

The background of the cover is a dramatic, low-angle shot of a rusted, metallic robot head (likely a Brotherhood of Steel member) in the foreground. Two American flags are flying against a cloudy, overcast sky. The robot's head is positioned in the lower-left corner, looking upwards. The flags are positioned diagonally across the frame, with one in the upper-left and another in the lower-right. The overall tone is gritty and post-apocalyptic.

Games Radar Presents

Fallout 3 Game Guide

Part 1: Introduction

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	pg. 2
2. Controls.....	pg. 3
3. Adventuring through the Wastes	
3.1 - User Interface.....	pg. 4
3.2 – Travel.....	pg. 5
3.3 – Locks.....	pg. 6
3.4 – Hacking.....	pg. 7
4. Skills & Perks	
4.1 – S.P.E.C.I.A.L.....	pg. 8
4.2 – Skills.....	pg. 9
4.3 – Perks.....	pg. 10

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1. Introduction

Fallout 3 is the latest entry in the long abandoned, but critically acclaimed, series created by Black Isle studios. Released by Interplay in 1997 Fallout was praised for its mature subject matter, unique setting that blended 1950's design aesthetic with a post-apocalyptic setting. Widely considered to be one of the best computer games ever made there are plenty who would say that it is one of the best games ever made, period.

After Interplay went under the rights to the series were sold off to Bethesda, makers of the Elder Scrolls games. While many feared that Bethesda would do horrific things to their beloved franchise, much like Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel had on the consoles. These fears were only greatly enhanced when it was explained that the game would be a first-person adventure much in the theme of Oblivion.

Fanatics everywhere derided the impending Fallout 3 as Oblivion with guns and that it would spell the end of the Fallout series. Well, they were wrong. Yes this is Oblivion with guns but it's also totally freaking awesome. The game blends a certain amount of tactical strategy with first person shooting and numerous RPG elements into a hodge-podge of gaming goodness.

War. War never changes.



2. Controls

Basic Controls

Left Analog Stick - Move character

Click Left Analog - Crouch (enter Stealth mode)

Right Analog Stick - Look Around

Click Analog Stick - Pick up/Put down items

D-Pad - Not used

Blue X Button / Square - Reload gun

Hold: ready/holster weapon

Yellow Y Button / Triangle - Jump

Green A Button / X (Cross) - Activate target

Red B Button / Circle Button - Use Pip-Boy

Hold: Turn on/off Pip-Boy light

Back / Select Button - Enter Wait mode

Start Button - Open Pause Menu

Left Bumper / L1 - Toggle 1st/3rd Person Camera

Hold: Adjust the camera

Right Bumper / R1 - Enter V.A.T.S. Mode

Hold: Scan

Left Trigger / L2 - (With gun)Enter Aim Mode, (In Melee) Block

Right Trigger / R2 - Fire Gun, Attack in melee

V.A.T.S. Controls

After activating the V.A.T.S. interface with the Right Bumper / R1 Button these are the controls that will be used:

Right Analog - Switch Target

Left Analog - Switch Between Body Parts of Target

Right Trigger / R2 - Select Target Location

Green A Button / X (Cross) - Accept V.A.T.S. Target Choice

Red B Button / Circle - Cancel V.A.T.S. Mode

3. Adventuring through the Wastes

3.1 - User Interface



- (1) **Hit Points, HP** - Hit points are the measure of how much damage that your character can take in combat. When you are injured your HP will drop and when it reaches zero you will die. Your hit points are increased by raising your Endurance rating and every time you level up.
- (2) **Compass** - This shows you what direction you are facing in. In addition to that it shows you numerous markers based on quests, enemies and people you can interact with.
 - Solid Green Arrow: Indicates the location of your main quest.
 - Green Arrow Outline: Indicates your personal location marker.
 - Green Rectangle: Indicates a friendly target.
 - Red Rectangle: Indicates a hostile target.
- (3) **Enemy Health Meter** - This shows how much health the enemy has remaining. It comes in from the outside and as it nears the middle they are closer to death.
- (4) **Action Points, AP** - Depleting from left to right this indicates how many Action Points you have left. These are used when you use the V.A.T.S. system on enemies and they recover over time when not in use.
- (5) **Weapon Condition, CND** - As you use weapons their condition will degrade, causing less damage and eventually becoming entirely useless. When the bar nears empty use a new weapon or start to repair it.
- (6) **Ammo** - The left number shown here is how many shots are in the weapons chamber. The right number indicates how much ammo you have on your person for this particular weapon.
- (7) **XP Bar** - This only appears when you're gaining experience and it shows how close you are to your next level. The closer that it gets to the right side of the bar the closer to a level.
- (8) **Rad Bar** - Only appearing when you're being irradiated, as this bar fills you will begin to suffer negative effects. Should it fill up entirely death is an inevitable result.

