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## OTHER RESOURCES:

[Top 10 Newbie Mistakes](#)

[Phobies Pack Opening Guide](#)

[Phobie Newcomer FAQ](#)

[Phobies Combat Mechanics FAQ](#)

[Phobies System Mechanics FAQ](#)

[Phobie Usage Guide](#)

[Phobies Glossary](#)

## Foreword

Many of the below mistakes have exceptions, but those exceptions are rare and exist at a level of play far beyond the beginner level. My hope with this document is to help new players reflect on the mistakes I commonly see new players make, and in doing so help them improve their general level of play. The mistakes here are intended to be concrete and straightforward in concept.

## 1. Throwing Away Keys

Every key is precious. Every key is great. If a key is wasted, Lippy gets quite irate.

Every key you summon should have a purpose, and you should aim to get its own key value or more in value before it dies. Since the lowest sacrificial key value you can have when capturing a panic point is 1 key, we can say that capturing a panic point is 1 key in value. That is, if you want to capture a panic point your opponent possesses, you can sacrifice 1 key to capture it for cheap. If your opponent wants to capture that panic point back, they can re-capture it by sacrificing 1 key of their own.

With that in mind, here are some common ways players throw away keys:

- Sacrificing a 1 key Phobie to capture a neutral panic point. This might seem at odds with what was written above, but consider this: if you sacrifice a 1 key Phobie to capture a neutral panic point, and then your opponent sacrifices a 1 key Phobie to capture that same panic point, what is the situation? You have both lost 1 key, but your opponent is in control! This situation is worse than when you started, when you both had the same number of keys but the panic point was neutral! You should always strive to capture neutral panic points *safely*, without a net key loss!
- Trading Down. Phobies is a pretty balanced game, and in general you can assume that a Phobie is worth its key cost in value. If you summon Temptresss to fight BoMangles and you succeed in slaying BoMangles while losing Temptresss, that might feel like you countered BoMangles, but in fact you just lost a 4 key to kill a 3 key - a net loss in power and value!
- Sacrificing Phobies once you are “done” with them. This is especially common with a Phobie like Grave Digger, where a player will summon him to break walls and then let the opponent kill him so they can summon a stronger Phobie. Instead, do your best to get 3 keys of value out of Grave Digger in a team fight, or combine him with a Phobie like Eratic to extend Eratic’s reach and hurt the enemy team for free!

While Phobies is not so simple that treating it like a key equation will win every match, it’s a good step toward thinking about your match decisions critically.

## 2. Phobie Team Imbalance

If you are new to Phobies, you may have a period in your learning where you realize BoMangles/Stabby are strong fighters for their key cost. Phobies like these, with 2 range and 1 movement, are called “turrets” in the Phobies community. So you think to yourself that if one turret is good, two would be even better. Why not three? Eventually you end up with a team of turrets, and you lose your match. Why?

Every Phobie archetype has a strength and a weakness.

- Turrets tend to be good fighters, but they cannot position well.
- Tanks have high stats, but they can be harassed and kited by ranged Phobies.
- Phobies with 2 range and 2 movement are flexible, but they need support Phobies to help them succeed.
- Support Phobies have great abilities, but are not great at fighting.
- Assault Phobies like Murder Wing have great damage and mobility, but low health.

When you use too many Phobies of the same type, you accentuate those weaknesses and begin to lose feeling of a strong team. What type of team to play depends on the match you are in, but it's essential to mix your team up to some degree to cover a variety of situations you will encounter.

### 3. Only Playing “Strong” Phobies

A common phrase from a new player in the Phobies community is something like “Alley Gator is better than Quagmire”. Of course he is! Alley Gator costs 2 more keys! It would be strange, in fact, if Quagmire was better than Alley Gator while also being cheaper. We should *expect* that a high-key Phobie is stronger than a low-key Phobie equivalent. When considering which Phobies to play, it's not a question of whether which Phobie is strongest, but which Phobie is *most efficient* for the role you need them for. The question to ask yourself is: Do you *need* those extra 2 keys worth of power in Alley Gator? Or will Quagmire accomplish your goals on his own, freeing up 2 keys to be spent on another Phobie to work alongside Quagmire to greater effect?

With this information in mind, avoid the following common mistakes:

- Skipping 1 Keys. Many new Phobies players believe that 1 keys are “weak”, and therefore not worth playing. Only half of this statement is true, though. 1 key Phobies are valuable for adding a little extra efficient attack power in a team fight. Razor Mouth deals 300 damage per hit, while Spud deals 330 - if you just need one hit at 300 damage to finish an enemy Phobie off in a coordinated team attack, Razor Mouth could save you 2 keys!
- Playing one strong Phobie alone and without support against multiple opposing weak Phobies. Boss is a very powerful 8 key Phobie, and he can devastate an Inoculus. However, he can be zoned, controlled, and eventually chased down by an Inoculus combined with a Glob - an 8 key combo! Usually, multiple low-key Phobie options can beat out one high-key option.
- Flooding Low Keys. Keep in mind that you are limited to 5 simultaneous Phobies on the board in a small map, and 7 Phobies on the board in a large map. Playing

too many weak Phobies can leave you in a situation where you are stuck with a team you do not want to be fighting with - balance is the key!

