

BASICS

» RACING 101

Practice, practice, practice! These are the three most important words you'll hear when learning to race. Get to know your tracks very well; run through them over and over to identify all the obstacles. Most important, get closely acquainted with all the best lines.



AUTOMATIC VS. MANUAL

In the game, automatic transmissions work the same way as in real life. Once you hit a set RPM, the transmission shifts gears up or down accordingly.

Manual transmissions also work the same way they do in real life. The learning curve is steep, but once shifting becomes second nature, the greater level of control over your transmission makes you faster on the track.

Race with an automatic transmission until you're comfortable with the controls, car handling, and race events. With fewer distractions, it will be easier to concentrate on winning. You can play through the entire game without having to switch from an automatic car, so don't feel pressured to change to a manual.

» BRAKING

Skillful use of the brake undoubtedly makes you a better racer. Every racer should have working knowledge of and experience with several braking techniques.

Every corner is divided into three segments; the turn entry, the apex of the curve, and the turn exit. Learn to recognize these segments in every corner to master the essential art of technical braking.

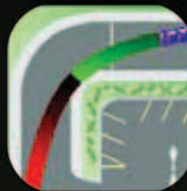
» STRAIGHT-LINE BRAKING



This principle is the holy grail of braking. Always brake the hardest when traveling in a straight line before a turn entry. Given sufficient speed, any turn in the wheels could force your car to understeer or oversteer, resulting in an uncontrolled drift. Learn the threshold of your car's brakes to anticipate just how hard to brake without losing traction.

When approaching a corner, apply the brakes to near maximum in the straight section immediately in front of the entry point; once at the turn apex, release the brakes and accelerate to rip out of the turn's exit.

» TRAIL BRAKING



A more difficult technique to master, trail braking involves delaying your braking until you are just ahead of the turn entry, then braking through the turn to the apex, where you can begin to accelerate out of the corner. The trick here is not to force your car to drift as you brake through the turn. Learn your car's braking threshold so you know how hard to brake without causing it to oversteer and slide into a wall.

» ENGINE BRAKING

On manual transmissions, gearing down once slows the engine and results in reduced speeds. Excessive downshifting will over-rev your engine, reducing speed and adding costly seconds to your time. Engine braking is sometimes favored by racers who want that extra torque coming out of a turn.

OVERSTEERING VS. UNDERSTEERING



Oversteering and understeering are common when driving a high-performance vehicle on the race track.

In oversteering, the rear of the car slides away from the car's direction of travel. The front wheels

BASICS

- GAME MODES
- RACING 101

THE RIDES

UPGRADES

CAREER MODE

TRACKS

ONLINE PLAY

BEHIND THE SCENES

APPENDIX

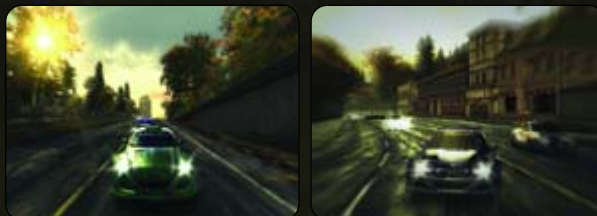


OVERSTEERING vs. UNDERSTEERING (CONT.)

track in the right direction, but the rear of the car veers away from the direction of the front wheels. When it can be controlled, oversteering is often beneficial in finding the tightest line through a course. But when the rear of the car loses traction and slides out uncontrollably (in oversteering, the rear always slides to the outside of a curve), it can send you into a spin. Correct this condition by throttling up (which adds more weight and force to the rear of the car) and steering in the direction of the skid.

In understeering, the front wheels are not steering the car effectively. They have lost the traction needed to drive the car around a corner, and the car generally goes straight into the wall or off the road, no matter how much the front wheels are turned. Correct this condition by slowing down and returning more weight to the front of the vehicle. But be cautious when recovering from understeering, because the car will have a tendency to suddenly grab the road, possibly throwing the back end into an oversteering condition. This is called fish-tailing, and it is why understeering is often more hazardous than oversteering.

» STREET LINES



Imaginary lines on the track follow a path of least resistance that allow for either the safest or fastest route. There are several types of lines in racing theory, but generally there is one standard line for each turn alignment. Remember that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. The lines can be slightly altered depending on your situation, speed, and track conditions. Use mild curves between the apex of a curve and around its corners, straightening them out as much as possible. How you want to exit the turn depends on how you enter it, so set up your turn entry correctly.

Remember, these lines are theoretical and cornering success depends on you. Read the conditions of each turn in the course, and follow these basic guidelines to build racing skill.

