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How to Play | Getting Started

Once the software is running you will be able to start a new game from the first menu screen, add a player name and leave the difficulty mode at its default of normal for now. If you want a quick blast just try instant action, if you want to get straight into the game then skip the intro, but it is always best to play the intro at least once, as well as explaining the controls the intro also introduces elements of the plot. When the new game starts you will be shown the main game intro animation, you can skip this at any time by pressing space but again it is worth watching at least once so you know what is going on.

The game revolves around exploring your surroundings from the base station, the Aegis. Once the tutorial has finished (or if you skipped it) go straight to the grid map. Here you can navigate from one node to another, eventually you will start to see red and orange target markers, these are the enemy. The grid map has two levels, the grid and the hyper grid, you can only get into the hyper-grid on certain nodes, but once there you can leap frog great distances.

Enter one of the nodes on the grid map to start the action, once the Aegis has jumped into the node you will be able to take out your default fighter. You can leave the node at any time once the Aegis' jump engine has recharged. If there are no enemies nearby use your main gun (Q default) to break up the rocks, which often contain rare elements you can use to make equipment or repair your ship. If you see any then use your gravity beam (E default) to pull them into your cargo hold. Once you have a full load return to the Aegis and drop them off.

Before long the enemy will locate your position and attack, if they destroy the Aegis your game is over so never let them near it. You can dock with the Aegis by pressing the call button (R default), or double tap it to make the Aegis move to your position at the time the call was made.

Mine the nodes, kill the enemy, follow the plot, explore the grid and recover your crew. If you keep improving your ships and the Aegis you can keep one step ahead of the enemy. Can you escape the grid?

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How to Play | WebScore™

At any time you may run the game and go straight to the 'hall of fame' to review the permanent records of the top eight players.Within an active game you can also see your progress by visiting the 'Maintain Aegis' screen and then clicking on 'Dimension Drive'. All the progress screens are overlaid over the Dimension drive room where you can see the current state of the Dimension drive. Once this drive is complete you can escape the grid and journey home.

From either location you can view your web code, which encrypts a number of details about your progress including the score. If you have an active Internet connection you can click on the Moonpod button to connect to member login. Once logged in, the code will be automatically entered into the system and the main high score tables immediately updated. You can also process codes manually if you don't have an internet connection on your gaming PC.

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How to Play | Default Controls

Default Keyboard Controls





Fire Group 1 (Q) and Fire Group 2 (W)



Engage Tractor Beam (If fitted)



Signal the Aegis to pick you up.


Front End Navigation and In game ship control
Left = Rotate Ship Anti-Clockwise
Right = Rotate Ship Clockwise
Up = Forward thrust
Down = Reverse thrust



Select



Exit (Always returns to front page)

Default Game Pad Controls



*Note: The above image represents the layout of an average game pad, some pads may order buttons differently. In this case Buttons ABCxyz represent the buttons on your gamepad numbered 123456 respectively.



Fire Group 1 (A) and Fire Group 2 (B)



Engage Tractor Beam (If fitted)



Signal the Aegis to pick you up.



Front End Navigation and In game ship control
Left = Rotate Ship Anti-Clockwise
Right = Rotate Ship Clockwise
Up = Forward thrust
Down = Reverse thrust



Select (In menus)



Exit (Always returns to front page in menus)

Our Recommended Setup for Gamepads



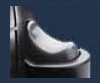
Fire Group 1 (A) and Fire Group 2 (B)



Engage Tractor Beam (If fitted)



Signal the Aegis to pick you up.



Left Trigger = Forward Thrust
Right Trigger = Reverse Thrust



Front End Navigation and In game ship control
Left = Rotate Ship Anti-Clockwise
Right = Rotate Ship Clockwise

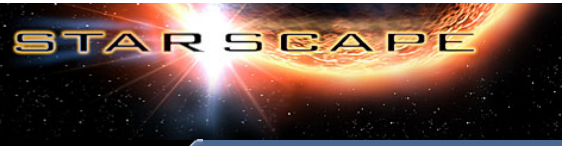


Select



Exit (Always returns to front page)

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Initially you will only have the default fighter, which is far from adequate, it is just a converted survey ship as used by the Aegis in its normal research role. As soon as you have some raw materials it's time to think about better equipment and then later creating new bigger hull designs.

You must always be careful to maintain a balance between the three resource-sinks Research, Construction and Repair. If you spend all your resources on any one then the others will suffer. Imagine taking a beating from the enemy only to find the Aegis has run out of resources and you cannot repair your ship!



If any ship is destroyed then the escape pod launches, you must get back to the Aegis as quickly as possible.



The Runabout is an off the shelf converted survey ship, if you have no custom hulls you can always access one of these standard fighters.



The Prowler is a major upgrade to the survey ship; the port nacelles carry extra weapons pods.



The Avenger is a completely new design; although it carries the same number of weapons it can take the more advanced larger weapon upgrades.



The Devastator is the ultimate one-man fighter. Its six weapon pods can carry top of the line weapons.

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Within the ship construction screen you can review the internal layout of a ship and modify the layout of equipment it uses. There are however three vital factors to be aware of:

Mining	If you haven't fitted a gravity generator then you won't be able to pull in resources as they become available. It is vital you always keep resource supplies topped up.
Generator	Almost every item on a ship needs power so you must fit a generator or you wont be able to launch. You can only fit one. Check the generator you fit can create enough power for the ship, every time you upgrade something it will probably need more power.
Engine	Obviously your ship needs an engine, but check the mass rating is high enough. You can only fit one and it must go in a specific location. As you add equipment to your ship its overall mass increases. If the engine isn't rated high enough then the ship will be sluggish when accelerating and decelerating. This can be critical.

Although it is essential to generate enough power for the engines it is possible to launch a fighter that cannot create enough power for the engines AND the weapons. This is in fact quite normal, you just have to deactivate the engines before firing.

