen/paralyzed or when they stop to attack. They attack simultaneously by each popping up a little ball shaped turret and firing a beam shot. Dark Gunners mostly have green balls, but every shot cycle, one will have a red ball. Damaging this one when it stops to attack but before it shoots its laser will prevent all the Dark Gunners from attacking. The beams that the Dark Gunners shoot are capable of hitting other monsters. It is rumored that there is a rare variant called a Death Gunner, but I don't know anyone credible who has ever seen one.

Claw

Flying claws. These look a little like flying fish. They slowly drift around, and behave very much like Savage Wolves in that they're much more likely to attack if they get behind you. By themselves, they are not particularly dangerous, but in a large group, they can cause trouble by

preventing action. If you're in a room with a large number of Claws and Dimenians, you're best off getting behind the Claws, as it will make it difficult for the Dimenians to reach you. Hitting a Claw with a Heavy attack will knock it pretty far away. Due to their motion, the third hit of a three attack combo will usually miss, so I recommend using a two attack Normal -> Heavy combo against these.

Bulclaw and Bulk

Claw pack. These are four Claws held together by a Bulk, and appear sort of like an upside-down cup. A Bulclaw will attempt to grab and enclose you, whereupon it can't be hit easily with melee weapons. If it is permitted to remain locked onto a player, it can cause poison, and the four Claws will be released surrounding the player. The remainder of the Bulclaw is now just a Bulk, which most of the time will float around waiting to be killed. If you leave a Bulk and its released Claws alone for too long, they will gather together, the Bulk will glow purple, and it will one more be a Bulclaw with all four claws. If the Bulk separates again, it will be considerably tougher than the first time. Most attacks will kill a Bulk, but be careful. If you seriously damage a Bulk without killing it, it will head towards one player and explode, leaving that player with only a single remaining HP. Be very cautious if you've damaged the Bulclaw before it separates into Claws and Bulk -- a damaged Bulclaw will result in a damaged Bulk.

Delsaber

Ghostly dark knight. These are purple knights with large purple swords. In their left hands, they can raise a shield which makes them impervious to frontal melee attacks. While the shield is active, you must either attack with a Technique or from the side or back. Delsabers warp in when you enter their zone of space, and will disappear when you leave the room. When at a far distance, they will perform a leaping attack. Delsabers are very dangerous to players who have high enough defense to prevent being knocked down by their attack, as in each attack sequence, they can swing their swords for a three hit combo. After a Delsaber makes use of its shield for invulnerability, the fire in the left arm will go out. It won't be able to use the shield again until it hits a player with the left arm (single hit). Rarely, when killing one, you may find a Delsaber's right arm, from which Montague can make a Delsaber's Buster. It is also theoretically possible to get a left arm, from which Montague will make a Delsaber's Shield.

Dark Falz (Ruins Boss) (v1.2)

There are four phases for Dark Falz (you only need fight the first three in Normal). I'm going to go into some detail about how to fight Dark Falz since so many people don't seem to know what they are doing when it comes to him. Unfortunately it's difficult to tell how much damage you're doing to Dark Falz with Techniques due to some weird bug in display (the numbers sort of appear inside of his body). I'm doing a very loose estimation of DF's hit points and then working backwards to determine Technique damage by counting the number of times it takes to kill Falz with repetitions of only one type of Technique.

STAGE ONE is the spike field. You must destroy a number of spikes. The higher the difficulty level and number of players, the more spikes that must be destroyed. The safest way to navigate the spike field is to IMMEDIATELY run to the outside edge, and then maneuver your way around the edge. You can only hit spikes that are smoking purple, but the purple smoke changes from spike to spike, making low powered attacks almost worthless. If your Grants is strong enough to kill a spike in one casting,

I suggest you use it to clear these out, as you don't have to target for that spell. It's also possible to freeze or paralyze spikes, not that this is always a great idea. With a small amount of practice, it is very easy to avoid spikes, so I don't bother trying to Reverse people who die in this stage. Chances are they foolishly stayed in the center and died there. Going after them almost guarantees you'll get yourself in trouble. Any Force with decent level Grants should be able to take this stage by herself, but make sure you have Dimate or Trimate on a customize button in case you get surrounded by spikes. Having no attacks on your shifted customize buttons makes it much easier to handle this stage. According to an email I received from PumaTwins, the spikes are called Deravants.

