

Tales of Symphonia Strategy/Orders FAQ

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Tales of Symphonia
Strategy / Orders FAQ

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1 - Introduction

Not sure what that "Strategy" option in your menu does? The standard Orders that the game starts you with just not working well enough when it's time to get down and dirty? Then you're in the right place. This is here to help those that just don't manage to 'get' the Strategy options. And since this is here for that reason, and not for me to babble, let's get down to it!

2 - What does the Strategy menu do?

Put simply, the Strategy menu lets you control how the computer-controlled members of your party fight. Changing different options in the character's Strategy menu makes them fight in different ways. There are a lot of options, which means Tales of Symphonia gives you an amazing amount of control over how the characters behave in battle.

Each character has three options you can set in the Strategy menu. The first, "Action", affects which enemies your party will focus on attacking. The second, "Skills/Magic", affects what types of techs your characters use, and how often

they use them. The final option, "Position", effects how close to the action your characters will get.

Just be careful how you combine your settings--it's useless to set a character like Genis to "Do Not Use" his magic and put his position at "L-Range Magic". He'll sit in the back and do absolutely nothing!

3 - Strategy List

The entries will appear in the following format:

Name: Setting name.

Description: In-game description.

Notes: My personal notes on the setting.

I'll list the skills in the order they appear in your menu, starting with Action, then Skills/Magic, and finally Position.

Action

Name: Attack Freely

Description: Attack the enemy based upon the character's own thought patterns.

Notes: The standard option, and usually alright. Characters all have different ideas about which enemies are more important to take down, so you might not get backup when you need it if this option is set.

Name: Attack Close

Description: Attack the closest enemy.

Notes: Largely useless. The closest enemies are almost never the most dangerous ones.

Name: Attack Far

Description: Attack the farthest enemy.

Notes: Potentially useful if you want your spellcasters to attack enemies in the back of enemy formations, but I've never found a serious use for it.

Name: Attack Same

Description: Attack the same enemy as the player.

Notes: One of the most useful settings of all, and one you'll be using in every boss battle, especially multiple bosses and bosses with annoying sidekicks.

Name: Scatter

Description: Party members fight different enemies.

Notes: Never found a real use for this setting. It's usually safer and quicker to have one or more people team up on an enemy to reduce numbers than to split your focus amongst multiple enemies.

Name: Aim High

Description: Attack priority given to enemies in the air.

Notes: Another setting I find marginally useful at best. Aerial enemies are usually the weakest, and their attacks tend to be easy to dodge.

Name: Block Magic

Description: Attack priority given to enemies that use magic.

Notes: This one can serve a real purpose. Magic is as deadly to you as it is to your enemies, and Block Magic will ensure that the character goes out of his way to interrupt enemy spellcasters.

Name: Reduce

Description: Attack priority given to enemies that are receiving the most damage.

Notes: While I find Attack Same to be more effective and simpler to control, Reduce will make the character focus on taking out enemies already receiving heavy damage, eliminating them quicker.

Name: Protect Friend

Description: Attack priority given to enemies targetting member with lowest HP.

Notes: Useful when a character is about to croak. Enemies have a knack for concentrating on the character that is hitting them the most, and this setting can draw attention away from a failing melee character or a caster that got too close to the fight.

Skills/Magic

Name: Use Skills Freely

Description: Use skills and magic based upon the character's own thought patterns.

Notes: While good enough to take on normal enemies and most bosses, characters have a tendency to burn through all their TP very quickly, leaving you with little to work with when the boss finally shows up.

Name: At Once

Description: Use attack-based skills and magic without any regards to TP.

Notes: With this, characters focus on one thing, and one thing only--dealing as much damage is as little time as possible. Save this for boss battles, as you'll quickly notice your dropping TP bars.

Name: Keep Reserve

Description: Stop using skills or magic once TP is below 25%.