Batteries	A better solution is to fit batteries to the hull, during periods of low usage they will take spare power and charge up, then in times of need such as when thrusting and firing they can supply the extra power required, for a short time.

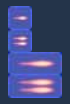
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What use is a fighter without weapons? Most weapons have to be fitted to specific pods on the hull; for example, lasers need a pod on the front facing leading edge of the hull. For extra control the weapons can be independently assigned to one of two weapon groups. Each weapon group is activated by either fire1 (Q default) or fire2 (W default). Missiles and bombs are automatically put in weapon group2 and lasers and blasters in weapon group1. From the ship construction screen you can modify a fitted weapon to go into whatever weapon group you like.

Some weapons need large amounts of power to fire (lasers) and others need little but use up ammo quickly (rockets). Therefore it is a good idea to put lasers in one group so they can be fired frequently but perhaps only when not moving. Conversely rockets benefit from being in their own group as they can be fired even when all power is being used elsewhere but their limited ammunition might mean extra care would be needed in selecting only important targets.

	starting weapon	inf. ammo	Small weak projectiles fired in large numbers. Can be charged up to release a powerful blast.
	starting weapon	fixed ammo	Initially just dumb rockets but can be upgraded to fully heat seeking missiles then plasma torpedos.
	zone 2	inf. ammo	More powerful than blasters and with the ability to bounce off targets.
	zone 3	inf. ammo	One or two can be added to a hull, robot weapon sentinels for added firepower.
	zone 4	fixed ammo	Very limited ammo but can release an enormous target-seeking wave of energy. Very useful in emergencies.
	zone 5	inf. ammo	The ultimate weapon, but draws excessive quantities of power. Can be charged up to release a frightening electrical discharge.

Weapons using ammunition can have the ammo quantity extended by using extra ammunition pods. What might initially be seen as an occasional use secondary weapon could become a primary piece of hardware if extra ammunition is fitted.

 Increases capacity of rockets, heat seekers or plasma missiles. Multiple ammo packs can be added to increase capacity even further.

 Increases capacity of nova bombs, add multiple ammo packs to increase capacity.

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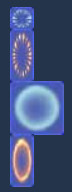
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The gravity beam is an essential item for recovering resources when in open space. When activated larger asteroids will be slowed and small resources or items will be sucked into the ship. The more advanced version uses stabilising magnetic fields to protect the fragile resources as they are absorbed.



Only one gravity beam can be fitted to each hull.

Shields are an extremely important addition to any ship, they can be found within the first zone. Like batteries they use spare generator power to charge up, impacts are then absorbed within the shield up to a certain amount. Excess damage falls through the shield and will damage the ship as normal.



Only one shield can be fitted to each hull.

Besides the player's ships the space station itself can also be enhanced, this is very important, as initially the Aegis is unarmed and very vulnerable. The Aegis has four small corner turrets and large central cannon, all of which can be upgraded.



The corner turrets send out a stream of small projectiles.



The main cannon takes time to charge but releases an extremely powerful laser blast.

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The term 'grid' refers to all the singularities that have been detected and that the Aegis is capable of entering, each one is called a 'node'. The grid is split into five zones; each 'zone' contains a number of nodes, some of which allow long distance travel between zones.

The 'hyper grid' map shows all the zones the player can access, eventually this will be all five, initially it is just one. Nodes that allow long distance travel are marked in green on the hyper grid; they are referred to as 'transfer nodes'. Press fire1 on a transfer node and the map display switches to that zone, the map is zoomed and all the nodes are shown. Pressing fire2 in this view on a transfer node switches back to the hyper grid map. As well as entering new zones, transfer nodes are useful for jumping straight past enemy units, they are confined to normal node transit.

Enemy units have a certain mass; this can be detected and used to display an enemy marker on the map. Enemy units move erratically and only seem capable of detecting the Aegis if it is on an adjacent node, stay well clear and they will not see you. Large and medium resource bearing rocks within the nodes can also be detected. Each node has a small bar next to it indicating the percentage of resource rich rock left in the node.

From the grid map screen it is possible to skip time without moving, this is useful if there are no enemies about and you just want to wait for an item to be researched or built.

As well as enemy units there are friendly aliens within each zone, you must find their location by destroying the larger enemy capitol ships that sometimes drop wreckage that can be analysed. Enemy units never go to these special nodes and they are very important as the Aegis and your own ships can be fully repaired free of charge.

Occasionally a node will be marked as unstable, these nodes are rich in resources yet very dangerous. Strange grid creatures live in the molten rocks that explode if touched and move unpredictably.

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Tactics & Strategy | Basic Play Guide | Stores

When you make any new equipment it is temporarily placed in stores, even hulls are kept here when not in use. From the stores screen you can see all the available equipment and if you want you can recycle it back into raw resources. As well as making equipment you can also pick it up in game, some of the larger capitol ships drop equipment pods. Even if you don't need it you can pick it up and then recycle it back into raw resources.

From the ship selection screen you can dismantle a ship and put it back into stores with one click. If you don't need the ship anymore you can also recycle the entire thing into raw resources with a single click. Within the ship construction screen you have control over individual items. You can add items from stores, be aware though that only suitable items are shown, i.e. if one engine is fitted you wont see any others to add, you have to remove it from the hull first. You can also modify items of equipment fitted to a hull, either recycling them into raw resources, putting them back into storage or if they are weapons you can change the weapon's group.

If you are in trouble and need resources quickly consider recycling some older or unnecessary items. There is however a small reduction in the resource value due to the conversion process. Don't forget to pull in any equipment pods dropped by exploding enemies; if nothing else they are another source of raw materials.

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Tactics & Strategy | Basic Play Guide | Game Modes

Starscape is all about customising space ships and fighting epic battles, the default ship known as the Runabout is pretty useless. Your customised ships should be prized and can be uniquely individually named. Along with other information your best five custom ships are recorded in your progress screen, when you save they also get added to the permanent hall of fame records.