STAGE TWO is the Dark Falz sitting on a three headed dragon. The three dragon heads spit out spikes, and are the target points for your attacks. Although using attack magic which requires targets don't appear to have any affect, the visuals are hidden in the center of Falz's body, and you will hear him grunt when you successfully attack. I find it easiest to beat this stage with a gun, preferably with a good dark %, but for Techniques, Grants is the most damaging. Many people have written to me to suggest making sure Rabarta is on one of the Customize buttons, and I agree, this makes life a lot easier even though Falz is immune to barta in this first form. Two blasts of good level Rabarta should destroy any spikes that are hovering about nearby, and can keep a big group of them from getting out of control. Grants is the most damaging Technique you can use against

STAGE THREE is Dark Falz sitting on a big blob of flesh (or something, I dunno). He moves around the outer edge of the field, mostly casting spells but occasionally taking a swipe with one of his big arms. The spells he makes use of are Rabarta, Rafoie, and Grants, all in massive quantity. By not standing directly in front of him (between his arms), there is less overlap from the Rabarta and Rafoie spells, meaning you can avoid taking quite so much damage, and in the case of Rabarta, have less chance of being frozen. Again, you can do the most damage with a gun, but Rabarta and Grants will both hurt him. For stages two and three, Forces playing in a team should shoot some, but mostly concentrate on keeping teammates healed and revived, as well as clear of status problems (freeze and slow).

STAGE FOUR clears the center of the field, where a floating Dark Falz dashes about doing his evil. It's never happened to me, but I've talked to players who complain that if they're dead in the center of the field when stage three ends and four begins, they will permanently lose their dropped weapon and Meseta. In stage four, Dark Falz has four attack patterns. First, he will dash around trying to chop players with a physical attack. It's not too hard to avoid this by sticking to the outer edge of the area, but it does quite a bit of damage if you get hit (to me, it does about 450 HP but my DFP isn't that great). Next, he will suck rocks up into the sky, fly up, and then shoot a swath of glowing boulders at one of the players. These can be avoided quite easily -- when you know it's about to happen, get in the middle of the ring and run in a curved path slightly turned inward to the center. If you get hit by one rock, you're going to get tagged by any others that are still coming. Third, while he's still flying around in the sky, Dark Falz will cast Grants on everyone. To me this does about 400HP of damage. This damage can be reduced with Resist/Saints units, but since you need to survive that arm swipe, you're better off equipping HP units instead. You can't avoid the Grants attack, so if you are routinely killed by this, don't bother trying to beat Dark Falz by yourself until have improved your attributes. Finally, after Dark Falz has taken some damage, he will start using players as a shield. When this happens he locks onto a player and starts sucking their soul. Player selection for this occurs in sequence, skipping over players who are dead when it is

their turn to be victim. On the radar, you will see Dark Falz's blob in the color of the player affected, and attached to that player with a wide colored bar. If you get close to Dark Falz, you will see that player's image standing in Dark Falz's mouth. During this time, Dark Falz can be hurt, but damage to him is also transferred to his victim. Do not attack Dark Falz while he's eating someone's soul! You will be hurting your teammate, and quite possibly might kill him. You can even hurt allies who have invulnerability from their MAGs! Unfortunately, because of lag, sometimes you won't see Dark Falz latched onto someone until after you start attacking, so be careful and pay close attention to his patterns. You can also almost always hear that he's attached to someone, even before you see the link on radar. Near the end of this attack, Dark Falz will attempt to Megid everyone (which in my experience always fails), will cast Grants on everyone, and then comes back down to start his attack pattern over again. In the fourth stage, Dark Falz can only be attacked with physical attacks when he appears "real" -- that is, a sort of solid purplish color. On the radar, his dot will look a dark tan, without flashing. Other times, such as when he's up in the sky, or when he's shifting colors, physical attacks will do no damage, but magical attacks will. Most of the time he is not vulnerable to physical attacks at all so he's annoying to fight. When he can be attacked physically, try to do so. Again, guns are the most effective way to attack, as with a good mechgun, you can do close to 2000 points of damage in one 9 round burst. At all other times, I keep casting Grants or Foie, neither of which do very much damage, but its better than nothing.

