

Mega Man III Walkthrough

by honestgamer

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Mega Man 3
Complete Walkthrough
Version 1.0
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After the success that was Mega Man 2, Capcom must have had a hard time deciding where to go next with the blossoming franchise. In the end, they chose the route taken with Mega Man 3. Everything is bigger, more challenging, and more complex. Whether or not you think it's better than its predecessors, the game has a huge variety of things to offer, making it a terrific subject for a walkthrough by yours truly. Just do yourself a favor and consult it only when necessary; you'll enjoy the game more that way.

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The Basics
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The NES Mega Man titles are famous for allowing you to tackle the first stages in any order you like, and that's the case once more. Though you have complete freedom for the first eight stages, and for various portions beyond, I recommend that you follow the order outlined in this walkthrough for the highest success rate. Some of the monsters pack quite a punch, and you'll want to be ready.

Since Mega Man 2, the blue bomber has acquired a new bag of tricks. The first of these is the ability to slide. If you press and hold 'down' on the controller while jumping, he'll slide instead of jumping. If you have a sticky controller like me, sometimes you'll slide right into pits without even knowing you were pressing the 'down' button. Be careful.

The item system has also changed slightly. You now have a robotic canine as a companion. His name is Rush, and he can change between a springboard, a submarine, and even a jet. As you might expect, the last two of these abilities is unlocked when you defeat various robot masters.

Finally, an added four stages stand between the eight robot masters and Dr. Wily's castle. These are remixes of stages that already are familiar to you, but they're much tougher. You get to fight modified clones of the eight robots from Mega Man 2 now.

That's about all you need to know for the basics, but you may also be interested to hear that this game will let you cheat like crazy.

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The Cheats
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Unlike Mega Man 2, the third outing for everyone's favorite blue bomber is loaded with different cheats you may use to make things simpler. It's even possible to work around with the password system so that you can create the password that pleases you from scratch. Look elsewhere for that, but here's

a quick briefing of the cheats you may find appealing (for the best experience, of course, don't use any cheats).

High jumps

Mega Man can jump the height of the screen if you hold 'right' on the second controller. Use this trick also to jump out of bottomless pits.

Freeze enemies

If you hold 'up' and 'A' on the second controller, many larger enemies will be frozen. So will Mega Man, but you can jump left or right, and also fire the arm cannon. This does not work on Magnet Man.

Invincibility

This trick is difficult to pull off, but possible. Start by working through a level to an area where there are lots of enemies near pits. Now, get knocked by an enemy so that you flash as you fall back into a pit. Just before Mega Man's death is finalized, as the life gauge empties, quickly press and hold 'right' on the second controller. Timing is tricky, but if you did it right you will be able to jump back out of the pit and will be impervious to enemy attacks until you pick up an item that refills a portion of your life meter. I believe spikes may still harm you.

Easy Energy Tanks

Starting a new game and intimidated by how powerful the robots are? Just enter a red dot in the password grid under A-6 and you'll start with nine energy tanks. Those should help you tackle anything the robot masters throw your way!

Good with the cheats? Glad to hear it! Let's get going on the actual game.

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Top Man

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Top Man's domain appears to be nestled in some sort of toy factory, so far as I can tell. This is a great level to serve as your introduction to Mega Man 3, and embodies all that makes the game great.

Begin by heading to the right. Here, enemies materialize out of thin air. Wait for the two halves to fly together and for the newly-constructed robots to glide toward you, then take them out with single shots from your arm cannon. Another threat in this area comes in the form of mechanical rabbits. Like the other robots, they fall to one good shot from the arm cannon.

When you come to the ladder, climb down but make sure you don't drop to the bottom of that screen. Instead, fire left from your vantage point. If you're far enough down the ladder, your shots will hit the robot to your left in the head, and you won't have to brave the stairs while he is sending out small tops. When the way is safe, go ahead and climb up those stairs and descend the ladder to the next screen.

Here you can collect tiny energy capsules if you need them, then drop down the next ladder. In the next room, the floor is lined with spikes. Not good to touch. There's also an enemy that will materialize in this room. If he bumps you off a ledge, you should be invulnerable long enough to hop from the

spikes and onto the lower ledge, then from there to the safety of the ledge on the screen's left side. Descend that ladder into the next room.

This next corridor has hardhat enemies that ride dozers. If you just stand and shoot, the blades will deflect your fire. Instead, jump and shoot the operators. Three direct hits will take them out and allow you to proceed down the corridor to the next ladder.

Climb down this ladder and you're in another room with our top-spewing friend. This time you must fight. The tops will vanish easily with shots from your arm cannon, and he only sends out three at a time, so keep that in mind as you hop up toward the left and take the fellow out. Then climb down the ladder into the next room.

Here you get to fight a giant, mechanical cat that sends out bouncy balls of damaging pink aura. They look like yarn, but will harm your armor a lot more. Around six to ten hits from the arm cannon will cause cat and balls to vanish, and you can climb down the next ladder.

Drop down to the lower ledge in this room, and head right up another staircase guarded by the top-spewing fellow that by now should be so very familiar. Next you'll see the black background that indicates another of the mechanical cats. This one is easier to defeat than the one that came before, as the balls don't bounce about quite so much. Push past the cat and climb the ladder to the next room, which is a bit more dangerous.

Above you, there are four blocks. On one rests a hardhat enemy, which will drop down to attack as you come within sight. When it lands, defeat it and then hop onto the lowest of the two right blocks. From there hop left to the block the hardhat occupied, left again to the next block, and left again to the ladder. Do so carefully, or you'll plummet to the instant death the spikes below offer.

Once you've climbed the ladder, you're in a room where the top-spewing robot makes his final appearance. Slide under the low roof to your right, then hop back around and shoot any tops in the way before sliding under the next ledge. Now you're free to hop up and right to dispose of your nemesis. Continue right and you'll come down a staircase that overlooks a wide, bottomless expanse.

Tops rise out of this pit, or fall from the skies, and you'll have to use them to cross the gap. It's easiest to start by jumping from about the halfway point on the staircase, out to the first top. From there, none of the jumps you'll have to make should be particularly taxing, so long as you keep moving to the right. When you reach the other side, you'll find the gate leading to the encounter with Top Man.

Top Man

This guy really isn't that hard to finish off with the arm cannon. When he first appears, he'll toss three tops up into the air. Fire as many shots as you safely can, but be prepared to jump the tops when they whiz toward your location where you are standing.

Once the tops are jumped, Top Man will spin more quickly in preparation for a dash across the screen. During this time, he is invulnerable. When he's spun for a while, start toward the right and leap him as he flies across. The most damage he can do is if he strikes you with his body while

spinning.

When he's passed underneath, quickly turn and start firing. He'll be vulnerable again, and will send out three more tops. Hit him a few times, then slide quickly to the right so the tops miss you. Then be prepared as he spins across the screen toward you. For the duration of the battle, just keep switching sides of the screen as necessary, sliding under the tops at the last minute so you get more shots in with your arm cannon. Easy.

Password: A-3 (red), C-5 (red)

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Shadow Man
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In a world of darkness and lava lurks Shadow Man, the robot master who will fall most quickly to your new spinning powers. He's also cool in that his special weapon is useful. This stage can get quite challenging near the end, but it's really not a long trek if you move quickly and are patient for the last series of death-defying jumps.

The first thing you should do is walk off the ledge to your right, which will drop you down to the next screen. You'll slip past an enemy that is sitting on a ledge at the center of this area, then land on a ledge just below. Quickly drop off to your left and you'll avoid taking any damage. It's not worth your time to shoot this enemy.

In the next screen, you'll immediately want to look right, where mechanical rabbit-like creatures are hopping toward you. One shot kills them, but they're good at avoiding your arm cannon fire. Take them out as you proceed to your right. Just past the robots, there's a bulldozer operated by a hardhat foe, just like the ones you saw in Top Man's stage. Three hits does the job here, just like it did before.

Beyond the bulldozer, you'll find a pit that drops you into a room with a nemesis new to the series, Proto Man. This fellow is like a boss robot. Since you've probably not taken any hits up to this point (or at worst, minimal damage), you may choose to get lazy and just hang out on the right side of the screen, pumping arm cannon shots at Proto Man as he hops about until he takes enough damage and flees the scene. He'll leave behind a blast that makes a hole in the floor, and you'll now be able to drop down it to a lower portion of the stage.

