

GURPS[®] LITE

Fourth Edition

An Introduction to Roleplaying

From STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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WHAT IS GURPS?

GURPS stands for “Generic Universal RolePlaying System,” the RPG that these rules are condensed from. Why is it called that? Well . . .

“*Generic.*” **GURPS** starts with simple rules, and builds up to as much optional detail as you like. This abridged version presents the “core rules” that most GMs start with.

“*Universal.*” The basic rule system is designed to emphasize realism. It can fit any situation – fantasy or historical; past, present, or future.

“*RolePlaying.*” This is not just a “hack-and-slash” game. The rules are written to

make true roleplaying possible – and to encourage it. In **GURPS**, you pretend, for a little while, to be someone else.

“System.” Over 200 different books have been published for **GURPS**, in eight different languages (so far). It is one of the recognized standards for roleplaying, worldwide.

MATERIALS NEEDED FOR PLAY

To play, you will need these rules, three six-sided dice, pencils, and scratch paper.

ABOUT GURPS Lite

This is the boiled-down “essence” of **GURPS**: all the fundamental rules, but not the options and embellishments that often confuse new players. Once you’re comfortable with these rules, you can pick up the **GURPS Basic Set** and jump right into the action. Experienced Game Masters will, we hope, find this a valuable tool for introducing new players to the game.

GLOSSARY

GURPS is a roleplaying game (RPG). Like any hobby, gaming has its own unique language. To help you understand the concepts and terms used in this game (and other RPGs), we’ll start with a few definitions:

roleplaying game (RPG): A game in which players take on the personalities of imaginary individuals, or *characters*, in a fictional or historical setting, and try to act as those characters would.

Game Master (GM): The referee, who chooses the adventure, talks the players through it, judges the results, and gives out bonus points.

character: Any being – person, animal, robot, etc. – that is played by the GM or a player.

nonplayer character (NPC): Any character played by the GM.

player character (PC): A character created and played by one of the players.

statistics: The numerical values that describe a character, piece of equipment, etc., taken collectively. Often called “stats.”

party: A group of PCs taking part in the same adventure.

game world: A background for play; a setting. “World” might mean “planet,” but it could also refer to a region and historical period . . . or an entire universe.

adventure: The basic “unit” of play in a roleplaying game, representing a single mission or plot. It might require several sessions of play, or just one play session.

encounter: One “scene” of an adventure, usually a meeting between the PCs and one or more NPCs.

campaign: A continuing series of adventures. A campaign will usually have a continuing cast of player characters, and the same GM (or team of GMs). It may move from one game world to another, with a logical reason.

race: The species to which you belong. Nonhuman characters (elves, dwarves, halflings, and Martians, for example) are common in RPGs.

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THE BASICS

GURPS uses six-sided dice only. To figure combat damage (and several other things), the “dice+adds” system is used. If a weapon does “4d+2” damage, this is shorthand for “roll 4 dice and add 2 to the total.” Likewise, “3d-3” means “roll 3 dice and subtract 3 from the total.” If you see just “2d,” that means “roll two dice.”

GURPS Lite has only three basic “game mechanics”: success rolls, reaction rolls, and damage rolls.

SUCCESS ROLLS

A “success roll” is a die roll made when you need to “test” one of your skills or abilities. Sometimes you roll; sometimes the GM rolls for you. For instance, you might test, or roll against, your Strength to stop a heavy door from closing.

WHAT TO ROLL

Whenever a character attempts to perform an action (e.g., use a skill), roll three dice to determine the outcome. This is called a *success roll*. The task in question *succeeds* if the total rolled on the dice is *less than or equal to* the number that governs the action – most often a skill or an attribute. Otherwise, it *fails*. For example, if you are rolling against Strength, and your ST is 12, a roll of 12 or less succeeds. Thus, the higher the stat you are rolling against, the easier it is to make the roll.

Regardless of the score you are rolling against, a roll of 3 or 4 is *always* a success, while a roll of 17 or 18 is *always* a failure.

In general, the player makes the die rolls for his character’s actions. However, the GM may always choose to roll the dice in secret – see *When the GM Rolls*, below.

WHEN TO ROLL

To avoid bogging down the game in endless die rolls, the GM should only require a success roll if . . .

- A PC’s health, wealth, friends, reputation, or equipment are at risk. This includes chases, combat (even if the target is stationary and at point-blank range!), espionage, thievery, and similar “adventuring” activities.

- A PC stands to gain allies, information, new abilities, social standing, or wealth.

The GM *should not* require rolls for . . .

- Utterly trivial tasks, such as crossing the street, driving into town, feeding the dog, finding the corner store, or turning on the computer.

- Daily work at a mundane, non-adventuring job.

When the GM Rolls

There are two sets of circumstances under which the GM should roll for a PC and not let the player see the results:

1. When the *character* wouldn’t know for sure whether he had succeeded.
2. When the *player* shouldn’t know what’s going on.

MODIFIERS

The rules often specify *modifiers* for certain success rolls. These bonuses and penalties affect the *number you are rolling against* – your “target number” – and not the total rolled on the dice. Bonuses always improve your odds, while penalties always reduce them.

For instance, when using the Lockpicking skill in the dark, the GM might tell you to roll at -5 for the attempt. If your Lockpicking skill is 9, you roll against 9 minus 5, or 4, in the dark.

A specific scenario might provide modifiers to allow for the relative ease or difficulty of a particular situation. For instance, an adventure might state that a lock is +10 to open due to the fact that it is primitive and clumsy. If your Lockpicking skill were 9, you would roll against 9 + 10, or 19. Since the highest roll possible on 3d is 18, it would seem that success is assured. Not quite – see *Critical Success and Failure*, below.

Modifiers are cumulative unless stated otherwise. For instance, if you tried to open that primitive lock in the dark, *both* modifiers would apply, and you would roll against 9 - 5 + 10, or 14.

Base Skill vs. Effective Skill

Your *base skill* is your actual level in a skill, as recorded on your character sheet. Your *effective skill* for a particular task is your base skill plus or minus any modifiers for that task. In the Lockpicking examples above, the base skill is 9 in all cases, while the effective skill is 4, 19, or 14.

You may not attempt a success roll if your effective skill is less than 3 unless you are attempting a *defense roll* (p. 28).

DEGREE OF SUCCESS OR FAILURE

Once you have calculated your effective skill by applying all the relevant modifiers to your base skill, roll 3d to determine the outcome. If the total rolled on the dice is less than or equal to your effective skill, you succeed, and the difference between your effective skill and your die roll is your *margin of success*.

Example: If you have effective skill 18 and roll a 12, you succeed; your margin of success is 6.

If you roll *higher* than your effective skill, you fail, and the difference between the die roll and your effective skill is your *margin of failure*.

Example: If you have effective skill 9 and roll a 12, you fail; your margin of failure is 3.

Many rules use margin of success or failure to calculate results that matter in play, so be sure to note it when you roll.

Critical Success and Failure

A *critical success* is an especially good result.

- A roll of 3 or 4 is *always* a critical success.
- A roll of 5 is a critical success *if your effective skill is 15+*.
- A roll of 6 is a critical success *if your effective skill is 16+*.

When you roll a critical success, the GM determines what happens. It is always something good! The lower the roll, the better “bonus” he gives you.

A *critical failure* is an especially bad result.

- A roll of 18 is *always* a critical failure.
- A roll of 17 is a critical failure *if your effective skill is 15 or less*; otherwise, it is an ordinary failure.
- Any roll of 10 or more greater than your effective skill is a critical failure: 16 on a skill of 6, 15 on a skill of 5, and so on.

When you roll a critical failure, the GM determines what happens. It is always something bad – the higher the roll, the worse the result.

REPEATED ATTEMPTS

Sometimes you only get one chance to do something (defuse a bomb, jump over a crevasse, remove an inflamed appendix, please the King with a song). Other times you can try over and over again until you succeed (pick a lock, catch a fish, analyze a poison). Still other times you will not know whether you succeeded or failed until it's too late to try again (translate an old treasure map, order in a French restaurant, build a ship). Finally, there are times when you are injured by failure but can afford to fail a few times (climb a wall, impress a savage tribesman).

The GM must use common sense to distinguish among these cases, according to the exact situation in which the adventurers find themselves.

CONTESTS

Sometimes a situation arises in which two characters must compare attributes, skills, or

other traits to settle a competition. The one with the highest score doesn't *always* win . . . but that's the way to bet. A "Contest" is a quick way to handle such a competitive situation without playing it out in detail. In a Contest, each competitor attempts a success roll against the ability being tested – with all applicable modifiers – and then compares his result to his opponent's. There are two different ways to make this comparison.

Quick Contest

A "Quick Contest" is a competition that is over in very little time – often in one second, perhaps even *instantly*. Examples include two enemies lunging for a gun or two knife throwers seeing who gets closer to the bull's-eye.

Each competitor attempts his success roll. If one succeeds and the other fails, the winner is obvious. If both succeed, the winner is the one with the largest margin of success; if both fail, the winner is the one with the smallest margin of failure. A tie means nobody won (in the examples above, both fighters grabbed the weapon at once, or the knives hit the same distance from the bull's-eye).

Margin of Victory

The amount by which the winner beat the loser is often important – success by 5

vs. failure by 5 generally means more than success by 2 vs. success by 1! The winner's "margin of victory" is the difference between his margin of success and the loser's margin of success if both succeeded, the sum of his margin of success and the loser's margin of failure if he succeeded and the loser failed, or the difference between the loser's margin of failure and his margin of failure if both failed.

Regular Contest

A "Regular Contest" is a slow competition with much give and take – for instance, arm wrestling.

Each character attempts his success roll. If one succeeds and the other fails, the winner is obvious. If both succeed or both fail, the competitors' relative positions are unchanged and they roll again. Eventually, one character succeeds when the other fails. At this point, the one who made his roll is the winner.

The length of *game time* each attempt takes depends on the activity, and is up to the GM. In a combat situation, each attempt takes one second . . . but in a library-research contest, with the fate of the world hanging on who finds a certain obscure reference first, each attempt could represent days of time.

REACTION ROLLS

When the PCs meet an NPC whose reaction to them is not predetermined (see below), the GM makes a "reaction roll" on 3d. The higher the roll, the better the reaction. The GM then plays the NPC according to the guidelines on the *Reaction Table*.

The GM should keep this roll secret from the players. They don't know, for instance, whether that friendly-looking old farmer is giving them straight advice or sending them into a trap.

A reaction roll is *not* a success roll. There are three important differences:

1. There is no "target number" to roll against.
2. A high roll is *good*, not bad.
3. Reaction modifiers apply directly to the die roll. A reaction *bonus* is any factor that makes NPCs *friendlier*, while a reaction *penalty* is something that biases NPCs *against* the PCs.

Some common reaction modifiers:

Personal appearance and behavior. This is especially true for the PC who does the talking! Above-average appearance gives a bonus, as do some advantages (see p. 8).

Below-average appearance and many disadvantages give a penalty.

Racial or national biases. Elves don't like dwarves, Frenchmen don't care for Germans, and so on. These are usually penalties, and take the form of an Intolerance disadvantage on the part of the NPC.

Appropriate behavior by the players! Here's a chance to reward good roleplaying. A good approach should be worth +1 or more! A wholly inappropriate approach that antagonizes the NPCs should give the party -1 or -2 on the reaction roll. Don't tell the players, "You blew it!" – just roleplay the offended character, and let them figure it out.

Random reaction rolls are great when they add a note of unpredictability to the game – this is more fun for the GM, too! However, *never substitute random die rolls for reason and logic.*

REACTION TABLE

Roll 3 dice and apply any reaction modifiers.

0 or less: Disastrous. The NPC hates the characters and will act in their worst interest. Nothing is out of the question: assault,

betrayal, public ridicule, or ignoring a life-or-death plea are all possible.

1 to 3: Very Bad. The NPC dislikes the characters and will act against them if it's convenient to do so: attacking, offering grossly unfair terms in a transaction, and so on.

4 to 6: Bad. The NPC cares nothing for the characters and will act against them (as above), if he can profit by doing so.

7 to 9: Poor. The NPC is unimpressed. He may make threats, demand a huge bribe before offering aid, or something similar.

10 to 12: Neutral. The NPC ignores the characters as much as possible. He is totally uninterested. Transactions will go smoothly and routinely, as long as protocol is observed.

13 to 15: Good. The NPC likes the characters and will be helpful within normal, everyday limits. Reasonable requests will be granted.

16 to 18: Very Good. The NPC thinks highly of the characters and will be quite helpful and friendly, freely offering aid and favorable terms in most things.

19 or better: Excellent. The NPC is extremely impressed by the characters, and will act in their best interests at all times, within the limits of his own ability – perhaps even risking his life, wealth, or reputation.

DAMAGE ROLLS

A “damage roll” is a roll made in a fight, to see how much harm you did to your foe. Damage rolls use the “dice+adds” system (see p. 2). Many things can affect the final injury inflicted by your attack. Armor reduces the damage received by the wearer. Certain attacks do extra damage if they get through armor. All these things are explained in the combat rules – see p. 29.

CHARACTERS

When you roleplay, you take the part of another person – a “character” that you create. **GURPS** lets you decide exactly what kind of hero you will become. Asteroid miner? Wizard? Professional time-traveler? You can take your inspiration from a fictional hero or heroine, or create your new “self” from the ground up. Once you know what role you want to play, it’s time to bring that character to life!

The GM (Game Master – the person “running” the game) will give you a number of *character points* with which to “buy” your abilities. For instance, the stronger you want to be, the more points it will cost. You can also buy advantageous social traits,

such as wealth, and special abilities called *advantages* (see p. 8).

If you want more abilities than you can afford on the budget given to you by your GM, you can get extra points by accepting below-average strength, appearance, wealth, social status, etc., or by taking *disadvantages* – specific handicaps such as bad vision or fear of heights (see p. 10).

The two most important things to know about your character are *who he is* and *what role you want him to play in his adventures*. Find out what kind of game the GM plans to run and what kinds of characters he intends to allow. Then start filling in the

details. There are several ways to approach this.

You can choose the abilities you want, spend your character points, and work out a character concept that fits the abilities. A good character is much more than a collection of abilities, but “shopping” for abilities can be a great inspiration.

You might instead decide on your character’s focal qualities first – the handful of things that *define* him, such as personal history, appearance, behavior, aptitudes, and skills. Think about how he acquired those qualities, then spend your points on features that go with these traits.

CHARACTER POINTS

Character points are the “currency” of character creation. Anything that improves your abilities *costs* character points: you must spend points equal to the listed price of an ability to add that ability to your character sheet and use it in play. Anything that reduces your capabilities has a negative cost – that is, it *gives you back* some points. For instance, if you start with 125 points, buy 75 points of advantages, and take -15 points of disadvantages, you have $125 - 75 + 15 = 65$ points remaining.

Starting Points

The GM decides how many character points the player characters (PCs) – the heroes – start with. This depends on how capable he wants them to be. Some example power levels, with suggested starting points:

Feeble (under 25 points): Small children, mindless thralls, zombies, etc.

Average (25-50 points): Ordinary folks, such as accountants and cab drivers.

Competent (50-75 points): Athletes, cops, wealthy gentry . . . anyone who would have a clear edge over “average” people on an adventure.

Exceptional (75-100 points): Star athletes, seasoned cops, etc.

Heroic (100-200 points): People at the realistic pinnacle of physical, mental, or social achievement; e.g., Navy SEALs, world-class scientists, and millionaires.

Larger Than-Life (200-300 points): Leading roles in kung fu movies, fantasy novels, etc.

Legendary (300-500 points): Protagonists of epic poems and folklore.

This beginning point level is sometimes referred to as the *power level* of the campaign.

Disadvantage Limit

A *disadvantage* is anything with a negative cost, including low attributes, reduced social status, and all the specific disabilities listed under *Disadvantages* (p. 10). In theory, you could keep adding disadvantages until you had enough points to buy whatever advantages and skills you wanted. In practice, most GMs will want to set a limit on the disadvantage points a PC may have. A good rule of thumb is to hold disadvantages to 50% of starting points – for instance, -75 points in a 150-point game.

BASIC ATTRIBUTES

Four numbers called “attributes” define your basic abilities: Strength (ST), Dexterity (DX), Intelligence (IQ), and Health (HT).

A score of 10 in any attribute is *free*, and represents the human average. Higher scores cost points: 10 points to raise ST or HT by one level, 20 points to raise DX or IQ by one level. Similarly, scores lower than 10 have a negative cost: -10 points per level for ST or HT, -20 points per level for DX or IQ. (Remember that negative point values

mean you get those points back to spend on something else!)

Most characters have attributes in the 1-20 range, and most normal humans have scores in the 8-12 range. Scores above 20 are possible but typically reserved for god-like beings – ask the GM before buying such a value. At the other end of the scale, 1 is the minimum score for a human.

The basic attributes you select will determine your abilities – your strengths and

weaknesses – throughout the game. Choose wisely:

6 or less: Crippling. An attribute this bad severely constrains your lifestyle.

7: Poor. Your limitations are immediately obvious to anyone who meets you. This is the lowest score you can have and still pass for “able-bodied.”

8 or 9: Below average. Such scores are limiting, but within the human norm. The GM may forbid attributes below 8 to active adventurers.

SECONDARY CHARACTERISTICS

"Secondary characteristics" are quantities that depend directly on your attributes. You can raise or lower these scores by adjusting your attributes.

Hit Points (HP) represent your body's ability to sustain injury. You have HP equal to your ST. For instance, ST 10 gives 10 HP.

Will measures your ability to withstand psychological stress (brainwashing, fear, hypnotism, interrogation, seduction, torture, etc.) and your resistance to supernatural attacks (magic, psionics, etc.). Will is equal to IQ. Will does not represent *physical* resistance – buy HT for that!

Perception (Per) represents your general alertness. The GM makes a "Sense roll" against your Per to determine whether you notice something. Per equals IQ.

Fatigue Points (FP) represent your body's "energy supply." You have FP equal to your HT. For instance, HT 10 gives 10 FP.

Basic Speed is a measure of your reflexes and general physical quickness. It helps determine your running speed, your chance of dodging an attack, and the order in which you act in combat (a high Basic Speed will let you "out-react" your foes).

To calculate Basic Speed, add your HT and DX together, and then divide the total by 4. *Do not round it off.* A 5.25 is better than a 5!

Dodge: Your Dodge defense (see *Dodging*, p. 28) equals Basic Speed + 3, dropping all fractions. For instance, if your Basic Speed is 5.25, your Dodge is 8. You must roll under your Dodge on 3d to duck or sidestep an attack.

Basic Move is your ground speed in yards per second. This is how fast you can run (although you can go a little faster if you "sprint" in a straight line; see p. 23).