A Force on this final stage should do what she can -- keep players healed and revived to as great an extent as possible, and make sure teammates have Shifta cast on them during times when DF is vulnerable to physical attack (usually during first attack pattern and coming out of the fourth). By the time Dark Falz is trying to eat souls, he's going to be pretty weak, so be more vigilant with Reverser when he starts this up.

Some players either cannot comprehend how Dark Falz's soul suck transfers damage or they simply choose to ignore how this affects the other teammates. I strongly advise that if your party is weak and one of your teammates keeps hurting the rest of you, stop healing & reviving him, and kill him off when it's his turn to be the victim. People who attack Dark Falz while he's locked on to another teammate are a serious liability. Be careful when playing with unfamiliar people. Dark Falz is a favorite time for weapon thieves to strike.

Finally, especially if you are playing with android teammates, before you trigger the boss, drop mates and moon atomizers in ones and twos around the edge of the field. These can come in handy during the fourth stage, especially if an android is the strongest member of your team.

MISCELLANEOUS

Section ID (v1.1)

When you create a character, it is assigned one of ten Section IDs. This ID is based on the letters and characters in your name. Your Section ID affects your MAGs' evolutions, and the types of items that are likely to be found in games that you create.

For a Force, the best Section ID to have is Pinkal, since Technique discs are more commonly found with this.

To calculate, take the units digit of the sum of the ASCII values for the characters in the name, and then for that result:

Value	Section ID	Items Found
0	Viridia	frequent: shots, partisans rare: slicers
1	Greenill	frequent: rifles, daggers rare: swords
2	Skyly	frequent: swords, rifles rare: mechguns
3	Bluefill	frequent: partisans, rods rare: wands
4	Purplenum	frequent: mechgung, daggers rare: swords, partisans
5	Pinkal	frequent: canes, wands, technique disks rare: rifles supposedly only class that can find Hard Attack disks at level 15
6	Redria	frequent: armor, shields, slicers, shots rare: daggers
7	Oran	frequent: daggers, swords, wands rare: rods
8	Yellowboze	frequent: meseta distribution of items is equal
9	Whitill	frequent: slicers, mechguns rare: shots

Credit to NOFXXX for posting item frequencies to the GameFAQs bulletin board. Also take a look at Exploder's Section ID Items FAQ. It contains some misinformation, but overall is a good source to see what types of things you can expect.

Photon Blast Assist And Combos (v1.2)

When a teammate does a Photon Blast, you can hit the Y button to send 10 points of your PB power over to him for each time you press Y. This will make his Photon Blast stronger, and give him a little bit of PB meter after the blast is finished. Apparently doing the assist may also trigger a MAG assist from your own MAG.

If you do your own Photon Blast immediately after your teammate, it will be placed in queue as a combo, and the order will be shown by a number next to the player name. If you use the same type of PB, only one will occur but it will be stronger than normal. You can still assist if you combo your Photon Blast.

Although I don't recommend it, it's possible to save your Photon Blast "for later" without accidentally triggering it. When your MAG's PB meter hits 100, remove it, and while the yellow meter is clearing, hold the R (shift) button. This will cause the shift keys to remain blank, though you can equip another MAG and start building PB meter again. The only purpose I can see for this is to be able to keep a MAG charged while still being able to do PB assists. When you want to use the charged MAG's PB, equip it and immediately trigger the Photon Blast. Going to Pioneer 2 will clear the PB charge for all your MAGs.

A couple people who I consider to be credible have told me that you can do a double Photon Blast by charging the second MAG, doing the blast, quickly swapping to the first MAG while the PB is still happening, and then

immediately do another Photon Blast. I haven't been quick enough to do this myself, so consider this to be unverified.

