



Utilize combat abilities to turn the tide of battle.



The Locust Horde—AKA chainsaw fodder.



Use Action Points to mow down incoming Locust drones.



Combat is centered on turn-based action.

TACTICAL TURN-BASED STRATEGY

# Gears Tactics

## Do you know the way to Fenix Point?

**START OUT IN A GAME** like *XCOM*, and you feel fragile: You don't have the advanced plasma weapons of the invaders; you don't have proper armor; your troops are a raggedy bunch of freedom fighters who were lucky enough to still be alive. Start out in *Gears Tactics*, for all it may look like *XCOM* to the casual observer, and you immediately feel powerful: You've got the series' trademark weapons; you've got the cover system; you're a side of beef crowbarred into a gridiron uniform.

This is just as well, as *Tactics* is prepared to stack the odds against you. Things move along in standard tactics game manner, with each soldier having a small number of Action Points with which to do stuff like move, fire, and reload. Run out of points, and the enemy gets its turn. The Locust Horde lives up to its name, and you'll need to make use of the melee execution system to overcome it. These kills, meted out to enemies who have dropped to their knees after taking damage, have the side effect of giving the rest of your squad an extra Action Point—only the executioner misses out. If you manage to chain enough executions together, you can keep your turn going for quite a long time.

It's a system that can literally turn the tide of battle. The right execution at the right time can rejuvenate a squad that has been locked to cover by overwhelming fire—the little cutscene while they're chainsawed in half or bashed in the head with a pistol butt is far less reward than the immediate return of your motivation. Maybe that one point is enough to allow a sniper shot? The sniper rifles in *Tactics* are particularly effective, especially if you undertake some of the side quests to upgrade them.

Unlockable abilities play on these Action Points further, transferring them between soldiers, and winning points back when comrades get kills. An Overwatching soldier with three points in the bank can fire three times. Heavies get an extra point just for going into Overwatch. Add to this the ability to revive downed teammates multiple times (unless on the very highest difficulty setting), and you've got a game that challenges without overwhelming, and provides enough positive feedback to keep you coming back.

This fabulous combat system is melded to a completely linear campaign, which sadly provides little replay value.

And then there are boss fights: Big enemies with massive health bars who don't change their tactics once during protracted battles. Side missions aren't really "side" at all, as you need to do them—their rare weapon rewards are just too powerful and tempting to ignore. Loot from missions quickly becomes a chore to sort through, however, and without any kind of choice on your part on how to proceed next, the game can start to feel a bit flat long before it's over.

*Gears Tactics* so nearly gets it—the combat system, with all its playful abilities and feeling of being absolutely unstoppable, is an absolute highlight—but the game needs more player agency while out of combat to truly take on the titans of tactics games. —IAN EVENDEN

**VERDICT**  
**8**  
**Gears Tactics**  
**GEARS** Chainsaw bros with a clever combat system.  
**FEARS** Boredom can set in out of combat.  
**RECOMMENDED SPECS** CPU, Intel i5 Coffee Lake | AMD Ryzen 3. RAM, 8GB. GPU, AMD Radeon RX 570 | Nvidia GeForce GTX 970.  
 \$60, gearstactics.com, Rated M



## INTEL CORE I5-10600K

Has AMD's Ryzen 5 3600X finally met its match? **PG. 68**



## MASTER WORDPRESS

Create and host your own online website **PG. 54**



## 20 TECH FLOPS

The worst tech launches of the century **PG. 32**

# MAXIMUM PC

MINIMUM BS • AUGUST 2020 • [www.maximumpc.com](http://www.maximumpc.com)

# BUILD IT! NEXT-GEN INTEL PC

- ✓ Intel's latest Core i9 processor unleashed
- ✓ Create the ultimate rendering machine
- ✓ 6-page illustrated step-by-step guide

**PLUS!**  
Build your own  
sound-dampened  
audio editing PC  
**PG. 60**

## PROCESSING DESTINY

What the future  
holds for your next  
PC processor **PG. 38**