Basic Move starts out equal to Basic Speed, less any fractions; e.g., Basic Speed 5.75 gives Basic Move 5. An average person has Basic Move 5; therefore, he can run about 5 yards per second if unencumbered.

Damage (Dmg)

Your ST determines how much damage you do in unarmed combat or with a melee weapon. Two types of damage derive from ST:

Thrusting damage (abbreviated "thrust" or "thr") is your basic damage with a punch, kick, or bite, or an attack with a thrusting weapon such as a spear or a rapier.

Swinging damage (abbreviated "swing" or "sw") is your basic damage with a swung weapon, such as an axe, club, or sword – anything that acts as a lever to multiply your ST.

Consult the following table for your basic damage. This is given in "dice+adds" format.

Damage Table

ST	Thrust	Swing
1	1d-6	1d-5
2	1d-6	1d-5
3	1d-5	1d-4
4	1d-5	1d-4
5	1d-4	1d-3
6	1d-4	1d-3
7	1d-3	1d-2
8	1d-3	1d-2
9	1d-2	1d-1
10	1d-2	1d
11	1d-1	1d+1
12	1d-1	1d+2
13	1d	2d-1
14	1d	2d
15	1d+1	2d+1
16	1d+1	2d+2
17	1d+2	3d-1
18	1d+2	3d
19	2d-1	3d+1
20	2d-1	3d+2

Damage is sometimes abbreviated "Dmg." On your character sheet, list thrust followed by swing, separated by a slash; e.g., if you had ST 13, you would list "Damage 1d/2d-1."



IMAGE AND LOOKS

This defines your character's intrinsic "social" traits: appearance, manner and bearing. Traits with positive point values (e.g., above-average Appearance, Voice) are considered advantages (p. 8), and obey all the usual rules for advantages. Others (e.g., below-average appearance, Odious Personal Habits) have negative values, and are treated as disadvantages (p. 10). Still others (e.g., height and weight, handedness) merely add "color."

Appearance

Appearance is mostly a "special effect" – you may choose any physical appearance you like.

Appearance is rated in levels. Most people have "Average" appearance, for 0 points. Good looks give a reaction bonus; this is an advantage and costs points. Unappealing looks give a reaction penalty; this is a disadvantage, and gives you back points.

Hideous: You have any sort of disgusting looks you can come up with: a severe skin disease, wall-eye . . . preferably several things at once. This gives -4 on reaction rolls. -16 points.

Ugly: As above, but not so bad – maybe only stringy hair and snaggle teeth. This gives -2 on reaction rolls. -8 points.

Unattractive: You look vaguely unappealing, but it's nothing anyone can put a finger on. This gives -1 on reaction rolls. -4 points.

Average: The default level. Most people have Average appearance. *0 points.*

Attractive: You don't enter beauty contests, but are definitely good-looking. This gives +1 on reaction rolls. *4 points.*

Handsome (or Beautiful): You could enter beauty contests. This gives +4 on reaction rolls made by those attracted to members of your sex, +2 from everyone else. *12 points.*

Very Handsome (or Very Beautiful): You could win beauty contests – regularly. This gives +6 on reaction rolls made by those attracted to members of your sex, +2 from others. *16 points.*

Charisma

5 points/level

You have a natural ability to impress and lead others. Anyone can acquire a

semblance of charisma through looks, manners, and intelligence – but *real* charisma is independent of these things. Each level gives +1 on all reaction rolls made by sapient beings with whom you actively interact (converse, lecture, etc.); +1 to Influence rolls (see *Influence Rolls*, p. 24); and +1 to Leadership and Public Speaking skills. The GM may rule that your Charisma does not affect members of extremely alien races.

Odious Personal Habits

-5, -10, or -15 points

You usually or always behave in a fashion repugnant to others. An Odious Personal Habit (OPH) is worth -5 points for every -1 to reaction rolls made by people who notice your problem. Specify the

behavior when you create your character, and work out the point value with the GM.

Examples: Body odor; constant scratching, or tuneless humming would give -1 to reactions, and are worth -5 points apiece. Constant bad puns or spitting on the floor would give -2 to reactions, worth -10 points apiece. We leave -15-point habits (-3 to reactions) to the imagination of those depraved enough to want them!

Voice

10 points

You have a naturally clear, resonant, and attractive voice. This gives you +2 with any skill that depends on speaking or singing (with the GM's approval, of course). You also get +2 on any reaction roll made by someone who can hear your voice.

SOCIAL BACKGROUND

It is an advantage to be technologically advanced or linguistically talented. *Inadequacy* in these areas can be a crippling disadvantage.

TECHNOLOGY LEVEL (TL)

"Technology level" (or "tech level") is a number that rates technological development. The more advanced the society, the higher its TL. The GM will tell you the TL of his world.

Characters also have a TL, equal to that of the technology with which they are most familiar. Unless you are especially primitive or advanced, your personal TL will be the same as the world.

In some game worlds, your personal TL may differ from the campaign average. A world might be TL8 on average, but the citizens of one advanced nation might be TL9 while those from an underdeveloped region might be TL7.

Low TL

-5 points/TL below campaign TL

Your personal TL is below that of the campaign world. You start with *no* knowledge (or default skill) relating to equipment above your personal TL. You can learn DX-based technological skills (pertaining to vehicles, weapons, etc.) in play, if you can find a teacher, but fundamental differences in thinking prevent you from learning IQ-based technological skills.

High TL

5 points/TL above campaign TL

Your personal TL is above that of the campaign world. You may enter play with skills relating to equipment up to your personal TL. This is most useful if you also have access to high-TL equipment, but the knowledge of a high-tech doctor or scientist can be very useful in a low-tech setting, even without specialized equipment!

LANGUAGE

GURPS assumes that most characters can read and write their "native" language. This ability costs no points, but you should note your native language on your character sheet; e.g., "English (Native) [0]."

Comprehension Levels

The point cost to learn an additional language depends on your "comprehension level": a measure of how well you function in that language overall. There are four comprehension levels:

None: You don't know the language at all. *0 points.*

Broken: You know just enough to get by in daily life, but you're at -3 when using skills that depend on language. *1 point for spoken, 1 point for written.*

Accented: You can communicate clearly. You're only at -1 when using skills that depend on language. *2 points for spoken, 2 points for written.*

Native: You can use the language as well as an educated native. You start with one language at this level for free. *3 points for spoken, 3 points for written.*



Literacy

Your written comprehension level determines your degree of literacy in that language:

Illiteracy: A written comprehension level of None means that you cannot read the language at all.

Semi-literacy: A written comprehension level of Broken means you must read slowly. Roll vs. IQ just to get the basic meaning!

Literacy: A written comprehension of Accented or Native means you can read and write at full speed.

You get Native level written comprehension in your native language for free. It's a disadvantage to be less literate: -1 point for Accented, -2 points for Broken, or -3 points for None.

WEALTH AND INFLUENCE

Now you need to determine your position in your society: How much money do you have, what privileges do you enjoy, and how do others react to you?

WEALTH

Wealth is relative. A middle-class American lives in more luxury than a medieval king, though he may have fewer gold coins in his basement. It all depends on the game world.

Personal wealth is rated in “wealth levels.” A level of “Average” costs no points, and lets you support an average lifestyle for your game world. The rest of these rules apply if you are unusually poor or wealthy, or have a source of income that does not require you to work.

Wealth

Variable

Above-average Wealth is an advantage; it means you start with two or more times the average starting wealth of your game world. Below-average Wealth is a disadvantage; it means you start with only a fraction of average starting wealth.

Dead Broke: You have no job, no source of income, no money, and no property other than the clothes you are wearing. Either you

are unable to work or there are no jobs to be found. -25 points.

Poor: Your starting wealth is only 1/5 of the average for your society. Some jobs are not available to you, and no job you find pays very well. -15 points.

Struggling: Your starting wealth is only 1/2 of the average for your society. Any job is open to you (you *can* be a Struggling doctor or movie actor), but you don’t earn much. -10 points.

Average: The default wealth level, as explained above. 0 points.

Comfortable: You work for a living, but your lifestyle is better than most. Your starting wealth is twice the average. 10 points.

Wealthy: Your starting wealth is five times average; you live very well indeed. 20 points.

Very Wealthy: Your starting wealth is 20 times the average. 30 points.

Filthy Rich: Your starting wealth is 100 times average. You can buy almost anything you want without considering the cost. 50 points.

REPUTATION

It is possible to be so well-known that your reputation becomes an advantage or a disadvantage. This affects reaction rolls made by NPCs (see p. 3).

The details of your reputation are entirely up to you; you can be known for

bravery, ferocity, eating green snakes, or whatever you want. However, you *must* give specifics.

Specify the reaction-roll modifier that you get from people who recognize you. This determines the base cost of your reputation. For every +1 bonus to reaction rolls (up to +4), the cost is 5 points. For every -1 penalty (up to -4), the cost is -5 points.

IMPORTANCE

Your formally recognized *place* in society is distinct from your personal fame and fortune.

Status

5 points/level

Status is a measure of social standing. In most game worlds, Status levels range from -2 (serf or street person) to 8 (powerful emperor or god-king), with the average man being Status 0 (freeman or ordinary citizen). If you do not specifically buy Status, you have Status 0. Status costs 5 points per level. For instance, Status 5 costs 25 points, while Status -2 is -10 points.

Status greater than 0 means you are a member of the ruling class in your culture. As a result, others *in your culture only* defer to you, giving you a bonus on all reaction rolls. Status less than 0 means you are a serf or a slave, or simply very poor.

ADVANTAGES

An “advantage” is a useful trait that gives you a mental, physical, or social “edge” over someone else who otherwise has the same abilities as you. Each advantage has a cost in character points. This is fixed for some advantages; others can be bought in “levels,” at a cost per level (e.g., Acute Vision costs 2 points/level, so if you want Acute Vision 6, you must pay 12 points). Advantages with “Variable” cost are more complicated; read the advantage description for details.

The GM has the final say as to whether a particular advantage suits a given character concept.

ADVANTAGE LIST

Acute Senses

2 points/level

You have superior senses. Each Acute Sense is a separate advantage that gives +1 per level to all Sense rolls (p. 24) you make

– or the GM makes for you – using that one sense. The available types are:

- Acute Hearing
- Acute Taste and Smell
- Acute Touch
- Acute Vision

Ambidexterity

5 points

You can fight or otherwise act equally well with either hand, and never suffer the -4 DX penalty for using the “off” hand (see p. 5). Should some accident befall one of your arms or hands, assume it is the left one.

Animal Empathy

5 points

You are unusually talented at reading the motivations of animals. When you meet an animal, the GM rolls against your IQ and tells you what you “feel.” This reveals the beast’s emotional state – friendly, frightened, hostile, hungry, etc. – and whether it is under supernatural control. You may also

use your Influence skills (see p. 15) on animals just as you would on sapient beings, which usually ensures a positive reaction.

Catfall

10 points

You subtract five yards from a fall automatically (treat this as an automatic Acrobatics success – don’t check again for it). In addition, a successful DX roll *halves* damage from any fall (see p. 32). To enjoy these benefits, your limbs must be unbound and your body free to twist as you fall.

Combat Reflexes

15 points

You have extraordinary reactions, and are rarely surprised for more than a moment. You get +1 to all active defense rolls (see *Defending*, p. 28) and +2 to Fright Checks (see *Fright Checks*, p. 24). You never “freeze” in a surprise situation, and get +6 on all IQ rolls to wake up, or to recover from surprise or mental “stun.”

Danger Sense

15 points

You can't depend on it, but sometimes you get this prickly feeling right at the back of your neck, and you know something's wrong. . . The GM rolls once against your Perception, secretly, in any situation involving an ambush, impending disaster, or similar hazard. On a success, you get enough of a warning that you can take action. A roll of 3 or 4 means you get a little detail as to the nature of the danger.

Daredevil

15 points

Fortune seems to smile on you when you take risks! Any time you take an unnecessary risk (in the GM's opinion), you get a +1 to all skill rolls. Furthermore, you may reroll any critical failure that occurs during such high-risk behavior.

Empathy

15 points

You have a "feeling" for people. When you first meet someone – or are reunited after an absence – you may ask the GM to roll against your IQ. He will tell you what you "feel" about that person. On a failed IQ roll, he will *lie*!

This talent is excellent for spotting imposters, possession, etc., and for determining the true loyalties of NPCs.

Enhanced Defenses

Variable

You are unusually adept at evading attacks! This may be due to careful observation of your foe, focusing *chi*, or anything else that fits your background. There are three versions:

Enhanced Block: You have +1 to your Block score with Shield skill. *5 points.*

Enhanced Dodge: You have +1 to your Dodge score. *15 points.*

Enhanced Parry: You have +1 to your Parry score. You may take this advantage for bare hands (5 points), for any one Melee Weapon skill (5 points), or for *all* parries (10 points). *5 or 10 points.*

Fearlessness

2 points/level

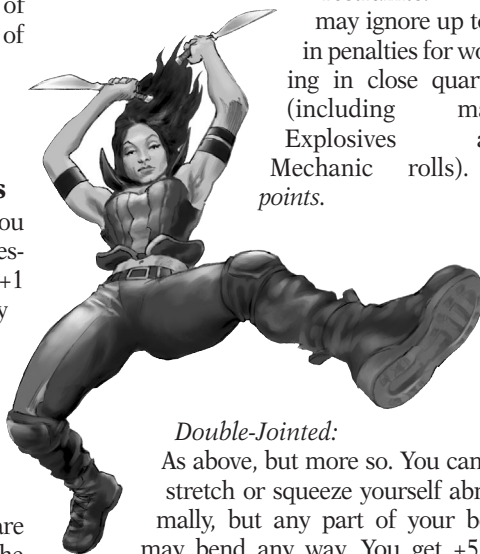
You are difficult to frighten or intimidate! Add your level of Fearlessness to your Will whenever you make a Fright Check or must resist the Intimidation skill (p. 15) or a supernatural power that induces fear. You also subtract your Fearlessness level from all Intimidation rolls made against you.

Flexibility

5 or 15 points

Your body is unusually flexible. This advantage comes in two levels:

Flexibility: You get +3 on Climbing rolls; on Escape rolls to get free of ropes, handcuffs, and similar restraints. You may ignore up to -3 in penalties for working in close quarters (including many Explosives and Mechanic rolls). *5 points.*



Double-Jointed:

As above, but more so. You cannot stretch or squeeze yourself abnormally, but any part of your body may bend any way. You get +5 on Climbing, Escape rolls, and on attempts to break free. You may ignore up to -5 in penalties for close quarters. *15 points.*

Hard to Kill

2 points/level

You are incredibly difficult to kill. Each level of Hard to Kill gives +1 to HT rolls made for survival at -HP or below, and on any HT roll where failure means instant death (due to heart failure, poison, etc.). If this bonus makes the difference between success and failure, you collapse, apparently dead (or disabled), but come to in the usual amount of time – see *Recovering from Unconsciousness* (p. 30).

High Pain Threshold

10 points

You are as susceptible to injury as anyone else, but you don't *feel* it as much. You *never* suffer a shock penalty when you are injured. In addition, you get +3 on all HT rolls to avoid knockdown and stunning – and if you are tortured physically, you get +3 to resist. The GM may let you roll at Will+3 to ignore pain in other situations.

Jumper

100 points

You can travel through time *or* to parallel worlds (sometimes known as "timelines") merely by willing the "jump." Decide whether you are a *time-jumper* or a *world-jumper*. To do both, you must buy Jumper

(Time) and Jumper (World) separately, at full cost.

To initiate a jump, you must visualize your destination, concentrate for 10 seconds, and make an IQ roll. You may hurry the jump, but your roll will be at -1 per second of concentration omitted. Regardless of IQ, a roll of 14 or more always fails. On a success, you appear at your target destination. On a failure, you go nowhere. On a critical failure, you arrive at the *wrong* destination, which can be any time or world the GM wishes!

You appear at your destination at exactly the same place you left your previous time or world – or as close as possible.

If there is no corresponding "safe" location within 100 yards of your destination, the jump will *fail* and you will know why it failed.

This ability always costs at least 1 Fatigue Point (see p. 31) to use, whether it succeeds or fails. Particularly "distant" times or worlds might cost more, perhaps up to 10 FP, at the GM's discretion.

Language Talent

10 points

You have a knack for languages. When you learn a language at a comprehension level above None, you automatically function at the next-highest level.

Luck

Variable

You were born lucky! There are three progressively more "cinematic" levels of Luck:

Luck: Once per hour of *play*, you may reroll a single bad die roll twice and take the best of the three rolls! You must declare that you are using your Luck immediately after you roll the dice. *15 points.*

Extraordinary Luck: As above, but usable every 30 minutes. *30 points.*

Ridiculous Luck: As above, but usable every 10 minutes! *60 points.*

Your Luck only applies to your own success, damage, or reaction rolls, *or* on outside events that affect you or your whole party, *or* when you are being attacked (in which case you may make the attacker roll three times and take the *worst* roll!).

Night Vision

1 point/level

Your eyes adapt rapidly to darkness. Each level of this ability (maximum nine levels) allows you to ignore -1 in combat or vision penalties due to darkness, provided there is at least some light.

Perfect Balance

15 points

You can always keep your footing, no matter how narrow the walking surface (tightrope, ledge, tree limb, etc.), under normal conditions without having to make a die roll. If the surface is wet, slippery, or unstable, you get +6 on all rolls to keep your feet. In combat, you get +4 to DX and DX-based skill rolls to keep your feet or avoid being knocked down. Finally, you get +1 to Acrobatics and Climbing skill.

Resistant

Variable

You are naturally resistant (or even immune) to diseases or poisons. This gives you a bonus on all HT rolls to resist incapacitation or injury from such things.

Resistant to Disease: You may take a +3 bonus for 3 points or a +8 bonus for 5.

Resistant to Poison: You have a +3 bonus, costing 5 points.

Talent

Variable

You have a natural aptitude for a set of closely related skills. “Talents” come in levels, and give a bonus of +1 per level with all affected skills, even for default use. This effectively raises your attribute scores for the purpose of *those skills only*; thus, this is an inexpensive way to be adept at small class of skills.

You may never have more than four levels of a particular Talent. However, overlapping Talents *can* give skill bonuses (only) in excess of +4.

The cost of a Talent depends on the size of the group of skills affected. Some examples:

Artificer covers Armoury, Electronics Repair, Engineer, Mechanic, and others. *10 points/level.*

Outdoorsman covers Camouflage, Naturalist, Navigation, Survival, and Tracking. *10 points/level.*

Smooth Operator covers all Influence skills, as well as Acting, Carousing, Leadership, and Public Speaking. *15 points/level.*

There are many other possibilities! GMs are encouraged to create their own Talents as needed.