Notes: Useful for melee characters against normal enemies. Unlike spellcasters they restore HP while fighting by scoring normal hits, so they don't need as large a store, though 25% is still fairly low for big fights.

Name: Retain

Description: Stop using skills or magic once TP is below 50%.

Notes: Quite a bit more useful than Keep Reserve. Standard enemies don't need much to go down, so I'd say use this setting for melee fighters, until you reach the boss. Passable for spellcasters, but 50% is fairly low when you might require almost constant healing and spell damage.

Name: Save

Description: Stop using skills or magic once TP is below 75%.

Notes: My personal favorite setting for spellcasters, this will ensure you have a solid supply of TP when it comes time to fight bosses.

Name: Do Not Use

Description: No not use skills or magic.

Notes: Honestly never found a use for it. The TP-reserving settings are more than enough to satisfy TP requirements. Possibly useful if you want enemies to survive longer to get Tech-usage up on rarely used moves to learn new ones.

Name: Moderation

Description: Use skills or magic less frequently once TP is below 50%.

Notes: Not very useful. Between the TP-reserving settings and cooking, you should always have enough TP on hand to finish off normal enemies before you reach your lower TP limit and tech usage stops.

Name: Heal

Description: When a party member's HP decreases, priority is given to healing.

Notes: A very useful setting. Causes your healers to focus on healing, which can be a real life-saver. Switch to this setting if you find yourself in a near-death situation.

Name: Support

Description: Priority is given to support skills and magic.

Notes: Only Raine gets this setting, and man does it ever work! You should have her set to this almost constantly. She focuses on raising stats and healing, but will still fling her share of Photon and Ray spells in the fight.

Position

Name: Move Freely

Description: Move based upon character's position and thought patterns.

Notes: Fine for normal battles. Might want to change it for boss fights or certain random encounters.

Name: Frontlines

Description: Approach enemies as much as possible and mainly use short-range attacks.

Notes: Very good for melee characters, especially in boss fights. In true Lloyd fashion, a character set to this will run directly up to the enemy and start pummeling at close range. Use to tie up bosses to keep them away from spell-casters.

Name: Don't Persue

Description: Move while keeping a distance from the enemy.

Notes: Not very useful. Possibly useful for Colette due to her unusual style of fighting. Try it out and see if it works for you.

Name: Hold Position

Description: Stay at that position and no not attack.

Notes: For serious battle? Useless. While trying to use techs with a certain character as many times as possible, it's wonderful. Have the others stand still while you handle the entire battle with nothing but your techs. Great while trying to learn higher-level techs.

Name: L-Range Skills

Description: Mainly use long-range skill attacks.

Notes: Potentially useful under certain circumstances. If you REALLY need to Demon Fang and Para Ball something to death, you can use this.

Name: L-Range Magic

Description: Mainly use long-range magic.

Notes: Genis and Raine should ALWAYS be set to this. Zelos and Kratos can be set to it as well, if you really need the power of a second elemental spell-caster.

Name: Skills/Magic

Description: Do not use normal attacks and only use skills or magic.

Notes: Useful while trying to have characters get tech usage up to learn new skills. Otherwise, spellcasters won't be able to protect themselves at all if an enemy slips by or teleports to them.

4 - Strategies by Character

Not all of the Strategy settings are available for every character. After all, characters with no healing spells hardly have need of a "Heal" strategy. I'll list the settings available to each character. Reference above to see what they do--or just look at your game.

