STAR TREK
TACTICAL ASSAULT

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Backgrounder:
Frequently Asked Questions

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QUICKSILVER SOFTWARE, INC.

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Q: What is Star Trek: Tactical Assault?

Control the complete Star Trek experience

Fans around the world know Star Trek as one of the great science fiction franchises. Numerous television series and movies have created a rich background story, intertwining the histories of humans with now-classic races such as Klingons, Romulans, and of course Vulcans.

Quicksilver designed *Star Trek: Tactical Assault* to let fans add their own chapters to the history of Star Trek, experiencing new situations written by celebrated writers from the show and set in the classic Trek era. Every element of the game, from the ships and races to the locations and individual personalities, has been crafted carefully to be true to the original franchise and provide new and exciting insights about the Trek universe for fans and newcomers alike.

Tactical Assault is an immersive handheld game reminiscent of Quicksilver's hit game *Star Trek: Starfleet Command*. Using a proven combat formula, it once again puts the player into the captain's chair as he progresses through a new "season" of exciting and tension-filled missions. The story includes two full campaigns written by celebrated Star Trek Authors Dorothy Fontana and Derek Chester. Leading the bridge crew in the command of new vessels, you explore strange new worlds and once again face the unknown. This is the classic *Star Trek* formula presented in a visually engaging environment for the Nintendo DS and the Sony PSP.
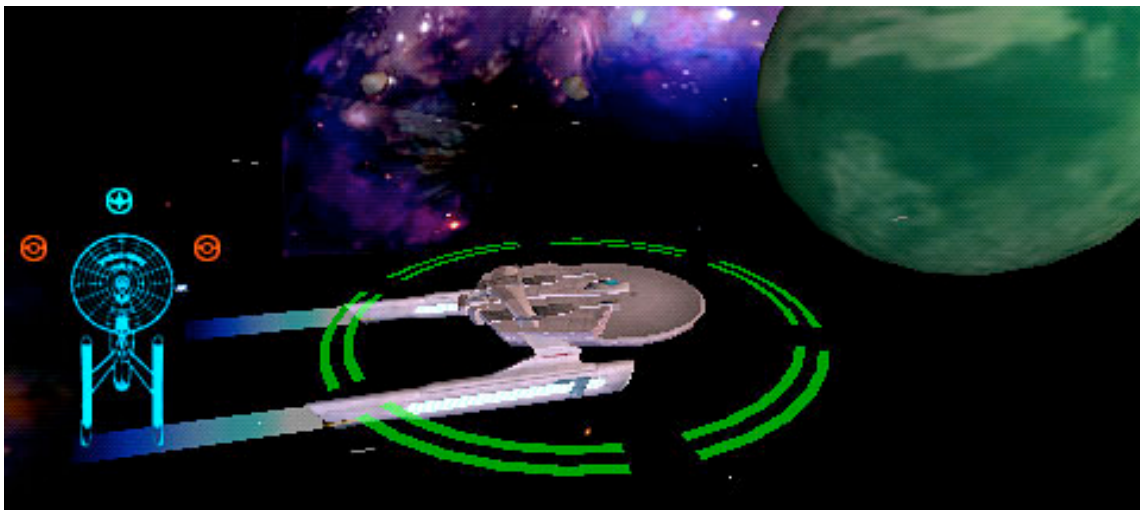
Image taken from Star Trek: Tactical Assault PSP

Q: What are the major features of the game?

1. Real-time Tactical Combat plus RPG-style Diplomacy

Scenario tracks let you captain large, powerful Federation ships and nimble, maneuverable Klingon Birds of Prey. Combat is a combination of raw firepower and effective maneuvering.

Two scenario tracks place you firmly in the captain's chair. Each scenario presents you with decision points that can affect your progress there and throughout the rest of your campaign.

2. Two Unique Campaigns: Federation and Klingon

Just like the shows and movies, split-second command decisions can change the course of battle or even avoid it completely. Missions were designed to play out just like the episodes from the original series. Quicksilver worked with celebrated *Star Trek* writers Dorothy Fontana and Derek Chester to bring each of the two campaigns its own very unique flavor, complete with behaviors and decisions appropriate to the race you're playing. A total of 30 scenarios explore the many challenges facing captains in the Star Trek universe. This time, though, the decisions are entirely in your hands.

3. Twenty Different Ships Available

Star Trek: Tactical Assault includes a full range of both Federation, Klingon and Romulan ships. In addition, two ships each from the Gorn and Orion fleets are also available. Once unlocked, all ships are available in multiplayer modes.

See the Gameplay Details section of this FAQ for more about the ships in the game.