In the normal game mode you can save and load whenever you like, if one of these custom ships gets destroyed you can just reload. In hard mode you must really cherish your custom fighters, after all, you made them. Although you can still save whenever you like, if you lose a custom ship all your saves are updated to reflect this. When they are gone, they are gone for good. This is the game mode that separates the men from the boys.

To reflect the importance of custom ships the webScore system also records which mode the game is being played in, how many saves you have used and how many custom ships have been made. True gaming guru's will play in hard mode, use few saves and cherish only a handful of battle worn veteran fighters.

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Tactics & Strategy | Basic Play Guide | Research & Development

This is where you improve your available technologies and build new equipment; both activities require a lot of resources. Don't forget that you can pick up equipment for free by destroying the larger enemy ships. At the top of this screen is the progress graph, this gives a rough indication of how long it will be before any research or development projects are finished.

No work can be undertaken without resources and assigned crew to do the job, the more crew you assign the faster the job gets done. Another reason to have a good look around each zone for your missing crew. Don't worry if you don't currently have enough resources you can still start work, the project will just stall until you get more supplies.

If you split the crew it is also possible to simultaneously research and build, you can change crew assignments at any time. If a research project finishes before a build project (or vice versa) don't forget to put the idle crew into the active project to get it finished quicker. If a large project is underway but you need to hang onto your resources for a fight just pause the R+D work, you can resume it later.

When choosing equipment to build or improve always check the descriptive text, you can see how much power it will draw, how massive it is and the arrangement of free hull pods needed to fit it. Is the new item really going to be suitable for your current ships? If you do make something in error then just recycle it back into raw materials.

Don't get carried away and spend all your resources on items, you must maintain a balance. Neither should you latch onto an item and pour hundreds of resources into it to upgrade it to the max. What good is the most powerful blaster in the game if it is too massive to fit to your hull and it draws so much power you can't fire it.

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All of the functions on this screen can also be edited by hand in the Starscape.cfg file, this allows settings to be changed if the game will not run for any reason. The controls can only be modified in game though.

Window style

Do you want the game to run in a window or full screen, the game should normally be played full screen. On some hardware running in a window causes the game to run very slowly. NOTE: if you click any of the buttons that cause your web browser to open, then the game will automatically drop into a window. You can either manually switch back to full screen when you are ready or the game will start full screen the next time it is launched.

Texture quality

High is best, low is there for older hardware that either doesn't work with texture quality set high or runs too slowly.

Screen mode

32bit is best but 16bit is there for older graphics cards where 32bit either doesn't work at all or runs too slowly. We have found 16bit mode can make the game run a lot faster on some older graphics cards.

Audio mode

Affects the quality of the audio, if the game runs slowly then try turning this down. You can also disable audio completely if you are experiencing a technical problem and the game wont run at all.

Music and Sfx volume

Independent control of music and sound effects volume to balance the levels to suit your system.

Controls

Takes you to the controls page where you can alter the keyboard or joystick input mapping.

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Warning! Advanced play guide (**spoiler**)

Don't read on unless you are stuck, this section contains many spoilers for the game and explains just about everything in detail. Resist!

Try to get three ships in the Aegis hangar as soon as possible, don't play for extended periods without resources for repairs, but take every opportunity to build all three. Instead of spending money repairing your ships, use each one in turn until the in game damage alarm begins to sound. At that point return to the Aegis and take a fresh one out, when they are all looking fairly beat up look for the nearest friendly alien node. If there is a Xenarch outpost close by pay it a visit, enemy units will not follow you in and you can repair your ships one after the other (and the Aegis) by just moving in close to the station. It is an excellent way of saving resources for research and construction.

Never risk a damaged ship in a node containing major enemy units; ships like the minelayer can cause a lot of damage. As they are much more massive than other enemy units they show up on your radar as a very bright red blip. With a ship at full health you will nearly always have enough time to get back to the Aegis if things go wrong. If your ship is already damaged before you start fighting you will have little chance should things turn bad.

Don't be tempted to over extend yourself by trying to research the best equipment and hulls straight away. You will just run out of resources constantly repairing the Aegis and the runabout. There are five zones in the game so balance your upgrades evenly as the game progresses and opportunity presents itself.

As well as balancing your own advancement you should make sure each ship is balanced to its hull. More powerful equipment tends to be more massive and consume more power. Don't be tempted to fit powerful items into the small Runabout hull, conversely there is no point spending resources on a Devastator and filling it with level 1 equipment. Your ships should always have responsive engines to maintain your manoeuvrability and ample power so you can always fire your weapons.

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Each zone is progressively more difficult and therefore it's important to have the right ship for the job. Following are some examples that work well in the appropriate zone without being too expensive in resources.

ZONE 1

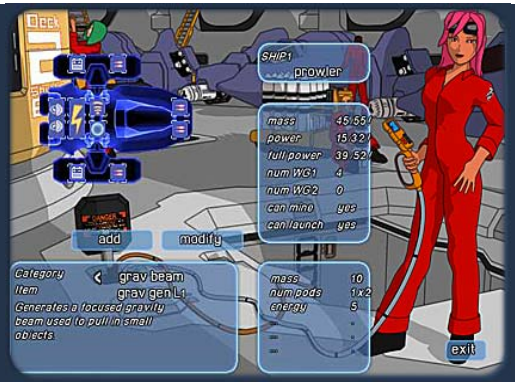


Zone one is just about possible with the Runabout although you would be using the escape pod quite a lot throughout the course of the zone. The Prowler is a much better bet; here we have outfitted her with twin level1 blasters and twin rockets. No equipment had to be researched to create this ship; most of the parts are already available in stores (once the tutorial is finished). The centre window contains the all important mass, power and full power readings. The right hand figures always indicate what the ship is comfortably capable of and the left hand figure shows what we actually need with the current configuration.

