

This is a copy/paste from the beginning of my faq. It's basically a beginner's information section. It's kind of a lot, but hopefully it explains a bit for you.

If on your first playthrough, let me say this:

Equipment level is WAY more important than character level. Damage dealt and damage received are primarily controlled by weapon level, armor class, armor level, and what is reforged/tempered onto said equipment. Character level, while helpful, plays a much smaller role in controlling your damage.

Try to get all of your stats to 20 as soon as you can. From there, it's about your priorities. When you first begin the game, make sure to get your spirit to 11 and then all other stats to 10. Then work on getting them to 20, after which you can focus on your build goals.

I like to keep pumping into heart and stamina for a while. Heart for the larger ki pool that fills quicker, and stamina for the equipment weight capacity (so i can switch between light, medium, and heavy.)

Damage reduction is an important thing for defense and why most people use heavy armor. Ninjas and people who love games like god of war, ninja gaiden, and devil may cry may stick with light armor and rely on superior dodging ability to keep them safe.

I prefer elemental magic, whereas others prefer buffs/debuffs - they rely on consumables (like elemental amulets from the blacksmith, tengu fans, burning pots, etc) to cause confusion.

I also recommend getting dex to 30 quickly (like in ng+) and if you go the route of elemental magic, pick up fire shuriken from ninja - you will not be disappointed.

The reason you want all stats at 20 is so you can freely switch between armor you pick up during your playthrough and have access to all of its skill-slots. Although you are likely not to change those skills until later difficulties, those stats will still be a huge consideration on whether you murder the game, or it murders you.

If you notice some armor has greyed out skills, it is because you don't meet the armor requirements. Look to the bottom under the skills, you will see the required stats. Light armor requires body and skill, medium armor requires body and strength, and heavy armor requires strength and stamina. The last armor in the game for each tier only requires 20 each of the required stats. Just one reason to want all stats at 20 before prioritizing weapon damage.

And in the weapon skill-trees there are passive stats. Unless they specify the weapon, they always apply. So be sure to get them all for the extra cca (critical), final blow (killing strike) damage, grapple damage, damage from behind, ki recovery while guarding, damage to full-life enemy, damage when full life, etc.

Speaking of which, do the dojo missions. Each level of missions will unlock the next tier of skills in the upgrade screen. And for ninjutsu and magic, the mystic art to instant-cast on self is somewhat vital if you plan to use scrolls and spells. Until you unlock the mystic art for magic, the hat that increases casting speed is important for any mages out there. The ninja and mage dojos require 5, 10, 15, and 20 points into their stats (dexterity and magic), which is another reason to get them to 20 as soon as possible.

And the ninja and magic trees have passives, too, if you get everything you want and have some left over skill-points (part of why i like to get them to 50 instead of 30 before completing 4th playthrough.) Things like purification range, vs yokai realm, elixir effect on life recovery, luck, yokai damage reduction, arrows and arrow damage, bullets and bullet damage, cannonball capacity and damage, dash speed, dash endurance, evasion ki usage, etc.

But also because they give boosts to all damage if you get onmyo power at/above 201 and ninjutsu power at/above 401.

Different enemies are resistant or weak to certain elements. For example: Ogress is hard to confuse without using earth and water - unless you use gale shot. She's super resistant to fire, tho. Electric enemies are often weak to water or earth. Fire enemies are weak to water just as water enemies are weak to fire. Earth enemies are weak to wind. Etc.

Many like to use a high spirit stat, but i find that to short your damage and i only use enough to have all the skills from my guardian spirit (commonly 19-23 for me, but 36 if i want to use them all.) However, it is not ill-advised to raise it to somewhere between about 36 and 55. But above 55 is more of a handicap than a boost aside from how quickly your GS cools-down after switching.

Just experiment and have fun.

Try all the weapons (and try out some of their skills) during first playthrough. Your stats are low enough that they should all do similar damage. All of the weapons can be fun once you get used to them, there really aren't any bad weapons in the game. Plus, completing the final dojo missions after you complete the game will unlock extra missions as well as the mystic arts for the weapons.

About gear early on:

Armor requires a minimum stat requirement from 2 stats to utilize the skills on it. For lightweight, this is skill and body. For medium armor, it is body and strength. For heavy armor, strength and stamina. To actually equip medium and heavy armor, you will need more stamina.

Worth noting that forged armor takes half the required stat amount (as opposed to gear you find

that drops from enemies and chests.)

At low levels you should probably just keep swapping gear to the strongest stuff you can find because maintaining one set the whole way will be far too costly and actually slow your progression.

Before ethereal drops (in 3rd-5th+ difficulties) you are really limited to one 7 piece set or two 4 piece sets in your build. (Or several smaller sets for damage reduction.)

