

An Advanced Guide to GTA V's P996 Lazer Fighter Jet



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[0.0] About This Guide

This guide is designed to provide advanced tips and tricks on piloting the P996 Lazer fighter jet. The guide assumes that you already know how to steal the Lazer from the military base and are comfortable with the controls. Each topic has been given a section with its own numerical heading to make it easier to jump to specific sections and avoid others which the reader may already be familiar with.

The guide is intended to be a living document. I am by no means the definitive expert on everything about the P996 Lazer. If you believe anything should be added or corrected, or if you would like to contribute your own section, feel free to contact me on Reddit, Social Club, or via a PSN message and I will give credit to contributors in the [4.0] Sources and Contributions section.

[1.0] The Lazer and its Capabilities

This section talks about the specifics of what the Lazer jet in GTA V is capable of which may differ from other games or real life counterparts and are therefore not immediately apparent.

[1.1] The Weapons

As you're probably already aware, the Lazer has two weapons available to it: the lock-on missiles and the dual cannons with explosive ammunition. Both weapons have unlimited ammunition. The lock-on missiles will track any aircraft or police car in free roam, and will attempt to impact the aircraft and explode. In game modes such as deathmatches and capture missions, the missiles will also track enemy players in vehicles, such as in the Top Gun missions. These missiles are functionally equivalent to the RPG, and will instantly destroy any aircraft and most vehicles on impact (the Rhino Tank being a notable exception). They are somewhat easy to evade however (see section 3.1) and are therefore less effective than the cannons.

The Lazer's dual cannons are arguably the most destructive weapons in the game when used effectively. The cannons fire a continuous rapid burst of cannon rounds which on impact will create a small explosion after a slight delay, capable of instantly destroying most vehicles and aircraft with a direct hit. Against the Rhino Tank, 6 seconds of sustained fire is required to destroy a tank from the front, and only 3 seconds is required to destroy a tank from the rear. Unfortunately, the cannons have a somewhat limited range, as shown in the photo below:



[1.2] Taking Damage

The Lazer is a quite fragile aircraft for a military vehicle. Any direct explosion hitting the aircraft will instantly destroy the Lazer, including another Lazer's cannons. It will also take significant damage from bullets. 5 hits from a heavy sniper rifle or about 30 bullets from the advanced rifle will cause the Lazer's engine to begin smoking, and 10 hits from a heavy sniper rifle or about 200 bullets from the advanced rifle will kill the Lazer's engine or even cause the Lazer to explode.

When the Lazer's engine begins smoking, the engine will periodically stutter, an effect which can be easily seen and heard in third person. This stuttering will affect handling in a manner similar to turbulence, and will also cause a small amount of damage to the Lazer. It is highly recommended that you replace the Lazer as soon as possible as the engine may unexpectedly shut down, forcing you into an unrecoverable dive.

[1.3] The Rudder Turn

The rudder can be used in combination with the elevators to turn sharper than normally. To perform a rudder turn, simply roll the jet to the left (or right) from level flight, then pull back on the left analog stick while holding the left bumper on Xbox/L1 button on PS3 (or right bumper/R1 when turning right). The aircraft should be angled slightly above the horizon to maintain a level turn.

[1.4] Slowing Down with the Brakes and Landing Gear

The landing gear and the air brakes can be used to slow down the Lazer jet. When the landing gear is deployed (click the left stick to raise/lower the gear), the jet will naturally slow down a considerable amount, at the expense of decreased maneuverability. The air brakes will also slow the jet down, but do not have as big an effect as the landing gear, and using the air brakes can be difficult. To use the air brakes, the pilot must press the left trigger/L2 button only about one-half to two-thirds of the way down. If the pilot presses the trigger down too far, the engine will shut off, which can potentially cause a crash if the pilot is too close to the ground and is unable to turn the engine back on fast enough.

[1.5] Hovering

By combining the brakes and the landing gear, it is possible to nearly hover the Lazer jet. To hover the jet, deploy the landing gear and hold the air brakes, and then pull back on the left stick to point the jet towards the sky until it stalls. Once the jet stalls, the nose will quickly drop towards the ground. Continue holding the air brakes and pull back on the stick once more to get the aircraft's nose to point at a small angle above the horizon. The jet will now be traveling forward very slowly, almost to the point of hovering in place. Once hovering, the pilot can retract the landing gear to regain maneuverability, but the air brakes must be constantly held to continue hovering. This maneuver requires constant input from the pilot to maintain, and will take some practice. For more information, see Youtube user Tonksi's video on hovering the jet: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sSkNeXZvriE>

[2.0] Strafing Ground Targets

This section covers how to attack targets on the ground using the powerful Lazer cannons, and the different types of targets you will typically find. The main goal here is to maximize the Lazer's effectiveness against ground targets while minimizing the risk to your own aircraft.

