

# Video Game Review: ‘Street Fighter IV’ Could Bring Fighting Genre Off the Mat With Nearly Perfect Game

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on March 5, 2009 - 6:23pm

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CHICAGO – We are undeniably in a gaming era in which the first-person shooter is king, but players of a certain age can remember a time when fighting games ruled the day. “Street Fighter IV” has the potential to reverse the FPS trend.

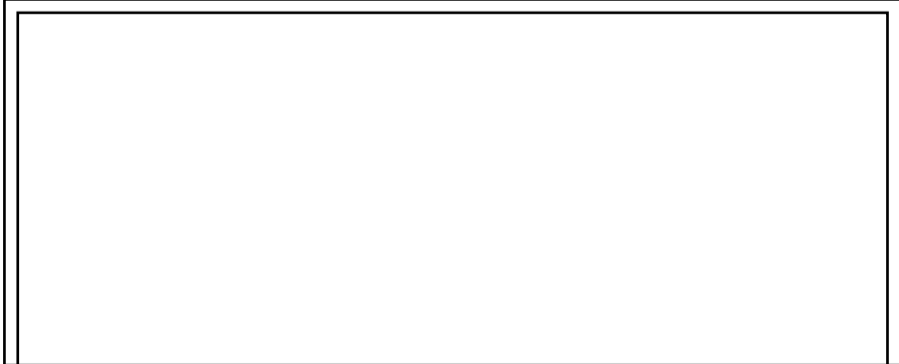
There are still some fun punch-n-kick games on the market like “Super Smash Bros. Brawl” and “Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe” was surprisingly enjoyable, but fighting games are not as prevalent as they were when “Mortal Kombat” and “Street Fighter” sequels ruled the arcade universe.

I have to admit, Capcom got me a copy of “Street Fighter IV” after the wave of positive reviews that accompanied the title on opening day. The 94 on Metacritic puts the game number six ALL-TIME for PS3 titles, right after “Metal Gear Solid IV” and right above “Elder Scrolls IV,” two undeniably awesome releases. So, my expectations were through the roof.



Street Fighter IV  
Photo credit: Capcom

At first, “Street Fighter IV” failed to meet those expectations. Yeah, the graphics are impressive and it’s got a beautiful mix of nostalgic and next-gen style, but what’s all the raving about? It’s just another fighting game.





Street Fighter IV  
Photo credit: Capcom

I only mention this as an introduction to the review to prepare you for the same reaction. When some games get such incredible praise, it can be easy to be let down. Don't give up on "Street Fighter IV". After just about an hour, not long at all in the gaming world, it clicked and this has become one of those titles that calls to me from the other room.

You know what I'm talking about. You're doing something else and not even thinking about gaming when an urge hits you and you simply have to play a certain title or it won't go away. It's like having to hear a song that's stuck in your head or it won't go away. That's what "Street Fighter IV" will do to you. It will get under your skin and become addictive.

Why? There are a number of reasons but I think one of the most impressive things about "Street Fighter IV" is the built-in learning curve. As with a lot of great games, it's an easy title to play, but a hard one to master. The developers of "SF IV" have perfectly balanced the accomplishment an average gamer will be able to reach each time they pick up the controller making for a title that doesn't feel too easy or too hard.

And really that's what most gamers are looking for. No one likes a game that they can pick up and breeze through like a demo. but you also don't want to be frustrated after parting with sixty hard-earned dollars and feel like you'll never be able to see all of the graphics you just paid for. It's a balancing act and it's one that "Street Fighter IV" nails.



Street Fighter IV  
Photo credit: Capcom

Now for the specifics. "Street Fighter IV" is a lovingly nostalgic update of a classic franchise. Don't expect "Soul Calibur IV"-style characters. The fighters in Capcom's title look 2D but with a next-gen sheen. Honestly, it's an amazing blend of what fans who grew up with the franchise expect from a "Street Fighter" title and breathtakingly new visuals.

The game is beautiful to look at and arguably bridges the gap between gaming generations better than any title in a long time. It's one of those rare games that you could have fun watching your friend play. It looks that cool.

But what about the butt-kicking? All 12 classic members of the "Street Fighter II" squadron are on-board with four new competitors. Each

fighter has their own strengths and weaknesses, adding to the replay value of the game. When you get through the difficult arcade mode with a quick, small character, you could easily go back and have a very different experience with a hulking, larger character.

The controls and gameplay in “Street Fighter IV” are shockingly fluid and that’s what is going to be the real draw of the title. Fighting games are often just a series of button-mashing affairs, but there’s actually some strategy to the gameplay in “SF IV” and that’s what sets it apart. The combos are not easy to learn but also far-from-impossible like some in recent fighting titles.



Street Fighter IV  
Photo credit: Capcom

Once again, you could win a fight with just one of the six punch and kick buttons or you can try and master something more complex. The levels of gameplay make this a title that appeals to both experienced fighters and newcomers to the genre. Of course, the experienced fighter will probably kick the newcomer’s ass.

And that’s where “Street Fighter IV” really gets fun. The online gameplay is not only some of the most lag-free that I’ve seen but it’s a constant barrage of competitors. If you’re playing “Arcade Mode,” you can turn on a function where someone can challenge you at any time to a fight. I was never left unchallenged long enough to see one fight in arcade mode if I had requests on. It seems like there are lines of people itching to get in the “Street Fighter” ring. It’s like being in a crowded arcade and everyone has unlimited funds.

That sense of arcade competitiveness is what really sets “Street Fighter IV” apart. It’s like that machine that you would plug quarters into when you were a kid but it’s got some of the best graphics that the next-gen systems have seen. And I have a feeling it will be one of the most popular online games all year long. See you online.

*‘Street Fighter IV’ was released and developed by Capcom. It is rated T (Teen). The version reviewed was on the PS3, but the title is also available on the XBox 360 and the PC. It was released on February 17th, 2009.*



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