The power indicator shows how much energy the ship draws when we aren't boosting or firing weapons. As you can see, it is perfectly balanced at 15 of 15. The full power indicator shows how much energy the ship draws when all weapons are firing and with all batteries charged. With a rating at 27 of 21 we can see that the batteries wont last long at full power with all weapons and engines running.

The engine is rated at mass 49, but as you can see we are running with a mass of 45, it's just enough so the ship should still be very responsive.

ZONE 1-2



When coming to the end of a zone or at the start of a new zone you can often find yourself with a dilemma. The new zone is much harder yet the old zone is low on resources, certainly not enough for a completely new hull and a full set of newly upgraded equipment to match.

In this situation you could try building a 'tank' fighter, the idea being to upgrade your weapons and then overload an existing hull. Don't try this unless you have one or two well-balanced fighters standing by as backups.

Here we can see we are carrying a full load of level2 blasters all assigned to weapon group 1 so they can be fired with a single button press. The ship isn't capable of sustaining power so two batteries have been fitted. This will mean engines and weapons will be available most of the time, but when the batteries are fully drained there will be problems. The hull is so overloaded the ship will be very sluggish, slow to accelerate and decelerate.

The best way of accessing this ship's firepower is to stand your ground giving maximum power to shields, batteries and weapons (keep the engines off). Even without moving you will only be able to maintain fire for a short time so you better hope the enemies don't attack in excessive numbers. A good tactic with a ship like this is to keep the Aegis with you so if things get too much you can fall back and let the enemy taste both your guns.

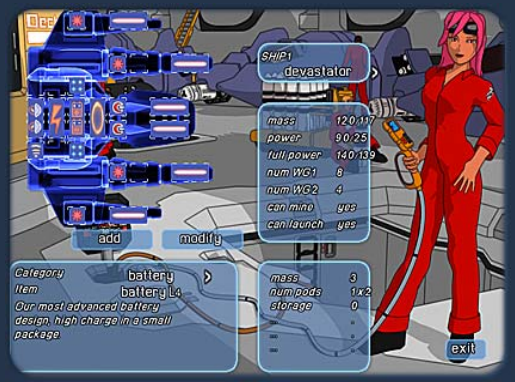
ZONE 2-3



Here we have upgraded to the Avenger class hull, this is a real warship with four level2 lasers and two drones. Effectively we now have 6 weapons assigned to a single fire button, very powerful. This configuration is so massive and so much energy is needed we have had to go for level2 engines and generators. These items are so large there is no room for a level1 gravity beam, but that's ok as there are plenty of spare pods so a level2 gravity beam fits nicely.

Even a level2 generator can't supply enough power with all weapons firing, therefore we have fitted two batteries which should allow for quite long bursts of fire.

ZONE 4-5



The ultimate fighter, plenty of power and very manoeuvrable, obviously the main advantage is the excessive weaponry. There are six weapon pods here fitted with level4 particle weapons, it doesn't get any better. Two drones add a low power laser to each side of the hull. Secondary fire is being used for Nova Bombs, which can be placed anywhere. If anything gets past the main guns secondary fire can be used to activate the nova bombs. In the above example four have been assign to secondary fire, so you will get 4 simultaneous blasts per press. True heroes only.

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Warning! Advanced play guide (**spoiler**)

Don't read on unless you are stuck, this section contains many spoilers for the game and explains just about everything in detail. Resist!

Here is a breakdown of some of the enemy units and bosses along with tips for defeating the more difficult opponents.

Drones

Basic unmanned enemy fighters, difficult to hit due to their small size, only a threat in large numbers.



Fighters

The foot soldier of the enemy, these one-man fighters often form small squadrons along with a number of escort drones. They are a constant irritation and are also used in support roles with larger enemies.



Frigates

These larger craft are armed with powerful missiles, they are fairly slow moving but if a missile catches you then you will take some serious damage.



Minelayer

The first of the capitol ships, it is armed with twin gun turrets that are vulnerable to attack. The ships main purpose is to keep out of the way and disperse mines throughout the level. The mines are small and hard to see on the radar, get too close and they home in, very dangerous.



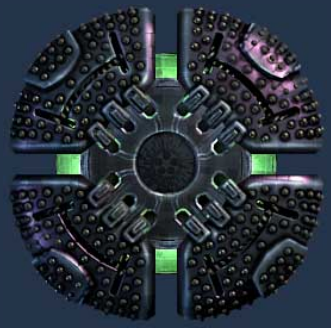
Spore seeder

Covered in invulnerable armour and armed with four gun turrets, the turrets are vulnerable to attack. This ship releases a huge amount of homing mines, these ones don't lie dormant, a more advanced targeting and propulsion system means they will hunt you down wherever you are. It is possible to shoot through gaps in the armour as the ship begins its mine launching phase. If disarmed the ship will attempt to ram the Aegis, obviously you need to get between it and your station.



Gravitron

These ships are very dangerous, covered in invulnerable armour, either avoid them or attack through gaps in the armour when they launch fighters. They have an extremely deadly attack, when you get in close they will sometimes activate a gravity beam. Unless you use your extra thrust to pull away you will be sucked in and crushed against the armour plating.



Interdictor

This capitol ship is basically a large troop transport, difficult to kill without taking damage from the rapid firing guns, it can also jam the Aegis jump drive. While there are ships of this type in a node you cannot get out.



Jammer

Another very difficult kill, the real problem here is that when this ship is in the node if you have shields fitted they wont work. At this point in the game shields are an absolute must so to be without them is very dangerous. This ship uses strobing lasers of extreme power, keep your distance.



Mining barge

An extremely important key capitol ship, they are used by the bosses to gather extra resources. If there are mining barges

in the zone it is likely the boss will be making new capitol ships. Once they have all been eliminated the boss can only make basic fighters and drones. The main structure of the ship is armour plated, including the gun turrets; the resource pods along its sides are vulnerable and must be taken out to kill the ship.