Attacking Another Player (v1.2)

The Japanese version of PSO has a strange quirk in that it will allow one player to attack a teammate. This can be done by placing a support magic or Star Atomizer on a shifted customize button that shares the same button as an unshifted attack. (For example, R-Yellow has Star Atomizer, Yellow has Normal Attack.) Press the attack button and shift, and the attack will target the teammate. It's possible to knock someone down (or cause them to go into "block stun" if they have high enough evade), although it doesn't do any damage. For benign purposes, this can be used to build up another player's Photon Blast. For less benign purposes, this can be used to disrupt a player's ability to fight and escape from monsters.

The US version of PSO will allow you to target another player in a similar way but with a Technique. I've done this with Zonde and Grants. For example, Resta on shift-X, Zonde on X. Hold shift trigger to target teammate, release and press X, press shift trigger again. This will add maybe three or four to the victim's PB meter. Be careful when doing this. Apparently, targetting someone who is activating a Telepipe can cause the game to lock up.

If someone is hitting you this way, it is deliberate. I suggest you leave the game and play with someone else.

WARNING: If someone has magic enabled in lobby/Pioneer 2, they can cause your game to lock up ("FSOD") by targetting you on the Pioneer 2. The frozen screen problem may cause you to lose your character or any items in your inventory that aren't equipped. I have not experienced this myself, but several people have told me that it's happened to them.

Soul Eater Quest

WARNING, CONTAINS SPOILER INFORMATION ABOUT QUESTS

To get the Soul Eater, you must play through several quests.

First is the quest Dr. Osto's Research, during which you will join up with a HUnewearl named Sue. When she asks you your name, do not tell her. If you've already done this quest and told her your name, you will not be able to get the Soul Eater on this difficulty level, even if you replay the quest. Make sure you talk to all the NPC's in this quest.

Next is the quest Unsealed Door. Sue will show up here as well, make sure you talk to her, and complete the quest.

Next is Waterfall Tears which is actually an earlier Cave based quest, if you've already done this one, you can redo it after you complete every other available quest, thus making them all reselectable. Sue is hanging out aboard the Pioneer 2 during this quest. Talk to her here then go do the quest. After beating Anna (which completes the quest), continue onward, and find and defeat Kireek. You will be able to see him on the Area Map.

After doing Waterfall Tears you will unlock Black Paper. Kireek is hanging out in Cave 2, find and defeat him here, then complete the quest.

Finally, do the quest From The Depths, which is the last available quest in the game. After completing it, Ash will leave you. Go back to Ruins 2 and

find Kireek. After beating him you will automatically take the Soul Eater.

Frying Pan Quest

WARNING, CONTAINS SPOILER INFORMATION ABOUT QUESTS

This isn't a great weapon, but if you want it, start in the quest Secret Delivery. Answer "!!" to the man outside of the Hunter's Guild who talks about the "ultimate weapon". You will get a WEAPONS badge. Complete the quest. You will find the other WEAPONS members aboard Pioneer 2 in the quests Value Of Money, Gran Squall, Claiming A Stake and Lost Bride. In this last one, the correct response is "Enthusiasm". After talking to the WEAPONS member, you must complete the quest. Once you've collected all the badges, do the quest Secret Delivery a second time. Talk to the original WEAPONS member, who tells you to talk to the big boss. Talk to the woman outside of the Shops and you will get the Frying Pan.

Eggblaster? (v1.2)

Oops, Celes Chere wrote to tell me that this is "Eggblaster" not "Eggbeater" :)

According to Lord Galacian from the GameFAQs PSO message board, to get the Eggblaster gun you will need a Sonic Adventure save with all emblems, and a Sonic Adventure 2 Demo save with an S Class ranking.

Judging from the amount of damage I see being done with the Eggblaster, it's not really that great, even when ground to +99.

I've been told all Eggblasters (and fwiw, also "Nei's Claws" and "Sonic Knuckles") are now considered to be illegal items and will cause you to be booted off the servers immediately. Can anyone confirm?