4. Crew Members with Upgradeable Skills

Star Trek: Tactical Assault lets you guide the training of your crew so they can focus on improving specific skills. Your goal as commander is to select a set of skills which best matches your playing style. These skills will translate directly into improvements in your ship's capabilities: better weapons, faster maneuvering, or improved efficiency, to name a few.

A complete list of crew upgrades may be found in the manual for the game.

5. Head-to-Head Wireless Multiplayer

Tactical Assault features the ability to face off against another player in head-to-head combat over a local wireless network. Skirmish and Battlefest multiplayer modes are supported.

A variety of different skirmish maps is provided, and you can select the starting skill level of your crew if you want to do a little handicapping. All five races are available for multiplayer games, though some need to be unlocked in single-player campaign mode first.

6. Making the Most of Both Platforms

Tactical Assault takes advantage of the unique capabilities of both the Nintendo DS and Sony PSP handheld platforms.

On the DS, you can control every aspect of your ship's functioning with the touch pad. The optional Rumble Pak is also supported.

On the PSP, you'll see a high-resolution introductory video sequence, and the menus include much more visual pizzazz, thanks to the greater storage available on the Sony UMD disc. Ships are clearly rendered using the full array of PSP 3D hardware capabilities, including bump mapping. Weapons make use of a number of particle effects, and ship damage is clearly shown using damage textures, sparks and flames which pour out of them when they're damaged.

The full variety of both Federation and Klingon scenarios is available on both the PSP and the DS. They both feature solitaire as well as head-to-head play.

Q: Space is 3D, so why is this game's combat in 2D?

There are a variety of reasons we made this decision. For one, in many ways it's more true to Star Trek. In the franchise, combat has almost always been 2D, especially in the Original Series era that is the focus of this game. In virtually every encounter, ships are oriented to "face" one another as if on the same plane. You never see one ship "upside down" when it approaches another, even though that would make perfect sense in a gravity-free environment. Of course, Kirk's battle with Khan in the Mutara Nebula is a notable exception. But it's a rare one.

The other large concern was the controls. Doing "true" 3D space combat requires control over pitch, roll and yaw. That's six degrees of freedom. With the limited number of buttons on the handheld platforms, adding 3D movement would have likely resulted in a control scheme that was complicated and frustrating. Instead, by keeping the game on a 2D plane, we were able to fit all the combat controls comfortably on the four action buttons and four directional arrows, with a few special-case functions like recharging and overloading available via the R Button. This keeps the game easy to control and allows the player to focus on the more interesting parts of the combat: fire and maneuver.

BTW, Quicksilver's PC game *Star Trek: Starfleet Command*, which was an inspiration for this product, employs exactly the same 2D-style ship movement as *Tactical Assault*. That game and its sequels were top-sellers for years. Going with 2D combat was considered a risky decision at that time, but we felt it was the best way to focus the gameplay. We stand by that decision today, for both titles.

Q: How much skill is involved in combat?

The combat system for Tactical Assault has been built from the ground up specifically to support the handheld market. Combat relies on timing and patience. This is a thinking game, with moves and counter moves that make all the difference. It may look simple at first, but there's a lot of strategy that experienced players can learn if they're going to be effective in fighting multiple opponents in later scenarios.

Ship systems and their capabilities are at your fingertips with controls which easily allow you to balance weapons, energy and shields to optimum advantage without feeling too cumbersome for the handheld controls. Movement is simple: use the directional controls to increase or decrease your speed, and to initiate turns. Star Trek ships are big – this isn't a small-ship fighter game. It takes a moment for them to turn and reach a desired direction.

Shields are arrayed all around your ship. Once you learn how to perform basic maneuvers, you'll see how to keep your strongest shields facing your opponents. You'll also discover when it's important to move in close to the other ship, and when to keep your distance or try to dodge between asteroids and planets for safety.

Also true to Star Trek, weapons aren't instantly available for use. They take time to recharge – some more than others. As a result, it's important to make sure you know how to take your best shot at your opponent. It's often a good idea to close in for a powerful shot, then back off a long way while your weapons recharge. Try to draw enemy fire while his ship isn't at optimal range, then take a shot when you can do proportionately more damage.

Weapon ranges vary a lot. Federation ships can try using Photon Torpedoes at great distance, to inflict significant damage while still far from their opponents. Romulans have to get in close to use their best weapons. Weapons also have "firing arcs": they can only shoot in certain directions away from your ship. Thus, you may have to maneuver and take repeated shots at an opponent to use all of your available firepower. See the Gameplay Details section for charts and tables describing ships and their equipment configurations in more detail.

Beyond the basics described above, special emergency maneuvers and weapon overloads are also possible. For example, you can perform an Emergency Turn to get away from an approaching enemy ship if you're in a vulnerable position. Or you can overload your weapons for an extreme boost in damage, discharging them at point-blank range for maximum effect.