This ship is very very dangerous, a large escort always accompanies it and it carries an enormously powerful mining laser. Always keep moving when near on of these monsters, the laser isn't powerful in short bursts but if it is held on you for any amount of time it can do major damage.

As mining barges are so closely tied to the zone boss they usually release huge amounts of reusable equipment and also vital intelligence. Don't attack one with a full cargo bay, if you are successful and it drops lots of goodies you wont be able to pick them up! What makes this worse is the resources that are dropped wont actually last long in the level before disappearing.



Boss1

This is your first time on your own and this boss is vicious, try to avoid his shots they are slow but very very damaging. He will launch a massive amount of drones, in such large quantities they can take out your ship very quickly. The four arms of the boss are vulnerable and must be taken out first, try to kill as many drones as possible at a distance and then go in.

Once the arms have been removed the boss will begin warping in molten rocks and flinging them at you. Keep moving, don't try and destroy them as they come on too fast. The main body is now vulnerable so take any opportunity to get a few shots in. If you are using blasters then try charging them up before quickly releasing a blast, this way you can keep moving.

Once destroyed the boss command bridge will detach and come after you along with any remaining drones. It's now a straightforward dog fight, his weapons will probably be more powerful than yours so use your manoeuvrability and get behind him.



Boss2

A heavily armoured mother ship that must be approached very carefully, it fires a fairly constant stream of radiation up, down, left and right so come at it diagonally. There are four large cutting arms fitted to the mother ship, these periodically fly out

in unpredictable directions leaving a huge stream of energy in their wake. These cutting discs must be destroyed before the main body can be attacked.



Boss3

This boss is more power station than mother ship, the power it generates operates slowly sweeping arms of laser death. Periodically there will be a huge discharge of electricity to the top and bottom, if you are nearby it will be attracted to the ship. You have to time your approach perfectly to get in between the laser beams and back out before the electrical discharge. You must actually get inside the boss to destroy the sensitive inner generator controls, to get in you must first take out armour plating over the entrance.



Boss4

A huge armoured gun emplacement whose only mission is your destruction, come in carefully between the projectile streams and target the control nodes between the guns. The guns can't fire constantly so you can move between streams if you time it just right. Once the guns are removed your troubles are only just beginning, the boss then periodically splits open releasing really powerful mines. You have to try and get shots in as the armour plated body opens up.



Boss5

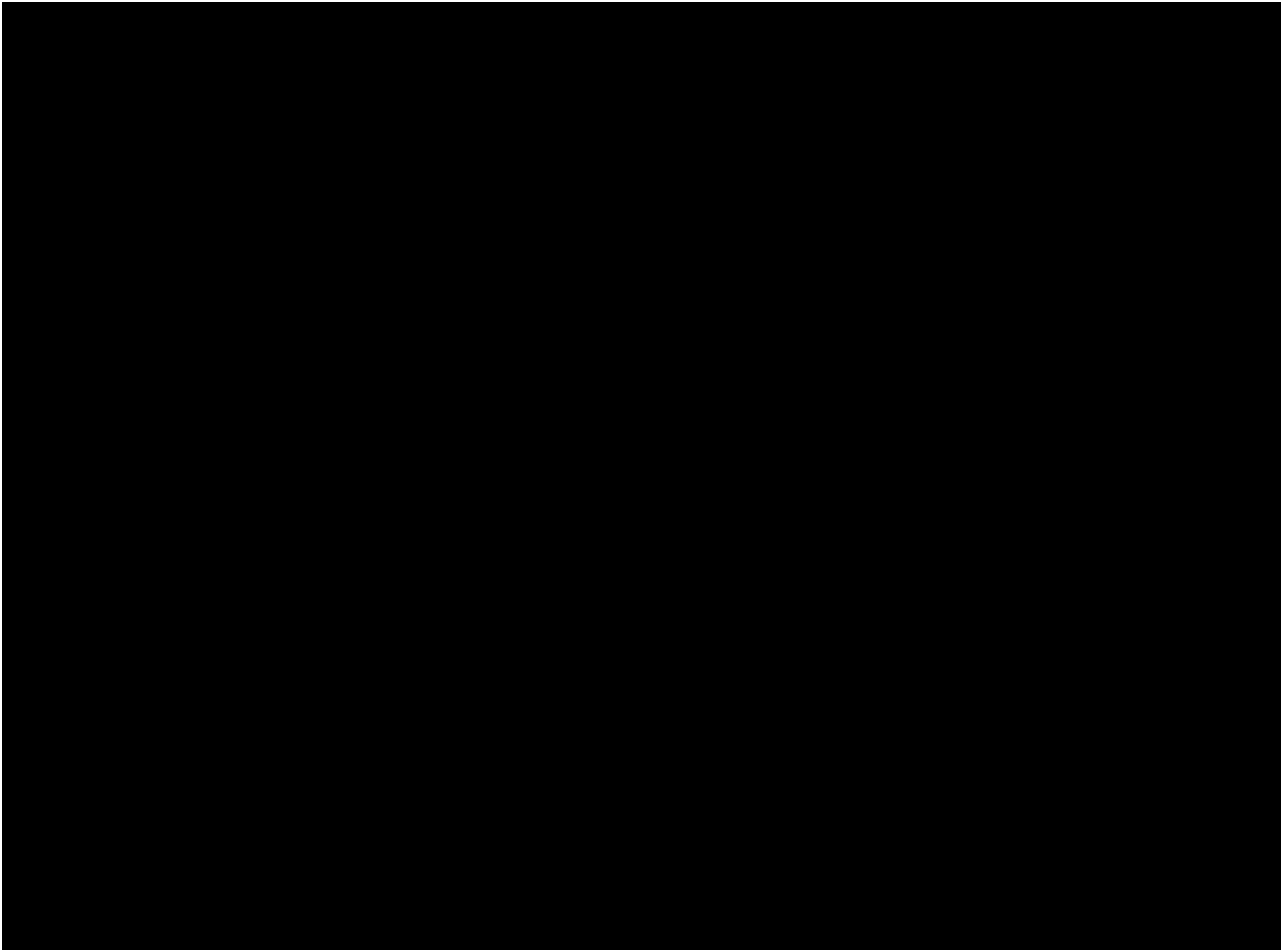
The final boss will really test your skills, it constantly releases slow moving projectiles that are very powerful so try and dodge them. It also releases a huge number of drone guardians, take out the launch bays as soon as you can. The boss has four energy pods that will periodically move out to a certain distance and then charged particles will move between them, you must never be caught in this stream of death.