DISADVANTAGES

A “disadvantage” is a problem or imperfection that renders you less capable than your attributes, advantages, and skills would indicate. In addition to the traits in this section, this includes anything with a negative point cost described earlier: low Status, below-average Wealth, etc.

You are probably wondering, “Why would I want to give my character disadvantages?” Each disadvantage has a *negative* cost in character points. Thus, disadvantages *give you extra character points*, which let you improve your character in other ways. And an imperfection or two makes your character more interesting and realistic, and adds to the fun of roleplaying!

RESTRICTIONS ON DISADVANTAGES

Your GM might wish to “cap” the extra points you can gain from disadvantages. A good rule of thumb is to hold disadvantages to 50% of starting points – for instance, -75 points in a 150-point game – although this is entirely up to the GM.

Negated Disadvantages: You cannot take a disadvantage that one of your advantages would mitigate or negate! For instance, if you have Acute Hearing, you cannot take Hard of Hearing.

Villain Disadvantages: Some disadvantages – Bloodlust, for instance – are not at all suitable for a “hero,” and the GM is free to forbid them to PCs. But they are often found in the more fiendish villains of adventure fiction, so they are included in the interest of good NPC creation.

A few mental disadvantages don’t affect you constantly. An asterisk (*) appears next

to the name of any disadvantage that gives you a chance to control your urges. In circumstances likely to trigger your problem, roll 3d against a target number of 12. A roll of 12 or less means you succeed and shrug off your disadvantage. A roll of 13 or higher means you fail and suffer its effects! This is a *self-control roll*. You never have to roll – it’s good roleplaying to give in willingly.

DISADVANTAGE LIST

Bad Sight

-10 or -25 points

You have poor vision. You may be nearsighted or farsighted – your choice. This disadvantage costs -10 points at TLs where it is correctable (with glasses or contact lenses), -25 points when it is not.

Bad Temper*

-10 points

You are not in full control of your emotions. Make a self-control roll in any stressful situation. If you fail, you lose your temper and must insult, attack, or otherwise act against the cause of the stress.

Bloodlust*

-10 points

You want to see your foes *dead*. In battle, you must go for killing blows, and put in an extra shot to make sure of a

downed foe. You must make a self-control roll whenever you need to accept a surrender; evade a sentry, take a prisoner, etc. If you fail, you attempt to kill your foe instead – even if that means breaking the law, compromising stealth, wasting ammo, or violating orders. Out of combat, you never forget that a foe is a foe.

Code of Honor

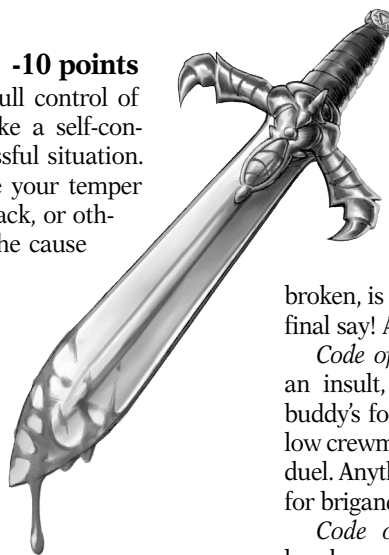
-5 to -15 points

You take pride in a set of principles that you follow at all times. The specifics can vary, but they always involve “honorable” behavior. You will do nearly anything – perhaps even risk death – to avoid the label “dishonorable” (whatever that means to you).

The point value of a particular Code of Honor depends on how much trouble it is liable to get you into and how arbitrary and irrational its requirements are. An informal Code that applies only among your peers is worth -5 points. A formal Code that applies only among peers, or an informal one that applies all the time, is worth -10 points. A formal Code that applies all the time, or that requires suicide if broken, is worth -15 points. The GM has the final say! A couple of examples:

Code of Honor (Pirate’s): Always avenge an insult, regardless of the danger; your buddy’s foe is your own; never attack a fellow crewman or buddy except in a fair, open duel. Anything else goes. This is also suitable for brigands, bikers, etc. *-5 points.*

Code of Honor (Gentleman’s): Never break your word. Never ignore an insult to



yourself, a lady, or your flag; insults may only be wiped out by an apology or a duel (*not* necessarily to the death!). Never take advantage of an opponent in any way; weapons and circumstances must be equal (except in open war). This only applies between gentlemen. A discourtesy from anyone of Status 0 or less calls for a whipping, not a duel! -10 points.

Curious*

-5 points

You are naturally very inquisitive. This is not the curiosity that affects *all* PCs ("What's in that cave? Where did the flying saucer come from?"), but the *real* thing ("What happens if I push *this* button?").

Make a self-control roll when presented with an interesting item or situation. If you fail, you examine it even if you *know* it could be dangerous. Good roleplayers won't try to make this roll very often . . .

Delusions

-5 to -15 points

You believe something that simply is not true. This may cause others to consider you insane. And they may be right! If you suffer from a Delusion, you *must* roleplay your belief at all times. The point value of the Delusion depends on its nature.

A *Minor Delusion* affects your behavior, and anyone around you will soon notice it (and react at -1), but it does not keep you from functioning more-or-less normally. -5 points.

A *Major Delusion* strongly affects your behavior, but does not keep you from living a fairly normal life. Others will react to you at -2. -10 points.

A *Severe Delusion* affects your behavior so much that it may keep you from functioning in the everyday world. Others react to you at -3, but they are more likely to fear or pity you than to attack. -15 points.

Gluttony*

-5 points

You are overly fond of good food and drink. Given the chance, you must always burden yourself with extra provisions. You should never willingly miss a meal. Make a self-control roll when presented with a tempting morsel or good wine that, for some reason, you should resist. If you fail, you partake – regardless of the consequences.

Greed*

-15 points

You lust for wealth. Make a self-control roll any time riches are offered – as payment for fair work, gains from adventure,

spoils of crime, or just bait. If you fail, you do whatever it takes to get the payoff. Small sums do not tempt you much if you are rich, but if you are *poor*, you get -5 or more on your self-control roll if a rich prize is in the offing.

Hard of Hearing

-10 points

You are not deaf, but you have some hearing loss. You are at -4 on any Hearing roll and on any skill roll where it is important that you understand someone (if you are the one talking, this disadvantage doesn't affect you).

Honesty*

-10 points

You *must* obey the law, and do your best to get others to do so as well. In an area with little or no law, you do not "go wild" – you act as though the laws of your own home were in force. You also assume that others are honest unless you *know* otherwise.

This is a disadvantage, because it often limits your options! Make a self-control roll when faced with the "need" to break unreasonable laws; if you fail, you *must* obey the law, whatever the consequences. If you manage to resist your urges and break the law, make a second self-control roll afterward. If you fail, you must turn yourself in to the authorities!

Impulsiveness*

-10 points

You hate talk and debate. You prefer action! When you are alone, you act first and think later. In a group, when your friends want to stop and discuss something, you should put in your two cents' worth quickly – if at all – and then do *something*. Roleplay it! Make a self-control roll whenever it would be wise to wait and ponder. If you fail, you *must* act.

Intolerance

Variable

You dislike and distrust some (or all) people who are different from you. You may be prejudiced on the basis of class, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sex, or species. Victims of your Intolerance will react to you at -1 to -5 (GM's decision). Point value depends on the *scope* of your Intolerance.

If you are thoroughly intolerant, you react at -3 toward *anyone* not of your own class, ethnicity, nationality, religion, or species (pick one). Total Intolerance of this kind is worth -10 points.

Intolerance directed at only one *specific* class, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sex, or species is worth from -5 points for a commonly encountered victim to -1 point (a nasty quirk) for a rare victim.

Jealousy

-10 points

You react poorly toward those who seem smarter, more attractive, or better off than you! You resist any plan proposed by a "rival," and *hate* it if someone else is in the limelight. If an NPC is jealous, the GM will apply a -2 to -4 reaction penalty toward the victim(s) of his jealousy.

Lecherousness*

-15 points

You have an unusually strong desire for romance. Make a self-control roll whenever in more than the briefest contact with an appealing member of the sex you find attractive – at -5 if this person is Handsome/Beautiful, or at -10 if Very Handsome/Very Beautiful. If you fail, you must make a "pass," using whatever wiles and skills you can bring to bear.

Obsession*

-5 or -10 points

Your entire life revolves around a single goal, an overpowering fixation that motivates all of your actions.

Make a self-control roll whenever it would be wise to deviate from your goal. If you fail, you continue to pursue your Obsession, regardless of the consequences.

Point cost depends on the time needed to realize your goal. A short-term goal (e.g., assassinating someone) is worth -5 points, while a long-term goal (e.g., becoming President) is worth -10 points.

Overconfidence*

-5 points

You believe that you are far more powerful, intelligent, or competent than you really are. You may be proud and boastful or just quietly determined, but you must roleplay this trait.

You must make a self-control roll any time the GM feels you show an unreasonable degree of caution. If you fail, you *must* go ahead as though you were able to handle the situation! Caution is not an option.

You receive +2 on all reaction rolls from young or naive individuals (who believe you are as good as you say you are), but -2 on reactions from experienced NPCs.

Pacifism

Variable

You are opposed to violence. This can take two forms.

Reluctant Killer: You get -4 to hit a person (not a monster, machine, etc.) with a deadly attack, or -2 if you can't see his face. If you kill someone, roll 3d – you're morose and useless for that many days. -5 points.

Cannot Harm Innocents: You may fight – you may even start fights – but you may only use deadly force on a foe that is attempting to do you serious harm. -10 points.

Phobias*

Variable

A “phobia” is a fear of a specific item, creature, or circumstance. The more common an object or situation, the greater the point value of a fear of it. If you have a phobia, you may temporarily master it by making a successful self-control roll . . . but the fear persists. Even if you master a phobia, you will be at -2 to all IQ, DX, and skill rolls while the cause of your fear is present, and you must roll again every 10 minutes to see if the fear overcomes you. If you fail the self-control roll, you will cringe, flee, panic, or otherwise react in a manner that precludes sensible action.

Even the mere threat of the feared object requires a self-control roll at +4. If your enemies actually inflict the feared object on you, you must make an unmodified self-control roll.

Some common phobias:

Blood (Hemophobia): -10 points.

Darkness (Scotophobia): -15 points.

Heights (Acrophobia): -10 points.

Number 13 (Triskaidekaphobia): Roll at -5 if Friday the 13th is involved! -5 points.

Spiders (Arachnophobia): -5 points.

Sense of Duty

-2 to -20 points

You feel a strong sense of commitment toward a particular class of people. You will never betray them, abandon them when they're in trouble, or let them suffer or go hungry if you can help.

The GM will assign a point value to your Sense of Duty based on the size of the group you feel compelled to aid:

Individual (the President, your wingman, etc.): -2 points.

Small Group (e.g., your close friends, adventuring companions, or squad): -5 points.

Large Group (e.g., a nation or religion, or everyone you know personally): -10 points.

Entire Race (all humanity, all Elves, etc.): -15 points.

Every Living Being: -20 points.

Truthfulness*

-5 points

You hate to tell a lie – or you are just very bad at it. Make a self-control roll whenever you must keep silent about an uncomfortable truth (lying by omission). Roll at -5 if you actually have to tell a falsehood! If you fail, you blurt out the truth, or stumble so much that your lie is obvious. You have a permanent -5 to Fast-Talk skill, and your

Acting skill is at -5 when your purpose is to deceive.

Unluckiness

-10 points

You have rotten luck. Things go wrong for you – and usually at the worst possible time. Once per play session, the GM will arbitrarily and maliciously make something go wrong for you. You miss a vital die roll, or the enemy (against all odds) shows up at the worst possible time. If the plot of the adventure calls for something bad to happen to someone, it's *you*. The GM may *not* kill you outright with “bad luck,” but anything less than that is fine.

Vow

-5 to -15 points

You have sworn an oath to do (or not to do) something. Whatever the oath, you take it seriously; if you didn't, it would not be a disadvantage. This trait is especially appropriate for knights, holy men, and fanatics.

The point value of a Vow should be directly related to the inconvenience it causes you. The GM is the final judge. Some examples:

Minor Vow: Silence during daylight hours; vegetarianism; chastity (yes, for game purposes, this is *minor*). -5 points.

Major Vow: Use no edged weapons; keep silence at all times; never sleep indoors; own no more than your horse can carry. -10 points.

Great Vow: Never refuse any request for aid; always fight with the wrong hand; hunt a given foe until you destroy him; challenge every knight you meet to combat. -15 points.

QUIRKS

A “quirk” is a minor personality trait. It's not an advantage and it's not necessarily a disadvantage – it's just something unique about your character. For instance, a major trait like Greed is a disadvantage. But if you insist on being paid in gold, that's a quirk.

You may take up to five quirks at -1 point apiece . . . and if you do, you will have five more points to spend. You can also “buy off” a quirk later on by *paying* 1 point,

but as a rule, you shouldn't do that. Quirks might have a small cost, but they are a big part of what makes a character seem “real”!

Mental Quirks are minor personality traits. However, you *must* roleplay them. If you take the quirk “Dislikes heights,” but blithely climb trees and cliffs whenever you need to, the GM will penalize you for bad roleplaying.

To qualify as a mental quirk, a personality trait must meet one of two criteria: It requires a specific action, behavior, or choice on your part from time to time; or it gives you a *small* penalty very occasionally, or to a narrow set of actions.

Physical Quirks are physical disadvantages that are only mildly or rarely limiting. They do not require roleplaying, but they give specific, *minor* penalties in play.

SKILLS

A “skill” is a particular kind of knowledge; for instance, karate, physics, auto mechanics, or a death spell. Every skill is separate, though some skills help you to learn others. Just as in real life, you start your career with some skills and can learn more if you spend time training.

A number called “skill level” measures your ability with each of your skills: the higher the number, the greater your skill. For instance, “Shortsword-17” means a skill level of 17 with the shortsword. When you try to do something, you (or the GM) roll 3d against the appropriate skill, modified for

that particular situation. If the number you roll is *less than or equal to* your modified score for that skill, you succeed! But a roll of 17 or 18 is an automatic failure. For more on skill rolls, modifiers, success, and failure, see p. 2.

Controlling Attribute

Each skill is based on one of the four basic attributes. Your skill level is calculated directly from this “controlling attribute”: the higher your attribute score, the more effective you are with *every* skill based on it! If your character concept calls for *many* skills based on a given attribute, you should consider starting with a high level in that attribute, as this will be most cost-effective in the long run.

ST-based skills depend wholly on brawn, and are very rare.

DX-based skills rely on coordination, reflexes, and steady hands.

IQ-based skills require knowledge, creativity, and reasoning ability.

HT-based skills are governed by physical fitness.

Difficulty Level

Some fields demand more study and practice than others. **GURPS** uses four “difficulty levels” to rate the effort required to learn and improve a skill. The more difficult the skill, the more points you must spend to buy it at a given skill level.

Easy skills are things that *anyone* could do reasonably well after a short learning period.

Average skills include most combat skills, mundane job skills, and the practical social and survival skills that ordinary people use daily.

Hard skills require intensive formal study or training.

Technological Skills

Certain skills are different at each tech level (see *Technology Level*, p. 7) and are designated by “TL.” When you learn such a skill, you must learn it at a specific tech level (TL). Always note the TL when you write down such a skill. Navigation/TL2 (consult the stars and an astrolabe) is nothing like Navigation/TL8 (get your location off a GPS receiver).

You learn technological skills at your personal TL. You may also choose skills from a *lower* TL. You can only learn skills from a *higher* TL in play – and only if you have a teacher *and* the skill is not based on IQ. To learn IQ-based technological skills from a higher TL, you must first raise your personal TL.

BUYING SKILLS

In order to learn or improve a skill, you must spend character points. When you spend points on a skill, you are getting training to bring that skill up to a useful level. Skills are easy to learn at first – a little training goes a long way! But added improvement costs more.

Skill Cost Table

Your Final Skill Level	Difficulty of Skill		
	Easy	Average	Hard
Attribute-3	–	–	–
Attribute-2	–	–	1
Attribute-1	–	1	2
Attribute+0	1	2	4
Attribute+1	2	4	8
Attribute+2	4	8	12
Attribute+3	8	12	16
Extra +1	+4	+4	+4

The point cost of a skill depends on two things: its difficulty and the final skill level you wish to attain. Use the *Skill Cost Table* (above) to calculate a skill's point cost.

The first column shows the skill level you are trying to attain, *relative to the skill's controlling attribute* – DX for DX-based skills, IQ for IQ-based skills, and so forth. For instance, if your DX were 12, a level of “Attribute-1” would be DX-1, or 11; “Attribute+0” would be DX, or 12; and “Attribute+1” would be DX+1, or 13.

The next three columns show the character point costs to learn skills of different difficulties – *Easy*, *Average*, and *Hard* – at the desired skill level. Harder skills cost more points to learn!

SKILL DEFAULTS: USING SKILLS YOU DON'T KNOW

Most skills have a “default level”: the level at which you use the skill if you have *no* training. A skill has a default level if it is something that everybody can do . . . a little bit. As a general rule, a skill defaults to its controlling attribute at -4 if Easy, -5 if Average, or -6 if Hard.

Some skills have *no* default level. For instance, Karate is complex enough that you cannot use it *at all* without training.



The Rule of 20

If a skill defaults to a basic attribute that is higher than 20, treat that attribute as 20 when figuring default skill. Superhuman characters get *good* defaults, but not *super* ones.

Who Gets a Default?

Only individuals from a society where a skill is known may attempt a default roll against that skill. For instance, the default for Scuba skill assumes you are from a world where scuba gear exists and where most people would have *some* idea – if only from TV – of how to use it. A medieval knight transported to the 21st century would not get a default roll to use scuba gear the first time he saw it!

SKILL LIST

The skill list is sorted alphabetically by skill name. Each entry gives the following information:

Name: The skill's name. Technological skills are noted as such; e.g., “Mechanic/TL.”

Type: The skill's controlling attribute and difficulty level; e.g., “IQ/A.” **E** stands for Easy, **A** for Average, and **H** for Hard.

Default: The attribute to which the skill defaults if you haven't studied it. “None” means *no* default – you *cannot* attempt to use the skill if you don't know it.

Description: An explanation of what the skill is for and how it works in play.

Acrobatics (DX/H)

Default: DX-6.

This is the ability to perform gymnastic stunts, roll, take falls, etc.

Acting (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the ability to counterfeit moods, emotions, and voices, and to lie convincingly over a period of time.

Animal Handling (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the ability to train and work with animals. When working with a trained animal, roll against skill for each task you give the animal.

Area Knowledge (IQ/E)

Default: IQ-4.