Lloyd

Action	Skills/Magic	Position
Attack Freely	Use Skills Freely	Move Freely
Attack Close	At Once	Frontlines
Attack Far	Keep Reserve	Don't Pursue
Attack Same	Retain	Hold Position
Scatter	Save	L-Range Skills
Aim High	Do Not Use	Skills/Magic
Block Magic	Moderation	
Reduce		
Protect Friend		

Genis

Action	Skills/Magic	Position
Attack Freely	Use Skills Freely	Move Freely
Attack Close	At Once	Frontlines
Attack Far	Keep Reserve	Don't Pursue
Attack Same	Retain	Hold Position
Scatter	Save	L-Range Magic
Aim High	Do Not Use	
Block Magic	Moderation	
Reduce		
Protect Friend		

Colette

Action	Skills/Magic	Position
Attack Freely	Use Skills Freely	Move Freely
Attack Close	At Once	Frontlines
Attack Far	Keep Reserve	Don't Pursue
Attack Same	Retain	Hold Position
Scatter	Save	L-Range Skills
Aim High	Do Not Use	L-Range Magic
Block Magic	Moderation	Skills/Magic
Reduce		
Protect Friend		

Kratos

Action	Skills/Magic	Position
Attack Freely	Use Skills Freely	Move Freely
Attack Close	At Once	Frontlines
Attack Far	Keep Reserve	Don't Pursue
Attack Same	Retain	Hold Position
Scatter	Save	L-Range Skills
Aim High	Do Not Use	L-Range Magic
Block Magic	Moderation	Skills/Magic
Reduce	Heal	
Protect Friend		

Raine

Action	Skills/Magic	Position
Attack Freely	Use Skills Freely	Move Freely
Attack Close	At Once	Frontlines
Attack Far	Keep Reserve	Don't Pursue
Attack Same	Retain	Hold Position
Scatter	Save	L-Range Magic
Aim High	Do Not Use	
Block Magic	Moderation	
Reduce	Heal	
Protect Friend	Support	

Sheena

Action	Skills/Magic	Position
Attack Freely	Use Skills Freely	Move Freely
Attack Close	At Once	Frontlines
Attack Far	Keep Reserve	Don't Pursue
Attack Same	Retain	Hold Position
Scatter	Save	L-Range Magic
Aim High	Do Not Use	Skills/Magic
Block Magic	Moderation	
Reduce		
Protect Friend		

Zelos

Action	Skills/Magic	Position
Attack Freely	Use Skills Freely	Move Freely
Attack Close	At Once	Frontlines
Attack Far	Keep Reserve	Don't Pursue
Attack Same	Retain	Hold Position
Scatter	Save	L-Range Skills
Aim High	Do Not Use	L-Range Magic
Block Magic	Moderation	Skills/Magic
Reduce	Heal	
Protect Friend		

Presea

Action	Skills/Magic	Position
Attack Freely	Use Skills Freely	Move Freely
Attack Close	At Once	Frontlines
Attack Far	Keep Reserve	Don't Pursue
Attack Same	Retain	Hold Position
Scatter	Save	Skills/Magic
Aim High	Do Not Use	
Block Magic	Moderation	
Reduce		
Protect Friend		

Regal

Action	Skills/Magic	Position
Attack Freely	Use Skills Freely	Move Freely
Attack Close	At Once	Frontlines
Attack Far	Keep Reserve	Don't Pursue
Attack Same	Retain	Hold Position
Scatter	Save	Skills/Magic
Aim High	Do Not Use	
Block Magic	Moderation	
Reduce	Heal	
Protect Friend		

5 - What are Orders?

So, what's an Order exactly? It's precisely what it sounds like! To put it simply, which is the only way it needs to be put, an Order is a command you give to your computer-controlled allies, who follow the order immediately. In Tales of Symphonia, Orders are used to instantly change the Strategy settings of ALL your computer-controlled party members, making switching battle tactics as simple as pressing the D+Pad.

You can store up to three orders (technically four, if you consider your default Strategy settings as a fourth order), set to the D+Pad. Pressing Left, Up, or Right will instantly initiate that order, changing the Strategy settings of your characters. You can press Down to "Cancel Orders", returning your characters to the default settings. All battles start with the default settings, however in the second or two that you're in the battle screen before you're able to move, you can initiate the Order, making sure it's followed from the very beginning of the battle.