3.2 - Travel



While Fallout 3 has many things in common with The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion one major difference is how the fast travel system works. In Oblivion you had all the major towns open to you from the beginning and could simply fast travel to these locations whenever you chose. This gave the impression that the character in question knows the lay of the land and knew what he needed to do to go wherever he wanted to head in the game.

This meant that from the start of the game you could go to towns that you'd have no reason to visit until much, much later in the game. Only places like tombs and dungeons had to be found before you could simply fast travel there and this required lots of fishing around in the wilderness.

Fallout 3 isn't like that, quite the opposite in fact. Since your character is only recently coming out into the sunlit world it makes sense that he'd have no real knowledge of the way the world is set out. What this means is that you have to leave the Vault and head straight towards the nearest town Megaton. This will allow you to get your bearings and enable you to find other locations you can get to.

After you have visited a location for the first time you can then fast travel to and from these places in the future. So while you must walk to any particular place once after you have done this you never need to do it again if you really don't want to. Doing so will hamper you though, there are locations hidden in the wilderness that you can come across by simply moving off the beaten path while you walk around the world map.

The Wasteland is a big place and you never know what you might find out there amidst the rubble of the old civilization. So explore to your hearts content, you might just be surprised.

3.3 – Locks

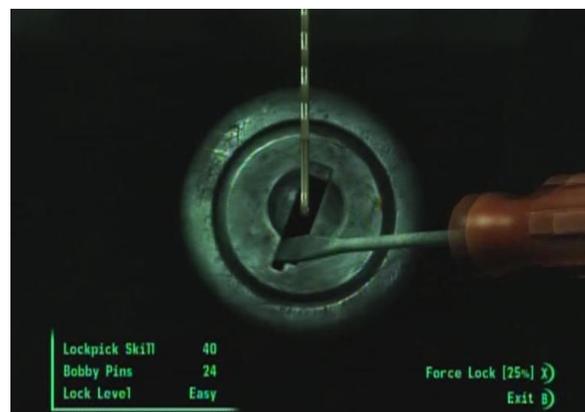
The lock picking in Fallout 3 is one of the more ingenious and fun mini-games ever devised. Before you can even attempt to lock pick you are going to need a supply of bobby pins. Unlike in Oblivion your supply of lock picks can actually be stretched out quite a bit since it isn't so easy to break the pick. It's still hard if you don't have the steadiest of hands and requires plenty of coordination.

Once you've got the lock picking screen open you will have to use the two analog sticks to control the two tools. Your left analog stick will control the bobby pin. As you swivel this in either direction the position of the bobby pin will be adjusted around the tumbler. Adjusting the right analog stick will make you begin to push on the lock, turning it in an attempt to open it.

The way that you will want to open these locks is by moving the bobby pin either to the left or right and then adjusts the screwdriver slowly. When the lock stops moving and begins to strain the bobby pin *stop* applying pressure. Adjust the bobby pin a bit to the left or right and try to move the lock again.

If you get more movement out of the lock then you need to keep adjusting it in that direction. Should it go even less in that direction then you will want to adjust the pin the opposite way. By doing this you can slowly but steadily figure out which way it needs to be moved and continue fiddling with it until you get the lock to spin until it faces completely horizontal.

The only real snag to this is that you must have a lockpick rating at least equal to the locks difficulty. This can be somewhat frustrating when you're really good at opening locks but don't have the rating so required to do so.



3.4 - Hacking

While it is initially one of the most annoying of the mini-games you will ever find, Hacking is actually a lot simpler. However this requires you to carefully read the instructions to how to succeed in this. Take note that you will have to have a Computers rating that is high enough to even get the terminal to open.

Whenever you open up a terminal you will see a number of words amidst the characters. You get four chances to successfully pick the right word and you can reset your chances by leaving and re-entering the terminal. However this causes the password to shuffle as well so it's not a foolproof method.

There is however a very, very easy way to find the passwords and it only requires a simple process. An example will be provided.

