

GURPS LITE

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. Therefore, 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. *GURPS* is a game in which you take on the persona of another character – and pretend, for a little while, to *be* that character.

“*System.*” Over 150 different books have been published for *GURPS*, in eight different languages (so far). It is one of the recognized standards for roleplaying, worldwide.

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.



GURPS rules • STEVE JACKSON
GURPS Lite abridged rules • SEAN PUNCH
 Editing • STEVE JACKSON and
 the GURPS BRAIN TRUST
 Illustration • DAN SMITH
 Graphic Design • JACK ELMY

Materials Needed for Play

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

GLOSSARY

GURPS is a *roleplaying game* (RPG). A roleplaying game is one in which a referee (the Game Master) guides several players through an “adventure” in which they play the parts of fictional characters.

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 the players take on the personalities of imaginary individuals, or *characters*, in a fictional or historical *game world*, and try to act as those characters would.

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

Character: Any being (person, animal, whatever) played by the GM or a player in a RPG.

Non-player Character (NPC): Any character played by the GM. The GM may control many characters, major and minor.

Player Character (PC): Any character played by one of the players. Typically, each player controls a single character.

Stats, or statistics: Numbers rating a character’s abilities, used to

determine what each one can and cannot do. See p. 3.

Party: A group of PCs taking part in the adventure.

Game World: A background for play; the setting for an adventure. A GM’s own fantasy creation or a published setting created specifically for gaming are both examples.

Adventure: The basic “unit” of play in a RPG, sometimes called a “scenario.” A RPG is never over until the players want to end it, but a single adventure will have a beginning and an end. It may last through several sessions of play, or be done in a single evening.

Encounter: One “scene” of an adventure. A meeting between the player characters 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 Game Master (or team of GMs). A campaign 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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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.” For really huge numbers, dice can be multiplied. “2d×10” would mean “roll 2 dice and multiply by 10.”

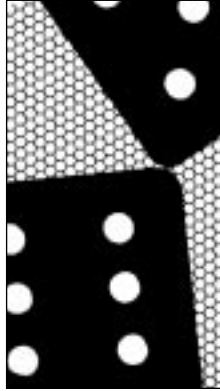
SUCCESS ROLLS

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

Roll 3 dice and add them together for a success roll. If your roll is *less than* or *equal to* the skill or ability you are testing, you succeeded. Otherwise, you failed. For example, if you are rolling against Strength, and your ST level 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.



When the GM Rolls

Normally, the player rolls dice for his own character. There are two exceptions:

First, in a situation in which the character shouldn't be able to tell whether he has succeeded – especially when he is trying to get information – the GM rolls in secret. If the roll succeeds, the GM gives the player true information. If the roll fails, the GM lies or gives no information at all.

Second, in a situation in which the player simply shouldn't know what's going on. This includes most “sense” rolls (see p. 24). The GM should simply roll in secret and inform the player of any consequences that his character would be aware of.

Modifiers and Effective Skill

Sometimes you will have *modifiers* (*bonuses* or *penalties*) to a roll. For instance, if you were trying to stop a *very heavy* door from closing, you might have to roll against Strength at a penalty of -2 (or ST-2, for short) because the door is heavy. In that case, with a Strength of 12, you would need to roll a 10 or less to succeed.

Likewise, for an especially easy task, you would get a bonus to your attempt. You might roll “Animal Handling+4” to make friends with a very friendly dog. If your skill were 12, a roll of 16 or less would succeed.

Your *effective skill* for a given task is your *basic skill* (your actual level in that skill) plus or minus any appropriate modifiers. In the example above, your basic skill is 12 but your effective skill is 16. You may not attempt to roll if your *effective skill* is less than 3, unless you are attempting a defense roll (see p. 25).

Critical Success and Failure

A *critical success* is an especially good result on a skill roll; a *critical hit* is a critical success scored on an attack (see p. 25). You score a critical success as follows:

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+.

The GM determines what happens when you roll a critical success. This is always something good; the better the roll, the better “bonus” he gives you.

A *critical failure* is an especially bad result on a skill roll. You score a critical failure as follows:

A roll of 18 is always a critical failure.

A roll of 17 is an ordinary failure if your effective skill is 16 or better, and a critical failure if your effective skill is under 16.

Any roll of 10 greater than your effective skill is a critical failure. That is, 16 on a skill of 6, 15 on a skill of 5, and so on.

The GM determines what happens when you roll a critical failure. It's always something bad; the worse the roll, the worse the result.