From this new landing, push toward the right. This next area is pretty easy, inhabited by robots that look like giant eyeballs with legs. They use suction cups to crawl along the ledge, and are easily disposed of with a few arm cannon shots. A more dangerous foe is the guy that looks like a walking grenade. Take him out with an arm cannon shot as quickly as possible. Finally, the area will be messing with your vision. Holographic bulbs hang on the ceiling and drape the area in darkness. There aren't yet any bottomless pits, so just keep pressing to the right, defeating enemies and jumping as you find barrier obstructing your progress (you can also use shots to take out the bulbs, but it hardly seems worth the time and effort).

When you drop down at the end of the long hallway into the pit leading to the room below, you're now at the most difficult part of the area. Drop down to the lower level in this room and head right, disposing of enemies along the way. You'll soon come to a pit of bubbling lava.

Narrow ledges form a partial bridge across this area, but you'll soon find

that enemies parachute down and zig-zag toward the narrow ledges. You can use three shots to take out these fellows, then hop to the next ledge, but they have a tendency to bump into you and knock you back into the molten soup if you're not careful. Be sure to get in your shots as they're swinging briefly away from you, and don't stand too near the left side of a given ledge or just a slight impact can be instant death.

When you make it across the series of ledges, your life meter is likely quite low. Be prepared for a rabbit that will leap at you in an attempt to decimate the rest of your waning health. One shot will take care of it, and then you can continue right again while dragonfly enemies swoop down. These guys follow a simple pattern you can manipulate to avoid damage. First they drop down slightly from the top of the screen, zip left, then drop again to Mega Man's level, and fly toward him. Rather than engaging them with arm cannon fire, it's almost simpler (and safer) to hop and avoid them.

Past the dragonfly robots, you'll find the gate that leads to the encounter with this area's robot master.

Shadow Man

Shadow Man isn't terribly difficult, since you have Top Man's ability. He dashes around the area, throwing shadow blades that you can easily hop over. Do so, then move in close and jump toward him. Just before you hit, tap and briefly hold the top spin. The impact will take down around a fourth of Shadow Man's life meter.

From there, you might as well just keep moving in for the kill. Trying to avoid his shots and such will only give him more opportunity to damage you. Keep the attack on the offensive and he'll run out of life well before you do. You'll gain not only his (amazingly) handy blades, but also the Rush Marine adaptor.

Password: A-3 (red), C-5 (red), D-6 (red)

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Magnet Man
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The metallic, barren wasteland that serves as Magnet Man's stage brings with it a number of challenges that are likely to lead to some serious frustration. However, a patient blue bomber can breeze through the stage in hardly any time at all.

Begin your assault by heading to the right. Here, you will find a series of ledges and a few bottomless pits. Before making each jump, note that robotic insects carrying magnets are fond of flying over the area. The magnets can pull you slightly off your course, and it's easy to wind up plopped into a pit if you're not careful. A good strategy is to clear them out before making each jump, then get to the middle of a safe ledge as the next passes overhead and tries to drag you to your death. This way, it's easy to break free of the magnetic charge and proceed.

The ladder you'll soon reach leads to another encounter with Proto Man, who will fall just as easily here to arm cannon shots as he did elsewhere. When the pit opens up, drop down to the next room and head right.

The spring-like robot here has a red cap over its head, and sends out blue

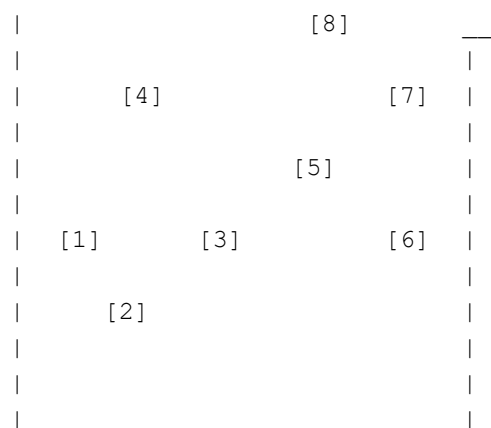
missiles that are magnetically drawn to Mega Man. You can shoot the missiles to destroy them, but it's likely better just to avoid those until you've focused enough shots at their source that it explodes. Then take out any remaining missiles and continue toward the right.

When you climb down the next ladder, you'll have to take out some of the giant, suctioned eyeballs to climb the stairs left, then drop down that ladder into the next room. Here, head right and you'll find more suctioned eyeballs as you ascend some steps, then descend more to find the next ladder.

There's a gap between the ladder and the ledge you can use to reach it, so drop down that gap and press left. In the room below, you'll land on a ledge with small energy capsules. Collect them and work left to the ladder at the bottom left corner of the room. Climb down that and you're to the most challenging portion of this particular stage. What you're greeted with now is a series of four rooms with disappearing/reappearing blocks that you likely remember from previous Mega Man titles.

To progress through each room, you'll want to note the patterns that the blocks follow. There are magnetically charged fans throughout, as well, and a few bottomless pits. Not pleasant stuff.

In the first room, the blocks disappear and reappear in the approximate order and locations indicated in the chart below:



The rest of the rooms that follow are much simpler in terms of their patterns, but there is the afore-mentioned pressure from the fans to consider. In the second room of disappearing/reappearing blocks, start with the lower right of the two blocks that appear simultaneously, ignore the second block that appears, then jump quickly to the third one just before the block you were standing on vanishes. From the third, watch as the fourth block appears, and ignore that one. Just before your new foothold evaporates, jump to where the final block appears.

The next two rooms are really simple, so long as you keep moving once you start and jump to compensate for the magnetic pull. When you're across the bottomless pits, climb up the ladder to the right. It leads up past energy items in the rooms to your left, up to a new room where a robot is perched on a ledge over some spikes. Hop to a platform left of the ladder, and from there fire a few shots to take out the robot. Now cross safely over to the ladder on the room's upper left side.

Climb that ladder and you're in another room with a red-capped spring that sends out magnetic missiles. Take it out the same way you did its brother, then head right through the gate that leads to this area's robot master.

Magnet Man

Magnet Man can be a real pain in the butt if you don't have the Shadow Blade. However, you do have the Shadow Blade, so things will be easy.

His basic attack pattern is to run toward you, then hop up to the ceiling and from there fire magnetic missiles. When he's approaching you, try and get in a hit or two with the Shadow Blade. When he leaps to the ceiling, get under him, then jump up and toss blades upward. They should just reach the robot, enabling you to get in another two hits.

Now he'll drop back down and try and suck you in with his magnetic pull. Avoid that until he's tired of the tactic, then hit him with more blades as he heads to a new perch on the ceiling. Repeat your attacks from beneath that worked so well, and Magnet Man should now be finished.

Password: A-3 (red), C-5 (red), D-6 (red), F-5 (red)

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Hard Man

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The mountainous crags in the background are nothing compared to the winding labyrinth you must traverse in order to reach the end of Hard Man's domain.

From the start, head right along the rocky canyon, watching for giant, bee-shaped robots that bombard you with their little ones. You can't hit the hives as they drop, but you can shoot the four bees that will emerge. They often leave behind power-ups, but sticking around to fight them all may well drain your life meter. Better to keep moving, when possible, and shoot the little bees from a safe distance.

Past that particular hazard, you'll find green-colored ledges pressed against the rocky surface that coats the stage. These green panels are traps. Stand on one for long at all and steel jaws will snap on Mega Man, dealing quite a hefty amount of damage. Hop over them, or slide.

Through a narrow space just beyond that first set of three traps, you'll find a ladder leading up to three more traps. A ladder hangs above them, while a large energy capsule is nestled against a wall to the left. Grab the energy if you need it, then climb the ladder up to the next room. Here you will find a robot swinging a mace-like object. He's invulnerable except for when the projectile is thrown. There are a few ways to hurt him, but don't be tempted to use your magnet shots; you'll need those for the boss encounter at the end of the stage. Instead, note that you can stand to his diagonal lower right, then throw shadow blades at an angle when he is open for damage. Once the robot is vanquished, use the Rush Coil ability to hop onto that ledge, and from there to the ladder that leads into the next room.