- (1) As soon as you open up the computer terminal begin looking for words that have letters in common.
- (2) Now find those words that have letters in common in the exact same place.
- (3) Pick one of these letters and you will likely fail. See how many letters it says that you have in common. It is important to note that this means letters in the same position are correct.
- (4) Start picking words that have letters in the exact same space, working to narrow it down.

So if you open up the terminal and you see the following words:

Gained, Monkey, Lovely, Pains, Sprains and Hollow

You can immediately rule out monkey, hollow and lovely because they only have one letter in common. While it might be "gained" we can see that "pains" and "sprains" have more letters in common. By picking "pains" we end up with 4/5 correct. This means that when compared to "sprains" the a,i,n and s are correct. Picking "sprains" means that you will hack the terminal.



4. Skills & Perks

4.1 – S.P.E.C.I.A.L.

Attribute Name - Rather obviously this is the attribute in question. They are organized in the same order of the acronym name of this section.

Stats Affected - These are the constant traits that are affected by having a high or low rating in this stat. These range from hit points, carrying capacity and even to how people respond to you when you speak to them.

Skills Affected - These are the actual skills that are changed by having a higher attribute. The higher the attribute the higher your base skill will be.

Attribute Name	Stats Affected	Skills Affected
Strength	Increases Your Carrying Capacity	Melee Weapons
Perception	Helps You Notice Enemies & Locations on the Compass	Energy Weapons, Explosives, Lockpick
Endurance	Increases Hit Points & Damage Resistance	Big Guns, Unarmed
Charisma	Raises Characters Starting Disposition With You	Barter, Speech
Intelligence	Increases the Amount of Skill Points per Level	Medicine, Repair, Science
Agility	Raises the Amount of Action Points you Recieve	Small Guns, Sneak
Luck	Raises Critical Hit Chance	All Skills Receive Minor Boosts



4.2 – Skills

Barter

Related S.P.E.C.I.A.L: Charisma

This is one of the skills that every character should invest in to some degree. It enables you to get more money when you sell items and to buy items cheaper. Due to this getting some points in Barter can help anyone who isn't stealing everything in sight accumulate a large amount of money.

Big Guns

Related S.P.E.C.I.A.L: Endurance

This skill is used when wielding the Fat Man, Flamer, Gatling Laser, Mini-Gun and Missile Launcher. If you aren't planning on using those then don't bother with this skill. Only those with high strengths should use these guns due to the weight of the weapons and ammunition. They're devastating but prohibitive due to this restriction.

Energy Weapon

Related S.P.E.C.I.A.L: Perception

This is used for Laser Pistol, Laser Rifle, Plasma Pistol and Plasma Rifle. While these weapons are powerful they're also rare early on. If you're going to use this skill tag it and then raise it when you start finding laser weapons. Early on you're probably better off simply selling them for their high value.

Explosives

Related S.P.E.C.I.A.L: Perception

Whenever you set a mine or throw a grenade this determines how much damage they do. It also increases your chance to disarm explosives and mines you might find. This is a useful skill but one that you can definitely get along without.

Lockpick

Related S.P.E.C.I.A.L: Perception

When you find a lock you will need a rank in this skill equal to the rating of the lock (25 for Easy). If you don't have this skill you cannot attempt to pick the lock at all. Having a higher rating in this skill also seems to help with your lockpicks breaking, making it less likely the higher you raise this skill.

Medicine

Related S.P.E.C.I.A.L:

A high medicine rating increases the effectiveness of any healing type item you might use. This includes Stimpacks, Rad-X and Radaway. The better your Medicine rating the more a Stimpack will heal you, the more radiation Radaway heals, etc. This also comes into play during some side quests but this is rare. Almost anyone should invest in at least a modicum of Medicine so as to avoid using up too many Stimpacks.

Melee Weapons

Related S.P.E.C.I.A.L: Strength

Melee Weapons are some of the most damaging weapons but they're limited by range. Closing into melee with an enemy who has a shotgun is a dangerous proposition. This does make for a great backup weapon skill early on although tagging it is a waste.

Repair

Related S.P.E.C.I.A.L: Intelligence

This governs your ability to repair your equipment and create custom weapons. The higher your skill the better you can repair equipment. Just make sure you have items on hand to use for parts when you want to repair something. Only a 10mm Pistol of some sort can be used to repair a 10mm Pistol. It's worth it to put some points into this every level or so just in case.

