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Keita Takahashi returns with the whimsically weird *To a T*

The creator of *Katamari Damacy* and *Wattam* hasn't lost his playful touch.

By [Khee Moon Chan](#)
May 26, 2025, 1:00 PM UTC

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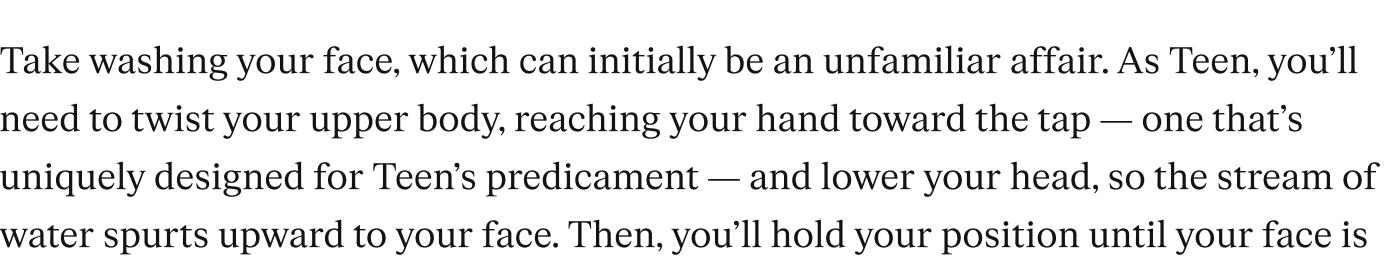


Image: Annapurna Interactive

From the worm-like character stretching to the length of the planetary system in *Noby Noby Bay*, to the tiny Prince hoarding a spherical mass of objects and even buildings in *Katamari Damacy*, the heroes of Keita Takahashi's games reflect the creator's whimsical vision. *To a T* is yet another Takahashi title that fits that playful tradition, well, to a tee. The protagonist is a young teen, aptly named Teen, whose body is permanently stuck in a T-pose. But while they may be able to wiggle their fingers a little or move their wrists to reach out for an item, their elbows are woefully nonexistent.

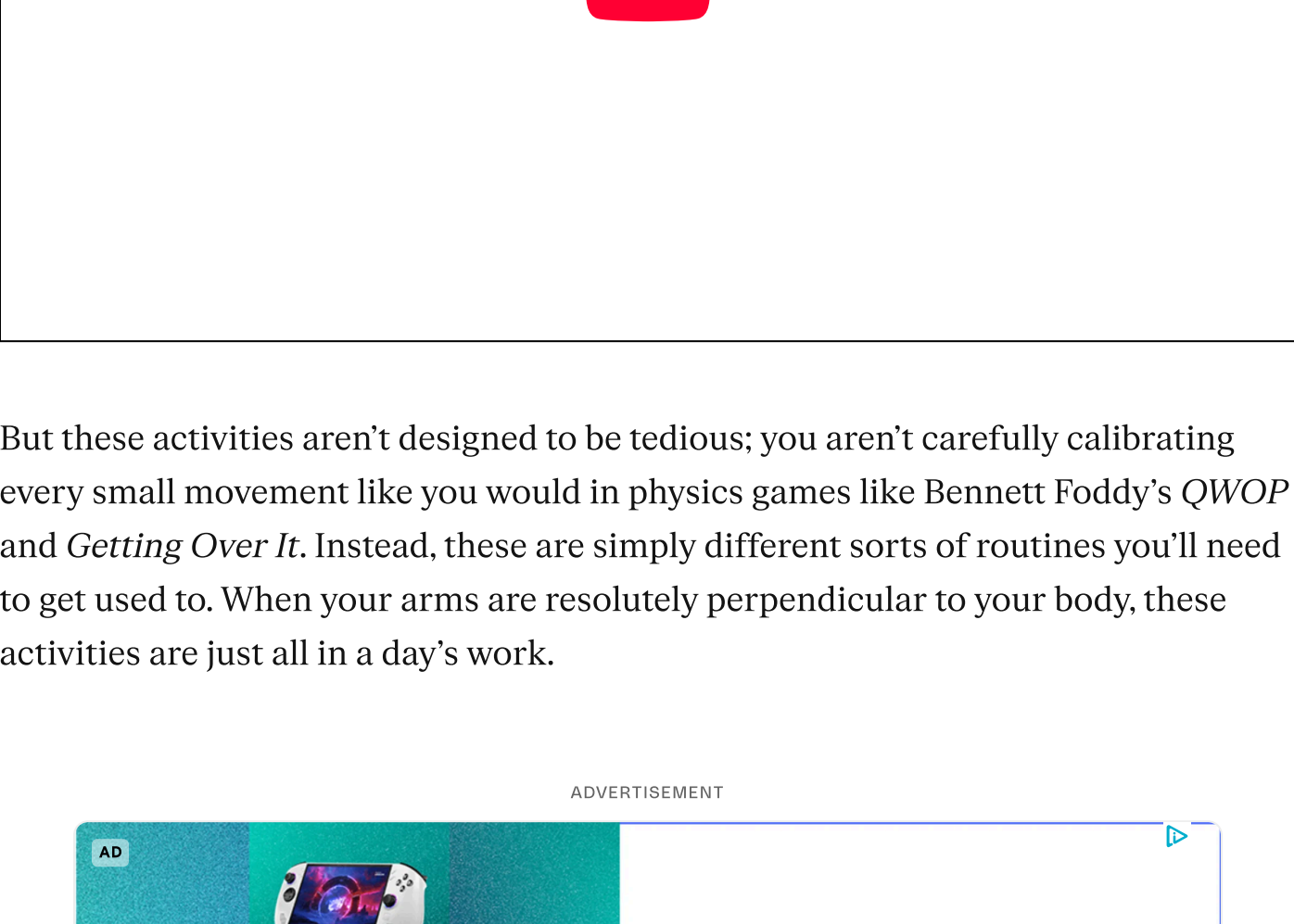
That's okay, though! Like most of Takahashi's games, *To a T* is also a heartwarming tale about self-acceptance. Prep, an indie pop band from England, even composed an infectious, chirpy theme song for the game about already being the perfect shape, no matter what you look like.