Here, you'll find a hallway with the ape-shaped robots you may remember from Mega Man 2. Instead of narrow scaffolding over a forest, they now jump to the ceiling and will attack you from there. Shadow blades are again the way to attack. Three hits or so will disable each ape. Proceed right past those, and up a long ladder (if you need to stop along the way, you can take out the robot that guards an energy capsule from the safety of the ladder; you can actually find the perfect place to rest that will enable you to shoot him while his projectiles fly just barely over your head).

Once you've climbed the tall ladder, there's another ape to take care of with

a shadow blade, then another ladder that leads up to the next portion. Here, you can drop down and slide under a green barrier to the right. In the following hall, you'll find a bulldozer enemy that you must hit with a few quick shots from the arm cannon. Press right beyond that and hop onto the next ledge. Climb up and take out another bulldozer, then beyond him you can obtain your first energy tank! This will certainly come in handy later in the game.

With the energy tank collected, climb up the ladder and take out the hardhat that you'll find in the next room. Then climb another ladder and you're in another canyon. A series of the traps lines the area ahead, so you'll want to press to the right and keep moving while taking the least damage possible. At the end is a ladder that drops down into a new room.

This room plays host to another battle with Proto Man, and he's more difficult now thanks to the addition of raised ledges in the center of the room. You'll have to navigate those while working to take him out. Remember that you can slide under a good number of his jumps. Take the least damage possible, and when the battle ends a hole will appear at the center.

Drop down that hole and you're in a room with a giant robot that takes large jumps. Let him take one jump toward you, then get near where he stands so that when he jumps again, you can slide under him and rush to the gate that leads to the encounter with the area's robot master.

Hard Man

The fight with Hard Man can be a challenging one. Considering how low your life meter is likely to be, it would probably be best to die your first life on purpose, if you have any others remaining. That way, you can save your special weapon energy for the next round.

When you have a solid life meter, the battle is a simple matter of duration. Hard Man begins by firing knuckle-shaped missiles that will head toward Mega Man, hit a wall, then from there fire back toward him. It's almost impossible to avoid all these shots, but you should try your best while keeping an eye on Hard Man.

Hard Man himself likes to jump into the air above you, then plummet downward to strike. Make sure you don't let his body bump into you in the middle of such a move, or you'll take a lot of damage. And of course, as you are moving around the chamber to avoid the robot and his missiles, you should be countering with your own magnet missiles. Hit him with a few of those (space them out, as they don't seem to do much damage when used in rapid succession) and Hard Man will bite the dust.

Password: A-3 (red), C-4 (red), D-6 (red), E-4 (red), F-5 (red)

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Spark Man
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A dull gray interior filled with electric traps, bottomless pits, and spike-covered ceilings serves as the lair for Spark Man. This stage is one of the most difficult of the initial eight, and you should be prepared for a few frustrating moments between its start and its conclusion.

From the very start, you'll have plenty of enemies to worry about. On the

ledge above, one of the suctioned eyeballs works left and right. If you wait for it to fall, it never will. Instead, take the proactive approach and quickly ascend the ladder, then fire a few shots before the guy can hit you. Now climb the ladder to the left, which leads up into a new corridor.

Move to the right and you'll notice gray, chimney-shaped patterns in the ceiling. Robots will emerge from these. They look like plugs from a VCR or something. Every so often, they'll pause in mid-air and fire shots in eight directions. The safest place to be is just to the right of the space directly beneath the robot at the time it fires, as one shot will then pass just to your left and another just to your right.

Avoid these fellows and their shots as you make your way to the right (cross the single bottomless pit with caution; no good having a spark knock you to your death). Along the way, there are security panels that slide about and occasionally send out walls of electricity. You must time your jumps so that you pass through when there's no electrical charge, or you'll take some damage.

When you reach the end of the hall, a ladder will take you up to the next room. The guy that occupies this area should be familiar by now, so take your time hitting him whenever he doesn't have his projectile whirling about as a shield. When he's gone, climb the ladder into the next hallway.

You're now at one of the stage's more challenging points. Head right and you'll see a bottomless pit. There are red ledges with arrows that point upward, toward a spike-lined ceiling. You must cross the pit by using those ledges. Whenever you step on one, it starts rocketing toward the ceiling. They move so fast that if you delay for long, you'll be high enough in the air that a jump will puncture your armor on the spikes. Jumping too soon without enough distance will send you into the pit. Either way, it's dangerous. Therefore, you'll want to make a series of rapid, well-timed leaps to get across the pit.

Once you reach the other side, you're still not out of the woods. There are some narrow ledges here, again lined by the security panels that like to generate those walls of electricity. Time your jumps carefully yet again, so that you pass through and can climb the ladder up to the relative safety of the next room. Here, there's a bulldozer you must disable with three arm cannon shots, and you can also use the Rush Coil ability to hop up to an energy refill on the ledge above.

When you're ready, go ahead and climb the ladder to the left, then walk to the right and drop down a long, vertical pit that takes you up to the level's single checkpoint. With that done, press onward to the right. In this hallway, there are more of the chimney-like pipes, but they don't send out the plug-shaped enemies. Instead, they drop enormous boulders that can instantly crush you if you're careless. Move near each, wait for a boulder to fall, then hop over it and run to the next such pipe. There are three of them, and just beyond lies the most challenging portion of the stage.

You are now at an even wider, bottomless pit. Again, spikes line the ceiling. Again, you'll have to use the red platforms to cross. However, there's a new wrinkle: the enemies that populated the first portion of Top Man's stage choose here to make their reappearance. The best technique seems to be to walk to the edge of the first ledge overlooking the red blocks, shoot the robot that will materialize, then hop like crazy across the pit, lingering on the red ledges no longer than necessary, jumping to the next before the robots overhead have time to materialize fully.

There's good news, though. When you get to the opposite side of that gaping pit, you'll be able to take a few steps and enter the gate that leads to the stage's robot master. Whew!

Spark Man

As robot masters go, Spark Man isn't much to talk about. He takes slow hops toward you and sends out burst shots that fire in eight directions. The sparks and contact with the robot master himself both do a fair amount of damage, but you have an ace up your sleeves.

That ace is the shadow blade attack. Around twelve direct hits from this weapon will put an end to Spark Man's nefarious ways. If you work quickly, he'll only drain around a third of your life meter before the battle ends. He probably won't even have time to cross the screen properly. If he does, just work to his right and finish him off from the central ledge.

Note that, as usual, it's better to take a hit from the robot's weapon, then move through him while invulnerable than it is to come in direct contact with the robot himself. When you win, you'll have the spark shock as a new option in your inventory. Sounds like just the thing to take out a certain reptilian robot that shall go unnamed, wouldn't you say?

Password: A-3 (red), C-4 (red), E-4 (red), F-4 (blue), F-5 (red)

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Snake Man
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When he went to get some interior decoration for his lair, Snake Man appears to have taken his name to heart. The entire stage is made up of the bodies of giant snakes, save for the last third of it or so, which just hangs in the air over clouds. It's a fun level to navigate, but dangerous if you don't keep up your guard.

As usual, start by heading to the right. You'll encounter some fairly simple enemies here, the first of which is a bouncing gray fellow that will fall to a single shot from your arm cannon. There's also a miniature snake pillar. Two shots to the head will put it out of commission, but be prepared to dodge any bullets it may spew.

Continuing along the hall, you'll encounter more of the same foes, until you reach a ladder leading up to the next room. Here, there are three of the snake heads in a diagonal row. Take them out carefully, then climb the ladder located at the room's upper left corner. This leads up to a rather enormous snake column.

From the top of the ladder, head left slightly, then turn to face the monster. It sends out bursts of two or three fireballs, which you'll want to jump while returning fire of your own from the arm cannon. The writhing floor will solidify once the head is disposed of, and you can proceed safely to the right, to a ledge overlooking a gap and two miniature snake columns extended upside-down from the ceiling. Wait until they've fired so that it's safe to jump, then leap to the ledge to your lower right.