Science

Related S.P.E.C.I.A.L: Intelligence

This is basically used to hack computer terminals and for side quests. Don't bother putting anything in this skill unless you're going to stick with it and raise it up enough to meet the requirements to use it for late game terminal hacking.

Small Guns

Related S.P.E.C.I.A.L: Agility

Covering all non-Laser Pistols, Shotguns, Rifles and BB Guns, Small Guns is the most useful skill early game. Unlike some of the other skills this one scales well long as you keep upgrading your weapons. If you tag this skill then stick with it since it will never let you down.

Sneak

Related S.P.E.C.I.A.L: Agility

Sneak governs your ability to sneak around, attack undetected, steal an item or pick someones pockets. You can pretty much ignore this entirely if you're playing a straight up fighter but the sneak attack can help just about anyone out.

Speech

Related S.P.E.C.I.A.L: Charisma

This skill governs how easy it is to convince others of what you have to say. This includes getting information from people, convincing others to do what you want and can help to defuse hostility in foes. A must have if you're trying to avoid fights.

Unarmed

Related S.P.E.C.I.A.L: Endurance

There is almost no reason to ever use the Unarmed skill throughout the entirety of playing this game. While the Power Fist weapon makes fighting with your hands a devastating choice it still has too many weaknesses compared to even melee combat.

4.3 - Perks

Level 2

Black Widow (for Women) / **Lady Killer** (for Men) - The damage bonus that this Perk gives you is pretty minimal and easily ignored. This means that the main boon to this skill is that it gives you extra dialogue options with characters of the opposite gender. As a note since you encounter more hostile men than women Black Widow is much more useful than Lady Killer.

Daddy's Boy (for Men) / **Daddy's Girl** (for Women) - While the boost that this skill gives to your science skill is nice the main boon is that it adds to medicine. Put a rank or two in this and gain a rather appreciable boost to that skill.

Gun Nut - This is a very useful skill for early in the game when your Small Guns and Repair skills are fairly low. It can help you survive through the earliest areas of the game although it doesn't pay to put more than one or two ranks in it.

Intensive Training - Since you can put up to 10 points in this and each one gives you a point to your stats this is a no brainer. Be sure to put points here early on to maximize the benefit especially if you're going to put it in intelligence.

Little Leaguer - Let's ignore the fact that this gives you a bonus to Explosives for some reason (likely because there's no Throwing skill). The Melee bonus that you get is nice but there's no reason to take this unless you play a concept character like a melee fighter who uses grenades. There are many better Perks.

Swift Learner - Since you gain 10% extra bonus experience for each rank in this Perk this is something to take early. A rank or two in this will assure you levels at a rapid rate especially if you complete all the side quests in Megaton.

Thief - The 5 point bonus to Lockpick and Sneak isn't a big boost unless you're going to put at least two ranks in this. It can be pretty impressive if you boost Agility and Tag the skill this can push you into a near 50% skill rating really early.

Level 4

Child at Heart - A moderately useful Perk this allows you to talk to children easier. This makes it more likely that they will tell you things they wouldn't tell an adult. It's a very specific Perk and it isn't the most useful but it can have some unexpected benefits, especially early on.

Comprehension - This isn't a particularly good Perk. You're better off increasing your Intelligence via Intense Training or taking Educated. They'll be much more useful early in the game

whereas this is more useful in the later part of the game.

Educated - Raising this skill nets you three more skill points every time you level up. This is a great skill with only one rank to it and there's no reason that every character shouldn't have it. Even the dumbest fighter types could do for the skill points.

Entomologist - While the boost to damage on Giant Ants and Radscorpions is nice there are simpler ways to kill them. Get a shotgun, close to melee and blow them away. Wasting a Perk slot on this is a complete and utter waste.

Iron Fist - Uhm... yeah, this gives one a pass. Unarmed combat is a waste early in the game and 5 points doesn't matter by the time you've gotten your hands on a Power Fist.

Scoundrel - A very useful Perk that boosts your Speech and Barter by 5 each time you put a rank in it. Unlike others of these types of Perks speech is usually done in terms of fives. So it's likely that a 5% boost will enable you to coerce someone you couldn't with that one boost.

Level 6

Bloody Mess - Selecting this Perk is more often than not done for the aesthetic appeal of watching people blow up messily. Sure the damage bonus is helpful but who really cares about that? Give us lots of gore baby!