In a world where elbows are very much an accessory to daily life, Teen has to go through some pretty unconventional routines due to their irreversibly stiff arms. For one thing, Teen can't put on clothes, use the toilet, or even dry their face on their own. Even walking down the street can be a little cumbersome, since their outstretched arms mean they may inadvertently slap their hands into another passerby. Fortunately for Teen, they have a trusty sidekick — a dog named Dog — who's more than eager to help them navigate these tasks.

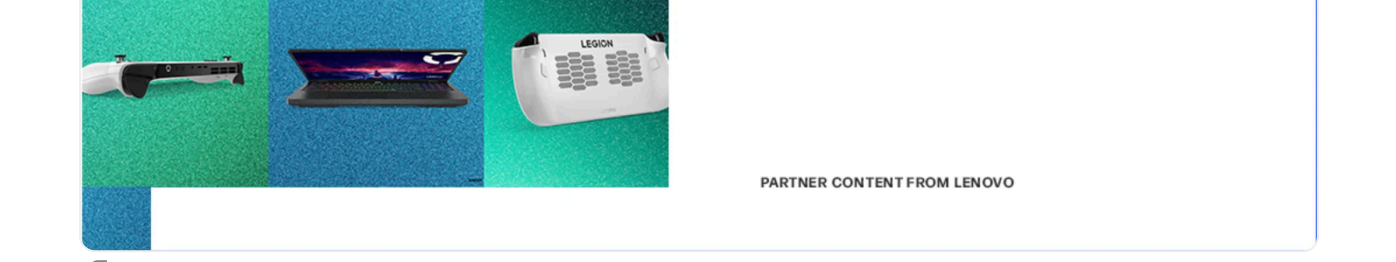


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Take washing your face, which can initially be an unfamiliar affair. As Teen, you'll need to twist your upper body, reaching your hand toward the tap — one that's uniquely designed for Teen's predicament — and lower your head, so the stream of water spurts upward to your face. Then, you'll hold your position until your face is clean and free of persistent eye boogers. Brushing your teeth is another fiddly routine. This is done by reaching for a toothbrush with a particularly long handle, getting Dog's help in squirting a bit of toothpaste on it, and then scrubbing your teeth until they're squeaky clean.