Once on solid footing again, proceed right. There's another snake column not far to the right, just beyond a ladder that leads up to some energy capsules. Defeat it, then descend the next ladder, and from its base head

left then drop to the lower portion of that screen.

Now it's time to head right again, where you'll encounter enemies that look like they're carrying miniature vacuums. They use these as shields, then vault over your head and try to charge you from behind. As they pass overhead, a single shot from the shadow blade can take them out, but you might want to save that for the level's boss. If so, instead just take things slowly. When the robot leaps overhead, be prepared for it to land, so that you can jump it when it charges and then destroy it with a few shots from behind.

There are two or three of the vaulting fellows before a ladder that leads up to the next room, where a robot is swinging its mace. Hit it when it's weakened (or stand below it and throw up some shadow blades, if you prefer), then use the ledge it stands on to reach the ladder to the upper right. Climb that and you can collect random goodness from the canisters before dropping back down, defeating the robot again, and climbing the ladder to its upper left.

This ladder leads to the second of the giant snake columns, and you'll dispatch of him the same way you did the previous one. From there, continue right and take a long leap over a wide pit, which finds you at the base of three gray towers. Climb the furthest one to the right after avoiding the vaulting robots, and at the top of that tower turn left. There's a robot patrolling the ladder there, so take out the robot, leap to the ladder, and climb to the top of the center column.

From here, you now have to work over a series of treacherous jumps that for the most part hang over a bottomless pit. The first jump you'll take is to a solid ledge, and from there you will see ledges with grating. When you stand on these, they send up chariots you can ride. Be careful not to stand on the edge of any of these ledges, but rather toward the center; stand on the edge and you'll be pushed to your death when a chariot emerges.

Using the chariots, you'll want to proceed cautiously to the right. Along the way, cloud-encased bullets glide lazily toward you and will knock you from your perch if given the opportunity. Shoot them to dissipate the clouds, at which point the bullets will move more speedily across the screen. This is a good way to get them out of your way if needed.

Eventually, you'll run out of the ledges that produce chariots. The last few jumps must be made over a series of the narrow green blocks, and you'll have to proceed with caution if you're to avoid being knocked to your doom. One bit of advice is to never be struck while on the far left side of a ledge. Instead, if you see a blow you can't avoid, try and be on the right side so that as you're knocked back, you don't lose your footing entirely.

When you reach the other side of that dangerous gauntlet, you'll be at the gate leading to the area robot master.

Snake Man

This squirmy fellow is one of the toughest robot masters in the game. Though you can try using your newly-acquired spark shock against him, it doesn't seem to do a lot more damage than the arm cannon. A much more effective weapon is the shadow blade.

However, even the shadow blade won't bring the fight to an end so quickly as

you might like. You'll have to use the small measure of safety afforded by the tall central ledge at the room's center for all it's worth. If Snake Man jumps to that perch, he'll from there make another long jump in the general direction he's headed, which means he'll pass over your head if you're in the right position.

Getting in the right position is dangerous, though, because Snake Man also sends out his search snake attack, which consists of two serpentine missiles that slide along the ground until they come in contact with something. If you have an energy tank or two, this battle would be a good place to put that added health to use.

Password: A-3 (blue), C-4 (red), C-5 (red), F-4 (blue), F-5 (red)

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Gemini Man
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This is one of the most memorable stages in the game, with a cool environment that feels icy and slimy, yet cool just the same.

From the start, you'll first head right over a series of ledges that span a bottomless pit. There are a few gaps between solid footing, and you'll want to time each jump carefully because of the enemies that swarm overhead. These flying robots look like giant eyes at the center of a diamond, and they drop walls of flame. Both flame and robots can knock you into a pit, so the best tactic is to equip the shadow blade and use it for protection as you press to the right. It also works well on the penguins that inhabit the area.

When you work right far enough, Proto Man will appear long enough to explode a cap that blocks a tunnel you need to access. Then, without a word, he'll leave the scene.

Drop through the newly-opened passage and veer left as you do so, if you'd like to collect a 1-up icon. When you reach the bottom of the screen, move to the right and you'll find a bunch of tadpoles trapped in bubbles. One shot from your arm cannon will burst a bubble and set its tadpole robot free, while a second shot can dispatch of the robot itself. Break the bubbles so that they form steps and allow you to access the item canister.

When you've gone as far right as you can, a new ladder will lead you up to another room of tadpoles you must clear in order to access yet another ladder, which in turn leads to another batch of the tadpoles. Through this third set of the tiny robots and their protective bubbles, you'll find a small gap. Slide through and drop down, then proceed to the right.

Now you get to face some penguin-shaped towers. They have cranks spinning overhead, and those cranks are the only vulnerable spots on the machines. However, you can't just repeatedly jump and shoot those, because the dragonfly robots are flying through the area. Be sure to avoid those, and also the tiny penguin robots that spew regularly from the base of the larger penguin towers. The miniature versions fall quickly to single shots from your arm cannon, and leave behind goodies with some frequency, so you can use them to refill your depleted life energy if desired.

Past the first penguin tower is a ledge, then a second one of the towers. Past that, you'll find a ladder that descends into an enemy-free room, where you can use the Rush Coil ability to grab a large energy pellet. With that done, drop down to the room below and find yourself at a

stage checkpoint.

The checkpoint is placed quite fortunately, as the area ahead can be somewhat difficult. Wade out into the waist-deep water, then near the edge use the Rush Marine ability to turn Rush into a submarine. Push to the right, firing bullets like mad, until you hit the ledge where the energy tank is resting. With that collected, quickly move right until the next low ledge you find.

Once Mega Man lands on the ledge, the Rush Marine ability will be gone (the meter was likely all but depleted, anyway). Quickly hop right along the ledges, avoiding the dragonflies that swoop down from above. The puffer-fish robots are also dangerous, as they discharge missiles when directly below you. The blast when the missiles strike is enough to knock you off a given ledge, so it's important to keep moving.

When you progress far enough to the right, you'll be able to collect another energy tank from a ledge before climbing the ladder that leads to the area above. In this room, there are two of the robotic rabbits, so take them out carefully before climbing the ladder at the room's upper left corner.

This new ladder leads to a room where a giant robot is stomping about. Climb halfway up the ladder, then face right and fire a steady barrage of bullets from your arm cannon. Most will harmlessly deflect away, but enough will hit the robot to destroy it without you having to put Mega Man at risk.

When the robot is dead, climb up the ladder, run across the ledge, drop down, and pass through the gate that leads to the area robot master.

Gemini Man

Meet the franchise's first schizophrenic robot. Gemini Man begins the battle by splitting into identical twins, which then hop around the room in a circular fashion. Move out a few steps from the left side of the screen, then leap over one of the robots as it approaches and follow it toward the right, throwing search snakes as you do so. A few hits from behind will get rid of one of the two circling fiends.

With that done, it's time to leap over the second one, then follow it and throw more search snakes, until both of the two images have succumbed to your attacks. It's actually a pretty easy battle, so long as you follow that technique exactly. Don't let yourself get caught in the center of the screen for long and you'll do fine.

Password: A-3 (blue), B-5 (blue), E-4 (red), F-4 (blue), F-5 (red)

=====
Needle Man
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The last of the initial eight robots resides in a fairly simple level made remarkable only because of the huge spikes and needles found throughout.

Begin by heading to the right, where you'll encounter porcupine-like robots. They will fire two bursts of needles before rolling into invulnerable balls and finding a new place from which to attack. Avoid the spikes, dodge the rolling foes, and move onward. Avoidance truly seems the best policy.

Past the porcupines is a ladder leading down to another straight stretch. Take the top path as you head right (the bottom one is a pointless dead end). You'll soon see a golden dome atop a pillar of the same color. The dome slides open to reveal a cannon, which you should pelt with shots from your arm cannon. This machine sends out red balls that do quite a bit of damage if they connect, so try not to allow the machine time to make its move.

Past this first dome cannon, you'll find two more, as well as an assortment of hardhat enemies. Nothing here should be terribly taxing, but the red balls will definitely bite into your health if you allow yourself to be careless.

When you reach the end of this segment, there's a ladder that leads down to the stage's checkpoint. That's right; you're already halfway through. Climb the ladder down to the lower ledge, and head right.