The energy pods reveal sensitive docking collars; occasionally a pod will move out far enough for you to get your ship in. If you fire straight down the collar you can damage the pod. Once all the launch bays and pod collars are taken out the main body will become vulnerable to attack.

It isn't over yet though as the boss will launch its command ship when destroyed and then it becomes a straight dog fight. The command contains the boss ships main cannon and continues to fire a deadly stream of energy. Get in behind it and take it out.



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Tell Us What You Think

Moonpod would like to hear from you. Whether you love our games or loathe them (heaven forbid), we'd like you to tell us what you think. By email - send your thoughts to info@moonpod.com Who knows, we may even quote you on our site! (We'll ask you first, of course.)

Online - visit http://www.moonpod.com/board/ and join our free message board.
We'd like to know precisely what you like/hate about our games, and give us your suggestions on how to improve them.
Remember, we're here to make games that you want to play, so your feedback is vital to us!

Note: Please do not send unsolicited game ideas. (Any ideas, which are sent to us, will automatically become the sole property of Moonpod).

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Support | 3D Hardware Accelerators

What is a 3D hardware accelerator?
How do I know if I have one?
Where do I get a 3D accelerator from?

What is a 3D hardware accelerator?

In a nutshell a 3D hardware accelerator is a piece of hardware, which speeds up the rendering of 3D and 2D images. Since most modern games are very 3D intensive many need a 3D accelerator in order to give you the quality and speed of graphics required to be playable. The actual form a 3D accelerator comes in varies. The three typical ones are:

- Single 3D/2D add-in board
- An extra board specifically for 3D
- Single 3D/2D chip on the motherboard

Note that the performance of 3D accelerators has increased tremendously over the past few years. Old 3D accelerators may in fact be so slow and have too little memory to be of any use. If this is the case you may need to buy a new 3D accelerator.

How do I know if I have one?

Well this is trickier to determine than it might first seem. If you have bought a new multimedia PC in the last 24 months, then it will almost certainly have some sort of 3D accelerator. If you have bought a 3D add-in card like a 'GeForce' card - then this is a 3D accelerator and the game will work fine with this. Failing all else you can always just try and run the demo of the product you are interested in! There's certainly nothing to lose this way.

Where do I get a 3D accelerator from?

There are a variety of companies producing such cards, you may want to check out the companies and products below:

Company	Products	Website
3DFX	Voodoo 3, 4, 5, 6	www.3dfx.com
Matrox	G200,G400, Parhelia	www.matrox.com
nVidia	Riva TNT, Riva Vanta, Riva TNT 2, GeForce series	www.nvidia.com
S3	SavegePro Twister	www.s3graphics.com
SiS	SiS305 and better	www.sis.com
Videologic	PowerVR Kyro2	www.powervr.com
Trident	BladeXP, BladeT64, CyberBladeXP2	www.tridentmicro.com
ATI	Rage 128, Rage 128 Pro, Rage Fury MAXX, Radeon series	www.atitech.com

The above list is for informational purposes only and is by no means exhaustive.

Known Issues

All cards with less than 16 meg of on board video memory	Starscape requires a 3D hardware accelerator with 16 meg of on board memory. Cards with less memory are unsupported however there is a chance that some may work. We recommend you download the demo and try it for yourself. You may be able to increase performance by changing some of the game options. In particular, texture quality and screen mode.

ATI Rage series	Please note that setting your display properties to 'Convert 32bit textures to 16bit' (under OpenGL settings) will override the texture quality setting in game. The Ati Rage series have no problem running Starscape with 32 bit textures, so it makes sense to leave this feature off, and the game set to 'high' texture quality.

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Warning!

You should only change settings in the Starscape.cfg file if you are experiencing problems running the game. If you reach a point where you don't know what to do and you cannot run the game, try deleting the file. The game will run with default settings and, provided everything was ok, will output a new file with the default settings in. If the game does not run with the default settings, please inform us and we can see about fixing any potential problems.

Renderer options

r_safeRenderMethod [yes, no]
Try setting this to true if you see fatal errors during startup. We have seen problems with some drivers and setting this to true usually fixes those problems at the expense of some speed. for a reasonably fast CPU this shouldn't be a problem.

r_ultraSafeRenderMethod [yes, no]
Set this to true in extreme cases. It uses the worst rendering codepath, but should work on just about any card with any dodgy drivers. Along with good compatibility it gives the worst speed. Hopefully you won't need to use it.

r_disableCVA [yes, no]
Setting this to true fixes some compatibility problems we've seen.

r_fullscreen [yes, no]
If set to true the game will run fullscreen. This is recommended unless you are testing any of the settings above.

r_colorbits [16, 32]
Selects the bit depth of the screen used in game. This may be overriden if your desktop is a different bitdepth and the game isn't running fullscreen. Set to 16 for increased speed on old graphics cards.

r_depthbits [16, 32]
This selects the bitdepth of the z buffer used in game. Because of the nature of the game a 16 bit depth buffer is adequate, and you shouldn't need to alter this.

r_hiQualityTextures [yes, no]
This selects 16 or 32 bit textures (true = 32bit). Set to false if you have a graphics card with less on board memory and the game is running slowly.

r_runOnce [yes, no]
The game keeps track of whether it has been run before with this. Simply, it checks the hardware a little more thoroughly if this is set to false (or not present). Set to false or remove this if you get to a situation where the game simply cannot run because of bad settings.