Phobies is a game that gives you limited keys to play with each match. Plan and reflect accordingly!

#### 4. Uncoordinated Attacks

Let's simulate a 1-on-1 fight between two Phobies: BoMangles, and Spud. Both of these Phobies take 3 keys to summon, and their stats are listed below:

- BoMangles: 1550 Health, 420 Damage
- Spud: 900 Health, 330 Damage

First, let's simulate the fight with BoMangles being the first to attack:

- 1) BoMangles moves and attacks for 420 damage. Spud is down to 480 health.
- 2) Spud attacks twice in response for  $330 + 330 = 660$  damage. BoMangles is down to 890 health.
- 3) BoMangles attacks twice for  $420 + 420 = 840$  damage. Spud is dead.

Now let's simulate the fight with Spud being the first to attack:

- 1) Spud moves and attacks for 330. BoMangles is down to 1220 health.
- 2) BoMangles attacks twice in response for  $420 + 420 = 840$  damage. Spud is down to 60 health.
- 3) Spud attacks twice for  $330 + 330 = 660$  damage. BoMangles is down to 560 health.
- 4) BoMangles attacks once for 420 damage. Spud is dead.

BoMangles wins in both simulations, so is he just better than Spud? Absolutely not! What Spud lacks in stats, he makes up for in mobility and his lob attack. This means Spud can use his 2 movement to go behind a wall and attack BoMangles. The wall then protects Spud from taking more than one attack back in response from BoMangles.

More importantly, in a team fight there is only so much room for 1 movement Phobies, and Spud fills the role of being a flexible but cheap attacker. You do not ever want to attack BoMangles with Spud alone! You want to instead coordinate your team to take down BoMangles together, utilizing the various Phobie abilities in coordination with one another.

As an example, you could coordinate a strike between a Spud for its lob (330 damage), a Stabby as your 1 movement turret (375 damage), a Murder Wing ability to make use of a wall attack space (450 damage), and a Maggie for an aerial strike from behind a wall (450 damage). All together this does  $330 + 375 + 450 + 450 = 1605$  damage, for a kill on BoMangles!

As you learn to play Phobies, you want to try to engage in coordinated strikes like these to gain a clear advantage over your opponent. The more you practice, the better you will get!

## **5. Disregarding Enemy Attacks**

You are not the only one attempting to create coordinated strikes! Unlike in the above example, it's unlikely BoMangles will be fighting alone. Instead, he will be part of a coordinated team that supports his attacks just like you are trying to devise. This is where the fun and strategy of Phobies comes in - your matches are as challenging as your opponent's skill level!

Before you submit a turn, you should reflect on how your opponent's Phobies can coordinate to attack you. While learning the game, it is helpful to know that you can select any enemy Phobie, which will make hexes around that Phobie glow red. Hexes that are glowing red are those the enemy Phobie can attack through a combination of movement and attacking. Check your opponent's options! Protect your melee! Never give a free hit!

Your goal when engaging in team fights should be to maximize your gains while minimizing your losses. The intricacies of understanding that balance are beyond the scope of this document, but exploring them is part of the longevity of enjoyment as a Phobies player.

## **6. Weak Map Control**

You can lose a match by losing all of your Phobies, or you can lose it by your heart dying. How does a heart die? Through the possession of panic points and direct attacks on the heart. How do you protect your heart? Map control!

- Do your best to organize your plays to prevent your opponent from capturing panic points for free. Aside from the "safe" panic points that are given to each player on their side of the board, capturing a panic point should always cost your opponent a 1 key or more.
- Only capture panic points you can control unless you are going for a strong panic point push to close out the end of a match. If you sacrifice a 1 key Phobie to capture a panic point that your opponent can re-capture without a loss, you have just lost a resource to deal meager heart damage. Unless it will win you the match, the key is more valuable!
- Do not ever pass on your first turn in a match. It is fine to want to save up for stronger Phobies through passing turns sometimes, but passing your first turn involves sacrificing so much map control that you will find it hard to recover

against an experienced player. Instead, if you are so inclined to stock up for a strong Phobie, play a few weak Phobies out on the board to control space before passing on a future turn. Beware that any turn you pass is potentially giving an aggressive opponent more of an advantage in board control!

Map control is a key step toward success on a map! Fighting for map control is the first step toward victory!

## 7. Disregarding Vault Snipes

Have you ever moved in or attacked your opponent and then lost a Phobie because of an unexpected summon from the vault (key hole)? The closer you get to the vault, the more dangerous your opponent's options become.

