

FATES WORSE THAN DEATH

The Role Playing Game

SPARE CHANGE EDITION

WARNING

This Book Contains The Following:

drugs 	crime 	violence 	sex & alternative lifestyles 	extreme political ideas 
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The questionable elements in this book are:

 idealized/encouraged	 presented neutrally players must decide	 demonized/prohibited
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NOT RECOMMENDED

for people with

POOR CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

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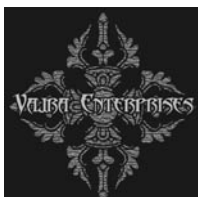
This book has been voluntarily rated:

BURN IMMEDIATELY

Special Note

To minimize danger of fatal head explosion, do not read this book in its entirety. Read "In Brief" sections to get a general idea of the setting and game, then go back to read in depth for specific reference.

Thank you for your cooperation.



FATES WORSE THAN DEATH the Role Playing Game
SPARE CHANGE EDITION
is published by Vajra Enterprises, Eureka California

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Katie Riley, Brennan Pike, Jeffrey W. F. Walker, John Laviolette, Paul Barnett, Rob Lowry,
Eeyore, Sandy Antunes, Chris Garland, Rebecca King, Steve Johnson and Guy McLimore.

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About This Special Edition

Fates Worse Than Death: Spare Change Edition is a scaled down or “light” version of Fates Worse Than Death the RPG. It is distributed as a free product by Vajra Enterprises and is not intended for resale.

The Spare Change Edition contains only the rules, character creation options and game setting information of interest to players playing Street People characters (those living on the streets without legitimate homes or jobs). The full edition of Fates Worse Than Death is 464 pages and includes all the information herein as well as information for Well and Indie characters.

Fates Worse Than Death has a MSRP of \$35.95 and can be purchased at www.FatesWorseThanDeath.com or at your local game retailer.

A Basic Overview of the Game

"If there is knowledge, it lies in the fusion of the book and the street."

-Studs Terkel

Style- The setting is dark, desperate and fast-paced, but characters are encouraged to never forget the values they hold important. In the city, one's worth is measured by being true to whatever values you hold dear: honor, altruism, friendship, family, personal growth, etc. The city is mostly lawless, and even though that makes it a dark and dangerous place, it also gives the people within it freedom to find what is important to them in life and seek it out. The sense of hope in the middle of the darkness is meant to heighten the tension of the game: as the name implies, characters have more than simply staying alive to worry about.

Background- In 2080, the island of Manhattan is now a large inner city, a ghetto where people go when they can not or will not live in a gated community, a corporate employee living center or an expensive private city. Large numbers of people among the city's population are insane, retarded, criminals, homeless or extremists. Others are merely trying to do the best with the life that has been dealt to them.

Tech Level- In 2080, many amazing discoveries have been made: genetic engineering, virtual reality, artificial intelligence, limited nanotechnology, mental programming (forced restructuring of neural networks to create "computer programs" inside the human mind), psychic energy, etc. but these technologies have done little to improve the state of the world. Instead, they introduce a new horde of terrible possibilities: What if a serial killer could copy his own mind in to other people's bodies? What if Virtual Reality companies could offer a world to live in that is wholly superior to ours? What if you could gain incredible power over the minds of others, but at the loss of your own sanity?

Power Structures- Corporations are sophisticated and influential, but their power is kept in check by a wary public and government. Gated Communities are self-sufficient economic units that use brain scans to screen people and drain away the most productive members of society. Those who can't get in to corps or gated communities languish in inner cities, where the police and government have little power. The Drug Lords are a consolidated group of drug dealers seeking a monopoly on drugs. They are violent and always creating more addictive drugs. The street gangs, having lost their ability to sell drugs, have slowly turned towards more lofty goals and have become popular with a wider range of people. The gangs sometimes fight the Drug Lords and other forces of evil, but they are more

often distracted by inter-gang warfare and internal struggles. The Black Market is a decentralized web of criminals and traders who can get anyone anything for the right price.

Dangers- The game has no set "enemy" to battle. Every individual and group has its own motivations and needs. It may be rare that characters will find themselves teaming up with a serial killer or fighting against charity workers, but it can happen if the right combinations of forces collide. Of the deaths that happen in the city, the majority are caused by gang warfare, riots, serial killers, plagues, animal attacks, murder during a mugging or burglary, murder by homeless "crazies" and deaths related to drug addiction.

Player Characters- Characters in this special edition will all be Street People: homeless people, many of whom were born on the streets without birth certificates; most are trained from birth in their families' skills of survival. Many characters will belong to gang-like street families, though they need not have a violent or criminal nature. Other characters do not belong to any family and rely on wits, skill and luck (instead of the threat of vengeance by a family) to protect themselves from the drug lords and other criminals.

Character Creation- The character has a pool of points to buy attributes with and a pool of points to buy skills with. Characters must choose a Character Class which represents their current place in society. This character class sets the cost (per level) in skill points of skills in each skill category. Character class also sets available funds and may give access to special advantages, disadvantages and skills. Advantages and disadvantages are used to round out the character. Any type of character creation points (skills points, attribute points, money, points from advantages and disadvantages) can be traded for each other via a simple formulae.

Game Mechanics - All mechanics are based on a simple system: The sum of attribute + skill or other factor + 1d20 must be equal to or higher than the difficulty of the proposed action. Opposed rolls are made when two actions are in conflict with each other: each party tries to get more above their difficulty than the other party. Fighting is made up of opposed actions (moves) with different difficulties and effects. In combat, for each round each character gets one action to make against an enemy and one reaction if someone else does something to them.

A Message From The City

"Listen up punky, 'cause this here's the crib sheets. This here's your study guide for not getting really horrible shit done to you next time you walk out your front door.

I feel like I must clarify a few things, since most of what you know about the city was probably told to you by corporate newscasters. The problem is, these fuckers that told you what a horrible urban chaos nightmare the city is, they live in nice happy little corporate living centers where you have to pass a fucking McEthics and McSanity test before they let you past the main gate. These fuckers have never been in the city and every time these fuckers talk some poor middle-aged welfare couple in to never leaving their apartment, their corp's VR service makes a little more money.

Here in the city we've got all the tried-and-true urban problems: crime, litter, plagues, riots, economic exploitation, cults, prostitution, drugs, corruption, crazy people. We've also got a few new problems that we just created: we've got a serial killer who replicates himself by kidnapping people and copying his mind over theirs. We've got these checkpoints at every way on to the island - they're supposed to keep guns out of the city but what they really do is make it so that only rich and powerful criminals have guns and the cops and gangs have to fight the bad guys with nightsticks and switchblades. We've got these vicious drug lords who have a monopoly on street drugs and have created some shit so addictive they can hold you down and inject you with it and now they own you. We've got a drug that eats parts of the brain so addicts become packs of howling cannibalistic animals.

Yup, this city is one dangerous fucked up shithole. It's got all the crime and gang violence of an anarchy, all the exploitation of a corporate capitalism and all the impotent bureaucracy of a self-serving government - and that's what's so great about it. Step out your front door and within an hour you might be saving someone's life from some major evil fucker. Whatever skill you have, there's someone in trouble right now that could use your help, even if it's just the skill of standing there with a knife and some magazines taped to you as armor and pretending that you ain't scared shitless.

You might be under the impression that in order to survive in the city you've got to be an incredibly tough bastard. Well, that's one way to do it. Another way is to be such a good person that not many people want to do you in, and those that do think twice about it when they see how many people would be really pissed if something happened to you. Most people go for the middle ground and join a gang. Contrary to what you may have heard, most gangs live by a code

of "don't fuck with us and you'll be alright," which is a lot better than some people in the city will give you. And if there's one thing the gangs do well it's finding interesting shit to be in to. Whether it's navigating mazes of rooftops, trying to become immortal by passing down your memories or getting infected with symbiotic diseases resurrected from prehistory, the gangs are the 31 flavors of cool probably-illegal shit you could do that might possibly make you that much more of a badass.

One thing that will get you killed (or worse) faster than anything else is stereotypes. You are fucked if you think a kid can't be a cold-blooded killer, a dude with spikes implanted in his skin has gotta be a dangerous asshole or that an old homeless guy is useless and powerless. Not only will you not see the bad shit coming, you won't recognize the potential allies, benefactors and wisdom that might help you survive.

Also, don't get cocky. After you've been around the block a few times you might think you know the city. You don't, nobody does, because there's not just one city. There's hundreds of interconnected cities going on simultaneously. Gangs and their little struggles aren't the only game in town: there's homeless extended families, pushers, moles, black-corp operatives, artists, old war criminals, shut-in citizen's groups, corrupt government employees, start-up business owners, black market traders, sex industry workers and exploiters, addicts and more, each with their own goals, internal struggles and the power to fuck you up if you happen to get caught in the middle of their shit.

And to those of you out there who would rather have everyone in the city be a bunch of mindless frightened little shut-ins who blow all our money on VR, alcohol and rent, who vote for whoever runs the most commercials and who let the criminals take whatever they want as long as they don't kill us, I've got a special message for you:

Forget it. There's thousands of us. We're organized and decentralized. Nobody tells us what to do or what to want. We push every boundary we can think of looking for ways to become better. We're working with a couple centuries experience dealing with the worst that the urban world has to offer. And we're not afraid of anything you can throw at us because the worst fate we can possibly imagine is being like you."

Katherine "Blackheart" Nikonov,
Needle Punk,
Jan 1, 2080
New York City

Cyberpunk vs. Fates Worse Than Death

Cyberpunk is a literary genre that first began in the early 1980s in the works of authors such as William Gibson, Bruce Sterling, Neal Stephenson and movies such as Blade Runner. Although Fates Worse Than Death takes much from the cyberpunk genre, it is not just a generic cyberpunk setting. Those who are only familiar with cyberpunk conventions will have a hard time playing in the Fates Worse Than Death universe. However, since cyberpunk is the closest “genre” to Fates Worse Than Death, here is a short list of differences to get cyberpunk fans acquainted with the Fates Worse Than Death game universe:

Cyberpunk	Fates Worse Than Death
The “ Urban Sprawl ”, an unending, unvaried and unknowable stretch of solid city containing every sort of culture, economy, lifestyle and organization within its breadth.	Game focuses on the island of Manhattan, detailing its boundaries and what can be found within it, including its specific and unique organizations and culture.
Most characters are lone wolves who travel the world giving only temporary loyalty to those who pay them (or the occasional good cause).	Most characters have an important and well-defined place in city society with duties and non-selfish motivations.
Usually no psychic phenomenon, or if there is it is usually a wildcard: rare freaks who can make people’s heads explode.	Well defined and explained psychic abilities with clearly defined limits.
Urban populations are constantly growing, changing, and moving, leaving little focus on tradition and history.	Manhattan population is small, stable and some people live as their grandparents had, giving a sense of tradition, age and maturity to the city.
Distinction between the powerless majority of people who are just trying to survive and the powerful minority who have special skills or resources. The powerful tend to be the main players, with the powerless as a sort of background.	Focus on the idea that everyone is quite skilled at what they do, no matter what their economic status is, and that everyone is powerful and dangerous in their own way.
Focus on the media , on corporate advertisers creating pop culture, on who is famous, on being flashy and stylish and having ‘style over substance’.	The street population of the city is basically ignored by and ignores the media. There is no real pop-culture and people become known for their deeds, not for looking cool.
VR is a gateway to adventure and a playground for the world’s master hackers.	VR is an addictive escape for shut-ins, disdained by the street population. Real hackers are as likely to use a text-only interface.
Guns are common and used liberally.	Guns are rare (screened for at city entrances), used mainly by the richest criminals. The most common weapon is a knife.
Life is cheap and the death of a person usually has few consequences.	Life is cheap to some, very important to others. Each individual has many interconnections and nearly every death has consequences.
Philosophy is irrelevant, people spend their days concerned with how to survive.	Many have carved a niche for themselves in city society and have time to ask themselves questions such as “why am I here?” and “what do I want to do with my life?”
Police force is a brutish paramilitary force.	Police force is a bunch of idealistic teens who are under-equipped, under-skilled and act more like a gang than a military organization.
Gangs are short-sighted, violent, self-destructive, crazy criminals who are addicted to and sell drugs. This vision of gangs is generally based on post-crack (1980s and after) US urban street gangs.	Gangs are more-or-less “normal” people who have banded together for self-protection. Some gangs have lofty goals and ideals. Although they do have problems with violence, overall the city is a better place for their presence.
Cybernetic implants and replacements are powerful, flashy chrome and tend to turn people in to robot monsters.	Implants are either biological or small, unobtrusive electronics. They extend human capabilities but are rarely able to make people superhuman.
City is portrayed as a bright, noisy, bustling marketplace 24 hours a day.	The city is darker and quieter with a smaller population density (especially with many shut-ins) and few motor vehicles. At certain times of day the streets are almost empty.
Integration of computer chip technology in to brains creates human-computer links and lets human be programmed.	Neural restructuring techniques allow the brain itself to be changed, reprogrammed, even copied. Unobtrusive hand-jacks allow integration with computers.
Dreary, blighted dystopian setting symbolic of characters’ own sense of being lost and having no control over their lives.	Dreary, blighted dismal setting as a counterpoint to and testing ground of social and individual growth.
Not as much focus on drama, suspense and terror because characters don’t have much to lose in the first place.	Characters are given something worth trying to hold on to, making drama, suspense and terror possible.
Violence typically portrayed as the most important form of social and political persuasion, and most stories usually have at least one skilled fighter (usually a neutral party, hired and used as a tool by the PCs).	Violence is one of many tools available to characters, which can be beneficial if used wisely or disastrous if used poorly. Often, threats of violence are more useful than violence itself.
Massive difference in education, social power and culture between rich and poor characters.	Really rich people exist but are seldom seen. Most PCs range between what would be called middle class and very poor today. Culturally, they are more alike than different.
Exploration of what is human through invasive electromechanical implants turning people in to machines.	Exploration of what is human through neural restructuring, biotechnological manipulation, drugs with permanent psychological effects, etc.
Complete lack of social support net . There are hardly any social services except those designed to keep the capitalist system going.	There is a massive welfare system that supports most of the city, though many people do fall through the cracks. This is a system that benefits corps and government (see p.176).
Corporations are a cross between governments and organized crime agencies, who regularly and directly interfere in the lives of the characters.	Corps have a lot of power (mostly economic) but they can’t afford to piss-off the government and their influence on the lives of characters is usually subtle and from afar.
History usually dotted with several Vietnam-esque wars with limited nuclear activity.	Periods of global corporate rule, ecological crises, global anti-corporate violence (and occupation by anti-corporate terrorist armies) leading to restructuring of economies and governments.

Tips For Survival in the City

"You've got to keep an open mind man. Hell, if ten impossible things didn't happen here every day, I'd leave." -**Terry Neiss, Freak**

"No matter who you are, you've got something someone else wants. Even if you're some homeless addict with nothing but poor health, an empty stomach and a few rags on your back, there's some other poor fuck who's lost enough of his mind that he sees you as a nice tasty source of protein. What I'm saying is that there ain't no time when you don't have to watch your back." -**DeeNa O'Keen, Good**

"Just because it looks like a human doesn't mean it is. Technology is humans manipulating nature, and now humans can manipulate themselves until they aren't even human anymore." -**3Day Jones, Freelancer**

"Hard shells often hide soft interiors. People with real power often have reason to hide that power." -**Kelly Crane, Immortal**

"In the city you can't get a good thing without making some sacrifice. Power is the intelligence and wisdom to time things so that the strengths work for you and the weaknesses hit you when you can handle them." -**Octavius Selgado, Needle Punk**

"If you're a rabbit, when some big bastard fucks with you, you hide in a corner. If you're a wolf, you'll use your last dying breath to slam a screwdriver into his face. And in this city the wolves can smell the difference." -**Amtrak Bill, Hummingbird**

"Never fight anyone on their own turf, they'll seriously mess you up." -**Hy Kenn, Arcadian**

"Sometimes something or another will shift the balance of power in the city, and that's when you've got to watch out, because the city is a dynamic system and it will use any and all of its resources to restore equilibrium, including you." -**Gretta Bakker, Math Addict**

"I once saw a homeless crazy guy: no pants, covered in fingernail scratches, skin blue from cold, eye infected, talking incoherently and smoking a cigarette. Here's a guy who can't speak in a complete sentence or put on pants, but somehow he gets a cigarette and lights it. The point is: if you want something badly enough, you'll find a way to get it. The only question is, are you willing to pay what it will cost you?" -**Pinky Lulu, Hungry**

"You know how I face death every day? I just keep in mind that there are eight hundred things worse than death. Well, eight hundred I know about, there are probably more." -**Victoria McKenna, Sat Jumper**

"If you beat down every person who crosses you, you'll blend in with everyone else out on the street. If you do something that lets people know there's something goin' on in your head, like be polite to old people, then people might take notice of you." -**Charles Reston, Tea Drinker**

"Never outsource for something you can possibly do yourself. You're only taking money from your growth base and putting it in to theirs." -**Margarie Hesh, Y1**

"Every person you meet, imagine that their life is at least as hard as yours, and treat them with that much respect." -**Jack Vandenburg, Jack**

"A scar, worn proudly, lets others know that you will let nothing get in the way of doing what you think is right. Most of us are born with perfect flesh, the scars are the only things we've truly earned." -**Crick Crack, Animalist**

"Usually they don't want to kill you, they just want to give you a good beating. Learn to tell the difference. I know that no one wants to take a beating, but sometimes you just can't help it and you're better off if you forget about fighting back and just concentrate on making sure that none of your vital organs get ruptured."

-**Magoro Karmine, Volunteer**

"To survive you gotta have more friends than enemies. The problem is most people start one down because they've never learned to be their own friend."

-**Poplar Corrigan, Sex Worker**

"If you're fighting someone who has dreadlocks or braids, you may be tempted to grab one of them and yank the person's head down in to knee-range, but don't do it unless you have good gloves on, because if that person is smart they'll have some barbed wire wrapped up in there and it will fuck up your hand."

-**Rick "Ripper" Pasquale, Night Shift**

"Your first duty in a battle is to keep the enemy from remaking the battlefield to suit their skills. Don't let the Dragons set up their fog-and-lightning machines, don't let the Omniscients break all the lights, don't let the Water Rats flood the area. If the enemy gains control of your environment, leave."

-**Green-Hat-Man, Hunter**

"I've seen Skin Borgs cry and charity workers backhand old people. Don't believe the stereotypes, ever." -**Fex Preuss, Hummingbird**

"Figure out what it is you most want to hear and if someone tells it to you, they're probably lying. That's what good liars do: they know people don't question what they wanted to hear."

-**Jack Omoka, Jack**

"Don't think your actions have no consequences. Kill some crazy homeless guy: maybe you'll get away with it, or maybe he's got some homeless kid who will spend a decade tracking you down and put a knife in your back." -**Linda Capri, Gambler**

"You wanna survive? If you see me, run." -**Carmin Chee, Skin Borg**

Chapter One - Character Creation

The stranger had knocked down the apartment door. He knocked Tabitha's father senseless with one punch. He found Tabitha hidden in the bathroom, curled up in a ball in the tub. Only practice had kept Tabitha from whimpering in fear. Then, instead of killing or raping her, he had talked to her in a kind voice.

He told her that her older sister had died in a gang war with some gang called the Drug Lords. He told her that if she came with him, her sister's gang would take care of her, let her join the gang, train her to fight and do other things. He said that someday she would be able to take revenge for her sister's death.

Tabitha remembered the last time she had seen her sister. She had tried to explain that gangs weren't all like the news said. She said that some gangs weren't about drugs, crime or bullying. She said that some gangs were just friends or people with mutual interests who had made a pact for mutual protection. Tabitha's sister had cried, had promised that as soon as she had saved up enough to get an apartment that Tabitha could come live with her. Before Tabitha's sister left she had another private talk with Tabitha's father. Tabitha had made out the word "castrate" among the shouting. That had kept Tabitha's father out of her room at night for at least a month.

Tabitha looked up at the stranger. He had a kind voice but he dressed like a killer. Tabitha didn't want to join a gang, she didn't want to fight in any wars or seek revenge against anyone. She was afraid of the streets, of all the terrible things the news said awaited innocent people when they stepped outside their doors.

Yet it was a way out...

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Character Creation in Brief

Step 1 - Character Concept

Your idea of the character: name, appearance, values, etc.

Step 2 - Personality Variables

Choose 3 Personal Ideals and 3 Worldviews.

Step 3 - Attributes

Split 80 points between 8 attributes (min 1, max 20). Choose optional sub-attributes (costs or gives 1 bonus point).

Step 4 - Socioeconomic Class

In this edition, you are a Street Person. Choose a subtype (reason you're on the streets).

Step 5 - Choose Character Class

Depending on socioeconomic class, choose the PC's place in city society.

Step 6 - Choose Skills

Spend 100 Skill Points, skill costs set by character class.

Step 7 - Buy Equipment

Available money set by character class.

Step 8 - Bonus Characteristics

PC starts with neutral balance. Advantages must be balanced out by disadvantages.

Step 9 - Character Advancement

Use XP to gain experience levels and improve the PC.

An Introduction to Point Based Character Creation

Imagine you have exactly \$1000 to buy a computer. You go to some computer manufacturers and find a \$1000 computer you like. You could go ahead and just buy it (this would be the quick, easy, non-tech-savvy way to do it). Or you can mess around with the configuration. You might decide you want more memory, but to do that you'll have to give something up – you might have to take a smaller monitor to free up the money. This option takes a little longer, but in the end you get a computer which is better suited to your needs.

You have the same choices during character creation. The simplest option is to follow steps 1 through 7 and use just the points and options you are given. If you really want to customize your character you can, but keep in mind that for every extra advantage you can give your character, you must take some disadvantage of equal value. We keep track of this equality using Bonus Points. Everything you do that hurts your character gives you Bonus Points and you can use these Bonus Points to get things that help your character.

See the section on Bonus Characteristics for a complete listing of what you can do to gain or spend Bonus Points.

STEP ONE - CHARACTER CONCEPT

In Brief: Your idea of the character: name, appearance, values, etc.

First of all, create a character concept. Character concept includes name, gender, appearance, and more ephemeral aspects of who your character is. The GM may ask you the following questions to get a better sense of who your character is. Even if he or she doesn't ask these questions, it is a good idea that you know the answer to them.

-Values: What does the PC do that he or she thinks is valuable? Does the PC have some ultimate goal or project? Does the PC feel that simply enjoying life as it happens is enough to justify his or her existence?

-Family: Where is the PC's family? Are they dead? Does the PC hate them and never speak to them? Does the PC love his or her family but thinks they could never understand the PC's lifestyle? Does the PC have family that live by the same lifestyle as he or she does? If the PC is in a gang, are the PC's family in the same gang or a different gang (possibly even an enemy gang)?

-Drugs: What are your PC's feelings on drugs? Does he or she abstain? Does the PC think others should abstain? Does the PC use illegal drugs when he or she thinks they serve a useful purpose? Does the PC use illegal drugs for enjoyment, to deal with life, or because the PC thinks they will improve him or her in some way?

-Gender/Sex: What is the PC's gender? What is your PC's sexual preference? Heterosexual, bisexual, homosexual? Is your PC a transsexual (seeking or having received gender reassignment surgery)? Is the PC looking for a monogamous relationship, does he or she sleep around, or is the PC abstinent? What does the PC find attractive in a man/woman? Does the PC have any kinks? Does the PC ever wish to have children? Does he or she wish to raise that child in the city lifestyle? (Note: Read the section on discrimination in the city (p.161) for more information on the effects, if any, these choices will have on the PC.)



Violence: Does the PC pick fights? Does he or she avoid violence whenever possible? Does the PC see violence as a way to express anger, a powerful tool, or the only way out of a few terrible situations? Has the PC ever killed someone and, if so, how does he or she feel about it?

-Ethnicity: What is the PC's ethnic background(s), or does the PC even know? Does the PC have connections to some culture other than average American culture? (Note: Read the section on discrimination in the city (p.161) for more information on the effects, if any, these choices will have on the PC.)

-Body Modification: How does the PC feel about improving his or her body through technological means (implants, genetic engineering, plastic surgery, etc.)? Does the PC have modifications already? If the PC had enough money, would he or she get some?

-Style: What personal style (hair, clothes, jewelry, tattoos) does the PC have?

-Self Improvement: What does the PC wish to change about himself or herself? Is there anything that you, as a player, wish to change about the PC but the PC is oblivious to this flaw? (Note: it is to your benefit to give the PC room for personal growth since personal growth during an adventure is a good way to earn experience points).

-Fear: What is the worst fate your PC can possibly imagine? Is it something visceral (being tortured, catching a disfiguring disease, being paralyzed) or is it something abstract (losing hope, dying having done more harm than good, living life controlled by others)?

STEP TWO - PERSONALITY VARIABLES

In Brief: Choose 3 Personal Ideals and 3 Worldviews.

Personal Ideals

Name three personal ideals that your PC starts the game with. This is some quality that the PC either hopes to achieve or thinks he or she has achieved. Choose descriptions that are simple yet precise ("efficiently and dynamically reallocates own attentional resources" is too complicated, "smart" is too simple). Try not to put states of worldly achievement (e.g. incredibly rich) but instead put the personality variables that the PC thinks makes this achievement possible (e.g. Ladder Climber, Ruthless Bastard and Streetwise Cynic). The PC will gain extra experience when he or she does something good that falls in-line with a personal ideal (see p.11).

Some example Personal Ideals are:

Charismatic Leader- The PC wants to be someone who is adored, looked up to and obeyed because of the force of his or her personality.

Clever Ideas- The PC wants to be the one who comes up with creative plans that save the day.

Compassionate Do-Gooder- The PC wants to care about other people's problems and to let that caring drive the PC to action.

Consumed Artist- The PC wants to be ruled by his or her creative impulses and to pour everything he or she is in to art.

Cool Under Pressure- The PC wants to be the one who does not get frazzled or carried away by stressful and hectic situations.

Crazy Daredevil- The PC wants to be the one willing to take risks that nobody else is willing to take.

Dependable Friend- The PC wants to be the buddy that friends know they can go to for help no matter what the crisis is.

Driven Overachiever- The PC wants to be the one who works harder than everyone else and achieves more.

Efficiently Organized- The PC wants to weave order out of the chaos of life and always be on-top of everything.

Humble Clown- The PC wants to be someone who never takes himself or herself or anyone else too seriously.

Improvement Seeker- The PC wants to be someone who never stops trying to root out flaws and improve himself or herself.

Indispensable Skill- The PC wants to have skills so important that the people in the PC's life couldn't get by without the PC.

Insightful Observer- The PC wants to be the one who pays attention when others aren't and notices important details.

Interesting Life- The PC wants to have a life so interesting that people will be captivated and awed by the stories.

Inviolable Will- The PC wants to be someone who never lets others dictate what the PC thinks, feels or believes.

Knuckle-Down- The PC wants to be the one who does unpleasant things (things nobody else can stand to do) because those things need to get done.

Ladder Climber- The PC wants to be the one who knows how to rise through the ranks and to be constantly doing whatever it takes to get ahead.

Line Drawer- The PC wants to be someone who will draw a line and if someone crosses it the PC will fight that person even with his or her last dying breath.

Lying Manipulator- The PC wants to be the one who can play people like instruments via an intricate web of lies.

Mature Wisdom- The PC wants to speak with the voice of experience.

Mysterious Stranger- The PC wants to keep his or her true motives and abilities secret, to have people wonder but know little about the PC.

Mystery Solver- The PC wants to be the one who keeps gathering information until all the pieces come together and the truth is discovered.

Neutral Mediator- The PC wants to be the one who stays neutral and objective in order to help people solve their problems.

Obsessed Perfectionist- The PC wants to be the one who is unsatisfied until everything it is absolutely perfect.

One-Of-The-Crowd- The PC wants to fit in, to be thought of by his or her peers as being just like them.

Outrageous Loudmouth- The PC wants to be willing to speak out and say things that are shocking, unpopular and that other people are afraid to say.

Philosophically Enlightened- The PC wants to understand the nature of the universe better than most people.

Pleasantly Nice- The PC wants to be nice to be around and to have people like him or her.

Principled Optimist- The PC wants to be the one who refuses to give up hope that humans are good and can make the world a better place.

Proud to be Different- The PC wants to be unashamedly different from those around them and from what is expected of them.

Proven Right- When the battle of philosophies, ideologies and religions is decided, the PC wants to triumph as the one who was right all along.

Radical Values- The PC wants to completely reject the mundane values that society tried to imprint on everyone (such as fitting-in, material possessions, etc.)

Rational Skeptic- The PC never wants emotions or wishful thinking to get in the way of logic or realism.

Respectfully Polite- The PC wants to treat everyone with the courtesy and respect usually reserved for the very powerful.

Revolutionary Hero- The PC wants to be an instrumental agent of change, someone who makes the world a better place.

Righteous Warrior- The PC wants to battle for what is right no matter what the odds.

Scary Evil- The PC wants to be into such scary things (like drugs, violence, occult, sexual fetishes) that "normal people" are afraid of the PC.

Secret Knower- The PC wants to know all the cool secrets that normal people don't get to know.

Self-Controlled- The PC wants to have flawless control over his or her emotions and impulses at all times.

Selfless Martyr- The PC wants to make tremendous sacrifices for the good of other people.

Self-Sufficient- The PC wants to be someone who never depends on anyone else for his or her survival or well-being.

Sex Object- The PC wants to be the object of sexual desire and the bringer of sexual satisfaction.

Simply Content- The PC wants to want nothing more than what he or she has at the moment.

Spiritually Pure- The PC wants to be free from sin in the eyes of his or her deity(s).

Streetsmart Cynic- The PC wants to be the one to recognize the worst in people and not let those people use the PC or pull the PC down with them.

Unflinchingly Honest- The PC wants to be totally honest with himself and herself and with other people, for truth's sake alone.

Vengeful Bastard- The PC wants to be someone nobody messes with (or quickly learns not to) because the PC is so mean.

Vigilantly Prepared- The PC wants to be prepared for whatever might happen, to never be caught without equipment or a plan.

Well Balanced- The PC wants to be moderately good at everything – not too logical, not too emotional, not too nice, not too mean, etc.

Witty Banterer- The PC wants to have something funny or clever to say for any situation.

Worldviews

Name three worldviews for your PC. This is an overarching philosophy that describes how the PC approaches attempts to understand the universe and the things that happen in it. The PC will gain extra experience points when he or she follows the tenants of a worldview and arrives at a correct (or otherwise useful) conclusion.

Some example Worldviews are as follows:

Absolutist- For the most important things in life there are no grey areas, no excuses, no maybes.

Animalist- Philosophies are meaningless, the only thing that gives the universe meaning is our animal drives.

Buddhist- All the things that we think are important and cause us suffering are only important because we imagine they are.

Common Sense- The universe is mostly simple and people already know most of the answers (if they don't over-think it).

Darwinistic- Those who can compete the best will survive and prosper.

Distraction- A lot of stuff is too horrible to think about, so find something you can keep your mind occupied with.

Egocentric- Things in this universe are only important inasmuch as they effect the PC.

Fanatic- There is one truth, the PC knows what it is, and anyone who says otherwise is insane or evil.

Fate- The universe and the rich and powerful decide what is going to happen, the best we can do is play along.

Game Theory- For every situation, learn the rules, determine the optimum strategy and hope you win the gamble.

Goth Poetry- Life is tragedy. If we admit that we are better off dead, at least we're being honest.

Hedonistic- The best thing we can do with our lives is to experience as many pleasures as possible.

Holistic- The only good solutions to problems are those that consider mind, body, spirit and community.

Humor- Life is a farce and those who don't laugh at it will get nothing out of it.

Intellectual- The person with exposure to the most facts and ideas is the person most likely to understand what's going on.

Introspective- Knowing yourself is the first step to knowing anything.

Punitive Justice- When someone does something bad they should be punished, when someone does something good they should be rewarded.

Moderate- Any philosophy, lifestyle or rule is bad if you take it too far.

Nietzschean- Some people are equipped to be in charge, those that aren't try to usurp power with meaningless concepts.

Paranoid- Lack of evidence or an obvious motive does not mean they aren't out to get you, just that they're very good at it.

Pessimistic- Depending on people to be good or situations to turn out for the best is stupid and dangerous.

Ponderer- If you think about something long enough, you'll find there are more factors to be considered than you first assumed.

Postmodern- Almost everything people do, say or create is based on a set of flawed assumptions and prejudices.

Relativist- No quality is absolute, it all depends on what frame of reference you look at it from.

Responsibility- Everyone depends on everyone else – if you refuse to do your part or do it poorly you will hurt other people.

Revolutionary- Things won't change themselves – you've got to risk it all fighting for what you believe in.

Scared- Bad things come from every angle and the only way to prevent horrible things from happening is to be constantly on guard.

Scientific- There are absolute truths about the universe which can be discovered and verified through observation and logic.

Social- What people think about you and what role you play in their lives makes you what you are.

Spiritual- There is some divinity in the universe and certain actions and attitudes bring us closer to it, others take us farther away.

Superstitious- There are dangerous forces and rules of the universe beyond current human understanding.

Taoist- Being in harmony with the nature of things is better than fighting against them.

Utilitarian- Thoughts, philosophies and ideas only have value inasmuch as they help you achieve your current goals.

Changing Personality- The PC can change Personal Ideals and Worldviews whenever he or she has some time to re-evaluate identity and belief. If this is a positive change, the GM may even reward experience points (see p.47).

STEP THREE - ATTRIBUTES

In Brief: Split 80 points between 8 attributes (min 1, max 20). Choose optional sub-attributes (costs or gives 1 bonus point).

Characters have 10 points per attribute (80 points total) to distribute between the eight attributes listed below.

1 represents as low as the attribute can get without the person being actually disabled.

10 represents the average for a healthy young person.

20 represents the highest a person can achieve without special training.

You must buy at least 1 point on each attribute and can spend a maximum of 20 attribute points on each attribute. Other character creation options can subsequently increase an attribute to more than 20 or reduce it to less than 1. Some advantages, disadvantages and character classes modify attributes. If a character buys 20 Strength with attribute points and then takes an advantage which gives her +5 Strength, she will have 25 Strength. Modifications can also make an attribute negative. GMs must define the effects of negative attributes (for instance, -5 Strength may mean that the character can not move or even breathe unaided).

Sub-Attributes- You can choose to have the PC be very good or very bad at one specific aspect of an attribute. Say, for instance, a PC is not very strong (5 strength) but his profession causes him to use his hands a lot so the player wants the character to have strong hands. For one extra attribute point the PC will have +3 to any Strength roll using hands alone. For an opposed strength roll to keep ahold of something, for instance, the PC would have 8

strength. The PC might also want a bad back (-3 strength) which would give one attribute point but the PC would have only 2 strength for lifting and carrying objects. Available sub-attributes are listed below each attribute.

Sub-Attributes can not be used to raise an attribute to more than 20 or reduce it to less than 1. Sub-Attributes move with the attributes, so if the character works out and increases his Strength by 7 (to 12 STH) he would now have 15 STH with his hands and 9 STH with his back.

Agility (AGY)- This represents limberness, coordination, balance and speed of physical reactions. Agility is used when a character needs to move silently, keep his or her balance, scale a wall or get through a small space.

Good/Poor Balance: ± 3 to save vs. loss of balance.

Good/Poor Precision: ± 3 to any roll which involves manipulation of small objects.

Good/Poor Climbing: ± 3 to any climbing roll.

Good/Poor Prowling: ± 3 to any prowling roll.

Awareness (AWR)- This represents the ability to notice things going on around one as well as things going on in one's own mind. This is not the acuity of one's senses, but the ability to be aware of important details. Awareness is used whenever characters need to notice a clue, avoid an ambush or sense attempts at psychic manipulation.

Good/Poor Introspection: ± 3 to any AWR roll to notice anything going on in the character's own head.

Good/Poor People Sense: ± 3 to any AWR roll to notice what people are doing, not doing or saying (this does not include sensing people prowling).

Charm (CHM)- This represents likeability, social presence, persuasiveness and ability to read people. Charm is used when a character needs to put on an act, convince an audience or seduce someone. Just as Intelligence doesn't represent cleverness, charm doesn't prevent a character from saying something that gets the group in trouble or something that saves the day.

Good/Poor Self-Confidence: ± 3 to first impression rolls to present himself or herself as self-confident.

Friendly/Unfriendly: The character is ± 3 to all first impression rolls to present themselves as a friendly or likeable person.

Good/Poor Seduction: ± 3 to any seduction roll.

Good/Poor Actor: ± 3 to any acting roll.

Good/Poor With Children: ± 3 to any CHM roll involving children.

Good/Poor With Animals: ± 3 to any CHM roll involving animals.

Good/Poor With Authorities: ± 3 to any CHM roll involving people in positions of power.

Good/Poor With Simple Folk: ± 3 to any CHM roll involving people who consider themselves simple or average.

Good/Poor With Outcasts: ± 3 to any CHM roll involving convincing people who consider themselves to be at the bottom of the social ladder.

Endurance (END)- This represents stamina for intense physical exertion as well as the body's ability to fight disease and resist toxins. Endurance is used when a character needs to hold his or her breath, go on a long hike or survive a serious illness.

Good/Poor With Heat: ± 3 to any save vs. heat exhaustion.

Good/Poor With Cold: ± 3 to any save vs. hypothermia.

Good/Poor At Disease Contraction: ± 3 to any save vs. disease contraction.

Good/Poor At Fighting Off Diseases: ± 3 to any save vs. disease progression.

Good/Poor Lung Capacity: ± 3 pooled END when the character is holding his/her breath.

Intelligence (INL)- This represents the speed at which the mind reacts, abilities with abstract thought, learning, creativity and memory. Intelligence is used when a character wants to perform a knowledge based skill, understand a complicated philosophical text or win at a strategy game. Intelligence is not cleverness or wisdom: any PC can come up with a clever plan or completely miss the obvious no matter what their intelligence.

Quick/Slow Thinker: ± 3 to any roll based on the speed of mental reaction (not including combat).

Good/Poor Memory: ± 3 to any roll to remember or memorize something.

Good/Poor Skepticism: ± 3 to any roll to figure out deception, illusion, hallucination, etc.

Speed (SPD)- This represents the ability to run and leap as well as the damage a character can do with a kick. The character's kick can do the following blunt damage:

SPD	1-5	SPD	6-15	16-19	20-30	31-40	41-50	51+
DMG	$\frac{1}{2}$ blunt	1	$1\frac{1}{2}$	2	3	4	5	

Good/Poor Jumping: ± 3 to any jumping roll.

Good/Poor Kicking: The character does kick damage as if they had ± 3 SPD.

Good/Poor Long-Distance Running: ± 3 to SPD when the PC is running long distances.

Good/Poor Sprinting: ± 3 to SPD when the PC is sprinting.

Strength (STH)- This represents upper body strength as well as the character's strength of grip and back muscles. A character would use strength to yank away someone's weapon, lift a heavy object or do damage with hand to hand weapons. Characters with high or low strength get plusses or minuses with blunt weapons as follows:

STH	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-25	26-30	31-40	40+
+ to dmg.	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5

The character's punches do the following blunt damage:

STH	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	25-30	31-40	40+
DMG	0	$\frac{1}{2}$	1	2	3	4	5

Good/Poor Back: ± 3 to any STH rolls to lift heavy objects.

Good/Poor Hands: ± 3 to any STH rolls using only the character's grip.

Good/Poor Bulk: ± 3 to any STH roll using the whole weight of the character's body (e.g. a football tackle, knocking down a door, etc.)

Good/Poor Punching: The character does punch damage as if he or she had ± 3 STH.

Willpower (WIL)- This represents the ability to resist emotions or discomfort and the strength of one's sense of self. WIL is used to control emotions, resist pain, stay conscious or battle against mind control. Psychics also use this attribute for manipulative actions.

Good/Poor Drug Resistance: ± 3 to any WIL roll to resist psychological addiction or drug cravings.

Good/Poor With Drug Effects: ± 3 to any WIL roll to save vs. drug effects.

Weak/Strong Stomach: ± 3 to any save vs. nausea.

Good/Poor With Distracting Pain: ± 3 to save vs. distracting pain (see p.55).

Good/Poor With Shocking Pain: ± 3 to any save vs. shocking pain (See p.55).

Good/Poor Temper: ± 3 to any save vs. anger.

Good/Poor Sense of Self: ± 3 to any opposed WIL vs. WIL roll.

Health Attributes

Characters also have 12 points to divide up between three additional attributes: Body, Blood and Incapacity (minimum 1, maximum 6).

Body Points (BDY) represent the amount of blunt damage a character can take before they start losing Blood Points (when all BDY is gone, blunt weapons do double their normal damage to Blood).

Blood Points (BLD) represents the amount of damage characters can take to their vital systems (heart, blood supply, etc.) before they are mortally wounded. When all BLD is gone, damage is done to INCY.