During the course of the game you'll need to master more than 20 ships split between 5 different races, each with its own advantages and disadvantages. In addition, a host of crew promotion points will allow you to upgrade your ship capabilities beyond Starfleet or Empire specifications.

Q: Why can't I play as Captain Kirk or Mr. Spock?

The reason for this decision was simple. We wanted to allow the player to create a new story and experience outcomes that could not have befallen the well-known characters of the Enterprise, whose story arcs are already well documented and frozen in their canonical state. To accomplish this, we introduced a new set of characters within the existing Kirk/Enterprise era, under the expert guidance of our writers, D.C. Fontana and Derek Chester. The story lines, locations and even some of the characters intersect those in the series and movies, while at the same time illuminating new and different events which took place during the classic Star Trek Original Series era.

Q: How do my decisions affect the mission outcomes?

What you choose to do as captain will have a dramatic effect on the outcome of many scenarios. You may end up going to different places, fighting different battles, and being faced with different choices. Often, the right answer is not obvious, and you'll need to think carefully in order to maximize your score. A true leader will not hesitate to make tough moral choices.

The game features many alternate scenario endings. For example, in one of the early Federation missions, you're asked to assist a mining operation that's being attacked. But the situation is not that simple, and the obvious course of action turns out to be exactly what you shouldn't do. Even in this simple, early scenario, you'll want to play it twice just to understand the impact of your one critical decision.

Similarly, several missions challenge you to take sides in a battle. Depending on whose side you take, the battle that you fight will be quite different. For example, one of the Klingon missions finds you piloting a refitted Romulan vessel into Romulan space, spying on the enemy. Suddenly, you are confronted by both Romulan and Klingon vessels. You must decide whether to side with the Romulans, protecting your secret identity but potentially destroying the Klingon vessel, or siding with the Klingons and revealing the existence of Klingon spies in Romulan space.

In many cases, you'll be challenged with tough choices about following orders, loyalty, and proper policy. A Federation commander will answer those differently than a Klingon. You must understand who you are and act in a manner consistent with your upbringing in order to get the maximum score in a given scenario. Such decisions are not always obvious, and you may find yourself playing through a scenario more than once in order to find the most honorable path.

Scenarios typically have four possible ratings: Failure, Poor, Good and Excellent. Each gives you different numbers of upgrade points to allocate to your crew, and represents a different way of solving the challenge. For example, if you decide to be prudent and refuse to lower shields in a tense situation, you might lose the opportunity to save other lives while protecting those of your crew. Yet it might turn out that taking the dramatic risk of lowering shields, exposing yourself to enemy attack, might in the end save many more Federation lives later on.

These are just a few examples of how the scenarios in *Tactical Assault* are integrated into the gameplay, and why the game is far more than a simple series of combat exercises.

Q: Is this a dumbed-down version of the PC game Starfleet Command?

No. It's a completely new game, designed from the ground up for handheld play. *Star Trek: Tactical Assault* borrows many good gameplay concepts from Quicksilver's hit title *Star Trek: Starfleet Command*, and adds several new ones. But it's definitely not the same game.

Tactical Assault is certainly simpler, for several reasons. It's a handheld game, which means that there's no keyboard or mouse to allow for complex menus or maneuvering controls. And the screens on the handhelds are so small that

complicated information displays would not be readable. Finally, *Command* is a very complicated Star Trek space combat simulator. While that makes for a great PC game, it's not the sort of title that appeals to handheld gamers.

Tactical Assault includes a rich RPG-style story engine which allows for branching scenarios with sophisticated dialog and numerous decision points. This brings much deeper story elements to the game than its predecessor – a perfect fit for handheld gaming.

Q: Is this game true to Star Trek?

Definitely. Quicksilver and Bethesda worked closely with experts from Paramount (now CBS) to ensure that every aspect of the game was respectful of the Star Trek franchise.

Every ship seen in the game was either modeled on detailed source materials available from Paramount or was created through careful extrapolation of known canonical elements. All of the ship concept drawings, models and final textures were reviewed and approved by Paramount. This process extends beyond the mere look of the ships. Their weapon types and mounting locations are also based on Paramount-generated reference materials, including movies and television shows.

The story line was written by two veteran Star Trek writers: D.C. Fontana and Derek Chester. Fans of the series will recognize D.C. as the author of many of the best episodes of the Original Series, and a story consultant on that series as well as later Star Trek shows and films. Together, they made sure that every element of the scenarios and story lines in the game were "historically accurate" and fit solidly within the Star Trek canon. In addition, they brought a depth of detail that would have been impossible for the development team to have achieved on their own.