[2.1] The Basic Approach

The first step after identifying a target you want to attack is to plan out your flight path. Take note of the target's surroundings and how they will affect your attack. For example, is the target surrounded by buildings? If so, you will want to align your attack so that you fly along the street to give your Lazer more room and reduce the risk of crashing into buildings. Be sure to use the radar and minimap often to find your target in relation to the environment. Once you have a planned path of attack, approach your target in a shallow dive while using the air brakes and/or the landing gear (see section 1.4) to slow your jet down, giving you more time to aim. When the target is in range of the cannons, fire at the target until you either kill the target or are required to pull up to avoid crashing into the ground. Patience is an absolute must when strafing your target; it is always better to abandon an attack and try again than risk crashing into the ground trying to get the kill.

Choosing a camera view for strafing ultimately depends on the pilot's own personal preference. The first person view will give you a zoomed in view which can help with aiming, but at the expense of reduced situational awareness. The third person view will make your targets harder to see, but you gain the benefit of increased awareness of your surroundings which can help you avoid buildings or spot other enemies. I recommend practicing with both camera views to find which you prefer.

[2.2] Strafing Cars

Cars are by far the easiest ground targets to kill. Personal vehicles with bright colors are easy to spot, and the driving behavior of players stands out fairly well in traffic. They also cannot easily shoot back at you, reducing the risk of attacking them greatly. A simple burst of cannon rounds down the street the target is driving on will make short work of them. Be sure to lead your target slightly, as the cannon rounds have a slight delay before exploding.

[2.3] Strafing Infantry/Players on Foot

Strafing players on foot is a bit more difficult. They are much smaller targets to spot, and they can shoot back to damage your aircraft. Before you attack, be sure to keep your distance to avoid taking hits. It is frequently possible to kill your target without ever seeing them if you know where they are on the minimap by covering the target's general area with explosive cannon rounds. If they attempt to fire RPGs at you, use the RPG's smoke trail and flash to find where the target fired from. RPGs travel relatively slowly and are very easy to dodge, so you shouldn't have to worry about getting shot down by one in most circumstances. The same spotting technique can also be used against automatic weapons, since their bullets leave a faint trail to their origin.

[2.4] Strafing Rhino Tanks

This is by far the most difficult target to destroy. Strafing tanks is incredibly dangerous due to the tank's thick armor and potential to instantly destroy your aircraft. With the proper technique however, it is possible to strafe tanks without ever exposing yourself to the tank's cannon range. The picture below outlines the tank's killing range:



Your flight path should always evade the tank's kill zone whenever possible. This will generally require you to keep a high altitude, and you may only get in a brief hit before you are forced to pull up to avoid flying into their kill zone. Patience is absolutely critical here; you will need several cannon strafes to successfully destroy the tank, but you should never under any circumstance endanger your aircraft to land a better hit. I recommend practicing against friends first, as this technique is difficult to master and risky to practice against random players.

[3.0] Aerial Combat

This section covers combat against enemy aircraft with various maneuvers and strategies to increase your success in the skies.

[3.1] Dodging Missiles

There are two methods to dodging missiles, and both are fairly easy to do. The first method is to simply pull back on the left stick until the missile detonates or stops tracking you. The missiles are unable to track jets that turn sharply in this manner, so you should have no problems dodging them this way. The second method is to continuously roll to the left or right while holding down the bumpers/L1 or R1 in the same direction. This maneuver allows you to continue flying in a straight line while still dodging the missiles, which can be useful for escaping an enemy you do not want to engage.

[3.2] Attacking Buzzard Helicopters

Buzzard helicopters are the easier of the two enemies you will face in the skies. The Buzzard helicopter's guns lack the damage and range to have any significant killing potential against you, and the missiles are easy to dodge as evidenced in the previous section. The general strategy for fighting Buzzards is to attack them with cannons from high above or from below. The helicopter cannot climb or dive nearly as fast as you can, and they cannot fire straight upwards or downwards (at least, not for long), giving you a significant advantage against them. Be careful not to crash into them when attacking, however.

[3.3] Fighting Other Lasers

First and foremost, use the third person camera view. It is objectively better than the first person view, because the benefits you get from the third person view's increased situational awareness far outweigh the increased zoom of first person. When using third person, be sure to take advantage of the right stick to look around and find your target. In certain scenarios this can help you dodge an attack from behind or reposition to get behind your opponent. You can also use the radar and minimap in a similar way to get an idea of where he is horizontally. The radar won't tell you what is altitude is, but if you find his radar blip isn't moving very fast horizontally, he is likely either climbing upwards or diving for the ground.