But these activities aren't designed to be tedious; you aren't carefully calibrating every small movement like you would in physics games like Bennett Foddy's *QWOP* and *Getting Over It*. Instead, these are simply different sorts of routines you'll need to get used to. When your arms are resolutely perpendicular to your body, these activities are just all in a day's work.



They're also genuinely joyful, even if the movements can appear superfluous. Rinsing your mouth is a matter of wriggling the analog stick or direction keys and then pressing another button to spit the water out into the sink. But you can also shake your head while doing that, so that your spit will trickle out like a meandering, miniature waterfall. Using the toilet allows you to mash several buttons, just so you can listen to Teen huffing and grunting as they go about their business behind closed doors. There's really no point to doing so other than giggling at these sights and sounds, but it's such a delightful way of prodding at the game's inherent silliness. That's the beauty behind *To a T* — it has zero pretensions about the kind of game it's trying to be.

In fact, *To a T* later informs you that you can skip any of these routines if you like. Want to eat breakfast without brushing your teeth right after? If you can tolerate seeing green gunk stuck on your teeth for the rest of the day, go right ahead. The game isn't going to penalize you for skipping teeth brushing for a day — or two.

To a T is chockful of such diminutive joys. Breakfast consists of cereal and flavored milk every day, such as chocolate, matcha, and mango, and there's a small thrill in discovering what these mixtures would taste like to Teen. In one meal, Teen commented that the cereal tasted like rubbery tires, and in another it was an explosion of strange, candy flavors. Regardless of the taste, they welcomed every mouthful of these sugary treats with gusto.

Exploring the neighborhood, particularly on weekends, feels especially liberating, as your day is seemingly filled with endless possibilities for fun. Eateries offer minigames in the form of speed-eating contests, as you devour a giant corn on the cob and even hailstorms of ice cream. There are coins to collect and discover among the shrubberies and rooftops, new shops to look at, and fascinating locales — from a lighthouse to a magical mushroom forest — to get lost in. Even attending school was an adventure, even though Teen was largely reluctant to head to class in his first few days due to relentless bullying, a problem that does get resolved.

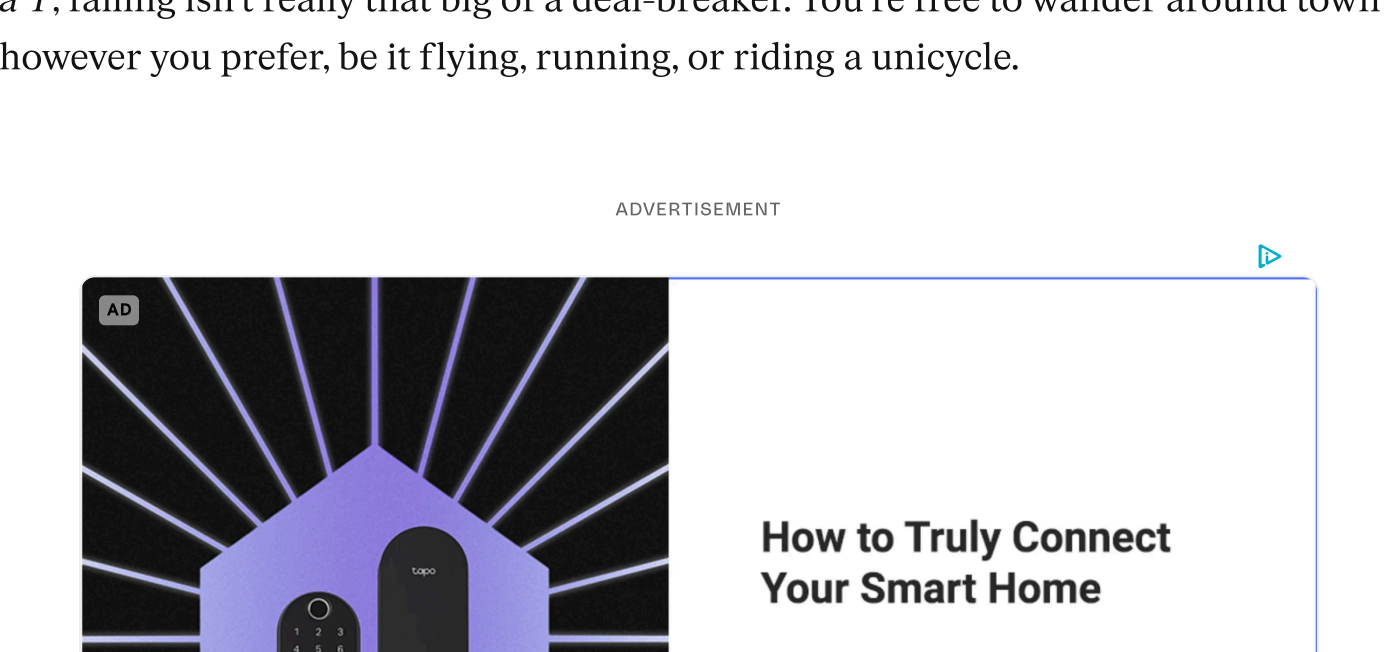
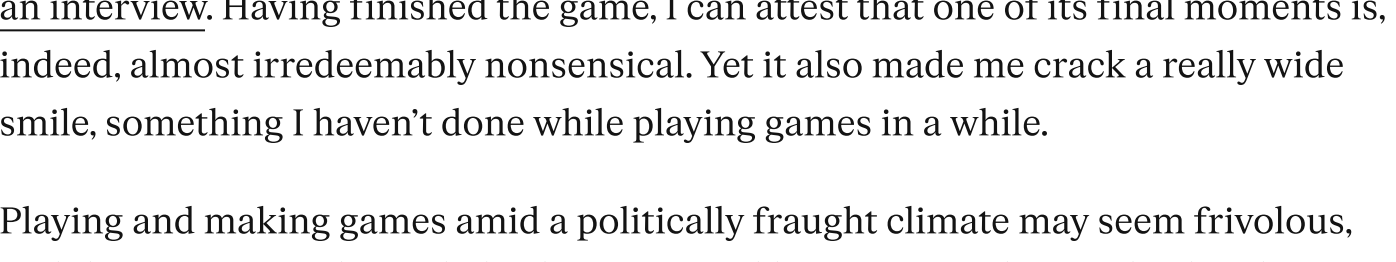


