

The Art of the Completionist Gameplay Guide for The Last of Us Part II Remastered

When I first loaded up The Last of Us Part II Remastered on a PlayStation 5, I knew I wasn't just in for a story. I was in for a challenge that would test every instinct I had built over years of playing Naughty Dog titles. The 4K resolution and silky 60 frames per second make Ellie's world feel almost tactile, but what really drew me in was the idea of a no damage run on Grounded+ difficulty while still grabbing all collectibles. That kind of run demands more than just quick reflexes. It demands a completionist gameplay guide approach that weaves together stealth, resource management, and deep knowledge of every corner of Seattle and Jackson Hole.

Let me be clear: a true completionist gameplay guide is not a list of where to find every trading card or coin. It is a philosophy. It is the difference between finishing the game and mastering it. When you combine the highest difficulty with the goal of taking zero damage, every encounter becomes a puzzle. Every bullet counts. Every bottle you throw to distract a runner is a decision that ripples forward into the next fight. And when you add the all collectibles requirement, you cannot afford to rush past any room or skip any dialogue line that might hint at a hidden artifact.

Why Grounded+ Changes Everything

Grounded+ is not just a difficulty slider. It strips away the training wheels. Enemies see you faster, hit harder, and flank with an intelligence that feels almost human. In a standard playthrough you can trade blows and heal. In a no damage run on Grounded+, one mistake means restarting the encounter. I have spent forty-five minutes on a single room in the Seattle hospital, learning the patrol patterns of WLF soldiers until I could ghost through without a single scratch. That level of repetition is boring unless you have a plan. A [completionist gameplay guide](#) gives you that plan by showing you the safest paths, the best use of the environment, and the order of collectible locations that minimizes backtracking.

The DualSense controller adds a layer of feedback that helps. You can feel the tension in the triggers, the vibration of a clicker in the distance. But no controller can save you from a bad approach. You need to know, for example, that in the early chapter with Joel Miller, you have a brief window to grab a few collectibles before the narrative forces you forward. Miss that window and you either reload a save or accept a hole in your collection. A good walkthrough flags those moments.

Building a Loadout for Maximum Upgrades

Maximum upgrades in The Last of Us Part II Remastered are not handed to you. You earn them through pills, supplements, and skill tree points scattered across the world. In a no damage run you cannot afford to waste resources on perks you will not use. Stealth gameplay is king. So I prioritize the stealth tree first: quieter movement, faster prone crawl, and the ability to hold breath longer while aiming a bow. Those upgrades let me clear rooms without ever triggering combat. Only after the stealth tree is maxed do I invest in health and weapon sway, and even then only because some boss fights force a confrontation.

Here is a short list of the upgrades I consider essential for a completionist run:

- Stealth 2 (quieter movement), lets you walk past clickers without alerting them.
- Precision 3 (reduced sway), crucial for headshots at range without wasting ammo.
- Crafting speed 1, saves a second or two in every crafting window, which adds up.
- Health 3, a buffer for the rare moment you misjudge a jump or a trap.
- Hold breath duration 2, necessary for the long-distance bow shots in the forest sections.

These choices come from trial and error. I have restarted the game three times because I spent points on weapon recoil reduction, only to realize I was never firing enough bullets to benefit. The skill tree is a puzzle in itself, and completing it with maximum upgrades requires you to know exactly which encounters give you the most parts and supplements.

Chronological Mode and the Story of Two Journeys

One of the most interesting features of this remaster is chronological mode. It rearranges the timeline so that you experience the story in a linear order, rather than the back-and-forth between Ellie and Abby Anderson that the original release used. For a completionist, this changes everything. In the standard version, collectibles tied to Abby's sections are spread across the middle and end of the game, and you might miss context for why a certain artifact matters. With chronological mode, you get a cleaner flow, which makes it easier to track collectible locations without flipping between chapters.

I recommend playing through the game once in chronological mode just to map every item. Then, on your no damage run, you can skip the exploration and focus purely on execution. That second run is where a completionist gameplay guide becomes indispensable. You already know where the trading cards and training manuals are. Now you need to know how to get them without taking a hit. In the Jackson Hole stadium, for example, there is a collectible inside a locked room that requires you to solve a puzzle while avoiding infected. The guide tells you the exact route to sprint between safe zones. Without it, you waste time and health.

