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**Some Basic Precautions To Set  
Future Pinball To Work Correctly**

**Edition 1-1**

**By Angel David Guzmán – PixelOz**

## Some Basic Precautions To Set Future Pinball to Work Correctly

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Future Pinball is a fantastic free 3D pinball simulator with awesome graphics with many tables that are reproductions of real, existing older and newer pinball tables and also with many tables that are original creations by many people from all over the world. These table creators allow you to download all these terrific tables for free. There are hundreds of free tables that you can download from several places that you can install and enjoy and some of them are very beautiful and cool. Now it does require a speedy PC in order for it to be fully enjoyed. Observe the minimum System Requirements as stated in the Future Pinball web site:

A Pentium / Athlon processor of 1800 mhz or greater, 512 megabytes ram and at least (or better) and a Geforce FX / Radeon video card. Video Card MUST support shaders.

Supported Platforms:

Microsoft Windows Vista and XP (SP1 or above) or 2000 (unsupported) running OpenGL 1.5 and Direct X 8 (Direct Input). Windows 98/ME/NT are not supported.

Now, that may sound OK but in my experience with the program it needs much more power than that to really start to look good. For example, I have an older PC that has a Pentium 4 CPU that runs at 3 Ghz with Hyperthreading, 1 Gigabyte of DDR-2 400 Mhz memory and a 9100 IGP Ati graphics chip on the motherboard and it barely runs well at 640 x 480 with no anti-aliasing whatsoever so the edges look very rough and basically it looks very ugly on that PC with a slow frame rate no matter how I adjust it.

In contrast to that my new PC is Intel i7 based (at 2.66 Ghz) with 12 Gigabytes of triple channel DDR-3 memory that runs at 1300 Mhz and it has two Evga 260 GTX graphic cards running in SLI mode and FP can run full speed with this setup at over 100 frames per second in full HD 1920 x 1080 mode and with all the graphic features set to high. Now I put this here as a reference so you have a clue of what it is required to really make this program tick but my new PC is kinda a wee bit above what you would need to run FP at full speed.

My personal opinion is that in order to run this program acceptably well you will really need at least an Intel Duo Core class processor as a minimum or equivalent and at least a graphics card capable of running Direct X 10, not because you need Direct X 10 but because the graphic cards that are capable of doing Direct X 10 are at about what I believe is the minimum level of power that you will really need for FP to look good and have good enough speed with acceptable anti-aliasing and high enough resolution. As for memory I don't think that you will need more than 1 or 2 Gigabytes which is more or less what you will find in computers of this level.

Well even if in this new PC I can reach over a 100 frames per second I had to go to the **Preferences** menu and in there I had to select **Video / Rendering Options...** and in the window that appears I had to select the checkbox that is labeled **Vertical Sync:** (at the middle

of the window to the left). After doing that my frame rate won't go above 60 frames per second but that is because this is the vertical refresh rate of my monitor and that setting will synchronize FP's frame rate with it and that will prevent the ball from stuttering in the game. If you do that the ball renders smoothly and moves fluidly and most FP players state that this is a necessity not an option.

Be aware though, that some people have complained that the **Vertical Sync:** setting may cause some noticeable lag in the flippers for the **Shift** keys. I know of a person with the following computer specifications: Core2Duo E8600@3.3GHz, ATI 4850 with 10.3 drivers and he says that in his PC he gets this lag with the **Vertical Sync:** setting. With my new PC in particular I don't notice this problem at all but look at the specs of my PC (two paragraphs back) and you will see that it is newer and faster than his cause I have a CPU that is of a generation that came after the Core2Duo so this could depend on your particular PC setup. Future Pinball is not perfect but it is a pretty good program and very enjoyable for the most part. It has been improved many times and I hope that its development continues and most of this inconveniences are fixed later on.

You have to know that a few tables are more demanding than others because of higher polygonal quality, higher texture quality, more elaborate effects and more details overall. So for the top quality tables you may need a computer even more powerful than one that I recommend as a minimum but you will be able to run most tables decently with a setup like that. Future Pinball is a terrific program but I think that it needs some optimization cause at the moment it is demanding on the hardware.

You can download Future Pinball completely free from its home web page which is located here:

<http://www.futurepinball.com/>

These are some places where you can download free tables:

<http://www.roneypinball.com.ar/> (once there click on the **Tables** button)

<http://www.pinballaddicts.com/>

<http://www.blindmankind.tecnopinball.org/>

<http://www.irpinball.org/>

<http://www.pinball-originals.com/>

<http://www.georg-reiter.de/41067.html>

<http://www.pinballnirvana.com/UpDownload.html>

And there are others but that can get you started. In some places they require you to register in order to be able to see the download link but that is only in a few places.

When you download and install the program also download and install the Sci-Fi Classic example pinball table in the **Tables** folder cause it has some libraries that some other tables expect to use and if you don't install that table some other tables that you install later-on that depend on those libraries will give you loading errors. This table is available at the Future

Pinball home web page.