Image: Annapurna Interactive

Eventually, Teen discovers an innate talent for flying. By spinning on their toes like a ballerina, they gain the ability to traverse higher grounds. This skill does have a bit of a learning curve, however. As it turns out, flying isn't particularly intuitive, and it took me several tries to get my feet off the ground. But as with most gimmicks in *To a T*, failing isn't really that big of a deal-breaker. You're free to wander around town however you prefer, be it flying, running, or riding a unicycle.



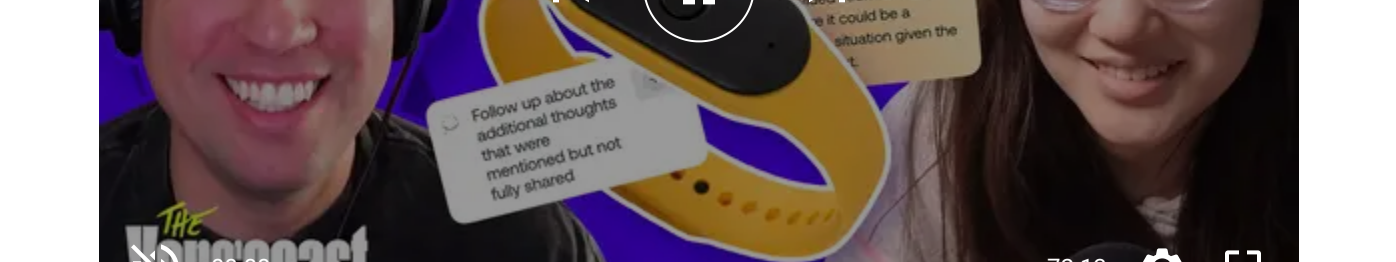
As you delve deeper into the game, *To a T* spins an increasingly ludicrous-yet-charming tale, one that Takahashi himself has referred to as being rather "stupid" in an interview. Having finished the game, I can attest that one of its final moments is, indeed, almost irredeemably nonsensical. Yet it also made me crack a really wide smile, something I haven't done while playing games in a while.