- At 5 tiles away, you need to be aware of Snowball and Jar Cannon.
- At 4 tiles away, you need to be aware of Morty, and various Phobies with 2 range and 2 movement.
- At 3 tiles away, you need to be aware of Inoculus.
- At 2 tiles away, you need to be aware of Glob, Cassowary, and Gesundheit.
- At 1 tile away, you need to be aware of AWOL.
- Additionally, many players early on will decide to sacrifice a somewhat expensive Phobie like Sheeping Gas to apply poison to a Phobie, not accounting for the fact that their opponent can summon a Muffintop or Clinico to remove that poison on the following turn. Do not fall into this trap!

If you look up each of these Phobies, you will see they do tremendous damage for their key costs when summoned straight from the vault. These are not the *only* Phobies you need to be aware of for potential vault snipes, they are just some of the more potent cases listed for your learning. If you are not sure what one of these Phobies does, you can look them up using the [Phobies Wiki](#).

## 8. Overusing Jar Cannon and Snowball

Jar Cannon and Snowball are super strong, very cool, and offer something unique to your play. It's no wonder that players love to play them early in matches for their incredible reach and general flexibility. However, using Jar Cannon and Snowball early can lead to a few issues:

- Jar Cannon and Snowball cannot control space well. Jar Cannon is great for flexible harassment, but it dies in 1 hit to a massive list of the game's Phobies.

He needs a team to help him harass safely. Snowball can only safely attack once every other turn - once it fireballs a target, it usually has to run away to stay safe. Playing either of these Phobies can result in falling behind in early map control.

- As mentioned in the previous section, Jar Cannon and Snowball are your only vault snipe options with 5 tiles of reach. If you use one of them early, you lose a valuable vault snipe option - and often using them both together is the key to a successful counter attack. That does not mean you need to reserve these Phobies solely for vault sniping, but you need to be aware that using them early is costing you a potentially valuable counterattack option.
- Snowball and Jar Cannon are not great team fighters. They are good at sniping a Phobie, but if a large team fight occurs their frail bodies and mediocre sustained damage output can come to feel like a burden. Be sure that you are aware of where the match is heading when you summon these two - having a late-game plan to utilize them well can help ensure you are happy you summoned them in the first place.

If you are someone who finds themselves overly reliant on these Phobies, start exploring other options!

## 9. Playing “Hopies”

Phobies is a purely deterministic game. There is no RNG. In every turn to be made there is a theoretical best move, even if none of us knows it yet. When you play your opponent, you should be playing as though your opponent is a skilled player who will make the best decisions available to them. “Hopies” occurs when you make plays based on the *hope* that your opponent will make a poor decision.

While your hope may come true, it will come true less and less as you advance through the Phobies ranks. The sooner you stop playing the game of Hopies and focus on making solid and reliable strategic decisions, the better.

Similarly, if you feel as though your opponent’s Phobie should die in a turn and your damage comes up short, rather than feeling frustration, consider that your opponent likely calculated your damage potential ahead of time and knew their Phobie would survive an attack!

## 10. Disregarding Undead Leech

If you get in a 1-on-1 fight with a stocky undead Phobie, you will likely lose. With equal stats, an undead Phobie will leech enough through the damage it deals to you to sustain itself *enough* to survive the encounter and keep on trucking. When dealing with undead Phobies, you need to carefully weaken their health so that they can be taken down

without the opportunity to sustain themselves. Here are some ways to manage undead and limit their opportunity to replenish their health:

- Poison/disease the undead Phobie, and then back off. Undead cannot be cured of poison and disease, so you can let their health slowly trickle down until their health is low enough where you can finish them off. The “back off” part is essential. If you poison/disease an undead Phobie and continue to fight it, the Phobie may just continue to leech through the poison/disease damage, causing you to lose more resources than you would have if you had backed off. It may even emerge from the entire situation relatively unharmed!
- Harass and kite the undead with Phobies that outrange them while discouraging advancement. It would be a bad idea to walk up to a Cerberus and attack with BoMangles, but a great idea to walk up and attack it with Inoculus. As Cerberus moves forward, Inoculus can continue to take shots and walk back while Cerberus’s health gets lower and lower during its advancement until it is weak enough for your team to take down.
- Attack debuffs. Certain Phobies, like Oopsy Baby, can reduce the attack power of a Phobie for a couple turns. Since leech is based on attack power, lowered attack power means lowered leech! You can use this to help wear the undead Phobie down at a more favorable rate, since its ability to sustain itself is diminished.
- Coordinating a team strike to take them down in one turn. This means organizing your Phobies to all strike the single undead target for its full health’s worth of damage in one turn. While this may seem like a daunting task, this is an important skill to work on in Phobies, as a lot of high-level play revolves around coordinating your team for one-turn-kills on enemy Phobies. It’s good to practice now!

Do not let the undead fight on their own terms!