In fact, *Tactical Assault* is closer to Star Trek canon than the title which inspired it, Quicksilver's *Star Trek: Starfleet Command* (Interplay, 1999). That title used a different combat system and featured many weapons and options not mentioned in the series or the movies. And it had much less in the way of a story line.

Q: I want more.

We are delighted that fans have such high expectations for Star Trek games. There are many active discussion boards about this and other Star Trek games. We do read them and enjoy hearing feedback about desired features for possible new products. While we cannot comment on future games, we can say that we are dedicated to making the best possible products and that, with the support of our enthusiastic fans, want to continue exploring the possibilities for other Star Trek games.

Image taken from Star Trek: Tactical Assault PSP

Q: Do you take advantage of each platform's capabilities?

Yes.

Star Trek: Tactical Assault was developed with both platforms in mind. Both include the same storyline and play mechanics so that you aren't missing out on anything significant regardless of which handheld system you own. Still, there are some minor differences between the two systems.

Nintendo DS

The main advantage of the Nintendo DS is the use of the touch pad. To take advantage of this, *Tactical Assault* was created so that almost all aspects of his ship can be controlled via the touch pad alone. Many of Nintendo's first-party titles barely use this feature, but *Tactical Assault* has it built into the interface as a design requirement. There were definitely limits over what can be done in memory and visually for the Nintendo DS, but this feature is one that makes the DS version of the game stand out.

In addition, the two screens in the DS allow ship status to be displayed on the lower screen and 3D combat to be focused on the upper screen. This streamlines the visuals and makes the active combat display a little less busy than on the PSP.

On the DS, you can control every aspect of your ship via the Star Trek LCARS system, replicated on the touch pad. Additionally, Tactical Assault is the only third-party DS title to support the Rumble Pak accessory.

Sony PSP

The major advantage of the Sony PSP is clearly the graphics. *Tactical Assault* on PSP is one of the few PSP titles that uses bump and specular mapping for the models and environments. These add a great deal to the look of the ships. Watch the subtle changes in texture as your ship turns, and the level of detail visible in the damage textures.

Likewise, with the additional processing power and graphics hardware available on the PSP, we created a more advanced particle engine to deal with special effects such as fire and sparks emitted from damaged ships. It's exciting to play a close battle, watching your ship spout flames as you limp through that final maneuver, charge weapons and deliver the killing blow to your equally injured opponent.

Another PSP advantage is the analog stick which allows the user to move the camera around to better spot upcoming obstacles.

Finally, the greater storage available on the PSP's UMD disc allowed us to create a cool intro movie and much prettier, animated set of main menu screens.

GAMEPLAY DETAILS

Q: How do the ships compare with one another?

Star Trek: Tactical Assault features a total of twenty different ships based on the original series and movies. Their weapons complements and relative strengths have been tuned to fit within the parameters established by Paramount Studios.

Where certain classes of ships did not exist in the canon, Quicksilver's design team worked closely with experts from Paramount to create new ship designs faithful to the design and functional intent of the originals. For example, very few Romulan ships are seen in the original series and movies, so the Original Series Romulan vessels were combined with other models seen in subsequent shows and movies. The result is a complete set of hulls for the three major races, all true to the franchise.

Weapons

All ships have two types of weapons. The Primary is a beam weapon. The Secondary is always a projectile weapon.

Weapon effectiveness depends on several factors:

- Base weapon power: how many points of damage the weapon can do at point-blank range
- Range from target: weapon power varies depending on range. Typically, it's either the same at all ranges, or declines with range. Some weapons decline a lot faster than others
- Weapon level: higher numbers are better, but there's no simple relationship. A Level 2 phaser is only slightly more powerful than a Level 1, but a Level 2 disruptor is much more powerful than a Level 1
- Recharge time: ranges from 5-25 seconds for beam weapons, and as much as 50 seconds for Romulan Plasma Bolts
- Overloading: power will increase, but the effective range will be reduced

There are three levels of Phasers (Federation beam weapons) and four levels of Disruptors (Klingon/Romulan beam weapons).

- Romulan beam weapons are the weakest by far, but they have good range
- Federation beam weapons are significantly stronger than Romulan, and have slightly longer effective range
- Klingon beam weapons are the most powerful at short range, but fall off rapidly and are less effective than those of the Federation at ranges over 150

- Romulan beam weapons improve the most as the level goes up, but their recharge time doubles
- Klingon beam weapons improve like the Romulans', but their recharge times are the longest, doubling at the top level
- Federation beam weapons improve the least, but start out more powerful

Note: it's possible for a ship to have more than one level of beam weapon mounted at different locations around the ship (for example, big phasers up front and smaller ones in the rear). The charts below show the highest-level technology available on a given ship; this does not imply that all weapons are of that same level.