Demolition Expert - If you're making any use of explosives then this is a must have skill. The 20% damage increase is appreciable especially when you consider that most explosives deal about 200+ damage. That's a 40 damage increase with only one rank in this skill. As you can figure it goes up rather rapidly as you put more ranks in this skill and get better explosives.

Fortune Finder - Honestly this is kind of a wasted Perk. While the bonus caps are nice the amount of extra caps you get isn't really all that huge. Take a pass on this one.

Gunslinger - While useful this is still a hard one to sell. The V.A.T.S. accuracy increase is nice but it only works when using one handed weapons. There are some very powerful pistols out there but you'd be better off rushing an enemy with a shotgun.

Lead Belly - Frankly you shouldn't really have too huge of a need to drink irradiated water. While it provides you nice bonuses on the go you would be better off increasing your medicine skill and using stimpacks. They can heal injured limbs along with damage.

Toughness - A very simple and useful ability. The 10% damage resistance bonus makes it much harder to be damaged. Essentially you're giving yourself some permanent armor with this Perk.

Level 8

Commando - The two handed version of gunslinger this is a much better skill. With this a close range shotgun blast to the head is a near guaranteed hit (and likely kill) and rifles can make excellent sniper rifles.

Impartial Mediation - Obviously this is a pretty useless skill if you aren't going to be staying neutral. If you're neutral then you definitely will want this skill, 50% boost is nothing to shake a stick at especially if you're a talker.

Rad Resistance - If this gave a 50% radiation resistance it would be a lot more useful but the 25% isn't worth a Perk slot. Instead just make sure to carry Rad-X and Radaways wherever you go.

Scrounger - The ammo based variation on Fortune Finder this one is more useful. Ammo is good for selling to traders for a nice chunk of change even if you're not using it. You could do much worse as far as skills go.

Size Matters - An incredibly strong skill, a few Ranks in this can bring a tagged Big Guns skill to over 50 without you putting any other points in the skill.

Strong Back - The 50 pound carrying capacity increase is pretty laughable. By raising your strength you gain 10lbs of extra capacity and give your strength based skills a boost. This is only really useful if you're using the biggest weapons and armor.

Level 10

Animal Friend - Putting one rank in this is good since it prevents random animals from attacking you. This makes traveling through the Wasteland much easier. The second rank is kind of useless though. If you really need the help of some Radroach to help defeat a Raider you might need to reconsider your character.

Finesse - This is an incredibly powerful Perk that all characters could do for. Paired up with Gunslinger/Commando you can tear enemies apart in V.A.T.S. mode especially if you can manage to sneak attack them.

Here and Now - Judge for yourself if this is worth it. You're trading in a Perk for this level for another level that comes with another Perk.

Mister Sandman - Unless you have a good reason to kill sleeping foes there is no reason to take this Perk. We have never found a good reason to take this.

Mysterious Stranger - This is a hard skill to judge. It's very useful when it works but it's kind of hard to rely upon. Although it is worth seeing the noir detective at least once you simply can't rely on this Perk.

Nerd Rage - The Strength boost is probably negligible if you're a science based character. Your melee skills probably aren't the greatest so this is a really useless Perk. If you set your character up for it to work (via tagging Melee) then you can slaughter enemies wholesale with a Super Sledge.

Night Person - The +2 Intelligence boost is nice but the +2 Perception boost is much nicer. This is very useful out in the Wasteland and if you're traveling at night most enemies will have problems noticing you. As you might guess this is a great skill for a sneaking character who wants to dabble as a sniper.

Level 12

Cannibal - A useful if disgusting skill. Make sure that you aren't seen and it's incredibly useful for evil characters. Otherwise you really don't want to take this Perk.

Fast Metabolism - This is an incredibly useful skill especially if you've put a lot of points in Medicine. Early on, with a high Medicine, you can heal up to 40 points. Adding the 20% bonus to it will only make this much more useful.

Life Giver - Who doesn't like more hit points? If you're rolling around in hit points thanks to an incredibly high HP amount you don't need this but for science based characters it will help.

Pyromaniac - Seeing just how few Flame based weapons there are in the game this is a waste. Just focus on increasing your Big Guns rating to make them more effective.

Robotics Expert - The damage bonus you get from this against robots is nice but the ability to shut them down isn't. If you're making good use of Sneak then this is an okay skill for you.

