

Mastering The Last of Us Part II: A Trophy Hunter Guide for Grounded Difficulty

When I first loaded up The Last of Us Part II on my PlayStation 5, I thought I knew what I was getting into. I had played the original game multiple times, memorized enemy patrol routes, and felt confident in my stealth tactics. Then I tried Grounded difficulty with a no damage run and realized how little I actually understood about the game's systems. That experience taught me that a proper trophy hunter guide for this title is about more than just collecting items. It is about rethinking how you approach every encounter, every resource, and every checkpoint.

The Last of Us Part II is a survival horror game at its core, and Naughty Dog designed it to punish carelessness. On Grounded difficulty, even a single bullet can end your run. This is where the real value of a trophy hunter guide becomes clear. It is not a walkthrough that holds your hand. It is a strategic framework that helps you make smart decisions under pressure. I have spent dozens of hours on this gameplay walkthrough, and I want to share what I learned so you can save time and avoid the mistakes I made.



Understanding the Grounded Difficulty Mindset

Grounded difficulty changes everything. Enemies deal massive damage, supplies are scarce, and the listening mode is disabled. You cannot rely on wallhacks to track enemies through walls. You have to use your eyes and ears. This forces you to engage with the game world in a way that most players never experience. The first time I played on Grounded, I died in the opening Seattle section more times than I care to admit. But each death taught me something about enemy patrol patterns and the layout of the environment.

One of the most important lessons I learned is that stealth tactics are not optional on Grounded. They are essential. If you try to fight every enemy head-on, you will run out of ammunition and health supplies very quickly. The game gives you tools like silenced pistols, arrows, and bricks to distract enemies. Use them. I found that taking five minutes to observe a room before engaging saved me hours of frustration. This kind of patience is what separates a casual playthrough from a no damage run.

Weapon Upgrades and the Crafting System

The crafting system in The Last of Us Part II is deep, and on Grounded difficulty, every resource matters. You cannot afford to waste materials on items you will not use. Early in the game, I focused on upgrading melee weapons and crafting health kits. That was a mistake. What I really needed were silencers for my pistol and smoke bombs for crowd control. A good [trophy hunter guide](#) will tell you to prioritize upgrades that let you control the flow of battle rather than just survive hits.

Weapon upgrades are another critical area. On Grounded, the difference between a fully upgraded pistol and a stock one is enormous. But you have limited parts and supplies. I recommend focusing on one or two weapons that fit your playstyle. For me, that was the hunting pistol and the bow. Both are quiet, accurate, and let me take out enemies from a distance without alerting others. The bow is especially useful because you can retrieve arrows from bodies, which saves resources over time.



Checkpoint System and Permadeath Mode

The checkpoint system in The Last of Us Part II is generous on lower difficulties, but on Grounded it can feel punishing. You will die often, and you will reload to a checkpoint that might be several minutes back. This is where patience becomes a virtue. I learned to treat each checkpoint as a fresh opportunity to refine my approach. If I died, I asked myself what I could have done differently. Did I rush? Did I miss a patrol route? Did I waste a smoke bomb that I needed later?

For players who want an even greater challenge, permadeath mode is available. This mode deletes your save file if you die, forcing you to start the entire game over. I have never completed a permadeath run myself, but I have watched speedrun techniques from players who have. Their strategies rely on memorizing enemy positions and using the environment to bypass fights entirely. If you are aiming for a permadeath run, a thorough trophy hunter guide is not just helpful. It is essential.

Collectibles and the 4K HDR Experience

One of the rewards of playing on Grounded difficulty is that you see every corner of the game world. The 4K HDR visuals on PlayStation 5 make environments like Seattle and Jackson Hole look stunning. I found myself stopping to admire the lighting and detail even while trying to survive. This is a game that rewards exploration. The collectibles, from trading cards to artifacts, are scattered throughout the levels, and finding them all requires a careful eye.

Collecting everything on Grounded is a test of endurance. You have to balance the risk of entering a dangerous area against the reward of finding a rare item. I used a checklist from a trophy hunter guide to track what I had found and what I still needed. This kept me from backtracking unnecessarily. The collectibles are not just filler. They tell a story about the world before the outbreak and the people who lived in it. Reading the notes and examining the artifacts added depth to my experience.