Collecting Everything Without Losing Momentum

The all collectibles requirement is the part that most players find tedious. There are over 200 items in the game: coins, cards, artifacts, journal entries, and more. In a standard run you might pick up half of them and move on. A completionist cannot do that. You have to check every drawer, every corner, every optional dialogue that triggers a collectible spawn. But doing that while also maintaining a no damage run is exhausting if you do not have a system.

I break the game into zones. Seattle day one, Seattle day two, and so on. Before I enter a zone, I open the walkthrough and note the collectible locations that are off the critical path. I mark them on a mental map. Then I clear the enemies in that zone using stealth, grab the items, and move on. If an area has a boss fight, I do the collectible run first, then reload the checkpoint and do the boss fight fresh. That way I never risk taking damage during a fight while still carrying a valuable item. It is slower, but it is reliable.



A few collectibles are missable. Some require you to interact with an object before a story trigger, or they disappear after a certain event. The training manual in the theater, for instance, must be picked up before the WLF siege begins. A good guide flags these timestamps. I have learned the hard way that missing a single artifact means restarting the entire chapter.

The Stealth Mindset for No Damage Runs

Stealth gameplay in The Last of Us Part II Remastered is deeper than it first appears. It is not just about crouching and hiding in grass. It is about manipulating enemy AI. You can throw a

bottle to draw a guard into a dark corner. You can whistle to line up two enemies for a double takedown. You can use the environment to create noise that masks your footsteps. In a no damage run, you become a ghost. You never trade shots. You never let an enemy get a clear line of sight. You use the listen mode sparingly because it drains focus, and you save your silenced weapons for dogs, which can track your scent.

The boss fights are the hardest part. Abby's fight against the Rat King, for example, forces you into a close-quarters arena with limited cover. In a standard run you might tank a few hits and heal. In a no damage run you have to memorize the attack patterns and dodge at the exact frame. I spent two hours on that fight alone. The trick is to stay in the center of the room and use the pillars as obstacles. Do not chase the boss. Let it come to you. That advice came from a community walkthrough, and it saved my run.

Practical Tools for the Journey

Beyond the game itself, a few external tools help. I keep a printed map of Seattle with all collectible locations marked. I use the in-game chapter select to verify that I have not missed anything. And I watch video walkthroughs of specific encounters to see the exact timing of enemy patrols. The 4K resolution helps here because you can pause the video and see the pixel-perfect position of a collectible behind a crate.

The PlayStation 5's fast loading also makes a difference. In the original PS4 version, reloading a checkpoint could take thirty seconds. On PS5, it is almost instant. That speed encourages experimentation. You can try a risky route to grab a collectible, fail, and reload in seconds. Without that speed, a completionist run would be twice as long and half as fun.

One last note about the DualSense controller: the haptic feedback can actually help with stealth. When you are prone and crawling through tall grass, the controller vibrates gently to indicate the texture of the ground. You can feel when you are about to step on broken glass or a creaky floorboard. That feedback lets you adjust your path before you make a sound. It is a small thing, but in a no damage run, small things are everything.

Final Thoughts on the Completionist Path

I have been playing Naughty Dog games since the original Uncharted. The Last of Us Part II Remastered is the most demanding of them all, not because of its difficulty but because of its scope. To run it with no damage, all collectibles, and maximum upgrades on Grounded+ is to commit to hundreds of hours of focused play. But every time I find that last artifact or survive a boss fight without a scratch, I feel a satisfaction that a casual playthrough cannot match. A completionist gameplay guide is not a shortcut. It is a companion. It helps you see the game

the way its designers intended: as a world worth exploring fully, even when the stakes are at their highest.

If you are thinking about starting this kind of run, pick a difficulty you are comfortable with first. Learn the map. Learn the enemy behavior. Then, when you are ready, turn up the difficulty and use the guide to fill in the gaps. The journey through Seattle and Jackson Hole with Ellie, Abby, and the memory of Joel Miller is one of the best in gaming. Experiencing it completely, without a single wasted bullet or unnecessary hit, is the ultimate way to honor that story.