Ships can also have one or more Photon Torpedoes (Federation/Klingon projectile weapons) or Plasma Bolts (Romulan projectile weapons).

- Klingon torpedoes are the weakest of all; damage is the same at all ranges
- Federation torpedoes are quite a bit better than Klingons', and they also stay the same at all ranges
- Romulan Plasma Bolts are much better than others at close range (less than 50 or 75), but their damage falls off quickly with distance, so closer is better

Federation and Klingon Heavy Cruisers and above will have two torpedo launchers. Romulan Light and Heavy Cruisers have two, and their Dreadnaughts have three. Gorn and Orion ships only have one torpedo launcher apiece.

Shields

Ships from all races have six shields. They all work in the same way. What differentiates them is the relative strength of each of the shields.

Firing Arcs

Not all weapons can fire in the same direction. Weapons mounted on the very front of a ship cannot fire to the rear, for example, and weapons mounted on wingtips can fire to one side but not the other.

Maneuverability

One of the most important aspects of ships in *Tactical Assault* is their top speed and their ability to turn. Typically, as would be expected, smaller ships are more nimble. There are some exceptions, such as the Federation Excelsior, which is very fast despite its large size.

Federation Ships

Federation ships have a "balanced" shield arrangement. All shields are pretty much equal in strength. They always have balanced firing arcs for their weapons, and are able to bring significant firepower to bear on their enemies from most facings.

Federation Ship Size	Primary Weapons	Secondary Weapons	Shields	Firing Arcs	Speed
Frigate	Type 1 Phasers	Mark II Photons	Below Average / Balanced	Balanced	Above Average
Destroyer	Type 2 Phasers	Mark II Photons	Average / Balanced	Balanced	Average
Light Cruiser	Type 2 Phasers	Mark II Photons	Above Average / Balanced	Balanced	Average
Heavy Cruiser	Type 3 Phasers	Mark III Photons	Good / Balanced	Balanced	Average
Dreadnaught	Type 3 Phasers	Mark III Photons	Excellent / Balanced	Balanced	Below Average
Excelsior	Type 3 Phasers	Mark IV Photons	Good / Balanced	Balanced	Above Average

Klingon Ships

Klingon shields are "forward-facing" – most of the shield strength is towards the front of the ship, because Klingons want to discourage retreats.

Klingon weapons tend to be configured for forward-facing use. Some Klingon vessels, such as the small Bird of Prey, have no rear-facing weapons at all.

Klingon Ship Size	Primary Weapons	Secondary Weapons	Shields	Firing Arcs	Speed
Bird of Prey	Type 2 Disruptors	Mark I Photons	Below Average / Fwd Facing	Fwd Focused	Good
Destroyer	Type 3 Distruptors	Mark I Photons	Average / Forward Facing	Fwd Focused	Average
Light Cruiser	Type 3 Distruptors	Mark I Photons	Average / Forward Facing	Fwd Focused	Average
Heavy Cruiser	Type 4 Disruptors	Mark II Photons	Good / Forward Facing	Fwd Focused	Average
Dreadnaught	Type 4 Disruptors	Mark II Photons	Excellent / Forward Facing	Balanced	Average

Romulan Ships

Romulans put more shields on the rear of their ships, opting for a "rear-facing" arrangement that supports the hit-and-run style of combat that they employ in combination with the use of their cloaking devices.

Romulans are similar to Klingons. Most of their weaponry is directed towards the front of their ships.

Romulan Ship Size	Primary Weapons	Secondary Weapons	Shields	Firing Arcs	Speed
Frigate	Type 1 Disruptors	Mark I Plasma	Below Average / Rear Facing	Fwd Focused	Good
Destroyer	Type 2 Disruptors	Mark II Plasma	Below Average / Rear Facing	Fwd Focused	Good
Light Cruiser	Type 2 Disruptors	Mark II Plasma	Average / Rear Facing	Fwd Focused	Average
Heavy Cruiser	Type 3 Disruptors	Mark II Plasma	Average / Rear Facing	Fwd Focused	Average
Dreadnaught	Type 3 Disruptors	Mark III Plasma	Above Average / Rear Facing	Fwd Focused	Average

Gorn Ships

Gorn vessels have balanced firing arcs, like those of the Federation.

Gorn Ship Size	Primary Weapons	Secondary Weapons	Shields	Firing Arcs	Speed
Light Cruiser	Type 2 Phasers	Mark I Photons	Average / Balanced	Balanced	Average
Heavy Cruiser	Type 2 Phasers	Mark I Photons	Above Average / Balanced	Balanced	Average

Orion Ships

Orions, like Klingons, have forward-facing firing arcs.