This skill represents familiarity with the people, places, and politics of a given region. You usually have Area Knowledge only for the area you consider your “home base.”

Armoury/TL (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the ability to build, modify, and repair a specific class of weapons or armor. A successful roll lets you find a problem, if it isn't obvious; a second roll lets you repair it. Time required is up to the GM.

Brawling (DX/E)

Default: None.

This is the skill of “unscientific” unarmed combat. Roll against Brawling to hit with a punch, or Brawling-2 to hit with a kick.

Camouflage (IQ/E)

Default: IQ-4.

This is the ability to use natural materials, special fabrics and paints, etc. to hide yourself, your position, or your equipment.

Carousing (HT/E)

Default: HT-4.

This is the skill of socializing, partying, etc. A successful Carousing roll, under the right circumstances, gives you a +2 bonus on a request for aid or information, or just on a general reaction. A failed roll means you made a fool of yourself in some way; you get a -2 penalty on any reaction roll made by those you caroused with.

Climbing (DX/A)

Default: DX-5.

This is the ability to climb mountains, rock walls, trees, the sides of buildings, etc. See *Climbing* (p. 22) for details.

Computer Operation/TL (IQ/E)

Default: IQ-4.

This is the ability to use a computer: call up data, run programs, play games, etc. It is the only computer skill needed by most end users.

Computer Programming/TL (IQ/H)

Defaults: None.

The ability to write and debug computer software. Roll to write, debug, or figure out a program.

Crewman/TL (IQ/E)

Default: IQ-4.

This is the ability to serve as *crew* aboard a large vehicle. It includes familiarity with “shipboard life,” knowledge of safety measures, and training in damage control.

Criminology/TL (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the study of crime and the criminal mind. A successful skill roll allows you to find and interpret clues, guess how criminals might behave, etc.

Diagnosis/TL (IQ/H)

Default: IQ-6.

This is the ability to tell what is wrong with a sick or injured person, or what killed a dead person. It might not determine the exact problem, but it always gives hints, rule out impossibilities, etc.

Disguise/TL (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the art of altering your appearance using clothing, makeup, and prosthetics. A *good* disguise requires a Disguise roll and 30 minutes to an hour of preparation.

Electronics Operation/TL (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This skill lets you use electronic equipment. Make a skill roll in an emergency situation or for “abnormal” use of equipment – not for ordinary, everyday use.

Electronics Repair/TL (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the ability to diagnose and repair known types of electronic equipment.

Engineer/TL (IQ/H)

Default: None.

This is the ability to design and build technological devices and systems. A successful roll lets you design a new system, diagnose a glitch, identify the purpose of a strange device, or improvise a gadget to solve a problem.

Environment Suit/TL (DX/A)

Default: DX-5.

This is training in the use of a specific class of protective suit. Suits designed against environmental or battlefield are so complex that you do not merely wear such gear – you *operate* it.

Battlesuit/TL: All kinds of powered battle armor and exoskeletons.

Diving Suit/TL: All types of *hard* diving suits.

NBC Suit/TL: All forms of hazardous materials (“HazMat”) gear.

Vacc Suit/TL: Any kind of spacesuit.

Escape (DX/H)

Default: DX-6.

This is the ability to slip out of ropes, handcuffs, and similar restraints. The first attempt to escape takes one minute; each subsequent attempt takes 10 minutes.

Explosives/TL (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the skill of working with explosives and incendiaries, including the ability to set up, disarm, and dispose of bombs and other explosives.

First Aid/TL (IQ/E)

Default: IQ-4.

This is the ability to patch up an injury in the field (see *Recovery*, p. 30). Make a skill roll to halt bleeding, suck out poison, give artificial respiration to a drowning victim, etc.

Forgery/TL (IQ/H)

Default: IQ-6.

This is the ability to create falsified documents (identity cards, passports, etc.). When you use a forged document, make your Forgery roll *each time* it is inspected – unless you roll a critical success on your first attempt. Failure means someone spots the forgery.

Gambling (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is skill at playing games of chance. A successful Gambling roll can (among other things) tell you if a game is rigged, identify a fellow gambler in a group of strangers, or “estimate the odds” in *any* tricky situation.

Hiking (HT/A)

Default: HT-5.

This skill represents training for endurance walking, hiking, and marching. Make a Hiking roll before each day's march; on a success, increase the distance traveled by 20%.

Holdout (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the skill of concealing items on your person or on other people (usually with their cooperation). An item's size and shape govern its concealability, from +4 for a BB-sized jewel or a postage stamp, to -6 for a crossbow or a heavy sniper rifle.

Humanities (IQ/H)

Default: IQ-6.

Each academic "humanity" or "arts" subject (such as History, Literature, Philosophy, or Theology) is a separate skill.

Influence Skills (Varies)

Default: Varies.

There are several ways to influence others; each is a separate influence skill. A successful roll will result in a good reaction from an NPC. Failure results in a bad reaction (except for Diplomacy, which is always safe). To actually coerce or manipulate an NPC, you must win a Quick Contest of your skill versus his Will. Methods of influencing others include:

Diplomacy (IQ/H): Negotiation and compromise. Defaults to IQ-6.

Fast-Talk (IQ/A): Lying and deceit. Defaults to IQ-5.

Intimidation (IQ/A): Threats and violence. Defaults to IQ-5.

Savoir-Faire (IQ/E): Manners and etiquette. Mainly useful in "high society" situations. Defaults to IQ-4.

Sex Appeal (HT/A): Vamping and seduction, usually of the opposite sex. Defaults to HT-3.

Streetwise (IQ/A): Contacts and (usually) subtle intimidation. Only useful in "street" and criminal situations. Defaults to IQ-5.

Interrogation (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the ability to question a prisoner. Roll a Quick Contest of Interrogation vs. the prisoner's Will for each question. This requires 5 minutes per question. If you win, you get a truthful answer. If you tie or lose, the victim remains silent or lies. If you lose by more than five points, he tells you a *good, believable lie*!

Jumping (DX/E)

Default: None.

This skill represents trained jumping ability. When you attempt a difficult jump, roll against the *higher* of Jumping or DX. In addition, you may use half your Jumping skill (round down) instead of Basic Move when calculating jumping distance. See *Jumping* (p. 23).

Karate (DX/H)

Default: None.

This skill represents *any* advanced training at unarmed striking, not just the Okinawan martial art of *karate*. Roll against Karate to hit with a punch (at no -4 for the "off" hand), or Karate-2 to hit with a kick.

Karate improves damage: if you know Karate at DX level, add +1 *per die* to basic thrust damage when you calculate damage with Karate attacks: punches, kicks, elbow strikes, etc. Add +2 *per die* if you know Karate at DX+1 or better!

Law (IQ/H)

Default: IQ-6.

This skill represents knowledge of law codes and jurisprudence. A successful roll lets you remember, deduce, or figure out the answer to a question about the law.

Leadership (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the ability to coordinate a group. Make a Leadership roll to lead NPCs into a dangerous or stressful situation. (PCs can decide for themselves if they want to follow you!)

Lockpicking/TL (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the ability to open locks without the key or combination. Each attempt requires one minute. If you make the roll and open the lock, each point by which you succeeded shaves five seconds off the required time.

Mathematics/TL (IQ/H)

Default: IQ-6.

This is the scientific study of quantities and magnitudes, and their relationships and attributes, through the use of numbers and symbols.

Mechanic/TL (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the ability to diagnose and fix ordinary mechanical problems. A successful skill roll will let you find or repair one problem.

Melee Weapon (DX/Varies)

Default: Special.

This is not one skill, but an entire *collection* of skills – one per class of closely related melee weapons. Melee Weapon skills are based on DX, and default to DX-4 if Easy, DX-5 if Average, or DX-6 if Hard.

Fencing Weapons

Fencing weapons are light, one-handed weapons, usually hilted blades, optimized for parrying. *Skills:* Rapier (A) and Smallsword (A).

Flails

A *flail* is any flexible, unbalanced weapon with its mass concentrated in the head. Because flails tend to wrap around the target's shield or weapon, attempts to *block* them are at -2 and attempts to *parry* them are at -4. *Skills:* Flail (H; includes morningstars and nunchaku).

Impact Weapons

An *impact* weapon is any rigid, unbalanced weapon with most of its mass concentrated in the head, such as axes and maces. Such a weapon cannot parry if you have already attacked with it on your turn. *Skills:* Axe/Mace (A).

Pole Weapons

Pole weapons are long (usually wooden) shafts, often adorned with striking heads. All require two hands. *Skills:* Polearm (A), Spear (A), Staff (A; also gives +2 to Parry).

Swords

A *sword* is a rigid, hilted blade with a thrusting point, cutting edge, or both. All swords are balanced, and can attack and parry without becoming unready. *Skills:* Broadsword (A), Knife (E; also gives -1 to Parry), Shortsword (A), and Two-Handed Sword (A).

Merchant (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the skill of buying, selling, and trading retail and wholesale goods. It involves bargaining, salesmanship, and an understanding of trade practices.

Missile Weapon (DX/Varies)

Default: Special.

This is not one skill, but an entire *collection* of skills – one per class of closely related missile weapons. Missile Weapon skills are based on DX, and default to DX-4 if Easy, DX-5 if Average, or DX-6 if Hard.

Gunner

This is the ability to use a heavy weapon, usually one mounted on a tripod or a vehicle, to make a *direct-fire* attack – that is, to

aim and fire at a target to which you have a line of sight. All Gunner skills are DX/Easy.

Beams: Any kind of heavy directed-energy weapon: laser, particle beam, etc.

Cannon: Any kind of heavy projectile weapon – e.g., the main gun of a tank or an ultra-tech railgun on a starship – that fires single shots.

Machine Gun: Any kind of heavy projectile weapon capable of firing bursts.

Guns

This is the ability to use a hand-held chemical-propellant or mass-driver projectile weapon. All Guns skills are DX/Easy.

Light Anti-Armor Weapon (LAW): All forms of rocket launchers and recoilless rifles.

Pistol: All kinds of handguns, including derringers, pepperboxes, revolvers, and automatics, but *not* machine pistols.

Rifle: Any kind of *rifled* long arm – assault rifle, hunting rifle, sniper rifle, etc. – that fires a solid projectile.

Shotgun: Any kind of *smoothbore* long arm that fires multiple projectiles (flechettes, shot, etc.).

Submachine Gun (SMG): All short, fully automatic weapons that fire pistol-caliber ammunition, including machine pistols.

Flamethrower

This is the ability to use a weapon that projects a stream of liquid or gas. Flamethrower is DX/Easy.

Other Missile Weapons

Blowpipe (DX/Hard): You can use this weapon to shoot small, usually poisoned, darts. You can also use it to blow powders at targets within one yard.

Bow (DX/Average): This is the ability to use all bows except crossbows.

Crossbow (DX/Easy): This is the ability to use all types of crossbows.

Natural Sciences (IQ/H)

Default: IQ-6.

There are a number of skill types under this heading, including Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Geology, and Physics, plus any others the GM approves.

Naturalist (IQ/H)

Default: IQ-6.

This skill represents practical knowledge of nature – notably, how to tell dangerous plants and animals from benign ones, how to locate a cave to shelter in; and how to “read” weather patterns to know when to take shelter.

Navigation/TL (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the ability to find your position through careful observation of your surroundings and the use of instrumentation. A successful roll tells you where you are or lets you plot a course.

Various types of Navigation include: *Sea, Air, Land, Space, and Hyperspace.*

Observation (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the talent of observing dangerous or “interesting” situations without letting others know that you are watching. Use this skill to monitor a location, a group of people, or your immediate surroundings for concealed or tactically significant details.

Occultism (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the study of the mysterious and the supernatural. An occultist is an expert on ancient rituals, hauntings, mysticism, primitive magical beliefs, psychic phenomena, etc.

Photography/TL (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the ability to use a camera competently, use a darkroom (TL5+) or digital imaging software (TL8+), etc., and to produce recognizable and attractive photos. You may roll at default to use a camera, but not to develop film or prints in a darkroom.

Physician/TL (IQ/H)

Default: IQ-7.

This is the ability to aid the sick and the injured, prescribe drugs and care, etc. Make a skill roll to hasten natural recovery from injury (see *Recovery*, p. 30), and whenever the GM requires a roll to test general medical competence or knowledge.

Pickpocket (DX/H)

Default: DX-6.

This is the ability to steal a purse, knife, etc., from someone's person – or to “plant” something on him.

Public Speaking (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is general talent with the spoken word. A successful skill roll lets you (for instance) give a good political speech, entertain a group around a campfire, incite or calm a riot, or put on a successful “court jester” act.

Research/TL (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the ability to do library and file research. Roll against skill to find a useful piece of data in an appropriate place of research . . . *if* the information is there to be found.

Riding (DX/A)

Default: DX-5.

This is the ability to ride a particular kind of mount. Make a skill roll when you first try to mount a riding animal, and again each time something happens to frighten or challenge the creature (e.g., a jump).

Scrounging (IQ/E)

Default: IQ-4.

This is the ability to find, salvage, or improvise useful items that others can't locate. Each attempt takes an hour. You do not necessarily steal your booty; you just locate it – somehow – and then acquire it by any means necessary.

Search (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the ability to search people, baggage, and vehicles for items that aren't in plain sight. The GM rolls once – *in secret* – per item of interest. For *deliberately* concealed items, this is a Quick Contest of your Search skill vs. the Holdout or Smuggling skill used to hide the item. If you fail, the GM simply says, “You found nothing.”

Shadowing (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the ability to follow another person through a crowd without being noticed. Roll a Quick Contest every 10 minutes: your Shadowing vs. the subject's Vision roll. If you lose, you lost the subject; if you lose by more than 5, you were seen.

Shield (DX/E)

Default: DX-4.

This is the ability to use a shield, both to block and to attack. Your Block score with any shield is (skill/2) + 3, rounded down.

Social Sciences (IQ/H)

Default: IQ-6

Each “social science” (e.g., Anthropology, Archaeology, Psychology or Sociology) is a separate skill.

Smuggling (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the ability to conceal items in baggage and vehicles. You can also use it to hide an object in a room or a building. Roll against skill to hide an item from casual inspection. In an active search, the searchers must win a Quick Contest of Search vs. your Smuggling skill to find the item.

Stealth (DX/A)

Defaults: DX-5.

This is the ability to hide and to move silently. A successful roll lets you conceal yourself practically anywhere, or move so quietly that nobody will hear you, or follow someone without being noticed.

If someone is *specifically* on the alert for intruders, the GM will roll a Quick Contest between your Stealth and the sentinel's Perception.

Survival (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the ability to "live off the land," find safe food and water, avoid hazards, build shelter, etc. To live safely in a wilderness situation, you must make a successful Survival roll once per day. Failure inflicts 2d-4 injury on you and anyone in your care. There are many different types of Survival skill, which must be learned independently.

Swimming (HT/E)

Default: HT-4.

This is the skill of swimming (on purpose or to keep afloat in emergencies) and lifesaving. Roll against the *higher* of

Swimming or HT to avoid fatigue or injury due to aquatic misfortunes.

Tactics (IQ/H)

Default: IQ-6.

This is the ability to outguess and outmaneuver the enemy in small-unit or personal combat.

When commanding a small unit, roll against Tactics to place your troops correctly for an ambush, know where to post sentries, etc. In personal combat, you may make a Tactics roll before the fight begins if you had *any* time to prepare. On a success, you start the fight in an advantageous position – e.g., behind cover or on higher ground – as determined by the GM.

Throwing (DX/A)

Default: DX-3.

This is the ability to throw any small, relatively smooth object that fits in the palm of your hand. Examples include baseballs, hand grenades, and rocks.

Thrown Weapon (DX/E)

Default: DX-4.

This is the ability to hurl any one type of thrown weapon. The types include:

Axe/Mace: Any axe, hatchet, or mace balanced for throwing (but *not* an unbalanced battleaxe or maul!).

Knife: Any sort of knife.

Shuriken: Any sort of hiltless blade, notably *shuriken* ("ninja stars").

Spear: Any sort of spear, javelin, etc.

Tracking (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the ability to follow a man or an animal by its tracks. Make a Tracking roll to pick up the trail, then roll every 15 minutes to avoid losing it, at a modifier ranging from 0 for soft terrain to -6 for city streets.

Traps/TL (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5.

This is the skill of building and nullifying traps. For the purposes of Traps skill, detection devices are "traps." Thus, this skill covers everything from covered pits to elaborate electronic security systems!

Vehicle Skills (DX/Varies)

Default: Varies.

Each class of vehicle requires a different skill to operate it. Roll once to get under way and again each time a hazard is encountered; failure indicates lost time or even an accident. Vehicle skills default to DX at -4 (easy), -5 (average), or -6 (hard); motor vehicles also default to IQ, at similar penalties. Available types include Bicycling (DX/E), Boating (DX/A) for small boats, Driving (DX/A) for cars and motorbikes, Piloting (DX/A) for aircraft, and Submarine (DX/A) for subs.

Writing (IQ/A)

Default: IQ-5

This is the ability to write in a clear or entertaining manner. A successful roll means the work is readable and accurate.

CHARACTER IMPROVEMENT

At the end of each session, the GM may award bonus character points for good play; these are the same kind of points you used to create your character.

Bonus points are used to develop and improve your character. Record them as "unspent" on your character sheet. Then spend them the same way as during character creation, as follows:

To *improve one of your basic attributes*, you must spend character points equal to the point-cost difference between the old score and the new one. Note that improving basic attributes will also affect secondary characteristics!

Most *advantages* are inborn, and cannot be "bought" later on. Exceptions include Combat Reflexes and languages, which can be learned, and social advantages like Status, which can be earned (in some societies). To add an advantage, you must pay the appropriate character points.

Bonus Character Points

At the end of each play session, the GM should award bonus character points for good play. "Good play" is anything that advances the heroes' mission or shows good roleplaying – preferably both. But roleplaying trumps mission success! If a player did something totally outside his character's personality (for instance, if a total coward performed a brave act), this should not be worth *any* points, even if it saved the day for the rest of the group!

The GM is free to award *any* number of points . . . but in general, he should give each player between zero and five points, averaging two or three points, *per session*.

The GM might also wish to give an award – perhaps equal to that for a successful play session – upon the conclusion of a lengthy adventure, story arc, or major plot thread.

A character may get rid of most beginning disadvantages by *buying them off* with points equal to the bonus earned when the disadvantage was taken, as long as the player and GM can agree on a logical explanation for this.

Earned character points can be used to *increase your skills or add new ones*. When you improve a skill, the cost is the difference between your current skill level and the cost of the new skill level.

EQUIPMENT

Now you need to decide what equipment you have. Usually, the GM sets a reasonable cost and weight for each item of equipment requested by a player. In a modern-day game, he may even refer players to real-life catalogs! Weapons and armor are a special case, however, since their use involves more intricate game mechanics. This section will give you enough information to let you choose your combat gear intelligently.