Tables usually come as a single file compressed in ZIP format. To use that table you have to uncompress the ZIPs and put all those files in the **Tables** folder inside the folder where Future Pinball is installed. You have to do this for every table that you download. The default directory where FP is installed is:

**C:\Games\Future Pinball**

That is if you didn't change it and installed it somewhere else. So the **Tables** folder should be in:

**C:\Games\Future Pinball\Tables**

If the file that you downloaded is just a file ending in the .fpt extension you just take that file and place it in the **Tables** directory as it is.

You will notice that many tables files (.fpt files) that come with the ZIP files are sometimes together with .fpl files (Future Pinball library files), you can leave those files there and the tables will work because the tables will work if the library files that correspond to them are in the same folder as the table files but ideally the .fpl files are supposed to go into the **Libraries** directory (**C:\Games\Future Pinball\Libraries**) unless you are going to create separate sub-directories for each table as some people do. So if you create separate sub-folders for every table you just place all the tables files (all the content of a table zip file) into its own sub-folder inside the **Tables** folder. Now, remember that doing this last thing keeps files tidier but if you do that when you are going to load a table file you will have to change from folder to folder for every table that you want to launch which is something that some people don't like so it's up to you to decide how do you want to organize your table files.

In Windows Vista or Windows 7 the controls may not operate properly (the keyboard won't operate properly) and you may not be able to start the tables once you are in them (you press **5** for coins and **1** for starting a player and you have to press **1** some more times to start additional players). So you start a table and you see it but the control keys to start playing do not work. Read on to see how to solve this.

Another one of those keyboard issues is the **Esc** key not working correctly in **Full Screen** mode also in Windows Vista and Windows 7 preventing you from exiting a table and going back to the editor/ launcher screen. One thing that you can do is to play the tables in windowed mode and not in **Full Screen** mode and to do that go to the **Preferences** menu choose **Video / Rendering Options...** and in the window that appears make sure that the the **Full Screen** checkbox is off). The **Full Screen** mode at least in my Vista 64 bit Ultimate machine causes trouble and using windowed mode prevents this but there is way to fix this and use **Full Screen** mode for some people. In some other versions of Windows (like XP) it doesn't have this problem.

To fix these problems you have to right mouse click on the Future Pinball program file

(**Future Pinball.exe** which will be located in **C:\Games\Future Pinball** if you installed it in the default directory) and in the menu that appears you select **Properties** and then in that window that appears select the **Compatibility** tab and make sure that these are checked:

- **Run this program in compatibility mode for:**  
and then select **Windows XP (Service Pack 2)** in the drop box below that.
- **Disable desktop composition** (that may fix those **Full Screen** mode troubles)
- **Run this program as an administrator** (that fixes the starting keys problems)

That should take care of the starting keys not operating properly and the **Full Screen** mode **Esc** key problem. If the **Esc** problem still doesn't go away you can use the program in windowed mode. Some people still use the **Full Screen** mode when the **Esc** key doesn't work and what they do is to use the **Ctrl+Alt+Del** keys to call the **Windows Task Manager** to turn the table off.

There is an error that sometimes happen with some textures not loading correctly and there is a way to handle it. Go into the menu **Preferences** and select **Editor Options...** and in the window that appears uncheck the box labeled **Load Image into Table Editor**. This has to be done so the program doesn't cause weird graphic problems like the textures of the arcade machines appearing white randomly when you load a table, a table not displaying the playfield texture also randomly when you load a table, etc. After unchecking the **Load Image into Table Editor** box you have to restart Future Pinball for the changes to take effect.

Some people that have Ati graphic cards are also having problems with the textures and that happens with drivers 10.5 and 10.6 but the 10.4 version of the drivers work fine with Future Pinball and if you have an Ati card and you don't get textures you have to revert your drivers to version 10.4 to solve that problem until Ati fixes this issue.

I have two Evga 260 GTX (Nvidia chips) graphic cards in SLI mode and I had problems with **Trilinear** filtering of the textures (**Preferences** menu/ **Video / Rendering Options...** in the **Texture Filtering:** parameter) with my previous driver (197.13). If I used **Trilinear** filtering things looked odd so I had to use **Bilinear** filtering and it ran OK. When the new 480 GTX graphic cards came along new drivers came along too. I got a newer version (257.21) and with that version the **Trilinear** filtering problem is gone in my PC. **Bilinear** filtering now looks smoother and **Trilinear** works and it looks even better than **Bilinear** as it is supposed to be. So I hope that updating your Nvidia based card drivers to the latest version also solve those problems for you.

Please avoid Nvidia 169.xx drivers as they have broken openGL support.

After playing a few tables (loading and unloading 2 or 3 table files) exit the program and start it again before continuing loading tables cause the program has a memory leak and if you just continue to load table after table it will crash soon enough and that takes care of that.

Otherwise the program performs fairly well and it is stable enough for the most part.

One additional tip:

You cannot change the ball texture in Future Pinball. At first I thought that this could be done but in reality the texture image that FP uses for the chrome ball is embedded into the Future Pinball.exe file so it is hard coded into the program file. What you can do is to change the ball color through the script. I won't go into the details of how to do that here so if you want to know you can get help in <http://www.vpforums.org/> but at least I warn you about it so you don't go into a wild goose chase with that.

I hope that these tips help some of the new users of Future Pinball.

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