Audio system options

a_disableAudio [yes, no]
Set to true, this disables the audio system.

a_force8bitSamples [yes, no]
Set to true, this option forces the audio system to use 8 bit samples. Using this can mean the game runs faster on slower processors when doing audio mixing in software.

a_outputFrequencyId [0, 1, 2]
Changing this changes the default output frequency of the sound system. 0 is 11KHz, 1 is 22KHz and 2 is 44KHz. The lower the number the better performance will be on slower computers, although in most cases setting it to 1 will give reasonable performance and acceptable output quality.

a_maxSimultaneousSamples [4..64]
This selects how many samples may be mixed simultaneously. the higher the number, the more sounds can be

heard at once, at the expense of speed if the mixing is being done in software. The default
of 32 should be adequate in most cases.

a_masterfxvolume [0..9]
This value is from zero to nine with zero being silence and nine being loudest.

a_mastermusicvolume [0..9]
Similar to a_masterfxvolume, except it affects the music volume.

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Support | DirectX

About DirectX
What Version Should I use?
How do I know if I have DirectX?
Where do I get it from?

About DirectX

Starscape uses DirectX for sound and input device access. DirectX is a series of software technologies developed by Microsoft. Their purpose was to enable compelling games experiences on the PC. The actual range of technologies is far reaching but the core ones are:

- Direct3D - Allows fast access to 3D accelerators.
- DirectSound - Allows playing and mixing of sounds.
- DirectPlay - Allows fast networking.
- DirectInput - Allows connection and use of a wide variety of devices (like steering wheels, force feedback joysticks)

Without this technology the games cannot access the facilities, which may well mean that they are unable to run. For more details on DirectX go to the DirectX homepage on the Microsoft site. You can find Microsoft's description of DirectX here.

What version should I use?

Generally you should use the latest version of DirectX. There have been a few major releases of DirectX so far. Starscape should work on versions as old as DX5.

- DirectX3 - First version with Direct3D.
- DirectX5 - Sweeping updates, the first good version of DirectX.
- DirectX6 - Updates and upgrades particularly in the area of 3D SFX.
- DirectX7 - Wide range of updates including DirectMusic real-time music generation.
- DirectX8 – Another sweeping update.
- DirectX9 is the latest release version, which improves the technology once again.

Microsoft has developed this technology such that products using older versions of the system should work fine on newer versions of the system. For example a game requiring DirectX5 will work fine (or maybe even better) on DirectX6. This follows on with DirectX9. So generally you are safe to always have the latest version of DirectX on your machine.

How do I know if I have DirectX?

If you have bought a new multimedia PC in the last 18 months then it will come preinstalled with a version of DirectX. If you want to check if you have it installed, and/or which version, then you should run 'dxdiag'. To do this;

- Click on the 'Start' button.
- Select the 'Run...' option from the menu.
- Type in 'dxdiag' in the open box
- Either press return or click 'ok'
- This will bring up a page of information on DirectX, at the bottom of the page the current DirectX version will be listed. If this page does not appear there is a good chance that DirectX is not installed on your machine. If you are still not sure if you have DirectX installed you may want to just download and install the latest version.

Where do I get it from?

Warning! Installing DirectX is usually a simple and painless experience - but be warned it is not always this way, and sometimes it can badly configure your machine. Therefore we recommend you only install a new version of DirectX if you really have to or you have enough PC knowledge to know how to fix things if it goes wrong. Generally it's a good idea to back up any important work on your machine before attempting to install

DirectX. Go to the Microsoft DirectX Download pages.

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Support | OpenGL

About OpenGL
What Version Should I use?
How do I know if I have OpenGL?
Where do I get it from?

About OpenGL

Starscape uses OpenGL to access your 3D hardware accelerator card to render the games sprites and create myriad effects at blistering speeds. OpenGL consists of two elements the API and the driver, Windows needs the API installed and your graphics card needs the latest driver installing. Without OpenGL installed the game will not run, for more information go to the OpenGL website.

What version should I use?

Starscape requires OpenGL version 1.1 or later to work correctly, most flavours of Windows will come preloaded with a suitable version of the API and drivers. The only exception being Windows95, in this case a separate download is required.

How do I know if I have OpenGL?

If you have Windows95OSR2 or later you will definitely have the API installed. The easiest way to tell if you have it is to download the free 'Starscape' demo and run it, if the drivers or API aren't present the game will inform you. Note: if the game runs, but extremely slowly, then you probably have the OpenGL API but no 3D hardware accelerator or the drivers for it are very old. In this case visit your graphics card manufacturer for the latest Windows driver.

Where do I get it from?

You should only consider installing a driver or the API if you are experiencing a specific problem with the game. If you have Windows95 pre the OSR2 release then you will need to go to Microsoft for the OpenGL update, all other versions of Windows should be fine. Regardless of which version of Windows you have installed it is always a good idea to visit your video card manufacturers website and download the latest Windows drivers. This is vital if you are running Windows XP as it ships with software rendering OpenGL drivers only. All video card manufacturers will provide a single driver update for your version of Windows, this will contain both DirectX elements and OpenGL elements, you only need one driver.

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Support | Tested Systems

Starscape has been tested with the following hardware, although we can't guarantee the game will work on all configurations we have done our utmost to ensure compatibility on a wide range of hardware.