Once you get into abyss graces, you may want to check out what graces are available and how to farm them (which is included in this faq.)

It is advised to get dex and magic to 30 and use scrolls and talismans in your build. Like quick change (revive), catwalking (silence), and suppa (invisibility) from ninjutsu; and extraction/plaedics from magic (or debuffs weakness, sloth, devigorate, lifeseal; or leeching / carnage and steel buffs.) But unless going ninja or mage, you don't need the stats above 30 except to reach damage boost thresholds of 401 nin power and 201 onmyo power. If using elemental shots, you may want the magic stat at 50 for the last 2 difficulties.

Also, you likely only need the first 2 or 3 chapters of this faq and the list of sets at the end. Also, this from the end:

Stances:

Hi stance is meant to be heavy hitting but slow. Also very good for breaking yokai horns with melee (i use magic, but for melee users this is how they do that) and high-strong attack can cover a lot of distance with an axe. Think of this as max damage output at the cost of speed.

Low stance is meant to be highest defense and best evade (i like mid-evade better, but low evade can be chained multiple times without rolling). It is meant to have the fastest attack, at the expense of reach and power.

Mid stance is the balance between them. Designed to reward blocking over evading, tho i use mid stance evasion a lot and it's my favorite evade. The most well rounded combos (and if the skills are not parries, you can use mid-stance skills in LW).

But it all comes down to preference. But with large weapons (axe, odachi, spear) the mid-stance attacks have a large sweeping combo that can hit multiple enemies at once, while low and high usually target a single opponent at a time.

So think of mid stance as for a defensive or strategic player, low stance for a high mobility player, and high stance for people who like to do massive damage at the expense of being more vulnerable.

And ki flux... when you do a ki pulse, if you switch stances during the pulse then you will get more ki back. So switching from mid to high and back gives you the ability to combo longer before running out of ki. I find that to be essential for heavier weapons, like the odachi and the axe. A perfect ki flux maximizes ki recovery and nearly doesn't deplete any ki.

Someone asked me if high stance offers "hyper armor"

Hyper-armor? I'm not sure what you mean.

Do you mean an increased resistance to flinching making your attacks interrupted less frequently? Because yes, it does. It will attempt to power through a blocking enemy instead of knocking back your attack and interrupting your combo.

But if you mean a higher defense, low stance actually has the highest defense of them.

But toughness determines how likely your attack is to be interrupted, and how easy you are to flinch, and how much ki blocking uses up.

But weapons like kusarigama can very easily be interrupted in low stance (which some players like because it's like having your character tell you to dodge) but won't be in high stance, so they use high to interrupt the enemy and ki flux to low to quickly continue the onslaught.

Moving between stances in mid-combat can really help you come up with better combos and strategies. Low stance is fastest, but high stance hits hardest and is less likely to be interrupted.

Switching between them as you play can help you a lot.

And remember that crit damage no longer works in LW, because it got nerfed in a patch. Kigetsu and leeching still apply, but not damage boost for being in a critical state.

Tactics:

Strafing is always good (running circles around boss and rolling when they attack). If you have a lot of trouble, every few lives play a life or two where you don't attack and only dodge and survive as long as you can. It'll help you understand their moves, gap (fight distance), and rhythm (attack speed/pace and when they take longer to recover aka attack window).

Confusion: inflicting 2 elemental status ailments before either wear off will confuse enemies. It will slow them, stunt their defense, and reduce their ki regeneration. Enemies often resist 2 elements and are weak to one or 2. You can use talismans to imbue your weapon (magic or drop, unlocked in forge from start), your LW, elemental shots (magic), or fire shuriken (works GREAT) / nin bombs.

The best bit about confusion is against yokai, including bosses - it locks them in zero ki until both ailments wear off. I've seen people do this on accident and have no idea what they did or how to replicate it. But if you use magic for confusion: with a stat of 30 elemental shots will work WotSam-WotD, 40 it will work for WotW, 50-60 it will work for WotN. Abyss, i recommend a magic stat of 100 if using elemental shots.

If your stat is lower, use talismans and LW. Fire shuriken work great, even with only 30 dex. And don't forget about hyotokko masks and burning pots. Or tengu feathers for wind. Mud jars don't muddy though, they inflict stench.

Poison and paralysis do not contribute to confusion. These are the ailments that do: scorched - recurring fire damage (which stacks with poison but poison does not contribute to confusion). Electrified - lightning ailment causes 30% slow that lasts longer than and stacks with the sloth (50% slow). Saturated - water ailment kills defense 30% and stacks with weakness (50%). Muddled - earth stunts ki regen 30% against humans and stacks with life seal (50% ki recovery reduction). Against yokai, muddy causes double ki damage. Blustered - wind (30% attack reduction) and stacks with devigorate (50% attack reduction).