You start with money equal to the campaign starting wealth, modified by your personal wealth level (see p. 8). The GM will supply equipment lists that give cost, weight, and other information about important items, and give you a ruling about anything else you request. Subtract the price of each item you buy from your starting wealth to determine how much money you have left.

Starting Wealth

"Starting wealth" covers both money and property. Start with the amount of money your wealth level entitles you to for your game world. Buy the possessions you want to start with. Any unspent money is your "bank account."

Realistically, if you have a settled lifestyle, you should put 80% of your starting wealth into home, clothing, etc., which leaves only 20% for "adventuring" gear. If you are a wanderer (pioneer, knight-errant, Free Trader, etc.), or Poor or worse, the GM might allow you to spend *all* your starting wealth on movable possessions.

All prices in *GURPS* appear in "\$": a convenient abbreviation for any baseline unit of currency suitable to the setting. One \$ may be one dollar, one credit, one copper piece, or whatever else is appropriate. Prices assume a typical sale made by an ordinary merchant.

Tech level (p. 7) determines starting wealth, as technologically advanced societies tend to be richer. Below is a comparison of TLs and suggested starting wealth.

TL0	Stone Age (Prehistory and later). \$250.
TL1	Bronze Age (3500 B.C.+). \$500.
TL2	Iron Age (1200 B.C.+). \$750.
TL3	Medieval (600 A.D.+). \$1,000.
TL4	Age of Sail (1450+). \$2,000.
TL5	Industrial Revolution (1730+). \$5,000.
TL6	Mechanized Age (1880+). \$10,000.
TL7	Nuclear Age (1940+). \$15,000.
TL8	Digital Age (1980+). \$20,000.
TL9	Microtech Age (2025+?). \$30,000.
TL10	Robotic Age (2070+?). \$50,000.
TL11	Age of Exotic Matter. \$75,000.
TL12+	Whatever the GM likes! \$100,000.



ARMOR

Armor is very useful in combat. A single sword blow or bullet can incapacitate or kill you . . . but armor might give you a second chance. Your armor's Damage Resistance, or DR, subtracts *directly* from the damage inflicted by your enemies' weapons. Armor requires no skill to use – you just wear it!

Effective armor is *heavy*, though. Its weight can hinder you (see *Encumbrance*

and *Move*, p. 22), reducing your Dodge and Karate Parry.

ARMOR TABLE

The armor table that follows includes an article of light, common clothing to wear underneath – or padding, if this is usual for the armor. The statistics already reflect this; you do not have to buy clothing or padding separately, or account for its DR and weight.

The tables give the following information for each item of armor:

Armor: The item's name.

DR: The amount of Damage Resistance the item gives. Subtract this from any blow that strikes the armored location. For instance, if you're wearing a DR 6 plate and are hit in the torso for 8 points of damage, only 2 points penetrate and affect you.

Cost: The item's price, in \$.

Weight: The item's weight, in pounds.

Armor Table

<i>Armor</i>	<i>DR</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Cloth Armor	1	\$150	12
Leather Armor	2	\$340	19.5
Light Scale	3	\$610	49
Mail	4	\$645	58
Steel Laminate	5	\$1,360	64
Plate	6	\$4,040	89.5
Flak Jacket	7	\$500	20
Ballistic Vest	8	\$400	2
Tactical Vest	12	\$900	9



SHIELDS

Shields are very valuable in low-tech combat, but almost worthless against firearms.

You normally wear a shield strapped to one arm. Your shield hand can't *wield* a weapon (preventing you from using two-handed weapons), but it can still *carry* an item.

A shield helps *all* your active defense rolls (Block, Dodge, and Parry) with no par-

ticular effort. You can also use a shield *actively* to block; see *Blocking* (p. 28).

The following statistics apply to shields:

Shield: The kind of shield.

DB: Defense Bonus. The bonus the shield gives to *all* of your active defense rolls (see *Defending*, p. 28) against attacks from the front or shield side, even if you have no skill at all with a shield.

Cost: The shield's price, in \$.

Weight: The shield's weight, in pounds.

Shield Table

Shield	DB	Cost	Weight
Small Shield	1	\$40	8
Medium Shield	2	\$60	15
Large Shield	3	\$90	25

WEAPONS

Adventurers often carry weapons of some sort, whether it's a knight's broadsword, a detective's snub-nosed .38, or a space pirate's blaster pistol.

First, decide *why* you carry a weapon. Is it for self-defense, intimidation ("Stop or I'll shoot!"), battle, or hunting? Also review your skills and Strength. High-tech weapons (such as guns) work equally well for anyone who knows how to use them. Low-tech weapons – clubs, swords, etc. – do much more damage if wielded by a strong person. Finally, look at the weapon's statistics. A weapon's damage rating is the basic measure of its effectiveness, but there are also factors such as range, rate of fire, and accuracy to consider.

WEAPON STATISTICS

Weapon tables provide the items of information explained below. A given column will only appear on a table if it is germane to the weapons on that table. In *all* cases, "-" means the statistic does not apply, and "var." means the value varies.

TL (Tech Level)

The tech level at which the weapon first becomes widespread. You may only buy weapons of your campaign's TL *or less*, unless you have the High TL trait (p. 7).

Weapon

The general class of weapon in question; e.g., "shortsword" or "assault rifle." Each entry represents a wide range of individual types.

For guns, this entry includes a projectile diameter, or "caliber," given in millimeters (e.g., 9mm) or fractions of an inch (e.g., .50), as customary for the weapon.

Damage

For muscle-powered melee and missile weapons, such as swords and bows, damage is ST-based and expressed as a modifier to the wielder's basic thrusting (thr) or

swinging (sw) damage, as given on the *Damage Table* (p. 6). For example, a spear does "thr+2," so if you have ST 11, which gives a basic thrusting damage of 1d-1, you inflict 1d+1 damage with a spear. Swung weapons act as a lever, and so do more damage.

For firearms and some powered melee weapons, damage is given as a fixed number of dice plus adds; e.g., a 9mm auto pistol lists "2d+2," which means that any user would roll 2d and add 2 to get damage.

Armor Divisors: A parenthetical number after damage – e.g., (2) – is an *armor divisor*. Divide the target's DR from armor or other sources by this number before subtracting it from your damage (or adding it to the target's HT roll to resist an affliction). For instance, an attack with a divisor of (2) would halve DR.

Damage Type: An abbreviation indicating the *type* of injury or effect the attack causes.

Abbreviation	Damage Type
burn	burning
cr	crushing
cut	cutting
imp	impaling
pi-	small piercing
pi	piercing
pi+	large piercing

A victim loses HP equal to the damage that penetrates his DR. Halve this for small piercing attacks; increase it by 50% for cutting and large piercing attacks; and double it for impaling.

Acc (Accuracy)

Ranged weapons only. Add Accuracy to your skill if you took an Aim maneuver on the turn prior to your attack. If the weapon has a built-in scope, the bonus for this appears as a separate modifier after the weapon's base Acc; e.g., "7+2."



Range

Ranged weapons only. If a weapon has only one range number, this is the *Maximum Range* (Max) in yards at which it can attack a target. If two numbers appear, separated by a slash, the first is *Half-Damage Range* (1/2D) and the second is Max. Damaging attacks on targets at or beyond 1/2D inflict half damage.

Muscle-powered weapons usually list 1/2D and Max as multiples of the wielder's ST, not as a fixed range. For example, "×10/×15" means 1/2D is 10×ST and Max is 15×ST, so someone with ST 10 would have 1/2D 100 and Max 150. For crossbows, use the *weapon's* ST in these formulas.

RoF (Rate of Fire)

Ranged weapons only. The maximum number of shots an ordinary shooter can fire in a one-second turn. A weapon can normally fire fewer shots (to a minimum of 1), if you wish, but some special notes apply:

Shots

Ranged weapons only. The number of shots the weapon can fire before you must reload or recharge it. "T" means the weapon is *thrown*. To "reload," pick it up or ready a new weapon!

The parenthetical number following Shots indicates the number of one-second Ready maneuvers needed to reload *all* of the weapon's shots (e.g., by changing magazines) – or, for a thrown weapon, the time needed to ready another weapon. An "i" next to this means you must load shots individually: the time listed is *per shot* rather than for all shots.

A crossbow takes the indicated time to ready (4 turns) only if its ST is no greater than yours (see *Crossbows and ST*, below). *Double* this if the bow's ST is 1 or 2 greater. If its ST is 3 or 4 greater, you need a "goat's foot" device to cock it; this takes 20 turns, and requires you to stand. If its ST is 5 or more above yours, you cannot reload it at all.

Cost

The price of a new weapon, in \$. For swords and knives, this includes a sheath or a scabbard. For firearms, this includes the minimal necessary cleaning kit.

Weight

The weight of the weapon, in pounds. For missile weapons with Shots 2+, this is *loaded* weight. The weight of one full reload appears after a slash.

ST (Strength)

The minimum Strength required to use the weapon properly. If you try to use a weapon that requires more ST than you have, you will be at -1 to weapon skill per point of ST you lack *and* lose one extra FP at the end of any fight that lasts long enough to fatigue you.

For a melee weapon, your effective ST for damage purposes cannot exceed *triple* the weapon's minimum ST. For instance, a large knife has minimum ST 6, so its "maximum

ST" is 18; if your ST were 19+, you would compute your damage as if you had ST 18.

Natural weapons (e.g., a punch or kick) have neither minimum nor maximum ST.

"†" means the weapon requires two hands. If you have at least 1.5 times the listed ST (round *up*), you can use a weapon like this in one hand, but it becomes *unready* after you attack with it. If you have at least *twice* the listed ST, you can wield it one-handed with no readiness penalty. But if it requires one hand to hold it and another to operate a moving part, like a bow or a pump shotgun, it *always* requires two hands, regardless of ST.

"‡" means the weapon requires two hands *and* becomes *unready* after you attack with it, unless you have at least 1.5 times the listed ST (round *up*). To use it in one hand without it becoming *unready*, you need at least *three times* the listed ST.

"B" indicates a firearm with an attached bipod. When firing from a prone position using the bipod, treat the weapon as if it were braced *and* reduce its ST requirement to 2/3 of the listed value (round *up*); e.g., ST 13 becomes ST 9.

Crossbows and ST: Crossbows and prodds have their *own* ST value. Use this instead of your ST to determine range and damage. You must specify the ST of such a weapon when you buy it. You can always use a bow that is *weaker* than you. If you use a stronger bow, it does more damage but take longer to cock (see *Shots*, above).

Notes

The numbers listed here refer to applicable footnotes (if any) at the end of the table.

MELEE WEAPONS

Melee weapons are grouped under the skills required to use them. Skill names appear in capital letters, with defaults in parentheses; e.g., "AXE/MACE (DX-5)." If there is more than one way to use a weapon, each method gets its own line. If multiple skills let you use a weapon, the weapon appears under each skill. For example, both Staff skill and Two-Handed Sword skill let you wield a quarterstaff – and either lets you swing the staff or thrust with it.

Melee Weapon Table

AXE/MACE (DX-5)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
0	Axe	sw+2 cut	\$50	4	11	
2	Mace	sw+3 cr	\$50	5	12	

BOXING, BRAWLING, KARATE, or DX

TL	Weapon	Damage	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
–	Punch	thr-1 cr	–	–	–	
1	Brass Knuckles	thr cr	\$10	0.25	–	

BROADSWORD (DX-5)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
2	Broadsword	sw+1 cut	\$500	3	10	
	or	thr+1 cr	–	–	10	
2	Thrusting Broadsword	sw+1 cut	\$600	3	10	
	or	thr+2 imp	–	–	10	

KNIFE (DX-4)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
0	Large Knife	sw-2 cut	\$40	1	6	
	or	thr imp	–	–	6	[1]

POLEARM (DX-5)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
3	Poleaxe	sw+4 cut	\$120	10	12‡	
	or	sw+4 cr	–	–	12‡	

RAPIER (DX-5)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
4	Rapier	thr+1 imp	\$500	2.75	9	

SHORTSWORD (DX-5)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
2	Shortsword	sw cut	\$400	2	8	
	or	thr imp	–	–	8	



SPEAR (DX-5)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
0	Spear	thr+2 imp	\$40	4	9	[1]
	two hands	thr+3 imp	—	—	9†	

STAFF (DX-5)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
0	Quarterstaff	sw+2 cr	\$10	4	7†	
	or	thr+2 cr	—	—	7†	

TWO-HANDED SWORD (DX-5)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
0	Quarterstaff	sw+2 cr	\$10	4	9†	
	or	thr+1 cr	—	—	9†	
3	Thrusting Greatsword	sw+3 cut	\$900	7	12†	
	or	thr+3 imp	—	—	12†	



Notes

[1] Can be thrown. See *Muscle-Powered Ranged Weapons*, below.

MUSCLE-POWERED RANGED WEAPONS

Muscle-powered ranged weapons are hurled weapons (axes, spears, etc.) and low-tech missile weapons such as bows and slings. Weapons appear under the skill required to use them, along with skill defaults. Some thrown weapons also appear on the *Melee Weapon Table*; use the statistics below when they are thrown.

Muscle-Powered Ranged Weapon Table

BOW (DX-5)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	Cost	ST	Notes
0	Longbow	thr+2 imp	3	×15/×20	3/0.1	1	1(2)	\$200	11†	[1]
0	Short Bow	thr imp	1	×10/×15	2/0.1	1	1(2)	\$50	7†	[1]

CROSSBOW (DX-4)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	Cost	ST	Notes
2	Crossbow	thr+4 imp	4	×20/×25	6/0.06	1	1(4)	\$150	7†	[1]
3	“Goat’s Foot”	—	—	—	2	—	(20)	\$50	7†	[2]

THROWN WEAPON (AXE/MACE) (DX-4)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	Cost	ST	Notes
0	Throwing Axe	sw+2 cut	2	×1/×1.5	4	1	T(1)	\$60	11	

THROWN WEAPON (KNIFE) (DX-4)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	Cost	ST	Notes
0	Large Knife	thr imp	0	×0.8/×1.5	1	1	T(1)	\$40	6	

THROWN WEAPON (SPEAR) (DX-4)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	Cost	ST	Notes
0	Spear	thr+3 imp	2	×1/×1.5	4	1	T(1)	\$40	9	

Notes

[1] An arrow or bolt for a bow or crossbow is \$2.

[2] Cocking lever to reload a high-ST crossbow. You can reload a weapon up to 4 ST over your own with 20 one-second Ready maneuvers.

FIREARMS

A “firearm” is any gun, rocket, or beam weapon that does not rely on muscle power. Guns are commonly available by TL4 and ubiquitous at TL5+. Beam weapons appear in late TL8 (mostly for vehicles), and *may* become common by TL9, ubiquitous at TL10+.

Pistol Table

GUNS (PISTOL) (DX-4)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	ST	Cost	Notes
5	Derringer, .41	1d pi+	1	80/650	0.5/0.1	1	2(3i)	9	\$100	
6	Auto Pistol, 9mm	2d+2 pi	2	150/1,850	2.4/0.4	3	8+1(3)	9	\$350	
7	Revolver, .357	3d-1 pi	2	185/2,000	3/0.21	3	6(3i)	10	\$500	
8	Auto Pistol, .44M	3d pi+	2	230/2,500	4.5/0.6	3	9+1(3)	12	\$750	

Rifle and Shotgun Table

GUNS (RIFLE) (DX-4)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	ST	Cost
5	Lever-Action Carbine, .30	5d pi	4	450/3,000	7/0.3	1	6+1(3i)	10†	\$300
6	Self-Loading Rifle, 7.62mm	7d pi	5	1,000/4,200	10/0.5	3	8(3)	10†	\$600
8	Sniper Rifle, .338	9d+1 pi	6+3	1,500/5,500	17.5/0.8	1	4+1(3)	11B†	\$5,600

GUNS (SHOTGUN) (DX-4)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	ST	Cost
6	Pump Shotgun, 12G	1d+1 pi-	3	50/125	8/0.7	2×9	5(3i)	10†	\$240

PLAYING THE GAME

We've seen the rules for creating and equipping characters. Now here's how to do things. The GM describes a situation and asks each of the players what his character is doing. The players answer, and the GM tells them what happens next. At some point, the GM won't be certain that the characters can automatically do what the players say they are doing . . . "You're carrying *what* and jumping the chasm?" . . . and the dice come out.

Encumbrance and Move

"Encumbrance" is a measure of the total weight you are carrying, *relative to your ST*. The effects of encumbrance are divided into five "encumbrance levels." All but the lowest level will reduce your actual Move to a fraction of your Basic Move and give a penalty to Dodge, as follows:

No Encumbrance (0): Weight up to Basic Lift (see p. 5). Move = Basic Move. Full Dodge.

Light Encumbrance (1): Weight up to 2×BL. Move = Basic Move×0.8. Dodge -1.

Medium Encumbrance (2): Weight up to 3×BL. Move = Basic Move×0.6. Dodge -2.

Heavy Encumbrance (3): Weight up to 6×BL. Move = Basic Move×0.4. Dodge -3.

Extra-Heavy Encumbrance (4): Weight up to 10×BL. Move = Basic Move×0.2. Dodge -4.

Drop all fractions. Encumbrance can never reduce Move or Dodge below 1.

Note that these levels are numbered from 0 to 4. When a rule tells you to add or subtract your encumbrance level from a die roll, this is the number to use. For instance, encumbrance gives a penalty to Climbing, Stealth, and Swimming skills.

PHYSICAL FEATS

Below are rules for common physical tasks of importance to adventurers. For tasks not listed here, make DX rolls for matters of precision and HT rolls for feats of endurance. To determine weight moved or work done, use Basic Lift. Movement speed should generally be proportional to Basic Move.

CLIMBING

To climb anything more difficult than a ladder, roll against Climbing skill (p. 14). This defaults to DX-5. Modifiers to the roll depend on the difficulty of the climb (see below). In all cases, subtract your encumbrance level from your roll as well. Combat speed on the table below costs 1 FP per Climbing roll.

Make one roll to start the climb and another roll every five minutes. Any failure means you fall (see *Falling*, p. 32). If you secured yourself with a rope, you will fall only to the end of the rope unless you rolled a critical failure.

Type of Climb	Modifier	Combat	Regular
Ladder going up	no roll	3 rungs/sec.	1 rung/sec.
Ladder going down	no roll	2 rungs/sec.	1 rung/sec.
Ordinary tree	+5	1 ft./sec.	1 ft./3 secs.
Ordinary mountain	0	1 ft./2 secs.	10 ft./min.
Vertical stone wall	-3	1 ft./5 secs.	4 ft./min.
Modern building	-3	1 ft./10 secs.	2 ft./min.
Rope-up	-2	1 ft./sec.	20 ft./min.
Rope-down			
(w/o equipment)	-1	2 ft./sec.	30 ft./min.
(w/ equipment)	-1	12 ft./sec.	12 ft./sec.