Incapacity (INCY) represents the character's ability to act even after taking fatal injuries. After a mortal injury, damage is done to INCY (END is also lost). When a character's INCY reaches 0, he or she becomes incapacitated, unable to fight or perform any other useful action. See the section on Using Health Attributes (p.55) for more information.

STEP FOUR - SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS

In Brief: In this edition, you are a Street Person. Choose a subtype (reason you're on the streets).

Choose your character's current socioeconomic status. This choice will limit your choice of character classes. Choose one of the following three classes, then choose an appropriate subtype. Some subtypes give or cost Bonus Points (see p.35).

Street Person

The PC has no legal source of income. The PC survives on whatever money he or she can make in the "black" or "grey" markets. The PC might live in a cheap residential hotel, might squat in an abandoned building or the PC might drift from location to location, not knowing where he or she will sleep next.

Choose one of the following subtypes:

Fugitive- Gives 4 Bonus Points. The PC was born a US citizen, but has given up his or her identity and fled to the city in order to escape from either the law (will be put in prison for life if caught) or by some powerful organized crime agency (will be tortured and executed if caught). The PC is afraid to offer any proof of identity or citizenship and so cannot get public assistance or a legitimate job.

Hard Luck- Costs 7 Bonus Points. This is the largest class of Street People. The PC is perfectly eligible for welfare, but he or she has fallen on such hard times (usually drugs, mental disease or both) that the PC was unable to keep up with the paperwork necessary for welfare. The PC has

Getting on Welfare

-First, the PC must get a bank account (for people with bad credit, this can cost up to \$500).

-Second, the PC must complete all the on-line paperwork for welfare (if the PC can't borrow someone's internet access he or she might have to pump \$20 of change in to a paycomputer in order to get all the forms filled out).

-Third, then the PC must arrange it so they are at a videophone at certain times in order to do face-to-face interviews with a social services agent.

Any interruptions in this process will delay the process of getting welfare for another month.

ended up on the streets and had to find a way to make a living as a Street Person. If the PC can get his or her act together, the PC can become a Well again.

Illegal Alien- Gives 2 Bonus Points. The PC has a birth certificate and citizenship in some other country and is in this country illegally, with no real hope of gaining legitimate US citizenship. The PC has the same restrictions as an Unborn, except that if the character is caught and turned in to the INS, the PC will be placed in jail until he or she can be deported.

Runaway- Gives 4 Bonus Points. The PC is an underage (16 or younger) runaway from home. The PC might be from the city, but more often it is some place outside of the city. The PC left to either escape from parents or the lifestyle or his or her parents. The PC can not get a legal job, welfare or a bank account. When the PC turns 18 (after at least 2 level advancements) the PC can try to go through the process to get on welfare. If the PC is ever picked up by law enforcement, the PC will be returned to his or her parents.

Stolen Identity- Costs 5 Bonus Points. The PC was a perfectly normal Well or Indie who had his or her identity stolen completely. Any records that the PC had as proof of his or her identity were destroyed. Now the PC has the same legal status as an Unborn. If the PC can find proof of identity (which may entail finding and raiding the apartment of the identify thief) and can hire an attorney, the PC can push through court orders to get his or her records fixed.

Unborn- Costs 0 Bonus Points. This is the second largest category of Street People in the city (after Hard Luck) and the fastest growing. The PC was born on the streets to a homeless midwife. The PC was never given a birth certificate or any other proof of identify and is now permanently ineligible for such. The PC is not considered a citizen of any country. The PC can not get a legal job or any form of public assistance.

Fuzzy Categories of Socioeconomic Class

When judging whether someone is a Street Person, Well or Indie, people tend to take in to account source of income and lifestyle. Between Wells and Indies, amount of income seems to be the most important consideration. Workers are thought of as Wells, despite the fact that they do not receive public assistance, because they make the same amount of money as most Wells. Between Street People and Wells, source of income and legality of housing is most important. Street family elders may work less, eat better and live in more luxurious housing than most wells, but they are still considered street people because they do not have a legal source of income nor legal housing.

STEP FIVE - CHARACTER CLASS

In Brief: Depending on socioeconomic class, choose the PC's place in city society.

Based on your socioeconomic class, choose a character class from the list below. Character class is not permanent; it is currently what occupation and/or

group of people your character currently aligns himself or herself with. Character class can be changed during game play (see Disciplines, p.49). Character class sets the cost for skills, the amount of available funds, access to special skills, advantages and disadvantages.

Character Classes In Brief AVAILABLE IN THIS EDITION

Street People Families

Black Meds: Large street family who make their living as unlicensed street-doctors.

Crackers: Street family whose members are taught from an early age to hack for money.

Drakes: Homeless family, makes and sells poisons (including psychic disrupting ash). They ingest and gain immunity to a poison which makes their bodily fluids poisonous.

Insomniacs: Use a drug which gives psychic power while "burning" away the ability to sleep (leading to numerous psychological problems).

Keepers: Live a hunter-gatherer lifestyle in the wilderness of Central Park, hunting wild animals.

Water Rats: Scavengers and thieves who use water tunnels for quick escapes and live without fear of retribution in fortresses in the sunken city.

Non-Family Street People

Addicts: Live on the street, everything in their lives centers around feeding their drug habits.

Gamblers: Start and play games in alleys, survive by being cunning gamblers and cheaters.

Jacks: Persuasive and quick-witted beggars who will say and do anything to make a buck.

Runners: Messengers and package deliverers for the black market and others. Experts at getting around the city quickly and cheaply.

Sex Workers: Sell their bodies in the city sex industry. Most have troubled pasts. Many form revenge pacts with each other.

Thieves: A member of one of many small street families that have survived, for generations, by stealing.

AVAILABLE IN THE FULL EDITION

Well Gangs

Animalists: Use mental programming to experience animal-like consciousness, believe that intelligence is only one tool for achieving instinctual desires.

Bleeders: Exert psychic influence on others by using samples of peoples' blood.

Freaks: Members of a chaotic freak show troupe that make money by holding wild carnivals.

Humankalorie: Students of an alien culture and martial arts system, have adopted the lifestyle of and become part of the society of the Clowdian (Kalor) aliens.

Hummingbirds: Dance-club attendees who take drugs to enhance their metabolism and let them dance harder and faster.

Hungry: Victims of a drug overdose causing permanent anhedonia (inability to feel pleasure), keep themselves going with artificially implanted hunger to seek revenge on the Drug Lords that created them.

Immortals: Young students who speed their acquisition of psychic skills by absorbing the memories of powerful psychics. Achieve "immortality" by passing down their memories through generations.

Math Addicts: Use mental programming to become human calculators with incredible powers of prediction, accuracy and analysis in everything from politics to combat.

Mem Junkies: Addicts to mental programs that enhance the emotional recall of memories. Mem-junkies seek out emotional experiences as if they were drugs.

Needle Punks: Gang of young pharmaceutical artists who experiment on themselves with drug cocktails and have learned to deal with potentially lethal side-effects.

Night Shift: Young cops with gang-attitude. Refuse to become corrupt. Break the rules in order to punish criminals.

Orphans: Once kids in an orphanage who revolted against abusers, now adults sworn to protect children.

Roofers: Own the rooftops, which they can travel quickly and leap between fearlessly. At constant war with the Siders.

Risen: Violent gang with much infighting. Many members faked their own death, many get implants, all are infected with mitochondrial vampirism.

Siders: Split off from Roofers, now at war with them. Expert climbers with high-tech gear who travel on the sides of buildings.

Skin Borgs: Warlike, expansionist gang. Wear multiple layers of high-tech armor. Social structure of violence and intimidation.

Technophiles: Small, loose group, obsessed with the art of technology, favoring a hands-on approach to tech.

Non-Gang Wells

Cornerpunks: Members of gangs too small to make a name for themselves on the citywide gang scene.

Freelancers: Young Wells with no particular allegiance to any gang, philosophy or lifestyle. Commonly security guards or mercenaries.

Goods: Drug dealers who believe that they are making the world a better place by offering addicts cheaper and safer drugs than the Drug Lords do.

Neos: Visitor from neo-cultural commune (a commune that tried to revive elements from ancient cultures).

Workers: Work hard for a day's pay in legitimate city industries and don't do much else.

Indie Gangs

Arcadians: Indie gang whose lives revolve around playing games. They have great knowledge of strategy, quick reflexes and have been known to manipulate events within the city.

Boarders: Thrill seekers on high-tech slipboards, speeding through the city doing tricks and ignoring boundaries of turf.

Dragons: Believe they are the destructive force of nature (the "dragon" of mythology) incarnate in a human form.

Omniscients: A group of obsessed technology hobbyists who use technology to expand their senses.

Purists: Members of a cult/gang who believe that their physical, mental and spiritual health is dependent on their keeping themselves free from chemical, emotional and psychic pollution.

Sexologists: Use sex to facilitate psychic bonding for physical and psychological therapy.

Tea Drinkers: Reviving the ancient Indian "Soma" drink which gives psychic powers.

Non-Gang Indies

Eccentrics: Older people with a lot of experience who have decided for aesthetic or philosophical reasons to be out on the streets.

Hunters: Make a sport out of hunting people. Some hunt innocent people, others hunt criminals, serial killers, Colins, even evil hunters.

Night Walkers: Roam the streets (usually at night), getting in to adventures and broadcasting their experiences live on the net for profit.

Sat Jumpers: Engineers in the high-danger field of on-site satellite repair. They work for a small company in the city.

Traders: The heart of the city's black market. They collect networks of resources to obtain merchandise and their homes are stores holding just about everything.

Utopia Children: Young adults who were raised in radical utopianist communes to have advanced "values" and sent in to the city to spread those values.

Volunteers: Advantaged charity workers who take to the streets to help less advantaged people.

YIs: Entrepreneurs, taking advantage of the low cost of doing business in the city to start new businesses (most of which either fail or are bought by corps within the first year).

STEP SIX - CHOOSE SKILLS

In Brief: Choose from Street Person, Well or Indie. Then choose a subtype within that class.

Every character begins with 100 skill points to buy skills with. Each character class has a list of skill costs. Each category of skills has a cost; that cost represents the cost (in skill points) to buy one level in any skill from that category. These costs are based on how easily characters of that class have access to teachers of those skills or can teach themselves. Skills are bought in levels from 1 to 6 with 1 representing a hobby level and 6 representing mastery at the skill. PCs can not buy level 6 (mastery) without special permission from the GM. Each level above the first gives +4 to skill rolls using that skill.

Some skills have prerequisites. One or more levels of another skill must be taken before any levels of this skill can be taken.

For example: *an Arcadian character, who can buy BIO skills for 5 points each, buys 3 levels of Emergency Medicine. This costs 15 skill points and gives him a skill level of 3, meaning he will have +8 on all rolls using this skill.*

See the section on using skills (p.59) for more information.

Skill Costs: A Complicated Example

Marvin is a Roofer. The player wants Marvin to be able to speak an incredible number of languages fluently. The skill Foreign Language is a SOC skill, and so the player looks up and sees that Roofers can buy SOC skills at 8 points per level. The player gives Marvin the Private School advantage, which gives -3 to SOC skill costs (min. 4). The player also gives Marvin the Multilingual advantage which gives -2 to skill costs for Foreign Language (min. 2). Finally, the player buys three levels of the skill Linguistics. The description of linguistics states that for each level in the skill the PC gets -2 to the skill costs for Foreign Language (min. 1). For three levels, Marvin should get -6 (min. 1).

The player takes the lowest minimum (min. 1, the minimum from the Linguistics skill) and applies all the bonuses (-3 from Private School, -2 from Multilingual, -6 from Linguistics = -11 in total). Since the bonuses would bring the skill cost below the lowest minimum, the player uses the lowest minimum (1). For Marvin, during character creation, SOC skills in general cost 5 points per level and Foreign Language costs 1 point per level. The player buys Marvin 10 languages at level 5 each for 50 skill points. At level 5, Marvin has a good chance of speaking these 10 languages without an accent.

After character creation, Marvin can continue to buy levels of Foreign Language skills using Experience Points. However, the Private School advantage states that the bonuses to skill costs are during character creation only (since they represent things the PC learned during childhood). The bonuses from Multilingual and Linguistics do not have this limitation. But, even without the -3 from Private School, Marvin still has a skill cost of 1, so there is no change. Later on, though, Marvin gets mixed up with drugs, gets seriously addicted, hits the streets and his character class switches from Roofer to Addict. Addicts have a SOC skill cost of 12, and so with the -9 from Multilingual and Linguistics, Marvin has a skill cost of 3 Skill Points per level.

Skill Description Features

The attribute this skill generally uses (roll Attribute + 1d20 +4/skill level above 1 and try to match the difficulty for whatever the PC is trying to do with the skill)

Nanomedicine (INL)- Prerequisite: Nanobot Programming (1). The PC can use nanotech tasks to treat medical problems. See p.406 for more.
Easy (10): Use nanobots to search for and destroy parasites in a bloodstream.
Moderate (20): Use nanobots to diagnose and repair internal tearing.
Hard (30): Reconstruct a severely damaged face using nanobots.

A skill PCs must have before they can buy this skill (and the number of levels of the prerequisite skill the PC must have).

A series of examples showing things PCs might do with a skill at different difficulties.

Special Skills

These are skills that are not normally available to the majority of player characters. Within the city there is usually only one group that is capable of teaching these skills, and the price of this learning is usually membership in the group. It may be possible to travel outside the city to find such skills. For instance, the Sexologists are a gang within the city who are the only people in the city who know and teach special psychic techniques involving sexual intimacy. A PC who wanted to learn these skills would have to: (1) Be a Sexologist OR (2) Make a special deal with the Sexologists OR (3) Find some other group in outside the city that will teach comparable skills.

The Special Skills are:

Drakes' Drake Poisons (INL)
Drakes' Drake Poison Immunity (END)
Gamblers' Read Tell (AWR)
Sex Workers' Bad Trick Sense (AWR)
Water Rats' Tunnel Surfing (AGY)



Athletics (ATHL)

Acrobatics (AGY)
 Bicycle (AGY)
 Climbing (AGY)
 Hold Breath (WIL)
 Running (SPD)
 Skates (AGY)
 Sports (AGY)
 Swimming (END)

Bio/Medtech (BIO)

Acupuncture (INL)
 Addiction (INL)
 Diagnosis (INL)
 Emergency Medicine (INL)
 Forensic Pathology (INL)
 Pharmacology (INL)
 Physical Therapy (INL)
 Plastic Surgery (INL)
 Psychotherapy (INL)
 Psychopharmacology (INL)
 Surgery (INL)
 Veterinary Medicine (INL)

Combat (CMBT)

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 Archery (Combat)
 Assassin: Armed (Combat)
 Assassin: Unarmed (Combat)
 Boxing (Combat)
 Club (Combat)
 Fencing (Combat)
 Florentine Sword (Combat)
 Immobilization (Combat)
 Kickboxing (Combat)
 Knife Fighting (Combat)
 Knife Throwing (Combat)
 Razormouth (Combat)
 Self-Defense Weapons (Combat)
 Shiv (Combat)
 Slam (Combat)
 Specific Weapon Training (Combat)
 Staff Fighting (Combat)
 Street Fighting: Armed (Combat)
 Street Fighting: Unarmed (Combat)
 Subway Fighting (Combat)
 Sword and Shield (Combat)
 Tae Kwon Do (Combat)
 Water Combat (Combat)
 Wrestling (Combat)

Creative (CRTV)

Blacksmithing (INL)
 Brewing (INL)
 Carpentry (INL)
 Cooking (AWR)
 Gardening (INL)
 Graphic Design (INL)
 Music (AWR)
 Photography (AWR)
 Sculpture (AWR)
 Storytelling (CHM)
 Visual Arts (AWR)
 Weapon Making (INL)

Information (INFO)

Computer Modeling (INL)
 Cryptography (INL)
 Information Smuggling (INL)
 Math (INL)
 Mnemonics (INL)
 Money (INL)

Military (MIL)

Biological Weapons (INL)
 Brainwashing (INL)
 Demolitions (INL)
 Interrogation (CHM)
 Military Tactics (INL)
 Poisons (INL)
 Torture (INL)

Psychic Manipulative (PSYM)

Belief Attack (WIL)
 Calm Attack (WIL)
 Control Attack (WIL)
 Emotional Attack (WIL)
 Hallucination Attack (WIL)
 Pain Attack (WIL)
 Physiological Control (WIL)
 Psychic Defense (WIL and AWR)
 Suggestion (WIL)

Psychic Sensory (PSYS)

Clairsentience (AWR)
 Mediumship (AWR)
 Mind Reading (AWR)
 Precognition (AWR)
 Psychic Sense (AWR)
 Psychometry (AWR)

Tech (TECH)

Anonymity (INL)
 Bomb Disarming (INL)
 Chemical Analysis (INL)
 Copy Protection (INL)
 Data Pirating (INL)
 Denial of Service (INL)
 Internet Browsing (INL)
 Jellynailing (INL)
 Linework (INL)
 Microelectronics (INL)
 Network Protocols (INL)
 Network Security (INL)
 Operating Systems (INL)
 Payphones (INL)
 Production Chemistry (INL)
 Programming: Application (INL)
 Programming: Virus (INL)
 Programming: VR (INL)
 Sniffing (INL)
 System Crashing (INL)
 System Prowling (INL)

Thief/Espionage (THIE)

Alarm Systems (AWR)
 Auto-Theft (INL)
 Disguise (CHM)
 Escape Artistry (AGY)
 Forgery (INL)
 Impersonation (CHM)
 Lock Picking (AGY)
 Pocket Picking (AGY)
 Prowling (AGY)

Sociological (SOC)

Corporations (INL)
 Foreign Language (INL)
 History: City (INL)
 Law: Basic (INL)
 Law: Criminal (INL)
 Legends (INL)
 Oratory (CHM)
 Social Work (INL)

Street (STRT)

Animal Training (CHM)
 Card Counting (INL)
 City Knowledge (INL)
 Drug Resistance (WIL)
 Gambling (INL)
 Graffiti (INL)
 Herbal Medicine (INL)
 Hypnosis (CHM)
 Light Sleep (AWR)
 Mechanics (INL)
 Moneysaving (INL)
 Needles (AGY and Combat)
 Plumbing (INL)
 Poison Tolerance (END)
 Seduction (CHM)
 Sleight of Hand (AGY)
 Street Drugs (INL or AWR)
 Tracking (AWR)
 Trading (INL)
 Wilderness Survival (INL)

Alphabetical Index of Skills

Name	Attrib.	Section
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Addiction	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
Aikido	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Alarm Systems	AWR	Thief/Espionage (THIE)
Animal Training	CHM	Street (STRT)
Anonymity	INL	Tech (TECH)
Archery	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Assassin :Armed	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Assassin: Unarmed	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Auto-Theft	INL	Thief/Espionage (THIE)
Belief Attack	WIL	Psychic Manipulative (PSYM)
Bicycle	AGY	Athletics (ATHL)
Biological Weapons	INL	Military (MIL)
Blacksmithing	INL	Creative (CRTV)
Bomb Disarming	INL	Tech (TECH)
Boxing	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Brainwashing	INL	Military (MIL)
Brewing	INL	Creative (CRTV)
Calm Attack	WIL	Psychic Manipulative (PSYM)
Card Counting	INL	Street (STRT)
Carpentry	INL	Creative (CRTV)
Chemical Analysis	INL	Tech (TECH)
City Knowledge	INL	Street (STRT)
Clairementence	AWR	Psychic Sensory (PSYS)
Climbing	AGY	Athletics (ATHL)
Club	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Computer Modeling	INL	Information (INFO)
Control Attack	WIL	Psychic Manipulative (PSYM)
Cooking	AWR	Creative (CRTV)
Copy Protection	INL	Tech (TECH)
Corporations	INL	Sociological (SOC)
Cryptography	INL	Information (INFO)
Data Pirating	INL	Tech (TECH)
Demolitions	INL	Military (MIL)
Denial of Service	INL	Tech (TECH)
Diagnosis	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
Disguise	CHM	Thief/Espionage (THIE)
Drake Poison Immunity	END	Drakes (Ch. 4)
Drake Poisons	INL	Drakes (Ch. 4)
Drug Resistance	WIL	Street (STRT)
Emergency Medicine	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
Emotional Attack	WIL	Psychic Manipulative (PSYM)
Escape Artistry	AGY	Thief/Espionage (THIE)
Fencing	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
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Foreign Language	INL	Sociological (SOC)
Forensic Pathology	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
Forgery	INL	Thief/Espionage (THIE)
Gambling	INL	Street (STRT)
Gardening	INL	Creative (CRTV)
Graffiti	INL	Street (STRT)
Graphic Design	INL	Creative (CRTV)
Hallucination Attack	WIL	Psychic Manipulative (PSYM)
Herbal Medicine	INL	Street (STRT)
History: City	INL	Sociological (SOC)
Hold Breath	WIL	Athletics (ATHL)
Hypnosis	CHM	Street (STRT)
Immobilization	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Impersonation	CHM	Thief/Espionage (THIE)
Information Smuggling	INL	Information (INFO)
Internet Browsing	INL	Tech (TECH)
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Kickboxing	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Knife Fighting	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Knife Throwing	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Law: Basic	INL	Sociological (SOC)
Law: Criminal	INL	Sociological (SOC)
Legends	INL	Sociological (SOC)
Light Sleep	AWR	Street (STRT)
Linework	INL	Tech (TECH)
Lock Picking	AGY	Thief/Espionage (THIE)

Math	INL	Information (INFO)
Mechanics	INL	Street (STRT)
Mediumship	AWR	Psychic Sensory (PSYS)
Microelectronics	INL	Tech (TECH)
Military Tactics	INL	Military (MIL)
Mind Reading	AWR	Psychic Sensory (PSYS)
Mnemonics	INL	Information (INFO)
Money	INL	Information (INFO)
Moneysaving	INL	Street (STRT)
Music	AWR	Creative (CRTV)
Needles	AGY/ Combat	Street (STRT)
Network Protocols	INL	Tech (TECH)
Network Security	INL	Tech (TECH)
Operating Systems	INL	Tech (TECH)
Oratory	CHM	Sociological (SOC)
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Payphones	INL	Tech (TECH)
Pharmacology	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
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Physical Therapy	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
Physiological Control	WIL	Psychic Manipulative (PSYM)
Plastic Surgery	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
Plumbing	INL	Street (STRT)
Pocket Picking	AGY	Thief/Espionage (THIE)
Poison Tolerance	END	Street (STRT)
Poisons	INL	Military (MIL)
Precognition	AWR	Psychic Sensory (PSYS)
Production Chemistry	INL	Tech (TECH)
Programming: Application	INL	Tech (TECH)
Programming: Virus	INL	Tech (TECH)
Programming: VR	INL	Tech (TECH)
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Psychic Sense	AWR	Psychic Sensory (PSYS)
Psychometry	AWR	Psychic Sensory (PSYS)
Psychopharmacology	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
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Sleight of Hand	AGY	Street (STRT)
Sniffing	INL	Tech (TECH)
Social Work	INL	Sociological (SOC)
Specific Weapon Training	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Sports	AGY	Athletics (ATHL)
Staff Fighting	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Storytelling	CHM	Creative (CRTV)
Street Drugs	INL/AWR	Street (STRT)
Street Fighting: Armed	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Street Fighting: Unarmed	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Subway Fighting	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Suggestion	WIL	Psychic Manipulative (PSYM)
Surgery	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
Swimming	END	Athletics (ATHL)
Sword and Shield	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
System Crashing	INL	Tech (TECH)
System Prowling	INL	Tech (TECH)
Tae Kwon Do	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Torture	INL	Military (MIL)
Tracking	AWR	Street (STRT)
Trading	INL	Street (STRT)
Tunnel Surfing	AGY	Water Rats (Ch. 4)
Veterinary Medicine	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
Visual Arts	AWR	Creative (CRTV)
Water Combat	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Weapon Making	INL	Creative (CRTV)
Wilderness Survival	INL	Street (STRT)
Wrestling	Combat	Combat (CMBT)

Vehicle Skills In Brief

Unlike normal skills, which list an easy, moderate and hard action that can be done with the skill, vehicle skills list a number of maneuvers that can be made with the skill. Each maneuver has its own difficulty. See the section on Vehicle Skills (p.60) for more.

Athletics (ATHL)

Acrobatics (AGY)- The PC has been trained in doing physical tricks involving swinging, jumping, rolling, balancing, etc. Primarily for the purposes of amusing others. Additional STH based rolls may be necessary for some stunts. Acrobatics adds +4 to jumping rolls per level.

Easy (10): Do cartwheels.

Moderate (20): Swing off of a fire escape, somersault in midair and land on feet.

Hard (30): Backflip off a building and land on a telephone wire.

Bicycle (AGY)- The PC has trained at riding on various terrain with racing and mountain bikes. Gives the following maneuvers (with +4 for each level after the first - see Vehicle Skills, p.60).

Jump (20): Jump the bike over holes or obstacles.

Sharp Turn (20): By leaning over almost to the point of touching the ground, the PC can make tight turns.

Skidding Turn (30): By skidding the rear tire, the PC can make incredibly fast and tight turns.

Stairs (20): Go up or down stairs or similar impediments.

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Climbing (AGY)- The PC has trained in climbing with or without climbing tools.

Easy (10): Climb an old brick wall bare-handed.

Moderate (20): Climb a cliff face using climbing tools.

Hard (30): Climb a cliff face using no tools.

Hold Breath (WIL)- The PC has trained his or her body and mind such that the PC can hold his or her breath for a very long period of time (see p.56 for more on Oxygen Deprivation).

Easy (10): Hold breath for 2 rounds before END loss begins.

Moderate (20): Hold breath for 8 rounds before END loss begins.

Hard (30): Hold breath for 1 minute before END loss begins.

Legendary (40): Hold breath for 4 min. before END loss begins.

Running (SPD)- The PC has learned a very efficient stride and knows just how much energy to spend to maintain maximum speed throughout different length runs.

Easy (10): Run a burst at +1 SPD -or- run a long distance at 75% of normal END loss.

Moderate (20): Run a burst at +2 SPD -or- run a long distance at 50% of normal END loss.

Hard (30): Run a burst at +3 SPD -or- run a long distance at 25% of normal END loss.

Skates (AGY)- The PC has trained in using roller-skates, rollerblades and motorized skates. PC can also use ice-skates or skis at additional difficulty. Gives the following maneuvers:

Jump (20): Jump over holes or obstacles.

Rails (30): Ride on very thin things like railings or small ledges.

Stairs (20): Go up or down stairs or similar impediments.

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Sports (AGY)- The PC has learned every popular physical sport in the city, including basketball, soccer, football, handball and tennis. To determine the outcome of the game, each player must make either a sports skill roll (easy difficulty) or AGY rolls (moderate difficulty). The opposed winner wins the game.

Swimming (END)- The PC is skilled at swimming for speed, distance and agility.

Easy (10): Swim at ¼ SPD -or- swim a long distance at 75% of normal END loss.

Moderate (20): Swim at 1/3 SPD -or- swim a long distance at 50% of normal END loss.

Hard (30): Swim at ½ SPD -or- swim a long distance at 25% of normal END loss.

Bio/Med (BIO)

Acupuncture (INL)- Originally a traditional treatment from Asia, this has become an accepted (if not commonly used) form of modern medicine.

Easy (10): Ease pain from a damaged nerve.

Moderate (20): Ease nausea.

Hard (30): Completely anesthetize someone for surgery.

Addiction (INL)- The PC has studied the medicine and biology of addiction and various therapies for addiction.

Easy (10): Name the withdrawal effects of a commonly abused drug.

Moderate (20): Prescribe pharmaceutical therapy to help someone get over a drug addiction.

Hard (30): Determine what a person was addicted to by examining his or her neurons with a scanning-tunneling microscope.

Diagnosis (INL)- By examining a patient the PC can tell what disease a patient has and how bad they have it. A full examination includes observing physiological differences, getting a medical history, asking the patient to describe what they are feeling and doing medical tests.

Easy (10): Diagnose a disease by doing a full examination (see above).

Moderate (20): Diagnose without doing any tests.

Hard (30): Diagnose without tests, a history or communicating with a patient.

Legendary (40): Diagnose a rare disease by looking at a photo of a clothed patient.

Emergency Medicine (INL)- The PC has trained in keeping patients alive long enough to get them to a hospital (or to a Black Med's home).

Easy (10): Clean and dress wounds (prevent additional bleeding and reduce chance of infection).

Moderate (20): Intubate a patient to make sure that air can continue to flow in to the lungs.

Hard (30): Do emergency surgery to reduce intracranial swelling.

Forensic Pathology (INL)- The PC knows how to examine a corpse using various tests to determine the cause and circumstances of death as well as the person's health during life.

Easy (10): Determine what caused a person's death.

Moderate (20): Determine what drugs a person has used over the past five years of his or her life.

Hard (30): Determine how many seconds it took for an injury to kill a person and what they were capable of (physically and mentally) during that time.

Pharmacology (INL)- The PC has studied the use of pharmacological treatments (drugs) for various diseases. The PC knows the side effects and possible interactions of pharmaceuticals. Keep in mind that an accurate diagnosis (see Diagnosis) is the prerequisite for any pharmacological treatment.

Easy (10): Prescribe a treatment for pain.

Moderate (20): Prescribe a treatment for a late stage auto-immune disease infection.

Hard (30): Prescribe a treatment for a serious drug interaction.

Physical Therapy (INL)- The PC knows how to help people recover from serious injuries and illnesses. Therapy primarily involves exercises and stretching.

Easy (10): Help a patient recover from a stab wound to the thigh.

Moderate (20): Help a patient recover from a year in a coma.

Hard (30): Help a patient recover from serious brain damage.

Plastic Surgery (INL)- Prerequisites: Surgery (1). The PC has studied the use of advanced surgery techniques to change people's appearances.

Easy (10): Slightly improve someone's appearance.

Moderate (20): Make someone look completely different.

Hard (30): Do a complete sex change operation.

Psychotherapy (INL)- The PC has trained in helping people overcome psychological problems and traumas using various forms of therapy (talk therapy encourages people to discover their own feelings and mental processes, cognitive therapy teaches people to avoid illogical or harmful thoughts, role-playing therapy helps people prepare to deal with real-life situations and exposure therapy helps people deal with fears by slow exposure to the source of the fears).

Easy (10): Help a patient overcome a mild phobia.

Moderate (20): Help a patient deal with the psychological effects of a recent severe trauma.

Hard (30): Help a patient overcome a sexual fetish.

Legendary (40): Help a patient discover that he or she is paranoid and delusional.

Psychopharmacology (INL)- Prerequisites: Pharmacology (1). The PC has been trained in the use of pharmaceuticals to treat psychological problems. One of the major problems encountered in psychopharmacology is finding a treatment that has so few side effects that a patient can be convinced to stay on it.

Easy (10): Prescribe a treatment for anxiety.

Moderate (20): Prescribe a treatment for schizophrenia.

Hard (30): Prescribe a treatment for a patient with manic depression, obsessive compulsive disorder and a sexual fetish.

Surgery (INL)- The PC has been trained in the surgical treatments of illnesses. Keep in mind that an accurate diagnosis (see Diagnosis) is the prerequisite for any surgical treatment.

Easy (10): Remove a bullet from a thigh without causing additional bleeding.

Moderate (20): Open the chest and repair lacerations to the heart caused by a stab wound.

Hard (30): Replace a defective heart with a vat-grown heart.

Veterinary Medicine (INL)- The PC has trained in the diagnosis, surgical and pharmacological treatment of common animal ailments. The PC can also treat humans at higher difficulty (+10).

Easy (10): Splint a broken bone.

Moderate (20): Treat a common communicable disease.

Hard (30): Open-heart surgery.

Moderate (20): Open the chest and repair lacerations to the heart caused by a stab wound.

Hard (30): Replace a defective heart with a vat-grown heart.

Combat (CMBT)

Aikido (Combat)- This 20th century martial art was designed for non-violent self-defense. Gives the following moves with bare hands and feet only:

+4 to Disarm

+4 to Grab (Pain)

+0 to Knockdown

+4 to Dodge

+4 to Flip

+0 to Parry

Archery (Combat)- The PC has trained in using bows and crossbows for sport and for combat. Gives the following maneuvers with bows and crossbows:

- +4 to Simultaneous Draw and Strike (bows only)
- Double Aim (takes 2 actions, +10 to next action)
- +0 to Strike
- +4 to Vital Strike
- No penalty for targeted strikes.

Assassin: Armed (Combat)- Techniques for quick and efficient killing of a surprised opponent with weapons designed for that purpose (knives, garrotes). For assassin training using firearms, see Sniper (p.2#). Gives the following maneuvers:

- +4 to Grab (Strangulation) with garrote weapons.
- +0 to Special Action: Jugular Attack (Requires 1/2 or more bladed damage handheld weapon. If successful, victim loses 4 BLD per round until dead. AWR + AGY vs. 40).
- +4 to Vital Strike (Bladed) with knives

Assassin: Unarmed (Combat)- Techniques for quick and efficient killing of a surprised opponent with bare hands alone. Gives the following maneuvers with hands and feet:

- +4 to Grab (Strangulation)
- +0 to Special Action: Neck Breaking (Requires a hold on the victim's head. If successful, instant paralysis and death. STH + AGY vs. 40)
- +4 to Vital Strike (Blunt)

Boxing (Combat)- The PC has trained in fighting with bare or gloved fists.

- +4 to Parry with forearms
- +0 to Strike with fists
- +4 to Blinding Strike with fists
- +0 to Knockout Strike with fists
- +4 to Pain/Stun Strike with fists

Club (Combat)- The PC has trained with all manner of clubs, including stick with nail, nightstick, pipe, baseball bat, telescoping baton and skullcrusher. Gives the following plusses with club weapons only:

- +4 to Parry
- +4 to Vital Strike (Blunt)
- +0 to Wing
- +0 to Strike

Fencing (Combat)- The PC has trained in sport fencing. Gives the following plusses with fencing swords (or with other swords at -8):

- +8 to Parry
- +0 to Strike
- +0 to Vital Strike
- +4 to Jump

Florentine Sword (Combat)- The PC has trained in fighting using two swords.

- No penalty for using paired swords.
- +4 to Parry
- +4 to Strike.
- +8 to Split Reaction: Parry and Simultaneous Strike

Immobilization (Combat)- This martial art is usually taught to police officers and security guards. The PC learns actions to take-down and immobilize opponents without hurting them. Gives the following actions:

- +8 to Grab (Pain)

- +4 to Grab (Wrestling)
- +0 to Grab
- +0 to Knockdown
- 4 to Crippling Attack
- 4 to Disarm

Kickboxing (Combat)- Gives the following actions with feet:

- +4 to Wing
- +4 to Parry
- +4 to Knockaway
- +0 to Strike

Knife Fighting (Combat)- This is one of the most common combat skills taught in the city. Gives the following actions with knives and daggers:

- +8 to Vital Strike (Bladed)
- +4 to Jump
- +4 to Split Action: Jump and Strike
- +0 to Dodge

Knife Throwing (Combat)- The PC has trained in throwing knives, daggers, tomahawks and throwing glass. Gives the following actions when throwing only:

- +2 per level to initiative
- +4 to Strike
- +0 to Vital Strike
- 4 to Blinding Strike
- No penalty for targeted strikes.

Razormouth (AGY and Combat) This is a skill usually taught in prison where having a concealed weapon readily available 24 hours a day can save your life. Practitioners learn to keep a razor blade in their mouths and move it around quickly. They can subtly spit it in to their hands for use as a weapon or, if hands are incapacitated, can hold it between their teeth and slash at enemies with their heads.

Easy (10)- Talk with a razor in mouth without being cut.

Moderate (20)- Sleep with razor in mouth.

Hard (30)- Half-swallow razor so it will not be seen on a search of the mouth.

This is also a combat skill with the following actions:

- +0 to Slash Attack
- +4 to Vital Strike (Bladed)

Combat Skills In Brief

Each combat skills lists plusses to combat actions and reactions (described on p.70) with a certain set of weapons. At level 1 in the skill, the PC only gets the plusses listed. Ignore any plusses that give +0 or a penalty. For every additional level of the skill, add +4 to each one of these plusses (meaning that the zeroes and negatives will eventually become plusses).

For instance, at level 1 a skill might give +4 to Strike, +0 to Parry and -4 to Vital Strike with a weapon. At level 1, the only plus that really counts is the +4 to strike. At level 2 the PC will get +8 to strike, +4 to Parry and +0 to Vital Strike (now only the Vital Strike does nothing). At level 3: +12 to Strike, +8 to Parry, +4 to Vital Strike.

If a PC has different skills that give plusses on the same action with the same weapon (e.g. Street Fighting: Armed and Knife Fighting both give plusses to Vital Strike with knives) the PC takes only the highest bonus for each action (the plusses do not combine).



Self-Defense Weapons- Gives the following plusses with blinding powder, kubotans, pepper spray, and tasers.

- +4 to Pain/Stun Attack
- +4 to Blinding Strike
- +0 to Crippling Attack

Shiv (Combat)- This skill, usually taught in prison, trains the PC in using small concealed, homemade poking weapons (including shiv and sharpened railroad spike) and making surprise attacks on victims' vital organs. The PC gets the following plusses:

- +4 to Vital Strike
- +0 to Blinding Strike
- +0 to Crippling Strike
- +0 to special action: Extra-Vital Attack (Requires shiv or small dagger capable of at least 1 bladed damage. Success is an attack that pierces the spine, heart or temples and does 5 bladed damage. STH + AGY vs. 40)
- special action: Invisible Aim (The PC takes aim mentally, even while the weapon is still concealed, giving +4 to the next action.)
- +2 per level to initiative during surprise attacks only with shivs and small daggers

Slam (Combat)- This style of combat originated in the most violent corners of the city dance club and live music scene. Tightly packed people learned how to hurt people and how to avoid being hurt. Because many attacks involve elbows (which are harder to grab and pin than fists), Slam is a good counter to martial arts like Immobilization. Gives:

- +2 per level to actions with hands and feet while blinded
- +0 to Stomp
- +0 to Knockdown with elbows
- +6 to Paired Pain/Stun attack with elbows

+2 to Parry with forearms

+0 to special action: Blind Swing (Takes no blindness penalties. Does the same damage as a normal punch. STH + AGY +1d20 vs. 30)

+2 per skill level to STH feats to push through a crowd or avoid being pushed by a crowd.

Specific Weapon Training (Combat)- The PC has trained in one hand weapon that is not covered by any other skill (including fire axe, karits, pickaxe, pike, sledgehammer, tiger claws or whip). Gives the following:

- +4 to Strike
- +4 to Vital Strike -or- +4 to Pain/Stun Attack (choose one)
- +4 to Parry -or- +2 per level to initiative (choose one)

Staff Fighting (Combat)- Gives the following plusses with staves or with pole weapons being used as staves:

- +8 to Parry
- +0 to Strike
- +4 to Split Action Jump and Strike

Street Fighting (Armed) (Combat)- The PC has been trained in rough-and-tumble, no-rules, do-anything-to-win fighting using whatever objects are available that can be used as weapons. Gives the following plusses using improvised weapons (see p.72) or cheap weapons (baseball bats, chains, crate cutters, daggers, kitchen knife spears, knives, pipes, rippers, sharpened sticks, shivs, skullcrushers, stick with nails, swinging rocks, swords (rusty saw) and throwing glass):

- +4 to Pain/Stun Attack
- +4 to Simultaneous Strike
- +4 to Crippling Attack
- +0 to Slash
- 4 to Vital Strike (Bladed and Blunt)

Street Fighting (Unarmed) (Combat)- Gives the following plusses with hands and feet only:

- +4 to Pain/Stun Attack
- +4 to Crippling Attack
- +4 to Blinding Attack
- +0 to Knockdown
- +0 to Stomp

Subway Fighting (Combat)- Because so many confrontations happen in subway cars, some fighters spend hour practicing on subway cars. This skill gives the following combat actions:

-special action: Propelled Jump Kick (Requires the subway car to be accelerating or decelerating such that it is pushing the PC forward towards the target. Success means the PC makes a powerful jump-kick that does full kick damage and is a knockdown attack. SPD + AGY vs. 25)

-special action: Swing Kick (The PC grabs a handrail and uses it to swing at his or her enemy, doing a powerful kick. If successful, victim takes two blunt damage. SPD + AGY vs. 25.)

+4 to Jump, only when the PC is jumping behind a vertical handrail pole (the PC avoids the attack by putting the pole between themselves and the opponent).

+4 per level to save vs. loss of balance, only on subway cars.