Backing Up Your Character Data

PSO creates a file on your memory card named "PSO_____SYS". This contains your character data. You cannot copy this with the Dreamcast's built in tool, but you can make a backup of it (and for that matter, any other "uncopyable" file) by using the Planet Web Browser v2.0 and emailing the file to yourself as an attachment.

In an attempt to stop item cloners, Sega has recently changed their server software to no longer permit users to revert to an old backup file. So if you play online, your old backup will probably no longer work.

Why make a backup? Because PSO is buggy, and if there is a network problem while you are performing some action that affects the memory card (using the Check Room, your Item inventory, or changing your Equiped items), the game may lock up, and you can lose your items and even your character.

You can also use the backup as a storage method to let you save multiple characters even if you have only one VMU.

If you don't have an email account that properly handles attachments, you can also make a backup through Booyaka.com.

WARNING: According to GODFREE from PSO World, Planet Web Browser v2.6 occasionally flashes the DC internal memory, and thus can wipe out the PSO registration info. You will have to reregister your PSO, with a new serial number and key, which you can obtain by calling 1-800-USA-SEGA.

Unfortunately, your saved characters will be lost.

Secret Costume Colors

There are two additional secret costumes colors for each class which can be unlocked by using a special code for the character name. From MeTh0DiX on the GameFAQs message board comes a universal code: SHUGRADJYT

Problems Using Moon Atomizers (v1.1)

Owners of imported Dreamcasts who are playing the US PSO (or as I've talked to, owners of a European Dreamcast who have imported a US PSO) may find they are unable to use Moon Atomizers, and Star Atomizers and support Techniques will not affect teammates. In addition, Guild Cards may not be accepted properly from other players.

This happens when you boot using the Utopia Boot Loader. Using the Action Replay demo CD (available free from some UK magazines), CDX (for Japanese DC), or some "mod chips" will permit Moon Atomizers to work correctly.

Thieves

This gets much more discussion than it warrants.

When you die, you will drop the weapon you have equipped and any Meseta that you are carrying. Any other player can pick these up. Most PSO players have respect for other people and won't take your things on purpose, and will give them back if they picked them up by accident. However, there are some people who will steal your weapon if you die, or worse, will attempt to be disruptive to you in order to try to take your weapon. (It doesn't even have to be a good weapon, there are some people who simply want to steal from you to be annoying.) If you have something that you really don't want to lose, don't equip it if you think you might die and don't trust the people you're playing with.

The people who are most likely to be thieves are those who play in an anti-social manner. The most common examples: constantly putting up garbage messages during fights (attempting to obscure your vision so you will die). Triggering a boss pad before all team members are aboard. Running off to pick up treasure and taking everything while leaving you to fight. Running straight through you while pulling a train of monsters. Even if the people who do this aren't trying to steal from you, playing with unpleasant people isn't a whole lot of fun, and I suggest you leave the game and play with someone else.

Trading guild cards immediately on entering a game will usually cut down the chances of negative behavior -- if people know they can be tracked (and a guild card lets you do this even if they change characters), they are less likely to act like jerks. While it's true that this can also let some losers stalk you, it's easy to ignore these fools. I am unwilling to play with anyone who is unwilling to trade guild cards.

Again, the majority of PSO players are decent people. Use a little caution, but don't let fear of thieves or a bad experience with a thief ruin your enjoyment of the game. And remember, it's just a game -- you haven't lost anything real.

Cheating (v1.1)

There are two common ways to cheat.

Cloning items used to be easily done by all users through data file duplication. Make a backup copy, drop off items in a friend's game, restore the backup, and you've doubled your items. You can still clone or hack an item with a Gameshark, or you can do what most people do and let someone else do it for you. Trading for or otherwise taking a high powered, very rare weapon is cheating: you're obtaining something you didn't earn. I have less respect for people who trade for their cloned and hacked crap than for the ones who are making all the duplicates that have flooded the game. People who want to cheat but can't do it for themselves are just stupid.

Alteration of the game engine, via Gameshark codes, is the other method. There are Gameshark codes to do quick level ups; quick MAG raising; break the MAG level limit (the source of all the "level 999" MAGs); prevent the HP, TP, and PB gauges from decreasing; equip any item; and one hit kills.