HIKING

Sustainable cross-country speed on foot depends on ground Move. Start with Basic Move and reduce it for encumbrance (see *Encumbrance and Move*, p. 22), injury (see *General Injury*, p. 29), and exhaustion (see *Lost Fatigue Points*, p. 31), as applicable. The distance in miles you can march in one day, under ideal conditions, equals 10×Move.

A successful roll against Hiking skill (p. 14) increases marching distance by 20%.

Roll daily. A group led by someone with Leadership skill at 12+ may make a single roll against the group's *average* Hiking skill. (Hiking defaults to HT-5 for those who have not studied it.) Success lets the entire group march 20% farther; failure means the whole group must forgo the bonus.

Once you know your ideal daily mileage, modify it for circumstances as follows:

Very Bad: Deep snow, dense forest, jungle, mountains, soft sand, or swamp. ×0.2.

Bad: Broken ground (including streams), forest, or steep hills. $\times 0.5$.

Average: Light forest or rolling hills $\times 1$.

Good: Hard-packed desert or level plains. $\times 1.25$.

Adverse weather conditions – rain, snow, or ice – often reduce these values further.

JUMPING

When you want to jump over something much smaller than you, the GM should say, “Okay, you jumped over it,” and get on with play. Such jumps succeed automatically. But when the obstacle seems really significant, or if the GM put it there as a deliberate hazard, use the following rules.

Jumping Distance

Your Basic Move determines jumping distance, as follows:

High Jump: (6 \times Basic Move) - 10 inches. For example, a Basic Move of 6 lets you jump 26” straight up. For a *running* jump, add the number of yards you run to Basic Move in this formula. Maximum running high-jump height is twice standing high-jump height.

Broad Jump: (2 \times Basic Move) - 3 feet. For example, a Basic Move of 6 lets you jump 9 feet from a standing start. For a *running* jump, add the number of yards you run to Basic Move in this formula. Maximum running broad-jump distance is twice standing broad-jump distance.

LIFTING AND MOVING THINGS

Basic Lift governs the weight you can pick up and move. The GM may let multiple characters add their BL (*not* their ST) whenever it seems reasonable; e.g., to carry a stretcher or pull a wagon.

One-Handed Lift: 2 \times BL (takes two seconds).

Two-Handed Lift: 8 \times BL (takes four seconds).

Shove and Knock Over: 12 \times BL. *Double* this if you have a running start. The GM can also make allowances for precariously balanced objects, to make them easier to tilt.

Carry on Back: 15 \times BL. Thus, you can carry more than you can lift by yourself . . . but every *second* that your encumbrance is over 10 \times BL (that is, Extra-Heavy encumbrance), you lose 1 FP.

Shift Slightly: Depending on your footing and the way you are braced, you could shift or rock 50 \times BL.

Settling Rules Questions

In any question of rules, the GM’s word is *law*. The GM decides which optional rules to use, and settles any specific questions that come up. A good GM discusses important questions with the players before deciding – and a good player accepts the GM’s decisions.

The GM should know the rules thoroughly. When the rules do not cover a situation – or when a decision about the “real world” is needed – the GM can use several techniques:

Success rolls. A “success roll” is a roll that tests one of a character’s attributes, skills, etc. – see p. 2. Use a success roll when a question arises about someone’s ability to do some particular thing.

Random rolls. A random roll is often best for a question like “Are the keys in the car?” or “Does one of the soldiers have a horse the same color as mine?” The GM decides what the chances are, then rolls the dice.

Arbitrary fiat. You don’t have to use the dice at all. If there is only one “right” answer to fit the plot of the adventure – then that’s the answer. “Luckily for you, the grenade bounced down the stairwell. Nobody was hurt. But now the guards are alerted!”

RUNNING

Your running speed, or ground Move, is equal to your Basic Move score modified for encumbrance – see *Encumbrance and Move* (p. 22). Sprinting is all-out running. It is very fast, but also fatiguing (see *Fatigue Cost*, below). You can sprint if you run *forward* for two or more seconds. Add 20% to your Move *after one second*. For instance, with a Move of 7, you could sprint at 8.4 yards/second after running for one second at 7 yards/second.

If you need to run a long distance, you will want to pace yourself to avoid exhaustion. Paced running averages exactly *half* the sprinting speed calculated above.

After every 15 seconds of sprinting or every minute of paced running, roll against HT. On a failure, you lose 1 FP. Once you are reduced to 1/3 or less your FP, halve your Move for any kind of running; see *Fatigue* (p. 31).

SWIMMING

Make a roll against Swimming skill (p. 17) any time you enter water over your head, and again every 5 minutes. Subtract twice your encumbrance level; add 3 if you entered the water intentionally. If you fail, lose 1 FP and roll again in 5 seconds, and so on until you reach ST 0 and drown, get rescued, or succeed at a roll. If you recover, roll again in 1 minute. If you succeed, go back to rolling every 5 minutes.

Land-dwellers such as humans have water Move equal to Basic Move/5 (round down), minimum 1 yard/second. After every minute of top-speed swimming, roll

against the *higher* of HT or Swimming skill. On a failure, you lose 1 FP. Once you are reduced to 1/3 or less your FP, halve your water Move; see *Fatigue* (p. 30).

THROWING

You can throw anything you can pick up – that is, anything with a weight of 8 \times BL or less. If the object you wish to throw is not already in your hands, you must take one or more Ready maneuvers to pick it up. See *Lifting and Moving Things*, above, for details.

Throwing an object during combat – whether as an attack or not – requires an Attack maneuver. You can throw objects that weigh up to 2 \times BL using one hand; heavier objects require a two-handed throw. Roll against DX-3 to hit a specific target, or against DX to lob something into a general area. Apply the usual modifiers for target size, speed, and distance.

Throwing Distance Table

To avoid slowing down the game with math, the GM should allow any throw he deems reasonable . . . but when you *need* to know the exact distance you can throw an object, use the following procedure:

Weight	Distance	Weight	Distance
Ratio	Modifier	Ratio	Modifier
0.05	3.5	2.0	0.30
0.10	2.5	2.5	0.25
0.15	2.0	3.0	0.20
0.20	1.5	4.0	0.15
0.40	1.0	6.0	0.10
0.50	0.8	10	0.06
1.0	0.60	12	0.05
1.5	0.40		

1. Divide the object's weight in pounds by your Basic Lift to get the "weight ratio."
2. Find the weight ratio in the *Weight Ratio* column of the table above. If it falls between two values, use the *higher* value.
3. Read across to the *Distance Modifier* column and find the "distance modifier."
4. Multiply your ST by the distance modifier to find the distance in yards you can throw the object.

Throwing Damage Table

Thrown objects inflict *thrust* damage for your ST (see *Damage Table*, p. 6), modified for weight as shown on the table below. Damage is usually crushing. A fragile object (or a thrown character) takes the same amount of damage it inflicts; roll damage separately for the object and the target.

Weight	Damage
Up to BL/8	Thrust, -2 per die
Up to BL/4	Thrust, -1 per die
Up to BL/2	Thrust
Up to BL	Thrust, +1 per die
Up to 2×BL	Thrust
Up to 4×BL	Thrust, -1/2 per die (round down)
Up to 8×BL	Thrust, -1 per die

MENTAL FEATS

SENSE ROLLS

"Sense rolls" include Vision rolls, Hearing rolls, and Taste/Smell rolls. To notice something using a given sense, roll against your Perception score.

Comprehension Rolls: A successful Sense roll means you noticed something. That is often sufficient, but in some cases, the GM may require a second roll to *understand* what you have sensed; e.g., to realize that the "owl hoot" you heard is really an Indian warrior, or that the faint scent you noticed belongs to the flower of a man-eating plant. This roll is against IQ for details that anyone could figure out, or against an appropriate skill if the significance would be lost on anyone but an expert.

Danger Sense: If you have the Danger Sense advantage (p. 9) and fail a Sense roll or comprehension roll to notice something *dangerous*, the GM will secretly make a Perception roll for you. On a success, you sense the danger anyhow!

Vision

Make a Vision roll whenever it is important that you *see* something.

When you try to spot something that is deliberately hidden, the GM may treat this roll as a Quick Contest against a concealment skill (Camouflage, Holdout, etc.), and may allow – or *require* – a skill such as Observation or Search to replace Perception for the roll.

Hearing

Make a Hearing roll whenever it is important that you hear a sound. The GM

will often require a separate IQ roll to make out speech, especially in a foreign language.

When you try to hear someone who is attempting to move silently, the GM may treat this roll as a Quick Contest against his Stealth skill. If you are *actively* listening for such activity, the GM may allow you to substitute Observation skill for Perception.

Taste/Smell

Taste and smell are two manifestations of the same sense. Make a Taste roll to notice a flavor, or a Smell roll to notice a scent.

INFLUENCE ROLLS

An "Influence roll" is a *deliberate* attempt to ensure a positive reaction from an NPC. A PC with an appropriate "Influence skill" can always elect to substitute an Influence roll for a regular reaction roll in suitable circumstances (GM's decision). See *Reaction Rolls* (p. 3) for more on NPC reactions.

Decide which Influence skill you are using: Diplomacy, Fast-Talk, Intimidation, Savoir-Faire, Sex Appeal, or Streetwise. Choose wisely! The GM may allow other skills to work as Influence skills in certain situations (e.g., Law skill, when dealing with a judge). Then roll a Quick Contest: your Influence skill vs. the subject's Will.

If you *win*, you get a "Good" reaction from the NPC – "Very Good" if you used Sex Appeal. On any other outcome, the NPC resents your clumsy attempt at manipulation. This gives you a "Bad" reaction – "Very Bad" if you attempted intimidation. *Exception:* If you used Diplomacy, the GM will also make a regular reaction roll and

use the *better* of the two reactions. Thus, Diplomacy is relatively safe . . .

WILL ROLLS

When you are faced with a stressful situation or a distraction, the GM may require you to roll against your Will to stay focused. On a success, you may act normally. On a failure, you submit to the fear, give in to the pressure, are distracted from your task, etc.

Fright Checks

A Fright Check is a Will roll made to resist *fear*. Fright Checks can occur as often or as rarely as the GM wishes. In a horror campaign where ordinary people meet shockingly gruesome Things, Fright Checks might be very common! With only minor adaptation, the GM can use these rules for awe, confusion, etc. as well as fear.

As a general rule, "ordinary" frightening things do not require Fright Checks. Fright Checks are for events so unusual and terrifying that they might stun or even permanently scar someone.

A Fright Check is subject to any number of modifiers, including ones derived from appropriate advantages or disadvantages, and the circumstances surrounding the roll.

A failed Fright Check results in the character being stunned (see p. 30) for a number of seconds equal to the margin of your failure, plus 2d. On a critical failure, the victim faints, and cannot be revived for the margin of failure plus 1d *minutes*. Hope the thing that scared you isn't hungry . . .

COMBAT

COMBAT TURN SEQUENCE

Combat takes place second by second. Each character actively involved in the combat gets one opportunity to act per second, referred to as his "turn." After everyone has taken his turn, one second has passed.

The GM shouldn't feel constrained by the one-second time scale. This is just a way of breaking a battle into manageable chunks! He should feel free to drop out of combat time whenever dramatically appropriate, and to resume combat time when non-combat action gives way to more fighting.

The “turn sequence” is the order in which active characters take their turns. It is set at the start of the fight and does not change during combat. The combatant with the highest Basic Speed goes first and takes his turn, then the one with the next-highest Basic Speed, and so on, in descending order by Basic Speed. Once every active character has taken his turn, one second has passed and another second begins.

Tied Speeds: If multiple NPCs on the same side have the same Basic Speed, the GM simply decides who goes first – it isn’t really important. If PCs are involved, ties go to the highest DX. If there’s still a tie, GM should roll randomly at the start of the combat to determine who acts first, and use that order throughout the combat.

A given participant’s turn is the one-second period that stretches from when he chooses a maneuver until his next opportunity to select a maneuver. This overlaps the turns of other characters.

MANEUVERS

A “maneuver” is an action that you can take on your turn. Each turn, you must choose *one* of the following maneuvers: Aim, All-Out Attack, All-Out Defense, Attack, Change Posture, Concentrate, Do Nothing, Move, Move and Attack, or Ready. Your choice determines *what you can do* on your turn, and sets your options for active defense and movement – your ability to dodge, parry, or block attacks (see *Defending*, p. 28).

For the purpose of active defenses, your maneuver is considered to be in effect until you select another maneuver on your next turn. For instance, if you chose All-Out Defense (which gives a defensive advantage), its benefits would apply if you were attacked after you took your turn, and would persist until it was your turn again and you took a different maneuver.

If you’re attacked before you’ve had a chance to choose a maneuver – usually at the start of combat – you’re considered to be taking a Do Nothing maneuver (see below).

Do Nothing

Anyone who is just standing still is assumed to be *doing nothing*. In particular, when combat begins, anyone who has not yet taken a turn is treated as if he took this maneuver before entering combat.

Someone who is conscious but stunned or surprised *must* take this maneuver. On each turn of Do Nothing, he may attempt a HT roll to recover from physical stun or an IQ roll to recover from mental stun. On a success, he recovers at the *end* of his turn –

Free Actions

“Free actions” are things you can do during *any* maneuver. Some examples:

Talk. You can *always* talk. If the GM wants to be realistic, he should allow only one sentence of communication per second . . . but it is usually more fun when you ignore this limitation!

Drop an item. You can drop any “ready” item at any time during any maneuver. If you’re moving, you may drop it at any point within your reach during your movement.

Crouch. If standing, you may opt to crouch (to make yourself a smaller target for ranged attacks) at the *beginning* of your turn. This will usually slow your movement speed (see *Posture Table*, below), and you *cannot* crouch and sprint. If you were already crouching, it is a free action to rise from a crouching position at the start of your turn.

that is, he Does Nothing this turn, but may act normally next turn.

Move

Move, but take no other action except those specified under *Free Actions* (see above). You may move any number of yards up to your full Move score. Most other maneuvers allow at least some movement on your turn; take this maneuver if *all* you want to do is move.

Players must tell the GM exactly where their PCs move to so that he can keep track of the combat. The GM decides where his NPCs move, and will inform any players whose PCs are in a position to witness the movement.

Posture Table

<i>Posture</i>	<i>Attack</i>	<i>Defense</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Movement</i>
Standing	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal; may sprint
Crouching	-2	Normal	-2	2/3
Kneeling	-2	-2	-2	1/3
Crawling	-4	-3	-2	1/3
Sitting	-2	-2	-2	None
Lying Down	-4	-3	-2	1 yard/second

Change Posture

This maneuver lets you switch between any two “postures” (stances in which you can pose your body). Valid postures are *standing*, *sitting*, *kneeling*, *crawling*, *lying prone* (face down), and *lying face up*. Any posture other than standing slows your movement and penalizes your attack and defense rolls, but also makes you a smaller target for ranged attacks.

You cannot stand up directly from a lying position. If you are lying (prone or face up), you must take a Change Posture maneuver to rise to a crawling, kneeling, or sitting posture first. A second Change Posture maneuver lets you stand from any of these postures. (Going from standing up to lying down, however, only takes one

maneuver – or none at all, if the change was involuntary!)

You can switch between kneeling and standing (only) as the “step” portion of any maneuver that allows a step – you don’t need Change Posture for that. This is *instead* of using the step to move. Thus, you could go from prone to kneeling with a Change Posture maneuver on one turn, and then stand up in place on your next turn by taking a maneuver that allows a step.

Crouching does *not* require a Change Posture maneuver; see *Free Actions* (above).

Attack: The modifier when making a *melee* attack from this posture.

Defense: The modifier to all active defense rolls.

Target: The modifier to hit you with a *ranged* attack.

Movement: The effect on movement.

Aim

This maneuver is used to aim a ranged weapon (or a device such as a camera or telescope). You must choose a specific target. You can’t aim at something that you can’t see or otherwise detect.

Specify the weapon you’re aiming with and your target. If you follow an Aim maneuver with an Attack or All-Out Attack with the *same* weapon against the *same* target, you get a bonus to hit. Add the weapon’s Accuracy (Acc) to your skill.

If you *brace* a firearm or crossbow, you get an extra +1 to Acc. A firearm or crossbow is braced if you can rest it on a sandbag, low wall, car, etc. A one-handed firearm (e.g., a pistol) is considered braced if used two-handed. A two-handed firearm (e.g., a rifle) is considered braced if you are prone and using a bipod.

If you Aim for more than one second, you receive an additional bonus: +1 for two seconds of Aim, or +2 for three or more seconds.

Attack

Use this maneuver to make an armed or unarmed attack in melee combat, or to use a thrown or missile weapon in ranged combat. To use a weapon to attack, it must be ready.

If you are using a melee weapon or unarmed attack, your target must be within reach. Resolve the attack as explained under *Melee Attacks* (p. 27).

If you are using a ranged weapon, your target must be within the weapon's Max range. Resolve the attack according to *Ranged Attacks* (p. 27). If you took an Aim maneuver (p. 25) last turn, you will have a bonus to hit.

● *Determined*: Make a single attack at +4 to hit!

● *Double*: Make two attacks against the same foe, if you have two ready weapons or one weapon that does not have to be readied after use. Attacks with a second weapon held in the off hand are at the usual -4 (see *Handedness*, p. 5) unless you have *Ambidexterity* (p. 8).

● *Strong*: Make a single attack, at normal skill. If you hit, you get +2 to damage – or +1 damage per die, if that would be better. This only applies to melee attacks doing ST-based thrust or swing damage.

If you are making a ranged attack, you must make a single attack at +1 to hit.

Move and Attack

Move as described for the Move maneuver (p. 25), but during or after your move, make a single, poorly aimed attack – either unarmed or with a ready weapon.

You attack as described for the Attack maneuver (above), but at -4. If making a ranged attack, you lose all bonuses for Aim. If making a melee attack, your adjusted skill cannot exceed 9.

● *Increased Defense*: Add +2 to one active defense of your choice: Dodge, Parry, or Block. This bonus persists until your next turn.

● *Double Defense*: Apply two different active defenses against the same attack. If you fail your defense roll against an attack, you may try a second, different defense against that attack. For instance, if you fail a block, you may try a dodge or a parry. If you try a parry (armed or unarmed) with one hand and fail, a parry using the other hand *does* count as a “different defense.”