Sword and Shield (Combat)- The PC has trained at using a sword (or machete) in one hand and a shield in the other. Gives the following plusses:

- +4 to Parry
- +8 to Split Action Parry and Simultaneous Strike
- +0 to Knockaway

Tae Kwon Do (Combat)- One of the most popular martial arts in the world, nearly synonymous with Karate. Focuses on dropping opponents swiftly and efficiently using only hands and feet. Gives the following plusses while unarmed only:

- +2 per level to initiative
- +4 to Strike with fists and feet
- +4 to Pain/Stun Attack
- +0 to Split Action Jump and Strike (kick)
- +0 to Parry (with the back of the hand)

Water Combat (Combat)- The PC has trained at fighting underwater. Gives the following plusses:

- No penalty to fighting underwater.
- +4 to Grab
- +0 to Knockaway

Wrestling (Combat)- Gives the following plusses:

- +0 to Grab
- +4 to Grab (Wrestling)
- +4 to Knockdown
- +4 to Tackle
- +0 to Flip

Creative (CRTV)

Blacksmithing (INL)- The PC can make artful or useful things out of metal using a hammer and anvil or moulds. PC can not make weapons with this skill.

- Easy (10): Create a simple metal tool.
- Moderate (20): Create a precise tool or weapon.
- Hard (30): Create machinery parts.

Brewing (INL)- The PC can make alcoholic beverages through fermentation.

Easy (10)- Make a bad tasting beer with enough alcohol to get drunk (and kill any bacteria in the water).

Moderate (20)- Make a tasty beer or a bad tasting brandy.

Hard (30)- Make a tasty brandy or an award winning beer.

Carpentry (INL)- The PC has learned how to build and modify buildings and other large structures.

Easy (10): Build a small temporary shelter that can withstand a storm.

Moderate (20): Build a full house over the course of several months.

Hard (30): Build a sea-worthy sailing ship.

Cooking (AWR)- The PC can cook in various styles.

Easy (10): Make a tasty meal in a well-stocked restaurant kitchen.

Moderate (20): Make a delicious meal in an Indie's kitchen.

Hard (30): Make a delicious meal made from food scrounged from a Well's fridge.

Legendary (40): Make an award-winning meal made entirely out of half-rotten food scavenged from dumpsters and cooked in tin-foil over a fire.

Gardening (INL)- The PC can grow and nurture crops for food, medicine, poison or decoration. Although this skill gives knowledge of different plants and what conditions they need to grow, it gives only a little knowledge of how to use the plants.

Easy (10): Grow plants in a greenhouse with grow-lights.

Moderate (20): Grow plants in an air-conditioned house with a small grow-light.

Hard (30): Grow plants in cracks in the asphalt.

Graphic Design (INL)- The PC is trained to use software to create beautiful or compelling images. With modern technology, computer generated images can be printed on just about anything: paper, cloth, wallpaper and even skin.

Easy (10): Create a pleasant background for an internet site.

Moderate (20): Create a good-looking company logo.

Hard (30): Create a piece of art that could be framed and sold, using only public domain images.

Music (AWR)- The PC can compose, read, write, play and improvise music. Choose one primary instrument (including voice) that the PC specializes in and up to three secondary instruments that the PC can play at -8.

Easy (10): Play a popular old tune.

Moderate (20): Make up an entertaining song (given hours of practice).

Hard (30): Make up an entertaining song (on-the-fly).

Legendary (40): Compose and play a hit song.

Photography (AWR)- The PC knows how to capture the exact look, feel and details of a scene that the PC wants to capture. The PC is also acquainted with how to maintain and use various photographic, developing and printing equipment.

Easy (10): Use studio lighting to photograph someone looking very nice.

Moderate (20): Capture the beauty of a dark alley.

Hard (30): Capture the action of a twilight battle using a cheap camera.

Sculpture (AWR)- The PC can carve beautiful or useful things out of rock or wood or form them out of clay.

Easy (10): Make a wooden doorstop.

Moderate (20): Make a useful pot out of clay.

Hard (30): Carve a stone statue that is a perfect likeness of someone.

Storytelling (CHM)- The PC can tell entertaining and engaging stories.

Easy (10): Entertain small children.

Moderate (20): Entertain young adults.

Hard (30): Entertain battle-weary veterans.

Visual Arts (AWR)- The PC has trained at painting, drawing and sketching.

Easy (10): Paint a pleasing picture.

Moderate (20): Draw a recognizable sketch of a person from memory.

Hard (30): Draw an illustration which is almost as detailed and realistic as a photograph.

Weapon Making (INL)- Prerequisites: Blacksmithing (2). The PC has trained in making weapons out of wood and metal.

Easy (10): Make a Sharpened Stick.

Moderate (20): Make arrows.

Hard (30): Make a sword.

Legendary (40): Make a superb samurai sword.

Information (INFO)

Computer Modeling (INL)- Prerequisite: Math (1). The PC knows how to use computer software to model real world systems. This is a great aid in all forms of engineering and for predicting the behavior of systems.

Easy (10): Model the aerodynamics of a vehicle design.

Moderate (20): Model the ecosystem in a fishbowl.

Hard (30): Model weather patterns or the stock market.

Cryptography (INL)- Prerequisite: Math (2). The PC knows the theoretical math behind modern cryptographic techniques and code-breaking techniques. The PC can analyze, modify and create cryptographic or code breaking algorithms (see p.65 for more).

Easy (10): Do simple cipher by hand.

Moderate (20): Aided encryption or decryption (p.65).

Hard (30): As part of a research team, discover new cryptographic techniques after months of research.

Information Smuggling (INL)- The PC is acquainted with all the various things that data can be hidden in, from the static in a music recording to the thread pattern in the cloth inside a shoe.

Easy (10): Hide information in a data file or computer chip.

Moderate (20): Hide information in a manufactured product.

Hard (30): List all the items on a smuggler's person that might contain hidden information.

Math (INL)- The PC has studied the various forms of mathematics and statistics that are behind modern science and computer technology.

Easy (10): Calculate the compound interest on a loan.

Moderate (20): Understand the parabolic equations behind cryptography.

Hard (30): Understand the fractal equations behind Artificial Intelligence.

Mnemonics (INL)- The PC has learned various tricks and techniques to be able to remember large amounts of information very accurately.

Easy (10): Hear a long phone address and remember it for days.

Moderate (20): Memorize the configuration of a chessboard and remember it for days.

Hard (30): Memorize several pages of a book (as fast as it can be read) and remember it verbatim for weeks.

Legendary (40): Memorize a 1000 digit cryptographic key and remember it for months.

Money (INL)- The PC understands the complex world of international currencies, banks, electronic money transfers, investments and taxes. Business owners use this skill to conduct international business. Criminals use it to launder money and create tax shelters. Hackers use it to tap in to electronic money transfers and steal (or create) money.

Easy (10): Explain what happens, step by step, when you pay for something on-line.

Moderate (20): Create a tax shelter.

Hard (30): Set up a bank.

Military (MIL)

Biological Weapons (INL)- The PC is familiar with the creation, deployment, effects of and defenses against chemical and biological weapons (most of which are strictly illegal throughout the world).

Easy (10): List the vectors of Markoff's Disease.

Moderate (20): Recognize the early stage effects of Harmon.

Hard (30): List the ingredients to make nerve gas. manufacturing nerve gas. manufacturing nerve gas.

Brainwashing (INL)- Prerequisites: Interrogation (1), Torture (1). The PC has learned how to use sleep deprivation, hunger, pain and intimidation to break someone's psychological resistance. Over the course of several days (or weeks) resistance is brought down to a point that the victim can be forced to say and subsequently to believe anything that the PC wants. Each day, the victims can make a moderate (20 difficulty) opposed WIL roll to avoid having their psychological defenses broken down any further (each opposed success by the victim delays the brainwashing by one day). Difficulty is based on what resources the brainwasher has and how quickly the brainwashing needs to be done.

Easy (10): Brainwash somebody over the course of 2 months, using a full staff, several different types of psychoactive drugs and a subliminal analyzer.

Moderate (20): Brainwash somebody over the course of 4 weeks using a few doses of Compliance Drops and an assistant.

Hard (30): Brainwash someone in one week with no assistance or special equipment.

Demolitions (INL)- The PC has learned how to manufacture, wire and place explosives for maximum effect. This skill does not teach how to disarm explosives (see Bomb Disarming, p.28).

Easy (10): Place a Shaped Charge to destroy the hinges on a tank door.

Moderate (20): Make a pipe bomb.

Hard (30): Bring down a large building (without harming surrounding buildings) using several sticks of dynamite and radio detonators.

Interrogation (CHM)- The PC has learned to combine psychological pressure with methods of lie detection to convince a person to tell the truth. There are many tricks to interrogation: One is to lie and convince the victim that the PC already knows the truth but the victim may benefit by telling his or her side of the story. Another trick is to manipulate the victim in to lying and then ask the right questions to trap the victim in a lie. The PC's manner (usually yelling constantly at the victim) prevents the interrogated from collecting his or her thoughts enough to lie well or figure out when the interrogator is lying. Some interrogation borders on mild torture or brainwashing: without ever touching the victim, the PC manipulates the victim's environment such that it slowly wears down the victim's will power.

Easy (10): Yell at someone to disrupt his ability to lie or detect lies (-7 to CHM & INL rolls).

Moderate (20): Manipulate someone in to letting herself be trapped in a lie.

Hard (30): Convince a person that telling the truth is to his advantage.

Military Tactics (INL)- The PC has studied military strategy, both in theory and in practice. The obvious application in the city is to help plan and execute battles between groups of people (typically gangs) so that the PC's side is more likely to achieve its goals.

Easy (10): Draw up a battle plan and explain it to a group of soldiers.

Moderate (20): Assess the military capabilities of a group of fighters by observing them.

Hard (30): From a vantage point where the battlefield can be seen, use radios to give orders to combatants and react to changes in the situation.

Poisons (INL)- The PC is well versed in the origin, use, effects and treatment of poisons. Note that this skill imparts very little knowledge of the secret Drake poisons (see the Drake Poisons skill, p.122).

Easy (10): Find something under a Well's sink that, when put on a blade, will make that blade more likely to kill.

Moderate (20): Manufacture Black Market Food Poison (p.102) from household chemicals.

Hard (30): Recognize a common poison by examining a dead body.

Torture (INL)- The PC has learned how to apply extreme amounts of pain to an individual without permanently injuring them, killing them or making them go unconscious. Victim gets an opposed WIL roll to resist the torture.

Easy (10): Force someone to do or say something when he has no real reason not to.

Moderate (20): Force someone to betray her country or friends.

Hard (30): Force someone to do or say something that will cause his own death.



Psychic Skills in Brief

Manipulative- Use WIL. When a psychic skill roll manipulates another person, that person gets two rolls: First is an opposed AWR roll (moderate difficulty) to sense that the manipulation is happening. If the victim notices the manipulation, he or she can make an opposed WIL roll (moderate difficulty) to block the psychic manipulation. Manipulative psychic skills use 2 pooled END per round (just like running or holding one's breath). Manipulative skills have modifiers listed on p.60. It is easiest to manipulate people by touch and when the PC is also effected by the manipulation. It is hardest to target a single individual at a distance.

Sensory- Use AWR. Sensory skills are made moderately more difficulty by the presence of a large crowd (psychic static). Sensory skills also increase in difficulty the farther away the thing or person being sensed is (like manipulative skills, touch is best).

Psychic Manipulative (PSY:M)

Belief Attack (WIL)- When the PC uses this skill, whatever the victim is hearing, reading or thinking (including thoughts implanted via the suggestion skill) will be believed as if the victim was certain they were true. Once the psychic influence ends, the PC can shed the beliefs the same way they would any other firmly-held false beliefs: by logically examining them. The difficulty is based on how likely the victim would be to believe the statement without the psychic influence. If a person already strongly believes something else, then both beliefs co-exist at once and the victim will follow the belief which best meets his or her drive for self-preservation.

Easy (10): Make a person believe "Potato chips are healthier than french fries."

Moderate (20): Make a person believe "Your friends are going to betray you."

Hard (30): Make a person believe "You can fly and jumping out of windows is fun."

Calm Attack (WIL)- PCs with this skill can force a depression of the central nervous system that leads to calmness, sleep or even unconsciousness. Difficulty is based on how excited the victims are and how much they want to stay awake (typically when people realize a psychic is trying to make them fall asleep, their desire to stay awake increases greatly). This skill can also be used to give people plusses to save vs. strong emotions or the effects of central nervous system stimulants (just as a good sedative would).

Easy (10): Make a tired, bored person fall asleep -or- Give +5 to save vs. fear/anger/stimulant effects.

Moderate (20): Make a person who has no real reason not to go to sleep take a nap -or- Give +10 to save.

Hard (30): Make someone who is trying to stay awake (like a security guard) fall asleep -or- Give +15 to save.

Legendary (40): Make an opponent fall asleep during combat -or- Give +20 to save.

Control Attack (WIL)- This skill allows the PC to gain temporary control over a victim's motor functions. Note that since the PC is not receiving kinesthetic feedback from the victim's body and does not see things from the victim's point of view (unless they have very high levels of Clairvoyance) any action the PC makes through another person's body is very clumsy (-10 AGY).

Easy (10): Make someone's hand twitch just enough to make them miss a pistol-shot.

Moderate (20): Make someone drop a weapon.

Hard (30): Gain control of both arms for 1 action.

Legendary (40): Gain complete control of a victim's entire body (victim can make opposed WIL rolls every round).

Emotion Attack (WIL)- This skill allows the PC to excite emotions in others that the PC is currently experiencing himself or herself. To make a person experience an emotion the PC is not experiencing is +10 difficulty.

Easy (10): Make a person feel an emotion weakly.

Moderate (20): Make a person feel an emotion at a moderate level.

Hard (30): Make a person feel an emotion so strongly that they must make a save vs. emotion to avoid doing something stupid.

Legendary (40): Paralyze a person with euphoria or dysphoria.

Hallucination Attack (WIL)- The PC can make other people see, hear, smell and even feel things that aren't actually there. Note that the realism of these hallucinations depends, in part, on the PC's powers of imagination.

Easy (10): Make someone hear a soft murmur or see a faint shadow or glow.

Moderate (20): Make someone see a transparent image or hear a faint noise.

Hard (30): Make someone see and hear a person so vividly that he or she thinks the person is real.

Legendary (40): Blind and deafen someone with an obfuscating hallucination.

Pain Attack (WIL)- The PC causes another person to feel physical pain. The victim must make an opposed save vs. pain.

Easy (10): Annoying pain (no save necessary).

Moderate (20): Distracting -or- shocking pain (see p.55).

Hard (30): Distracting and shocking pain.

Legendary (40): Distracting and shocking pain and the victim's eyes hurt so much she can not keep them open.

Physiological Control (WIL)- This skill allows the PC to send messages to his or her own body or other people's bodies to trigger normal physiological actions. The scope of this skill is a lot like that of the Body Control mental program.

Easy (10): Make someone sweat.

Moderate (20): Make someone's immune system spend more energy fighting a particular disease (+7 to save vs. disease contraction and progression).

Hard (30): Reduce blood flow to an injured area (no post-battle BLD loss).

Legendary (40): Reduce someone's blood pressure fast enough to make that person faint.

Psychic Defense (WIL and AWR)- The PC has trained in defending himself or herself against psychic attacks. For every level of the skill, the PC gets +4 to the reaction Mental Block (p.71) and +4 to AWR rolls to notice that the PC is being psychically manipulated. The PC can also defend other people from psychic attacks (at +20 difficulty).

Suggestion (WIL)- The PC can implant ideas in people's heads. The victims do not necessarily believe these ideas (see belief attack) but if they fail their AWR rolls they will believe that the ideas came from their own minds and will consider them accordingly. The difficulty is based on the complexity of the idea.

Easy (10): "Skin Borgs are dangerous."

Moderate (20): "I should try looking in the box."

Hard (30): "A true anarchist does not try to destroy the government - a true anarchist refuses to recognize that there is a government and treats law enforcement the same as they do anyone else."

Psychic Sensory (PSY:S)

Clairsentience (AWR)- The PC can sense what another person is currently sensing. The PC must declare who they are trying to pick up senses from and what senses.

Easy (10): Get brief flashes of vision or sound.

Moderate (20): See exactly what a person is seeing -or- hear exactly what a person is hearing.

Hard (30): Experience all of a person's five senses.

Mediumship (AWR)- Prerequisites: Clairsentience (1). The PC can communicate with "ghosts" (leakage of psychic energy through subatomic wormholes that sometimes occurs during death).

Easy (10): Sense the presence of a ghost, experience brief flashes of the person's sensations of death.

Moderate (20): Hear the thoughts of a ghost, experience the full experience of the person's death.

Hard (30): Communicate telepathically with a ghost.

Mind Reading (AWR)- The PC can sense psychic energy coming from another person's mind that indicates what they are feeling and thinking. Can be used in combination with manipulative psychic skills to force people to think or remember specific things and thus psychically interrogate people.

Easy (10): Tell what emotions a person is experiencing.

Moderate (20): Hear occasional words from what the person is thinking.

Hard (30): Hear everything a person is thinking.

Precognition (AWR)- Prerequisite: Clairsentience (1). The PC is constantly 'open' to psychic communication coming from subatomic wormholes (that lead to other times and places) from his or her own mind or from the minds of others. As with mediumship, it is a matter of pure chance whether there will be an open wormhole and whether it leads to the future or past.

Easy (10): The faint impression of an object or a descriptive quality (e.g. "door" or "wet").

Moderate (20): Brief flashes of vision or hearing.

Hard (30): Full info from all senses for up to 5 seconds.

Psychic Sense (AWR)- PCs with this skill can "see" the psychic energy that comes from most vertebrate nervous systems (and, to a lesser degree, from decaying organic waste, burning plastic and some other rare chemical reactions). Most psychics see psychic energy as a faint glow or aura. The most useful aspect of this skill is the ability to sense people: to see them through walls or in the dark, to tell how active their nervous systems are, tell if they are using or are under the influence of psychic skills, and to distinguish between people by their psychic 'accent.'

Easy (10): In the dark, tell if there is another human in the room -or- tell if someone is using psychic powers.

Moderate (20): In the dark, see a person well enough to fight at only -7 penalty -or- tell how stimulated someone's nervous system is.

Hard (30): In the dark, fight a person at no penalty -or- distinguish between people by their psychic signatures.

Legendary (40): See what areas of a person's brain are most active.

Psychometry (AWR)- Prerequisites: Mind Reading (1), Clairsentience (2). Some types of matter (mostly organic matter that still has natural fats and oils, like wood, lawn clippings, desiccated corpses) can briefly pick up and resonate back psychic energy they have been exposed to, much like a rock that was near a fire may radiate heat for a short period after the fire has been removed. The PC has learned to sense those weak echoes and gain some sense of what has happened near an object in its recent past.

Easy (10): Tell if someone has been psychically attacked or has died near the object within the last hour.

Moderate (20): Sense a strong emotion that happened nearby the object within the last 24 hours.

Hard (30): Get flashes of sight and sound that someone experienced near the object in the last 24 hours.

Tech (TECH)

Anonymity (INL)- The PC knows how to access the internet without leaving any traces that could be used to track back to the user. This is typically done through free (but poorly advertised) anonymous re-sender servers operated by privacy advocates.

Easy (10): Send an anonymous email for a \$5 fee.

Moderate (20): Make an anonymous videophone call for free.

Hard (30): Access full-immersion VR -or- send money anonymously for free.

Bomb Disarming (INL)- The PC has learned how to disarm explosives. In combination with the surgery skill, this skill can be used to remove death borgs.

Easy (10): Dispose of a pipe bomb.

Moderate (20): Remove a death borg (requires surgery roll).

Hard (30): Disarm a briefcase nuke.

Chemical Analysis (INL)- The PC has learned to analyze the chemical makeup of samples.

Easy (10): Analyze a simple chemical using a handheld spectrograph.

Moderate (20): Analyze a complex chemical using a handheld spectrograph -or- analyze a simple chemical using a kid's chemistry set.

Hard (30): Analyze a mixture of complex chemicals using a handheld spectrograph.

Copy Protection (INL)- Prerequisite: Programming: Applications (1). The PC knows about the tricks that software companies use to prevent illegal copying and piracy and the tricks that software pirates use to defeat copy protection.

Easy (10): Determine what piracy group has broken copy protection on a piece of software.

Moderate (20): Write standard copy protection in to an application -or- break standard copy protection.

Hard (30): Break copy protection on classified R&D stage corporate software.

Data Pirating- Prerequisite: Internet Browsing (2). The PC has learned where people go on the internet when he or she wants to get pirated software and data. This includes knowledge of software trading rings, file sharing networks, and offshore pirated software net sites. When PCs use the skill to find pirated software, the amount of time it takes them depends on the level of success (success of 1 would be several days, success of 10 would be near instantaneous). A new character starts with \$1000 in pirated data per skill level, anything else must be pirated during gameplay.

Easy (10)- Find a \$10 (black market value) piece of pirated data for free on the net.

Moderate (20)- Find a \$250 piece of data.

Hard (30)- Find a \$1500 piece of data.

Legendary (40)- Find a \$3000 piece of data.

Denial of Service (INL)- Prerequisite: Network Protocols (1). The PC knows how to overload computers and network connections by flooding them with false requests or garbage packets. Such attacks are often 'distributed': the hacker takes over several computers and uses all of them to attack at once.

Easy (10): Slow a small net-site server to a standstill using fifty computers.

Moderate (20): Slows someone's internet connection to a standstill using ten computers.

Hard (30): Slow a major ISP's mail server using one computer.

Internet Browsing (INL)- This is knowledge of how to find anything on the web quickly, efficiently and cheaply. The PC also knows generally what types of things are available on the net, what are the technological and economic mechanisms that make them available and what are the motivations of the people who put them there. Please note that this skill only includes finding publicly available resources, it does not include anything that would require hacking or piracy to get.

Easy (10)- Find a recipe for Anise-White Chocolate Sauce.

Moderate (20)- Find the full text of a Victorian era treatise on the criminal underworld.

Hard (30)- Find the number of residents in a city housing complex for the year 2013.

Legendary (40)- Find a security camera picture of a friend picking his or her nose.

Jellynailing (INL)- Prerequisite: Operating Systems (1). This is the art of forcing software to run on computers with less power, different hardware or a different operating system than the software was designed for. This usually involves running the program through an emulator (another program that executes the commands of the original program as if they were operating on a different system). No matter the skill of the user, the program will be slower (approximately twice as slow for each level the hardware is inadequate by).

Easy (10)- Run software intended for a slightly faster computer and a different operating system.

Moderate (20)- Write a translation matrix to run software using the wrong piece of hardware.

Hard (30)- Run modern software on a computer from a century ago.

Linework (INL)- The PC knows how to tap in to network connections at connection closets and switch boxes.

Easy (10): Tap in to an apartment's network connection at the locked switchbox on the street.

Moderate (20): Pirate an unauthorized network connection from a switchbox.

Hard (30): Reconfigure a network connection closet to create a new network leg.

Microelectronics (INL)- The PC is fluent in the circuitry and microchips that power every modern electronic device. The PC can repair most electronic devices (given the correct parts).

Easy (10): Repair a computer by determining what part is not working and ordering a new one.

Moderate (20): Lay out a microchip design in a CAD program.

Hard (30): Alter the functioning of an electronic device by breaking off one of its microchips.

Network Protocols (INL)- The PC understands the hidden header information attached to every data packet that gets sent out on a network. The packet tells what the data is, who sent it, how it was routed, where it is going to, among other things. The PC also knows secret network queries and commands that network administrators use to diagnose network problems.

Easy (10): Probe a network to find out what type of network it is and what other networks it had access to.

Moderate (20): Send a packet from one network node so it looks like it's coming from another node on the same network.

Hard (30): Get a complete list of nodes on a network.

Network Security (INL)- The PC understands how to configure networks, servers and workstations to resist intrusion by hackers. The amount of success on a roll increases the difficulty for a hacker to find a hole in a network or station's security.

Easy (10): Configure a personal workstation to resist hack attempts.

Moderate (20): Configure a server to resist hack attempts.

Hard (30): Configure an entire network to resist hack attempts.

Operating Systems (INL)- The PC understands how to configure, repair and use operating systems (the programs that run on a computer and create an interface for running other programs). For every level in the skill the PC must choose an operating system that they specialize in (OpenFree/OpenCert, OpenMicro, Amicus, Mainframe 10 or GuildOS). The PC is at +10 difficulty to any OS he or she hasn't specialized in.

Easy (10): Hide files from casual searches -or- find hidden files.

Moderate (20): Configure an OS so it runs faster and crashes less.

Hard (30): Repair an operating system that has been trashed -or- run a command the current account does not normally have privileges to run.

Payphones (INL)- The PC is versed in the workings of payphones and paycomputers. The PC knows how to hack in to these machines (typically by getting in to the circuitry and crossing a few wires) to get free access or even spare change. This skill also works on vending machines at a higher difficulty (+10).

Easy (10): Make free phone calls.

Moderate (20): Free paycomputer internet access.

Hard (30): Get a payphone to collect change and then drop it in to the coin return for the hacker.

Programming Skill Roll Failures

0 to -2: The program has several small errors in it which are not immediately apparent. For every 10 minutes of use the program has a 1 in 20 chance of crashing.

-3 to -4: For every 5 min. of use the program has a 1 in 6 chance of crashing.

-5 to -9: The program has so many errors in it that the PC can not run it for more than a few seconds at a time without it crashing.

-10 or less: The program will not run at all.

Production Chemistry (INL)- The PC has studied techniques for the manufacture of chemicals.

Easy (10): Recognize what type of chemicals a rig is set up to produce.

Moderate (20): Create a god-killer manufacturing lab from household and mail-order equipment.

Hard (30): Create a sibosin manufacturing lab.

Programming: Application (INL)- The PC knows how to program complex user interfaces that lets the average user take advantage of the computer's processing powers.

Easy (10): Create a graphing calculator.

Moderate (20): Create a full-featured word processor.

Hard (30): Create a programmer's suite for easily creating new applications.

Programming: Virus (INL)- The PC is familiar with the tricks utilized by viruses, worms, trojans and time-bombs.

Easy (10): Create a trojan that resembles a short VR movie but, when run, deletes files.

Moderate (20): Create an email virus which, if it can trick people in to running it, will send itself to others on the same network.

Hard (30): Create a worm which will hack in to network nodes and reproduce itself.

Programming: VR (INL)- The PC is familiar with programming of VR interfaces, movies, games or multiplayer VR universes.

Easy (10): Create a short (non-interactive) full immersion VR movie.

Moderate (20): Create a simulated training environment to teach kickboxing.

Hard (30): Create a massive game world for hundreds or thousands of players to interact, have adventures and meet pseudo-intelligent NPCs and villains.



Sniffing (INL)- The PC knows how to tap in to the packets of data flowing through a network or an internet router and to search through the packets for a particular sender, receiver or data strings. Once found and isolated, packets can be read, blocked or modified. Note that most important information being sent across the internet is encrypted, so decryption rolls may be necessary to peek in to someone else's communication.

Easy (10): Find and read packets sent to a particular address.

Moderate (20): Find and read packets with a particular word in them.

Hard (30): Intercept and edit packets before they reach their destination.

System Crashing (INL)- Prerequisite: Operating Systems (1). The PC knows what to do with a system to make it stop working.

Easy (10): Make one particular program on a system stop working so that it has to be shut down and re-started.

Moderate (20): Make the whole computer locked up so that it must be manually rebooted.

Hard (30): Crash a computer such that it will not boot up afterwards without hours of repair work by someone with high levels in the Operating Systems skill.

System Prowling (INL)- Prerequisite: Operating Systems (1). The PC knows all the tricks on how to do things on a computer without leaving any traces and without the system's manager being able to see that they are doing it. A hard (30) opposed Operating Systems roll can be used by a system manager to notice system prowlers (just as an opposed AWR roll can be used against prowling).

Easy (10): Erase the history of what internet sites one has browsed on a computer.

Moderate (20): Stop a system from registering that a particular user is currently logged in.

Hard (30): Create an administrator account on a computer that none of the other administrators can see.

Thief/Espionage (THIE)

Alarm Systems (AWR or INL)- The PC knows all about the various electronic alarm systems that protect buildings from thieves. The PC can recognize alarm systems (AWR) and determine how to bypass or disable them (INL). Sometimes AGY rolls are also required to disable or bypass the alarms without setting them off. See p.181 for information on different types of alarm systems.

Easy (10): Recognize a motion detector -or- Bypass infrared beams.

Moderate (20): Recognize a door sensor -or- Move very slowly past a motion detector.

Hard (30): Recognize pressure sensitive floor plates -or- Dress up in trash to fool a human-recognition computer.

Auto-Theft (INL)- The PC knows the various tricks for opening vehicles and hot-wiring them. Note that because there are few running cars in the city (and those that do run are gas guzzlers that very few people can afford to use) this skill is not as useful as it once was. Today it is as often used to break in to the vehicles people are living in to steal their possessions.

Easy (10): Open a door on a very old car using a long flat piece of metal.

Moderate (20): Hotwire an old car.

Hard (30): Hotwire a new car with a security system.

Disguise (INL)- The PC is familiar with the physical aspects of disguise: clothing, makeup, wigs, latex masks, platform shoes, etc. The PC can make himself or herself or someone else look different.

Easy (10): Make a young male look unrecognizable, even by close friends.

Moderate (20): Make a young male look like an old male or a young woman.

Hard (30): Make a person look exactly like another person (requires latex masks). The disguised person must use the Impersonation skill to act or sound like that person.

Escape Artistry (AGY)- Prerequisite: Lock Picking (2). The PC has learned the various techniques that stage magicians use to escape from various enclosures. Most of these escapes involve having a lock pick hidden on one's person and using contortion to retrieve it and get in to a position where a lock can be picked.

Easy (10): Escape from a pair of handcuffs.

Moderate (20): Escape from a straight-jacket.

Hard (30): Escape from a steamer-trunk wrapped in a chain with a padlock.

Forgery (INL)- The PC knows how to forge signatures, ID cards and other paper based documents. Most

attempts at forgery require an investment in equipment (ink, printers, lamination, etc.) which can range from a few bucks (for a cheap ID) to several thousand (for counterfeiting money).

Easy (10): Copy a signature.

Moderate (20): Create a photo ID.

Hard (30): Create counterfeit money.

Impersonation (CHM)- The PC learns to adopt the mannerisms, posture, accent and voice of another. The PC can try to impersonate someone's voice over the phone or, with a very good disguise, in person. The difficulty is based on how much contact the PC will have with those being fooled (walking by and waving 'hi' to someone is easier than having a long conversation) and how well those being fooled know the person being impersonated (close friends would be more difficult than casual acquaintances).

Easy (10): Wave hello to a casual acquaintance.

Moderate (20): Shout a few words at a co-worker.

Hard (30): Speak a few sentences with a friend.

Legendary (40): Have a long conversation with a lover.

Lock Picking (AGY)- The PC knows how to open locks, typically by putting tension on the lock and raking each pin in the lock (with a pick) until they stick in the proper position. This skill can be used in combination with the Microelectronics skill to pick electronic locks.

Easy (10): Pick the lock on a cheap filing cabinet.

Moderate (20): Pick a door lock.

Hard (30): Pick the lock on the change box on a payphone.

Pocket Picking (AGY)- The PC has learned how to put his or her hand in a person's pocket without the person noticing and to remove whatever is found there. The victim gets an opposed (moderate) AWR roll to sense the theft. Victims can also use common sense (e.g. knowing to check their pockets after someone has bumped in to them). Different pockets have different difficulties: a pocket inside a jacket or a pocket on tight jeans would be much harder than large external pockets on a bulky overcoat.

Easy (10): Bump in to a person, almost knocking him over, and remove one item from an external overcoat pocket.

Moderate (20): Walk past someone and pull something out of her pants pocket as the two pass.

Hard (30): While sitting next to someone on a subway, slit a tight jeans pocket with a razor blade and remove the contents.

Prowling (AGY)- The PC has practiced sneaking up on people, moving silent, quickly finding hiding places, crawling through shadows and blending in with the environment. Gives +4/level to prowling rolls (p.52).

Sociological (SOC)

Corporations (INL)- This is a study of the modern corporations of today.

Easy (10): Name all major multinationals and the major subsidiaries of each.

Moderate (20): Name banned corps, their locations and major sources of revenue.

Hard (30): Name and give brief biographies of the board of directors of a major multinational.

Foreign Language (INL)- The PC must take separate levels of this skill for each language he or she wishes to learn. Note that some languages are so similar that one language skill may be used to substitute for another at increased difficulty (e.g. substitute Foreign Language: Latin for Foreign Language: Italian at +20 difficulty).

Easy (10): Read and write text in the given language.

Moderate (20): Speak slowly about common things.

Hard (30): Have a normal-paced conversation.

Legendary (40): Speak with perfect, accent-less fluency.

History: City (INL)- The PC has studied the history of New York city and it's surrounding areas.

Easy (10): List the different names the city has had (e.g. New Orange, New Amsterdam).

Moderate (20): Tell what years a skyscraper was built in.

Hard (30): Determine what was on any given block 200 years ago.

Law: Basic (INL)- The PC has studied the basic principles of American and World law: where laws come from, what courts judge what cases, how cases are brought in front of a court, who can practice law in what situations, what the general legal remedies are for every type of legal problem and the general procedures for legal actions.

Easy (10): File an amicus curiae (friend of the court) brief.

Moderate (20): File a complaint against an immoral lawyer with the state bar.

Hard (30): Research all relevant laws and cases for a given legal question.

Law: Criminal (INL)- Prerequisite: Law: Basic (1). The PC has studied the criminal justice system and how to prosecute or defend a person who has been accused of committing a crime.

Easy (10): List the elements of murder.

Moderate (20): Figure out whether the 'deal' the district attorney is offering a criminal defendant is a good deal or not.

Hard (30): Get the evidence obtained from a bad (not quite legal) police search thrown out.

Legends (INL)- The PC has studied various myths and legends from around the world and various theories about the origins of these myths.

Easy (10): Tell who was the Greek god of thieves.

Moderate (20): Describe the various pictures distributed on the internet that are claimed to be Jeffrey Hernandez still alive.

Hard (30): Name the different types of vampires the Gypsies believe in and how to kill them.

Oratory (CHM)- The PC has been trained to speak before an audience, to speak persuasively to different types of people and to use cues from the audience to gauge which persuasive tactics are working and which aren't.

Easy (10): Write a speech designed to work on a particular audience (+4 to persuasion rolls).

Moderate (20): Notice when a strategy isn't working and change gears (PC can re-roll a bad persuasion roll).

Hard (30): Predict the arguments an opponent will make and pre-argue against them (-7 to the opponent's persuasion roll).

Social Work (INL)- The PC is acquainted with the various human services available via city, county, state and federal government programs. The PC understands

the massive (and largely corrupt) bureaucracies that provide these services and how to actually get people to the services meant for them.

Easy (10): Help someone fill out the paperwork to get on welfare.

Moderate (20): Help someone get on disability.

Hard (30): Help a mentally ill homeless person get in to a group-home.

Legendary (40): Get grant money to start a small new agency.

Street (STRT)

Animal Training (CHM)- The PC has learned to care for and train animals to serve useful functions. The difficulty is based on the complexity of the task and the natural 'trainability' of the animal.

Easy (10): Keep a dog alive and keep it from going feral.

Moderate (20): Train a dog to fetch thrown objects.

Hard (30): Train a dog to stop at "don't walk" lights.

Legendary (40): Train a cat to stop at "don't walk" lights.

Card Counting (INL)- Prerequisite: Gambling (1). The PC has learned to remember the values of cards that have been played to determine what cards are most likely to come up next and give a small (but in the long run very significant) advantage over other players.

Easy (10): Gain a +4 advantage in blackjack.

Moderate (20): Gain a +7 advantage in poker.

Hard (30): Gain a +7 advantage in poker when multiple decks are used.

City Knowledge (INL)- City knowledge is knowledge of the geography, culture, philosophy, sociology, economy and recent history of the city. Anything that a person learns by sole virtue of the hours he or she has spent on the streets is city knowledge.

Easy (10)- Figure out whose turf the PC is on by looking at graffiti -or- Navigate by finding common land marks.

Easy/Moderate (15)- Find the closest black market trader to the PC's home.

Moderate (20)- Figure out what turf the PC is on by looking at the cross streets.

Moderate/Hard (25)- Recognize the leaders of every city street gang by sight.

Hard (30)- Give any information listed anywhere in the PC Groups chapter -or- Recite the complete subway timetables.

Hard/Legendary (35)- Recognize, and tell the exact location of, some random alley by a photograph.

Legendary (40)- Figure out where in the city the PC is by smell alone.

Special Note: This skill is based on time spent on the streets and so follows different rules for skills advancement. Unless otherwise noted in the character class or an advantage/disadvantage, the PC gets 1 free level of this skill on starting the game and 1 free level for every 4th level advancement. The PC can not ever have more than 1 level of this skill per experience level.

City Knowledge Levels		
XP	Free	Max.
Level		
1	1	1
2	1	2
3	1	3
4	1	4
5	2	5
6	2	6
7	2	6
8	2	6
9	3	6
10	3	6
11	3	6
12	3	6

Drug Resistance (WIL)- The PC has been high on many types of drugs and has learned to resist their effects and act normal when necessary.

Easy (10): +1 to lost attributes, +4 to save vs. drug side effects.

Moderate (20): +2 to lost attributes, +7 to save vs. drug side effects.

Hard (30): +3 to lost attributes, +10 to save vs. drug side effects.

Gambling (INL)- The PC knows how to play various games of chance (mainly dice or card games). When playing a game the PC makes an opposed moderate (20 difficulty) roll against their opponents (who can make gambling skill rolls or hard (INL) rolls).

Graffiti (INL)- Not all gang members know how to read or write gang graffiti. The most basic messages (e.g. 'this is Risen turf') can be read by anyone with the City Knowledge skill. However, to read and write any complex messages, the graffiti skill is necessary. Note: Literacy is not required for this skill.

Easy (10)- Read an obituary written by a member of the PC's character class.

Moderate (20)- Read a battle description written by a member of another character class.

Hard (30)- Piece together a 30 year history of an area by examining different layers of graffiti.

Herbal Medicine (INL)- The PC knows how to use herbs, especially those which are grown in various indoor or outdoor gardens throughout the city to treat medical problems. These herbs are typically turned in to tea or alcohol extracts for consumption.

Easy (10): Treat headaches.

Moderate (20): Treat the symptoms of a flu.

Hard (30): Treat a major infection.

Hypnosis (CHM)- The PC can put willing people in to an altered state of consciousness where they are highly open to suggestion. There are many things hypnosis can not do: memories can not be made more accurate (although they may be made to seem more accurate), a person can not be forced to do something they truly don't want to do, attributes can not be increased (e.g. a person can not be made more agile). Hypnosis has had some success at revealing blocked memories, but it just as often causes the hypnotized person to make up completely fictional memories.

Easy (10): Help someone fall asleep.

Moderate (20): Give someone +4 to save vs. drug cravings.

Hard (30): Uncover blocked memories.

Light Sleep (AWR)- The PC has trained himself or herself to sleep warily such that any sign of danger will wake him or her.

Easy (10): Awaken if someone turns a light on.

Moderate (20): Awaken if someone is walking around by the PC's bed.

Hard (30): Awaken if any one of several roommates awakens.

Mechanics (INL)- The PC knows how to analyze, maintain, repair and create mechanical systems.

Easy (10): Sabotage a garage door opener by sticking something in a gear.

Moderate (20): Repair an old fashioned pocket watch -or- Repair an automobile transmission.

Hard (30): Engineer and build a secret elevator to a basement.

Money Saving (INL)- In the game, characters get money per week which is equivalent to whatever they make (from work, welfare, crime, etc.) minus whatever they spend on housing, food, clothes, etc. This skill allows the PC to save money and add to his or her weekly spending money. This skill must be used actively: for each week the character wants to use it, the character must spend about 4 hours comparison shopping, clipping coupons, etc. (as appropriate for the character class).

Easy (10): Increase free money per week by 5%.

Moderate (20): Increase free money per wk. by 15%.

Hard (30): Increase free money per wk. by 25%

Needles (AGY and Combat)- This skill represents experience using syringes.

Easy (10): PC gives himself or herself an intravenous injection.

Moderate (20): Draw blood painlessly.

Hard (30): Find a vein on a long-term drug addict and give an intravenous injection.

Legendary (40): Draw a drop of blood without the victim noticing (opposed AWR roll).

Needles is also a combat skill that gives the following (at +4 per level) when using syringes only:

+0 to Wing

+0 to Strike

No penalty for targeted strikes.

Plumbing (INL)- The PC is familiar with the repair, maintenance and installation of plumbing. Among the homeless, this skill is highly valued because it allows water to be illicitly 'pirated' in to abandoned buildings.

Easy (10): Clean out a clogged pipe.

Moderate (20): Pirate water from a street line.

