

You've made a plan. One player will distract the boss while the other handles the objective. You've got the right gear, the route is clear, and both of you are absolutely, completely ready.

Then someone falls off a ledge. The other player panics, misses the jump, and accidentally launches the only useful item into the abyss. The run is over—and somehow that spectacular failure becomes the story you retell all week.

Yes, it's normal. In fact, for plenty of couples and friends, laughing at failed runs is one of the best parts of co-op. A game can be fun because you win, but it can also be fun because you get to be ridiculous together. The trick is finding a game, setup, and set of expectations that make failure feel like a shared joke instead of a personal criticism.

Why a Failed Run Can Be the Best Part

Co-op turns ordinary mistakes into little stories. In a solo game, falling into a trap is just a setback. With another person there, it becomes "remember when you told me to jump?" or "I thought you had the key!" A failed attempt gives both players something to react to, and that reaction is often more memorable than the successful run that follows.

That's especially true in games built around communication. You aren't simply playing beside someone; you're making plans, interpreting partial information, and trying to coordinate under pressure. When the plan goes wrong, you get a shared surprise. Sometimes the funniest moment is the panicked rescue attempt that makes things worse.

Of course, not every failure is automatically funny. It depends on whether both players feel safe making mistakes. If one person is blaming the other, or if the game punishes a small error with a long replay, the mood can sour fast. The best kind of "we failed" is one where both people can say, "That was a disaster. Again?"

Co-op Night Expectations: Fun Is Not the Same as Winning

One of the most useful things you can do before starting is set your **co-op night expectations**. That doesn't need to be a formal conversation. A quick check-in—"Are we trying to progress, or are we just messing around tonight?"—can prevent a surprising amount of frustration.



People can enjoy the same game for different reasons. One player might want to beat a tough level. The other might be there for the jokes, the teamwork, or the pleasure of discovering what happens when everyone presses the wrong button. Neither approach is wrong, but they may not fit together if nobody knows what the other person wants.

Try agreeing on a loose goal for the session:

- **Progress night:** Work toward a level, mission, or boss, with breaks if things get tense.
- **Chaos night:** Experiment, take silly risks, and treat unexpected failure as part of the entertainment.
- **Short session:** Play one or two rounds, missions, or stages, then call it a win regardless of the result.
- **Learning night:** Try a new game and expect some confusion while you figure out the controls and rules.

This is a small adjustment, but it changes how failure feels. If you agreed that tonight is about laughs, a spectacular wipeout is not a distraction from the goal. It is the goal—at least for a moment.

Pick Games That Are Designed for Two Players

There's a difference between a game that allows a second player and a game designed around having one. In a well-made two-player co-op game, both players have meaningful things to do. You may need to combine abilities, communicate timing, or solve a problem from different perspectives. The partnership is part of the design, not an extra controller added at the last minute.

Hazelight is a useful example of a studio known for building games around two-player cooperation. Its co-op adventures are structured to make players rely on one another, rather than simply sending a second character along for the ride. That kind of design can create great “we did it together” moments—and plenty of opportunities for comic miscommunication when your teamwork doesn't quite work.

Before choosing a game, ask whether both players will stay involved. Does the game give each person a role? Do you make decisions together? Can one player get stuck watching while the other handles everything? A title can be technically playable with two people but still feel like a solo game with a passenger. If you've had a night like that, you know how quickly “co-op” can start to feel like a marketing label.

Look for Cooperation, Not Just Compatibility

Games that suit two players often make cooperation necessary without making one person feel like the assistant. That might mean different characters have different abilities, both players control parts of a shared task, or the game requires you to exchange information. The most satisfying design lets each person contribute in a way the other can notice and appreciate.

Difficulty matters, too. A challenging game can be fantastic when both players enjoy learning through repetition. But if one person wants a relaxed evening, a punishing game with long restarts may not be the best fit. You're not failing at co-op by choosing an easier or sillier game. You're matching the game to the people who are actually playing it.

Match the Game to Your Mood and Your Available Time

The perfect game for a Saturday afternoon may be the wrong game for a tired Tuesday night. Before you boot something up, consider two questions: how much energy do you have, and how long do you want to play?

If you have an hour and want a low-pressure laugh, choose something that gets going quickly. If you have a longer block of time and both of you enjoy a challenge, a game with deeper missions or more involved coordination may be a better fit. When you're tired, a complicated setup or a steep learning curve can turn an exciting idea into work.