Normally, I'm in favor of allowing players to cheat at games. Anyone who has purchased a game can decide how they want to play. Even if they're doing something that would devalue the game to me, I can still play how I want.

Unfortunately, since much of the enjoyment of PSO comes from playing with other people, if you are playing with a cheater, their actions do affect you. The most obvious form of cheating, that of playing with hacked and cloned items, can greatly unbalance the game. All those very low level characters with the Spread Needles and a hacked Opa Opa MAG are ruining the game when they join a team with other new players. They're preventing other players from learning how to play, and worse, they're ruining the fun for everyone else by killing all the monsters before anyone else can even touch them. Some cheaters rationalize this dislike of cheating as "player hating", which is ludicrous. There is no skill involved in trading for and then using an unearned, overpowered weapon.

I don't recommend surprising cheaters by taking their weapons when they die. Stealing is stealing, and it's an abuse of someone else's trust. If someone's choice of weapon bothers you, ask that person to change their equipment.

A warning to cheaters: the same server patch that will prevent you from using an old backup will also prevent save files containing some hacked items. The hacked MAGs seem to be ok, but stuff like the hacked God/Battle (which appears to everyone else to be a Priest/Mind) are not.

Player Killing (v1.2)

For a couple weeks, there had been a huge problem with a bug exploit allowing one play to kill another. This made use of a hacked Devil/Technique-- item which caused a player's Technique levels to be a negative number. When a player equipped with this hacked unit casted Resta, it would take HP away from other teammates, instead of adding them. This would usually result in the teammates' death.

Users who attempt to equip or possess a Devil/Technique-- are now disconnected immediately from Sega's servers.

There are also rumors that it is possible to kill players with a physical attack through a Gameshark code, or via hitting them with Megid through the player targeting glitch. As far as I know, both of these rumors are false.

Beware, getting hit by a Technique aboard Pioneer 2 or while going into a Telepipe may cause your game to lock up. Also, it is rumored that the Resta PK is possible through use of a Gameshark code used to modify a MAG's stats to negative numbers, or by modifying a user's Technique level directly to a negative number.

Sega's Attempts To Prevent Cheating (v1.1)

Because of the large number of cheaters that infest PSO, Sega's attempted to do a few things to get things under control. To try to stop duping, Sega no longer permits character backups to work. Now, to stop hacked items, Sega's servers check for known "hacked" items and will immediately disconnect a player who attempts to use one.

However, there is still no way to stop item duping or character stats inflation that are done offline. (For example, the Gameshark hack to pump XP per monster killed will allow a user to almost instantly create a very high level character -- Sega has no ability to detect or prevent this type of falsely generated character from being used.)

Walking Through Closed Doors (v1.1)

A whole lot of people have written asking if I could explain how to do this. It's fairly simple, but please do not abuse this -- I recommend walking through closed doors only when you're the sole player in an online game, and you need to open a locked door that needs people to stand on switches.

First, you must have a melee weapon equipped or no weapon at all. You do not have to have a double saber, and you do not have to unequip your weapon unless that weapon is a gun or throwing knife. Now, walk to the edge of the door. Make note of where your shadow is, and try to get it as far to the edge of the door as you can. Turn slightly away from the door, and do a Normal -> Normal -> Normal combo. You should notice that your shadow has scooted back a little, and probably away from the edge of the door. Maneuver yourself to the edge, and repeat. You'll keep going backwards into the door a little at a time, until you're all the way through.

In the Ruins, you can walk through beam fences by going through a post at the end of the beam (meaning, the post can't be in the middle of the fence). I've heard a few people claim that they can move through any of the fences without having to do the backwards-walk, but no one has been able to demonstrate this to me.

Escaping the Ruins' "Jar" Trap (v1.1)

If you get caught and have no one available to free you, go the menu system and drop an item. You can then walk out of the trap, though you cannot perform any actions until the jar explodes, and if you remain too close to the jar, as usual, you will sustain damage. This is more useful in online play, since offline, these traps explode very quickly. Thanks to Gen2000 from the GameFAQs bulletin board for this one.