Another important aspect of dogfighting is to learn how to turn the Laser as quickly as possible. Section [1.3] The Rudder Turn covers how to turn faster, but you must also pay attention to how your airspeed affects your ability to turn. If you are traveling too quickly (say, full throttle while diving towards the ground) your Laser will take longer to turn, and the same is true if you are traveling too slowly (hovering [1.5] is NOT a good way to turn quickly). Therefore, a balanced speed must be achieved to maximize your Laser's turning ability. In general, you should apply full throttle when climbing and the air brakes (see section [1.4]) when diving.

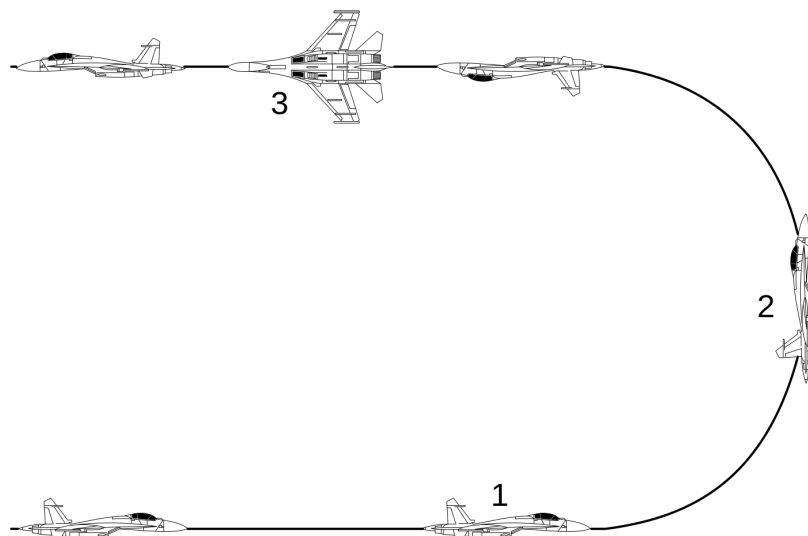
When you first approach an enemy pilot, you may find yourselves in a "game of chicken". This occurs when both pilots are flying towards each other with their guns pointed at each other. This typically ends badly for both pilots, since they are likely to crash into each other even if one manages to kill the other. There are two methods to remedy this problem: The first method is to approach the enemy from a different altitude, keeping your nose pointed towards the horizon instead of at the enemy. Once the enemy is within range, quickly aim at

the target while firing the cannons. Hopefully you will score a hit before your opponent does, and you will have enough distance to evade his debris. The second method is far more dangerous, and should only be used against pilots you know you can out-maneuver. This method is to forfeit the “game of chicken” and allow your opponent to chase you, then turn sharper or maneuver to eventually get behind him and secure the kill. Caution should be taken to not allow the opponent to get close enough to score a hit when allowing him to get behind you.

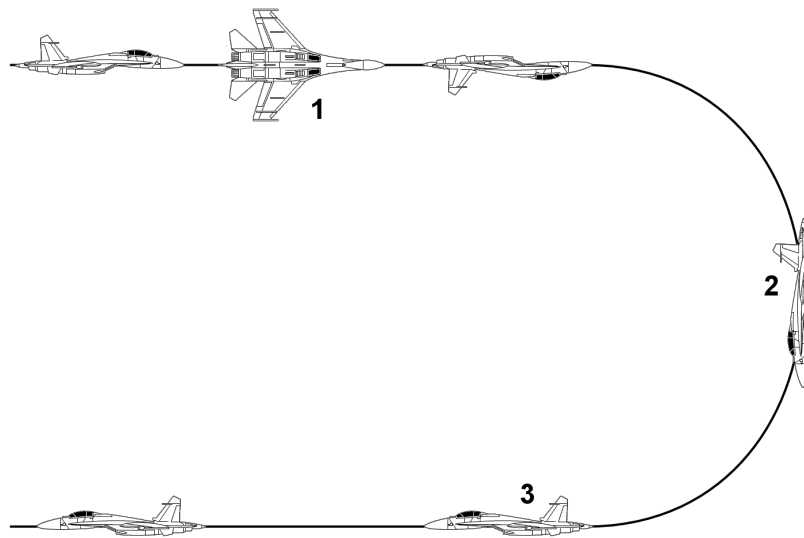
When chasing a fleeing opponent who is outside the range of your cannons, the lock-on missiles can be used to force the pilot to evade them. Your missiles will most likely miss the target, but the pilot will likely pull back on the stick to dodge them, allowing you to close the gap and get within cannon range. In general, missiles can be used to force your opponent to dodge them in a predictable manner and allow you to gain a positional advantage over them.