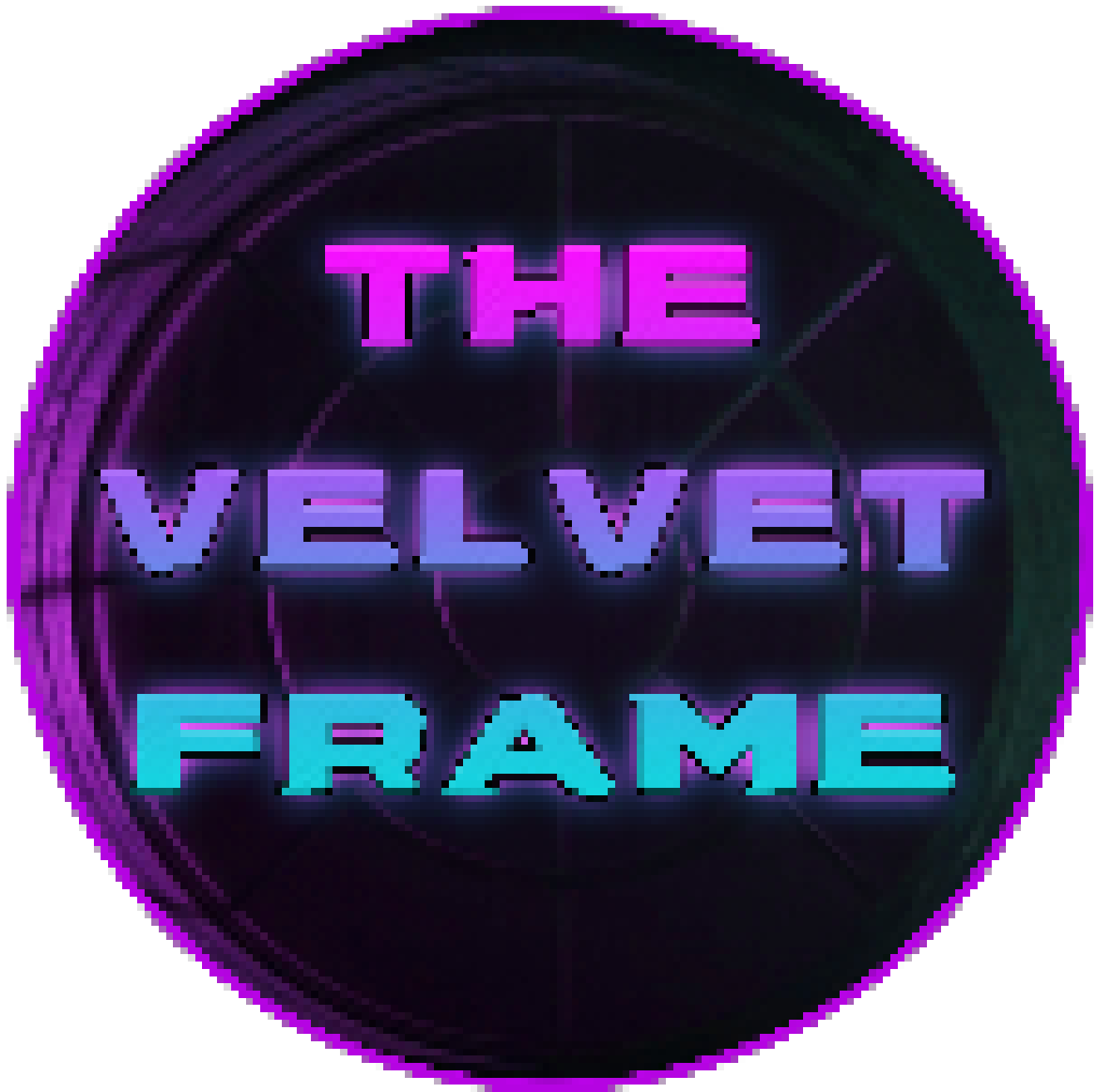
Accessibility Options and Personalizing Your Run

Naughty Dog included a wide range of accessibility options in The Last of Us Part II. These are not just for players with disabilities. They can be used by anyone to tailor the difficulty to their preferences. For example, you can adjust the enemy awareness, turn on auto-aim, or slow down the game speed. I used some of these options during my no damage run to make the game more manageable without losing the core challenge. A good trophy hunter guide will encourage you to experiment with these settings to find what works for you.

The accessibility options are a testament to how Naughty Dog thinks about player experience. They understand that difficulty is not one-size-fits-all. What makes Grounded challenging is the combination of limited resources and aggressive enemies. You can keep that tension while using accessibility options to reduce frustration. I recommend turning on the option that highlights interactive objects. This saves time when you are searching for collectibles and helps you avoid missing important items.

Speedrun Techniques and Efficiency

If you are going for a no damage run, speedrun techniques can help you move through the game faster without taking risks. The key is to know which fights you can skip and which you have to complete. I learned a few simple techniques from watching speedruns. For example, you can use a smoke bomb to blind enemies and run past them. You can also use the prone position to crawl under obstacles that enemies cannot see through. These techniques require practice, but they save time and reduce the chance of taking damage.



The game's pacing is important to maintain. If you spend too long in one area, you increase the chance of making a mistake. I found that setting a mental timer for each section helped me stay focused. If I had not cleared an area in five minutes, I would retreat and rethink my approach. This is one of those tips that seems simple but makes a big difference. A trophy hunter guide that teaches you to manage your time is worth its weight in digital gold.

Final Thoughts on the Journey

The Last of Us Part II is a masterpiece of storytelling and gameplay. Playing it on Grounded difficulty with a no damage run is one of the most satisfying challenges I have ever completed. It forced me to learn the game on a level I never expected. I now understand why Ellie and Abby

make the choices they do. Their desperation mirrors the player's own when resources are low and death is one mistake away.

Whether you are collecting all collectibles or aiming for a permadeath run, a good trophy hunter guide can be the difference between frustration and triumph. I hope the strategies I shared here help you on your journey. Remember to be patient, use your resources wisely, and never underestimate the value of a well-placed stealth kill. Seattle and Jackson Hole are waiting, and they are beautiful even in their ruin.