- Windows 95 with OpenGL add on or Windows95 OSR2
- Windows 98, Windows ME, WindowsNT4, Windows2000, Win XP
- IBM PC compatible processor - Intel Pentium II 300Mhz or equivalent AMD or better
- 64Mb or more system memory
- Supported 3D Accelerator Card (16Mb minimum)
- 100 MB Free hard disk space
- SoundBlaster or DirectSound compatible sound card

Starscape supports Direct3D compatible cards with the following chipsets:

- Voodoo 3,4,5,6
- Rage 128, Rage 128 Pro, Rage MAXX, Radeon series
- Matrox G400, Parhelia
- Nvidia Riva TNT, TNT2 (all variations), GeForce, Quadro, GeForce2, GeForce3, GeForce4, GeForceFX
- S3 Savage 3D, Savage S4, Savage2000
- Power VR Kyro1, Kyro2
- SiS 305 or better
- Trident Blade XP or better

Comments

- The golden rule: If you can't get the free demo to run then don't buy the game.
- Starscape is not compatible with the following video chipsets - 3DFX Voodoo 1, 3DFX Voodoo 2, 3DFX Voodoo Rush, 3DFX Velocity 100.
- Users are advised to refrain from minimising the game using ALT/TAB or any other key combination. If access to the Windows desktop is needed we recommend that the game be quit first. If any sound or video problems are encountered, we recommend updating to the latest sound or video. To check which video drivers are currently being used, run DXDIAG (this can be done by selecting the 'Run' option on the START menu and typing 'DXDIAG') and select the 'Display' tab. This will list the device name and driver version.
- If problems are encountered when running the game, users are advised to close down all other programs that may be running. Doing this will ensure that Starscape is able to use the maximum system resources available. To check which other programs are open, press the CONTROL, ALT and DELETE keys at the same time. This will bring up a menu titled 'Close Program'. This menu lists all the programs currently running, a completely clean system should only have Explorer and Systray listed on this screen. N.B. If you are unsure what the programs currently running are, do not close them unless you are having problems running the game (with either game stability or speed).
- The game may run on modern laptops with hardware accelerated graphics cards, check your machine specification and try the demo first.

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Starscape Manual

Support | Technical

If you're having problems with Starscape then use the links below to help us to solve your problem quickly. Visit the technical support and machine specification pages to determine what the problem is. If all else fails click here for our contact details.

I can't install the game
I can't get the game to run
The graphics appear corrupted
There's no sound
Why can't I play the full version?
The game is slow/hard to control?
What do I do if all else fails?

I can't install the game.

- Firstly the game and the demo are one and the same thing - in order to play the demo or the full game you must have installed the demo first.
- Make sure first that your machine fits the required machine specification.
- Make sure you have enough space on your hard disk for the demo. You might need to make some more space by deleting old or unwanted files from your machine.
- If you have tried installing the demo and it still doesn't work - are you sure you have a machine with a suitable version of DirectX, and with a supported 3D accelerator?

I can't get the game to run.

- Are you sure you have a version of DirectX on your machine? If not this link will explain where to download the latest version. Are you sure you have a suitable 3D accelerator in your machine?
- Do you have the latest drivers for your video card/3D accelerator? Check on the machine spec page for cards the game has been tested on.

The graphics appear corrupted.

- Please check the 3D hardware accelerators page for details of problems on specific cards.
- You may have an older driver, you might want to update your machine's video drivers - do this by going to the web pages of the maker of your video card.

There's no sound

Are you sure you have:

- A suitable sound card fitted (it must be DirectSound or SoundBlaster compatible).
- Speakers/head-phones connected to your machine/sound card.
- Turned the volume up on your speakers/headphones.
- Turned up the main volume of your sound card, using the taskbar speaker icon.
- On the final point - within Windows you can set the volume of sound. To do this on the bottom right corner of the screen double click on the yellow 'speaker' icon. This icon can sometimes appear with a red circle over the top of it - this happens when sound on your system has been muted (disabled). Make sure each of the sliders is at their highest positions. Make sure that all of the 'Mute' and 'Mute All' tick boxes are off (without tick).

Why can't I play the full version?

- Well, have you bought access to the full version of the game?
- If not, then please go here to find out how to purchase the full version. If yes, then the key is probably not installed

correctly on your machine. To install a key
- Buy the key from the site,
- Go to the member log in page, enter your 'challenge' code and then you will be sent a 'response' code.
- Run the game and type this 'response' code into the registration screen.

The game is slow / hard to control

This is probably because of how the game is configured and/or how your machine is set up. Therefore you need to reconfigure your machine and/or the game in order to increase performance. Please try the following ideas:

- Make sure you close down everything on your machine except for the game. The other programs will eat up some of your machine's resources. It is especially a good idea to close down mail/internet programs as they can interrupt the game, making game play 'jumpy' (stops and starts).
- If after trying the above you still find the game runs too slowly you might want to upgrade your machine. Here are some of the ways that will improve the performance of the game.
- Memory - More than 256Mb of memory (RAM) will likely make little difference though.
- Processor - Get a faster processor. Check the recommended machine specs for details.
- Video card - Buy a new 3D accelerator. If you have one of the cards listed in the machine spec page it is probably fast enough.
- You can also improve the performance of the game by changing the graphics settings. Choose 'Options' from the main menu to adjust the display colour depth, audio quality, etc.
- This may be the result of a badly configured custom fighter, i.e. the engine is too small to manoeuvre it properly or you aren't generating enough power. See the appropriate section of the manual for more information.

What do I do if all else fails?

You can contact our online help staff. Please make sure you have completely read through this page before contacting our staff. Note that anybody who has purchased a product from us gets a priority service. To get this service please include within your message the customer name and email address you used to purchase the products.

To help us quickly work out what the problem is you must include the configuration of your machine. You can get this automatically as the game will create a file listing all the relevant details. You can find it in the install directory, the same place as the game exe; it is called 'console.log'.

Within the mail please provide:

- Where you got the file from.
- Where the problem takes place.
- How often (if applicable) the problem takes place.
- How the problem manifests itself
- Attach the console.log file to the email

Thank you for taking the time to provide this information, this will greatly ease the process of finding out what the problem is. Send your email to support@moonpod.com and we will try to get back to you as soon as we can.

Thanks, and sorry for the inconvenience.

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