[3.4] Basic Fighter Maneuvers

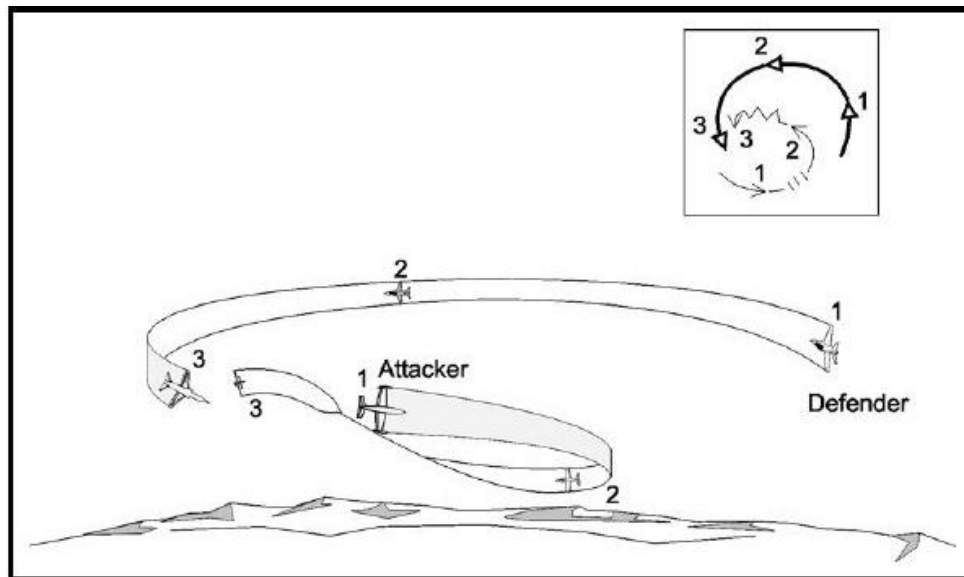
This section covers several useful maneuvers for dogfights which can help you gain a positional advantage over the enemy or defend yourself from your enemy's guns. Note that this is not a list of catch-all moves that will give you the upper hand in a dogfight; a maneuver that proves successful in one scenario can easily lead to your demise in another. Actual dogfights will consist of a fluid, continuous blend of maneuvers, rather than a sequence of clearly defined moves. Nonetheless, these maneuvers are good to practice and will help you think about how to adapt and respond to different dogfighting scenarios and positions.



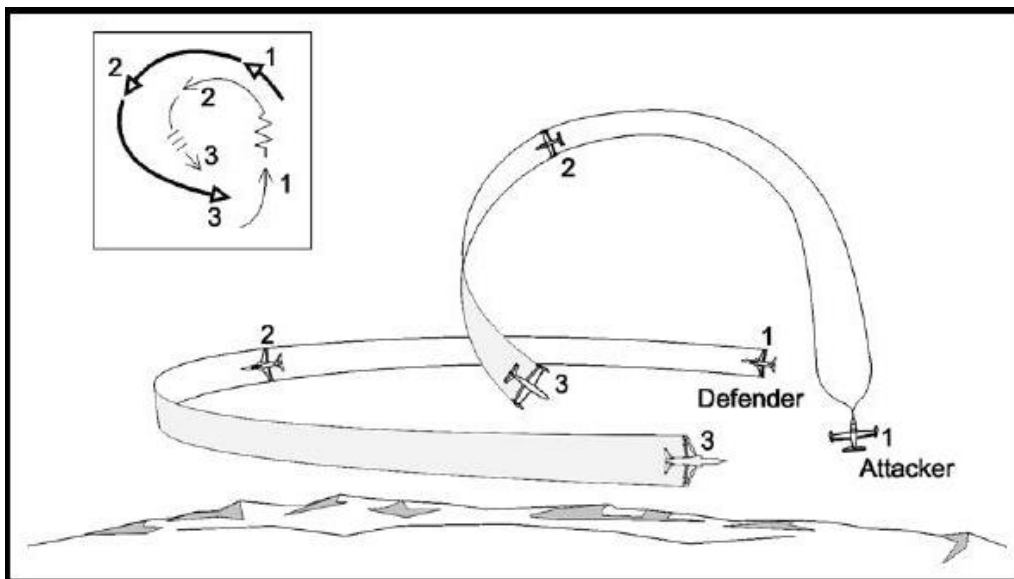
The Immelmann: Pictured above, this maneuver is a simple half loop performed by pulling back on the stick towards the sky until your plane has turned 180 degrees, then rolling the plane upright with the horizon. This maneuver is primarily used to change direction while gaining altitude, perhaps to pursue an opponent above you and flying in the opposite direction. However, this is a very poor defensive maneuver, as it is easy to predict and track.