Orion Ship Size	Primary Weapons	Secondary Weapons	Shields	Firing Arcs	Speed
Destroyer	Type 1 Phasers	Mark I Photons	Average / Balanced	Fwd Focused	Good
Heavy Cruiser	Type 2 Phasers	Mark II Photons	Above Average / Balanced	Fwd Focused	Average

Q: What is the best upgrade path in Federation missions?

There are many possible answers. One of the fun aspects of *Star Trek: Tactical Assault* is that there are many ways to win. How you play depends at least in part on your personality. That said, here are some tips about how to play, coming from the development team members who built the systems and know how they work.

Develop shield recharging capability early. This is a feature that only Federation crews are able to support. Being able to shore up that one weak shield can make a huge difference in combat, delaying the point at which your weapons systems or other components begin to take critical hits and fail completely. In addition, it puts you at a better starting point for the next sector, when a fraction of your shield damage will be repaired during warp.

Upgrade your Science Officer's Shield Recharge Efficiency (shield recharge takes less power) and your Engineer's Power Efficiency (power regenerates faster).

Next, focus on improving your weapon effectiveness at a distance. Photon Torpedoes are already an ideal Federation tool, because they do heavy damage no matter the range. Boost your overload efficiency or your accuracy, and you'll be even better equipped to fight Romulans and Klingons while staying outside of their optimal combat distances.

The Science Officer's Weapon Efficiency skill, Weapons Officer's Phaser and Photon Damage skill and Engineer's Phaser and Photon Efficiency skill are all well worth upgrading.

Finally, Federation ships are very strong. They have large hulls and large power reserves, but there's always room for a little more safety margin.

Useful skills in this area are the Captain's Damage Control (take less damage) and Power Capacity (adds more power).

By the way, make sure you're getting the best scores in each scenario by exploring all of the possible outcomes from the decisions that you make. Sometimes, the obvious choice may not be the best one. And sometimes the mission really can be completed, even though it looks impossible. Pay careful attention to the timing of your choices. In certain scenarios, when you make a choice is just as important as which choice you make.

Q: What is the best upgrade path in Klingon missions?

There are many possible answers. One of the fun aspects of *Star Trek: Tactical Assault* is that there are many ways to win. How you play depends at least in part on your personality. That said, here are some tips about how to play, coming from the development team members who built the systems and know how they work.

Overcome your fears, like a true Klingon, and focus on making your weapons even more effective and your maneuvering as fast as possible. Your ships are already

designed to be nimble, so focus first on boosting weapon damage and overloading efficiency. Give yourself the ability to make several hard, fast strikes at your opponent's ship. If you can break through a shield and deliver early hull damage, you'll have a continuing maneuver advantage through the rest of the battle.

The Science Officer's Overcharge Weapons Efficiency skill, Weapons Officer's Disruptor and Photon Damage skill and Engineer's Disruptor and Photon Efficiency skill are top picks for Klingon players.

Next you will probably want to defend against the inevitable attacks against your relatively weak aft shields, allowing you to last longer in battle.

The Captain's Damage Control skill is a good choice.

Klingon ships are comparatively underpowered versus their Federation counterparts, so any increase in your total available power is a key tactical advantage.

The Captain's Power Capacity skill is a good thing to have.

Finally, you'll want to consider enhancing your maneuvering ability. This will allow you to make your deadly attack runs even faster, and will also allow you to perform more effective (or more frequent) evasive maneuvers to avoid Romulan or Federation torpedoes.

Choose the Helm's Maneuverability skill or the Science Officer's Maneuvers Efficiency skill to make these actions more effective.

By the way, make sure you're getting the best scores in each scenario by exploring all of the possible outcomes from the decisions that you make. You're likely to face a number of challenging moral choices in your leadership role as a Klingon commander. Be sure you know what you really want. Also, remember that sometimes the mission really can be completed, even though it looks impossible. Pay careful attention to the timing of your choices. In certain scenarios, when you make a choice is just as important as which choice you make.

Q: How were the missions created?

When we began this project, we knew that a strong story line would help bring the game to life for players. Therefore, we designed a story engine that's very flexible and "data-driven" – it operates off of a series of saved data files stored in the cartridge or on the UMD disc.

Each scenario contains a map which designates the locations of all objects (planets, asteroids, and ships) and the visuals that will be used for the background elements.

Scenarios also have an arbitrary number of "triggers" that cause certain actions to occur at certain places or times. These are all specified using a custom scenario authoring system developed by several of our team members. Triggers can cause ships to appear or disappear, warp out, and start or stop fighting, to name a few possibilities.

In addition, triggers can initiate actions, which are decisions that require that the player make a choice. Up to three different options can be provided. Each of these can, in turn, activate additional triggers or actions.

