

Hollowborn Combat Design

Overview:

Hollowborn is a third-person action combat project that draws its primary inspiration from games like Elden Ring and secondary inspirations from games like Monster Hunter and Dragon's Dogma. Hollowborn aims to be a small technical demo that consists of a combat controller and some enemy AI. This project aims to act as the 'core' that many games could be built around or on top of.

Combat Goals:

- Combat should be deliberate and medium-slow paced.
- Player should feel slightly stronger than human but not God-like.
- Combat must be satisfying.
- Combat should feel heavy and impactful with no animation cancelling until an attack is reaching its blend out state.
- Combat controls should be highly responsive.
- Hit boxes should be tailored to game feel but not be overly generous that it takes away the need for skill, timing, and positioning.

Inspiration:

- A mix of Dragon's Dogma and Dark Souls with Dark Souls as the primary inspiration.
- It should feel like a souls-like but more over the top. I want to boost that satisfaction meter massively because this should be a combat core for several different game types to be built on, not just a souls-like even if it is more tailored to this.

Mechanics:

- Dodging
 - o Spec
 - Dodge that uses root motion to translate the player
 - 20 I-Frames
 - Omni-directional
 - Consumes 50 Stamina
 - o Asset Requirements
 - Dodge root motion animation
 - Dodge sound effect
- Blocking
 - o Spec
 - Hold to Block
 - Blocking Negates damage but consume stamina proportionate to the incoming damage
 - Will only block damage from the direction faced

- Asset Requirements
 - Blocking animation
 - Blocking hit animation and sound effect
 - Block broken animation and sound effect
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- Attacking
 - Light Attack
 - Spec
 - 4-piece light attack combo
 - Motion Values: 100, 102, 105, 110
 - Consumes 65 Stamina
 - Omni-directional if not locked-on
 - Motion warps the player forward or to their lock-on target
 - Asset Requirements
 - 4-piece light attack combo animations with root motion
 - Light attack swing and hit sound effects
 - Light attack hit camera shake
 - Attack hit particles
 - Weapon trail particles
 - Heavy Attack
 - Spec
 - 2-piece heavy attack combo
 - Motion Values: 100, 110
 - Can be charged and released
 - Consumes 70 Stamina base, but more with time charged
 - Omni-directional if not locked-on
 - Motion warps the player forward or to their lock-on target
 - Asset Requirements
 - 2-piece light attack combo animations with root motion
 - Heavy attack swing and hit sound effects
 - Heavy attack hit camera shake
 - Attack hit particles
 - Weapon trail particles
- Hit States
 - Hit reactions
 - Spec
 - Directional root motion hit reaction
 - Knockback added onto this movement as well
 - Characters must have a resistance to knockback as an accessible variable
 - Asset Requirements
 - Front, Back, Left, Right directional root motion hit reaction animations

- Knock-down
 - Spec
 - Rotate the hit target to face the knockdown instigator and then play the animation
 - Knockback added onto this movement as well
 - Characters must have a resistance to knockdown as an accessible variable
 - Asset Requirements
 - Root motion knockdown animation
 - Get-up animation
- Poise
 - Spec
 - Poise is used as a threshold to determine when an enemy is staggered
 - Stagger build-up continuously ticks down
 - Poise is used as a value to determine as well whether a character can be interrupted during an attack
 - Poise must be an accessible variable to adjust
- Input Buffering
 - Spec
 - Allows players to input actions before the previous one ends
 - These windows will need a lot of adjustments and playtesting so use a sensible window to start with
 - Must help the game feel responsive and the windows must feel right so the game doesn't queue an input too early.
- Basic Enemy
 - Spec
 - Impulse backwards on hit to ensure there is a constant flow of combat
 - Uses LOS, damage, and touch detection – hearing can be added later if needed
 - Enemy attack should have clear and exaggerated telegraphing and translate the enemy forward towards the player
 - Enemy move speed = $\frac{2}{3} * \text{player movement speed}$
 - Asset Requirements
 - Enemy animations
 - Idle
 - Run
 - Attack
 - Hit
 - Knocked-down
 - Strafe
 - Block
 - Enemy sound effects
 - Enemy detect player
 - Enemy hit
 - Enemy death
- Juice
 - Hit stop

- Slow-Mo? (potential, could experiment with it)
- Camera Zoom
- Particles
- Camera Shake
- Sound Effects
- Long Wind-ups (Anticipation frames)

Limiting Factors:

- Assets
 - Animations
 - Animations are particularly important for any combat system. From the way that they blend into each other, to how exaggerated the anticipation is, and more.
 - Finding the correct animations for my project is hard so I may have to make small adjustments to the combat design based on what animations I have available and can find.
 - Sound Effects
 - Sound effects are extremely important for making impactful and satisfying combat.
 - I will need to either buy professional sound effect packs or make my own and modify them to be as suitable for the project as possible.