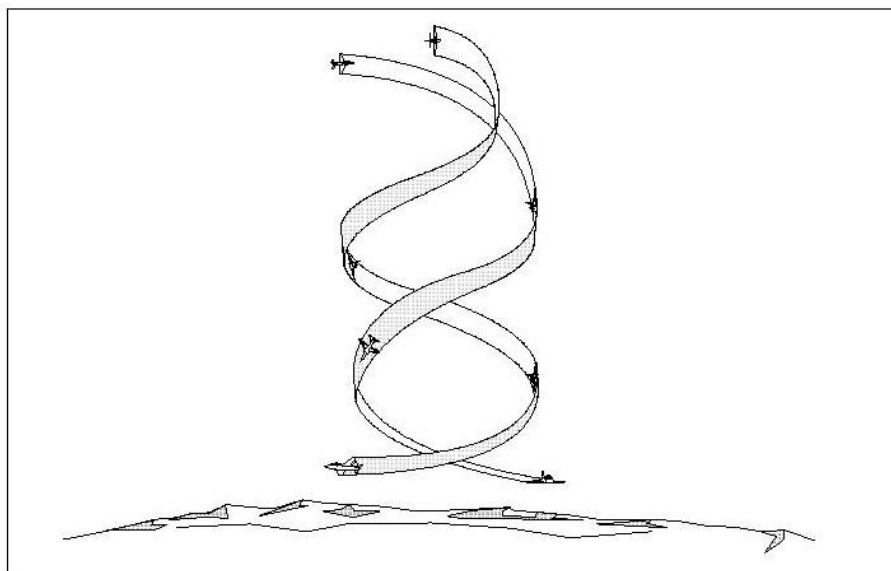
The Split-S: This maneuver is essentially an inverted Immelmann. To perform this maneuver, roll the aircraft until it is upside-down, then pull back on the stick to do a 180 degree turn. This maneuver is used to change direction while decreasing altitude. Unlike the Immelmann, this maneuver has a bit more defensive potential, as it is less predictable and can be used to force the tailing opponent to crash into the ground to continue their pursuit. Care must be taken to avoid crashing into the ground yourself, however, so be sure to know how sharply the Lazer can perform this maneuver.



The Low Yo-Yo: This maneuver starts with the aircraft already turning level to the horizon. This maneuver is performed by rolling the aircraft partially towards the ground, causing the Lazer to dip below the horizon, then climb back up to its original altitude. This maneuver is useful to help close the gap on a turning opponent. This maneuver can also be used defensively by providing an unexpected change in altitude, either to dodge an attack or to cause the attacker to lose track of your position.



The High Yo-Yo: Like the Low Yo-Yo, this maneuver starts with the aircraft already turning level to the horizon. This maneuver is performed by rolling partially towards the sky, causing the Lazer to climb above the horizon, then dip back down to its original altitude. This maneuver is useful to prevent an attacking pilot from overshooting a defending pilot who is turning too sharply for the attacker to land a hit. Unlike the Low Yo-Yo, this maneuver is less effective as a defensive move, since the decrease in speed resulting from the climb will make your Lazer easier for the attacker to track.



The Defensive Spiral: This is a desperate, defensive maneuver performed by simultaneously rolling and pulling back on the stick to cause the plane to spiral towards the ground. The goal of this move is to force the attacker to “play chicken with the ground”, hopefully causing the pilot to either crash into the ground or pull up in a different direction than the defender.

[4.0] Sources and Contributions

(In order of appearance)

Title picture:

Added by Rhenrique on GTA Wiki.

http://gta.wikia.com/File:Gta-v-p996_jet.jpg

[1.1] The Weapons:

Credit to Cor_atrati and DarkSquare for helping me capture the photo of the Lazer firing its cannons.

[1.5] Hovering:

Credit to Youtube user Tonksi for his video on hovering the Lazer jet.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sSkNeXZvrIE>

[2.4] Strafing Rhino Tanks:

Credit to Cor_atrati and DarkSquare for helping me capture the photo of the tank's firing angle/range.

[3.1] Dodging Missiles:

Credit to Spartank374 and Tonksi for the second method on dodging missiles.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bj9hSB_xZAc

[3.4] Basic Fighter Maneuvers:

Credit to Wikipedia's article on Basic Fighter Maneuvers for the maneuver diagrams.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basic_fighter_maneuvers#Maneuvers