Hard (30): Create a hot water heater from old metal trash cans.

Poison Tolerance (END)- The PC has given himself or herself small doses of poisons and gained a limited tolerance to many poisons. This skill is not as complete or strong as the poison tolerance that Drakes instill on their own starting at a very young age.

Easy (10): Take three quarters the normal effects of Black Market food poison.

Moderate (20): Take half the normal effects of Black Market Knife Poison.

Hard (30): Take half the normal effects of Drake Fungus poison.

Seduction (CHM)- Every level of the skill gives +4 to seduction rolls (p.54). The PC can also use this skill to notice body language cues that tell how easy it would be to seduce someone and how well the PC is doing at a given seduction (moderate difficulty).

Sleight of Hand (AGY)- The PC has trained himself or herself to manipulate small objects so quickly that it can not be seen. A common trick is to direct a person's attention to one hand while the other is doing the actual change.

Easy (10): Make a penny "disappear" by palming it and dropping it in to a pocket.

Moderate (20): Replace one playing card with another (from a sleeve) while tapping the deck.

Hard (30): Make 10 lit cigarettes disappear by waving one's hand over them.

Street Drugs- Uses AWR or INL. This is an overall familiarity with common street drugs – how much they cost, what their effects are, what people act like when they are on them, etc. INL is used for remembering facts, AWR is used for recognizing things.

Easy (10): Name the going price for a drug (INL) -or- Determine what drug the PC currently has in his or her own bloodstream (AWR).

Moderate (20): Name the common withdrawal effects of a drug (INL) -or- Determine a drug's purity by looking at and tasting it (AWR).

Hard (30): Determine the street sale potential, if any, of a prescription drug (INL) -or- Determine what drug a person is on just by looking at them (AWR).

Tracking (AWR)- The PC has learned to follow the signs that show that an animal or human has passed through. This skill is most useful in wilderness areas (like the Hole) where mud can show tracks, but it can also be used in urban areas. Tracks grow significantly harder to follow the older they get (generally +1 difficulty per hour after they were made). Tracking can also be used to determine information about the people or animals being tracked: how fast were they going, did they have a limp, did they stop often, etc.

Easy (10): Track a large man who ran through the hole bleeding.

Moderate (20): Track a child who was exploring an abandoned building (by looking at disturbed dust).

Hard (30): Track a rat through the hole.

Trading- (INL)- This skill is a detailed knowledge of how much every item or service is worth to what group (people without this skill only know what something is worth to them personally).

Easy (10): Identify the general worth of a black market item.

Moderate (20): Identify what group in the city would be willing to pay most for a black market item.

Hard (30): Determine what other inner cities one could travel to get the best markup on a black market item.

Wilderness Survival (INL)- The PC knows how to find food, clean water and shelter in wilderness environments (including that of the hole). The PC must roll for each day in the environment. Difficulty is based on how much food, water and shelter is available in the environment.

Easy (10): Survive in the Hole during summer.

Moderate (20): Survive in the Hole during winter.

Hard (30): Survive in the desert.

STEP SEVEN - CHOOSE EQUIPMENT

In Brief: Available money set by character class.

Starting Equipment

As a Street Person, the PC will get free equipment and services to start:

- A room in an abandoned building that can be locked from the inside or outside with a padlock.
- A padlock.
- Several candles and a lighter.
- Old sheets and blankets for use as a bed.
- Several buckets: for drinking water, for washing water and for elimination.
- One outfit with shoes, gloves and a jacket.
- A few cans of food and a pan for cooking in.

Purchasing Equipment

The PC starts with an amount of money listed in the PC's character class description. Buy equipment and services listed in Chapter Three: The Market. The GM may disallow some purchases that would be unreasonable for the PC (especially those items that are listed as "Unavailable").

Be sure to note which equipment is being stored at home (or hidden somewhere else) and which equipment the PC regularly carries on his or her person. Check encumbrance, p.54 for more. The weight of equipment a PC can carry without minuses is STH times 5 lbs.



STEP EIGHT - BONUS CHARACTERISTICS

In Brief: PC starts with neutral balance. Advantages must be balanced out by disadvantages.

In addition to the advantages and disadvantages listed below, you can adjust the PC (by gaining and spending Bonus Points) in the following ways:

Extra or Fewer Attribute Points: 1 Bonus Point = 1 Attribute Point

Extra or Fewer Health Attribute Points: 3 Bonus Points = 1 Health Attribute Points

Extra or Fewer Skill Points: 1 Bonus Point = 3 Skill Points

Extra or Fewer Money: 1 Bonus Point = \$125.

Example: *A PC starts with only 70 Skill Points (-30 Skill Points = +10 Bonus Points), \$375 less than normal (-\$375 = +3 BP) but starts with 13 Health Attribute Points (+1 Health Attribute Point = -3 BP) and 90 Attribute Points (+10 Attribute Points = -10 BP).*

Gaining or Losing Bonus Characteristics in Game Play

The simple rule to remember here: character creation is meant to be fair, game play is not.

Advantages and disadvantages can be rewarded or taken away during game-play as part of the adventure with no points being exchanged at all. For instance, a player may the PC to have the Art Patron advantage, only to have that Art Patron killed during the first five minutes of game play, meaning that advantage is permanently lost and the points spent are wasted. On the other hand, the PC may save someone's life and gain the equivalent of Ally: Outgroup within five minutes of game-play. A PC might start with Addiction: Opiates, and declare in the first minutes of game play that she is quitting. Assuming the PC can resist the cravings rolls, he or she will be rid of that disadvantage.

To reiterate: Anything that the PC does or anything that happens to the PC in-game can remove advantages and disadvantages, or can give special advantages and disadvantages to the PC regardless of the points spent during character creation.

Advantages

Ally: Ingroup (5 BP)
 Ally: Outgroup (3 BP)
 Ally: Parents (3 BP)
 Ambidextrous (2 BP)
 Androgynous (1 BP)
 Art Patron (3 BP)
 Contact: Locals (3 BP)
 Contact: Wise (2 BP)
 Drug Resistant (4 BP)
 Dumpster Stomach (2 BP)
 Ethnic Group (4 BP)
 Experienced (5 BP)
 False Identity (5 BP)
 Free Surgery (5 BP)
 Good Rep (4 BP)
 Innate Talent: Brawler (15 BP)
 Innate Talent: Creative (10 BP)
 Innate Talent: Math (4 BP)
 Innate Talent: Painful Psychic (5 BP)
 Innate Talent: Psychic (15 BP)
 Innate Talent: Technical (8 BP)
 Instructor (10 BP)
 Low Sleep Need (2 BP)
 Minister (2 BP)
 Multilingual (2 BP)
 Pain Experienced (2 BP)
 Part Time Job: Below Board (4 BP)
 Physically Attractive: Minor (2 BP)
 Physically Attractive: Major (6 BP)
 Potential Genius (10 BP)
 Prison Baby (10 BP)
 Prison Experience (5 BP)
 Sense of Direction (1 BP)
 Special Armor (2 BP)
 Special Computer (2 BP)
 Special Pet (3 BP)
 Special Weapon (3 BP)
 Stone Face (1 BP)
 Training: Corporate (3 BP)
 Training: Drug Lords (4 BP)
 Training: Military (5 BP)
 Vampirism (5 BP)
 Word (5 BP)

Disadvantages

Addiction: Alcohol (10 BP)
 Addiction: Amphetamines (17 BP)
 Addiction: Chomper (25 BP)
 Addiction: Escape (10 BP)
 Addiction: God Killer (25 BP)
 Addiction: Inhalants (15 BP)
 Addiction: Mauler (30 BP)
 Addiction: Maxin (10 BP)
 Addiction: Multi-Drug (10 BP)
 Addiction: Nicotine (5 BP)
 Addiction: Opiates (17 BP)
 Addiction: Slave (30 BP)
 Addiction: Trace (30 BP)
 Allergy: Deadly (4 BP)
 Allergy: Incapacitating (2 BP)
 Bad Rep (4 BP)
 Blind (10 BP)
 Chronic Pain (2 BP)
 Clumsy (2 BP)
 Colorblind (1 BP)
 Crush (1 BP)
 Deaf (5 BP)
 Debt: Life Debt (1 BP)
 Debt: Loan Shark (1-5 BP)
 Debt: Restitution (2 BP)
 Drug Sensitivity (2 BP)
 Enemy: Ex (2 BP)
 Enemy: In Gang (4 BP)
 Enemy: Parents (2 BP)
 Enemy: Stalker (2 BP)
 Epilepsy (2 BP)
 ESL (2 BP)
 Fried (4 BP)
 Gang Outcast (10 BP)
 Gang Probation (2 BP)
 Haunted (2 BP)
 Hemophilia (4 BP)
 High Sleep Need (1 BP)
 Hunted: Colin (8 BP)
 Hunted: Corporation (5 BP)
 Hunted: Drug Lords (10 BP)
 Hunted: Federal Government (5 BP)
 Hunted: Gang (4 BP)

Hunted: Police (6 BP)
 Hunted: Serial Killer (3 BP)
 Illiterate (8 BP)
 Inexperienced: City (5 BP)
 Inexperienced: World (8 BP)
 Institutionalized (4 BP)
 Learning Disability (3 BP)
 Lookalike (1 BP)
 Malnourished (5 BP)
 Memory Gaps (1 BP)
 Missing Arm (5 BP)
 Missing Eye (5 BP)
 Missing Leg (5 BP)
 Mute (7 BP)
 Night Blindness (3 BP)
 No Healthcare (2 BP)
 Obese (2 BP)
 Old (15/decade BP)
 Only Parent (10 BP)
 Parole (4 BP)
 Perv Bait (2 BP)
 Physically Unattractive: Minor (2 BP)
 Physically Unattractive: Major (4 BP)
 Poor Hearing (2 BP)
 Poor Vision (2 BP)
 Pregnant (15 BP)
 Recovering Addict (3 BP)
 Sickly (4 BP)
 Street Mouth (1 BP)
 Stupid Relatives (3 BP)
 Terminal Illness (17 BP)
 Thin Bones (2 BP)
 VD: Annoying (2 BP)
 VD: Deadly (20 BP)
 Virgin (1 BP)
 Weird Brain (1 BP)
 Young (7/yr. BP)

Advantages

Ally: Ingroup (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- An older member of the PC's character class has taken a liking to the PC. The ally is older, more skilled and more powerful than the PC. The ally looks after the PC by giving advice and by trying to keep the PC out of trouble.

Ally: Outgroup (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- The PC starts the game with an NPC who is a friend or ally and is a different character class from the PC. The ally will try to help the PC whenever possible (so long as it doesn't hurt or put the ally in danger) and the PC may be required to return the favor every once in a while. When choosing this advantage, be sure to note what group the ally belongs to and what the nature of the relationship with the PC is.

Ally: Parents (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- Limitation: PCs in street families can not purchase this advantage since they already have it. Unlike most young people in the city, the PC's parents both know what the PC does on the streets and try to support the PC. The PC's parents live in the city, are of the same socioeconomic class as the PC, and are good for the occasional loan, emotional support, place to crash, advice and other similar favors.

Ambidextrous (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC is almost equally comfortable using either hand for precision tasks. PC suffers only a -2 penalty for using paired weapons.

Androgynous (Costs 1 Bonus Point)- Given the right makeup, clothing and perhaps a little padding, the PC looks equally normal, attractive and convincing as a male or female. PCs with this advantage and a Physically Attractive advantage do not lose the advantage while crossdressing.

Art Patron (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- Limitations: The PC must have at least 3 levels in a creative skill. The PC has a wealthy fan of his or her art who is willing to buy it at more than the normal market price and who is willing to do other little things to help the PC make it as an artist. Gives +\$75/wk. for every week in which the PC spend at least 8 hours working on his or her art.

Contact: Locals (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- The character knows a lot of people around the neighborhood. This includes neighbors, black market traders, local shop/restaurant/bar owners and neighborhood homeless people. They all know the character, know that he or she is an 'alright' person and will make some attempt to let the character know if they see something of interest going down.

Contact: Wise (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC knows somebody who has had a lot of experience living in the city (has the skills City Knowledge (5) and History: City (2)) and 15 levels in other skills from diverse fields. The contact also has wisdom born of experience and will almost always give useful advice.

Drug Resistant (Costs 4 Bonus Points)- The PC's body chemistry is such that psychoactive drugs have less of an effect on them than they do on the average person. Gives +7 to save vs. drug effects. Does not help save vs. drug addiction and cravings.

Dumpster Stomach (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC grew up eating food which had not been properly handled and refrigerated. The PC has developed, over the years,

a very impressive tolerance to food poisoning and other forms of food contamination. The PC gets +10 to save vs. diseases and toxin effects from bad food.

Ethnic Group (Costs 4 Bonus Points)- Limitations: The PC must take either the Bilingual advantage, the ESL disadvantage or 3+ levels of Foreign Language skill. Whatever other organization or class the PC belongs to, he or she also belongs to a small community of immigrants living in the city. The PC has spent all or some of his or her youth in the city. The PC understands American and City culture better than most of his or her fellow immigrants. Thus the PC is often called on to interpret for or represent his or her people. This additional duty does not go unrewarded: the PC can expect favors and free stuff from older member of their community, who realize what a valuable resource the PC is (even if they are secretly afraid of how much of the city has rubbed off on the PC).

Experienced (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- The PC has been around on the streets for a while before finding his or her place in the world and has a lot more city experience than most other level ones of the same class. The PC starts with one extra level of City Knowledge. The PC also gets a little more respect than some of his or her younger peers.

False Identity (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- The PC has spent years establishing a false identity. This identity has a fake ID, sparse (but believable) credit and rental history and a bank account. What the PC doesn't have is the capstone of a false identity: a birth record that would establish citizenship and allow the PC to get welfare or a legitimate job under that name.

Free Surgery (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- At some point in the PC's past he or she had access to a surgeon willing to do work free of charge. During character creation the PC can purchase any body modification and pay no surgery costs.

Good Rep (Costs 4 Bonus Points)- Deserved or not, the word among the PC's social circle (in other words, the PC's character class) is that the PC is someone special. Whatever is valued in the PC's circle (e.g. toughness, kindness, intelligence, bravery, loyalty, etc.), that's what people associate with the character's name. This rep will last about a year before most people forget about it.

Innate Talent: Brawler (Costs 10 Bonus Points)- The PC has been getting in fights since he or she was a little kid and fighting comes natural to the PC. The PC gets +2 to strike, parry and dodge, +5 to initiative, and a +3, a +2, and a +1 to any actions or reactions of the character's choice (the pluses can not be put on the same action or reaction).

Innate Talent: Creative (Costs 8 Bonus Points)- This advantage gives no pluses to creative skill costs and give no pluses to skill rolls. However, when the PC does succeed at a creative skill, the effect is beautiful or evocative in a way that no one else in the world could produce. For example: A PC with the cooking skill and decides to create a new recipe for Fajitas, that recipe will be as good as tasty or horrible as the roll dictates, there will not be any Fajita recipe in the world like it.

Innate Talent: Math (Costs 6 Bonus Points)- The PC is a mathematical prodigy. Gives -2 to Information skill costs (min. 2) and +4 to all Computer Modeling, Physics, Cryptography and Math skill rolls.



Innate Talent: Painful Psychic (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- The PC has a brain that is wired very unusually. The PC has the potential to be a very powerful psychic, but using this ability causes severe neurological side effects. The PC can purposefully limit his or her powers (-10 to psychic skill rolls) with no side effects. When using his or her full potential the PC gets +7 to psychic skill rolls (including Bleeder and Sexologist special skills), +5 pooled END for psychic purposes, but the PC suffers from one of the following side effects. The PC can choose multiple side effects (the advantage costs 2 BP less for each additional side effect, minimum cost of 1 BP).

Pain: As soon as the PC starts using any psychic skill, he or she gets an incredibly painful headache. The PC must make hard (30 difficulty) save vs. distracting pain (see p.55). The headache lasts 2d4 hours.

Fainting: The next round after the PC uses a psychic skill, he or she must make a hard (40 difficulty) save vs. unconsciousness (see p.52).

Psychosis: As soon as the PC starts using any psychic skill, he or she must make a hard save vs. hallucinations and delusions. The hallucinations and delusions are bizarre in quality and last 1d4 minutes.

Depression: After each time the PC uses a psychic skill, he or she falls in to a deep depression. The PC feels a lack of pleasure and interest in anything he or she normally enjoys or finds exciting. The PC feels that everything is going terribly wrong (even if everything is actually going well). The PC must make hard saves vs. dysphoria to get out of bed each day. The PC suffers from full sleep deprivation (p.56) no matter how long he or she stays in bed. The depression lasts for 2d6 days.

Seizures: The next round after using a psychic skill, the PC make a moderate (20 difficulty) save vs. seizure (see p.57).

Innate Talent: Psychic (Costs 15 Bonus Points)- Limitations: Can not be taken together with the Painful Psychic advantage. The PC has a natural talent for psychic skills. The PC gets +4 to psychic skill rolls (including Bleeder and Sexologist special skills), +4 END for use in psychic abilities and -4 to all psychic skill costs (min. 5).

Innate Talent: Technical (Costs 8 Bonus Points)- The way the PC thinks makes it easier for the PC to understand how technology works and how to interface with it. Gives -4 to Tech skill costs (min. 5) and +4 to Tech skill rolls.

Instructor (Costs 10 Bonus Points)- The PC has a very skilled mentor who is willing to help train the PC free of cost. Choose one of the following:

Doctor: -4 to Bio/Med Skill costs (min. 4), -2 to Intellectual (min. 6).

Fighter: -4 to Combat (min. 5), -2 to Athletics (min. 7), -2 to Military (min. 7).

Thief: -4 to Thief/Espionage (min. 5), -2 to Street (min. 5).

Hacker: -4 to Tech (min. 4), -3 to Information (min. 5), -2 to Intellectual (min. 5).

Artist: -4 to Creative (min. 3), -2 to Sociological (min. 5).

Psychic: -6 to Psychic: Exotic (min. 15), -6 to Psychic: Manipulative (min. 10), -6 to Psychic: Sensory (min. 10).

Academic: -4 to Intellectual (min. 4), -4 to Sociological (min. 4).

Low Sleep Need (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC has never needed as much sleep as the average person. The PC is happiest with about 6 hours of sleep per night and can sleep only 4 hours for several nights in a row with no detectable loss of abilities.

Minister (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC is an ordained minister of a generally recognized church. The PC can marry people, gain access to places the general public can't (especially as a chaplain in hospitals, prisons, disaster scenes) and gets some measure of respect from members of that church. Note that being ordained does not guarantee employment at any church.

Multilingual (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC was raised hearing and speaking two languages. Because of this, the pathways in the PC's brain have formed such that the PC can more easily learn new languages. The PC can choose 2 languages to be completely fluent in. Skill costs for Foreign Language and Kalor Language are -2 (min. 2).

Pain Experienced (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- At some point in his or her past, the PC experienced quite a lot of pain for quite a while. The PC has learned how to handle pain and act normally while in pain. Gives +5 to save vs. pain.

Part Time Job: Below Board (Costs 4 Bonus Points)- The PC has a job that never gets reported to any government agency. The job doesn't pay much but the PC doesn't need to pay taxes, provide proof of citizenship or have public assistance adjusted because of the extra income. The PC works 4 hours a day 5 days a week and will be fired if he or she misses 3 shifts in a month. The PC can also be fired (or put on an unpaid vacation) if the employer thinks authorities might be investigating. The PC gets +\$35/wk. The most common below-board part-time jobs in the city: assistant to a black market trader, maid, exotic dancer and light manufacturing.

Physically Attractive: Minor (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC has physical features which makes him or her more attractive to people who are interested in members of the PC's gender. Gives +4 to seduction rolls.

Physically Attractive: Major (Costs 6 Bonus Points)- The PC has physical features which makes him or her

very attractive to those with an interest in the PC's gender. Gives +8 to seduction rolls.

Potential Genius (Costs 10 Bonus Points)- The PC's brain is wired differently from other peoples' such that the PC has incredible mental potential. The cap for the PC's INL is raised from 20 to 25.

Prison Baby (Costs 10 Bonus Points)- The PC spent much of his or her early childhood in prison, being raised by a parent who was a prisoner there. The PC might have stayed with a parent or parents (in a segregated area of the prison), all the way until age ten. After ten the PC would have been forced to go to a foster home, orphanage or juvenile prison. The PC has been exposed to a lot of dangerous criminals and has had access to a lot of criminal skills. If prison is the "university of crime" then the PC is like a child who grew up attending university classes. The PC gets Back to Wall (3) (see text box), Light Sleep (2), Shiv (1), Razormouth (1), Law: Criminal (1), -4 to Combat skill costs (min. 3), -6 to Thief/Espionage (min. 3), -4 to Military (min. 3). Prison babies typically have quite a few prison tattoos and a surgery scar on his or her rib cage (from the tracking and control device).

Back to Wall (AWR)- A special skill taught only in prisons. The PC has learned to habitually keep his or her back to something at all times.

Moderate (20): the GM must inform the PC of any time his or her back is exposed

Prison Experience (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- The PC has spent time in prison where he or she had the opportunity to pick up a lot of useful criminal skills. Gives -2 to CMBT skill costs (min. 4), -4 to THIE (min. 4), -2 to MIL (min. 4). The PC can buy levels in the special skill Back To Wall (see text box) and the skills Shiv and Razormouth for 4 skill points per level.

Sense of Direction (Costs 1 Bonus Point)- The PC has an inherent ability to sense what direction he or she is facing. Roll this as an AWR feat with a difficulty based on the number of cues available (things like being indoors, being hit in the head or being in another part of the world would increase the difficulty).

Special Armor (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- At some point the PC gained possession of a suit of armor that he or she would have never been able to afford otherwise. The PC might have found it, inherited it, won it in a card game, taken it off of a dead body, etc. Choose from Historical Reproduction Plate Armor (p.93), Modern Chainmail (p.93) or Spiked Armor: Poison (p.94).

Special Computer (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC was lucky enough to come across a very high-level computer at some point in his or her past. The computer is no longer as top-of-the-line as it was years ago, but it still considerably powerful and the PC has been using it so long that he or she is very good with it (+7 to skill rolls using the computer). Choose from: Laptop: Military, Desktop: Developer; Palmtop: Combo or Laptop: New.

Special Pet (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- The PC has a trained animal that has been the PC's loyal friend and companion for many years. The PC has the pet specially trained (choose 5 commands the pet knows) and the PC and the pet communicate well. Choose from Dog, Chimpanzee, Horse or Eagle.

Special Weapon (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- At some point the PC was lucky enough to gain possession of a very special weapon which was much better than the PC could have any hope of getting a hold of at that period in his or her life. Because the PC has trained almost exclusively with this weapon, he or she gets +4 to any roll using the weapon. Choose from:

Skullcrusher: As per p.107, but by virtue of a very sharp rock, does an extra 1 bladed damage (pierces armor as 4 bladed).

Bow (Compound): As per p.106 but +2 ft. FR, +100 ft. MR. The bow is also made of a nearly indestructible material which can be used to parry or as a 1 blunt damage weapon.

Sword (Broadsword): As per p.107 but it is weighted and balanced perfectly (no hard strike).

Sword (Katana): As per p.153 but because of incredible sharpness: +1 bladed damage and +2 to the pierces-as damage.

Stone Face (Costs 1 Bonus Point)- Since he or she was born, emotions have never registered very strongly on the PC's facial expressions, body language, voice or physiology. The PC's emotions are just as strong as anyone else's (though the PC may have trouble convincing people of that fact). +10 difficulty to any attempt to detect lies or emotions in the PC.

Training: Corporate (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- The PC has been in a corporation and has learned in the best corporate training programs. Gives -4 skill costs (min. 3) to one of the following (choose only one): Bio/Med, Information, Intellectual, Tech or Sociological. The PC gets Corporations (1).

Training: Drug Lords (Costs 4 Bonus Points)- The PC was once a member of the Drug Lords' organization and learned a lot about how the Drug Lords work (the PC does not know where any of the lords live, nor who really runs the Drug Lords). The PC gets -4 to the following skill costs (min. 3): Pistol, Addiction, Production Chemistry, Street Drugs. The PC also starts with \$1000 worth of drugs, armor and weapons.

Training: Military (Costs 4 Bonus Points)- The PC has been trained in a military organization. The PC gets -4 to Athletics skill costs (min. 3), -3 to Combat (min. 4), -4 to Military (min. 3). PC gets Rifle (1).

Vampirism (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- The PC has become infected with Mitochondrial Vampirism, an ancient disease (recently resurrected by archeologists) that may have been responsible for some elements of vampire myths. Gives +4 INCY, +4 BLD, +4 END, +2 STH, +2 SPD. The PC must eat 10 times the amount of sugar that normal people do, more if the PC has been doing heavy activity or have been oxygen deprived. For computing hunger damage, six hours of "normal" activity counts as a day, 15 minutes of heavy activity counts as a day and 1 minute

of oxygen deprivation counts as a day. Note that fats and carbohydrates can be converted by the body in to sugars, but this takes so long that the PC may starve to death in the meantime. Sugary food is converted in to glucose (blood sugar), and consuming (or taking intravenously) glucose is faster still.

Word (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- The PC has a reputation within his or her class, and even beyond that, of being someone who can be trusted to be honest and to keep his or her word. This advantage will evaporate quickly if the PC acts inconsistently with this reputation.

Disadvantages

The Catch-All Rule

If a disadvantage doesn't have the potential to cause problems for the PC, the GM can choose to give fewer (or no) Bonus Points for it. For instance, it is ridiculous for an Addict PC to take the Bad Rep disadvantage with the "Liar/Backstabber" choice because all addicts already have that rep. The PC and the GM should work together to either lower the point value of the disadvantage (the PC might decide that, because of the PC's particular situation and life goals, that disad is worth 1 point) or to make the advantage worse to match the points awarded (the GM might rule that the PC is so infamous a liar and backstabber that his or her very name is used in all city social circles as a slang term for lying and backstabbing).

Addiction: Alcohol (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- The PC is physiologically and psychologically addicted to alcohol (which has a craving difficulty of 15). See p.57 for addiction rules and p.85 for the drug profile of alcohol. The PC has been using alcohol daily for 1 year so far and so does not yet suffer from any appreciable long term effects (see p.85). Note: It costs an alcoholic approximately \$35/wk. to buy enough alcohol to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Amphetamines (Gives 17 Bonus Points)- The PC is psychologically addicted to amphetamines (which have a craving difficulty of 20). See p.57 for addiction rules and p.86 for the drug profile of amphetamines. The PC has been using amphetamines for 6 months so far and suffers from ulcers and malnutrition (-1 BLD, -1 BDY), see p.86 for more long term effects. Note: It costs an amphetamines addict approximately \$49/wk. to buy enough amphetamines to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Chomper (Gives 25 Bonus Points)- The PC is psychologically addicted to chomper (which has a craving difficulty of 30). See p.57 for addiction rules and p.87 for the drug profile of chomper. The PC has been using chomper for 6 months and suffers from lost hair and teeth (-5 to seduction rolls), Liver Damage (-6 to save vs. poisoning/drug effects) and Anemia (-1/2 BLD), see p.87 for more long term effects. Note: It costs a chomper addict approximately \$49/wk. to buy enough chomper to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Escape (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- The PC is psychologically addicted to escape (which has a craving difficulty of 20). See p.57 for addiction rules and p.88 for the drug profile of escape. The PC has been using escape for 6 months so far and suffers from blunted personality (PC's feelings and opinions are not very strong), insomnia (1 in 6 chance each night of not being able to sleep) and poor vision (-1 to vision based AWR rolls), see p.88 for more long term effects. Note: It costs an escape addict approximately \$140/wk. to buy enough escape to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: God Killer (Gives 25 Bonus Points)- The PC is psychologically addicted to God Killer (which has a craving difficulty of 30). See p.57 for addiction rules and p.88 for the drug profile of God Killer. The PC has been using God Killer regularly for 6 months so far and so does not yet suffer from any appreciable long term effects (see p.88). Note: It costs a God Killer addict approximately \$70/wk. to buy enough God Killer to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Inhalants (Gives 15 Bonus Points)- The PC is psychologically addicted to inhalants, which are a number of commonly available chemicals (paint, airplane glue, etc.) which displace oxygen going to the brain and causes euphoria and dissociation. Inhalants costs about \$2/dose (though they are most often shoplifted) and a typical addict must use 2 doses a day

to prevent cravings. The PC suffers steady brain damage: -1 AWR, -1 AGY, -1 INL, -1 WIL for every 6 months of daily use. The PC has been abusing inhalants for about 3 months. Inhalants have a Craving Difficulty of 15.

Addiction: Mauler (Gives 30 Bonus Points)- The PC is physiologically and psychologically addicted to mauler (which has a craving difficulty of 30). See p.57 for addiction rules and p.89 for the drug profile of mauler. The PC has been using mauler for 3 months and suffers from brain damage (-3 INL). See long term effects, p.89. Note: it costs a mauler addict approximately \$49/wk. to buy enough mauler to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Maxin (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- The PC is psychologically addicted to the smart drug Maxin (which have a craving difficulty of 20). See p.57 for addiction rules and p.90 for the drug profile of Maxin. The PC has been using Maxin for 1 year so far and suffers from weakened bones (-1 BDY). See long term effects, p.90. Note: It costs a Maxin addict approximately \$140/wk. to buy enough Maxin to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Multiple Addictions

The PC can not take more than one of the following addiction disadvantages for points. To create a PC who does any drug he or she can get a hold of, take the Addiction: Multi-Drug disadvantage.



Addiction: Multi-Drug (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- The PC is not addicted to any one particular drug. He or she has a psychological addiction to being intoxicated. The PC's basic problem is that he or she can not deal with living life in a sober state. The PC lost or never developed the psychological mechanisms to deal with unfiltered reality. The PC can stand to be sober for short periods, typically while he or she is doing something to keep busy (like hustling money to get drugs). When evening rolls around and nothing stands between the PC and examination of his or her life, the PC must make a craving roll (WIL + 1d20 vs. 20) to avoid finding some intoxicant. The PC will use whatever he or she can get a hold of: alcohol, marijuana, god killer, hallucinogens, inhalants, pain killers, amphetamines, etc. He or she may blow all available cash on week-long drug binges which leave the PC with debt, health problems and social problems (that are almost as good of a distraction as intoxication). Typical multi-drug addicts can spend as little as \$35/week on drugs (though a typically multi-drug addict will spend more on better drugs when he or she has the money).

Addiction: Nicotine (Gives 5 Bonus Points)- The PC is physiologically addicted to nicotine (which has a craving difficulty of 20). See p.57 for addiction rules and p.87 for the drug profile of nicotine. The PC has been smoking for 2 years and suffers from emphysema (-1 END) and increased risk of cancer and stroke. See long term effects, p.87. Note: It costs a smoker approximately \$15 to \$49/wk. (depending on what they smoke) to buy enough tobacco to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Opiates (Gives 17 Bonus Points)- The PC is physiologically and psychologically addicted to opiates (which has a craving difficulty of 20). See p.57 for addiction rules and p.90 for the drug profile of opiates. The PC has been using opiates for 6 months so far and suffers from a poor immune system (-4 to save vs. disease contraction and progression), see long term effects, p.90. Note: it costs an opiate addict approximately \$56/wk. to buy enough opiates to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Slave (Gives 30 Bonus Points)- The PC is physiologically and psychologically addicted to Slave (which has a craving difficulty of 35). See p.57 for addiction rules and p.91 for the drug profile of Slave. The PC has been using Slave for 1 year so far and suffers from weight loss (-1 BDY), pale skin, liver damage (-1 to save vs. poison/drug effects). See long term effects, p.91. Note: It costs a Slave addict approximately \$56/wk. to buy enough opiates to avoid withdrawal.

Addiction: Trace (Gives 30 Bonus Points)- The PC is physiologically and psychologically addicted to Trace (which have a craving difficulty of 30). See p.57 for addiction rules and p.91 for the drug profile of Trace. The PC has been using Trace for 1 year so far and suffers from damaged immune system (-4 to save vs. disease contraction and progression), arthritis (-1 AGY) and reddish skin. See long term effects, p.91. Note: it costs a trace addict approximately \$49/wk. to buy enough Trace to avoid withdrawal.

Allergy: Deadly (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- The PC has a serious sensitivity to some common food item (e.g. peanuts, wheat, eggs, milk, soy, shellfish, tomatoes, fish). If the PC ingests even a little he or she will be incapacitated within 10 minutes and will die within 1 hour without medical attention.

Allergy: Incapacitating (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- Like the Deadly Allergy, except the health problems the PC suffers more-or-less prevent the PC from doing anything (must make a 30 difficulty roll to do anything) but will not kill the PC. The reaction could be blinding headaches, convulsive vomiting or asthma.

Bad Rep (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- In the circles the PC runs in (the PC's character class) the PC's name is associated with something bad. The story may or may not be true, but if it isn't true there is no way the PC can prove his or her innocence. The only hope for the PC is to do so many good things that the bad thing is forgotten about. Choose one of the following that is believed about the PC.

Traitor/Snitch: The PC knowingly betrayed those he or she was supposed to be loyal to.

Uncontrollable/Dangerous: The PC did not take orders, listen to reason or consider the safety of comrades in a way that hurt others.

Stupid/Irresponsible: The PC was asked to do something that a small child could do, but the PC acted without thinking about the consequences and failed terribly.

Liar/Backstabber: The PC has pretended to be a friend while secretly hurting his or her supposed friends just to get ahead.

Naive/A Liability: The PC showed a total lack of street smarts, city knowledge or common sense.

Blind (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- The PC's eyes do not work at all. After character creation the PC can get cloned eyes for about \$2,500 or implants which serve most of the same functions of eyes for less.

Chronic Pain (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC has some old injury that causes him or her to experience pain for about half of waking hours. The PC must make an easy (10) save vs. distracting pain about half the time and is at -10 to save vs. psychological addiction to pain-killer drugs. The PC's injury can probably be fixed with about \$1000 of surgery. The PC can also get a Pain Blocker mental program, but sustained use of one of these programs has its own disadvantages.

Clumsy (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- When the PC is not paying attention to what he or she is doing the PC drops things, knocks things over, bumps in to things, etc. At least once in a game session, while the PC is not trying to be careful, he or she will make some clumsy movement (a hard AGY roll can help the PC recover from or lessen the damage done).

Colorblind (Gives 1 Bonus Points)- The PC was born with pupils that are unable to distinguish between a broad range of colors. Most likely, the PC can not see a difference between colors containing red and colors containing green. The PC can get new eyes for about \$2,500 but will have to learn how to understand the new information they give.

Crush (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- The PC is in love with someone who doesn't return those feelings. The PC may eventually get over the PC's feelings (taking 6 months to a year) or may be able to finally woo the subject of his or her affections.

Deaf (Gives 5 Bonus Points)- The PC was born without any ability to hear. The PC can get implants which let him or her hear but will have to spend years learning how to hear.

Debt: Life Debt (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- Someone saved the PC's life; someone who had absolutely no duty to do so. The PC owes a major debt to this person. If the PC shirks an opportunity to repay this debt, he or she will gain a bad reputation among the PC's social circles.

Debt: Loan Shark (Gives 1 Bonus Point per \$1000, max. 5)- The PC owes money to some criminal, typically a black market trader who makes money giving loans to the desperate. The PC is past due on the loan and the loan shark has sent out thugs with the job of getting the money, valuables or seriously hurting the PC. The more money that is owed, the more thugs the loan shark is willing to send. Some loan sharks will spend \$2000 hiring thugs to get back \$1000, just to make sure everyone knows that they can't renege on a debt. In the end, most loan sharks would rather kill the PC than let him or her get away without paying back a debt.

Debt: Restitution (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- Limitations: Members of gangs or street families only. At some point the PC committed some crime against or otherwise hurt another person. The PC's elders have decided that the PC must do whatever he or she can to repay the damage done. The PC must do whatever he or she can to help the victim, save something which would practically be suicide. If the PC shirks an opportunity to repay the victim, he or she faces serious punishment from gang/family elders. It is up to the elders to decide when the debt has finally been repaid (the elders are likely to err on the side of overpaying).

Drug Sensitivity (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC's body chemistry and neurology is such that the PC is extremely sensitive to psychoactive drugs of all types. Gives -7 to save vs. drug effects (does not effect addiction and craving saves).

Enemy: Ex (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC has an ex-lover who has a major problem with the PC being alive and happy. The Ex is not angry enough to actually kill the PC. However, the Ex knows the PC's friends and family, knows secrets about the PC and will generally make life difficult for the PC.

Enemy: In Gang (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- Limitations: PCs in gangs only. A powerful member of the PC's gang does not like the PC and will attempt to sabotage the PC

by whatever means are accepted within the gang (e.g. in the Risen the normal thing to do with an enemy is try to rip them open, in the Sexologists the normal thing to do to an enemy is to slowly turn public opinion about the PC around by convincing friends and lovers that the PC is no good). The enemy may even break the gang's own rules if the enemy thinks he or she can get away with it.

Enemy: Parents (Gives 2 Bonus Point)- The PC's parents have a serious problem with the PC's current lifestyle and will do whatever they can to sabotage the PC and force the PC to live as they do. The tactics used will vary according to parent. Some parents may try to blackmail the PC by suddenly withholding money the PC depends on. Some parents may hire cult deprogrammers. Some parents may try to physically capture the PC and haul him or her off the streets.

Enemy: Stalker (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC is being stalked by some person who believes that he or she is deeply in love with the PC. The hope that the PC may someday return this love is the only things that has any meaning in the stalker's life. The stalker will ignore any evidence or reasoning that might take away this hope and may even delude themselves in to believing things to keep this hope alive (like that the PC is sending secret love messages or that the PC and the stalker are married). In general the stalker is more annoying than dangerous, but when stresses mount in the stalker's life, the stalker can become dangerous and might even decide that the pair would be better off together in the afterlife. The stalker has no special powers or training but is dangerous because he or she has memorized volumes of information about the PC.

Epilepsy (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC suffers from occasional seizures (about once a week). The PC loses consciousness and may make strange sounds or movements. The seizure lasts about 1 minute and it can take up to an hour to recover full AWR, INL and AGY. Anti-epileptic medications (covered by Indie and Well health insurance) can reduce the occurrence of seizures to about once a month, and anti-epileptic mental programs (10 MMUs, \$250 +\$250 installation) can eliminate the disorder.



ESL (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC speaks some non-English language fluently and has only recently started to learn English. The PC must buy levels of Foreign Language: English to be able to read, write, speak or understand any English at all. Because the PC is immersed in English, after character creation the PC can buy skill levels in English at -6 skill cost (min. 1).

Fried (Gives 4 points)- The character has used too many hallucinogens and has permanently changed the structure of his or her neural networks. This damage is so widespread it is impossible to repair via mental programming. The character suffers from the following deficits: -5 to save vs. hallucinations and delusions. One round penalty before they can use any skill or ability that utilizes abstract thought (for instance: a PC wants to use his math skill, he must spend a round trying to summon the right state of consciousness). Flashbacks (hard difficulty hallucinations or delusions) triggered by sensory stimuli. The PC does not know what sensory stimuli will cause a flashback (GM chooses 5 triggers) but may be able to figure out over time what they are.

Gang Outcast (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- Limitations: Gang members PCs only. The PC is currently not considered a member of the gang that is the PC's character class. The gang will not seek revenge for crimes committed against the PC and will become very angry if the PC masquerades as a member of that gang. Character creation is normal, but when the PC starts earning XP he or she does not have the skill costs and access to special skills that correspond with that character class (because the PC can no longer go to fellow PCs for training). Instead, the PC should use the skill costs and income of Freelancers (if the PC is a Well) or Eccentrics (if the PC is an Indie). At level 1, adventure 1, the PC has two choices: seek another path as another character class (see Disciplines, p.49) or try to get back in to the good graces of the gang that originally trained the PC.

Gang Probation (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- Limitation: Gang PCs only. The PC has done something wrong. The PC was allowed to stay a member of the gang but on probationary status. The PC is being very closely watched by his or her gang elders. If the PC screws up in any way he or she will not be shown any mercy, will not be given a warning or another chance. The PC will simply be removed from the gang (see Gang Outcast). If the PC behaves flawlessly for one experience level, the probation will end.

Haunted (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC gets occasional flashes of sensation of himself or herself dying violently. These sensations all seem to point to some possible future event. If this really is a 'ghost' event (see p.203) then it means there is some very serious danger in the PC's future. What the PC has visions of will happen unless the PC can gain enough knowledge and wariness from these visions to survive the event. Unfortunately, the sensations the PC receives do not tell much and it may be hard to know when the danger is coming.