In this portion of the stage, you'll want to be careful. Reddish spikes will protrude from the ceiling, then recede, then protrude again in an endless loop. You'll want to slide through as the needles start to recede, so that they don't have time to come back out and hit you before you've passed through. First there's a single needle, then a set of two, and finally a group of three, but the strategy is the same each time.

Once you're passed the row of three spikes, you'll find a wide, bottomless gap greeting you. There are three gold-colored ledges suspended over this pit. Hop out onto the first, and watch the air above the second. There's another spike there. Wait until it starts to recede, then quickly hop up and from there, slide over to the third of the ledges. The spike should just miss you, and you can now safely climb the ladder leading into the next room.

Here, you'll be greeted by another porcupine. Carefully avoid it. The most likely set of events here is that the porcupine will survive long enough to roll down to your level. Hop over it and to the ledge it just left, then turn around and use some well-time search snake shots to put it out of commission. With the screen clear, you should next use the Rush Coil ability to hop up to the outcropping in the screen's upper right corner, where there's an energy tank. Next climb the ladder at the screen's upper left side.

You're now in a room with two of the projectile-throwing enemies you've encountered several times thus far. Fortunately, they're easily dispatched if you climb not quite to the top of the ladder and fire from that safety point. Continuing upward using the ladder to the upper left side of that screen, you'll find yourself approached by one of the giant stomping robots.

At this point, your life meter is likely all but empty, so the strategy I advise is again a careful retreat. Slide under the monstrous machine when it leaps, then keep moving quickly to the right and through the gate that leads to the eighth robot master.

Needle Man

Prepare for some slow-down in this battle, as you'll be making use of the gemini beam. Needle Man doesn't move particularly fast, but he doesn't need to. Both his body and his attacks will take a large chunk out of your life meter.

The trick is to fire the gemini beam when it has a good chance of connecting almost immediately. Otherwise, it will ricochet around the room. Until it connects, you won't be able to fire another shot. In the meantime, Needle Man might well finish you off.

For this reason, a bit of caution is advised. It's only going to take four or five shots with the beam to send Needle Man to the scrap heap, so just time your shots carefully and try not to let him corner you (he jumps around a lot, so you can slide under him). Also, remember that he has pretty good range. Never get too close to him or he'll drop his head and send out the needle-packed punch from which he derives his name. Eww!

After twenty seconds or so, you should have sent your nemesis to his grave. Onto the next challenge!

Password: A-3 (blue), B-4 (red), B-5 (blue), D-3 (blue), F-4 (blue) *

* If you would like to use this password, you'll start with three energy tanks. To start with nine instead, substitute the 'B-4 (red)' with 'A-6 (red)' and you'll do so.

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Doc Robot - Spark Man Stage
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With the eight robot masters all defeated, you will soon find that there are four more stages before you get to begin your assault on Dr. Wily's Castle. These are the Doc Robot stages, and are made up of bits and pieces of stages you've already seen, but with modifications that make them far deadlier. Not only that, but there are two robot masters in each stage. Though they don't look different, really, they are taken from Mega Man 2. Only this time, your selection of weapons is different.

When you begin the revamped Spark Man stage, the first thing you will likely notice is that the overhead ladder is missing. Lure the suctioned eyeball down to your level, or jump and hit it from below with shadow blades, then use Rush Coil to spring up to the above ledge.

Next you'll climb the ladder at the top left side of the screen, and you should again have shadow blades equipped so that you can take out the robot that will come scurrying down to greet you.

From the top of this ladder, head right through a hallway that looks familiar but isn't really. You'll find rotating gears throughout. These can be used as ledges to reach new heights. Because they spin, though, you'll only want to hop on them quickly before moving to safer ground. As you use these gears and proceed to the right, watch out for the spark-emitting enemies that should already be familiar to you, and watch also for robots that materialize and join together before gliding toward you (the ones that first greeted you in Top Man's stage).

There are some bottomless pits along the way, but you shouldn't have much trouble working your way to the right end of the hallway, where a ladder leads up into the next room. Here, some gears are suspended over a pit of spikes. Just hop quickly across to the ladder and this won't be a challenge at all.

At the top of that ladder, be ready to take out a robot before sliding through a passage and finding a gate that leads to the first boss robot

encounter in this area.

Doc Robot - Metal Man

The best strategy here is to use your regular arm cannon shots. There's nothing in your inventory that will do a particularly good job of hitting for more damage, and you really want to work to maintain your distance. It seems to work best if you are on the far left side of the screen, while Doc Robot is on the right side chucking metal blades your way.

If you're on the left side, you shouldn't have much trouble dodging each barrage of blades (they seem to come no more than three to a group), and you'll also avoid direct contact. Any time you bump Doc Robot (in this stage or elsewhere), it's going to eat off almost a third of your life meter, so caution is always good. This particular battle will last a fair while, but you should come out of it relatively unscathed.

With your first Doc Robot encounter ended, it's time to continue onward. You'll next be able to collect a large energy capsule, before dropping down a lengthy, spike-lined shaft. The trick is to always stay at the center as you're falling, so that it's never very hard to dodge out of the way if the next screen reveals spikes a little closer than you would like. As always, one touch of the spikes spells the end of Mega Man.

When you reach the bottom of the shaft, you'll continue right through hallways lined by the security panels that are so fond of generating walls of electricity. These aren't terribly hard to avoid. In fact, you can sometimes bring them into view, turn quickly around, then turn around again and cause the panels to vanish.

Past the panels, you'll find a more formidable challenge in the form of columns that drop those heavy, instant-death blocks. As before, let one fall and then quickly pass through to the next ledge. If it's going to be a tight squeeze, a slide from the top of the first block to fall will typically carry you to safety.

When you get past the crumbling blocks, you'll find the gate leading to this area's second Doc Robot encounter.

Doc Robot - Quick Man

Though the regular arm cannon worked wonders against this guy in Mega Man 2, a more useful approach this time around is the search snake. If you get near enough to lob a few of the snakes at your opponent, you'll find his life drains quite rapidly. Alternatively, you can use the gemini beam, though a miss with that weapon is more devastating.

Since Doc Robot moves so quickly, it's quite likely you'll suffer a fair amount of damage. As usual, your best defense is a solid offense. Also, be careful to avoid what boomerang shots you can, though at least they are preferable to direct contact (and may in fact work in your favor by making you invulnerable for a brief moment).

When the battle with the second Doc Robot ends, you'll have completed the

level and the game will award you your new password.

Password: A-1 (red), A-3 (blue), B-5 (blue), D-2 (red), D-3 (blue), F-4 (blue)

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Doc Robot - Gemini Man Stage
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Your second visit to the Gemini Man stage is going to be quite a bit more challenging than the first, primarily because of the opening area.

As before, you should begin by equipping the shadow blade. Working to the right, you'll see that the floating eye robots now drop ice columns instead of fire. Otherwise, their attack pattern hasn't changed. What has changed is the number of robots. There are far more of them before. Not only that, but there are a lot more holes in the ground. It's easy to get knocked back into a pit if you're not carefully making each jump. As a general rule, don't make most jumps until you've only just defeated a robot. Then quickly jump and be prepared for another to take its place.

The flying enemies aren't your only concern, either. There are others that race along the ground, and they'll just as easily send you to your doom if you're not watching your step.

When you reach the end of this area, you can quickly drop down the pit and to a series of tadpoles encased in bubbles. This time around, don't just take the easy route and go along the bottom; the first set of bubbles will send you to a pit of spikes if you try that. Instead, climb partway up through the bubbles, then slide through. The second and third groups of bubbles present no particular threat, so you shouldn't have trouble passing through those.

Beyond the bubbles, you'll find the gate leading to your first Doc Robot encounter for this stage.

Doc Robot - Flash Man

When you enter this battle, ready the Needle Cannon and start firing for all you're worth the minute it's possible to do so. Doc Robot will start a slow march toward you, and you'll want to have most of his life gone by the time he reaches you.

When he's neared the edge of the screen, it's time to switch positions while continuing the barrage of needle shots. This battle should be short if you're doing things right, even if Doc Robot pauses to freeze you in mid-stride. Whatever you do, don't lose, or you'll be sent back to the very beginning of the stage.