Automatic Success

Some things are totally trivial. No roll is required when common sense says that both failure and critical success are impossible. However, if there is any chance of failure, a roll is required. Finding your corner store requires no roll. Hitting a target at point-blank range, even for an experienced warrior, does, since his weapon might break or he might slip on an unexpected banana peel.

Repeated Attempts on Success Rolls

Sometimes you have only one chance to do something; other times you can try over and over until you succeed. Sometimes you will not know whether you succeeded or failed until it's too late to try again. Finally, there will be times when you are injured by failure but can afford to fail a few times. The GM can use common sense to distinguish among these, according to the situation in which the players find themselves. As a rule:

(a) If the first failure kills them (or destroys the object of the attempt), that's that.

(b) If a failure causes damage of some kind, assess the damage and let them try again after a “reasonable” time passes.

(c) If a failure causes no damage, let them try again after a reasonable time, at a -1 penalty for each attempt after the first.

Contests of Skill

Sometimes two characters will need to compare their relative skills to settle a battle or competition. A *Contest of Skill* is a quick way to resolve a competitive situation without playing it out in detail.

When a Contest of Skill is called for, both characters make their success rolls in the appropriate skill. Any appropriate modifiers are used.

There are two types of contest:

A *quick contest* is usually over in a second; e.g., two people grabbing for the same weapon. Each character makes his skill roll. If one succeeds and the other fails, the winner is obvious. If both succeed (or fail) the winner is the one who succeeded by the most, or failed by the least. A tie means nobody won.

A *regular contest* may take some time; e.g., arm wrestling. Each character tries his skill roll. If one succeeds and the other fails, the winner is obvious. If both succeed or both fail, the characters' relative positions are unchanged and they may try again.

The time each attempt takes will depend on the activity, and is up to the GM to determine. In a combat situation, each attempt takes one second. 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.

If both characters have a very high skill, the contest could go on indefinitely. Therefore, shorten it as follows: If both skills are over 14, reduce the higher one to 14, and subtract the same amount from the lower one.

Eventually, one character will make his roll and the other one will miss. At this point, the one who made his roll is the winner of the contest.

REACTION ROLLS

A “reaction roll” is a roll made by the GM to determine how his NPCs react to the PCs. This roll is always optional; the GM may predetermine reactions. But (at least some of the time) it’s more fun to let the dice control the reactions.

To check reactions, the GM rolls 3 dice and consults the *Reaction Table* (below). The higher his roll, the better the NPCs will react, and the better treatment they will give the PCs.

Reaction rolls are typically made in potential combat situations, during commercial transactions, in response to requests for aid or information, and to determine the attitude and loyalty of NPC hirelings.

Reaction Modifiers

A *reaction bonus* is a factor which makes the NPCs more friendly; a *reaction penalty* is something that will make them less friendly. There are several types of reaction modifiers:

First, many PCs will have *personal* modifiers for appearance, social standing, etc., that add to (or subtract from) reaction rolls.

Occasionally, the *situation* can also result in a reaction modifier. Offering someone a bad business deal, or trying to convince someone not to attack you when you’re badly outnumbered, might give you a penalty. Offering a good deal, or dealing with an old and trusted hireling, could give a bonus. This is left up to the GM.

Finally, *appropriate behavior* by the players should always influence reaction rolls. A good approach should be worth a +1 modifier – or more! – while a wholly inappropriate approach might give a -1 or -2 penalty on the reaction roll.

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. Many things can affect the final damage done by an injury: armor protects the wearer, certain weapons can do extra damage if they get through the armor, and “critical hits” bypass the damage roll altogether. All of these things are explained under *Combat* (see p. 24).

CHARACTERS

Creating a character is the first part of the game, and one of the most important. The whole idea of roleplaying is to take the part of another person – a “character” that you create. *GURPS* lets you decide exactly what kind of hero you will become.

The usual way to create a character is to *design* him, just as though he were a character in a story you were writing. Start by deciding what type of person you want to be. You can take your inspiration from a fictional hero or heroine – or create your new “self” from the ground up. Once you have some idea what sort of person you want to play, it’s time to bring him to life!

Character Stories: A “character story” is the history of a game character, written by the person who plays that character. This is a great aid to roleplaying. You may even want to write the story first (or at least some of it), and *then* work out your character’s actual stats. A story can really help bring your character to life. You don’t have to do it – but it’s recommended.

If you write the story down, you should show it to the GM, but not necessarily to the other players. After all, your character probably has some secrets, even from his friends.

CHARACTER POINTS

When you create a character, you start with a certain number of *character points* to “spend” on your character’s abilities. For most games, we recommend 100 points for a heroic character. Other levels are possible, of course, from average folks at 25 points, to supermen of 300 points or more.

