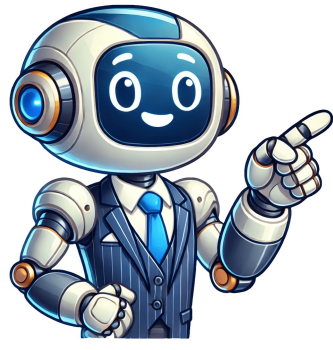


I'm not a bot



The Persona franchise has been around since 1986. We played the hell out of Persona 5 over our review arc loved it. We're already working on a bunch of in-depth guides to help you out, and we've even gathered specific tips to help get through the first 20 hours. But we also know that not everyone knows Persona as well as we do. Not everyone spent hundreds of hours on Persona 3, or played Persona 4 to completion multiple times across multiple platforms. With Persona 5's incredible stylishness, it's sure to pull some new fans who have never checked out the series before. If you're one of those fans, this is for you. We've collected some advice for helping you get the most out of your time with Persona 5.

Before we dig into anything else, the most important piece of advice we could offer for Persona 5 is a simple one: Don't rush it. This is a long game – it took us over 100 hours to finish it for our review. Trying to blast through it as quickly as possible, especially if it's your first game in the series, is just going to suck the fun out of it. The ideal with Persona 5 is to take your time. This is a game that you'll probably still be playing months from now, and that's OK. There's no rush here, except when there is a rush. Shortly after meeting Sae Niijima at her school trial, you may notice a countdown in the upper right corner of the screen, telling you how many days until a certain event will occur. These events are called "Social Links," which are relationships between you and other people in the game. They can range from casual acquaintanceships to deep friendships. As they progress, they unlock various abilities and items for you. So don't worry about missing them; instead, enjoy them as part of what makes Persona 5 so unique. And remember: You won't need an extra day to deliver a calling card before completing any dungeon. As such, be sure to save everything until the last possible day. You may have heard that Persona 5 is a Japanese role-playing game, and that's true. But it's only a part of the game, and one that carries certain expectations that this series gladly walks all over. Your time in Persona 5 is actually split, with about 30 or 40 percent devoted to the dungeon-crawling and turn-based combat traditional to RPGs and the rest is all about time management. See, each day in Persona 5 is split into segments of morning/afternoon/evening, and most major activities in the game — hanging out with friends, taking tests to study, working a job and so on — cause time to pass. As you'll play the game, you'll begin to work out when certain people are available to hang out, what days are best for studying and so on. You should always have multiple strong candidates for how to spend your time on each calendar day, and you're likely to discover certain bonds or stats that you want to focus on as you progress. Wherever you choose to spend your time, just make sure you're doing something with each free time block you're given. A huge part of the appeal of the Persona games is the idea of "social links," or as they're called in Persona 5, Confidants. By spending time with your friends — both party members and non-party members alike — you gain experience points, stat boosts, item drops, and more. Each confidant leads to a specific type of Persona; try bringing a Phantom Thief persona like Yukiko Amagi along with you whenever you hang out with someone you think would be confident to give you a boost to grow quickly. Rank up your relationship. Social Link ranks increase every two weeks, typically requiring a certain number of hangouts per week to reach the next level. Beyond the traditional RPG stats that you improve via leveling up, Persona 5 features five "social states": charm, guts, knowledge/kindness and proficiency. Different non-dungeon activities will slowly build up each of these states, and the higher your rank in them, the more confident hang-outs and other options will be open to you. There are a lot of ways to improve these stats, but let's start with a few general tips. First off, always carry an unread book with you everywhere. In addition to spending time reading in the evening, some mornings on the train ride to school you'll get an open seat, which provides free time for reading. You can purchase books at bookstores or check them out of the school library. Second, every open Sunday, be sure to go to the train station and purchase the special juice available at a booth there. The type of juice will rotate out from week to week, raising different stats, but importantly it will do so without passing time, which is a rarity. Here are a few tips for each specific state:

- Charm:** Your absolute best bet for raising charm is to spend some evenings visiting the public bathhouse near the main character's living quarters. The bathhouse always gives a boost to charm, but it will give a bigger boost on Mondays, Thursdays and any day when it's raining. You can also raise charm by spending time with Yoshida, a confidant located just outside of the Shibuya train station. Guts: There are a few methods for raising guts in Persona 5, but your best bet is to spend time with Taka Takemi, a confidant located at the clinic near the main character's house. You can also go to the local diner and order coffee, which has the added benefit of improving your knowledge. Knowledge is the easiest stat to raise because it comes naturally from almost every activity you engage in during the day. To raise knowledge, simply talk to anyone you meet throughout the city. Proficiency: Raising proficiency requires a bit of planning ahead. It involves finding places where you can practice skills related to the skill you wish to learn. For example, if you want to raise proficiency in music, find a place where you can listen to music regularly. Kindness: Kindness has one important method that doesn't pass time: buying plant fertilizer and using it on the plants in your room once every couple of weeks. Beyond that, hanging out with Shoji Sakura at Leblanc and improving your connection with him will also feed into kindness, as does working any jobs where you have to interact directly with customers. Proficiency: Proficiency can be one of the harder social states to raise, but also one of the most rewards. The best way to improve it is to craft tools at your desk. Not only does this increase proficiency built, well, it gets you those tools which can then be used in dungeons — in particular, you'll want to focus on lockpicks. One quirky, however: There's an element of randomness to crafting that determines how many of each item you make. If you get lucky and manage to make multiple extras, you'll earn more of a buff to your proficiency than you would otherwise. You may want to save and reload before doing crafting to try to maximize this bonus when possible. If you're feeling a little overwhelmed by all the people to hang out with, stats to raise and stuff to do in Persona 5, you're not alone. It's a lot. But the important thing is to step back, take a deep breath and know that you don't need to do it all. There is a tendency among gamers in general (and RPG players in particular) to be pretty completist. Persona 5 is a game that makes that really difficult, at least especially on a first playthrough. While it's possible to max out all of your confidant relationships and social stats on your first playthrough, it's extremely difficult and frankly not the recommended way to play. Instead, focus in on the characters and elements you enjoy most. If you hit a roadblock with someone that requires having max guts, and you have more important stuff to do, don't sweat it. Social status will carry over in new playthroughs, so you can pick up where you left off later. Remember that while you might feel like you're making slow progress, the richness of your experience as smooth as possible.Sadayo Kawakami - Your homeroom teacher will become a confidant that you can begin building a relationship with some time in May on the in-game calendar. It's worth noting that each time you hang out with Kawakami, it will cost you about 5,000 yen, so it's a steady responsibility to rank up. It's worth the investment, however; over time you'll be able to call on Kawakami to make coffee (which is essential for dungeon runs) and do your laundry (which lets you discover new items to equip). If you max your relationship out with her, you'll be able to call her and get a massage, allowing you to stay awake and spend more time getting other stuff done even on days when you've entered a dungeon.Yukio Mishima - A clingy, dorky, scruffy teenager. Mishima may not be the most appealing confidant. Nonetheless, spending time with him is a good idea. Ranking up with Mishima leads to sidequests being unlocked, which provide good opportunities to explore the Mementos side dungeon and get some big rewards for doing so.Chihaya Mihne - You'll be able to strike up a friendship with this fortune teller in Shinjuku beginning in June. As you progress, Mihne will offer more useful helpful skills, including the ability to increase the rate of growth for selected social stats and the ability to increase your bond with other confidants. Essentially, she lets you play catch-up if you got behind.Your teammates - Since you'll be spending the most time with them already, it's likely you'll want to get to know characters like Ann and Ryuji. But building your confidant relationship doesn't just provide backstory for your partners; it also teaches them new tricks they can use during combat, such as the ability to perform quick attacks against enemies. As you progress, you'll see that Ann and Ryuji have their own storylines that tie into the overall narrative of the game. So don't ignore them either!