The game starts you off with three Orders already in place. Pressing Left will give you Reserve, which is used for normal battles. Up gives you the Guard Order, which makes healers heal, and your other characters focus on attacking an enemy that's focusing on your weakest character to try and drag them away. Right gives the All Out Order, which makes your characters throw caution (and TP) to the wind, and focus on doing as much damage as possible, while reducing enemy numbers as quickly as possible.

It's simple enough to change Orders to whatever you want. Simply go into the Strategy menu and press Y. You can now change the settings of all three orders, as well as change their names to better fit the new orders.

6 - Useful Orders

The Orders that come with the game are fairly good. They'll get you through most of the game, possibly even all of it. However, sometimes it's simply not enough to tackle the bigger, meaner bosses of the game. I'm going to list the Orders I used to get through the game--I set these the moment I could open my menu (and set the Strategies for new party members as they joined), and the setup has yet to fail me. From your humble beginnings, trying to sneak into Martel Temple, to taking on Mithos in the final chambers of Dharris-Kharlon, this setup should see you through.

D+Pad Setting: Left

Name: Wimps..

Purpose: Normal battles.

Notes: I use this Order for most battles. It proves to be effective for all but the strongest of random encounters, and saves your TP for when you need it most--boss fights.

Settings:

Lloyd:	Genis:	Colette:
Attack Freely	Attack Freely	Attack Freely
Retain	Save	Save
Move Freely	L-Range Magic	Move Freely

Kratos:	Raine:	Sheena:
Attack Freely	Attack Freely	Attack Freely
Retain	Support	Retain
Move Freely	L-Range Magic	Move Freely

Zelos:	Presea:	Regal:
Attack Freely	Attack Freely	Attack Freely
Retain	Retain	Retain
Move Freely	Move Freely	Move Freely

D+Pad Setting: Up

Name: HELP!

Purpose: Emergency Healing.

Notes: This setting is used when a fight doesn't go your way. Party members with healing spells will focus on using them, while your other characters will rush to the aid of the character with the lowest HP, hopefully saving them from being KO'ed and wasting the time and resources needed to use a Life Bottle or cast Ressurrection.

Settings:

Lloyd:	Genis:	Colette:
Protect Friend	Protect Friend	Protect Friend
At Once	At Once	At Once
Frontlines	L-Range Magic	Move Freely

Kratos:	Raine:	Sheena:
Protect Friend	Protect Friend	Protect Friend
Heal	Heal	At Once
L-Range Magic	L-Range Magic	Frontlines

Zelos:	Presea:	Regal:
Protect Friend	Protect Friend	Protect Friend
Heal	At Once	Heal
L-Range Magic	Frontlines	Frontlines

D+Pad Setting: Right

Name: DIE!

Purpose: Boss battles.

Notes: The ultimate offense. Characters focus on dealing as much damage as possible, ignoring TP consumption. Raine focuses on boosting the stats of your party, but she and other characters with healing spells can be counted on to heal when needed (usually--if things get hairy, switch to the HELP! Order).

Settings:

Lloyd:	Genis:	Colette:
Attack Same	Attack Same	Attack Same
At Once	At Once	At Once
Frontlines	L-Range Magic	Move Freely

Kratos:	Raine:	Sheena:
Attack Same	Attack Same	Attack Same
At Once	Support	At Once
Frontlines	L-Range Magic	Frontlines

Zelos:	Presea:	Regal:
Attack Same	Attack Same	Attack Same
At Once	At Once	At Once
Frontlines	Frontlines	Frontlines

If you have Orders you've found useful, and would like them to appear in this guide so they may prove useful to other people as well, send an email with the name you would list to be listed as in the credits, the name of the order, the purpose it serves, notes about what it does, and the Strategy settings for all 9 characters to <sara.riane@gmail.com>. Good Orders will be added to the guide at the next update, with full credit given.

7 - Copyright/Disclaimer

Tales of Symphonia is owned and copyrighted by Namco. While I'm sure the rest of us would love to say we owned it, they do.

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