Once you've kicked the first Doc Robot where it hurts, you can proceed through the rest of the stage, which is easier than the first portion was.

Jump over the first pit you see, and keep working to the right until you find yourself at the pool of water. Drop down there, then switch to the Rush Marine ability. Now you need to zip along just beneath the surface of the water, shooting at any robots that come near. Whenever you approach a ledge with a special weapons refill, leap out of the water long enough to grab it

before plunging back into the icy soup.

Keep working right, firing to prevent yourself from striking approaching enemies. You'll soon reach a wall, with only a narrow gap at the bottom. Switch off the Rush Marine adaptor and slide through the opening.

Once you're on the other side, leap up to the ladder and climb your way to the next screen. As you proceed right along this corridor, be careful to watch for holes in the ceilings. Robotic bugs emerge from these with alarming frequency. They're easily taken care of with single shots from the arm cannon, but you're life will be drained down to nothing if you get lazy.

Soon, you should make it to the ladder on the opposite end of the hallway. Start down it and from there look to the left. There are two holes in the ceiling here, but you can fire at the bugs as they appear from your vantage point on the ladder. In fact, I would advise that you do so long enough to generate a few energy power-ups and maybe even some 1-up icons.

When you're mostly restored, go ahead and cross over to the ladder on the screen's lower left side, and descend to the next screen. Now just cross over to the gate that leads to Doc Robot.

Doc Robot - Bubble Man

If you played Mega Man 2, you should be ready for this encounter. The strategy really hasn't changed. Just whip out your shadow blade, get near enough to do some damage, and let loose.

As Bubble Man, Doc Robot can float around quite a bit. When he does, try and get beneath him. His torpedoes can't hit you then, and since he's rising in a vertical column, it's easy to get in several hits before he descends. Easy enough, in fact, that you might be able to finish him off while only taking two or three hits.

Two of the four Doc Robot stages are out of the way, but you're only halfway through. Time to tackle the next one.

Password: A-1 (red), A-3 (blue), B-5 (blue), B-6 (red), D-2 (red), D-3 (blue), F-4 (blue)

=====
Doc Robot - Shadow Man Stage
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Maybe it's just me, but the re-visit of Shadow Man's domain doesn't seem significantly harder than it was the first time around.

Start by falling down the same shafts you did the last time you came here, only this time the hazard is the spike-lined walls. When you're nearing the bottom, make sure you're not close against the left wall; the floor there has spikes covering it.

When you land at the bottom of the shaft, it should be around three or four strides to the right of the left wall. To your right, you'll see a mechanical rabbit hopping your direction. Take it out with a few arm cannon shots, then hop right and over the bottomless pit there. Next you'll find a ladder, lined by spikes.

Here, it's easy to jump too high and hit a spike because you're slightly off-center. Instead of doing that, make a short hop just high enough that you grab the bottom of the ladder. Now climb straight up it and you won't have to worry about the spikes. Above, one of the suctioned eyes is likely in the way, so hit it with a shadow blade, walk across the ledge it occupied, then climb down the next ladder.

From there, climb down yet another ladder, into a room with one of the giant, stomping robots. Slide under it and drop down the pit on the screen's left side, then head back to the right. You'll find a series of ledges rising up like a staircase. Take out more suctioned eyes and climb to the top, then hop over the gap to the right.

In this area, there's one of the bulbs that makes the room dark. There also are four ledges, red in color. Stepping on these causes them to buckle under your weight, but they're good for quick hops. Hop along them and from the fourth ledge (the highest) jump out to the right as far as you can to land on a new ledge. Walk along and take out any enemy you may encounter, until you find yourself looking over another bottomless pit and a second series of collapsing ledges.

Leap out onto the first, trying to land as far toward the right portion as possible, then hop quickly across those ledges and to safe ground on the opposite side of the black pit. Then proceed right yet again, blasting any robots that get in your way, until you come to a ladder you can descend.

The next room should have some robots you can blast that hopefully will leave behind a few energy pellets. Then you're at the gate to the first Doc Robot encounter.

Doc Robot - Wood Man

This fight is actually quite simple. First, switch to the Needle Cannon. The way Doc Robot attacks now is by throwing a set of four leaves to the ceiling while more leaves encircle him as a shield.

Position yourself so that when the leaves fall, you'll be safe between the first and second leaf, and watch the shield around Doc Robot. When he tosses it, jump over it and start firing your needle cannon. You should get in quite a few hits, around one fourth to a third of his life meter.

The pattern will now repeat. When the leaf shield falls away again, you should have over half the robot's life. Again, he'll throw up more leaves and use the shield. This time, be prepared to slide under him when he throws his shield and hops toward you, then turn to fire needles from behind. Once the leaf shield comes up again, run to the opposite side of the screen (it should be the screen's right side, now), and be prepared for the leaf shield to fall away again so that you can finish the job. The battle is harder than the similar encounter in the original Mega Man 2 cartridge, but still not overly difficult.

With the first Doc Robot encounter out of the way, it's time to head for the second. You'll find a large energy capsule in the next hallway, and beyond that a series of hellish jumps that will likely trip you up the first time you attempt them.

To survive this dangerous crossing, you'll want to equip the shadow blades. As you cross each pit, be prepared to throw a blade in mid-air to take out the parachuting robot, then chuck another as you land so that you take out the rabbit that hops along these ledges. Repeat the pattern all the way across the lava, until you reach the other side.

Now you should encounter a red-capped spring robot that fires magnetic missiles. Take out the robot and its missiles with more shadow blades, then proceed to the second Doc Robot encounter.

Doc Robot - Heat Man

Hopefully, you've still got a decent supply of shadow blades left, because that's the weapon of choice when dealing with this fiend.

As Heat Man, Doc Robot first throws a triple column of fire, then starts to flicker and blazes toward you. He's immune when in this condition, so wait for him to stop before countering with some shadow blade shots. He'll then repeat his pattern, so you'll want to be prepared to go through the necessary motions throughout the remainder of the fight. You may need to use an energy tank near the end.

And so you've tackled three of the four Doc Robot stages, and only one remains. Time to pay another visit to Needle Man's former abode.

Password: A-1 (blue), A-3 (blue), B-5 (blue), B-6 (red), C-1 (red), D-3 (blue), F-4 (blue)

=====
Doc Robot - Needle Man Stage
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The final Doc Robot stage you should attempt is quite difficult, but nothing you won't be able to handle by now. Just be prepared for a challenging Rush Jet segment a little over halfway through.

Before you get there, though, you'll have the first third or so of the level to deal with. Begin by heading right, past a series of porcupine robots. Most of them are at ground level, and thus easily tended to with a barrage of arm cannon shots. Beyond those, you'll find a ladder leading down to a series of spike rooms.

This portion should be familiar to you from the previous play through the area, but it's still enough to give a challenge. Work hard to avoid letting them hit you, and remember to slide as the first one is most of the way through receding to avoid the second spike in most groups.

Beyond the rooms of spikes, there's a ladder leading up to a room with one of the red-capped springs. Shadow blades are handy here, as they can easily turn the robot to scrap metal and block any missiles that may be headed your way. Once that's tended to, go ahead and climb the ladder on the screen's left side.

At the top of this ladder, use the Rush Coil to reach the next ladder, and climb it to find the gate that leads to the area's first encounter with Doc Robot.

Doc Robot - Air Man

The weapon of choice for this battle is the spark shot. However, you won't normally be able to get in a clear shot because Doc Robot sends out gusts of air in various formations.

What you'll need to do is jump over or slide under various air gusts, then counter with the spark shot. It's going to take a fair number of hits, especially if you fire in rapid succession, but once you get an opening Doc Robot will go down swiftly.

Now for the last leg of your journey through this stage. It's the tough part, too, so buckle up.

From the encounter with Doc Robot, walk just to the right and you'll find yourself staring out at a vast, empty space. Switch to the Rush Jet and start the trek across. The whole time, you'll be pestered by descending parachutes and dragonfly enemies.

For me, the best technique was to spend most of the time crossing the gap at about halfway up the screen. I mostly tended toward the high side, so that the parachutes ahead of me would drop below me quite quickly. However, the dragonflies mean that you have to change elevation frequently to avoid excessive damage. Not only that, but the Rush Jet only has so much energy. Because of that, you'll have to make pit stops at certain ledges to refill its meter.