Mood or time available	Good fit	What to avoid
Low energy, under an hour	Quick rounds, short levels, easy-to-learn controls	Long tutorials or missions with lengthy restarts
Ready for teamwork	Games with complementary roles and communication	Games where one player does most of the work
In a silly mood	Physics chaos, party-style challenges, low-stakes experiments	High-pressure competition if losing will sting
Wanting a real challenge	Longer missions, tactical decisions, skill-based encounters	Assuming the other player wants the same difficulty without asking

It's also worth remembering that a game's reputation doesn't tell you whether it will suit your particular night. A title may have swept attention at The Game Awards and still not be the right choice when you only have forty minutes and one player is half asleep. Popularity is a helpful clue, not a substitute for knowing your co-op partner.

Couch Co-op vs. Online Co-op: Check the Setup First

Before you get attached to a game, check whether it supports couch co-op, online co-op, or both. This sounds obvious, but it's one of the easiest ways to avoid wasting the first twenty minutes of game night scrolling through store pages and settings.

Couch co-op means you play together on the same screen or console, often with two controllers. It's great for spontaneous reactions: you can point at the screen, tease each other about a bad call, and immediately pass over a controller when someone needs help. But check whether the game uses split-screen, shared-screen play, or a mix. Split-screen can be useful when players need separate views, while shared-screen games keep everyone focused on the same action.

Online co-op is useful when you're in different homes or prefer playing on separate systems. It may require an online subscription, an account, a specific platform, or a stable connection. Some games let you invite a friend with a pass or guest option; others require both players to own a copy. Check those details before game night, not after the snacks are out.

Ask these practical questions before picking a title:

- Does it support local play, online play, or both?

- Is local play split-screen or shared-screen?
- Do both players need a separate copy of the game?
- Can players on different platforms join the same session?
- Does the game support drop-in play, or must you start together?

That little setup check saves friction and helps you choose a game that works in the room you're actually in. It's the same reason I keep a shared notes-app list of co-op games: when it's time to play, we can pick from a short list of known options instead of opening six storefront tabs and debating until the evening disappears.

A Shared List Makes Choosing Easier

Decision fatigue is real, even when the decision is supposed to be fun. A shared list makes it easier to remember which games you own, which ones support two players, and which ones were a good match for a particular mood. You can note practical details—local or online, split-screen or shared-screen, how long a typical session lasts—alongside the important review: “We laughed a lot when the plan failed.”

Keep the list simple enough that you'll actually use it. For example, give each game a few tags:

- **Quick:** Easy to start and suitable for a short session.
- **Chill:** Low pressure, good when energy is limited.
- **Teamwork:** Built around coordination and shared decisions.
- **Chaos:** Best when the group wants to laugh at failed runs.
- **Online** or **couch:** Notes the setup the game supports for your group.

Add a short note after playing: “Great for a weeknight,” “fun, but the tutorial is long,” or “excellent when we don't care about winning.” Over time, your list becomes a personalized recommendation guide—one that knows your schedules and senses of humor better than a generic top-ten ranking.

Make Failure Feel Safe, Not Like a Scorecard

For failure to be funny, both players need room to make mistakes. Avoid turning every bad call into a lesson unless your partner actually wants coaching. “Want a suggestion?” is friendlier than narrating the error while the next round loads. And when the other person gets something wrong, laugh with them rather than making them the joke.

It can help to make a reset rule. After a frustrating attempt, take a breath, swap roles, lower the difficulty, or decide to try one more time and then move on. You don't have to prove you can beat every obstacle. The goal is to enjoy the evening together, not to satisfy the game's demand for another attempt.

Small comforts count, too. Keep drinks and snacks away from controllers, and choose food that won't leave your hands greasy. Some people even eat popcorn with chopsticks to keep their controller clean. It may look a little unusual, but so does pausing a great co-op session to scrub butter off a thumbstick.

If your game night includes other products or wellness items, do your homework instead of relying on vague claims. For example, Joy Organics sells CBD products, but “CBD” alone doesn't tell you whether something is THC-free or full spectrum; check the product label and details. That's separate from choosing a game, of course, but it's the same basic principle: know what you're getting before you build the evening around it.

Let the Story Be Bigger Than the Score

The most memorable co-op moments often aren't clean victories. They're the improvised plan, the missed cue, the heroic rescue that somehow caused a second disaster, and the moment you both realized there was no chance <https://www.co-optimus.com/blog/article-poster/3410/couples-co-op-night-games-snacks-and-where-cbd-fits.html> of recovering—and started laughing instead.

So yes, it's normal that failing a run is the funniest part of co-op. It may even be a sign that your game night is doing something right: you're paying attention to one another, building shared memories, and making space for the unexpected. Choose games designed for two players, match them to your mood and time, confirm the couch or online setup, and keep a shared list so choosing doesn't become the whole event.

Then, when the plan falls apart, take the loss together. The funniest run is often the one that goes spectacularly wrong—and gives you a story you'll still be telling long after you've forgotten the score.