Hemophilia (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- The PC's body does not produce clotting factors that let ruptured blood vessels close up. If injured, the PC keeps bleeding (losing half

the original damage again every minute) until the PC dies or has the severed arteries repaired or cauterized. The PC can take drugs that will alleviate the symptoms (\$5/day, free with Indie and Well health care) so that the PC stops bleeding after 2 minutes (injuries only do double damage). The disease can be cured with \$1000 worth of genetic therapy.

High Sleep Need (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- The PC needs more sleep than most people. The PC is most comfortable sleeping 12 hours a night and will suffer sleep deprivation damage if he or she gets any less than 10 hours.

Hunted: Colin (Gives 8 Bonus Points)- The self-reproducing serial killer Colin (see p.178) wants the PC dead. Knowledge of the PC varies among Colins (since Colin has no central interchange of information). A small percentage of Colins have never heard of the PC. The majority know the PC's name, character class and they want the PC dead, but nothing else. A minority know the PC personally: they know the PC's face, where the PC hangs out and whatever they have been able to discern by snooping around (Colins can learn quite a lot, since they take over people's bodies and masquerade as their victims). Colin's motivation may seem like rage, but really it's about reputation: Colin wants people to see him as a god, and he's not much of a god if he can't take out a single enemy. If Colin catches the PC he will kill the PC in an especially sadistic way and make sure that, when the body is found, everyone knows that it is Colin who did it.

Hunted: Corporation (Gives 5 Bonus Points)- The PC is wanted by a major multinational corporation. The corporation wishes to find the PC and prosecute the PC in criminal and civil courts for some crime against the corp. The corp has professional skip-tracers looking for the PC and data analysts combing the corporate databases for any sign of the PC. All the PC has to do is put his or her name and address on a "win a boat" contest entry slip at some fast food place (which is a subsidiary of the corp) and the next day there will be corporate security agents at the PC's front door. If the PC is found he or she will face a multi-pronged legal attack that can last for years. As soon as the corp finds the PC they will put the PC under 24 hour a day surveillance (so the PC can not escape again). The corp will not do anything illegal to get the PC (though some independent contractors might be tempted to bend the rules in order to get a bonus for catching the PC).

Hunted: Drug Lords (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- Limitations: Not available for Goods, Hungry and Night Shift, who are already enemies of the Drug Lords. The PC is an official enemy of the Drug Lords. Most likely the PC did something to the Drug Lords and the Drug Lords feel they have to kill the PC in order to get the message across that nobody gets to do that to them. The PC's vitals (name, gender, ethnicity, age, character class) have been distributed to the city's pusher gangs. Any pusher gang who kills the PC gets a \$10,000 reward. Many pusher gangs let addicts in on this opportunity (the addict might get a few thousand if he or she kills the PC, the pusher gang gets the rest) which means there are thousands of people in the city out looking for the PC. If a Drug Lord gets any info on the PC's whereabouts, he or she will immediately send a Dagger team (p.192) out to get the PC.

Hunted: Federal Government (Gives 5 Bonus Points)- The PC is on the “most wanted” lists of the FBI and other federal law enforcement agencies. The PC has a federal agent working 8 hours a day on finding the PC. The PC’s picture and vitals are regularly seen on the internet, especially by cops and bounty hunters. There is a \$20,000 reward for the PC’s capture. Fortunately, Federal Agents have little knowledge of the city and, since they aren’t allowed to bring in guns, are fairly weak on the streets. The agent’s hope is to track down the PC via internet research and phone calls (the same way skip tracers do), corner the PC with a couple of agents and Night Shift officers, and have the National Guard on speed-dial if the PC puts up armed resistance. If caught, the PC faces criminal charges and life imprisonment.

Hunted: Gang (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- One city gang has named the PC in particular as one of its enemies. The gang is looking to kill the PC. Anyone who tries to protect the PC will become, to a lesser degree, an enemy of the gang. While its thirst for vengeance remains unfulfilled, the gang’s memory will be quite long indeed. When choosing this disadvantage, be sure to note which gang and why they are so mad at the PC.

Hunted: Police (Gives 6 Bonus Points)- The city police department is out to get the PC and are under such pressure to catch the PC that even the corrupt Day Shift officers (who normally care more about graft than fighting crime) are out looking for the PC. The day shift’s experience and control of resources, combined with the Night Shift’s bravery and knowledge of the streets makes the police department a dangerous enemy, capable of powering through any area of the city (with the National Guard ready to step in if they meet armed resistance) in search of the PC. If caught, the PC faces criminal charges and life imprisonment.

Hunted: Serial Killer (Gives 3 Bonus Points)- An ordinary serial killer (not a Colin) wants the PC dead. Perhaps the PC is “the one who got away” or is someone who bullied the serial killer as a child. The PC doesn’t know much about the serial killer. The PC might have caught a brief glimpse of the serial killer’s face or heard the serial killer’s voice during an aborted attack, but the PC does not know the killer’s name and address and would have a hard time picking him or her out of a crowd.

Illiterate (Gives 8 Bonus Points)- The PC can not write or read any language. Later in the game the PC can learn to read by buying the equivalent of 5 levels in an Intellectual skill. While the PC can not read he or she has the following increased skill costs: +10 to Bio/Med, +20 to Information, +15 to Intellectual, +15 to Tech, +10 to Sociological, +5 to Military. If the PC is a Well, the PC will likely experience long periods of loss of welfare and homelessness because he or she will have to depend upon friends and social workers to complete the regular paperwork necessary to stay on welfare.

Inexperienced: City (Gives 5 Bonus Points)- Limitations: Not available to Utopia Children, who already have this disadvantage. The PC has received the same training as others in his or her character class, but has practically no city knowledge. The PC starts with no levels of the City Knowledge skill. The PC does not know basic things like

what a Skin Borg is (unless he or she is a Skin Borg, or is a member of a gang currently at war with or in an allegiance with the Skin Borgs). This disadvantage does not make the PC naive or stupid.

Inexperienced: World (Gives 8 Bonus Points)- For some reason the PC is an adult but has practically no knowledge of the city or the modern world in general. The majority of people with this disadvantage were raised in bizarre cult communes. The PC doesn’t know simple things like what a police officer is, how to use an ATM machine or why it is wise to lock one’s door at night.

Institutionalized (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- The PC has grown up in the care of the state. He or she was not lucky enough to be in the state orphanage when the children rebelled. Instead, the PC has been shuffled around between juvenile detention facilities, foster homes, group homes and even mental hospitals across the state. These facilities are kind of like storage facilities for kids nobody wants. They do nothing to help the kids develop in to productive adults and the state only provides as much education as they have to avoid being charged with criminal neglect. The PC starts with -3 CHM (poor social skills development), +2 to skill costs for Bio/Med, Creative, Information, Intellectual and Social skills (during character creation only). The PC has a general ignorance of things most Wells and Indies take for granted (like how to make a budget, how to look for a job, how to handle disputes with a landlord, etc.).

Learning Disability (Gives 3 Bonus Points)- The PC’s brain is wired in such a way that some things are incredibly difficult for the PC to learn. Choose the type of learning disability as follows:

Math: +2 to Bio/Med, Intellectual and Sociological skill costs, +4 to Tech skill costs, +8 to Information skill costs.

Reading: +3 to Tech and Military skill costs, +6 to Bio/Med, Information, Intellectual and Sociological skill costs.

Spacial: +8 to Athletic, Combat skill costs. +4 to Creative, Street and Military skill costs.

Lookalike (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- There is some person who looks enough like the PC that the PC is commonly mistaken for this person and visa versa. The lookalike sometimes gets in to trouble, which gets the PC in trouble.

Malnourished (Gives 5 Bonus Points)- In the past the PC was badly malnourished and this has had a lasting negative impact on the PC’s health. The PC suffers from a permanent -1 BLD, -1 BDY (the max. caps for these attributes suffer from the same penalties). The PC is -4 to save vs. disease contraction and progression and -4 to seduction rolls because of things like missing teeth, thin hair, etc. (this can be removed with plastic surgery).

Memory Gaps (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- The PC has periods of his or her life that can’t be remembered at all. Common causes are drug use, head injuries and mental program malfunction. The danger here is that something dangerous from the PC’s past might show up and the PC won’t recognize it coming.

Missing Arm (Gives 5 Bonus Points ea.)- The PC is missing one arm. For STH rolls that normally require both arms, the PC's STH is half (round down). For \$250 the PC can purchase a strap-on electromechanical prosthetic that looks more-or-less normal and can be used for simple tasks (turning a doorknob, smoking a cigarette) but is not strong, fast or precise enough for things like fighting, lock picking, etc. For \$2500 the PC can have a new arm cloned and attached.

Missing Eye (Gives 5 Bonus Points) The PC is missing one eye. A new one can be cloned and put in for \$1000. With one eye missing the PC is -7 to AWR rolls requiring peripheral vision or precise judgment of distance.

Missing Leg (Gives 5 Bonus Points ea.)- The PC can get a solid prosthetic (nothing more than strap-on leg-shaped plastic) for \$75, crutches for \$25 or a non-electronic wheelchair for \$100. Walking with a solid prosthetic or crutches reduces PC's SPD to 1. Wheelchairs make the PC's max. SPD equal to half his or her STH. For \$450 the PC can buy an electromechanical prosthetic leg that can move and let the PC walk at normal SPD or run at max. 5 SPD. For \$2500 the PC can get a new leg cloned and attached.

Mute (Gives 7 Bonus Points)- The PC can not speak or make anything other than coughing and gagging noises. The PC can have an electronic voicebox installed for \$450.

Nightblindness (Gives 3 Bonus Points)- The PC sees very poorly (-10 to AWR rolls) in low light. PC is partially blinded (-5 to actions/reactions) in the light of a room lit with a 15 watt bulb and fully blinded (-10 to actions/reactions) in light so dim that a normal person could not read a book. The PC can get this condition removed with \$1000 worth of genetic therapy.

Obese (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC is so overweight that it impairs his or her abilities and causes health problems. The PC is -10 to all jumping, sprinting, climbing rolls and +10 to rolls where weight is an advantage (tackle, pin, ramming). The PC is -7 to save vs. heat exhaustion and +7 to save vs. hypothermia. Depending upon the PC's STH, standing or walking may be a tiring activity (uses pooled END).

Old (Gives 15 Bonus Points per decade after 50)- The character starts the game much older than most of his or her peers. Age not only has physiological effects but changes the way characters are viewed by others. Many people assume that older people are weak and can be pushed around. For each decade after 50, the character gets a cumulative -2 STH, -2 END, -2 SPD, -1 AGY, -1 BLD and -1 BDY.

Only Parent (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- The PC is the only caregiver of a very small child that the PC is legally and psychologically attached to. If the child dies, the PC will be so psychologically distraught that he or she will be unable to complete normal day-to-day duties effectively (in other words, forget about playing the character as a normal PC for quite a while). The child starts at 3 to 5 years old. Create a mini character sheet for the child. The PC may be able to get others to watch the child, but this

will either cost money (see Daycare, p.97), mean asking for a favor (which will eventually have to be repaid) or will put the child in a moderately dangerous situation. As the PC grows older and wiser, so will the child. For every experience level the PC gains, the child will age 1 year, will gain 4 attribute points and 50 skill points. By the time the PC reaches level 10, the child should be old enough to take care of himself or herself and even to be a PC. Because of extra costs from the child, the PC's income is reduced by \$25/wk. for Street People, \$50/wk. for Wells and \$75/wk. for Indies

Child NPC Creation

Step 1 – Name, Age, Gender, Description

Step 2 – Create attributes by splitting up 35 attribute points with the following maximums: AGY: 10, AWR: 7, END: 7, INL: 6, STH: 5, WIL: 7. The NPC also has 1 BLD, 1 BDY and 3 INCY.

Step 3 – Use 100 skill points to buy skills as follows: 40 skill points for one level of any skill the parent has, 10 skill points for one level in a "child feat" (this is a CHM, INL, AWR or WIL feat that most adults can do but most children that age can't). Example: a child might start with Beg For Food (1), Find Home (2), Recognize Members of Mommy's Gang (1), Give Self Injection (2), Skill: Calm Attack (1).

Step 4 – Equip child (use money from PC's starting pool).

Parole (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- The PC is out on parole from prison. The PC is out conditionally: there are a set of rules and if the PC breaks them the PC is given a five minute hearing and shipped back to prison (for about 6 months). The PC must meet a parole officer weekly and the parole officer may drop by unannounced (1 in 20 chance each day). Because the PC is homeless, he or she must wear a tamper-proof tracking device which allows the parole officer to find the PC. Most characters on parole are given regular urine tests to make sure they are using no drugs or alcohol and they are not allowed to associate with criminals or gangs. There may be other conditions depending upon the PC's crime (a hacker might not be allowed to own a computer, a burglar might not be allowed to own tools, etc.)

Perv Bait (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- Something about the way the PC looks, dresses or acts has a strong tendency to attract people with an unhealthy attitude towards sex and relationships, including some people who are dangerous. The PC attracts people that the PC really doesn't want attracted to them. The PC has no idea what it is about him or her that attracts these people (otherwise he or she would change it). The PC faces the risk of losing faith in sex and relationships altogether as they are again-and-again burned by partners who seem nice but end up having something seriously wrong with them.

Physically Unattractive: Minor (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC has features which tend to make him or her less attractive to those interested in members of the PC's gender. Gives -4 to seduction rolls.

Physically Unattractive: Major (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- The PC has features which have a very strong tendency to make him or her unattractive to those interested in members of the PC's gender. Gives -8 to seduction rolls.

Poor Hearing (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- Without aid, the PC's hearing is very poor (-10 to hearing based AWR rolls).

Poor Vision (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- Without prescription glasses, contact lenses or some other special aid, the PC is almost blind. If the PC is nearsighted, he or she can see close-up things okay (well enough to recognize a person's face at 1 ft.) or if the PC is farsighted he or she can see far away things okay (well enough to recognize a building). Prescription glasses cost \$40. Corrective surgery (\$500) can restore the PC's vision to normal.

Pregnant (Gives 15 Bonus Points)- The PC has recently become pregnant. The PC has a strong desire to give birth to the baby and raise it. The pregnancy lasts for 40 weeks and is broken down in to three trimesters. The disadvantages faced by the PC vary according to trimester:

-1st Trimester (weeks 1 to 13): "Morning sickness" (-10 to save vs. nausea). Difficulty sleeping and fatigue (-2 END, -4 to save vs. unconsciousness). Emotional lability (-5 to save vs. fear, anger and other emotions).

-2nd Trimester (weeks 14 to 27): PC will begin to be visibly pregnant (-4 to save vs. loss of balance). Hormonal changes are generally positive: effects on skin and hair may make the PC more attractive to some (+2 to seduction rolls), anxiety is reduced (+4 to save vs. fear). Strange food cravings. Forgetfulness and trouble concentrating (-2 INL). Trouble dissipating body heat (-4 to save vs. heat exhaustion).

-3rd Trimester (weeks 28 to 40): Poor sleep. The PC is very large (-10 to save vs. loss of balance, back pain, walking around will use pooled END). Breath is short (-4 END). Occasional contractions throughout this trimester (20 difficulty distracting pain). Increased need to urinate. Fatigue (-4 to save vs. unconsciousness). Trouble dissipating body heat (-7 to save vs. heat exhaustion).

During the entire pregnancy the PC must be careful to avoid harm coming to the baby. During the first trimester, the baby is most sensitive to toxins and poisons (takes double damage the PC takes). As the baby gets bigger, it is less vulnerable to toxins but it becomes bigger and thus more vulnerable to physical injury: Any random injury to the PC has a 1 in 20 chance of hitting the baby during the first trimester, 1 in 10 during the second trimester and 1 in 6 during the third trimester. At all times the baby has AR 20 PR 2 bladed 2 blunt from the PC's body. Assume the baby has 0 BDY, 1 BLD, 1 INCY.

If the PC carries the pregnancy to term and gives birth, the PC will then have the Only Parent disadvantage (p.45).

Recovering Addict (Gives 3 Bonus Points)- The PC has been a psychological addict of some drug and has recently quit. The PC has been clean for about 2 months and experiences cravings every 11 days or

any time the PC is under psychological stress. The PC is at -10 to psychological addiction rolls for any drug. The PC has a psychological void in his or her life that was once taken up by the drug. This void manifests as things like insomnia, depression, boredom, lack of goals in life, etc. The PC also experiences various health problems depending upon what drug the PC used. Choose one of the following as the drug the PC used:

Name	Craving Difficulty	Health Problems
Alcohol	15	Brain damage (-2 INL, -2 AWR, retrograde and anterograde amnesia at 4 difficulty to save), liver damage (-2 to save vs. drug/poison effects)
Amphetamines	20	Ulcers, malnutrition (-1/2 BLD, -1/2 BDY)
God Killer	30	Emphysema (-2 END), increased risk of cancer, brain damage (-1 INL, -1 AWR)
Mauler	30	Brain damage (-2 INL)
Opiates	20	-2 to save vs. disease progression and mortality.
Slave	35	Weight loss (-1 BDY), liver damage (-1 to save vs. drug/poison effects)
Trace	30	Damaged immune system (-4 to save vs. disease progression and contraction) and arthritis (-1 AGY)

Sickly (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- The PC was born with a susceptibility to many types of diseases. The PC has had more serious illnesses by their teens than most people do in 80 years. The PC starts with -7 to save vs. disease contraction and progression and -10 to save vs. shock. The PC regains lost END and heals from injuries half as fast.

Stupid Relatives (Gives 3 Bonus Points)- The PC's relatives (parents, siblings, even children) have an annoying habit of getting themselves in trouble and running to the PC for help.

Street Mouth (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- The PC has never learned how to speak in any way other than using street slang, a thick New York accent and many profanities. If the PC tries to talk like a non-street dweller, he or she will most likely stutter and be nearly unable to communicate. The PC can learn to speak in other ways, but it will take time and effort (PC must spend skill points as if buying 2 levels in a Sociological skill).

Terminal Illness (Gives 17 Bonus Points)- The PC has a non-contagious illness that there is no known cure for and that will eventually cause the PC's death. The PC's only hope is to stave off death with expensive medications (and even more expensive nanobot treatments) and hope for a cure to be discovered (and either pass FDA scrutiny or get on the black market). The only other possibility is if the PC can gain enough money to be transferred in to a new body (see p.209). The PC must roll once on the random symptom table every week if un-medicated or every month if on medication (\$75/wk.).

Random Symptom Table (All minuses are permanent and cumulative)	
01-05%	Weight loss (-1/2 BLD)
06-10%	Muscle loss (-1 SPD, -1 STH)
11-25%	Tiredness (-2 END)
26-30%	Hair loss, splotchy skin (-4 to seduction rolls)
31-35%	Dizziness (-4 to save vs. loss of balance)
36-40%	Pain sensitivity (-4 to save vs. pain)
41-50%	Nausea (-4 to save vs. nausea)
51-55%	Clammy skin (-4 to save vs. hypothermia)
56-65%	Weakened immune system (-2 to save vs. disease contraction and mortality)
66-70%	Cloudy eyes (-2 to vision based AWR rolls)
71-75%	Ringing in ears (-2 to hearing based AWR rolls)
76-80%	Calcium loss (-1 BDY)
81-85%	Loss of sex drive (+10 difficulty to be seduced)
86-90%	Light sensitivity (-4 to vision based AWR rolls in bright lights)
91-95%	Odor (PC emanates an odor characteristic of the very ill, -10 to seduction rolls)
96-00%	Dementia (-1 INL, -1 AWR, -1 WIL)

Thin Bones (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC has very weak bones, usually as a result of bad genes or poor nutrition. PC is -2 BDY and has a max. cap of 3 for BDY.

Weak Stomach (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- The PC's stomach is especially sensitive to irritants. -10 to save vs. nausea. Spicy foods, acidic foods or stress will cause heartburn (easy save vs. distracting pain).

Venereal Disease: Annoying (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC has a disease which is spread via intercourse (contraction difficulty 10 for protected sex, 20 for unprotected sex). There is no known cure for this disease, only expensive pharmaceuticals which suppress the effects. The disease causes off-and-on swelling and burning/itchy rashes on the genitals, painful urination, increased risks of cancer and infertility.

Venereal Disease: Deadly (Gives 20 Bonus Points)- The PC has a sexually transmitted disease (contraction difficulty 15 for unprotected sex) for which there is currently no cure. Every month the PC must make a save vs. disease progression (difficulty 30). The PC can buy expensive drug cocktails (covered under Indie healthcare, \$100/wk. on the black market) that will give +7 to save vs. disease progression. Unlike normal diseases, a successful save does not lessen the disease's effect, it only staves off progression. For each failure, the PC suffers from cumulative -¼ BLD, -2 to save vs. contraction and progression of other diseases and -1 to whatever is highest among STH, SPD, END. For every given experience level there is a 1 in 10 chance that a cure for that particular strain will be discovered (it will take at least 2 years after that to

get FDA approval). The very rich have other treatments available. Nanotech treatments can find and destroy most of the disease organisms (return PC to a state of early infection). Transfer in to a new body (p.209) is a complete cure.

Virgin (Gives 1 Bonus Points)- The PC has never had sexual intercourse with another person (or even a realistic simulation of one in VR). The PC has a general idea of how it is done, but has no way of knowing if he or she can do it well or if he or she will enjoy it.

Weird Brain (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- The PC has an abnormal brain anatomy. This disadvantage does not effect abilities in any way, but because the anatomy is different, any attempt to put a mental program in the brain is extremely dangerous. The program will probably not work and there will probably be a loss of abilities. Other radiochemical neural stimulation based technologies (e.g. full immersion VR) will not work reliably on the PC.

Young (Gives 7 Bonus Points per year below 16)- The "normal" starting age for most character classes is 16 to 21. If a PC starts the game younger than this, he or she is likely to be treated differently. A young character is likely to be treated with less respect: thought of as not as tough, not as wise and not as dependable as an older peer. For each year younger than 16, the PC gets -4 Attribute Points and -½ health attribute point.

STEP NINE - CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

In Brief: Use XP to gain experience levels and improve the PC.

Level One, Adventure One

At the first adventure using a new character the PC is at Level One, Adventure One. What that means is that the PC has just gained Level 1 status in his or her character class. The PC is no longer a trainee and is (just barely) a full fledged member of that character class. This does not mean that the PC has had no life or experiences, just that this is the first time the PC has been able to stand on his or her own two feet as a member of some community that can be found on the city streets. Many people never reach level 1 and whatever time they spend on the streets they depend on someone else.

The average age for a character at level one, adventure one varies by socioeconomic class. For Street People the average starting age is 16. For Wells the average starting age is 19. For Indies the average starting age is 21.

Gaining XP

Experience allows the PC to grow as a person and improve himself or herself. Experience is measured by Experience Points (XP). XP is awarded at the end of a gaming session, based on the PC's performance in the adventure. Some things player characters can do during a game to gain experience points:

Completing Adventure Goals: Whatever the goals of the given adventure are, the PCs should be awarded points to the degree that they completed the goals successfully. (5 to 25 XP)

Staying Alive: In some adventures, the PCs are thrown in to dangerous situations and the PCs get XP by surviving. (1 to 5 XP) The PC may also get points if every PC involved in the adventure survives. (2 XP)

Making Friends: With PCs with different beliefs, gangs, economic status, etc. it is a commendable achievement when two PCs become good friends and will be awarded. (5 XP)

Discovering Secrets: The game world has a lot of secrets: who controls the Drug Lords, what's up with the moles, etc. Whenever a PC finds out a major secret about the game world, he or she will earn XP. (5 XP)

Personal Growth: This is awarded when something happens that makes the PC wiser or more mature or when the PC realizes something important about his or her life. Usually this means that the character has overcome (or has decided to overcome) some personal flaw. It could also mean a wider outlook. For example, a Skin Borg bent on being the biggest badass on the block could realize that violence is not always the best answer, an obsessed gang member who wants to kill all Roofers could decide that peace is an option or a completely selfish character may decide that it feels good to help others out. XP should only be awarded if this is a permanent change, not just a temporary deviation. This is used to award depth and change in PCs. (5 XP)

Good Roleplaying: GMs can experience points to players who show empathy for or commitment to the psychology and worldview of their PCs by doing something that fits very well with that character. This is a good way for GMs to compensate players that hurt their characters for the sake of realism (e.g. not using knowledge that the player has but the character wouldn't). (2 XP)

Making The World A Better Place: The PC will earn XP any time he or she helps some person or people (or even animals). This could mean saving a life, providing food to hungry people, teaching someone to read, etc. This can also mean helping people by less direct means, e.g. eliminating a serial killer and therefor saving the lives of anyone that serial killer would have otherwise preyed upon. (1 to 10 XP)

Benefiting Gang/Group/Cause: Whenever the PC does something that benefits the PC's group, gang or cause, the GM will award XP. (1 to 10 XP)

Clever Plan: Whenever a PC comes up with an idea which is clever and also works (has good effects) the GM will award XP. (1 to 5 XP)

Worked Well As Group: The GM will award XP whenever the PCs show that they can work together well and do things they would be unable to do alone. (2 XP)

Worldview Success: If the PC comes to an important and correct conclusion by following the tenants of one of his or her Worldviews (see p.12), the PC should earn (depending on how helpful the conclusion was). (2 XP)

Personal Ideal Success: If the PC succeeds in a way that shows that he or she is progressing towards or has reached a Personal Ideal (p.11) the PC will earn XP. (2 XP)

Losing XP

Just as various types of successes will add to the XP earned in an adventure, some failures can cause the PCs to get less XP than they would have otherwise. XP for an adventure can not drop below zero.

Failing at Adventure Goals: The GM may deduct XP if the PC fails at the goals of the adventure (especially if the goals were very easy or very important). (1 to 5 XP)

Splitting Up Group: If the PC chose to split up the party and it did not benefit the party to do so, the PC will lose XP. (5 XP)

Making the World a Worse Place: Anything that hurts people (or animals) or otherwise makes the world worse will cost XP. (1 to 5 XP)

Player Character Death: If one of the PCs in the party dies, each surviving PC will lose XP. (10 XP)

Spending XP

Generally, XP can be spent as soon as it is received. The only exception is when so little time has passed in the game universe between one game session and another that it is ridiculous to think that the PC might have improved in that way. Example: *The PCs are fugitives, on the run from an angry gang and hiding in abandoned buildings. When a game session ends, the GM awards 16 XP. One player decides that her character will gain one level in the skill Nanoengineering. However, since she had no study materials or time to study, the PC must wait to get the skill.*

The PC can buy the following with Experience Points:

Skill Points: 2 XP = 1 Skill Point

Attribute Points: 10 XP = 1 Attribute Point. Attributes can not be raised above their max. cap of 20. Negative sub-attributes can be removed (at a cost of 1 attribute point each) but positive sub-attributes cannot be purchased.

Health Attribute Points: 30 XP = 1 Health Attribute Point. Health Attributes can not be raised above their max. cap of 6.

Level Advancement

In addition to spending XP, also you should keep track of how much the PC has earned in total so far. When the PC has earned 100 XP, whether the XP has been spent or not, the PC advances an Experience Level. For the most part, Experience Levels are simply an easy way of keeping track of how much experience the PC has. The following is what people tend to think about people of various experience levels:

Level Zero: Immature, untrained, skill-less, a dependent. About 30% of people on the streets at this level.

Level One: Inexperienced, Green. 30% of people at this level.

Level Two and Three: Moderately experienced, "average." 23% of people at this level.

Level Four to Six: Veteran, Experienced. 10% of people at this level.

Level Seven to Ten: Very experienced, gang elder. 4% of people at this level.

Level Ten to Thirteen: Wise and powerful, unborn family elder, gang leader. 2% of people at this level.

Level Fourteen or more: City legend, historical figure. 1% of people at this level.

Level Advancement can also be used as a rough estimate of time. One experience level might take six months to two years to achieve. Certain things are "timed" based on Experience Levels, such as: the growth of a child (see Only Parent, p.51), the increase in a Trader's level of contacts (p.325), the patience of investors in a Y1's startup (p.333), the increase in a Nightwalker's lifetime viewers (p.315) and the age grades of a Humankalorie (p.215).

The PC also gains 1 free level of the special skill City Knowledge (p.37) for every 4 level advancements (at level 5, 9, 13, etc.). The PC can buy levels of this skill with XP but can not buy more levels than his or her current experience level.

Disciplines

A PC's character class is what the PC does every day. For some, a character class is a means of making a living (e.g. Night Walker, Gambler), for some it is a means of protection or a group to belong to (e.g. Dragons, Orphans), for some it is the PC's hobby, duty or goal (e.g. Volunteer, Hunter). With each character class comes a discipline: while the PC is spending his or her days being the character class, the PC is also learning to be a better member of that character class.

For example: *Vorchag is a member of the Bleeders. He spends his evenings doing his duty to the Bleeders and to his master: he fights in gang wars, he runs errands and goes on missions for his master, etc. He also seeks training to become a better Bleeder: he learns special psychic skills that only his Bleeder elders can teach him, he learns traditional psychic skills, he invests in special Bleeder equipment, etc. Being a Bleeder is both his current Character Class and his current Discipline. When he gains 100 XP he will advance a level as a Bleeder.*

However, a PC can choose to have a different discipline from his or her character class. There are certain things that must be worked out during the game: First, the PC must gain access to teachers of the given discipline. The PC may also have to get certain equipment (e.g. to study to be a Boarder, one must have a slipboard). Second, the PC must deal with any social consequences of studying to be one thing while being another (the people in the PC's character class might have a problem with the PC studying to be something else and the people the PC is studying with might have a problem with the PC continuing to spend his or her days as the PC's character class). If the PC can deal with these various problems and can gain 100 XP, the PC can go up a level as that discipline. While the PC has another discipline, he or she gets the skill costs (and access to special skills) associated with that discipline.

Once a PC has gained one level in a discipline, the PC has all the knowledge and skills to switch to that as his or her character class. Again, the problem of gaining permission to be that new character class (and to leave the old character class) must be dealt with in-game. Once a PC is a new character class he or she gets the income, lifestyle and duties associated with that character class.

For most character classes, the PC must have at least one level as that character class to be a full member of the class. The PC does not always have a choice in the matter, though: a PC may be forced to adopt a character class before gaining a level in it. Assuming the class will accept the PC, the PC will operate as a level 0 member of the class. At this level, the PC does not have the same duties, benefits and opportunities as other members of the class – the PC is something like an apprentice. The PC earns half the income of that character class.

There are also a few special disciplines that do not have a character class associated with them. Think of these as an optional specialty. EMT (emergency medical technician) is one such discipline: there is no exclusive character class called EMT. If Vorchag the Bleeder gains a level as an EMT, he is now a Bleeder with special medical training and the option to get a good-paying part time job. This is a good option for PCs who want to keep their current character classes, but want to have some special training that sets them apart from the other people in their classes.

Some disciplines available to PCs are:

Animal Trainer- The PC learns to breed, raise, care for and train animals. Some Street People take this up as a way to make a little extra money (it's not lucrative enough to do as a full time career) and/or to provide trained animals for their street families. Indies and Wells sometimes take this up, but usually just as a hobby, not a moneymaking enterprise.

Discipline Requirements: The PC must find a master (level 4 or better) animal trainer willing to take on the PC as a student (such as service might be worth \$15/wk. in the street community). The PC must also have a safe place where he or she can keep animals.

Skill Costs: ATHL 8, BIO 7, CMBT 12, CRTV 7, INFO 12, MIL 12, PSYM 30, PSYS 30, TECH 12, THIE 10, SOC 12, STRT 7. The skills Veterinary Medicine (p.21), Tracking (p.34) and Animal Training (p.32) have a skill cost of 5.

Level Requirements: For level 1, the PC must have Animal Training (3), Veterinary Medicine (2), must own at least 4 animals and First Aid Kit: Black Med. For level 2, Must have Animal Training (4), Veterinary Medicine (3) and must own at least 6 animals.

Special Opportunities: At any level, the PC can buy baby animals for ¼ their Untrained cost. The PC buys animal food in bulk, so pays half the per week cost for feeding animals. At level one the PC can make extra money training and selling animals (gives +\$15/wk.). At level two the PC has gained some fame as an animal trainer and can make +\$20/wk.

Negotiator- Every once in awhile, gangs or other powerful city residents try to settle their differences through talking instead of violence. In these cases, the parties who are trying to work things out sometimes call on those within their ranks who are skilled at negotiating or they hire someone from outside the group to negotiate for them. The PC is training to be one of these negotiators, and will learn skills that will also make him or her a useful messenger, translator, peacemaker or mediator.

Discipline Requirements: The PC must find a seasoned negotiator (at least level 3) willing to train the PC.

Skill Costs: ATHL 12, BIO 10, CMBT 14, CRTV 7, MIL 12, PSYM 15, PSYS 10, INFO 7, TECH 10, THIE 7, SOC 5, STRT 7. The PC can get the skills Storytelling, Internet Browsing, Oratory, Foreign Languages, Money, Information Smuggling, Law: Basic and Interrogation for 4 points per level.

Level Advancement Requirements: For level 1, the PC must have Oratory (2), Interrogation (1), Foreign Language (1). Must have CHM of 7 or better. For level 2, the PC must have Oratory (4), Interrogation (2), Foreign Language (2). The PC must own either Hearing Aid, Voice Stress Analyzer or Subliminal Analyzer. Must have CHM of 11 or better.

Special Opportunities: A PC may be hired for occasional sporadic jobs. The more credibility the PC gains as a negotiator (by negotiating honestly and fairly) the more likely the PC is to be hired. A negotiation can pay anywhere from \$5 to \$1000. Negotiating jobs for the PC's own gang will earn nothing more than extra respect and gratitude. The PC can never hope to make a living negotiating. Even the city's best negotiators never work any more than once every few months.

Pit Fighter- There are places in the city where people fight for money (see p.192) and some Street People with few other prospects take up fighting in these arenas to make a little extra cash. The money earned by even the best street fighters is never enough to make it a career. At best it is a brutal part time job that leaves almost everyone in it scarred and disabled (or dead). Wells and Indies occasionally take this up, but they are usually mentally ill.

Discipline Requirements: The PC can either find a trainer (level 3 or greater Pit Fighter) willing to train the PC (usually in exchange for 50% of anything the PC earns while being trained) or the PC can train himself or herself in the ring (if this is the case, the PC will start most adventures with some injury gained in the ring).

Skill Costs: ATHL 5, BIO 12, CMBT 8, CRTV 8, MIL 15, PSYM 40, PSYS 40, TECH 20, THIE 12, SOC 20, STRT 8. The skills Boxing, Kickboxing, Slam, Street Fighting: Armed, Street Fighting: Unarmed and Wrestling cost 5 points per level.

Level Advancement Requirements: For level 1, the PC must have Street Fighting: Unarmed (3) or 6 levels total unarmed combat skills, must have min. 10 STH, min 10 AGY. For level 2, the PC must have Street Fighting: Unarmed (2) and 8 levels total of unarmed combat skills, must have min. 13 STH, min. 13 AGY.

Special Opportunities: At level 1, The PC can make an extra \$15/wk. by working the nightly pit-fighting circuit without too much of a chance of serious injury (the PC has learned when it is best to fake being knocked out). At level 2, the PC has gained a bit of notoriety and can make +\$30/wk. At level 3, the PC can make +\$45/wk. but has gained such notoriety in the pit fighting circles that he or she may encounter people during non-work hours who want to challenge the PC.

Professional Artist- Some people manage to gain limited notoriety, social connections and a handsome bit of extra cash with some creative skill. These include mainly poets, musicians, painters, graffiti artists and VR samplers. The key making it as an artist is not skill or talent (a lot of people have a lot of that), it's learning to work within the art community and gain status.

Discipline Requirements: The PC must spend 20 hours a week working on his or her particular art form.

Skill Costs: ATHL 15, BIO 15, CMBT 15, CRTV 3, INFO 12, MIL 15, PSYM 30, PSYS 30, TECH 10, THIE 15, SOC 7, STRT 13. The skill Graffiti costs 4 points/level.

Level Advancement Requirements: For level 1, level 5 in any one Creative skill.

Special Opportunities: At level 1, the PC can make \$75 for every week in which the PC spend at least 8 hours working on his or her art. At level 2, the PC can make +\$100. At level 3, the PC can make +\$150 and can use his or her influence over the city art scene to have a noticeable impact on city culture and politics.

Torturer- Many gangs feel it is an unfortunate necessity to have at least one person in the gang who is able to get information out of a person by any means necessary (a minority of gangs would never do this and have no need for torturers). Torturers are respected but often looked at with distaste (and a little fear) even by fellow gang members. Even those who aren't looked at with distaste find it is easier to get along with people if they say nothing about the details of their trade around other

people. Those torturers who are not total sociopaths tend to be very lonely people. This loneliness is why so many of them seek out students they can train (and thus create a new generation of torturers).

Discipline Requirements: The PC must find a seasoned Torturer (level 2 or greater) willing to train the PC.

Skill Costs: ATHL 10, BIO 10, CMBT 10, CRTV 10, INFO 10, MIL 7, PSYM 20, PSYS 20, TECH 15, THIE 15, SOC 15, STRT 15. The skills Emergency Medicine, Pharmacology, Immobilization, Brainwashing, Torture, Interrogation, Poisons, Needles and Seduction cost 5 points per level.

Level Advancement Requirements: For level 1, must have Torture (3) and own \$50 worth of tools. For level 2, must own a Torture Kit and one dose of Compliance Drops.

Special Opportunities: If the PC belongs to a gang that currently condones this sort of thing (gang's attitudes on this subject have been known to change) at level 1 the PC may be asked by his or her gang to do them a favor.

A Complex Advancement Example- *Vorchag starts the game as a level 1 Bleeder. His character class and discipline are both Bleeder. He participates in several adventures and gets a lot of XP. He spends the XP based on the skill costs of the Bleeder: he gets some psychic skills, including skills that only Bleeders can learn. He soon gains 100 XP and is now a Level 2 Bleeder.*

Vorchag grows dissatisfied with the Bleeders. He has a friend who is a Sexologist and he starts training to be a Sexologist. He now has Bleeder as his current character class and Sexologist as his current discipline. His income, duties and lifestyle are that of a Bleeder, but his skill costs are that of a Sexologist. As he gains XP he spends them on special Sexologist skills. However, before he can gain 100 XP, Vorchag's gang elders find out that he is studying with the Sexologists. Feeling that this is a conflict of interest, Vorchag's teacher orders him to stop his associations with the Sexologists. Vorchag refuses and it is only with luck, clever maneuvering and the help of his friends that he survives the incident. He is now considered an enemy of the Bleeders and has ceased to be a Bleeder as his character class. The PC asks the Sexologists to take him in, and he manages to talk them in to it. His character class is that of a Sexologist, but he is a Level 0 Sexologist, a mere trainee and not a full member of the gang. The PC is not allowed to have sex with anyone except his Sexologist teachers and he is not allowed to go out by himself and act on behalf of the Sexologists. Because the PC is so controlled and spends so much of his time studying, he has little opportunity to go out and make money (his weekly income is cut in half). After a few adventures he has gained another 100 XP and he goes up a level as a Sexologist. He is now a Level 1 Bleeder, Level 1 Sexologist whose character class and discipline are both Sexologist.

Vorchag now decides that he wants to get a job as an EMT. He puts aside the money for VR training courses, invests in equipment and learns medical skills. Now his character class is Sexologist and his discipline is EMT. The Sexologists don't mind: they would love to have another person around with emergency medical training. At Vorchag's next level advancement he becomes a Level 1 Bleeder, Level 1 Sexologist and Level 1 EMT. He remains a Sexologist (there is no EMT character class) but he is a Sexologist with skills who has the option of getting a nice paying part-time job.

Chapter Two - Organic Rule Components

His face was oily, his scalp itched, his socks were stiff with dried sweat, his eyes burned, his back and wrists ached, his hands trembled, his mouth was dry and bitter, his empty stomach felt acidic, and someone kept calling his name.

This was the most important hacking job of Twink's life. He had blown every bit of cash he had on a big bag of fast food, and had traded some computer equipment for some uppers and smart drugs. After breaking in to the switch box and giving it internet access, he took residence in the old abandoned rowhouse. There he sat crosslegged on the floor, amidst a layer of white dust, and he hacked.

The lights of day filtering through the boards, illuminating the ubiquitous dust particles, had come and gone more times than he had bothered to count. He had long ago finished the last cold, soggy french-fry. He had long ago drunk the last drop of luke-warm soda, diluted by the melted ice and barely held in by the water-logged paper cup. He had long ago pissed and shit it all out in the far corner, and now there was nothing left in him but stomach acid, smart drugs and uppers

The damn firewall just wasn't giving. Thankfully he was hacking via anonymous resenders, since network security kept finding him and cutting off his IP address. He had tried every security hole he knew and then went and looked up a hundred more, but the firewall quietly rebuffed every attempt.