Picture Snapshot (v1.1)

Please take a look at pso.donut.dhs.org. The basic steps: place a controller in slot d, and a VMU with 195 free blocks in the second slot of the controller. Press A and Start for a closeup of the center of the screen, Press X and Start for a picture of the full screen. The image will be saved to a file "PSO_____IMG" which is apparently a 16 bit uncompressed

bitmap, at 256x192 resolution. Pso.donut.dhs.org has an online conversion utility that will turn the image into a jpeg.

Change To Another Player's Camera View (v1.2)

Have a second controller plugged in (I use the second controller port), hold the D-Pad to the left or right, and while holding the D-Pad, press the Left and Right triggers at the same time. Your view will change to the perspective of another player's. You must be in the same area as another player for this to work. You can return to your own view by repeating this until the camera cycles back to you.

Kind of neat, but in my opinion, useless. Thanks to Switchblade for telling me about this one.

Oh, if you want to see something very trippy, watch someone as they go through a teleporter :)

Other Hidden Quests (v1.1)

WARNING, CONTAINS SPOILER INFORMATION ABOUT QUESTS

It is possible that there are some other hidden quests in the game. Talking to the ranger aboard Pioneer 2 and to Elenor in the Magnitude of Metal offline quest both give event chimes, although nothing seems to come of it.

Also, telling Sue your name in the Dr. Osto's Research quest leads to another set of dialogue with her and Bernie. Nothing seems to come of this either.

Anyone with information about concluding either of these, please write to me.

Equipping Any Weapon (v1.2)

There is no such unit as "GOD/EQUIP", or at least not that anyone has ever found.

That being said, it is possible to equip any weapon, aside from using a cheat loader.

Boy did I screw up the instructions for this in the revision 1.1 of the Guide. Sorry about that. Here's how it should be done:

First, place a weapon that you can equip above the weapon that you want to equip but cannot. (For example, if you are a Force, sort your items so that there is a Sword underneath a Cane.) Go to the Item list, and press A, down on the D-Pad, and A again, very fast, but not simultaneously. Be prepared to waste a lot of time on this, but it does work.

A couple people have written to me saying that Artiic is full of beans and one of the worst trolls on the GameFAQs bb. Yes, I know this, which is why I took the time to verify that it works myself before including it here. It does work, but it is hard as heck to do -- I've only gotten it to work once after literally weeks of trying, although a few other people on the GameFAQs bulletin board claimed it only took them about 45 minutes to get it done. Even though the game allows you to do this without any external cheat loader, I do consider this to be a form of cheating!

Credit to Artiic for posting about this on the GameFAQs bulletin board.

Someone asked me if the game can be saved like this. I don't know.

Fooling The Swear Filter (v1.2)

You can create a shortcut with your language setting on Japanese. After typing a Roman letter, press the spacebar twice. The text will appear larger than normal, and the swear filter will miss whatever juvenile comment you want to make (you can also toggle the key palette to the larger letters if you don't have a keyboard).

Credit to Cloud Playa for posting this on the GameFAQs bulletin board.

Acknowledgements, Credits, And Other Useful Reading Material (v1.2)

The official Sega of America site for PSO (<http://score.sega.com/games/phantasystaronline/pc/index.html>) is quite useless, but it is an "official" Sega site. Like that's supposed to mean anything, but here it is anyway.

Sonic Team (<http://www.sonicteam.com>) are the developers of PSO and PSO v2. All the neat stuff for PSO is in the Japanese language section. Of primary interest (unless you can read Japanese I suppose) are the pictures of v2. I've been told there's also a snapshot conversion utility but I haven't looked around for it.

PSO Jazz's MAG section (http://www.jeha.org/pso/mag/dic_e.html) is a great reference. Not only do you get information on how MAG's evolve and what they will do, but you also get pictures.

Another really nice MAG guide is the Scene51.com MAG Database (<http://www.scene51.com/mags.htm>). This is a good visual summary of MAGs and how to raise them.