It's a challenge, but you should be able to reach the ladder at the other side of the pit in pretty good shape. Once you do, climb the ladder and you'll find a special item refill, which you should use to recharge your jet's energy. Now use the jet again and ride it up to the ladder at the upper left side of the screen.

Climb the ladder to its top, then switch to the shadow blade, which you'll want equipped right up to the moment you find the gate that leads to Doc Robot.

As you press to the right now, you'll encounter a lot of hardhat enemies of various size. First you will run into a monstrous machine that rises from the ground. It is vulnerable only where you see the red cross, so be ready to move in quick and toss a flurry of shadow blades in that general vicinity. The weapon also does a fine job of taking out any miniature hardhat foes that race toward you at ground level.

Past the first giant hardhat, you'll find some more of the miniature fellows. They glide around in the air, somehow, but still succumb quite easily to shots from the shadow blade. Also, there are more of the domed cannons. Again, you'll be amazed by how effectively shadow blades work here. They should take you right through to a second one of the giant hardhat machines.

Beyond the second of the hardhats, it's only a short jaunt to the gate that leads to the final Doc Robot encounter.

Doc Robot - Crash Man

Remember this guy from Mega Man 2? This time around, you don't have the air cyclone on your side. Instead, you'll have to use the hard knuckle.

Doc Robot will hop around the screen a lot, but for me the simplest strategy was just to stay at the very lower left of the screen and fire a series of hard knuckle shots. Since he moves around so much and the knuckle attack itself is quite slow-paced, Doc Robot did himself in while I supplied only four or five shots with the hard knuckle. This is quite possibly the simplest of the Doc Robot encounters.

At last, you've done it. The Doc Robot stages were no match for your skillful abilities, and a new hazard will appear on the screen where formerly Mega Man's head rested.

Password: A-1 (blue), A-3 (blue), B-2 (blue), B-4 (red), B-5 (blue), D-3 (blue), F-4 (blue)

=====
Break Man
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With Doc Robot out of the way, you will now face Proto Man. That's his name in later Mega Man games, but here he is called 'Break Man' instead.

You've been fighting him throughout the game thus far, and the strategy hasn't changed significantly. This fight is actually almost easy, in fact.

Just stand on the central area and shoot him as he walks back and forth. The only time you should stop shooting is when you turn to slide under him as he approaches from either direction. Then it's back to shooting.

Though he doesn't have a life meter, you should find that it won't take long to hit him with enough force that he leaves the scene. You're now ready to begin the assault on Dr. Wily's castle. The password immediately below is the last you'll be able to use, and starts you at the front gates with nine energy tanks.

Password: A-1 (blue), A-3 (blue), A-6 (red), B-2 (blue), B-5 (blue), D-3 (blue), E-1 (red), F-4 (blue)

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Skull Castle #1
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The first stage in Dr. Wily's castle really isn't terribly difficult, if you just take it at a leisurely pace. It might even give you false hope that the last leg of your journey will be a breeze.

From the start, head right over a series of ledges. Here, you'll find two of the top-spewing monsters from Top Man's stage, so climb the steps carefully and take them out as possible. From there, continue to the right to the ladder. Stand on the ladder and from there jump to the right to collect the energy tank before dropping into the pit.

You're now in an underground sewer of sorts. Progression to the right is hindered by shallow recessed lined by spikes. If this feels dangerous, don't worry; it's not. Just make leaps over the gaps, shooting the fish that will fly toward you from the right as you go. If you take a hit and fall on the

spikes, you should be able to jump away before any permanent damage is done.

On the opposite side of the pool of water, you can leap out and onto dry land. From there, climb a ladder that leads up to the next screen. There, you'll find a 1-up icon sitting pretty behind some greenish walls. Switch to the hard knuckle to take out the walls, then drop into the opening to collect the icon. Now slide left and climb up that ladder, into the next screen.

Once more, you're at a screen with those lovely green walls, and you can again destroy them with hard knuckle shots. Here, you should see another energy tank resting on the high ledge above, so go ahead and grab it if you need it (though if you used the password provided earlier, you should already have a full reserve of them).

When you've collected any goodies that appeal to you, climb the ladder on the screen's left side into the next room. To the right, you'll see one of the projectile-slinging foes. Make sure you don't climb to the very top of the ladder. Instead, hang on it and use arm cannon shots to take out your foe. Now you can go ahead and crest the ladder, then from there hop up to the ledge to your upper right. Now slide under the low ledge there and press right so that you land on the lower ledge, then repeat the action to land where your opponent stood a moment before. Continue right and there will be two more of the fellows to take out.

The second of those projectile-slinging guys is standing on a high ledge you can't quite reach without the Rush Coil. Switch to the magnet missiles and fire as he's open, and two direct hits will finish him off. Then it's safe to use the Rush Coil to spring up to that ledge, and to climb the ladder into the next room.

Now you're in one of the most potentially dangerous segments of the level. There are disappearing/reappearing blocks here, over a pit of spikes. Not pretty. If you watch, you should get a feel for the first three, which lead conveniently up to solid ground where an energy capsule is resting. You want to hop up to the third block, then slide under the first barrier to where the energy waits. From there, watch the pattern again. You should get a feel for when a block appears directly under the ladder on the left side of the screen. When it's just about to appear, slide under the low wall that stands in your way, land on the block and quickly jump to the safety of the ladder.

Climb the ladder up to the next room, then walk to the right (you can spring up to collect the special weapon refills if you really want) and through the gate that leads to the area boss.

The Turtle Machine

This is quite possibly the easiest boss battle in the game. Just stand along the bottom floor with shadow blades equipped. The machine at the top of the room will send out turtles to hit you.

Move back and forth, throwing your shadow blades upward to hit the turtles as they appear. One hit will eliminate any given turtle and remove a good chunk of the machine's life meter. There will only be a few of the turtles before suddenly you've won the battle. You may not even suffer a hit!

=====
Skull Castle #2

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The second stage in the castle is blessedly short, like its companions, but that doesn't mean it's a walk in the park.

When you first appear, you'll be on collapsing ledges. You can climb these to the top portion of the screen, then climb up the ladder on either side. When you reach the top of the ladders, you can then drop down to collect special weapon refills if you desire, or you can just get on with the assault on the castle.

Once you're ready, work up the right side of the screen, until you see a thin ledge leading to a ladder on the screen's left side. Cross over to that ladder and climb up it. You'll now be facing a narrow sliding space, with green-colored tiles that indicate there are those steel traps you're familiar with from Hard Man's stage.

Slide through the opening and you're now looking over a field of spikes with trap-colored ledges leading across. Switch to shadow blades for this part, then hop quickly across the gaps. When you reach a fairly wide ledge between two traps, throw the shadow blade up at the bee that swoops in, so it's destroyed before it can attack. Then start hopping along more ledges that lead to the right. About two ledges in, there will be another of the bees, so be prepared to take it out with another shadow blade as you hop toward the right.

The next time you encounter a safe ledge, just right of the last of the green-colored traps, it's time to switch to the Rush Jet adaptor and, with that done, ride toward the right. Your jet can take you from one special item refill to the next, and you should soon come to solid ground in front of a gate leading to the area boss.

The Stone Cyclops

If you played the original Mega Man, you will be familiar with this guy. When the battle first begins, step to about the middle of the screen and keep an eye to your left. Chunks of debris will start flying to the right. Be prepared to jump the ones that come at ground level, and to slide over those that are higher.

When the pieces finish, a robot will have assembled itself. It is a stone cyclops, and you should see a patch of discoloration that will soon become an eye. Hopefully, you're only a short distance away from the robot. Jump and fire a hard knuckle at the eye, land, then jump and fire again. If you work quickly, you can get in two hits before the robot starts to fall apart.

Now the pieces will glide over to the other side of the screen. They will do so in one of two possible patterns. One is a duplicate of the robot's entering effect, while the other consists of pieces bouncing about like beach balls. Either way, you want to be near the robot's feet when it all ends so that you can get in your two hits before repeating. After about three or four such cycles (don't be afraid to use an energy tank or two if you must), you should have done enough damage that the robot will be defeated.