Playing and making games amid a politically fraught climate may seem frivolous, and this is an issue that Takahashi mentioned he was struggling with when he was working on his previous game, *Wattam*. But *To a T*'s central message of acceptance, and of finding joy in life's smallest moments, feels like a salve for these trying times. At the very least, its positivity gave me the impetus to keep trudging on — hopefully it'll do the same for you, too. [/](#)

To a T launches on May 28th on the PS5, Xbox, and PC. [/](#)



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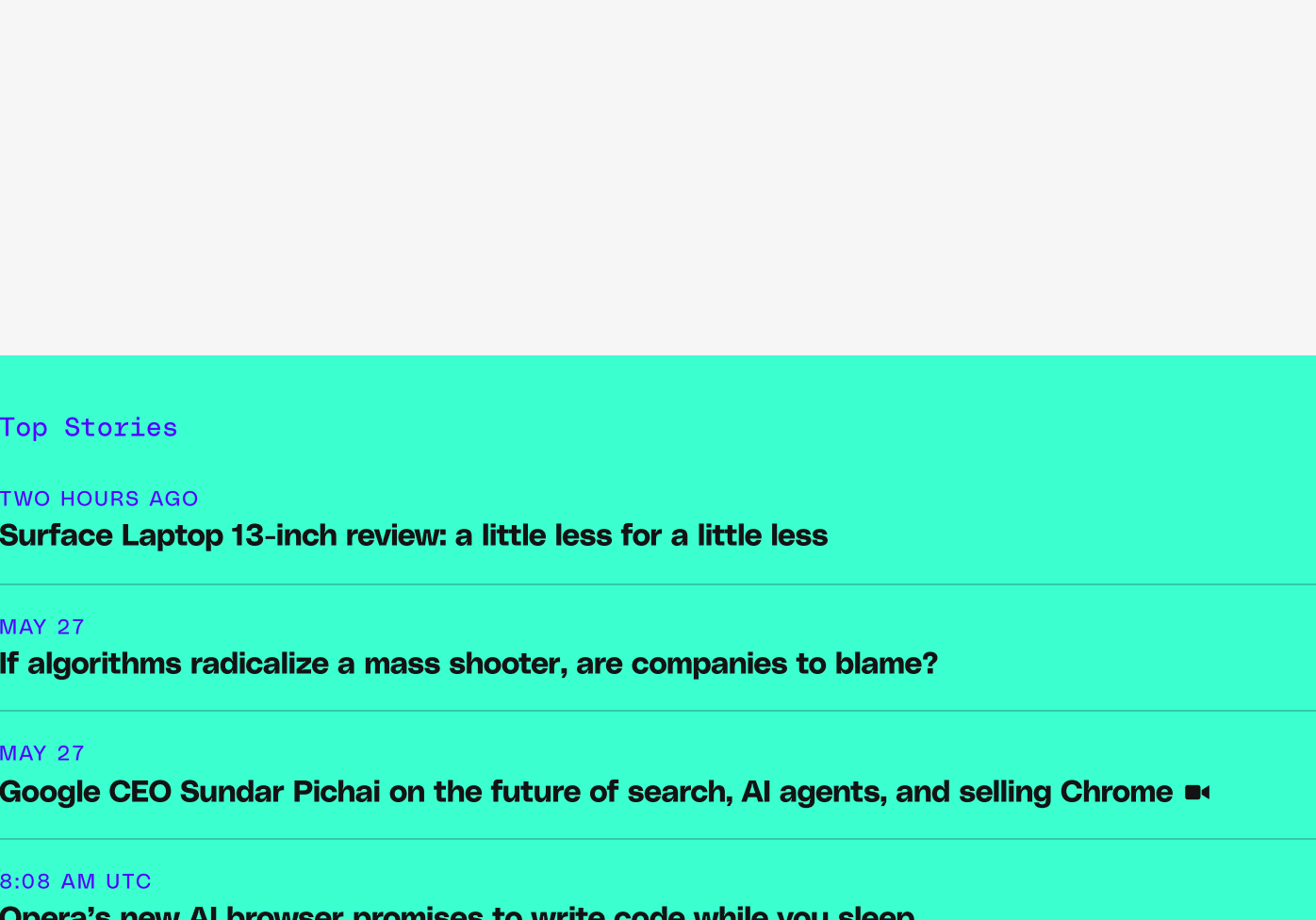
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