The following sections describe things you can spend your character points on. Positive traits (e.g., great strength, wealth, better than average appearance, skills) *cost* points in proportion to their value. Negative traits (e.g., weakness, bad sight, poverty, fear of heights) *give* you extra points that can be used to buy more positive traits.

ATTRIBUTES

Four numbers called “attributes” are used to define your basic abilities:

Strength (ST), a measure of “brawn” or physical muscle.

Dexterity (DX), a measure of agility and coordination.

Intelligence (IQ), a measure of brainpower, alertness, adaptability, and general background experience.

Health (HT), a measure of energy and vitality. HT also stands for “hits” – the amount of physical damage a character can take. When you have taken “hits” equal to your Health score, you soon fall unconscious. Further injury can kill you.

The four attributes are considered equally valuable. The point cost for beginning attributes is given in the table at right. Note that a score of 10 in any attribute is *free*, since 10 is “average.” Scores below 10 have a negative cost – in effect, they “give you back” some points!

An attribute of 1 is the lowest score permitted for a human. There is *no* upper limit to any score. For each attribute, a score of 10 represents the human average; anything from 8 to 12 is in the range considered “normal.” Scores above 16 are definitely unusual; scores above 20 are superhuman!

| Level | Point Cost |
|-------|------------|
| 1 | -80 |
| 2 | -70 |
| 3 | -60 |
| 4 | -50 |
| 5 | -40 |
| 6 | -30 |
| 7 | -20 |
| 8 | -15 |
| 9 | -10 |
| 10 | 0 |
| 11 | 10 |
| 12 | 20 |
| 13 | 30 |
| 14 | 45 |
| 15 | 60 |
| 16 | 80 |
| 17 | 100 |
| 18 | 125 |

Each additional attribute point beyond 18 costs another 25 character points.

See p. 3
 See p. 5
 See p. 29
 See p. 26
 See p. 18

See p. 3
 See p. 24
 See p. 21
 See p. 13

GURPS

CHARACTER SHEET

Name DAI BLACKTHORN Player
 Appearance 5'6", 110 lbs., FAIR SKIN, DARK HAIR and EYES
 Character Story STREET KID, THIEF

| | |
|----------------|-------------|
| Date Created | Sequence |
| Unspent Points | Point Total |
| | 100 |

| | | |
|----------|----------------|--------------|
| Pt. Cost | ST • 8 | FATIGUE |
| -15 | | |
| 60 | DX • 15 | BASIC DAMAGE |
| | | Thrus: 1d-3 |
| 20 | IQ • 12 | Swing: 1d-2 |
| 20 | HT • 12 | HITS TAKEN |

| | | |
|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Mvmt | BASIC SPEED | MOVE |
| | 6.75 | 6 |
| | (HT+DX)/4 | Basic - Enc. |

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| ENCUMBRANCE | PASSIVE DEFENSE |
| None (0) = 2xST 16 | Armor: 1 |
| Light (1) = 4xST 32 | Shield: — |
| Med (2) = 6xST 48 | |
| Hvy (3) = 12xST 96 | TOTAL 1 |
| X-hvy (4) = 20xST 160 | |

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| ACTIVE DEFENSES | | |
| DODGE | PARRY | BLOCK |
| 6 | 7 | 5 |
| = Move | KNIFE Weapon/2 | Shield/2 |

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| DAMAGE RESISTANCE | TOTAL |
| Armor: JACKET: 1 | 1 |

| | |
|----------|--|
| Pt. Cost | ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES, QUIRKS |
| 5 | ABSOLUTE DIRECTION |
| 10 | ACUTE HEARING (+5) Hears on 17 |
| 5 | DOUBLE-JOINTED |
| 15 | DANGER SENSE |
| -15 | ENEMY: Thieves' Guild roll of 6 or less |
| -10 | OVERCONFIDENCE |
| -15 | POOR |

| | |
|----------|-----------------------------------|
| Pt. Cost | DISADVANTAGES, QUIRKS |
| -1 | SENSITIVE ABOUT HEIGHT |
| -1 | AFRAID OF DROWNING/dislikes lakes |
| -1 | LOVES HIGH PLACES |
| -1 | NO DRUGS OR ALCOHOL |
| -1 | FLAMBOYANT SHOWOFF |
| 0 | CANNOT READ |