The third stage in the castle isn't terribly remarkable, but you may still find yourself short on life when you reach its end thanks to the giant stomping robots in the last few passages.

When you first appear, you should immediately switch weapons to the shadow blade. There's an enemy directly overhead, so jump up and toss a blade or two its way and you'll put it out of commission. With that tended to, Rush Coil up to the ledge it occupied, and from there hop left. You're now standing below a ladder. Switch back to shadow blade, then climb up the ladder into the next room. There, hit another enemy from below with the blade. Now switch back to Rush Coil and spring up to that ledge, and from there hop right and then back left to the ladder suspended from the top center of the screen.

At the top of this ladder, slide under the space to your right and collect an energy tank. Then slide back left and use the Rush Coil ability to get on top of that ledge.

From here out, you'll only need to be armed with the regular arm cannon. Work your way right and you'll see various bulbs in various recesses. Drop down to their level so that you can take them out as you go, and work toward the right. The grenade-shaped robots are in evidence, as you might have expected, so be sure to take them out with your arm cannon before they get close enough to cause you harm.

You'll soon reach the right edge of the room, where you can drop down a pit. Do so, and fall straight down, past where a projectile-slinging robot waits. Drop down the new opening on the screen's left side, and you're halfway to the end of the stage.

Now you will need to work to the right, past two giant, stomping robots. It's hard to slide under them without suffering damage, as they're so huge and the space is so small. Try and take them out first, but make a run for it if you suffer a hit.

Beyond the two robots, a ladder leads up to the next room. Here, you will see a ladder near the top left side of the screen. Spikes line most of the floor. To reach the ladder, you must hop up moving ledges and ride to the ladder. It's not terribly hard if you move quickly and get a feel for the speed at which they move. The next room is more of the same, and after that you'll find yourself in a new room with some item canisters above.

Use the Rush Coil ability to spring up to that platform and collect the goodies in the canisters, then drop back down and head right through the door that leads to the boss encounter.

The Three Clones

This fight isn't terribly difficult, but you'll possibly need to use an energy tank to survive it. There are three levels in the room. The first is the floor level, and there are blocks that allow you to access two higher ledges.

On each ledge, you'll soon see a clone of Mega Man. Only one of these three is weak to your arm cannon shots, and the weakness switches from one clone to another each time they pass over the transporters and swap locations (though sometimes, the 'same' robot will be vulnerable two rounds in a row).

No one robot is vulnerable for very long, but your arm cannon shots do quite a bit of damage. Unfortunately, the three robots each fire two shots during each round, and those shots are fairly hard to avoid. So you'll want to quickly determine which robot is weak (it's usually one of the bottom two, with the middle one being the most likely bet, so far as I could tell) and let loose with a spray of bullets once you're sure.

The fight shouldn't last terribly long, and then it'll be onto the next portion of Skull Castle.

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Skull Castle #4
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Though short, this stage can be a real pain in the butt. From the start, you should first collect any special item refills that prove necessary. When you're ready, go ahead and drop down the shaft and aim left.

When you land, immediately let loose with a spray of arm cannon fire. The robot to the left will chuck a huge block at you if given the chance, and it does quite a bit of damage to your weak armor. Once you've taken him out, drop down to the next room below.

Here, you can slide and press to the right to land on a ledge and refill special weapons energy again. Also, you can collect energy pellets to replace any damage dealt by the robot in the previous room. Just watch out for the spikes that line the floor on the left side, here.

When you're ready, climb down the ladder on the room's right side, and you'll find yourself in a room with another of the block-heaving robots. Take him out quickly to avoid more damage than necessary, then drop down again and you'll once more be facing one of the block heavers. Defeat him and start right again, and yet another will appear. Take this fellow out like you did his companions, and then you'll be safe to descend to the next room.

Here, you should just work around the ledge, to the gate on the lower right side. There aren't any enemies in this room, thankfully, so you don't have to move cautiously.

The Robot Masters

Through the gate is a short hall and a transporter device that leads to a new room where you will find eight transporters. They each lead to robot masters you've already defeated. Now you must defeat them again, and after each one you beat, you'll get a large energy capsule before choosing the next robot you wish to fight. It's a good idea to spread out the easy and hard ones, so you don't have to dip into your energy tank reserves much between rounds. The chart below indicates which robot is where:

[1]	[8]	1 - Needle Man	6 - Shadow Man
		2 - Magnet Man	7 - Spark Man
[2]	[7]	3 - Gemini Man	8 - Snake Man
		4 - Hard Man	
[3][4][5][6]		5 - Top Man	

When you defeat the eight robots, you can pass through the gate on the lower right side of the screen, collect some special item refills, then pass through the transporter to head to the castle's next area.

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Skull Castle #5
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When this stage begins, you're in a room with special item refills and item canisters. Collect any goodies you need, and then you can drop down to the room immediately below. Guess what? You're already to this stage's boss!

Spider Tank

You've finally made it to Dr. Wily, it would seem. When the battle first starts, stand along the left side of the screen. A giant tank will plod onto the screen, held up by pin-shaped appendages. The first target is the cannon attached to the machine's belly. You can take it out with well-aimed flurries of fire from your standard arm cannon.

By the time the machine is at the screen's center, you should have laid waste to its life meter. Once the meter is empty, the bubble over the top of the machine will pop off. Slide under the robot leg and stand directly below the bubble, then just start chucking shadow blades upward. They should make quick work of the second life meter.

Note that you may need to use an energy tank if your life runs low during the process. But if you work quickly, one tank is all that will be necessary. When you win, you'll find that a robot was at the controls. There's one more stage to go before the game's closing credits.

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Skull Castle #6
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And now, you're truly at the final stage of the game. It's been a long trip, but this is where Dr. Wily finally gets his due. You'll appear in a room just left of where the battle appears, and an energy tank will be up on a ledge above. Use the Rush Jet to fly up and grab it. Also, check the contents of the canisters, as they sometimes contain energy tanks. Finally, refill your shadow blade and search snake. If this isn't possible, note that you should die all your lives and continue the stage fresh, with your meters charged, rather than wasting energy tanks on a lost cause.

Ready to go, then? Good. Step through the gate and prepare for the final battle.

Peace-Keeping Robot

Dr. Wily had talked about a peace-keeping robot, but it was only a ruse to get his associate to create a weapon of destruction. Now you get to fight that robot.

Fortunately, the battle is a lot simpler than you might anticipate. When it starts, run under the center portion of the robot. Directly above you, a robot should be perched, firing shots. They will arc almost directly down, so just move slightly left and right while making small hops and tossing shadow blades upward.

When half the robot's life meter is drained, a horned cap will descend. Dr. Wily is seated in a bubble within that cap, but it's vulnerable only to attacks from above. At this time, a spiked fist will come out from the right side of the screen. Jump to avoid the spikes, and land on the flat portion of the hand, above the spikes. From there, as the hand starts to recede, jump up to the set of blocks to the right.

From this series of blocks, you can jump outward and toss search snake shots. Move carefully. There shouldn't be any reason to fall down to the ground level again. Just hop outward from the block closest to Dr. Wily's bubble, toss a search snake or two, then land back on the edge of the block and repeat. You'll make short work of the remainder of the life meter, and then the screen will flash and you'll be watching the closing story sequence and game credits.

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Conclusion

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After a long journey, Mega Man has finally defeated Dr. Wily and his robots for a third time. Peace is restored to the world. But is the journey over? Of course it's not! If you had a great time, why stop there? Go back through and try tackling the robots in a different order. Play through without using any energy tanks (a daunting challenge, to be sure). Or, if you haven't done so already, check out some of the other titles in the franchise. There are quite a few of them, after all. And since they're being re-released soon on the GameCube and Playstation 2 (with improved visuals, no less), there's no longer any excuse to hold back on playing them. Happy gaming!

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Acknowledgements

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Thanks for reading this guide! I played through each level as I wrote this, and I think that shows in the way the guide is written. The passwords provided are mine, too. In short, I made this on my own and I hope you enjoy it. I know there are a lot of FAQs available online for this game, so thanks for choosing mine.

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