When he first started hearing the voices calling his name, they were faint, sounding like they were coming from somewhere behind him. He hadn't been able to find the source and wondered if they were hallucinations caused by the uppers. Over time they grew louder and Twink found it harder to believe they weren't real. Everything around him seemed dangerous, like every board and rusty nail and scrap of paper was conspiring to destroy him. The world, he knew innately, was too dangerous and terrible place for the voices to be just a hallucination. He wondered if it was psychics trying to drive him insane, or whether someone had put some sort of mental program in his brain without him knowing it.

Then he realized the source of the voice: his laptop. It was no longer his, it worked for them. It steamed with evil intelligence, a supernatural awareness. 'You're a failure,' it seemed to tell him, 'You'll never find out what happened to your friends, you'll never see them again, and it will be all your fault.'

"Shut up!" Twink screamed, grabbing the laptop and jerking to his feet. "Shut up!" he repeated over and over again as he flung the laptop as hard as he could against the wall...

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BASIC MECHANICS

Rolls are made during game play for one specific reason: to see if a character can do something he or she is trying to do. Rolls should only be made if a doubt exists as to whether the character can do it. When a roll does need to be made, the basic form is this:

**Applicable attribute + 1d20 (one twenty sided die)
Vs. Action Difficulty**

For instance: Sam wishes to climb the side of a building to get to the roof. AGY is the attribute and the GM decides that the difficulty will be 20. Sam has an AGY of 9 and so needs to roll 11 or higher on his d20 in order to succeed. Say, however, that Sam has special gloves that gives him +8 to climbing – now he would roll AGY (9) +8 (gloves) + 1d20 vs. 20 (Sam only needs to roll a 3 or better).

Sample Difficulties

- 0- Automatic Success
- 5- Walk down stairs briskly. (AGY)
- 10- (Easy) Notice a mosquito on PC's skin. (AWR)
- 15- (Easy-Moderate) Paint ceiling from flimsy ladder. (AGY)
- 20- (Moderate) Win a game of mah-jongg. (INL)
- 25- (Moderate-Hard) Catch paper flying in the wind. (AGY)
- 30- (Hard) Get burned and not flinch. (WIL)
- 40- (Legendary) Lift a pony over PC's head. (STH)

Dual Attribute Rolls- Some rolls use two attributes. For instance, to save vs. unconsciousness a PC uses Endurance (for physical energy) and WIL (for mental energy). When using two attributes, add the attributes together and divide by half (rounding up). So, if a PC with 3 END and 12 WIL wants to save vs. unconsciousness with moderate difficulty, $END+WIL/2$ is 7.5, rounded up it's 8, so the PC would roll 8 + 1d20 vs. 20.

Opposed Rolls- When characters are competing, two rolls are made and whoever has the best success (success minus difficulty) wins. This represents that people competing may have different levels of ability but may also be trying things of different difficulty. A character trying to do a complicated martial arts maneuver must get a much higher roll to get the same amount of success as someone trying to do something as simple as a punch. Opposed rolls take the following form:

Character 1's Attribute + 1d20 v. Difficulty 1
opposing
Character 2's Attribute + 1d20 v. Difficulty 2

Deliberate vs. Chance- GM's decide whether a roll is a "deliberate" or "chance" roll. This depends upon how much chance influences the outcome of the event (as opposed to skill and talent). On a chance roll, a roll of 1 on the 1d20 means automatic failure, a roll of 20 means automatic success. If a roll could not have succeeded except for rolling a 20, the roll should be considered to have succeeded by 1. In almost all cases, fighting rolls are chance.

Chance Actions: An action a PC needs to get done immediately, or when an action must either succeed or fail the first time the PC does it. Example: a climbing roll involving leaping from one building and grabbing on to the windowsill of another. No matter the AGY and climbing skills of the PC, the PC might succeed or might fail on a 1 or 20.

Deliberate Actions: The PC is trying to do something, but can stop if he or she is about to fail. These are typically slower actions. Example: PC is at the bottom of a wall and makes a climbing roll to see if he can climb up it. A failure here does not necessarily mean that the PC falls, it might

just mean that the PC couldn't find a safe way to get up the wall. There are no automatic successes or failures here.

Savings Rolls - Save vs. X rolls are difficulty rolls to keep something from happening that will happen unless the roll succeeds. If a PC is making a save vs. unconsciousness then the PC will become unconscious unless he or she can meet the difficulty. A basic table of savings throws follows. See the section on using attributes for more information.

Save vs.	Rolled on
Disease Contraction	END
Disease Progression	END
Fall/Skid Damage	AGY
Fear	WIL
Heat Exhaustion	END
Hypothermia	END
Loss of Balance	AGY
Nausea	WIL
Pain	WIL
Paralysis	END
Physiological Addiction	END
Physiological Drug Effects	END
Psychological Addiction	WIL
Psychological Drug Effects	WIL or INL
Unconsciousness	END/WIL
Shock	END

Opposed Savings Rolls- Occasionally, characters will be required to make opposed savings rolls. This means that even if they succeed (meet their difficulty) they will fail if they do not succeed at a level greater to or equal to the level that their opponent succeeds their difficulty.

Example: *Sam hits Carl with a knockout strike. Carl beat his difficulty by 5. Now Sam not only has to beat the normal difficulty for a save vs. unconsciousness, he has to beat it by 5 or more to avoid going unconscious.*

USING ATTRIBUTES

Agility (AGY)

Use AGY for athletic type rolls: catching things, throwing things, blocking things (other than strikes), skipping rope, etc.

Balance- Use AGY for rolls to keep one's balance: walking a tightrope, moving on ice covered streets, racing down stairs, etc.

Climbing- Use AGY for climbing. See table for sample difficulties.

Landing- Characters can use AGY to save vs. falling or skidding damage (see Other Types of Damage, p.56). The first point of damage can be saved against at 10 difficulty, the second point at 20 difficulty, the third at 30, etc.

Climbing Difficulties (with no equipment)

10 (Easy) Tree with low branches.
 20 (Moderate) Rocky cliff face.
 30 (Hard) Sheer cliff face.
 40 (Legendary) Glacial ice.

Prowling- AGY is also used for prowling (attempting to move through an area while not being noticed). The difficulty is based on several factors: the number of people and their proximity, how distracted or attentive they are, the amount of cover and whether there is darkness or a weather condition obscuring the PC. The person being prowled against should get an opposed awareness roll.

Prowling difficulties

10 (Easy) Crawling through a field of tall grass with a wind to cover noises and an unsuspecting person nearby.

20 (Moderate) Sneaking up behind someone who isn't expecting anything.

30 (Difficult) Crawling in a gutter at night with several people searching for PC.

40 (Legendary) Avoiding someone who is searching for PC by staying directly behind them (may also require SPD based rolls).

Awareness (AWR)

Noticing- Use AWR when characters need to notice a detail too small to be included in the GM's description of the surroundings (e.g. the man standing next to you has a small needle mark on his neck). AWR should not be used for a substitute for directed attention: if a player says "I'm looking carefully at the man next to me," he or she should be given every detail about that person with no AWR roll needed. AWR is also used to save vs. prowling (see above).

Manipulation- An AWR roll is also made when something is trying to manipulate the PC's mind (typically this will be a psychic). The normal difficulty is 20. If the PC's success is better than the manipulator's success, the PC realizes that he or she is being manipulated, and now can try to resist the manipulation (usually with a WILL roll).

Charm (CHM)

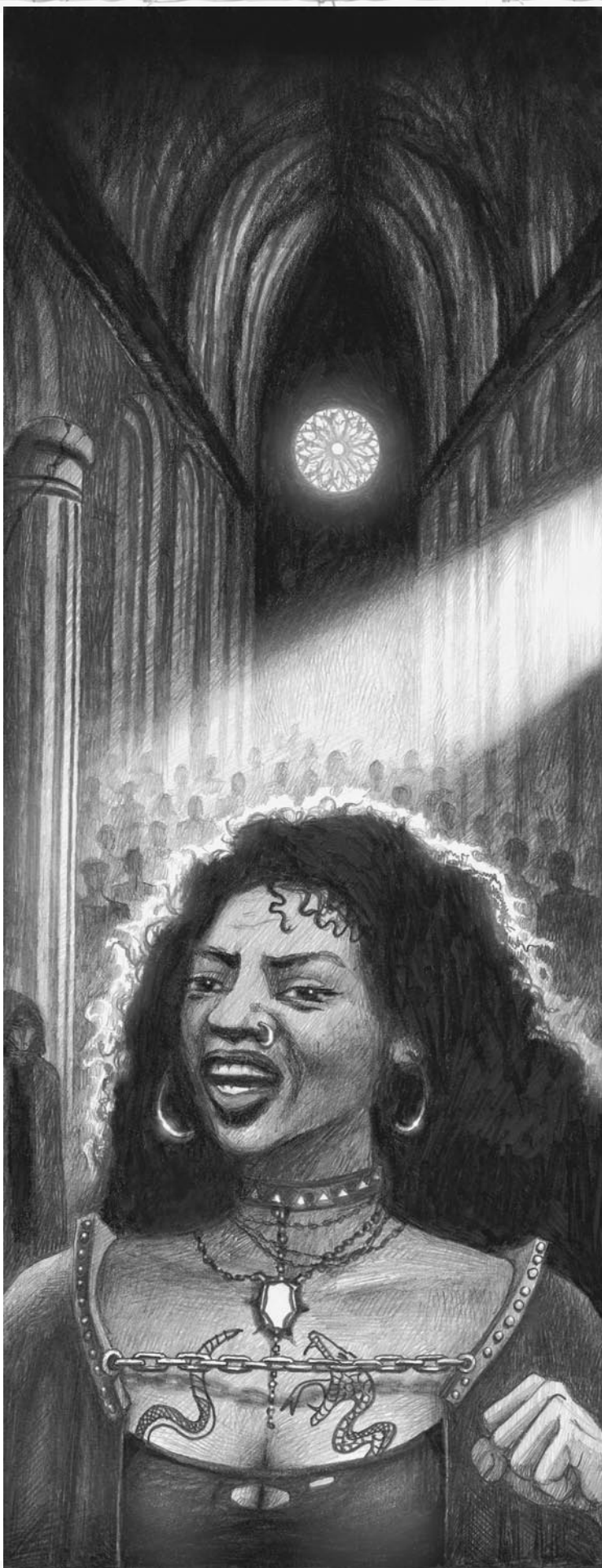
Acting- Use CHM whenever a PC needs to put one some sort of act to fool other people.

Acting difficulties

- 10 (Easy) Making people think you're bored.
- 20 (Moderate) Making people think you're in pain.
- 30 (Difficult) Making people think you're not scared.

First Impressions- CHM rolls can also be made to "modify" an NPC's reaction to the PC. The most common usage is to try to make people like the PC. A PC meeting a stranger who beats 20 on a CHM roll comes off as slightly more confident, friendly, intelligent and likeable than he or she would have otherwise. Note that this is "first impressions" only. After the PC has had more interaction with an NPC, the PC's actions and words become what the PC is judged by. Instead of trying to come off as likeable, PCs can also try to modify their first impressions in other ways, e.g. to come off as tough/mean/scary or as lowly/loser/wimp/nothing-to-be-worried-about.

Persuasion- CHM is used to persuade NPCs to agree with an argument. First, PCs must roleplay arguing their case. Next, the GM decides the difficulty of the persuasion based on the logical strength of the argument. A very reasonable argument which makes a lot of sense might have a difficulty of 10. A very improbable argument that asks the listener to make a lot of assumptions might have a difficulty of 30. Note: Don't even bother rolling if an argument is so strong or so weak that it is ridiculous to believe that someone wouldn't/would agree with it.



Seduction- Use CHM for seduction rolls. A successful roll means that the victim wants to have sex with the PC. How and if the victim will act on those desires is up to the GM or player. The normal difficulty for a sexually healthy adult who has a preference for the PC's gender is 20 (moderate). GMs can also force players to make "passive seduction" rolls to see if a person is attracted to the PC even without the PC trying to seduce the person. Passive seduction rolls typically have +10 difficulty.

Endurance (END)

Pooled Endurance- Endurance is used as a measurement of the amount of energy a PC has to expend. The PC starts with a "pool" of points equal to his or her END. Any of the following removes 1 point from this pool:

Exertion: Any round in which the PC is doing some strenuous physical action, including combat or anything that uses at least half the PC's STH or SPD.

Oxygen Deprivation: Any round in which the PC can't or won't take in oxygen.

Mortal Injuries: Any round in which the PC is mortally wounded (is at 0 BLD, see p.55).

Other miscellaneous things (e.g. toxins) can also remove pooled END. Using psychic manipulation skills removes 2 END per round.

When Pooled END reaches 0, the PC is incapacitated. The PC can not stand, can not make fighting actions or reactions and can not initiate any kind of communication. The PC will fail at any roll involving AGY, END, SPD or STH.

Example: *Tim has 9 END. He was just shot (bringing his BLD to 0) and he is in a room filled with poison gas. He is holding his breath and running as fast as he can (he hopes to jump out of the window). Each round he loses 3 pooled END (one from exertion, one from oxygen deprivation, one from mortal injuries), which means he has 3 actions before he becomes incapacitated. After two rounds he gets hit in the head with a rock and must make a save vs. unconsciousness. He rolls 1d20 plus an average of his WIL and END (which is currently 3).*

Fatigue- END can also be used more slowly by activities which do not use half the PC's STH or SPD but are tiring nonetheless (e.g. jogging, manual labor, even standing for long period of time). Example: Juan has a SPD of 10. If he runs at 5 or higher he will lose 1 END per round, so he decides to run at SPD 4. The GM decides that he will lose 1 pooled END for every 5 minutes running at this speed.

Rest- When Pooled END is lost to strenuous activity, it returns at 1 point per round when the PC is resting. Pooled END lost to oxygen deprivation returns at 1 point per round when the PC begins receiving oxygen again. Pooled END lost to fatigue returns at the same rate it was lost (e.g. if Juan loses 4 END by jogging for 20 minutes, he will regain it with 20 minutes of rest). If a PC ever reaches 0 END (incapacity) that PC is -1 END for the next 24 hours. If a PC reaches 0 END multiple times, the PC will be very tired (have aggregate minuses to END) until the next day.

Health- END is used to represent the body's general health. It is used to save vs. things like hypothermia, heat exhaustion, cardiac arrest (heart attack), shock and (along with WIL) unconsciousness. See Other Types of Damage (p.56) and Symptoms/Effects (p.57) for more.

Disease- END is also used to save vs. disease contraction and progression. See Disease (p.58) for more.

Intelligence (INL)

Speed of Thought- Among other things, INL represents how quickly a PC thinks (as opposed to AWR, which can measure how quickly a PC notices things, or AGY which represents how fast the PC's body reacts). A GM might sometimes ask PCs and NPCs to make opposed INL rolls to find out who figures out something first. INL (along with AWR) is used to determine initiative in combat (see p.68).

Skills- Intelligence is used to perform intellectual or creative skills. See Skills (p.59) for more. In Brief: roll INL +1d20 +4/ skill level above the 1st vs. the difficulty for whatever the PC is trying to do.

Speed (SPD)

Leaping- SPD is used for leaping rolls. The difficulty for making a leap is the distance (in ft.) times two, so a ten foot leap would have a 20 difficulty. Height differences, inclines, etc. can increase the difficulty.

Running- SPD also sets the maximum speed the character can run. For convenience's sake, we use SPD as its own measurement of speed and we list everything in the game as having a SPD, from a car to a PC to a tidal wave. If you need to determine miles per hour, it is approximately SPD divided by 2.

Strength (STH)

STH is used in opposed strength rolls, for instance, if two people are grabbing for an object.

Strength Feats- Strength is also used for lifting heavy objects or any other "feat" of strength. Assuming a character can get a good grip on an object, the difficulty to lift the object should be the weight in lbs. divided by 10, so a 200 lb. object would be 20 difficulty to lift (a poorly grippable object or an object with poor balance would have a higher difficulty). Some example STH feats:

STH Feat Difficulties

- 10 (Easy) Prying open a nut.
- 20 (Moderate) Breaking a wooden door
- 30 (Difficult) Pushing a horse around.
- 40 (Legendary) Pulling apart a cheap padlock

Encumbrance- STH also determines the amount that the PC can carry on his or her person without suffering a detriment to attributes. A PC's "Base Encumbrance" is equal to his or her STH times 5 lbs. If the PC is carrying his or her base encumbrance, well distributed over the body, the PC is at -1 AGY, -1 SPD and loses 1 Pooled END per hour. For every 10 lbs. over Base Encumbrance, the PC is at an additional -1 AGY, -1 SPD and loses 1 additional Pooled END per hour.

Example: Nyorbu has a STH of 7. His base encumbrance is 7 x 5lbs. or 35 lbs. If Nyorbu is carrying 25 lbs., so long as it is packed well, he suffers from no minuses. At 35 lbs. he is at -1 to AGY and SPD and loses 1 Pooled END every hour. If Nyorbu is carrying 85 lbs. (35 lbs. plus 50 lbs, or 5x10 lbs. over his Base Encumbrance) he is at -6 to SPD and AGY and loses 6 Pooled END per hour.

Willpower (WIL)

Mind Control- WIL is used for opposed rolls involving attempts at psychic manipulation (1d20 + WIL vs. 20 opposing the attack roll of the psychic) or brainwashing (1d20 + WIL vs. 20 opposing the skill roll of the brainwasher). Note that in order to resist psychic manipulation, the PC must first realize that someone is trying to manipulate him or her (see AWR, p.53).

Resistance- WIL is used to resist anything that would cause the PC to act (or not act) against his or her will. PCs can make WIL bases saves to resist, among other things, pain, nausea, fear, amnesia, hallucinations, delusions, euphoria, etc. See p.57 for a list of symptoms and effects of drugs/diseases/poisons and the consequences for failing saves against them.

Pain- One of the most common things PCs will have to resist is pain. Pain comes in two types:

Shocking Pain: This is pain that comes on suddenly (sometimes unexpectedly). It only lasts a second but it is so strong that it can cause the PC to be unable to act. A PC who fails to save by 1-9 loses his or her next action. A PC who fails by 10 or more loses his or her next action and reaction (see Actions and Reactions, p.70), meaning that the PC not only cannot act, but cannot defend himself or herself for one round.

Distracting Pain: This is pain that comes on more slowly and stays around longer, causing the PC to be distracted from anything he or she tries to do. When a PC fails a save vs. distracting pain, the PC suffers from a penalty equal to the amount he or she failed by. This penalty applies to any roll the PC has conscious control over (e.g. it would apply to an attempt to catch a ball, but would not apply to a save vs. disease contraction).

Example: Logos fails a save vs. distracting pain by 3. Logos now suffers from -3 to skill rolls, actions, reactions and anything else he has conscious control over.

Drug Cravings- WIL is also used to save vs. drug cravings (the difficulty based on the drug) after becoming addicted. See Drugs (p.57) for more.

HEALTH ATTRIBUTES

In Brief- Blades remove BLD. Crushing removes BDY (then double BLD). 0 BLD = mortally wounded, but PC can keep going until INCY or Pooled END = 0.

The three health attributes, BLD, BDY and INCY are used whenever a character takes any kind of damage which moves the PC progressively closer to death. There are many types of damage which may cause pain, may cripple the PC, but don't move the PC significantly closer to being dead and so they do not remove BLD, BDY and INCY. The two main types of damage are blunt and bladed.

Blunt Damage- Blunt damage comes from that does crushing damage to the PC's tissues, like a club or a punch. Things like falling, being crushed, being rammed by a vehicle also do blunt damage. Blunt damage is subtracted from BDY. Once all BDY is gone, blunt damage is removed from BLD but the effect is doubled. So, if a person with 2 BDY is hit with something that does 5 blunt damage, all 2 BDY are taken away and the character suffers 6 damage to BLD (the remaining 3, times 2).

Bladed Damage- Bladed damage comes from anything which cuts, pierces or spills blood, including knives, guns, barbed wire, skidding, etc. Bladed damage goes straight to BLD. Any other type of damage which causes the PC to lose blood, be unable to take in oxygen, or does damage to the heart and lungs also do damage to BLD.

0 BLD- When a PC reaches 0 BLD it means he or she has been mortally wounded and without medical intervention he

or she will eventually die. Even at 0 BLD or below, a PC can still do things, even fight, for a limited period of time. END effects how long the PC can continue to act, and INCY (Incapacity) effects how much more damage a PC can take before being immediately incapacitated.

Incapacity- When damage reduces a PC's BLD to 0, any further damage is done to INCY. INCY represents the character's last reserves of energy to act even after being mortally wounded. Blunt damage does double damage to INCY. All further damage that would have done damage to BLD instead does damage to INCY. When a PC reaches 0 INCY it means he or she is incapacitated. An incapacitated person can not stand, make fighting actions or reactions, or initiate any kind of communication. An incapacitated PC may make moderate (20 difficulty) WIL rolls to be able to do very simple things (e.g. answer a question, crawl away from a fire) but cannot do anything that would require a roll (e.g. perform a skill).

As long as a PC still has INCY points left, he or she can still act normally, so long as the PC still has pooled END. As soon as a PC reached 0 BLD, he or she loses 1 point of pooled END every round (in addition to END lost from other activities/circumstances). When pooled END reaches 0, the PC is incapacitated.

After being incapacitated (either by reaching zero INCY or zero END), the PC has his or her INCY + END number of rounds before brain death occurs and no known means can revive the PC.

Armor

In Brief- AR is how much success a strike needs to bypass armor, PR is subtracted from any strike that hits the armor.

A piece of armor has two factors:

Armor Rating (AR) represents how much of the body the armor covers (or how difficult it is to hit an unprotected spot on the PC.

Protection Rating (PR) represents how much damage each type the armor can absorb.

Example: *Lake has a leather vest with an AR of 7 and a PR of 2 bladed. A strike (a combat action, see p.71) with a success of 7 or below will hit the armor and 2 bladed damage will be subtracted from the damage the strike would normally do. If the strike was with a weapon that does 4 bladed and 2 blunt damage, it would only do 2 bladed and 2 blunt damage. A strike with a success of 8 and above would hit an unprotected spot and do full damage.*

AR of 20 represents total coverage and no amount of success can bypass the armor.

Multiple Layers- When a PC is wearing multiple layers of armor, each layer acts upon the damage independently. One strike may hit one piece of armor and lose some of its damage, hit another piece of armor and lose more, then bypass a third piece of armor and not lose any more. In order for damage to reach a PC, it must either bypass or cut through every piece of armor the PC is wearing.

Armor Piercing- Some weapons and types of damage cut through armor better than they cut through other things (like people). An armor piercing bullet may be listed as doing: "5 bladed damage (pierces as 10)". When subtracting damage absorbed by the armor, treat the damage as if it is 10. When the damage gets to the PC, however, it can't do any more than 5. Note that poisons on a bladed object do full damage if any bladed damage gets through to the victim.

Non-Damaging Attacks- There are attacks which do not do damage, but do things like cause pain, cripple joints, knock people out, etc. Armor can protect from these attacks too. To determine whether armor protects from such an attack, figure out how much damage the attack would have done if it were a normal strike, then figure out if any of that damage would have gotten through. If none would have gotten through, then the non-damaging attack has no effect. Also, some attacks have a minimum damage (e.g. a knockout strike requires an attack that would do at least 2 blunt damage if it was a normal strike) and if armor reduces the "would be" damage to less than this then the strike doesn't work.

OTHER TYPES OF DAMAGE

Burn: When a person is burned, 4 effects happen:

- BLD damage (1 point per point of burn damage).
- Pain (WIL+1d20 vs. 10/point of damage).
- Physiological Shock (END+1d20 vs. 5/point of damage).
- Increased chance of infection (-5 to save vs. disease contraction/point of damage).

Cold: Make saves vs. hypothermia hourly. 1st failure halves all attributes, each additional failure does 1 BLD damage.

Crippling Damage: ½ damage will make a hand unusable or badly damage a foot. 1 damage will make an arm or leg unusable. See Crippling Attack (p.70) for more.

Dropped Objects: Do blunt damage = weight (divided by 10 lbs) times number of stories. E.G. 20 lb. object dropped 5 stories does 10 blunt damage.

Electricity: When harmful levels of electricity run through a person, four effects happen:

- Paralysis (WIL+END+1d20 vs. 20/point of damage), paralysis only lasts while the electricity is running.
- Unconsciousness (WIL+END+1d20 vs. 10 per point of damage)
- Heart Attack (END+1d20 vs. 5/point of damage), see Symptoms/Effects (p.57).
- Burn Damage: 1 point of burn damage for every 4 points of electrical damage.

Explosion: Explosions can do one, two or all of the following:

- Incendiary Damage (same as Burn damage)
- Concussion Damage (same as Blunt damage)
- Shrapnel (same as Bladed damage, the amount is usually expressed as a dice roll and typically pierces armor)

END Damage: Some toxins to END damage. Every point of damage takes away 1 pooled END. When pooled END is at 0, damage is done to BLD.

Falling: 2 blunt damage for each story fallen (a story is ~10 ft). Armor cannot protect from this damage.

Heat: Make saves vs. heat exhaustion hourly. 1st failure halves all attributes, each additional failure does 1 BLD damage.

Hunger: For every two days without food: -½ BLD, -4 END.

Radiation: For every point of damage: 1 BLD damage, Vomiting (10), Headache (10), fatigue (-2 END), confusion (-1 INL, AWR). Effects develop over 24 hours. BLD damage is permanent (unless bone marrow transplants are given). Strong likelihood (25% per point of damage) of developing cancer and cataracts within the next year.

Ragged: Like bladed damage, but with an increased chance of infection after the battle (see p.73). For each point of ragged damage taken, PC gets -5 to save vs. disease contraction.

Skidding: For each 20 SPD the PC is moving at: 1 bladed 1 blunt damage. Less if the ground is very soft, more if it is rocky.

Sleep Deprivation: For every 24 hours without sleep: -3 to AWR, CHM, INL and END. Must save vs. hallucinations and delusions at (3 difficulty per 24 hours). Must make saves vs. unconsciousness (15 difficulty per 24 hours) when not doing anything.

Strangulation/Loss of Oxygen: PC loses 1 pooled END per round (in addition to pooled END being lost for other reasons). The PC can not regain pooled END by resting. When END reaches 0, PC loses 1 BLD per round. When the PC can breathe normally again, lost END and BLD returns 1 per round.

Thirst: ½ BLD damage per day.

Example: *Inferno* is trying to stab *Hoshi* in the nuts with an ice-pick (a pain/stun strike). *Hoshi* is wearing a leather motorcycle outfit that has AR 10, PR 3 bladed 1 blunt. *Inferno*'s difficulty for the strike is 25, and he gets a 32, meaning he succeeds by 7. This success is less than the AR of the armor, so the armor's PR is subtracted.

Had this been a normal strike, the ice-pick would have done 1 bladed (pierces armor as 3). So, 3 bladed PR is subtracted from 3 bladed (pierces as) damage, and the result is 0. No damage gets through, and the strike has no significant effect on *Hoshi*.

DRUGS, DISEASE AND POISONS

Symptoms/Effects

Some drugs, diseases and poisons do simple damage to BLD, just like being stabbed. The majority, however, have effects or symptoms that hit people with different intensities (depending on how much of the drug or poison they've taken or how bad they have the disease). Some symptoms are simply annoying and can not be saved (e.g. red puffy skin). Some symptoms reduce attributes and can not be saved (e.g. a disease might cause "exhaustion" and reduce STH and SPD by 5). Some symptoms can be saved against (e.g. a poison might cause Vomiting, which can be saved against at 10 difficulty). Failing a save might mean the PC is incapacitated, or it may even kill the PC.

The following lists some common symptoms/effects, what attribute is used to save against them, and what happens to a PC who fails such a save:

Anterograde Amnesia (INL): Cannot remember anything about his or her past.

Cardiac Arrest (END): 1 BLD damage per round.

Coma (END): Unconscious and unable to waken. With a failure of 10+ the user suffers cardiac arrest.

Delusions (WIL): Believes without reservation some thought or idea (e.g. I am impervious to bullets).

Dysphoria (WIL): Overwhelmed by unhappiness/depression and unable to initiate any activity.

Euphoria (WIL): Overwhelmed by pleasure and unable to initiate any activity.

Hallucinations (WIL): Senses things which he or she is unable to distinguish from real sensations.

Headache (WIL): -1 penalty to all rolls per point of failure.

Insomnia (WIL): Sleep deprivation damage (see p.56) as 1 night without sleep.

Obfuscating Hallucinations (WIL): Unable to see, hear or feel real stimuli because of hallucinations.

Panic (WIL): Does anything to escape danger. With failure of 10+ the user makes random counterproductive actions.

Paralysis (WIL): Unable to move. With a failure of 10+ user is unable to breathe.

Pulmonary Arrest (END): 1 END damage per round, then 1 BLD damage per round.

Retrograde Amnesia (INL): Will not later remember anything that happened during intoxication.

Seizures (WIL): Loses consciousness for 1d6 minutes, loses all pooled END. With a failure of 5+ there is possible of physical injury. With failure of 10+ there is brain damage (-1 INL, AWR or AGY).

Shock (END): END = 0, all other attributes halved. 1 BLD damage per minute.

Stupor (WIL): Unable to think, remember, concentrate or make decisions (INL = 0, WIL = 0).

Sudden Amnesia (WIL): Forgets where he or she is and what's going on, takes 1d6 rounds to remember.

Unconsciousness (END/WIL): Unless specified otherwise, lasts 1 round per point of failure.

Vomiting (WIL): -20 to all other actions while vomiting.

Drugs

A drug can have different effects based upon when and how it is used. A drug can have:

- Normal dosage effects (a normal person taking one dose of the drug).
- Overdose effects (the effects of taking 2 times, 4 times and/or 8 times the normal dose).
- Withdrawal effects (the effects when the drug exits the user's system)
- Long term effects (the general effects of the drug for a habitual user)
- Long term withdrawal effects (the effects of withdrawal after habitual use)
- Tolerance (how much more a long term user must use to get the same effect)

Addiction- Drugs can be addictive in one or both of the following ways:

Physiologically Addictive: Using the drug enough times changes the chemical balance of the brain and body such that the drug is needed for normal functioning. Without the drug the brain does not work right and addicts are driven to take more of the drug in order to "fix" things.

Psychologically Addictive: The addict's personality adjusts to the effects of the drug such that he or she can no longer handle reality (day to day life) without the drug.

Saving vs. Addiction- Each addictive drug lists the addiction difficulty for physiological and/or psychological addiction. To this difficulty is added the number of doses the person has taken without a significant break (of at least 24 hours). Saves are thus made as follows:

WIL + 1d20 vs. Psychological Addiction Difficulty + number of doses taken

END + 1d20 vs. Physiological Addiction Difficulty + number of doses taken

Disease

Cravings- Cravings first appear within 24 hours after an addicted character tries to stop using. PCs who are both psychologically and physiologically addicted must deal with 2 separate cravings. Cravings are saved against on WIL+1d20 vs. the Craving Difficulty of the drug. On the first successful save, the PC will not have another craving for 1 day. For each subsequent success, the time between cravings doubles. Some drugs do have special “triggers” which can cause a craving at any time, no matter how long it’s been since the last craving.

Physiological cravings go away after a number of days equal to the Craving Difficulty. Psychological cravings never go away, they just get farther and farther apart.

If a PC fails a craving, he or she must do anything within his or her power to seek out the drug. If the PC gets a hold of the drug, he or she will use it immediately and will be back to a one day period between cravings. If a PC is searching for his or her drug of choice but cannot find it, the PC can make a new save vs. cravings every hour to give up searching.

Example: *In order to keep hacking despite the pain from her injuries, Lulu starts popping pain pills. The pain pills have a Physiological Addiction Difficulty of 5, a Psychological Addiction Difficulty of 1 and a Craving Difficulty of 20. Cravings for this drug can also be triggered by pain or anxiety. Lulu ends up taking 10 doses in the course of several days. At the end of that period the GM makes her save vs. Physiological Addiction (at END + 1d20 vs. 5 +10 (the 10 doses). Lulu fails and is now physiologically addicted to pain pills. She must also make a save vs. Psychological Addiction (at WIL + 1d20 vs. 1 +10). She fails at this roll. Now she is physiologically and psychologically addicted.*

When she tries to stop using not only does she experience the withdrawal effects listed for the drug, but within 1 day she must two saves vs. cravings at WIL + 1d20. She succeeds at both, and so her next craving will not be for two days. Two days later, she saves again and succeeds, it will now be four days until her next craving. Four days later, she saves again and succeeds. Eight days later, she saves again and succeeds. Before the next craving period, 20 days will have passed, which means she must no longer save vs. physiological cravings. Sixteen days later she saves only once, and succeeds. It will now be 32 days until her next craving.

Unfortunately, though, before that time she is badly cut by some barbed wire and is in a great deal of pain. This triggers an immediate craving. This time, Lulu fails, and she is now forced to drop whatever she is doing and seek out some pain pills. She succeeds, getting the pain pills. After the one dose she took wears off, she decides to quit again. She must make another save vs. physiological addiction (this time at END + 1d20 vs. 5 +1 (one dose)). She succeeds, and only has to deal with a psychological addiction. However, her craving periods are now reset and she will experience another craving within 24 hours.

Contraction- When a PC is exposed to a disease, the PC must make a save vs. Disease Contraction (END + 1d20 vs. the Disease Contraction Rating of the disease). Diseases will have different contraction ratings depending upon how the PC is exposed. Breathing the same air as an infected person may have a Contraction Rating of 10 while sharing body fluids with a person may have a Contraction Rating of 40. If the PC makes the save, he or she does not catch the disease. If the PC fails then the PC has the disease at 1x symptoms.

Progression- Once a PC has a disease, the PC must fight to keep the disease from getting worse. Each disease has a Disease Progression Speed, which represents how quickly the disease will get worse. If the disease progression speed is 8 hours, then every 8 hours the PC must save vs. Disease Progression. Each disease has its own Disease Progression Rating (the difficulty to save vs. disease progression). For every consecutive failure to save vs. disease progression, the symptoms increase by 1 level (1x to 2x, 2x to 3x, etc.). However, if the PC succeeds at a save, the disease is “halted”: it can no longer progress. From this point onward, a failed save vs. progression has no effect, but a successful save means the symptoms level is reduced (3x to 2x, 2x to 1x). When the symptoms level reaches 0, the PC is cured.

Treatments- Treatments can do two things. Some treatments help the PC fight the disease (give the PC plusses to save vs. disease progression). Other treatments only help reduce the severity of symptoms (most over-the-counter medications work in this way).

Immunity- Once a PC has defeated a disease, the PC has immunity to it, and gets +10 to save vs. disease contraction and progression from the same disease. The PC also gets +6 to save vs. disease contraction and progression from closely related diseases.

Example: *Marcos was stabbed in a battle and the wound was exposed to an infection. The infection has a Disease Contraction Rating of 20, a Disease Progression Rating of 20, a Disease Progression Speed of 12 hours, can be treated by antibiotics, and has the following symptoms: For each 1x the victim suffers from an aggregate fever (-10 to save vs. heat exhaustion), Vomiting (10), weakness (-5 STH, -5 SPD) and 1 BLD damage.*

12 hours after being stabbed, Marcos makes a save vs. disease contraction at END (7) + 1d20 vs. 20. He fails, he now has 1x symptoms. He is -10 to save vs. heat exhaustion, has -5 STH, -5 SPD, takes 1 BLD damage and must save vs. vomiting (at difficulty 10). 12 hours later must make a save vs. disease progression (at END (7) + 1d20 vs. 20). He fails, and now he has 2x symptoms: -20 to save vs. heat exhaustion, -10 STH, -10 SPD, an additional 1 BLD damage and he must save vs. vomiting at 20 difficulty. Since Marcos only has 8 SPD, he can now not even stand. Marcos’ friends finally get him some antibiotics, which give +8 to save vs. disease progression. After another 12 hours he saves again at END (7) +8 (antibiotics) +1d20 vs. 20. He succeeds: the disease is not halted, but he is still at 2x symptoms. 12 hours later he rolls again and fails, but since the disease is halted nothing happens, he remains at 2x symptoms. 12 hours later he rolls again and succeeds, now his symptoms are reduced to 1x. 12 hours later he rolls again and succeeds again, now the disease is gone.

SKILLS

In Brief- Skill + 1d20 +4/level above the 1st vs. difficulty.

Basic Skill Use

There are certain activities that anyone can try to do without being trained: prowling, climbing, jumping, seducing, etc. Skills are generally things that someone can not even try to do without some sort of special training. A person doesn't have to be a trained long-jumper to try jumping over a hole (though it helps), but someone really does have to have some physics training to try to calculate the speed and acceleration of an object sliding down a smooth incline.

The majority of skills are "intellectual" and are rolled using INL. Other skills use the other attributes. Skills are purchased in levels, and are purchased with skill points at a cost per level set by the character class (see p.17). For every level above the first, the PC gets +4 to any skill roll. Each skill has six possible levels which can be achieved:

- (1) **Interest:** Characters have studied only the basic levels of the skill. They know enough to try anything, but their chances of succeeding at difficult tasks are very low.
- (2) **Hobby:** Characters keep up on the skill but are far from masters in it. (+4 to skill rolls)
- (3) **Pursuit:** Characters have spent a large portion of their time practicing the skill or keeping up with the subject. They have a respectable knowledge of the skill. (+8 to skill rolls)
- (4) **Study:** Characters have spent a significant portion of their lives studying the skill. They know almost everything an average person studying the skill could be expected to learn. Characters have a professional level of knowledge about the skill. (+12 to skill rolls)
- (5) **Expertise:** This is the equivalent of a Ph.D. in the skill. Characters know subtleties about the skill that few people know exist. (+16 to skill rolls)
- (6) **Mastery:** This is everything a person could possibly know about the skill. A person with Mastery in a skill will rarely, if ever, meet a person as skilled or knowledgeable as them. Starting PCs may not have level 6 in any skill without special permission from the GM. (+20 to skill rolls)

Example: *Tim has Physics (3). Tim wants to calculate the radioactive decay of a batch of toxic waste. The GM says that this will be a moderate (20) difficulty use of the skill. Tim rolls INL +8 (because he has level 3) + 1d20 vs. 20.*

Skills & Time

When a PC uses a skill, it is assumed that a PC is taking as long as he or she needs to. This might mean one round (e.g. using Corporations to realize that a certain person is the CEO of a major corp) or weeks (e.g. using Carpentry to build a house). PCs gain no plusses from taking extra time to complete a skill, but they do take a penalty if they are trying to rush.

Working Together

Two PC with equal levels in a skill can often work together, giving +4 to the skill roll (one PC makes the roll). PCs with unequal levels in the skill cannot work together (one knows so much more than the other that the other can't do anything to help).

Books

Books are manuals for using a certain skill. Using a skill with a book generally takes significantly longer than using the skill unaided (twice as long if the text is in a mental program, three times as long if it is in a searchable computerized format, four times as long if it is in printed form). There are three types of books:

Introductory Texts: Useless to PCs who already have the skill, but can temporarily give the equivalent of level one (hobby) in the skill to people who do not have the skill.

Reference Texts Unusable by people who do not have the skill, but for those who do have the skill they increase the skill level by one (max. 6).

Introductory/Reference Texts: Can be used either way.

Not every skill has a book available (for many skills a book would be useless).

Combat Skills

Each combat skill lists fighting actions and/or reactions which are learned as part of the skill. In addition to any plusses listed in the skill, the PC gets +4 for every skill level above the first to each of these actions and reactions. Most combat skills only allow the plusses to work on certain weapons.

Some skills start with a negative on one of the actions/reactions. This does not mean that a PC with one level in the skill has a penalty. It only means that this is something that the PC doesn't benefit from until he or she gets multiple levels of the skill. For instance, if a skill gives -4 to Blinding Strike, then at level 1 the PC gets no benefit, at level 2 (-4 +4) the PC still gets no benefit. At level 3, however, (-4 +8) the PC does get +4 to blinding strikes.

Example: Fenn has Knife Throwing (4). The skill lists the following plusses when throwing knives or similar weapons:

- +2 per level to initiative
- +4 to Strike
- +0 to Vital Strike
- 4 to Blinding Strike
- No penalty for targeted strikes.

Because Fenn has 4 levels in the skill, he gets +12 to all of these, so Fenn's actual plusses are:

- +8 (+2 x 4) to initiative
- +16 (+4 +12) to Strike
- +12 (+0 +12) to Vital Strike
- +8 (-4 +12) to Blinding Strike
- No penalty for targeted strikes.

If a PC has different skills that give plusses on the same action with the same weapon (e.g. Street Fighting: Armed and Knife Fighting both give plusses to Vital Strike with knives) the PC takes only the highest bonus for each action (the plusses do not combine).

Psychic Skills

In Brief- Psychic skills can manipulate (uses WIL, can be sensed with AWR and resisted with WIL, uses 2 END) or sense (uses AWR, disrupted by crowds) nervous systems. Animals harder.