Humans: knock them out of LW to be able to survive or they will not flinch and will power through you and kill you. How? An arrow to the face or guardian spirit special to knock them down, but let them fall - LW fades while they're on the ground.

Then, if you have it: quick draw -> finisher unless in LW: then ground stab and combo through their ki.

Increasing your ki damage can also make humans who block much easier to defeat. As can pierce guard (close combat) or parry disabled against blocking opponent.

If you want to LW spam, you could try hi-nezumi, gyokuto, or aya-komori. They hit weaker, but they refill and recover insanely quick compared to the others. With extraction and plaedies, you sometimes have it refilled before you hit the ground from being knocked out of it...

Just don't be afraid to spend your stat/skill points and try stuff out. You can reset and re-spend them later at any time (although your stats and skills are both completely reset. But you don't lose anything, you just have to take the time to re-spend them all.) All it takes is a book of reincarnation to reset stats/skills, or a koan manual to reset prestige points.

I hope that isn't too much info...

In way of the samurai, you have to beat all the main missions. In the future playthroughs, you only need to complete 30% of the game - 18 or 19 missions i think. Clearing all missions in first 3 regions will do it. Or side missions only!

Side missions with no bosses:

Kyushu: death to bandits. Request from Ginchiyo. Finder's keeper's. Kanbei and the overlord.

Chugoku: magatama of fire. 3 angry gods. Bridge of bone.

Kinki: disappearing ranjatai. Missing catalogue. Fallen onmyo mages.

Tokai: 7 good tidings. Three souls. Fiercer flame.

Sekigahara: unrepentant thief. Demon's daughter.

And i skipped side missions like malefactors, the conspirators, ogress, wreathed in flame, demon hunting, guardian of the underworld.

And i think if you completed all of those, queen's eyes would be unlocked. In fact, i think that totals 4 missions more than you need.

Tips for combat for beginners:

Well, my advice is this:

There's mainly 3 inputs for skills; block + quick attack, block + strong attack, and strong attack after a quick attack/combo.

So while you may want to try different skills - to find which ones you like the best, and which ones do the best ki damage or attack the fastest after a block - once you get them assigned you don't really need to think about them as you'll get used to them as you play. You'll just intuitively get used to where the different skills are.

Once you do get used to where they are, that's when you'll start changing stances to access different skills during combos to link together combos/skills from different stances. But for now - you can just switch to high stance to aim for a yokai horn, or when a human blocks so your combo doesn't get interrupted by their block - and to low stance when facing smaller or quicker enemies - and mostly just play in mid stance.

If you get the running water skills in the weapon skill trees, your dodge can ki pulse for you - which is helpful in keeping the combat flow, and if you don't have time for both ki pulse and dodge. These skills are near the bottom of any weapon skill tree - and there's 3 of them (one for each stance - Heaven for high, man for mid, and earth for low) and getting them for one weapon automatically gets them for all weapons.

Practice ki pulse - you can start doing flux once you start changing stances to access other skills - don't worry about flux for now. But when time is of the essence - having your dodge ki pulse for you (minus the ki cost of the dodge) is a life saver.

Remember that blocking humans will interrupt your attacks in mid/low stance unless you have parry disabled vs Guarding enemy on your weapon as a special effect - so this is where high stance shines as your attacks won't bounce off the block when in high stance.

Other than that, I could only offer my favorite skills for katana and spear, but that's probably enough to get you going. Skills I would suggest are:

Katana:

- High stance - morning moon
- mid stance - kick and flowing shadow - also Haze II
- low stance - Heaven's flash/step
- backwave and Tempest (timely guard parry + slam)
- iai III
- (Haze II is best katana parry aside from backwave/tempest, kick is best ki damage aside from Sword ki, and flowing shadow is great for after blocking or attacking while moving)
- Night rain is also a very good skill - and you can have it on another stance so you can do a faster and multi hit attack instead of iai in one of your other stances. And if that stance is mid stance, you can use it in living weapon without canceling your living weapon.
- if you find iai drops your inputs - try double tapping the sheathed button. Like, default controls is R1+O, so I mean hold R1 and double tap O, holding on the second press.

Spear:

- High - piercing rain (or spearfall - I prefer piercing rain for the break dmg)
- Spear kick or shoulder bash for mid/low
- Entangle for mid (trips humans for free final blow)
- Body swap

And beyond that is up to whatever you like. Maybe twirl for spear - or tornado?

Most the other skills I use for those weapons are exclusive to Nioh 2. Wouldn't help you with Nioh 1. But I recommend trying those skills to see if they are your style.

I hope that helps you learn the combat system better. :)