Concentrate

You *concentrate* on one primarily mental task. Examples include making a Sense roll to spot an invisible warrior, making a Leadership roll to give orders, making an Electronics Operation roll to operate a sensor, and most other IQ-based skill rolls. Some activities require you to Concentrate for multiple seconds. If you are forced to use an active defense, knocked down, injured, or otherwise distracted before you finish, you must make a Will-3 roll. On a failure, you lose your concentration and must start over.

Ready

Take a Ready maneuver to pick up or draw *any* item and prepare it for use; e.g., to pull a sword from its sheath or a gun from its holster, or to reload a firearm. In some cases, you may also need a Ready maneuver to regain control of an unwieldy weapon after a swing, or to adjust the reach of a long weapon.

You can use a Ready maneuver to perform physical actions other than fighting: opening or closing a door, picking a lock, digging, lifting, etc.

ATTACKING

An “attack” is an attempt to hit a foe or other target. If you execute an Attack, All-Out Attack, or Move and Attack maneuver, you may try to hit a foe. You can only attack with a weapon if it's ready.

The GM always has the option of ruling, for any reason having to do with the situation, that some fighters cannot attack certain opponents. For instance, eight attackers could not hit one human-sized foe at the same time. (Even three or four attackers at once would be unlikely, unless their victim had no allies!)

There are two basic types of attacks: melee attacks (see p. 27) and ranged attacks (see p. 27). Your target must be within reach if you're making a melee attack, or within range if you're making a ranged

Unarmed Combat

Sometimes you have to fight without weapons, or with improvised weapons. This is *unarmed combat*. Anyone can engage in unarmed combat, but certain skills make you a more effective unarmed fighter.

See the table below for the reach, damage, etc., of punches, kicks, bites, and other unarmed strikes.

BRAWLING, KARATE, or DX

TL	Weapon	Damage	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
–	Punch	thr-1 cr	–	–	–	[1]
1	Brass Knuckles	thr cr	\$10	0.25	–	[1]

BRAWLING-2, KARATE-2, or DX-2

TL	Weapon	Damage	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
–	Kick	thr cr	–	–	–	[1, 2]
–	Kick w. Boots	thr+1 cr	–	–	–	[1, 2]

BRAWLING or DX

TL	Weapon	Damage	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
1	Blackjack or Sap	thr cr	\$20	1	7	

[1] Karate (p. 15) improves damage with punches and kicks.

[2] If you miss with a kick, roll vs. DX to avoid falling.

All-Out Attack

Attack any foe with a ready weapon, making no effort to defend against enemy attacks. If you are making a melee attack, you must specify *one* of these three options before you attack:

All-Out Defense

This is the maneuver to choose when you're beset by foes – especially foes who like All-Out Attacks! You must specify *one* of the following two options:

attack. Resolving either type of attack takes three die rolls:

- First is your *attack roll*. If your roll is successful, your attack was a good one.

- Now your foe must make a *defense roll* to see if he can defend against your blow. If he makes this roll, he evaded or stopped the attack, and is not hit.

- If he misses his defense roll, your blow struck home and you *roll for damage*.

Attack Roll

Your “attack roll” is a regular success roll. Figure your *effective skill* (base skill plus or minus any appropriate modifiers) with the weapon you are using.

If your roll is *less than or equal to* your “effective” skill, your attack will hit unless your foe successfully defends (see *Defending*, p. 28). If he fails to defend – or if he can’t – you’ve hit him.

If your roll is *greater than* your effective skill, you missed!

No matter what your skill, a roll of 3 or 4 always hits, and is a *critical hit*. A roll of 5 or 6 may be a critical hit, depending on your skill. If your effective skill is 15, then a roll of 5 or less is a critical hit. If your effective skill is 16 or more, then a roll of 6 or less is a critical hit.

On a critical hit, the blow automatically hits home – your foe does not get a defense roll. As well, on an attack roll of 3, you do not roll for damage – your blow automatically does the most damage it could do. For instance, maximum damage for a 1d+2 blow would be 6+2, or 8 points. Other critical hits bypass the defense roll, but roll normally for damage.

Regardless of skill, a roll of 17 or 18 always misses.

Melee Attacks

When you take a maneuver that lets you make a melee attack, you must specify who you are attacking, and with what weapon. You can make a melee attack using any *ready* melee weapon (including a natural weapon such as a kick, bite, or punch).

You can use some weapons in more than one way; e.g., you can swing or thrust with a shortsword. Such weapons have multiple lines on the weapon tables (pp. 20-22). When you attack with a weapon like this, you must indicate how you are using it before you roll.

A one-handed weapon is ready if it’s being held in your hand. A two-handed weapon is ready if you are gripping it with *both* hands. Some unwieldy weapons (e.g., the poleaxe) become unready after each attack unless you are extremely strong (see p. 20).

To draw a new weapon from a sheath, scabbard, or sling, or to ready an unwieldy weapon that became unready after an attack, you must take a Ready maneuver (p. 26).

A natural weapon (punch, kick, etc.) is *always* ready unless the body part in question is occupied or restrained; e.g., you can’t punch if you are holding a weapon with the same hand.

Ranged Attacks

A “ranged attack” is any attack with a weapon used at a distance, from a thrown rock to a laser rifle.

You can only make a ranged attack on a target that falls within your weapon’s *range*. To find this, see the relevant weapon table. Most ranged attacks list Half Damage (1/2D) range and Maximum (Max) range, in yards. Your target must be no farther away than Max range; 1/2D range only affects damage.

All ranged weapons have an Accuracy (Acc) statistic. This is the bonus you get if you take one or more Aim maneuvers immediately before you attack. When you Aim, you can receive other bonuses for extra seconds of aim, bracing your weapon, or using a scope.

“Thrown weapons” are weapons you must physically hurl at the target: rocks, hand grenades, ninja stars (*shuriken*), etc. You can also throw certain melee weapons, such as hatchets, knives, and spears. Treat a thrown weapon just like any other ranged attack.

General Attack Modifiers

Attacker’s Maneuver

Move and Attack: -4

Attacker’s Situation

Bad footing: -2 or more (GM’s option)

Major distraction (e.g., all clothes on fire): -3 or more (GM’s option)

Minor distraction (e.g., part of clothes on fire): -2

ST below that required for weapon: -1 per point of deficit

Visibility

Blind, target completely invisible, or in total darkness: -10

Cannot see foe: -6, or -4 if you know his location to within 1 yard

Partial darkness, fog, smoke, etc.: -1 to -9 (GM’s option)

Melee Attack Modifiers

Attacker’s Maneuver

All-Out Attack (Determined): +4

Attacker’s Situation

Holding a large shield: -2

Other Actions by Attacker

Off-hand attack: -4 (no penalty w. Ambidexterity)

Ranged Attack Modifiers

Attacker’s Maneuver

All-Out Attack (Determined): +1

Other Actions by Attacker

Aim for one turn: +Accuracy of weapon

Braced weapon: +1 if stationary *and* took a turn to Aim

Extra Aim: +1 for 2 seconds, +2 for 3+ seconds

Off-hand attack: -4 (no penalty w. Ambidexterity)

Targeting Systems

Scope: +1 per second of Aim, to a maximum of the scope’s bonus

Size and Speed/Range Table

The main use for this table is ranged combat, but the GM can also use it for Sense rolls and other success rolls that size, speed, or range might believably affect.

This table uses the same progression for size as it does for the sum of speed and range, but the modifiers for size have the *opposite sign* from those for speed/range: large size gives a bonus, while large speed and range give a penalty. Thus, if a target is twice as big but also twice as far away and twice as fast, the net modifier to hit stays the same.

Size of Target: The larger the target, the easier it is to hit. The modifier to hit an object due to its size is its “Size Modifier” (SM). Humans have SM 0. Objects larger than man-sized give a bonus to hit, while smaller objects give a penalty.

Find the SM of a creature or object using the table. Simply look up the being or object’s longest dimension (e.g., height, for a humanoid) in the “Linear Measurement” column, and then read across to the “Size” column to find SM. If size falls between two values, base SM on the next-highest size. If an object is much smaller in *two* of three dimensions (e.g., a steel cable 100 yards long but only 2” thick), use the *smallest* dimension instead of the largest.

Target’s Speed and Range: Speed and range only affect ranged combat. Add the target’s speed in yards/seconds to its range in yards. Find the total in the “Linear Measurement” column. Read across to the “Speed/Range” column to find the speed/range modifier. If the total falls between two values, use the higher; e.g., treat 8 yards as 10 yards. For fighters on foot, assume speed is 0 and use range by itself; for vehicles, speed in yards/second is half speed in mph.

Examples: A man 8 yards away is -4 to hit. A motorcycle rider 40 yards away, traveling at 30 yards/second (60 mph), has a speed/range of $40 + 30 = 70$ yards, which equals -9 to hit.

Size and Speed/Range Table

Speed/Range	Size	Linear Measurement
0	-5	1 ft
0	-2	1 yd
0	0	2 yd
-1	+1	3 yd
-2	+2	5 yd
-4	+4	10 yd
-5	+5	15 yd
-6	+6	20 yd
-7	+7	30 yd
-8	+8	50 yd
-9	+9	70 yd
-10	+10	100 yd

DEFENDING

If you make your attack roll, you have not (yet) actually struck your foe, unless you rolled a critical hit. Your attack is *good enough* to hit him – *if he fails to defend*.

There are three “active defenses” that a fighter can use to evade or ward off an attack: Dodge (see *Dodging*), Parry (see *Parrying*), and Block (see *Blocking*). You should calculate these active defense scores in advance and record them on your character sheet.

An active defense is a deliberate attempt to avoid a particular attack. It's only possible if the defender is aware of the possibility of an attack from his assailant *and* is free to react . . . by moving out of the way of the attack (a dodge), deflecting the attack with a weapon or empty hand (a parry), or interposing a shield (a block).

If a foe makes a successful attack roll against you, you may choose *one* active defense and attempt a “defense roll” against it. *Exception:* The All-Out Defense (Double Defense) maneuver lets you attempt a second defense against a particular attack if your first defense fails.

The active defense you choose depends on your situation – *especially* the maneuver you chose last turn. Some maneuvers restrict the active defenses you can make. You also get no active defense if you're unaware of the attack. And you get no active defense if you are unconscious, immobilized, or otherwise unable to react.

Defense Roll

The defender rolls 3d against his active defense score. If his roll is *less than or equal* to his effective defense, he dodged, parried,

or blocked the attack. Otherwise, his active defense was ineffective and the attack struck home. If this occurs, roll for damage.

An active defense roll of 3 or 4 is *always* successful – even if your effective defense score was only 1 or 2! A roll of 17 or 18 always fails.

Your foe does not get to attempt a defense roll if you rolled a critical hit against him.

If you are *stunned*, any active defense is at -4.

If you have a ready shield, add its Defense Bonus (DB) to any Dodge, Parry, or Block roll against an attack that came from in front of you or from your shield side.

Dodging

A “dodge” is an active attempt to move out of the perceived path of an attack. This is often the best defense when you're not skilled with your weapon and you have no shield, or when you're attacked multiple times.

Dodge is normally the *only* active defense you can take against firearms. This does not mean you can actually dodge bullets! A dodge against this kind of attack represents an attempt not to be where you think your opponent will shoot, by weaving or ducking at the right moment.

Your Dodge active defense is Basic Speed + 3, dropping all fractions, less a penalty equal to your encumbrance level (see *Encumbrance and Move*, p. 22). List Dodge on your character sheet for quick reference.

You may dodge *any* attack except one that you did not know about! You only get one Dodge roll against a given attack.

You only get one active defense against each attack, unless you use All-Out Defense (Double Defense), but there is no limit to the number of times you may dodge *different* attacks during your turn.

Blocking

A “block” is an attempt to interpose a shield, cloak, or similar large object between yourself and an attack. This requires a *ready* shield. (If you're strong enough to grab and lift someone, you can block with his body!)

Your Block active defense is $3 + \text{half}$ your Shield skill, dropping all fractions. For instance, Shield-11 would give a Block of $3 + (11/2) = 8.5$, which rounds down to 8.

In general, you can block any melee attack, thrown weapon, projected liquid, or muscle-powered missile weapon. You *cannot* block bullets or beam weapons . . . these come too fast to be stopped this way.

You may attempt to block only *one* attack per turn.

Parrying

A “parry” is an attempt to deflect a blow using a weapon or your bare hands. You cannot parry unless your weapon is *ready* – or, if you are unarmed, you have an empty hand.

You can use most melee weapons to parry. A few long, well-balanced weapons (e.g., the quarterstaff) get a +1 or +2 bonus to parry due to their ability to keep a foe at bay.

Your Parry active defense with a given weapon is $3 + \text{half}$ your skill with that weapon, dropping all fractions. For instance, Broadsword-13 would give a Parry of 9.

A parry won't stop anything except melee attacks or thrown weapons. *Exception:* If a foe attacks you with a missile weapon *and* he is within reach of your melee weapon, you may parry. You're parrying the weapon, not the projectile! For example, if an attacker fired a pistol at you from only one yard away, you could attempt to parry barehanded. Success would mean that you slapped his arm or gun aside, causing him to fire wide of your body.

You can parry thrown weapons, but at a penalty: -1 for most thrown weapons, or -2 for *small* ones such as knives, shuriken, and other weapons that weigh 1 lb. or less.

If you successfully parry an unarmed attack (bite, punch, etc.) with a weapon, you may injure your attacker. Immediately roll against your skill with the weapon you used to parry. This roll is at -4 if your attacker used Karate. If you succeed, your parry

Unarmed Defense

If you are fighting without weapons, or with at least one hand free, you may choose to parry barehanded. Beings that lack hands (like most animals) can't parry unarmed – they can only dodge.

You can use Brawling or Karate skill – or DX, if higher – to parry with one hand. Your Parry active defense is $3 + \text{half}$ your skill or DX, dropping all fractions.

There's no penalty to parry another unarmed attack. You are at -3 to parry weapons, unless the attack is a *thrust* or you are using Karate (in either case, use your full Parry).

struck the attacker's limb squarely. He gets no defense roll against this! Roll damage normally.

Defense Modifiers

Defender's Equipment

Parrying with dagger or knife: -1 to Parry
Parrying with quarterstaff: +2 to Parry
Unarmed parry vs. weapon: -3 to Parry (0 vs. thrust, or w. Karate)

Defender's Maneuver

All-Out Attack: no defense possible!
All-Out Defense (Increased Defense): +2 to one of Dodge, Block, or Parry
Move and Attack: dodge or block only; you cannot parry

Defender's Situation

Bad footing: -1 or more (GM's option)
Can't see attacker: -4, and a block or parry requires a Hearing-2 roll
Distraction (e.g., clothes on fire): -1 or more (GM's option)
Encumbered: penalty equal to encumbrance level to Dodge, or to Karate Parry
Stunned: -4

Nature of Attack

Attack from behind: no defense possible
Flail: -4 to Parry/-2 to Block
Thrown weapon: -1 to Parry, or -2 to Parry if *small* (1 lb. or less)

DAMAGE AND INJURY

If your attack roll succeeds and your target fails his defense roll (if any), you hit him! If your attack is one that can do damage, you must now make a "damage roll." This tells you how much *basic damage* you deal to your target.

Your weapon (and, for muscle-powered weapons, your ST) determines the number of dice you roll for damage. If your target has any Damage Resistance (DR) – from armor, protective magic spells, etc. – he subtracts this from your damage roll.

If your damage roll is less than or equal to your target's effective DR, your attack *failed to penetrate* – it bounced off or was absorbed. If your damage roll *exceeds* your target's DR, the excess is the *penetrating damage*. If your foe has no DR, the entire damage roll is penetrating damage.

Once you know the penetrating damage of your attack, apply the wounding modifier for damage type (this matters only for cutting, impaling, and certain types of piercing damage; see below). This gives the *injury* the foe suffers, which is subtracted from his Hit Points.

Damage Roll

You usually make your own damage rolls, and the GM rolls for NPCs. Damage rolls are expressed as a number of dice, sometimes with a modifier; e.g., "6d-1" or "1d+2." A negative modifier can't reduce damage below 0 if the attack does *crushing* damage, or below 1 if it does *any other type* of damage.

The result of the damage roll (*after* any modifiers, as explained above) is the hit's "basic damage."

If a ranged weapon has two range statistics, the first is its Half Damage (1/2D) range, in yards. If the target is at or beyond 1/2D range, *divide basic damage by 2*, rounding down.

Damage Resistance and Penetration

Damage Resistance (DR) rates the degree of protection that natural or worn armor, a

force field, tough skin, etc. affords against damage. Objects and vehicles have their own DR values that protect against any damage *they* suffer – and if you take cover behind or inside them, their DR also protects *you*.

Subtract DR from basic damage. The result is the "penetrating damage" that punched through or deformed the armor enough to cause a significant injury. For instance, if you are hit by an attack that inflicts 6 points of basic damage and you're wearing mail with DR 4, you take 2 points of penetrating damage.

In general, DR from multiple sources is additive; e.g., if you have a natural DR of 2 and put on a tactical vest with DR 12, your total DR is 14. Exceptions will always be noted.

Wounding Modifiers and Injury

Any damage left over after subtracting DR from basic damage is "penetrating damage." If there is any penetrating damage, multiply it by the attack's "wounding modifier." This is a multiplier that depends on damage type:

- Small piercing (pi-): $\times 0.5$.
- Cutting (cut) and large piercing (pi+): $\times 1.5$.
- Impaling (imp): $\times 2$.

The damage after this multiplier determines the injury: the HP lost by the target. Round fractions *down*, but the minimum injury is 1 HP for any attack that penetrates DR at all. Reduce the victim's current HP total by the injury sustained.

Effects of Injury

The severity and type of the wound indicate what happens next. See the following section for rules on injuries and recovery.

INJURY, ILLNESS, AND FATIGUE

The life of an adventurer is not all song and glory. You get tired. You get your clothes dirty. You might actually get *hurt* – or even worse, *killed*!

Fortunately, all these problems can be cured. Even death. Read on . . .

INJURIES

Wounds and ailments cause "injury": a (usually) temporary loss of Hit Points. Thus, your HP score measures your ability to sustain injury; see *Hit Points* (p. 6).

If any injury reduces you to 0 or fewer HP, you will soon fall unconscious. You can even go to *negative* HP . . . but if you go too far, you risk death. For the average man, the

difference between full HP and negative HP is one or two sword blows or bullets.

General Injury: Lost Hit Points

Repeated wounding eventually causes *anyone* or *anything* to weaken and collapse, even if no single injury is very great. The chart below summarizes the effects of being at low or negative HP. All effects are cumulative.

Less than 1/3 your HP left – You are reeling from your wounds. Halve your Move and Dodge (round *up*).