Psychic Manipulation- Psychics can manipulate their own nervous systems, or the nervous systems of other people or animals. Psychic manipulation is rolled using WIL. Each psychic action uses 2 END.

When a psychic tries to manipulate another person, that person can make an opposed AWR roll (20 difficulty) to try to sense the manipulation happening. If the victim's success beats the psychic's, the victim realizes that he or she is being manipulated. An AWR roll is not necessary if the effects of the manipulation are obviously psychic (e.g. the psychic takes control of someone's arm and makes that person stab himself).

If a person realizes that he or she is being manipulated, the person can make an opposed WIL roll (20 difficulty) to try to resist the psychic manipulation. If the victim's success is greater than the psychics, the victim resists the manipulation.

Psychic manipulation rolls work best when the psychic is touching the victim. The farther away the target is, the harder it is to manipulate him or her (-1 per foot). A psychic can also choose to effect everyone in range (including himself or herself), which will make the roll easier (+10) but may mean that the psychic will have to resist his or her own manipulation.

Example: Matt has Belief Attack (2). Matt is surrounded by a gang of addicts, one of whom has him pinned against a wall and is going through his pockets. Matt yells "I've got the plague" and makes a Belief Attack skill roll to make everyone believe it. He decides to target everyone, including himself. Matt rolls WIL (17) +4 (skill) +10 (everyone in range effected) +1d20 vs. 20 (the GM decides this is a moderately believable idea). He rolls 2, meaning he gets 33 vs. 20, a 13 success. Matt knows he is being manipulated, so doesn't need to make an AWR roll to tell he is being manipulated, but he does have to resist the manipulation. He must roll WIL (17) + 1d20 vs. 20 and get better than 13 success. If he fails he will believe he has the plague. The addicts, on the other hand, can not resist unless they realize they are being manipulated. They must make an AWR + 1d20 vs. 20 roll. The psychic going through Matt's pockets (touching him) has to beat 13 difficulty. Matt had -1 per foot on his success against the other addicts, and since they are all 4 ft. away they must get at least 9 success (29 on their WIL + 1d20 rolls). Only one makes the AWR roll, but she fails at resisting the attack. The addicts all run off to look for someplace to wash themselves off.

Psychic Sensation- Like manipulation rolls, using psychic senses is easiest when the psychic can touch the source of the psychic energy. For each foot away the target is, the psychic gets -1 to the roll. Psychic sensation is made difficult by large crowds (because people put out a lot of psychic "noise" which can drown out one specific sensation). For every four people around the psychic, the psychic suffers a -1 penalty to rolls.

Example: Matt is in a crowd of 100 people and wants to read the mind of someone 5 ft. away. Matt is at -25 (from the crowd) and at -5 (5 ft.) to his roll

Animals- Psychic skills depend on natural systems within the psychic's nervous systems connecting with natural systems within another nervous system (or by-products of that nervous system). The more different the

two nervous systems are, the harder the roll. A psychic using a skill on an animal takes the following penalty:

Non-Human Primates: -4
Non-Primate Mammals: -10
Birds, Reptiles, Amphibians, Fish: -20
Insects, Jellyfish, Shellfish, etc.: -40

Vehicle Skills

Normal skills list example things that a person with that skill could do at each level of difficulty (an easy thing, a moderate thing, a hard thing, etc.) Vehicle skills list a number of "maneuvers" that a person with that skill can do, each with a corresponding difficulty. For example, one of the maneuvers that people with the motorcycle skill get is "Stairs (20): Go up or down stairs or similar impediments." Maneuvers are rolled as a normal skill roll, but they have two special modifiers: maneuverability and speed.

Maneuverability: A rating of a particular vehicle that tells how good or bad it is at complex maneuvers. Maneuverability is expressed as a plus or minus to maneuvers done with the vehicle.

Speed: For some maneuvers (jumping, stairs), going fast is good, but for the majority of maneuvers going too fast makes the maneuver harder. Unless the GM decides that this is a fast maneuver, the difficulty for the maneuver is whichever is higher: the difficulty listed in the skill description or the current SPD of the rider.

Example: Rakesh, who has Motorcycle (3), is chasing after someone on his motorcycle and is confronted with a flight of stairs. At the bottom of the stairs he will have to make a sharp turn or hit a wall. Rakesh is going at 30 SPD when he hits the stairs. The GM decides that Rakesh will not take a SPD penalty while going down the stairs. Rakesh rolls AGY (15) + 8 (skill) +15 (the maneuverability of the motorcycle) + 1d20 vs. 20 (the difficulty listed for Stairs in the Motorcycle skill description). Rakesh makes it easily. At the bottom of the stairs is the sharp turn, and the GM says that he will make Rakesh take the SPD penalty. Rakesh rolls AGY (15) + 8 (skill) +15 (maneuverability) + 1d20 vs. 30 (his current SPD).

Maneuvers as Combat- The maneuvers Ram, Trample and Swerve can be used as combat actions and reaction. They can be opposed by other combat actions and reactions by people on foot. **Example:** Rakesh wants to use the Trample maneuver to hit Lew (who is on foot). On Rakesh's action, he makes a Trample maneuver roll. As a reaction, Lew dodges. Rakesh succeeds by 5, Lew succeeds by 7, thus the dodge is successful.

Non-Skills

A PC can try anything without using a skill. The PC simply narrates what he or she does. **Example:** Flagg has no demolitions or electronics skills of any kind and he's trying to disarm a bomb. The GM doesn't make him roll a skill roll, doesn't even make him roll INL. The GM simply describes the bomb and asks Flagg what he does. Flagg decides the best thing to do is grab a handful of wires and yank them out all at once. The GM narrates the result...

Unless they have some special disadvantage, PCs are expected to be able to do a certain number of normal things, including: read, eat, dress, keep clean, stay afloat, use a pistol, read a map, cook a meal, tie a knot, tell a lie, recognize symptoms of serious illness, etc.

Psychic Modifiers

Manipulation Rolls

Manipulating target remotely:	-1/ft.
Everyone in range effected:	+10

Sensory Rolls

Touching the source:	-0
Sensing remotely:	-1/ft.
Being in a crowd:	-1/4 people

HACKING

In Brief:

Step 1: Homework – Talk to people, search the internet, sneak around to find out anything you can.

Step 2: Getting In – Find a hole in a firewall, use a virus, get in through a computer you've already hacked (privileges, sniffing) or use non-hacking methods.

Step 3: Once You're In – Better success at getting in = better privileges (more power). Can up privileges by hacking the OS. Can crash computer, try not to be detected, lock out other users, do more research.

System Security – Can setup the firewall well. Can monitor for intruders. Have home-field advantage (can almost always beat intruders once found).

Homework

In Brief: Roll Internet Browsing and/or CHM and/or success at sneaking the building vs. organization's secrecy rating. If successful, roll on table to see what you learned.

This is the term hackers use to describe everything that happens before attempting to hack the target system. Homework is research to find out as much as possible about the system.

There are three ways to do homework:

Internet Research: The PC scours the net for any information that has been posted in public places about the system. Roll Internet Browsing skill roll vs. the organization's secrecy rating.

Social Engineering: This is when the PC tries to con someone out of information about the company. The most difficult type is cold calls (calling up a member of the organization and pretending to be someone with a legitimate right to knowledge about the organization and the target system). An easier way is finding network administrators in a bar after hours and pretending to be a

potential sex partner who find their job very interesting. PCs must role-play getting a hold of and talking to members of that organization. Roll CHM + 1d20 vs. the organization's secrecy rating.

Sneaking Around: Hackers use thief skills to enter the offices of the organization or homes of employees looking for anything that might give some clue as to how to get in (old passwords written on slips of paper, old software data cards, printouts of internal memos, old broken computers with hard drives that information can be scavenged from). Dumpsters are a common target of hackers doing this type of homework. Roll 1d20 plus a number signifying how far the hackers were able to intrude (10 if they just got a few bags of trash, 20 if they got in to the home of a network administrator, 30 if they were able to wander around the offices of the organization) vs. the organization's secrecy rating.

For each successful homework roll, the PC gets one of the following (roll on 1d100):

01-20: The physical location of the system or network and what physical security measures protect it. (Useful info if hackers must resort to an on-site hack attempt).

21-40: Location on internal network (+10 to Network Protocol rolls to find system)

41-60: The type of system, software running on it, and security setup. (+10 to Finding a Hole)

61-80: The composition, skills, habits and policies of the network security team. (+10 to any opposed rolls vs. system security)

81-00: Information about the internal structure of the company (which can be used to help hackers impersonate company employees). (+10 to any further social engineering rolls).

Tech Skill and Hacking: What They Are Good For

Anonymity- This skill allows a hacker to avoid being tracked back to his or her location by sending commands to the target system anonymously.

Copy Protection- When hackers steal programs off of the system that they have hacked, this skill allows them to break the copy protection on the programs so they can use or sell them.

Date Pirating- This skill is used to get hacking tools without having to pay for them on the black market.

Denial of Service- This skill is used to disable a system without having to actually have access to it.

Internet Browsing- This skill is used for researching the publicly available information that will help the PC figure out the best way to attack a system.

Jellynailing- This skill allows PCs to run their programs on a target system or to run programs stolen from a hacked system on their computer, despite hardware incompatibilities.

Linework- This skill allows hackers to physically tap in to networks to hack them from the inside.

Network Protocols- This skill is used to map networks and to masquerade as another network node (send data from one station, but make it look like it came from another station).

Network Security- Hackers with this skill can get a better sense of the security on a target system, and they can also secure their own computer against counter-attacks.

Operating Systems- Once inside a computer, this skill allows a PC to manipulate the operating systems and do things the account doesn't normally have privileges to do.

Payphones- This skill is used to hack in to paycomputers, which are convenient places to stage an attack from.

Programming: Applications- The PC can write hacking tools which automate some of the aspects of hacking a system and allow the hacker to do several things at once. In extreme cases, hackers can also use this skill to decompile a security program and comb through it for holes that might let a hacker in.

Programming: Virus- This skill allows PCs to write programs which they can send to some user. If they can trick that user in to running the program (and if the program is good enough to bypass the computer's anti-virus programs) the program can open up backdoors to let the PC in to the system.

System Crashing- This skill is used to break computers. The whole point of the hack might be to sabotage a system, or crashing might be incidental (a system might be crashed to distract or disable network security or to cover the hacker's tracks).

System Prowling- This skill is used to let the PC keep system administrators from noticing the hacker's presence during or after the hack.

Cryptography- (an Info skill) Used when the PC gains access to some file or taps in to some communication that is encrypted. The PC uses the cryptography skill to help a code breaker program break the code and give the PC access to read or change the data.

Getting In

In Brief- Find a password, scam someone in to giving it to you (CHM+1d20 vs. secrecy rating), 'eavesdrop' on someone logging on to the computer (must break encryption), hack in to another computer that has privileges on target computer.

There are several ways to gain access to a system:

Getting a Password- This is the most common method and the one that requires little or no technical skills. The PC simply finds out someone's password and logs in using it. There are nearly as many scams to get people's passwords as there are scams to get people's money. One of the most common is Shoulder Surfing: spying on someone who is logging in to a system in a public place and watch what keys they are hitting. Some hackers have gone as low-tech as getting a password by threatening to hit a user with a brick.

Social Engineering- This is a very specific type of scam to get passwords. The hacker gets a hold of some user, pretends to be someone else in the organization and tricks the user in to giving out his or her password. Many companies and government agencies spend thousands or millions on campaigns to teach users not to give their passwords to anyone, but all it takes is one naive person.

Knowledge of a structure of the organization is vital to Social Engineering (see Homework) because it helps the hacker pretend to be a member of the organization. With good sound and video samples, Social Engineers can even use the Puppet program (p.80) and the Impersonation skill (p.31) to masquerade over videophone as someone the victim knows (even as the victim's own boss) which makes it much easier to get a password.

To try to get a password via Social Engineering, role-play the interaction with the victim, then roll 1d20 + CHM (and any plusses or minuses the GM rewards for a very convincing or not very convincing scam) vs. the organizations Secrecy Rating. A failure of 1 to 5 means that the victim won't give out the password. A failure by more than 5 means that the victim will report the incident to Network Security.

Sniffing- On any network, data being sent from one computer to another passes through several nodes. This data includes people logging in to systems on a network. If the PC can gain control of a computer which is in a network between the system and the person logging in to the system, the hacker can capture that user's password. On an internal network this can be as simple as hooking up a palmtop computer to a network port (using the Linework skill). On the internet, this means gaining control of an Internet Router that is intermediate between the system being hacked. Internet Routers are very powerful machines that help route information around the internet (every company or organization that has direct access to the internet, instead of buying it from somewhere else, has an internet router). See p.66 for an example Internet Router.

Once the PC has a computer which is on the network, the PC must use the Sniffing skill (and Sniffing software) to find a person logging in. The problem now is encryption. Most logins that take place over the internet (and even some that take place on internal networks) are encrypted, which means that once the PC has captured the login he or she has to break the code (see cryptography) to use it. For instance, one very paranoid system might have Remote Login Encryption Strength 20 for their internal network and Remote Login Encryption Strength 40 for internet logins.

Sibling Attack- Some computers "trust" other computers. For instance, an organization might use a single logon server that processes logins for any computer on the network. If that server says a person's password is legitimate, every other system on the network trusts that server and lets the person in. A hard Network Protocols roll can tell the PC what servers trust what other servers. If it is too hard for a PC to hack in to one server, they might be able to hack in to another server and then gain automatic access to the first server.

Virus/Trojan/Worm- The PC writes some malicious program and sneaks it in to the network. The PC might send it as an email attachment, or mail a data card to someone in the company, or infect a home computer of a user. The PC must then wait until the program gets on to the target system. Then the program will try to run and will try to open up a backdoor that lets the PC log directly in to the system. The only thing that can stop it is the system and network's anti-virus setup. Roll the Programming: Virus skill roll vs. the systems Virus Protection Rating.

On-Site Attacks

In Brief: Much easier to hack when in the building or at the machine.

There is a considerable advantage to being in the same building as the system the PC is trying to hack. If a computer isn't connected to the internet (or any other network that goes outside the building) it might be the only way the PC can hack in to the system. By entering the building and tapping in to the internal network with a portable computer, the PC can completely bypass the external firewall. The PCs can also do things like look for passwords scribbled down on pieces of paper, distract network security by doing things like pulling fire alarms, or even going to the system itself. If the station has an account logged on to it, the PC is in without needing to hack it at all. If not, PCs with high levels in the Operating System and Jellynailing skill can reboot the system in a hacker OS, run the normal Operating System in an emulator that gives them control over what it does, and gain control of the system that way. The only thing that can go wrong with this is if the Operating System is encrypted (very few are set up this way) so that some external decryption key needs to be entered before the operating system can even run.

How Long Does Hacking Take?

In Brief: An Evening

Hacking can be fairly quick if the hacker can get in easily. The more steps a hacker has to go through to get in to a system, the longer it will take. Generally, the more success the hacker gets on a roll, the quicker the hacker does that thing.

-Homework can take hours to weeks, depending on how much homework the hacker wishes to do.

-Breaking encryption (e.g. when Sniffing) can take from seconds to months, depending on the success at breaking the encryption (see p.65)

-Finding a hole takes about an hour (15 minutes with 10+ success).

-Raising privileges takes about half an hour (15 minutes with 10+ success).

-Most other things a hacker would want to do (looking for file, homework, putting in backdoors, crashing) that requires a skill roll takes about fifteen minutes.

-Most other things a hacker would want to do that don't require a skill roll (copying a file, logging in to a database, etc.) take only 1 or 2 minutes.

Finding a Hole- This is the form of hacking that has changed little in a hundred years. There are programs designed to give some people access to a computer and deny it to everyone else. These programs are never perfect and so every system has holes. Some holes are errors in the program, others are mistakes made by the people setting up the security setup, others are mistakes by users who choose passwords that are too easy to guess. Every day, new security holes are discovered and knowledge of them spread throughout the hacker community and every day software companies are creating new patches to close these security holes.

The word Firewall has a very specific technical meaning, but it is often used more generally to describe all the various attempts to plug up security holes around a system or network. In most security-minded organizations, the entire network has a firewall protecting the network from attacks coming in from the internet (a network firewall) and if hackers get past that they have to deal with firewalls protecting the individual computer which is the target of the attack (a system firewall).

To find a hole in a computer or network firewall, make an Operating Systems or Network Security skill roll with a difficulty equal to the firewall's strength. The PC could also use the following skills at +10 difficulty: Network Protocols, Internet Browsing, Programming: Applications. The PC could also use the following skills at +20 difficulty: Data Piracy, Programming (any), System Crashing, System Prowling, Payphones, Copy Protection.

A failure of 1 to 5 means that the user's attempts were simply blocked by the firewall. A failure of 6 or more means that the firewall recognized that there is an attack in progress, it immediately notifies system security.

Once You're In

In Brief- Hackers get in with a level of control equal to the success on the roll that got them in. They can improve their privileges (OS vs. 30), crash the computer (System Crashing skill roll), lock out other users, cover his or her tracks (System Prowling skill roll), put in backdoors, or do more homework.

Privileges- When a PC gets in to a system with one of the methods listed above, he or she has a username and password of an account on the system. Not all accounts are equal: some have privileges to do things that others can't. Each system will have a list of things that users can do with each level of privileges. If PCs get in using a Sibling Attack (see above) they will have access equal to whatever access they have on the sibling. Otherwise, the level of privileges is based on the amount of success on the roll that the PC got in with:

1-5: User (Typically has access to only limited areas of the computer. The PC can run most programs but can not change anything). Gives -10 to any rolls to manipulate the computer.

6-9: Superuser (Typically can control the accounts of users, install and run programs, but can not make system wide changes).

Without Getting In

The main focus of this section is on gaining access to computers. There are, however, certain things that a hacker can do to a computer without gaining any sort of access:

Denial of Service- The PC brings a computer or its connection to its knees by flooding it with false requests. Denial of Service attacks rarely do permanent damage to a system, but it is sometimes enough to temporarily disable it. See p.29 for more.

Virus / Trojan / Worm- Without the PC ever gaining access to a station, a well written virus, trojan or worm can wreak all kinds of havoc on the PC's behalf.

Sniffing- Sometimes it isn't even necessary to get in to a system if all the PC wants to do is eavesdrop on the communication between that system and other computers. The PC only needs to be able to hack in to an intermediate network node, then the PC can see anything going across and only has to worry about breaking possible encryption in the communication.

10+: Admin (Has complete control of everything on the computer, including the other administrator accounts). Gives +10 to any rolls to manipulate the computer.

If the hackers wants to do something that his or her current privilege level will not allow, there are two options: the PC can attempt to run a command at a higher level with a hard Operating Systems roll, the hacker can make a legendary Operating Systems roll to try to raise his or her privileges one level, or the hacker can try to hack in again with a different account (but this time with +10 to getting in because the hacker has already been inside the system and knows a lot more about what to expect).

Crashing- One options for hackers inside a system is to try to crash the system. A PC can crash individual programs, crash the whole computer so it will stop working until someone can physically reboot it, or the hacker can try to trash the computer so bad that it will not work again without hours of repair. Use the System Crashing skill (or the Operating Systems skill at +20 difficulty). If the PC's goal here is to destroy data be aware that many organizations back up their important data to solid memory that is kept offline, which means there's no way to get rid of the data other than finding where it is stored and physically destroying it (such as the Freedom Army did with the corporate AIs during the Freedom Wars).

Lockout- Sometimes hackers will attempt to change all the passwords on a system so that only they have access to it. The obvious response from system administrators is to remove the computer from the network, force their way in to the operating system (reinstalling the OS if necessary) and regaining control.

Prowling- Blatant and direct attacks like crashing the computer or trying to lockout the users often fail because the system administrators have physical access to the computer and the hacker does not. Most hackers find they can do what they want for longer if they keep themselves and their actions hidden. Hackers can make an opposed System Prowling roll (vs. the administrator's Network Security roll) to cover their tracks and not alert administrators of their presence.

Backdoors- Another thing hackers like to do in a system is to put in a backdoor, some invisible security flaw that only they know about which will allow them to get back in to the system whenever they like. The PC can make a moderate Operating Systems or Network Security roll to leave a backdoor and an opposed System Prowling roll to try to hide the backdoor so that it will never be discovered. The ultimate security response to this is every time a computer has been hacked in to, wipe the memory completely and rebuild it from scratch. Fortunately for hackers most systems either aren't important enough to warrant this kind of effort or the owners can't afford to have the system be down for as long as this would take.

More Homework- When a hacker gets on to one computer in a network, they can often snoop around on that machine and find out information about other computers on the network. For each machine in a network a PC gets Admin access on, the PC can roll once on the homework success table (p.61).

System Security

In Brief- Can prevent/stop hackers by: good firewall setup (Network Security, Cryptography skill rolls), monitor for intruders (Network Security skill roll vs. System Prowling). Found hackers can be easily cut off.

The amount of security on a network and on a system varies widely. At the low end, there are very many systems that have no staff dedicated solely to security and a system admin that doesn't know much about security at all. On the other end of a spectrum are very important government and corporate networks that have a network "war room" where a whole team of security administrators watch the network for intruders (and have the power to log on to any system on the network as administrator and snuff out an account being used by a hacker).

Security Setup- The first way a security administrator can protect a network or system from hackers is through skillful setup. It is the administrator's Network Security skill roll that sets the network and system firewall difficulties. It is the administrator's Cryptography skill roll that sets up the encryption strength for remote logins. It is the administrator that makes sure a system doesn't need to trust any other systems (unless absolutely necessary) and that each level of privileges can't do any more than it needs to.

Monitoring for Intruders- Every system has a rating representing how much of the time a network security administrator is monitoring the network and the systems on it looking for hackers, and how skilled the admin(s) are. For every experience level, assume that the security admins have one level of Network Security, Operating Systems and Cryptography. If a system has "30% monitoring by level 3 Admins" then a hacker makes a percentile roll. If the roll is 30 or less, then there is an Admin currently monitoring the network at the time that the hacker is trying to hack in.

If a hacker is unlucky enough to be on or trying to get on a system or network while it is being monitored, the hacker's only hope is to make an opposed moderate System Prowling skill roll vs. a moderate Network Security skill roll by the security admin. If the security admin wins the opposed roll (or succeeds uncontested) he or she has noticed the hacker. If the security admin wins by 1 to 5 points, he or she has a suspicion that the account logged in is that of a hacker (and not a legit user) but will probably try to check and make sure first. If the security admin succeeds by more than 5, he or she is instantly sure that this is a hacker at work.

Dealing With Intruders- Most security administrators have Admin accounts on every computer on the network, including the computer running the network firewall. If they identify an intruder, it only takes a second for them to log on to the firewall machine and block the intruder's network address. The hacker can try to get in coming from another network address, but before the hacker can do that a good administrator will change the password on the account the hacker was using or find and patch the security hole. The only chance the hacker has of fighting back is to make a first strike (cutting off the Admin's access). This strategy doesn't help for long, because a security admin can simply walk over to a machine to log-on in person or, failing that, shut it down.

Possible Systems on a Network

Billing Server- Has a dedicated connection to a bank, allowing the company to do on-line sales. Hackers on these systems can debit or credit accounts.

Database Server- Runs some large shared database (e.g. a database of customers, or of work orders, etc.)

File Server- For storing files so that people on different computers can access them. May store documents, accounting spreadsheets, program source code, etc. depending on what department it is used for.

Firewall Server- This computer runs the external firewall. Hackers on this system can create backdoors in the firewall and can cut any station off from the network.

Internet Router- This computer is connected to an internet service provider and provides internet access for the entire network. Hackers on this system can sniff any connection from outside the network, and can block any connection.

Logon Authority Server- Keeps accounts and passwords so that a person can have one logon that works on multiple machines. Hackers on this system can access any account.

Mail Server- Handles routing of all email within the network, coming from the internet or going out to the internet. Hackers on this system can read people's email and control who gets what email.

Memory Archive Server- Makes solid state backups of data from other servers. Hackers on this system can search through old backups, and can see any data on any system that gets backed up.

Netsite Server- Runs the netsite that people can access from the internet. Most net sites provide information to the public, but others let people pay to access data/services or let employees log-in remotely.

Network Gateway- Adds an additional buffer of protection (beyond just a firewall) between a network and the internet. Users must log-on to (or hack in to) this machine before they can even try to access a machine on the network.

Phone Server- Routes incoming calls to the proper person. Monitors and records calls. Hackers on this system can control who can make and receive phone calls and can eavesdrop on any calls.

Security Admin Workstation- The workstation that security personnel use to monitor and administrate the network. Hackers on this system can make security admins blind to intrusions or block their attempts to cut off hackers.

User Workstations- Individual users within the company log-on to the network (and to other machines on the network) from these machines. By far the most common machines on a network.

VR Server- Runs a multi-user virtual reality program (see p.198).

Cryptography

Today, every code is breakable, but the amount of time it takes to break the codes depends on several factors:

Encryption- Modern encryption is done via computer programs that can take any sort of data (text, sound, video, pictures, computer programs, etc.) and encrypt them. Each piece of encryption software has a strength which tells how hard the codes are to break. Most encryption programs are used by people who know nothing about cryptography. Skilled cryptographers can help the program out by selecting options which best match the current situation. To add to an encryptions strength, roll a moderate (20 difficulty) cryptography skill roll and add the success (if any) to the encryption strength.

Unaided Decryption- This is where encrypted data is fed in to a computer program which tries to break the code. The program is left alone to make all its own decisions with no help from the user. To determine the success of the code breaking:

**Code Breaker Strength x Available Power
+ 1d20 vs. Encryption Strength**

Aided Decryption- This is where the PC uses his or her knowledge of encryption and of the particular code being used to help point the code breaker in the right direction. Make a moderate (20 difficulty) cryptography roll and add the success, if any, to the code breaker's roll.

Modifiers to Code Breaking

- Small Sample Size -5
- Large Sample Size +5
- Knowing What Encryption Software Was Used +5
- Knowing What Type of Data is Encrypted +5
- Using Old Code Breaking Software -1/month
- Having Part of the Unencrypted Message +5

Cryptography Success- Unlike other tasks, with code breaking it isn't a matter of succeeding or failing, but a matter of how long it will take the code breaker to crack the code. Every code breaker will succeed within some finite amount of time, the success merely determines whether it can do it fast enough to be of any use to the PCs.

- 50: Longer than the lifetime of the universe.
- 40: 10,000 years.
- 30: 100 years.
- 20: One year.
- 10: One month.
- 0: One week.
- 1: One day.
- 3: One hour.
- 5: 30 minutes.
- 10: 30 seconds.
- 20: One second.
- 30: Instantaneously.

Example: Marla wants to be able to log-on to her server from a remote location, but she doesn't want people grabbing her password as it goes across the net, so she sets up encryption. She buys software that makes 30 strength encryption, and she makes a cryptography roll to set all the right settings. She has Cryptography (2) and rolls INL (15) +4 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 20. She succeeds by 7 and thus adds 7 to the strength of her encryption.

Kimberly grabs Marla's log-on as it passes over the network. She has a computer with 6 power and a code

breaking program with a Code Breaking Power of 2. She has Cryptography (4) and makes a skill roll to aid the decryption. She rolls INL (14) +12 (skill) +1d20 vs. 20. She beats the difficulty by 15. Her roll for decryption is: Code Breaker Strength (2) x Available Power (6) +15 (aided decryption) +1d20 vs. Encryption Strength (27).

She rolls 6 on 1d20. Altogether that's 33 vs. 27. She beat the difficulty by 6, meaning it will take 30 minutes for her to break the code.

Types of Encryption

Public Key- This type of encryption uses special keys that everyone makes public for anyone who wants to send them the message. The key is sort of like a deposit-box on a bank: it's easy to put information in (encrypt it) but only the key's owner can take information out (decrypt it). This technology allows people to send encrypted messages to people they've never meet and is the most common technology used on the Internet. The advantages is that it is easy to use, the disadvantage is that it is not as strong as other types of encryption.

One-Key- This is the oldest form of code. Both the party receiving and the party sending the message share a key which is used both to encrypt and decrypt the message. The advantage of this method is that it is very powerful, the disadvantage is that the two parties must meet at some point to exchange keys (a potential security hole).

Evolving- An evolving code is one where each message that is sent changes the key. The key is thus always changing and thus if a person manages to crack the code today, the key may be entirely different tomorrow. The advantage is that code breakers must keep track of every single exchange or lose the key. The disadvantage is that if the legitimate target of the encoded message misses even a few characters, they can no longer decrypt the message.

A Simple Hacking Example

Kimberly and her friends have an enemy trapped inside a small office building on Fourth Ave. Before they go in, Kimberly wants to look really quickly to see if she can find a blueprint for a building. Kimberly is working on a little Palmtop Communicator with a cellular internet connection. Kimberly makes an Internet Browsing roll to see if she can find the blueprints in some publicly available place on-line. Although she succeeds at her skill roll, the GM says that the blueprints aren't publicly available, but Kimberly does find the architects that created the building. There is a special "clients only" area of their netsite that Kimberly thinks might have the blueprints. There is no network firewall protecting the netsite server, which means Kimberly can attack it directly. Kimberly tries to find a hole in the system firewall of the server. The server has a System Firewall Strength of 20 and is running OpenCert. Kimberly has Operating Systems (2) with OpenFree/OpenCert as one of her specialties. Kimberly rolls INL (14) +4 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 20. Kimberly succeeds by 7, meaning she gets in with SuperUser privileges. With this level of privileges she can easily get in to the client directory and pull out the blueprints for this building.

A Complicated Hacking Example

6:00PM: Kimberly and her friends desperately need to find the address of the last "client" visited by an escort working at 36F Escorts. Kimberly sends Talula and Marshall to go raid the dumpster of the 36F Escorts building. She sends Jack Monroe to call up 36F Escorts pretending to be interested in a job and to try to get as many details as possible about the network. Meanwhile, she stays at home and tries to find anything she can about the company via the internet.

A Sample Network: 36F Escorts

36F Escorts is the city's largest escort service. They have about 30 employees in their administrative office in downtown Manhattan (this does not include the escorts, who rarely see the office). They have one full-time computer tech, Marla Morrone, who works 9-5 Monday through Saturday and carries a pager when she is off duty. Marla's sister Jenny is an escort and whenever there is any hint that Jenny might be in trouble, Marla immediately leaves the office to check on her.

Access: Connected to the Internet.

Network Firewall Strength: 15

Network Security: 7% monitoring by level 2 Admin.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 10

Mail/Phone Server: This computer handles email and routes phone calls to the various call-center workstations.

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (a login every 4d6 minutes)

System Firewall Strength: 20

Trusts: None

Operating System: OpenCert

Virus Protection Rating: 30

Power: 17

Privileges

User: Check email and phone stats.

Superusers: Change email and phone settings.

Admin: Edit email in mailboxes.

Billing Computer- This computer has a direct connection to the company's bank. The call center and the net site take credit card information and forward it to this computer which verifies credit info and bills customers.

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (Internal) 40 (External) (a login every 2d20 hours)

System Firewall Strength: 30

Trusts: Call Center DB

Operating System: Mainframe 10

Power: 10

Privileges

User: Get billing reports.

Superusers: Manually credit or bill credit card accounts.

Admin: View full billing record (including hundreds of saved credit card numbers).

Call Center DB- This computer runs a custom database created by Marla to run the call center. There are full records of every customer, every escort and a calendar of every meeting since the system went up three years ago. When a customer calls in, the call taker records his or her preferences, when they want someone and the computer suggests an escort. The call taker makes an appointment and the database calls the escort.

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (a login every 2d6 minutes)

System Firewall Strength: 25

Trusts: None

Operating System: Mainframe 10

Power: 20

Privileges

User: Input and retrieve customer info, view escort info, enter and cancel appointments.

Superusers: Edit escort info.

Admin: Delete records and appointment history.

Marla's Workstation- This is Marla's office computer, from which she administers all other servers. She only turns it on while she is at work.

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (a login every 4d20 hours)

System Firewall Strength: 40

Trusts: None

Operating System: GuildOS

Power: 15

Privileges

User: Run programs, access the internet.

Superusers: Add and remove software.

Admin: Delete system files. Edit user accounts.

Net Site Server- Runs the public net site (3D.36F-escorts.com.us) which advertises the company, gives a price list and links to the call center's phone address.

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (login every 2d20 hours)

System Firewall Strength: 40

Trusts: None

Operating System: OpenCert

Power: 25

Privileges

User: Make changes to the net site contents. View traffic stats.

Superusers: Turn the net site off and on.

Internet Router- A small router with a connection to NYRLAN that gives internet access to every computer in the office.

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (login every 2d20 hours)

System Firewall Strength: 30

Trusts: None

Operating System: Mainframe 10

Power: 10

Privileges

User: View firewall settings. View internet traffic.

Superusers: Packet sniffing. Block internet addresses. Turn on or off the network firewall.

Administrator: Edit packets.

User Workstations- 15 computers in the call center are used by call takers. They log-on to the Call Center DB and enter calls.

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (login every 4d20 hours)

System Firewall Strength: 35

Trusts: None

Operating System: OpenCert

Power: 7

Talula and Marshall end up grabbing two bags of trash out of the dumpster without getting caught. The GM says that the two bags of trash are worth 10 points. Talula and Marshall roll 10 + 1d20 vs. the Organization Secrecy Rating of 36F Escorts (10). They succeed and roll on the homework success table, getting "The composition, skills, habits and policies of the network security team. (+10 to any opposed rolls vs. system security)." Meanwhile, Jack Monroe makes a CHM (17) + 1d20 vs. 10 (secrecy rating) roll to get info from someone over the phone. The person is quite happy to talk about the computer network in the office. Jack rolls on the homework table and gets "Location on internal network (+10 to Network Protocol rolls to find system)" Kimberly rolls 1d20 + INL (14) +8 (from having Internet Browsing (3)) vs. 10 (secrecy rating). She succeeds and gets "The composition, skills, habits and policies of the network security team. (+10 to any opposed rolls vs. system security)," which is useless because Talula and Marshall already found the same thing.

8:00PM: Having done all the homework they have time for, they decide it is time to strike. It is 8 pm, and they know (from their homework) that Marla, the company's computer tech (and sole security admin) has gone home for the day. They set up in an abandoned building across the street from the 36F building and Kimberly goes to work. First she must get past the network firewall. Out of all the skills she could use, she figures that Operating Systems is her strongest skill. She rolls INL (14) +4 (skill) vs. 15 (the Network Firewall Strength). She easily beats it and now has access to any computer on the network.

8:15PM: She has to figure out which server has the escort's appointments on it (the Call Center Database). Since Jack Monroe got "Location on internal network" Kimberly gets +10 to her roll. Kimberly makes a moderate Network Protocols skill roll at INL (14) +10 (from homework) vs. 20. Kimberly succeeds and finds the system.

8:30PM: Now Kimberly tries to find a hole in the firewall of the Call Center DB. The system runs Mainframe 10, which Kimberly does not have a specialty in, so she would be at +10 to her difficulty if she used Operating Systems. Instead she decides to use Internet Browsing (at +10 difficulty, because this is not the best skill to use to find a hole, see the list on p.63). So, she rolls INL (14) +8 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 25 (the System Firewall Strength) +10 (because she is using Internet Browsing). Kimberly fails by 7, meaning that not only did she not get in, the firewall will be notifying the system administrator. They figure Marla should be getting a page right now, wherever she is.

9:00PM: Realizing that she has to hurry, Kimberly looks for another system she can break in to more easily. She makes a moderate Network Protocols roll to get a list of every station on the network and the operating system of each. She finds a system called MailPhone that is running OpenCert (an OS she does specialize in). She rolls to find a hole in the firewall of that machine, using Operating Systems. She rolls INL (14) +4 (skill) +1d20 vs. 20 (the System Firewall Strength). Kimberly succeeds by 7. That means she is in as a superuser. Looking to see what she can do, Kimberly finds that she can change people's phone and mailbox settings, but that doesn't do her too much good.

9:30PM: They see a woman striding quickly towards the building with a frown on her face. Fearing that it is Marla, the system admin, Jack Monroe goes down to stall

her. Jack pretends to be someone Marla knows and starts reeling off some bullshit about money Jack owes her, not letting Marla get a word in. While this is happening, Marla decides that she needs better privileges. She figures that she's not skillful enough to raise her privileges, but she can try hacking in again and hope to get a better account. She's at +10 to hack in again because she's already seen the inside of the system. She rolls INL (14) +4 (skill) +10 (has already been inside) +1d20 vs. 20 (the System Firewall Strength)). She succeeds by 12, meaning she gets in as an Admin. She now has access to everyone's mail and saved phone messages. The GM rules that because she succeeded by so much, she got in very quickly, in only 15 minutes. Kimberly downloads all the email and voicemail messages for their missing escort, hoping that might help.

9:45PM: Kimberly decides to try to hack in to one of the workstations of one of the call center operators. Her thought is this: they're probably logged in to the Call Center DB, so if she can gain control of one of their machines, she can get access to it. The workstations are running OpenCert, so Kimberly rolls INL (14) +4 (skill) +1d20 vs. 35 (the System Firewall Strength). She succeeds by 1, giving her user privileges. The GM says that with that success it will take half an hour to find the hole. While she is in the middle of doing this, Marla, the security admin, finally gets sick of trying to tell Jack that she's in a hurry. She tries to step past Jack and when Jack gets in her way she calls one of the security guards in the building. Jack doesn't want to tangle with the security guard and leaves. Talula, who is watching out the window, tells Kimberly. Kimberly doesn't have the System Prowling skill, so there's nothing she can do to hide from Marla, she just has to hope that she can find what she needs before Marla finds her. Marla goes in, talks to the shift manager, logs on to her workstation, and makes a Network Security roll to find the intruder. Since Kimberly is not prowling, it only takes a moderate success on the skill roll. Marla makes it easily, and finds the hacker on a superuser account on the Mail/Phone Server and a user account on one of the Call Center Workstations.

10:15PM: As Marla logs in to the Internet Router to cut off the network address Kimberly is coming in through, Kimberly is seizing control of the Workstation. The employee at the station watches in confusion as icons start moving without his control. If he was smart, he would simply pull the plug on his computer, but fortunately for Kimberly he is not very smart. Kimberly opens up the window for the appointment database and searches for the missing escort's last appointment. Kimberly pulls up the last appointment, but before she can save the information, Marla cuts off the internet connection. Kimberly is now locked out of the network, and Marla is busy resetting the passwords on the compromised accounts, monitoring for further attempts, and finding and patching the security holes that Kimberly used to get in. Kimberly could try to get on the internet via a different address and hack in again, but it will be next to impossible with Marla watching like a hawk. Instead, Kimberly makes an INL roll to see if she can remember what flashed by on the screen before she was cut off. She remembers a name. Maybe that will be enough...

See Also

Some Computer Systems (p.223) for systems that can be hacked in to.

Internet Geography (p.196) for a general description of the internet.

FIGHTING

In Brief

Combat begins by determining initiative (who acts first), then proceeds through a number of rounds until combat is finished. Each round, each participant gets one action (used in order of initiative) to use against an opponent and one reaction to react defensively to something done to him or her. There are many types of combat actions and reactions, each with a different intended result, different difficulty and using different attributes. There are also many factors that can modify the difficulty for an action or reaction, including skills, properties of the weapon, and environmental variables.

Attributes in Combat

The following gives a basic idea of how attributes figure in to various combat maneuvers:

AGY- Adds to the speed and accuracy of an action/reaction.

AWR- Adds to actions that require noticing and reacting quickly to sudden movements.

INL- Adds to actions that require the use of knowledge (e.g. knowing where to strike to hit a vital organ).

SPD- Adds to actions that involve quick and powerful footwork.

STH- Adds to the damage and pure force of an attack.

WIL- Helps PCs resist pain and to take hits (allowing themselves to be hit so they can make unopposed strikes against the opponent).

Initiative

At the beginning of combat, each participant makes an $AWR + INL + 1d20$ roll. The fighter with the highest roll will get the first action in the round, the second highest will go next, etc. The next round, initiative is the same. Initiative must be re-rolled every time there is a break in the action (e.g. fighters stop to taunt each other).

Surprise- The fighter who initiates combat should get a bonus to initiative, from +5 to +15, depending upon how much of a surprise the combat was to the other fighters. Also, characters who are completely unaware that they are the victims of an action (e.g. are hit unaware by a sniper) do not get a reaction.

A Combat Round

A combat round is a period of time during which each participant gets one action and one reaction. The character's reaction is made in response to any attack against them at any time during the round.

Converting Actions & Reactions- Characters do not have to use their actions and reactions at the designated time; they can do any of the following:

- Wait and use their one action at the end of the round.
- Give up their action for that round in order to gain an extra reaction (no penalty).
- Turn a reaction in to an action (at extra difficulty, see Simultaneous Action, below).

