

REVIEW

COMING SOON



Developed by: **The Knights of Unity**

Published by: **All in! Games**

Genre(s): **Party**

Platform: **PC**

Cost: **\$19.99**

ESRB Rating: **RATING PENDING**

Players: **1-4**

Release date: **December 3, 2019**

Reviewed on: **PC**

7.5

TOOLS UP!

WRITTEN BY: [KENNETH SEWARD JR.](#)

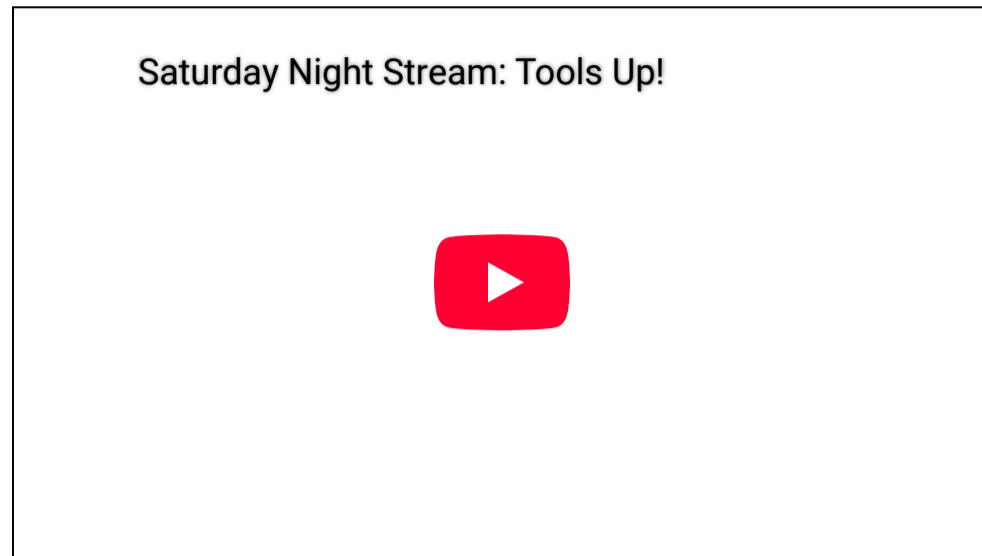
FEBRUARY 25, 2020

Video game reviews are weird. Not in terms of the critique, given its inherent value. But in the finality of it all. A review gives a snap shot of what players can expect. Something that can change wildly with the passage of time. It's one of the reasons we don't review games in Early Access.

This has been an issue for some time now. Especially when it comes to day one patches and such; my criticisms ahead of launch might not ring true when a particular game is released. As development continues post launch, the gulf between what's written in respect to what can be experienced grows. **No Man's Sky** is a much better game now than it was years ago.

The reason I'm starting my review of Tools Up! – an entertaining, renovation game developed by The Knights of Unity – by acknowledging this weirdness is because of my current predicament. I haven't had a chance to play it much sense being released this past December.

Don't get me wrong. I spent a decent amount of time in-game fixing various homes. Playing with friends locally (or via Steam's Remote Play), I experienced the joy of stripping wallpaper. Carrying supplies. Laying carpet. Slipping on paint. Misinterpreting blueprints. You name it. Most of it was entertaining; any given session was filled with both laughter and frustration.



Again, I played a ton of Tools Up! Enough to speak on what was present with a certain authority. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to pen my review in a timely manner. The passing of a family member took precedent. Fast forward to a few days ago and Tools Up! is a slightly different game.

The targeting issues that caused me to pick up the wrong tool or open the wrong door had been addressed. Various bugs that invoked the wrong kind of frustrations – being slightly miffed at a friend spilling paint everywhere vs. anger derived from unresponsive controls – were patched out. New content in the form of modes, UI changes and ways to play were added. The game had improved.

Tools Up! uses mechanics reminiscent of what's found in Overcooked. Hold a button to remove or add something. Press another to mix paint. Instead of cooking food though, players need to renovate rooms based on their blueprints. It was all about teamwork. Only one person could hold the prints at a time, which allowed them to move the screen around and direct others when necessary. Processes had to be completed in order. Remove the wallpaper before applying paint. Finishing meant that everything was in place and that there were no messes – gotta remove trash and such. Do it within the allotted time limit and you'll collect stars needed to unlock future rooms.



This gameplay loop is still present. Just more entertaining. Especially when having to renovate the game's more unconventional rooms/apartments – one shouldn't have an ice-rink for a living room. The controls still feel a little sluggish though. This could have been to mirror the vibe created by the game's charming characters (they look like Hasbro's Weebles). Or to add a layer of "fun" in the vein of Gang Beasts.

Ideally, that'll change with time as well. The Knights of Unity have been adding hot fixes that tweak various things since launch. One of the things that hasn't changed is the game's visuals. The pastel colors and soft, clay-like aesthetics is endearing.



I always considered Tools Up! to be a good game. Mildly flawed here and there. That said, I felt odd penning this review so removed from the game. A few months have passed since I really dived into it. Which I guess makes this review weirder than normal. While my recollection of events (and brief moments of recent play) will suffice in anchoring my critique, they aren't exactly indicative of what the game was when I set out to do this review. In other words, take my thoughts with a grain of salt.

Gameplay:	7
Tools Up! is an entertaining multiplayer game. The Knights of Unity continues to smooth out its rough areas.	
Graphics:	8
The game looks great. I dig the soft, pastel look.	
Sound:	7
The music and effects sound ok.	
Replay Value:	8
Tools Up! offers up couch co-op fun. New modes/ways to play should keep fans coming back.	
Final Score:	7.5

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