As you can see, the system is very generalized. It's designed so that we can author complex scenarios and test them quickly before they're even implemented in the game. There's a complete simulator, written in Visual Basic, that allowed us to test many of the early scenarios well before the game engine was even completed.

The power and generality of the scripting engine allowed us to work closely with the writers for the game, translating their scripts into interactive form. They even showed us the value of certain additional features, which we added to the engine during the course of development. The result of this collaboration was that we were able to implement 30 unique and challenging scenarios with a very small and talented scenario creation team.

Q: How can I avoid hitting asteroids or planets accidentally?

This isn't hard, once you get the hang of it.

The key is to turn off your targeting periodically to check what's around and especially what's behind you. Just tap the L Button until you don't have any enemy ships targeted. This will switch you from "follower camera" mode to "over the shoulder camera" mode. It's then quite easy to see what obstacles are in your path and turn, if necessary, to avoid them.

Doesn't this make combat harder to manage? No, because there's enough time while weapons are recharging for you to look around and decide on a course of action. Switching camera modes takes only a moment, and you can switch right back quickly so you're ready to fire when weapons are back on line.

Managing your speed also helps. Speed is a double-whammy. Not only do you have less time to react at higher speeds, but you also have less ability to make quick changes in direction. When in a tight area of the map, watch your speed. Go only as fast as you have to, and slow down when you can. Likewise, be very careful when using emergency maneuvers in obstacle-filled regions. It's pretty easy to accelerate straight into a rock or a planet if they're just outside of your current cone of vision.

On the PSP version, you can also use the analog stick to move the camera for a better view of your surroundings. This is easier and faster than changing your target.

Q: What are reviewers saying about the game?

Here's a brief sampling of some of the positive reviews for *Tactical Assault*:

GAME VORTEX **80%**

"Star Trek Tactical Assault is a ship-on-ship combat game with all of the bells, whistles and minute control that Star Trek fans will appreciate.

"Where the PSP version of Tactical Assault really shines is its graphics. From the first menu screen (a faithful recreation of the USS Enterprise-A's bridge) to the detail and smoothness of each ship, I was just amazed by the game's ability to fit so much detail onto the handheld."

http://www.gamevortex.com/gamevortex/soft_rev.php/3361

Image taken from Star Trek: Tactical Assault PSP

4.5/5

"Gameplay: Varied gameplay and solid, tabletop-inspired combat make the game fun and easy to come back to. The missions are all short enough to be played in a sit-down stretch, which is a good design choice for a game on portable systems.

"Graphics: On the PSP, the graphics are all about the ships: in the DS, it's about the experience and interface, but both options make for a great visual experience.

"Overall: Whichever system you get it on - DS or PSP - you're going to like Tactical Assault."

http://www.glideunderground.com/modules.php?op=modload&name=
HTMLReviews&file=index&req=showcontent&id=235

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"The team at Quicksilver did a fantastic job at capturing the essence of the Star Trek universe. As commander of a starship, you are given command decisions, which directly impact the storyline of the game. During one of the earliest missions in the game you are sent to look into bandits trying to steel from a mining colony. When you get there, you are told where the bandits are, and are told to "Deal with them". Now as a starship captain, you can go "deal with them" or you can investigate and see if there is anything going on beneath the surface.

"Star Trek: Tactical Assault does a fantastic job with giving the player a feel of the Star Trek universe and what the commander of a starship had to go through in the shows."

http://www.gaming-age.com/cgi-
bin/reviews/review.pl?sys=psp&game=startrek_tacticalassault

4.0/5

"There have been many games based on the various Star Trek TV shows and films, with similarly varying quality levels. One of the better games was the strategy title *Starfleet Command*, and there is much about *Star Trek: Tactical Assault* that makes it feel like a spiritual successor – and that is a very good thing!

"There is plenty of depth in terms of scenarios and tactical decision-making…. There is considerable breadth of unit upgrades to support your tactical approach, and the controls for real-time battles work very well…. The lengthy single-player game features both Federation and Klingon campaigns, and it is a tribute to the solid and consistent design that many players argue over which was harder than the other.

"…there are some games that are genuinely challenging in a positive and rewarding way. *Star Trek: Tactical Assault* is one of those games."

http://www.gamerdad.com/detail.cfm?itemID=3449

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"An original cast of characters bring personality and humor to the game. Officers chime in with the old cardboard Star Trek dialogue, ranging from the alarmingly nerdy ("purging the engines IS fun") to over the top nerdy (your Klingon campaign starts, "We will bathe in the blood of our enemies!"). I greatly appreciated this approach….