Range

Each weapon has a range. This is how close to or how far away from an opponent a character must be to use that weapon against that opponent. A sword might have a range of 1-2, this means that at range 0 you are too close to use it and at range 3 you are too far away. Jumps (see Noncombat Actions) can be used to get in to the proper range.

Range 0: Short knives, biting and clawing, minimum range for small pistols.

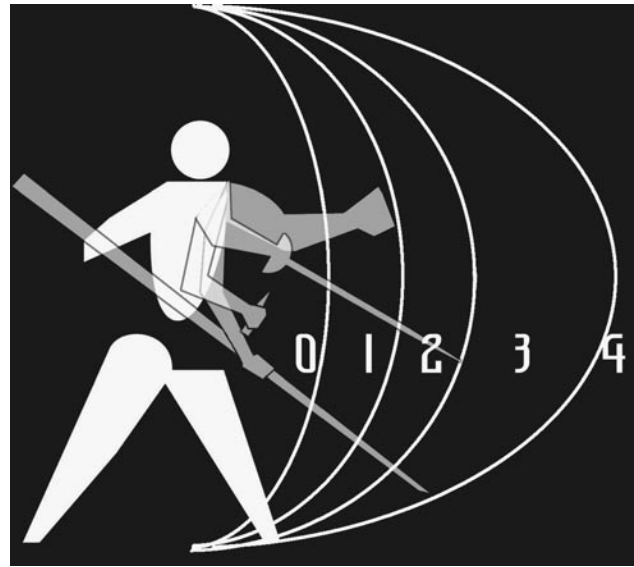
Range 1: Punches, kicks, knives, short swords, disarm and crippling strikes.

Range 2: Long swords, chain weapons, minimum range for shotguns & rifles.

Range 3: Pole arms, broadswords, whips.

Range 4: Projectile weapons.

Why keep track of range? First, because range gives a benefit to opponents with longer weapons. Second, range gives a benefit to opponents who are defending (since the opponent must use an action to step forward).



Noncombat Actions

These are actions which are useful during combat but they do not directly effect opponents and so the opponents can not react to them. The GM usually won't require a player to make difficulty rolls for these actions.

Draw- Ready a weapon for attack (may take more than one round if the weapon is not readily available).

Aim- Aim a projectile weapon at an enemy and follow any movement the enemy makes. If the character later makes an attack against the enemy with that weapon (without their aim having been interrupted) the character gets +4 to the roll.

Rise- Rise to standing from a prone state.

Jump- Move a specified number of units closer to or farther away from the opponent. See Range, above.

Resolving Combat

A combat action is an attempt to do something to someone else during combat. Like any other attempt to do anything (that the GM decides requires a dice roll) the character's action fails if the player cannot match the difficulty. If the player matches or exceeds the difficulty, the action will succeed unless it is opposed. Like all opposed rolls, the defender must make an opposing action (a reaction) and succeed (beat the difficulty) by more than the attacker succeeded. In other words, whoever does a better job, the attacker or defender, wins.

Action/Reaction Example

Attacker's Action:
Strike (Handheld)

Defender's Reaction:
Dodge

The attacker declares the action first: an attack with some handheld weapon. The defender then chooses to use his or her reaction to dodge the blow.

Attacker's attributes:
STH+AGY = 23

Defender's Attributes:
AWR+AGY = 30

Each action or reaction uses specific attributes, a handheld strike uses STH and AGY, a dodge uses AWR and AGY. The combatants add those attributes.

Attacker's 1d20 roll:
14

Defender's 1d20 roll:
5

Attackers add to their attributes to the result of their roll on a 20 sided die. If attackers had applicable skills or situational modifiers, those would be added in as well.

Attacker's Roll vs.
Difficulty:
Total of 37 vs. difficulty
25

Defender's Roll vs.
Difficulty:
Total 35 vs. difficulty 25

Each combatant's combined attributes plus 1d20 roll are compared to the difficulty of the given action. Both the attack and dodge have a difficulty of 25. Here, both combatants beat the difficulty for their respective actions.

Attacker's Success:
37 - 25 = 12

Defender's Success:
35 - 25 = 10

Success is the amount by which a player beats the difficulty for the action. Since the strike and dodge are opposed, the person with the most success wins. Here, the attacker's success is more than the defenders (by 2 points, making it an opposed success of 2). The attacker wins and inflicts damage upon the defender (the goal of that particular action).

Modifiers

Any factor can realistically modify the difficulties for actions and reactions in a combat. GMs will determine bonuses and penalties for each situation. Some common modifiers are:

Aim	+4 to action	The attacker has just aimed at the target (see Noncombat Actions)
Blinded (Full)	-15 to actions/reactions	This is the penalty when a fighter's vision is completely obscured.
Blinded (Partial)	-7 to actions/reactions	This is the penalty when a fighter's vision is partially obscured or blurred.
Burst	-4 to action	The character is firing more than one shot at once (up to the max. Rate Of Fire listed for that weapon). If the action is successful, each shot does damage.
Extended Action	+5 to action	The character puts his or her whole body in to an action (+5) but in doing so sacrifices his or her balance (-10 to next action or reaction). Not possible with projectile weapons.
Improvised Weapon	-8 to most actions/reactions	See Improvised Weapons (p.72) for more.
Leaning	-10 to actions/reactions	While leaning over to attack something below the character's knees, he or she is at -10 to their roll for any action or reaction.
Mounted	-4 to actions	Penalty only applies when the animal/vehicle is moving. Note that in order to hit opponents, mounted PCs must typically lean (see above). When the PC is moving he or she is at +4 difficulty to hit.
Paired	-4 to action	The character is attacking with two weapons simultaneously. If the action succeeds, both weapons do damage.
Prone	-8 to actions/reactions	Penalty does not apply to kicks or projectile weapons. Because of their reduced profile, prone characters are -8 to hit with a projectile. See also Stomp (p.71).
Simultaneous Action	-20 +WIL to action	The character makes an action as a reaction: he or she reacts to an action directed towards him or her with another action. Both actions happen simultaneously and neither are opposed. -20 to the roll, but WIL is added in as a third attribute.
Split	-10 to actions/reactions	The character splits one action in to two actions or one reaction in to two reactions but gets -10 to each. Actions created in this way must be used at the same time; reactions can be saved for later in the round.
Targeted	-4 to action	The damage done by a successful attack is done to a specific part of the enemy predefined by the attacker (depending upon the part, the attack might do less damage than normal, but never more).
Underwater	-8 to actions/reactions	Because water reduces momentum, all attacks do ½ damage underwater. Characters without any swimming skills can only move at 1 SPD underwater.

Combat Actions

These are actions that every person can attempt, even people with no combat training whatsoever. Actions that only people with special training can do can be found in the combat skills section (p.21).

Area Attack

Goal- Hit everything in a given area with bullets or other projectiles.

Roll- INL + Number of shots fired + 1d20 vs. 25 + size of area in feet.

Weapon- Any that can shoot more than once per action.

-Each victim can react separately to the attack.

-This is the only action which doesn't suffer from blindness penalties: the character can fire at an area without seeing it. Distance penalties for projectile weapons do apply.

-When declaring, define an area to spray. Roll a separate success roll for each person in the area.

-Each victim hit takes damage from one projectile.

Blinding Strike

Goal- Damage victim's eyes to blind him or her.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Anything that damages eyes or flesh around the eye or any substance that can obscure vision or makes eyes shut involuntarily.

-Most weapons only partially blind (a nail can only poke out one eye at a time, sand will only partially damage vision).

-Some weapons fully blind on a successful strike (e.g. a caustic chemical spray). See Improvised Weapons: Blinding Substances (p.72) for more.

Crippling Attack

Goal- Damage a limb so as to make it unusable.

Roll- STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Anything that can cut tendons, break bones or dislocate joints (must be able to do at least ½ point of damage had this been a normal strike).

-A successful crippling attack cripples one limb.

-A person can continue to stand on one leg but is at SPD 1, -7 to all actions and reactions, and is -20 to save vs. loss of balance.

Disarm

Goal- Knock the opponent's weapon from his or her hand.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Fists, kicks or anything which can cause a wrist to lose tension.

-Usually a strike to the wrist, though it may be a strike to the weapon itself.

-The victim can resist with an opposed STH feat (STH+1d20 vs. 20) as a reaction.

Grab

Goal- Immobilize one limb or one weapon.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Hands, or anything which can grab (e.g. a snare).

-Once a limb or weapon is successfully grabbed, the grab remains until it is broken. The grabber can choose to let go, or the victim can use an action to make an opposed STH roll against the grabber. Any successful pain/stun attack against the grabber will also cause the hold to be broken.

Grab (Pain)

Goal- Immobilize a limb so that the victim can not move without pain.

Roll- STH+INL+1d20 vs. 35

Weapon- Hands

-The victim's arm is simultaneously grabbed and twisted so that the victim must make a save vs. pain (WIL+1d20 vs. 20) to move in any way.

-The victim's free limb is still usable but usually on the opposite side of the body from the grabber.

Grab (Strangle)

Goal- Cut off blood and air flow through the neck.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Hands, anything that can be wrapped around the victim's neck, or anything hard that can pin the neck against a stable surface.

-Grab can be broken by opposed STH roll or pain/stun attack.

-During the hold, the victim takes 1 BLD damage per round. If the hold is broken before the victim dies, the lost BLD returns one per round.

-Both the victim's hands are free during the grab.

Grab (Wrestling)

Goal- Use multiple limbs to immobilize the victim's limbs.

Roll- STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Hands

-Goal is to get the victim in a hold that is easier to maintain than it is to break free from. To break hold victim must make hard (30) STH feat while holder makes easy (10) feat.

-Takes one limb to immobilize a limb (e.g. to immobilize both the victim's arms, attacker must use both his or her arms).

Knockaway

Goal- Do damage and knock the victim backwards.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Anything capable of inflicting two or more points of blunt damage over a wide area.

-Victim takes 1 point of blunt damage and is knocked back one range unit per point of opposed success.

-Even if the damage is absorbed by armor, the victim is still pushed backwards.

-Victim must make an opposed moderate save vs. loss of balance (AGY+1d20 vs. 20) to avoid falling.

Knockdown

Goal- Knock the opponent to the floor.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Anything capable of hooking legs or pushing the victim over through sheer force.

-If successful, the victim is knocked down with no save. See p.69 for more on prone fighters.

Knockout

Goal- Knock the victim unconscious

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Anything capable of doing significant blunt damage

-If successful, the victim can make an opposed save vs. unconsciousness (WIL+END+1d20 vs. 20). If they can not successfully oppose the knockout, the victim is knocked unconscious for one round per point of the attacker's opposed success.

-For every successful knockout, there is a chance of serious damage to the victim, whether the attacker desires it or not. Generally, if the attacker's opposed success is more than 10, the attack also does 1d6 damage to BLD.

Pain/Stun

Goal- Stun the victim by causing him or her pain.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Nearly anything capable of blunt, bladed or burn damage or otherwise capable of causing pain.

-If the attack is successful the victim must make an opposed save vs. shocking pain (difficulty 20). If the victim fails by a difference of less than 10, the victim loses his or her next action. If the victim fails by 10 or more, the victim loses his or her next action and reaction.



Slash

Goal- Cause damage, distracting pain and disfigurement by an attack on the face or any other sensitive area.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Anything capable of cutting or tearing long gashes in flesh.

-Does ½ point BLD damage and the victim must make an opposed moderate (20 difficulty) save vs. distracting pain. Victim suffers a -1 penalty for each point of opposed success by the attacker.

Stomp

Goal- Do 2x damage to victim's lower than the attacker.

Roll- SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Feet.

-The victim must be below the knees of the attacker.

-Because this attack uses the full weight of the attacker against the victim, it does double the damage of a normal kick.

Strike (Handheld)

Goal- Do damage to the victim.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Any handheld weapon capable of doing damage.

-If successful, it does the normal damage listed for the weapon.

Strike (Projectile)

Goal- Damage to the target.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 -1 per functional range unit vs. 25

Weapon- Any projectile weapon.

-For every one Function Range (FR) unit away the victim is, the character takes a -1 penalty to the roll (see Projectile Weapons, p.72).

Tackle

Goal- Knock both the attacker and the attackee to the ground.

Roll- SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 20

Weapon- Body

-If the tackle is successfully dodged, the attacker must make a save vs. loss of balance to avoid ending up on the ground.

-A tackle does no damage.

Vital Strike (Bladed)

Goal- Use a bladed weapon to damage vital areas.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 35

Weapon- Any weapon that does bladed damage.

-Bladed damage that penetrates armor is doubled.

-Blunt damage is not doubled.

-This is an attack on an area where bladed damage is especially harmful (e.g. neck, heart).

Vital Strike (Blunt)

Goal- Use a blunt weapon to damage vital areas.

Roll- INL+STH+1d20 vs. 40

Weapon- Any weapon that does blunt damage

-Blunt damage that penetrates armor is doubled.

-Bladed damage is not doubled.

-This is an attack on an area where blunt damage is especially harmful (e.g. spine, temples).

Wing

Goal- Damage easy to hit, but non-vital parts.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 20

Weapon- Any weapon capable of doing damage.

-Aimed at exposed yet non-vital body parts (e.g. arms, thighs and ribs).

-Any damage which gets through the armor is cut in half.

Reactions

Dodge

Goal- Sidestep the path of the weapon.

Roll- AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

-After a successful dodge, the defender is still in roughly the same place as he or she was before.

Entangle

Goal- Stop and trap the weapon.

Roll- INL+STH+1d20 vs. 30

-Requires something that can stop and trap the weapon (e.g. chain, meat hook, trident, jacket, folding chair).

-If successful, the action is blocked and the attacker must use another action to unentangle the weapon.

Flip

Goal- Dodge attack and knock over attacker.

Roll- AGY+STH+1d20 vs. 35

-This requires that the attacker make a lunge (punch or attack with a handheld weapon) and that the defender must be close enough to use the momentum to flip the attacker over a pivot point (usually the defender's shoulder).

-If successful, the attacker is knocked down with no save.

Drop

Goal- Drop below the path of the weapon.

Roll- AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 20

-Whether successful or unsuccessful, the defender ends up on the floor at the end of the reaction.

Jump

Goal- Jump out of weapon's range.

Roll- SPD+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

-Unlike the Noncombat Action: Jump, this is in reaction to a specific attack.

-Determine how many range levels the character needs to move to be out of the range of the weapon.

-+10 difficulty for every range level beyond the first.

-If the defender beats the difficulty but doesn't beat the opposed action, the PC gets hit but ends up out of weapon's range at the end of the reaction.

Mental Block

Goal- Resist attempted mind control (especially psychic attacks).

Roll- WIL+1d20 vs. 20

-This is only useful against attacks that go directly to the character's mind.

Parry

Goal- Block the attacker's weapon.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

-Be sure to declare what you are blocking and with what. If you block a knife blade with your bare hands, for instance, you will take some damage (though not as much damage as you would have taken otherwise).

Actions	Reactions
-Each character gets only one per round.	-Each character gets only one per round.
-Characters get to use their actions in an order determined by initiative.	-A character can only use a reaction when he or she is the target of an action.
-Actions can be traded for reactions at no extra difficulty.	-A character can use a reaction as an action at extra difficulty (+20 +WIL).
-Characters can wait until the end of the round to use an action.	-If the character is not acted upon in a round, he or she gets no reaction.

Projectile Weapons

Range- When making any action with a projectile weapon, add to the normal difficulty the number of range units away the target is. For example, if a weapon has a FR (Functional Range) of 5 ft.: for every 5 ft. away the opponent is (rounded down) there is an extra point of difficulty. A target 60 ft. away would be at +12 difficulty to hit with that weapon. Weapons also have a Maximum Range (MR) beyond which the weapon can not do damage.

Cover- A character who lies flat, facing their enemy (reducing their profile) is very hard to hit with projectile weapons (-8 to hit). Any type of cover can give the enemy a minus to hit depending upon how much of the character's body is protected. Treat this as armor: standing partially behind a tree might have an AR of 5 and a PR of 15 bladed/blunt (from that one direction only).

Fighting Non-Humans

Machines- Non-Biological opponents do not have BDY, BLD or INCY. Instead, each device has an amount of blunt or bladed damage that, if it takes, will cause it to cease functioning. One machine, for example, may be able to take 4 blunt or 9 bladed damage before it stops working.

Size- Animals and machines which are bigger or smaller than humans are easier or harder to hit (see table). Also, small opponents can only take limited blunt damage because instead of absorbing the damage, the opponent goes flying (unless the opponent is crushed against something).

Special Attacks- Sense should be used in fighting non-humans. For instance, a blinding strike would be silly against an animal that does not depend upon its eyes, a rhinoceros would not be very susceptible to a knockdown attack by a human, etc. Without some knowledge of mechanics, a vital strike against a machine would be impossible.

Swarms- A swarm is a group of small animals attacking the character that are so numerous we treat them as one entity. A swarm can not be parried or dodged, only run from.

Armor can help the character: any portion of the character's body which is covered by armor can not be attacked. The amount of the character's body which is protected is the ratio of the AR to 20. So, a character with

size	to hit
Bee	-20
Rat	-10
Cat	-5
Human	0
Horse	+5
Elephant	+10
House	+20

AR 10 could only be attacked by half the swarm at once. A character with an AR of 5 could only be attacked by three-fourths of the swarm.

Most swarms do not dodge and instead make simultaneous strikes at no minuses (for convenience's sake, assume that all swarm animals which can attack make a successful strike). Characters, on the other hand, usually can't kill more than a few swarm animals with each strike, except with certain weapons like poison sprays or flame throwers.

Weapon Specific Difficulties

The difficulties listed for the various actions and reactions represent the difficulty with the "typical" weapon someone might use to do that action or reaction with. Some weapons are designed so that some actions/reactions are easier, while others are much harder. For instance, a sledgehammer is so heavy and awkward that it is hard to make a strike with it. On the other hand, a whip is designed for pain/stun attacks and so such an attack would be easier. In weapon profiles, special actions and reactions are listed as:

Very Easy (-8 difficulty)

Easy (-4 difficulty)

Hard (+4 difficulty)

Very Hard (+8 difficulty)

Improvised Weapons

Normal objects can be used as weapons but since they are not designed as weapons they have higher difficulties to use. Many will also break after the first attack.

Slashing Weapons: Any object with a cutting edge strong enough to cut flesh does 1 bladed damage. The PC is at -8 to any actions with this weapon except pain/stun, blinding and slash.

Poking Weapons: Objects with a point on them strong enough to be driven to flesh do only ½ a point of bladed damage. The PC is at -8 to any actions with this weapon except blinding strike, pain/stun and vital strike.

Blunt Weapons: Blunt objects with a good handle can do between 1 and 3 blunt damage. The PC is at -8 to any actions with these weapons except strike and pain/stun.

Thrown Objects: Any heavy object without a handle can be thrown at an enemy. If a character attacks someone with a huge rock at point blank range, we can simply say that is was a throw at 0 ft. They have normal difficulties but the following ranges:

Weight	Functional Range	Dmg
1-2 lbs.	3 ft.	½
3-5 lbs.	3 ft.	1
6-10 lbs.	2 ft.	2
11-20 lbs.	1 ft.	3
20-99 lbs.	½ ft.	4
100+ lbs.	½ ft.	1 dmg/20lbs.

Blinding Substances: Any substance which can be thrown in the eyes. PCs can make a blinding attack with these substances at no minuses. They can be thrown only within a range of 5 ft. Most of these substances can be avoided by closing one's eyes (a very easy dodge). A successful attack, though, will fully blind the opponent (-15 to all actions/reactions) for a length of time depending upon the causticity of the substance. Extremely caustic substances (like bleach) will not only blind but act as a pain/stun strike on a successful blinding attack.

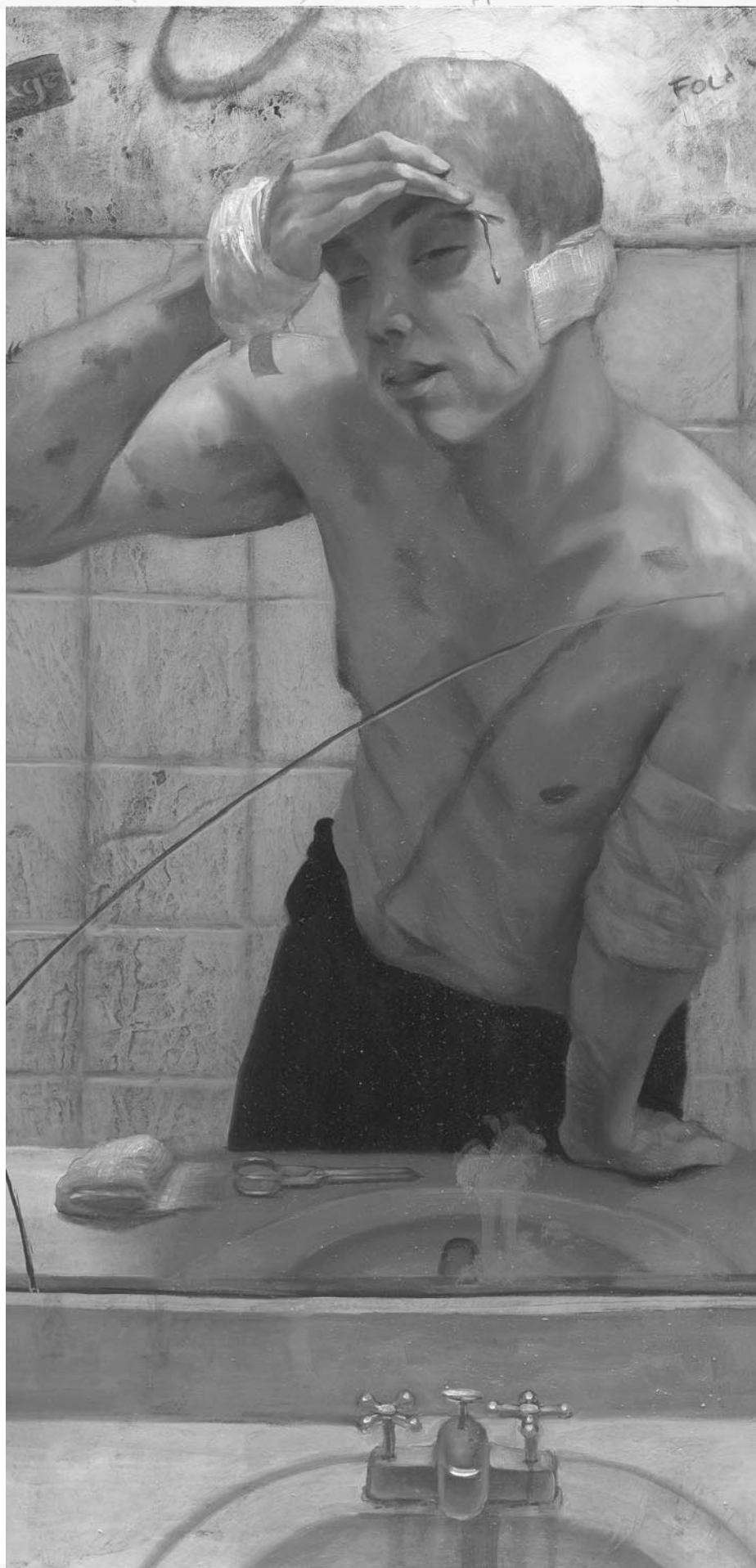
After Combat

After combat is finished, PCs who have taken injuries should seek out medical attention. The best case scenario is that someone with the Emergency Medicine skill and proper medical equipment can immediately treat wounded PCs. Proper medical care will eliminate the three following effects. Inadequate care (care given too late, without proper equipment or without the proper skills) only reduces the following effects.

Bleeding- For each point of bladed damage a PC has taken, that PC will lose another $\frac{1}{2}$ point of BLD over the next 15 minutes unless the wound is cared for (tourniqueted, cauterized, stitched up).

Pain- When the endorphins the body produces in an emergency wear off, the PC will feel every bit of damage done. The PC must save vs. distracting pain with a difficulty of 5 for each point of damage done.

Infection- Unless a wound is disinfected, the victim risks a serious infection. For every point of bladed damage a PC has taken, the PC must make a save vs. disease contraction with a difficulty of 10 per point of damage (max. 30). Note that burns and ragged damage (see Other Types of Damage, p.57) increase the chances of infection and are very difficult to treat medically. If the PC fails the save vs. contraction, he or she suffers from a disease with the following profile (see p.57 for more on fighting diseases): Disease Progression Rating: 20. Disease Progression Speed: 12 hours. Treatments: Antibiotics. Symptoms: For each 1x the victim suffers from an aggregate fever (-10 to save vs. heat exhaustion), Vomiting (10), weakness (-5 STH, -5 SPD) and 1 BLD damage.



Simple Combat Example

Rusty and Juanita are in a fight:

Rusty: 12 AWR, 8 AGY, 10 INL, 6 SPD, 14 STH, 7 WIL, 3 BLD, 5 BDY, 4 INCY. No combat skills. Has a hunting knife (range 0-1, damage: 2½ bladed). No armor.

Juanita: 8 AWR, 10 AGY, 13 INL, 16 SPD, 4 STH, 8 WIL, 4 BLD, 4 BDY, 4 INCY. Kickboxing (2) (gives +8 to wing, +8 parry, +8 to knockaway, +4 to strike with her feet). No weapons. Her kicks do 1½ blunt damage. No armor.

GM- Roll initiative.

Rusty- (rolls INL (10) + AWR (12) + 1d20) 28

Juanita- (rolls INL (13) + AWR (8) + 1d20) 23

GM- Rusty, you get the first action. What do you do?

Rusty- I'm doing a split action, I'm moving in to range 1 and doing a strike at Juanita with my knife.

GM- Juanita, are you reacting?

Juanita- I'm going to dodge.

GM- Okay, roll. Remember, Rusty, since you split your action you're -10 to each action. The jump in to range will succeed automatically, but you're -10 to hit.

Rusty- (rolls STH (14) + AGY (8) -10 (split action) +1d20 vs. 25) I got 27, that's 2 success.

Juanita- (rolls AWR (8) + AGY (10) + 1d20 vs. 25) I got 26. Only one success.

GM- Okay, the knife hits you Juanita, and does 2½ damage to your BLD. Okay, Juanita, now it's your action.

Juanita- I'm going to make a strike with my feet.

Rusty- I'll block with my arm.

GM- Okay, roll.

Juanita- (rolls STH (4) + AGY (10) +4 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 25) I succeeded by 8.

Rusty- (rolls STH (14) + AGY (8) + 1d20 vs. 25) I succeed by 12.

GM- Okay, Rusty parries the kick. Next round. Rusty, your action. What do you do?

Rusty- I'm going to make a strike against Juanita with my knife.

GM- Okay, Juanita, your reaction?

Juanita- Um... I'll parry with my leg.

GM- You realize that since you're parrying a bladed weapon, even if you succeed your leg may be injured? You might lose BLD or even have the leg crippled?

Juanita- Yeah, but it won't be as bad as if I get stabbed, right?

GM- Right.

Juanita- Okay, I'll do it.

GM- Okay, roll.

Rusty- (rolls STH (14) + AGY (8) +1d20 vs. 25) I got 3 success.

Juanita- (rolls STH (4) + AGY (10) + 8 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 25) I got 30. Five success.

GM- Okay, let's see, you kick the blade out of the way, but your ankle is grazed. Take... ½ BLD damage.

Juanita- Okay. I'm at 1 BLD now.

GM- Okay, Juanita, your action.

Juanita- I'll do a knockdown, with my feet.

Rusty- I'll let her kick me and do a simultaneous strike.

GM- Okay, roll.

Juanita- (rolls STH (14) + AGY (8) + 1d20 vs. 30). Two success.

Rusty- (rolls (14) + AGY (8) +1d20 vs. 25). Five success.

GM- Okay. Juanita, you take another 2½ damage to your BLD. Rusty, your knocked on the ground.

Juanita- My BLD is zero now, and I'm down to 2½ INCY.

GM- Well, you've just been mortally wounded. From now on you'll be losing a point of pooled END every round. Rusty, it's your action.

Rusty- I'll get up.

Juanita- While he's doing that, I'm going to run away.

Complex Combat Example

Raul and Tyra vs. Hammerhead and Ying.

Raul:

Attributes: 14 AWR, 6 AGY, 4 END, 16 INL, 9 SPD, 3 STH, 15 WIL, 5 BLD, 3 BDY, 4 INCY.

Skills: No combat skills.

Weapons: Tech Sword (range: 1-2, damage: 6 bladed (pierces armor as 8), easy strike, easy vital strike) and Riot Shield (gives +10 to parry).

Armor: None.

Tyra:

Attributes: 17 AWR, 12 AGY (including the AGY penalty from her armor), 7 END, 6 INL, 12 SPD, 8 STH, 12 WIL, 3 BLD, 4 BDY, 3 INCY.

Skills: Street Fighting (1) (gives +4 to Pain/Stun Attack, +4 to Simultaneous Strike, +4 to Crippling Attack).

Weapons: Sharpened Stick (range: 2, damage: 2½ bladed, hard strike) coated with Black Market Knife Poison (within 1 round after being stabbed: 1 BLD damage per round for 6 rounds. Excessive thirst, Vomiting (20), Anaphylactic Shock (20), numbness (+7 to save vs. pain, -7 to touch based AWR rolls), blurry vision (-7 to actions/reactions and AWR based rolls)).

Armor: Trash Armor (AGY Penalty: -4, AR 8, PR 5 bladed 4 blunt).

Hammerhead:

Attributes: 6 AWR, 10 AGY, 13 END, 7 INL, 13 SPD, 17 STH, 14 WIL, 2 BLD, 4 BDY, 6 INCY.

Skills: No combat skills.

Weapons: Improvised Slashing Weapon (1 bladed damage, -8 to any actions except pain/stun, blinding and slash).

Armor: Nanopadded Armor (AR 10, PR 2 bladed 7 blunt 2) and Modern Chainmail (AR 7, PR 3 bladed 1 blunt).

Ying:

Attributes: 6 AWR, 14 AGY, 8 END, 12 INL, 5 SPD, 7 STH, 18 WIL, 4 BLD, 4 BDY, 4 INCY.

Skills: Knife Throwing (3) (gives +6 to initiative, +12 to strike, +8 to vital strike, +4 to blinding strike, no penalty for targeted strikes).

Weapons: 5 throwing daggers (FR 1 ft. MR 20 ft, damage: 2 bladed).

Armor: None.

-The Situation: They are in an alley, Raul and Tyra on one side, Hammerhead and Ying on the other, 10 ft. apart.

-Initiative: Ying (who gets +6 to initiative from the Knife Throwing skill) gets 34, Raul gets 32, Tyra gets 26, Hammerhead gets 23.

-Round 1: Ying's Action. Ying declares that he is throwing a dagger at Tyra (a strike). Tyra reacts by ignoring the strike and running at Ying full speed. Ying rolls AGY (14) + INL (12) +12 (strike) -10 (she is 10 ft. away and the dagger has a Functional Range of 1 ft.) + 1d20 vs. 25. He succeeds by 8. This is not enough to bypass Tyra's armor (she has AR 8) and all of the dagger's damage is absorbed by the armor. Since she ran at Ying, Tyra is now in range 2.

-Round 1: Raul's Action. Raul decides to hold his action – he wants to see what Hammerhead is going to do.

-Round 1: Tyra's Action. Tyra declares that she is going to make a pain/stun strike against Ying with her (poisoned) sharpened stick. Ying declares that he will do a Jump, jumping back 1 range level, to avoid the strike. Tyra rolls STH (8) + AGY (12) +4 (skill) vs. 25, she succeeds by 8. Ying rolls SPD (5) + AGY (14) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 2. Ying is stabbed in a tender spot with the stick, and must make an opposed save vs. pain. He rolls WIL (18) + 1d20 vs. 20. He gets 31, succeeding by 11, which beats Tyra's success, which means he doesn't lose any actions. He is now also at range 3, out of Tyra's weapon range. The stick has, however, punctured his skin, and starting next round he will take poison damage.

-Round 1: Hammerhead's Action. He decides to do a split action jump in (running in to range to hit Raul) and pain/stun against Raul. Raul declares that he will react by dodging. Hammerhead rolls INL (7) + AGY (10) - 10 (split action) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 1. Raul rolls AWR (14) + AGY (6) + 1d20 vs. 25, he fails. Raul must make an opposed save vs. pain. Raul rolls WIL (15) + 1d20 vs. 20 and fails by 2. Raul will lose his next action (the one he saved).

-End of Round. Since everyone has been fighting, everyone loses 1 pooled END (Raul has 3, Tyra has 6, Hammerhead has 12, Ying has 7). At the start of this next round, Ying will take damage from the poison. He takes 1 BLD damage, must save vs. vomiting (rolls WIL (18) + 1d20 vs. 20, he succeeds), must save vs. shock (rolls END (7) + 1d20 vs. 20 and succeeds), and is +7 to save vs. pain, -7 to touch or vision based AWR rolls and -7 to all actions and reactions.

-Round 2: Ying's Action. Ying declares he is making a strike against Tyra with a knife. Tyra declares that she will react by dodging. Ying rolls INL (12) + AGY (14) +12 (skill) -6 (he is 6 ft. away) -7 (poison effect) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 10. Tyra rolls AWR (currently 13) + AGY (12) + 1d20 vs. 25. She succeeds by 2. Ying's strike hits her, and bypasses the armor and does full damage. Tyra loses 4 BLD.

-Round 2: Raul's Action. Raul declares he is going to make an extended strike against Hammerhead with his Tech Sword. Hammerhead declares that he is going to make a simultaneous Disarm strike, trying to knock the weapon out of Raul's hand. Raul rolls STH (3) + AGY (6) +4 (the Tech Sword has an easy strike) +5 (extended) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 4. Hammerhead rolls INL (7) + AGY (10) + WIL (14) (because it is a simultaneous strike) + 1d20 vs. 25 + 20 (because it is a simultaneous strike), he fails. Since Raul's success on his strike is 4, less than the AR of either of Hammerhead's armors, the PR of both armors is removed from the damage of the sword. The sword does 6 bladed, but pierces as 8. Hammerhead's armors has a PR of 3 bladed and 2 bladed. Altogether, 3 bladed damage pierces Hammerhead's armor. Since Hammerhead's BLD is only 2, he loses all his BLD and 1 INCY point. Since he has received a fatal injury (is at 0 BLD) he will lose an additional 1 point of pooled END each round.

-Round 2: Tyra's Action. Tyra is out of range, so she decides to do a split action jump in and extended wing against Ying. Ying declares that he will react with a jump out. Tyra rolls INL (6) + AGY (14) +5 (extended) -10 (split action) + 1d20 vs. 20, she succeeds by 7. Ying rolls SPD (5) + AGY (14) -7 (poison effects) + 1d20 vs. 25, he fails. Ying takes half damage from the stick (loses 1 BLD) and takes another dose of poison. Starting next round he will be taking double the poison effects.

-Round 2: Hammerhead's Action. Hammerhead declares that he is going to disarm Raul. Raul declares that as a reaction he will do a simultaneous strike against Hammerhead. Hammerhead rolls INL (7) + AGY (10) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 3. Raul rolls STH (3) + AGY (6) + WIL (15) (because he is doing a simultaneous action) -10 (this is his next reaction after an extended action) + 1d20 vs. 25 + 20, he fails. The sword falls from Raul's hand.

-End of Round. Everyone loses another point of END, and Hammerhead loses an additional point because he is at 0 BLD. Now Raul has 2, Tyra has 5, Hammerhead has 11, Ying has 6. Since the Ying has been stabbed twice, he has two doses of poison in them and double the effect.

Ying takes 2 BLD damage, reducing him to 0 BLD. He must save vs. vomiting at difficulty 40 (he fails and will spend all round vomiting), save vs. shock at difficulty 40 (he fails, now all his attributes are halved), and he is -14 to touch/vision AWR rolls and -14 to all actions/reactions.

-Round 3: Ying's Action. He decides to make a football tackle against Tyra, though he will be at -20 (from vomiting) and -14 (blindness) and so can only succeed by rolling a 20. Tyra decides to ignore him and dash in to weapon's range of Hammerhead. Ying fails.

-Round 3: Raul's Action. Raul declares that he is bending down to pick up his weapon. Since he is not acting against any opponent, nobody gets a reaction.

-Round 3: Tyra's Action. Tyra declares that she is making a pain/stun strike against Raul. Raul declares that he is dodging. Tyra rolls STH (8) + AGY (12) +4 (skill) vs. 25, and succeeds by 6. Raul rolls AWR (14) + AGY (6) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 10. Tyra's attack misses Raul.

-Round 3: Hammerhead's Action. Hammerhead declares that he will make a Disarm strike against Raul. Raul has no reaction left. Hammerhead rolls INL (7) + AGY (10) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 5. Raul drops his sword again.

-End of Round. Everyone loses another point of END, and Hammerhead and Ying lose 2 because they are both at 0 BLD. So, now Raul has 1, Tyra has 3, Hammerhead has 9, Ying has 4. Ying loses 2 INCY to the poison. He fails his save vs. vomiting.

-Round 4: Ying's Action. He doesn't take any.

-Round 4: Raul's Action. Raul declares that he is going to grab his weapon and jump backwards out of weapons range. Since this is a slightly complicated maneuver, the GM makes him make a moderate AGY roll (AGY (6) + 1d20 vs. 20). Raul fails. The GM declares that Raul got the weapon but didn't make it out of weapon's range.

-Round 4: Tyra's Action. Tyra declares she is going to make an extended pain/stun strike against Raul. Raul declares that he is going to split his reaction, use one half to parry the strike, and save the other half for later. Tyra rolls STH (8) + AGY (12) +4 (skill) +5 (extended) vs. 25, and succeeds by 12. Raul rolls STH (3) + AGY (6) +10 (from the shield) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 3. Tyra's poisoned stick hits Raul in a soft spot. Raul must now make a moderate opposed save vs. pain. He rolls WIL (15) + 1d20 vs. 20. He succeeds by 9, which is 3 less than Tyra's success, which means he loses his next action. He will also take poison damage starting next round.

-Round 4: Hammerhead's Action. Hammerhead has a 2 damage punch, and he declares that he is going to make an extended knockout strike against Raul. Raul declares that he is going to use the second half of his split reaction to parry. Hammerhead rolls STH (17) + AGY (10) +5 (extended) + 1d20 vs. 30. He succeeds by 9. Raul rolls STH (3) + AGY (6) +10 (from the shield) + 1d20 vs. 25, and succeeds by 5. Now Raul must make an opposed save vs. unconsciousness. He rolls the average of his WIL (15) and END (currently 1), which is 8, + 1d20 vs. 20. He succeeds by 1, which is 8 less success than Hammerhead's knockout. Raul goes unconscious.

-Post Battle: Ying is vomiting and blind and will be dead by the beginning of the next round. Raul is unconscious and poisoned, he will die before he wakes up. Hammerhead has been mortally wounded by Raul's tech sword. At the beginning of next round he will have only 7 pooled END left, which means only 7 rounds to get medical attention before he goes unconscious. Tyra has been seriously wounded, she is down to 1 BLD and if she doesn't get her injuries treated they will bleed and she will lose another 2 points of BLD ($\frac{1}{2}$ point per point of injury) within 15 minutes, which will put her at 0 BLD. If Hammerhead and Tyra find a way to live through the next 15 minutes, unless they get quality medical care they will have to deal with pain (they will have to make saves vs. distracting pain, Hammerhead at 15 (3 damage x 5 difficulty) and Tyra at 20 (4 damage x 5 difficulty)). They will also have to save vs. disease progression to avoid their injuries becoming infected (both at 30, since the difficulty is damage x 10 with a max. of 30).

Tips for GMs: Keeping Combat Quick

1. Never let the PCs get in to a fair fight. Either the PCs should be ambushed, or the PCs should be doing the ambushing, or the PCs should be vastly superior to the people they are fighting, or the PCs should be vastly inferior to their opponents.
2. Enemies run away, surrender or play dead when they realize they are getting their asses kicked.
3. Figure out the NPC fighter's typical action and typical reaction ahead of time and calculate it (e.g. this opponent strikes at 1d20 vs. 3).
4. NPC fighters only make simple actions (e.g. strike and dodge, no extended simultaneous split actions).
5. Don't bother keeping track of END if the battle is only going to last a few rounds.
6. Give opponents weapons with the same range as that of the PCs – this makes for a lot less jumping around during battle.
7. Start PCs and opponents in weapons range of each other.
8. Instead of calculating and rolling for every effect of a poison on an NPC opponent, just give the opponent a flat penalty to all actions and reactions. E.G. instead of the huge list of symptoms of Drake Fungus Poison, just say that each dose does 1 BLD damage and gives -10 to all rolls.
9. Give each player only a limited amount of time to declare an action or reaction.