REACTION +/- NONE

| WEAPONS AND POSSESSIONS | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|------------|-------|-----|------------|
| Item | Damage Type | Skill Amt. | Level | \$ | Wt. |
| SMALL KNIFE | cut | 1d-5 | 17 | 30 | 1/2 |
| | imp | 1d-4 | | | |
| DAGGER | imp | 1d-4 | 17 | 20 | 1/4 |
| LOCKPICKS | | | | 30 | - |
| CLOTHES (low-class) | | | | 10 | 1 |
| SHOES | | | | 40 | 2 |
| LEATHER JACKET | | | | 50 | 4 |
| RING | | | | 20 | - |
| SILVER \$ | | | | 10 | - |
| Totals: \$ | | | | 200 | Lbs. 7 3/4 |

| SKILLS | | |
|--------------------------|----------|-------|
| Skill | Pt. Cost | Level |
| AREA KNOWLEDGE | 2 | 13 |
| CLIMBING | - | 13 |
| FAST-TALK | 2 | 12 |
| KNIFE | 4 | 17 |
| KNIFE THROWING | 1/2 | 14 |
| LOCKPICKING | 4 | 13 |
| PICKPOCKET | 4 | 15 |
| SHORTSWORD | 4 | 16 |
| STEALTH | 2 | 15 |
| STREETWISE | 2 | 12 |
| TRAPS (from lockpicking) | 1/2 | 11 |

| WEAPON RANGES | | | | |
|----------------------|----|-----|-----|---------|
| Weapon | SS | ACC | 1/2 | DMG MAX |
| KNIFE | 11 | 0 | 3 | 8 |
| DAGGER | 12 | 0 | 3 | 8 |

| SUMMARY | | Point Total |
|----------------|--|-------------|
| Attributes | | 85 |
| Advantages | | 35 |
| Disadvantages | | -40 |
| Quirks | | -5 |
| Skills | | 25 |
| TOTAL | | 100 |

See p. 3

See p. 18

See p. 21

See p. 21

See pp. 17, 26

See p. 3

See p. 26

See p. 17

and the equipment lists (pp. 18-20)

See pp. 18, 26

See Advantages, p. 9

Disadvantages, p. 11

Quirks, p. 13

See p. 18

See p. 27 and the Ranged Weapon Table, p. 20

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Add up the points from each area and check the total.

Illustration: Find or draw one!

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. 9), 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. 11). Still others (e.g., height and weight, handedness) merely add "color."

Appearance

Variable

You are free to set the physical appearance of your character in any way you like. However, outstanding good (or bad) looks are considered advantages (or disadvantages). Good looks cost points; bad looks give you bonus points to spend elsewhere.

Hideous Appearance: Any sort of disgusting looks the player specifies: hunchback, severe skin disease, wall-eye . . . preferably several things at once. You have -4 on any reaction roll except by totally alien creatures or by people who cannot see you. *-20 points.*

Ugly Appearance: As above, but not so bad – maybe only stringy hair and snaggle teeth. -2 on reaction rolls, except as above. *-10 points.*

Unattractive Appearance: You just look vaguely unappealing. -1 on reaction rolls by members of your own race, but no penalty for other races – this problem is too subtle for them to notice. *-5 points.*

Average Appearance: No bonuses or penalties of any type; you can blend easily into a crowd. No point cost or bonus.

Attractive Appearance: You may not enter beauty contests, but you're definitely good-looking. +1 on all reaction rolls by your own race. *5 points.*

Handsome (or Beautiful) Appearance: You *could* enter beauty contests! +2 on reaction rolls made by the same sex; +4 on reaction rolls made by the opposite sex – as long as the races are the same or similar. *15 points.*

Very Handsome (or Beautiful) Appearance: You *do* enter beauty contests, and you win. +2 on reaction rolls made by the same sex; +6 (!) on reaction rolls by opposite sex. *25 points.*

Charisma

5 points/level

This is the natural ability to impress and lead others. Anyone can acquire a semblance of charisma by good looks, good manners and intelligence – but *real* charisma works independently of these things, and you either have it or you don't. It affects any reaction roll made by any intelligent creature. Cost: 5 points for each +1 reaction bonus.

Handedness

no point cost

Decide whether you are right- or left-handed. These rules assume you are right-handed unless you decide otherwise or pay the points to be ambidextrous. If you decide to be left-handed, and combat damage is rolled to your right hand, it happens to your left instead. There is no point bonus or penalty for being left-handed.

Whenever you try to do anything significant – swing a sword, forge a letter, and so on – with your "off" hand, you will be at a -4 penalty. This does not apply to things you *normally* do with your off hand, like shield use.