0 HP or less – You are in immediate danger of collapse. In addition to the above

effects, make a HT roll at the start of your next turn, at -1 per *full* multiple of HP below zero. Failure means you fall unconscious (or simply stop working, if you weren't truly alive or conscious in the first place); see *Recovering from Unconsciousness* (p. 30). Success means you can act normally, but must roll again *every turn* to continue functioning. *Exception:* If you choose Do Nothing on your turn, and do not attempt any defense rolls, you can remain conscious without rolling. Roll only on turns during which you attempt a defense roll or choose a maneuver other than Do Nothing.

-1×HP – In addition to the above effects, make an *immediate* HT roll or die. (If you fail by only 1 or 2, you're dying, but not dead – see *Mortal Wounds*, below). If you succeed, you can still talk, fight, etc., as above (until you fail a HT roll and collapse). Roll again each time you suffer injury equal to a further multiple of your HP, whether as a result of one wound or many. For instance, if you have 11 HP, you must roll to avoid death at -11 HP. If you survive, you must roll again at -22 HP, -33 HP, and so on . . .

-5×HP – You die immediately. You have lost a total of 6 *times your HP*! Nobody can survive that much injury.

-10×HP – Total bodily destruction, if this makes sense given the source of the damage – 200 points of arrow wounds leave a messy but recognizable corpse; 200 points of fire injury leaves nothing but an unrecognizable lump of charcoal. The difference can be important in settings where resurrection, reanimation, etc. are possible!

Shock

Whenever you suffer injury, reduce your DX and IQ by the number of HP you lost – to a maximum penalty of -4, regardless of your injuries – *on your next turn only*. This effect, called “*shock*,” is temporary; your attributes return to normal on the turn after that.

Shock affects DX- and IQ-based skills, but *not* active defenses or other defensive reactions.

Major Wounds

A “major wound” is any *single* injury of greater than 1/2 your HP. Any major wound requires a HT roll to avoid knockdown and stunning (see below).

Knockdown and Stunning

Whenever you suffer a *major wound*, you must make an immediate HT roll to avoid knockdown and stunning. On a success, you suffer no penalty beyond ordinary shock.

On a failure, you're stunned; see below. You fall prone (if you weren't already), and if you were holding anything, you drop it. This effect is called “*knockdown*.” On a failure by 5 or more, or any critical failure, you fall unconscious! See *Recovering from Unconsciousness* (below). If you are stunned, you must Do Nothing on your next turn. You may perform any active defense while stunned, but your defense rolls are at -4.

At the end of your turn, you may roll against HT. On a success, you recover from stun and can act normally on subsequent

turns. On a failure, you remain stunned; your next maneuver must also be Do Nothing, but you get another roll at the end of that turn . . . and so on, until you recover from stun.

Mortal Wounds

If you fail a HT roll to avoid death by 1 or 2, you don't drop dead, but suffer a “mortal wound.” This is a wound so severe that your internal injuries might kill you even after you stop bleeding.

If you are mortally wounded, you are instantly incapacitated. You may or may not be conscious (GM's decision). If you suffer further injury and must make another HT roll to avoid death, *any* failure kills you.

While mortally wounded, you must make a HT roll every half-hour to avoid death. On any failure, you die. On a success, you linger for another half-hour – then roll again. On a critical success, you pull through miraculously: you are no longer mortally wounded (but you are still incapacitated). You can also recover from a mortal wound with a successful HT roll whenever medical treatment or magical healing restores any number of hit points – even if you're still in the negatives.

If you recover from a mortal wound, make a HT roll. On a failure, you lose a point of HT permanently. On a critical failure, the GM may apply an appropriate disadvantage (p. 10) or some other effect (e.g., reduced appearance due to scarring).

Death

If your character is killed, you may still wish to keep track of further injury. In certain futuristic or magical worlds, the dead can be brought back to life by prompt treatment, as long as the body is mostly intact (not reduced to -10×HP).

Decapitation, a cut throat, etc. can kill anyone, regardless of HT and HP. If a *helpless* or *unconscious* person is attacked in an obviously lethal way, he's dead. Don't bother to roll for damage, calculate remaining HP, etc. Just assume that he drops to -5×HP.

This does not apply to a merely *unaware* victim. If you sneak up behind a sentry with a knife, you can't automatically kill him. Game it out realistically. Since it's a surprise attack, he won't be hitting back: make an All-Out Attack! Your attack roll will almost certainly succeed. Your victim gets no active defense at all. You will probably inflict enough injury to incapacitate or kill him. But it isn't *automatic*.

When a PC or important NPC is killed in any but the most sudden and thorough fashion, the GM should allow a “dying action.” If this is a final blow at the enemy,

it should take no more than a turn. If it's a deathbed speech, the GM should stretch time a little bit for dramatic purposes! This has nothing to do with realism, but it's fun.

RECOVERY

The *Injuries* rules may seem harsh, but don't despair . . . you can get better!

Recovering from Unconsciousness

Failure by 5 or more on a knockdown roll, a failed HT roll to stay conscious at 0 HP or less, and many other things can leave you unconscious. It is up to the GM to decide whether you are *truly* unconscious or just totally incapacitated by pain and injury – but either way, you can't *do* anything. You recover as follows:

- If you have 1 or more HP remaining, you awaken automatically in 15 minutes.

- At 0 HP or worse, but above -1×HP, make a HT roll to awaken every hour. Once you succeed, you can act normally. But since you are below 1/3 your HP, you are at half Move and Dodge.

- At -1×HP or below, you are in bad shape. You get a *single* HT roll to awaken after 12 hours. If you succeed, you regain consciousness and can act as described above. But if you fail, you won't regain consciousness without medical treatment or magical healing – if you make a HT roll whenever you regain hit points by these means, you wake up and can act as above. Until you receive help, however, you must roll vs. HT every 12 hours; if you fail, you *die*.

Natural Recovery

Rest lets you recover lost HP, unless the damage is of a type that specifically does not heal naturally (for an example, see *Disease*, p. 32). At the end of each day of rest and decent food, make a HT roll. On a success, you recover 1 HP. The GM may give a penalty if conditions are bad, or a bonus if conditions are very good.

First Aid

The two main uses for First Aid skill (p. 14) are *bandaging* and *treating shock*.

It takes one minute to apply pressure or a tourniquet to stop bleeding. This restores 1 HP.

After bandaging, the aid-giver may take extra time to apply a more elaborate dressing and treat the victim for shock. He must keep the victim warm, comfortable, calm, and still. After the time indicated on the *First Aid Table*, below, he may roll against First Aid skill.

On a success, the medic rolls as indicated on the table to see how many HP the victim recovers – minimum 1 HP. A critical success restores the maximum possible HP! This roll *includes* the 1 HP for bandaging; thus, a roll of 1 HP restores no further HP.

On a critical failure, the victim *loses* 2 HP instead of recovering any HP at all!

First Aid Table

Tech Level	Time per Victim	HP Restored
0-1	30 minutes	1d-4
2-3	30 minutes	1d-3
4	30 minutes	1d-2
5	20 minutes	1d-2
6-7	20 minutes	1d-1
8	10 minutes	1d
9+	10 minutes	1d+1

FATIGUE

Running or swimming long distances, being suffocated, and many other things can cause “fatigue”: a temporary loss of Fatigue Points. Your Fatigue Points (FP) score starts out equal to your HT. Just as injury represents physical trauma and comes off of HP, fatigue represents lost energy and reduces FP. When you lose FP, keep track of it on your character sheet.

Lost Fatigue Points

The chart below summarizes the effects of being at low or negative FP. All effects are cumulative.

Less than 1/3 your FP left – You are very tired. Halve your Move, Dodge, and ST (round up). This does *not* affect ST-based quantities, such as HP and damage.

0 FP or less – You are on the verge of collapse. If you suffer further fatigue, each FP you lose also causes 1 HP of injury. To do anything besides talk or rest, you must make a Will roll; in combat, roll before each maneuver other than Do Nothing. On a success, you can act normally. If you are drowning, you can continue to struggle, but you suffer the usual 1 HP per FP lost. On a failure, you collapse, incapacitated, and can do *nothing* until you recover to positive FP.

-1xFP – You fall unconscious. While unconscious, you recover lost FP at the same rate as for normal rest. You awaken when you reach positive FP. Your FP can *never* fall below this level. After this stage, any FP cost comes off your HP instead!

Fatigue Costs

The following activities commonly result in FP loss.

Combat: Any battle that lasts more than 10 seconds will cost FP – you expend energy quickly when you fight for your life! Those who make *no* attack or defense rolls during the fight are exempt from this fatigue, but other actions (e.g., casting magic spells) still have their usual FP cost. At the *end* of the battle, assess a cost of 1 FP *plus* a number of FP equal to the encumbrance modifier.

These costs are *per battle*, not per 10 seconds of battle. A very long battle may cost more (GM’s decision), but it would have to run for 2 or 3 minutes (120 to 180 turns!) before extra FP costs would be realistic.

Hiking: Use the FP costs for fighting a battle, but assess them *per hour* of road travel; e.g., one hour of marching with light encumbrance costs 2 FP.

Overexertion: Carrying more than extra-heavy encumbrance, or pushing/pulling a very heavy load, costs 1 FP *per second* (see *Lifting and Moving Things*, p. 23).

Running or Swimming: Every 15 seconds of sprinting, or minute of paced running or swimming, requires a HT roll to avoid losing 1 FP.

Starvation: A human needs three meals per day. For each meal you miss, take 1 FP.

Dehydration: A human (or elf, dwarf, etc.) needs 2 quarts of water a day – 3 in hot climates, 5 in the heat of the desert! If you get less than you need, you lose 1 FP every eight hours. If you drink less than a quart a day, you lose an *extra* 1 FP and 1 HP per day. You can regain all FP lost to dehydration after a day of rest with ample water supplies. You recover lost HP at the usual rate.

Missing Sleep: If you’ve been awake for more than your normal day (typically 16 hours), you start to get tired. You lose 1 FP if you fail to go to sleep, and 1 FP per quarter-day (usually four hours) you stay awake after *that*.

If you’ve lost half or more of your FP to lack of sleep, you must make a Will roll every two hours you spend inactive (e.g., standing watch). On a failure, you fall asleep, sleeping until you are awakened or get a full night’s sleep. On a success, you have -2 to DX, IQ, and self-control rolls.

If you’re down to less than 1/3 your FP due to lack of sleep, roll as above once per 30 minutes of inaction or two hours of action. This can be very dangerous!

Recovering from Fatigue

You can recover “ordinary” lost FP by resting quietly. Reading, talking, and thinking are all right; walking around, or anything more strenuous, is *not*. Lost FP return at the rate of 1 FP per 10 minutes of rest. The GM may allow you to regain one extra

FP if you eat a decent meal *while resting*. Certain drugs, magic potions, etc. can restore missing FP, as can magic spells.

You can only recover from fatigue caused by *missed sleep* by sleeping for at least 8 hours. This restores 1 FP. Further uninterrupted sleep restores 1 FP per hour.

You need food or water to recover FP lost to starvation or dehydration; see above.

OTHER HAZARDS

Besides the ordinary combat risks of swords, guns, and spells, adventurers commonly face other hazards.

Cold

Cold can be deadly. Armor must be insulated or heated to shield against prolonged exposure to ambient cold.

Make a HT roll every 30 minutes in “normal” freezing weather. For most humans, this means temperatures below 35°F. In light wind (10+ mph), roll every 15 minutes. In strong wind (30+ mph), roll every 10 minutes. Additionally, strong wind can dramatically reduce the effective temperature (the “wind chill factor”). Also see the modifiers below:

Situation	Modifier to HT Roll
Light or no clothing	-5
Ordinary winter clothing	+0
“Arctic” clothing	+5
Heated suit	+10
Wet clothes	additional -5
Every 10° below 0°F effective temperature	-1

Failure costs 1 FP. As usual, once you go below 0 FP, you will start to lose 1 HP per FP. Recovery of FP or HP lost to cold requires adequate shelter and a heat source (flame, electric heat, body warmth, etc.).

Collisions and Falls

An object or person’s *Hit Points* and *velocity* determine collision damage. “Velocity” is how fast the character or object is moving in yards per second (2 mph = 1 yard per second).

An object in a collision inflicts dice of crushing damage equal to (HP × velocity)/100. If this is less than 1d, treat it as 1d-2.

If a moving object hits a stationary object that is too big to push aside – like the ground, a mountain, or an iceberg – it inflicts its usual collision damage on that object and on *itself*. If the obstacle is breakable, the moving object cannot inflict or take more damage than the obstacle’s HP + DR.

Falling

A fall is a collision with an immovable object: the ground. Find your velocity (in yards per second) when you hit using the following table:

Falling Velocity Table

Fall	Velocity	Fall	Velocity
1 yard	5	20 yards	21
2 yards	7	30 yards	26
3 yards	8	40 yards	30
4 yards	9	50 yards	33
5 yards	10	75 yards	40
10 yards	15	100 yards	47
15 yards	18	1,000 yards	146

If an object falls *on* someone, find its velocity on the table above and calculate damage as for an ordinary collision.

Disease

Maladies and strange diseases may affect adventurers in far-off lands . . . or even at home. The search for a cure – whether for the Princess' wasting disease, an alien plague, or a terrorist's bioweapon – is a wonderful plot device.

The important things to know about a given disease are:

Resistance Roll: The HT roll to avoid the disease. Most diseases allow a roll at HT to HT-6. On a success, the victim does not contract the disease. On a failure, he does, but he gets further rolls – once per “cycle” – to throw off the disease.

Delay: This is the incubation period – the time between initial exposure to the disease and the appearance of the first symptoms in those who fail to resist. This is 24 hours for a “generic” disease, but can vary considerably for real-life diseases.

Damage: The disease's effects in game terms. This is typically 1 point of toxic damage, but it might be higher – up to 1d – for virulent diseases. DR does not protect against disease! Symptoms (fever, sneezing, coughing, spots, rash, etc.) appear after the subject starts to suffer injury. Injury from disease will *not* heal naturally until the victim makes his HT roll to recover!

Cycles: A disease damages its victim at regular intervals until he makes a HT roll *or* a maximum number of cycles passes. The “default” interval between HT rolls is one day. The number of cycles varies with the deadliness of the disease; for instance, a potentially fatal disease might only inflict 1 HP per cycle but endure for 20-30 cycles.

Once the symptoms of a disease become apparent, identify it with a roll against Diagnosis. This cannot identify a totally new illness, but a good roll might give enough information to allow treatment.

Appropriate remedies – herbs, drugs, etc. – can provide a bonus to the cyclic HT

rolls to shake off certain diseases. At TL6+, antibiotics (e.g., penicillin) give +3 to recover from most bacterial diseases.

Flame

If you spend *part* of a turn in a fire (e.g., running through the flames), you take 1d-3 burning damage. If you spend *all* of a turn in a fire of ordinary intensity – or if you are on fire – you take 1d-1 damage per second. Very intense fires inflict more damage; for instance, molten metal or a furnace would inflict 3d per second!

Continued exposure to a fire can result in intense heat that can rapidly fatigue you even if the flames themselves cannot penetrate your DR. See *Heat* (below).

A *single* hit that inflicts at least 3 points of basic burning damage ignites *part* of the victim's clothing. This does 1d-4 burning damage per second and is distracting (-2 to DX, unless the damage simply cannot harm the target). To put out the fire, the victim must beat it with his hands. This requires a DX roll, and each attempt takes a Ready maneuver.

A *single* hit that inflicts 10 or more points of basic burning damage ignites *all* of the victim's clothes. This does 1d-1 burning damage per second and is *very* distracting (-3 to DX, except when rolling to put out the fire). To put out the fire, the victim must roll on the ground. This requires a DX roll, and each attempt takes *three* Ready maneuvers. Jumping into water takes only one second, and automatically extinguishes the fire.

In all cases, remember to apply shock penalties to DX if the flame inflicts injury!

Heat

In ordinary hot weather, you will experience no ill effects if you stay in the shade and don't move around much. But if you are *active* in temperatures in the top 10° of your comfort zone or above – over 80°F for humans – make a HT roll every 30 minutes.

Failure costs 1 FP. On a critical failure, you suffer heat stroke: lose 1d FP. As usual, if you go below 0 FP, you start to lose 1 HP per FP. You cannot recover FP or HP lost to heat until you move into cooler surroundings.

As well, at temperatures up to 30° over your comfort zone (91-120° for humans), you lose an extra 1 FP whenever you lose FP to exertion or dehydration. At temperatures up to 60° over your comfort zone (121-150° for humans), this becomes an extra 2 FP.

Poison

Poison can show up on weapons; on darts, needles, or spikes in traps; in food or drink offered by a treacherous foe; and anywhere else you did not expect it.

The important things to know about a given poison are:

Delay: Most poisons require a few seconds to several hours to take effect. This is nearly *always* true for digestive agents.

Resistance: Some poisons give the victim a HT roll to resist. Make this roll after the delay, if any, has passed. There is often a modifier: a mild poison might call for a HT+2 roll, while one that is almost impossible to resist might require a HT-8 roll! HT to HT-4 is typical. DR never affects this roll.

If you're in a poisonous *environment* (like a gas cloud or toxic atmosphere) and make your initial HT roll, you must roll again once per second until the poison affects you or you leave the area. If the poison has a delay, roll after each delay period instead.

Effects: The most common effect of poison is *toxic* or *fatigue* damage. Mild poisons might only inflict 1 HP or FP; more severe poisons might inflict 1d or more. DR has no effect on this damage. These HP and FP losses heal normally.

Suffocation

If you *completely* lack air you lose 1 FP per second. If you are drowning after a failed Swimming roll, you can get *some* air; but you also inhale water: roll vs. Swimming every five seconds; failure costs 1 FP (see *Swimming*, p. 23).

At 0 FP, make a Will roll every second or fall unconscious. Regardless of FP or HP, you die after four minutes without air.

If you get clean air before you die, you stop losing FP and start to recover FP at the usual rate (see *Recovering from Fatigue*, p. 31). If you are unconscious, you awaken once you have 1 FP. If you were drowning, a rescuer must *also* make a First Aid roll to get the water out of your lungs in order to save you.

If you went without air for more than two minutes, roll vs. HT to avoid permanent brain damage: -1 to IQ.

GAME WORLDS

When designing a new setting for your game, start with the checklist below. It is by no means exhaustive, but if you take the time to describe these items, you'll be off to a good start.

Languages
Laws and Customs
Society and Government
Tech Levels
Economics
Other Planes of Existence (if any)
Adventure Settings
Skills, Jobs, and Professions
Weapons and Combat

The Campaign Planning Form and other **GURPS** forms and support material may be downloaded at www.sjgames.com/gurps/resources/.