"When your ship is destroyed in *Star Trek: Tactical Assault*, and I went through plenty of ships, the game over screen is a letter of condolence to the family of your main character Captain Reynolds. It's a cute gag and a telling sign - a lot of people are bashing this game on accusations of slow gameplay, but I think Tactical Assault is faithful to Star Trek with a bit of much-needed heart."

http://www.gamerevolution.com/review/ds/star_trek_tactical_assault

Q: What do players say about the game?

Player reviews of *Star Trek: Tactical Assault* have been very positive. Across the board, they've averaged several points above those of the professional reviewers.

The best example comes from GameSpot's page of comments about the Nintendo DS version. GameSpot gave the game a score of 6.2. But player reviews there consistently give the game an average score of 8.1 or 8.2 – a full two points above the review score. Here's what one of the players said:

> "Wow. Absolutely love it. A lot of reviews said that there wasn't enough Kirk to make this game Star Trek, but that's the reason I love it. So many games (Star Wars: Galaxies and such) do WAY TOO MUCH name dropping and make the game feel like you only occupy a tiny universe. This game essentially separates you completely, making it feel like it's your very own adventure. It's like a simpler version of Starfleet Command, which I also loved. If you're a Trek fan, you can't pass it up."

> "i was able to go in and play the perfect romulan in skirmish mode, be a badass klingon in the klingon campaign, and make the proper command decisions in the federation. the race's weaknesses and strengths were amazingly culled from the show itself, and i always made it back to the starbase "by the skin of my teeth" thanks to that knowledge. this is the ultimate combination of portable/onthe go/trekkie/nintendo-seal-of-approval quality you could ever want."

> Player reviews on Gamespot – Overall 8.2
> http://www.gamespot.com/ds/strategy/startrektacticalassault/players.html

Another choice site is Metacritic. Its combined score for covered review sites is a 66, yet the comments from players on the site give the game an equivalent score of 93. Here's what players had to say:

> "The making of a franchise is here, and with 2 solid campaigns and a fun couple skirmish modes this game comes with my highest reconmondation." [sic]

> "Excellent portable title. Controls are easy to use and smooth. Very small load times. Only drawback I can think of is that some have say the story is a bit linear, but considering that's essentially designed to be a playable TV mini-series. I can't seem to agree with those reviewers."

> "This is very fun in depth Tactical game. It really stands out on the PSP, the PSP features higher end graphics than the DS and is highly recommended. If you are a fan of Sims or Star Trek then you must get this game."

> Source:
> http://www.metacritic.com/games/platforms/psp/startrektacticalassault

The following comment came from Bethesda's forums:

> "I win! thanks for the great game, Quicksilver, best series of missions in any DS game."

> http://startrek.bethsoft.com/forums/index.php?showtopic=2033&st=0

This came from the TrekBBS system:

> "I bought it 2 days ago, and just finished the Starfleet campaign.

> "I don't have a PSP to compare, but I'm having a LOT of fun with this. The storyline is pretty cool, and I love having choices to make that make me think "What would a real Starfleet captain do..." (the diplomatic solution is usually the correct one)

> "And the touchscreen adds just that much to the fun factor."

> http://www.trekbbs.com/threads/showflat.php?Number=6816249
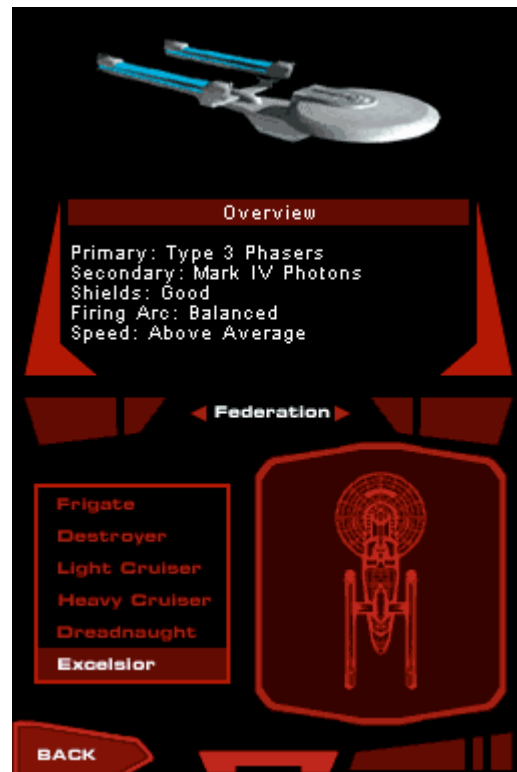
Images taken from Star Trek: Tactical Assault DS

For The Latest Information, Visit our Web Sites:

http://startrek.bethsoft.com/games/ta-overview.html

http://www.quicksilver.com/tacticalassault.php