» RIGHT-ANGLE TURNS



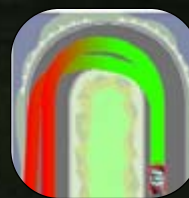
This line has a good balance between entry and exit speeds, and passes evenly through the apex of the turn. Right-angle turns are the most common type. Experiment in time trials to find the best line through them.



“Slow in–Fast Out”: make this your braking mantra and chant it over and over. The sooner you slow down before taking a turn, the faster you can accelerate out of it. Using this technique will avoid costly seconds of added lap time by preventing uncontrolled slides or disastrous collisions.

Its natural opposite, “Fast in–Slow Out,” is a terrible racing technique, commonly executed by amateurs because it is the natural tendency of inexperienced drivers.

» 180°-TURNS (HAIRPINS)



Hairpin turns generally have two accepted lines, which depend on circumstances. For safety (low-risk cornering), the easiest line to execute is the one that hugs the inside of the turn, keeping wide on both the entry and exit.

The other line is faster, but it is more challenging and requires more practice. Start at the center of the turn entry, move to the outside edge of the turn when you pass the middle of the apex and follow the outside to the turn exit; you should still be hugging the outside edge, maximizing your exit speed, when you shoot out of the corner.

» CHICANES



Chicanes create a horizontal diversion in the track. Treat them as S-turns with a narrower path between the curve apexes. In city driving, chicanes are used to divert the path of travel, shifting it sideways. On closed circuits, they are a short, tight challenge.

Chicanes get even more complicated when elevation changes are thrown into the mix. Try to go through them in as straight a line as possible, from the inside line of one curve to the inside line of the next. The straighter your line, the faster your exit.

» DOUBLE APEXES



Double apexes can be treated like hairpin corners. The difference is that they have a straightaway within the corner, effectively separating it into two parts.

Base your decision on which line to take on the track conditions before and after the turn. How do you want—or how are you able—to enter and exit?

» DECREASING AND INCREASING TURNS



Decreasing turns start with a wider radius and become tighter as you get deeper into the corner. These are possibly the most challenging turns in terms of maintaining proper alignment and speed. They are also the most frequent cause of spins and collisions with the outer guard rail at the turn exit. Cut in close to the inside as you enter the turn, then move to the outside as you exit, applying full throttle.

These become wider in radius as you get deeper into the turn. Start cornering early and keep tight to the apex as you exit the corner.

» NITRO



The Nitrous Oxide system has been redesigned this year, into a perpetually regenerating supply, with one condition: You must reach 50 mph to start the refill process. The faster you go, the faster it fills up. The Nitrous gauge fills up much more rapidly if you're going over 100 mph. There are no fancy tricks needed to regenerate it, just speed. You must, however, install a Nitrous Oxide performance upgrade on your car before you can reap the benefits.

When the upgrade is installed, you will see Nitro gauges on your in-game HUD screen. This gauge tracks your current N_2O level and indicates when your tank is empty and in need of regeneration. Check the gauge often to know when the extra boost is available.

How you use your Nitro is up to you. You can use it off the starting line to get into the middle gears quicker, or to push your ride to new top speeds. Either way, hang on to your hat!

» SPEEDBREAKER



Speedbreaker, a new feature this year, brings a fresh element to high-speed racing. Imagine yourself a pro racer, with supernatural reflexes and razor-sharp intuition. When you get into your groove on the course, things seem to slow down. Everything moves in slow motion, giving you the ability to react to impossible circumstances or pull off dangerous and unbelievably daring maneuvers.

No need to use your imagination—Speedbreaker gives you the ability to slow down time. When you activate it, you have a limited time to pull off your moves before normal time resumes (you can, however, hit the button again to come out of Speedbreaker mode). Conserve it and use it wisely when it is truly needed. This is one thing you don't want to be short of in dire circumstances.

Another important aspect of Speedbreaker is that when you're in this mode, your car takes on incredible characteristics:

- Vehicle mass increases
- Traction increases
- Steering increases

With these changes to your ride in mind, imagine hitting a roadblock normally, and then imagine a train plowing through a roadblock. For much more drama and significant effect, activate Speedbreaker just before you contact the cars in a roadblock. Be sure to deactivate once you get away.



tip
Speedbreaker regenerates much like Nitrous Oxide; it recharges slowly with speed once you are traveling faster than 100mph. However if you want to fill the gauge much more quickly, try some extended power slides with the handbrake. Using this strategy you should be able to fill your Speedbreaker gauge with only a few good drifts—the longer you sustain a drift, the faster the gauge fill rate accelerates!

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- RACING 101

THE RIDES

UPGRADES

CAREER MODE

TRACKS

ONLINE PLAY

BEHIND THE SCENES

APPENDIX