Silent Running - This is a skill for those who sneak everywhere they go. However it seems to be kind of a waste since if you're sneaking around an area there are likely enemies and traps. One would think that this means you would want to move slowly. It's useful if you wish to sneak around the Wasteland though.

Sniper - Obviously you don't need this if you use lots of rocket launchers and mini-guns. But if you're using small guns or laser pistols this is a fantastic skill. If you take Sniper, Gunslinger / Commando and Finesse you can make the combat a breeze.

Level 14

Adamantium Skeleton - An incredibly useful skill this ensures that you won't need to keep on healing up your limbs. If you have a high enough Medicine rating then this Perk is unnecessary but it will help out the more combat oriented types.

Chemist - While you shouldn't be using Chems too often if you find yourself needing them then this Perk is great. It guarantees that any chems you use will last you through the current situation. Not using chems? Then you don't need this Perk.

Contract Killer - If you're trying to stay neutral or good then you can't really use this. Even if you're evil it's still kind of useless taking this skill since there aren't that many good characters to kill outside towns. It is useful if you find yourself being hassled by attack squads though.

Cyborg - It's surprising just how powerful this Perk is. Not only does it give you plenty of resistance to basically all forms of damage but it makes you better with energy weapons. While this is obviously a no-brainer for anyone who uses these guns the damage resistance increases can be helpful for every character.

Lawbringer - This is an absolutely incredible Perk to purchase so long as you aren't evil or trying to stay neutral. The money and constant Karma boosts are fantastically helpful. If you pair this up with Master Trader you can really rake in the caps.

Light Step - Are you having problems avoiding enemy traps and mines? If that's the case then pick up this Perk so that you can avoid the damage. Should you find it easy to avoid these then you don't need this Perk.

Master Trader - Even if you're rolling in the caps at this point this Perk is still incredibly useful. This allows you to keep yourself well armed and armored no matter the situation. If you're using a Laser Weapon, or Big Weapons, this is a yet more useful skill since the ammo for those can get expensive.

Level 16

Action Boy - Even though the 25 bonus Action Points are quite useful you shouldn't need them. The weapons at this point should be killing people in one or two headshots so this Perk should be unnecessary in the long term.

Better Criticals - Seriously why shouldn't you be using this Perk? If you happen to blast someone in the face with a shotgun this makes it all the more likely they are reduced to a fine spray of blood and gristle.

Chem Resistant - While this would be a great Perk it comes at a point in the game where you shouldn't be using drugs anymore. If it came earlier then it would be great, as it is it's simply mediocre. Drugs are only useful for fighting bosses and if you're not using drugs all the time you don't need this skill.

Tag! - The boost you gain for tagging another skill is incredibly useful. If you wish to change to using a new weapon type or simply better a skill you've been using a lot then this Perk is awesome. One of the better Perks in the game.

Level 18

Concentrated Fire - This is an incredibly useful skill if you are using Small Guns. Aim at an enemies head and keep hitting them there until their face is a fine red mist. An incredible skill.

Computer Whiz - Since computer hacking is, for lack of a better term, kind of crappy this will be of some assistance. It allows you to attempt to hack a terminal a second time even after you fail. However you can avoid this problem by simply canceling out of the hacking attempt whenever you get to a third failure. They reset when you exit so there's no reason to waste a Perk on this.

Infiltrator - By this point in the game you shouldn't need a Perk like this. If you can't open doors reliably then this might help you out but overall you shouldn't be making mistakes like this when you hit a level this high.

Paralyzing Palm - Another unarmed skill? Bah! If you're trying to make a character akin to a D&D Monk then this is your skill. However you can't have a Power Fist equipped to use it. Pass!

Level 20

Explorer - If you haven't found all the locations by the time you can afford this, find a guide online. This is a total waste of a Perk especially such a high level one.

Grim Reaper's Sprint - One of the best Perks in the whole game. This lets you use your V.A.T.S. incredibly often to blow away peoples' faces. They can only take so many shots to the face before they die and then your entire supply of them gets renewed.

Ninja - Let's ignore the Melee or Unarmed boosts you get from this, the critical boost is incredible. If you are a Melee fighter and can sneak up on someone the damage output on the attack can be ridiculously overpowered.

Solar Powered - The minor boosts you get from this are marginal at this point. Ninja or Grim Reaper's Sprint are much more useful than this skill at this level.