PSO World (<http://tomeeboy.com/pso>) has a pretty good listing of rare items, with pictures. It's a good way to check out what some of the more esoteric items are, so you'll have an idea of what it would be useful to find, and you'll have some idea what the latest overpowered fad is when the cloners get their hands on it.

GameFAQs.com (<http://www.gamefaqs.com>) is probably the overall best source of game related information available on the net. Worth taking a look at there are NoZedivel3's MAG FAQ, Khaotic's Item List, and Miyuu's Section ID FAQ. There are also very active message boards there for general discussion of PSO and for trading items.

pso@ghoul.net (<http://www.ghoul.net/pso>) will always have the latest version of this Guide, and also has a convenient Section ID calculator written in QuickBASIC. (Ok maybe it's not that convenient.)

Booyaka (<http://www.booyaka.com/games/vmu>) is probably the best source for Dreamcast VMU saves available. For PSO, there's currently a Downloaded Quest available there called "A Letter From Lionel".

PSO Snapshot Transfer (<http://pso.donut.dhs.org>) will automatically convert your PSO snapshot to a jpeg.

Game Software Code Creators Club (specificly,

<http://www.cmgsgccc.com/dc/ps0.shtml>) has all the codes you need to abuse the hell out of PSO.

Getting PSO To Work With The BBA

(http://www.daytonsmisc.com/article14_default.htm) is a very detailed explanation of how to get the US release of PSO to work with a Broad Band Adapter.

Credit to the following GameFAQs message board members for supplying information about max base stats -- blame them if these are wrong :)

Aenya, Arleas, Aurora Revolution, AzNGamer, dvdashot, faceless, FireX, Hylozoist, Legionnare, Mark, pipsqueak, and plageron.

Thanks to the following who have written with corrections, suggestions, or just to say hi: Ian M, Max Fuse, EV-9|)9.3, Archon Shiva, PumaTwins, SHORT, Tom C, Gary C, Sebas, Atwight G, Josh S, Josh D, Peter J, Henry H, Answer42, Kelvin L, Celes Chere, ikem o, Warpath :P, Lilibat, Gouki, Jason V, Shoku, John-Micheal M, SykusStar, CV, Joe L, Halfyhatr, Rubblish, Rich C, Reno Rude, Adam N, and Tim.

Very special thanks to the following players, most of whom I have spent quite a bit of time playing with, and all of whom are good teammates. (If I missed your name, my apologies. I accidentally overwrote my guild card data file with that of a new character's.)

Bob and Zed, my RAcast buddies with whom I've spent more time on PSO than with any other players, combined.

Bull, RAmar

D8Vid and JakeZero, RAmar and HUmar

Helena Sue, HUnewearl, good friend and inveterate MAG feeder

LLDOWSER, HUmar

Magdalena-69, FOnewearl, and proof that I'm not the only one who tries to play a Force "the right way".

Warpath, RAmar, who has demonstrated that it's possible to own a Spread Needle without abusing it.

Revision History & Future Updates

v1.2 24-Apr-2001

Some grammar corrections (if you see any other errors, please let me know), more on how to fight with melee weapons, various corrections God/Battle, a correction to the contradictory language of the "Equip Any Weapon" section in miscellaneous, fixed up the Bestiary with accurate HP, other nonsense. Future revisions will include corrections (if necessary), monster DFP's (if I feel like it), and an improvement on the Megid success rating as I gather more statistical information on this.

v1.1 5-Apr-2001

Wow, a whole lot of people wrote to me with corrections and suggestions. So here's version 1.1. Also included are some more odd things about the game.

To make the new stuff easier to find, I've placed a version number next to the topic header where changes have been made. For the next revision, I'd like to add a "Megid success rating" to the Bestiary for the monsters on Very Hard.

v1.0 23-Mar-2001 first and most likely last version.

The Bestiary section on the Mine is missing a little information., and in

the far, far, future, I may play through Normal and Hard again with a new character to expand the Bestiary, but considering how much time it took me to finish the section on Very Hard, this is unlikely. Otherwise I think this is pretty much complete.

Suggestions, corrections and comments are welcome. Send via email to pso@ghoul.net.

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