Ambidexterity

10 points

You can use both hands with equal skill. You do not suffer the -4 DX penalty for using an "off hand" like most people do, and can fight (or act) with either hand (though not necessarily both at once). Should some accident befall one of your arms or hands, assume it is the left one.

Height and Weight

no point cost

Players are free to select height and weight for their characters, within

reason. The table below can be used to determine "average" height and weight. Average height is based on your ST score. Weight, in turn, is based on your height. As much as 8" variation in height and 40 lbs. variation in weight is believable, but anyone with a better-than-average appearance should have a weight within 20% of "average" for his height.

For each inch of height over 6'3", add 10 lbs. to average weight.

This table assumes a 20th-century male. For a female, subtract 2" from average height and 10 lbs. from average weight. For a historically accurate pre-19th-century character, subtract 3" from average height. Weight is always determined after height.

| ST | Height | Weight |
|-----|--------------|----------|
| – | 5'2" or less | 120 lbs. |
| – | 5'3" | 130 lbs. |
| 5– | 5'4" | 130 lbs. |
| 6 | 5'5" | 135 lbs. |
| 7 | 5'6" | 135 lbs. |
| 8 | 5'7" | 140 lbs. |
| 9 | 5'8" | 145 lbs. |
| 10 | 5'9" | 150 lbs. |
| 11 | 5'10" | 155 lbs. |
| 12 | 5'11" | 160 lbs. |
| 13 | 6' | 165 lbs. |
| 14 | 6'1" | 170 lbs. |
| 15 | 6'2" | 180 lbs. |
| 16+ | 6'3" or more | 190 lbs. |

Fat

-10 or -20 points

You are unusually obese for your race.

For -5 points, you are *Overweight*. Determine weight normally for ST, and then increase it by 30%. Being overweight carries a reaction penalty of -1 among health-conscious societies and in areas where food is in especially short supply.

For -10 points, you are *Fat*. Determine weight normally from ST and then increase it by 50%. This gives -1 on *all* reaction rolls; HT may not be greater than 15.

For -20 points, you are *Extremely Fat*. Determine weight normally and *double* it. This gives -2 on all reaction rolls; HT may not be greater than 13.

In all cases, the extra weight counts as encumbrance which you cannot get rid of. (*Exception:* this does not count against you when swimming.) If you are Fat or Extremely Fat, normal clothes and armor will not fit you, and you will be at -3 to Disguise, or to Shadowing if you are trying to follow someone in a crowd.

Fat people get +5 to their Swimming roll (+2 if merely Overweight).

Skinny

-5 points

You are notably underweight. After figuring your height, take "average" weight for that height and cut it by 1/3. You may not take Handsome or Very Handsome appearance, and your HT may not be more than 14. Normal clothes and armor will not fit you, and you will be at -2 to Disguise, or to Shadowing if you are trying to follow someone in a crowd.

Odious Personal Habits

-5/-10/-15 points

You behave, some or all of the time, in a fashion repugnant to others. The worse your behavior, the more bonus points you receive. Specify the behavior when the character is first created, and work the bonus out with the GM. Body odor might be worth -5 points, spitting on the floor would be worth -10 points; -15-point habits are left to the imagination of those depraved enough to want them.

For each -5 points your habit is worth, subtract 1 from all reaction rolls made by someone in a position to notice your problem. This reaction penalty is for members of your own race; it is up to the GM to handle differing reactions from other races.

Voice

10 points

You have a naturally clear, resonant and attractive voice. You get a permanent +2 bonus on all the following skills: Bard, Diplomacy, Politician, Savoir-Faire, Sex Appeal, and Singing. You also get a +2 on any reaction roll made by someone who can hear your voice.

SOCIAL STANDING

This section contains rules for defining your character's *extrinsic* social traits – his place in society. As for *Image and Looks*, above, traits with positive point values are advantages, while those with negative values are disadvantages. Most of these traits only have significance within the character's own society.

Clerical Investment **5 points/level of rank**

This is the social/political advantage of being invested as a cleric of your religion. It represents your status and influence within the church. You have a number of powers and privileges that a layman lacks, including a +1 reaction bonus *per level of rank* from followers of your religion and those who respect your faith. You will be addressed by a title – Father, Sister, Reverend, Shaman – and may perform such ceremonies as Confirmation, Marriage, and Exorcism.

Duty **Variable**

You have a significant responsibility toward others, and you are personally committed to that responsibility. Duties may come from an arduous job, a feudal responsibility, or elsewhere. By definition, a duty is imposed from outside.

The GM rolls at the beginning of each adventure to see if each character will be “called to duty” in that adventure. The point cost of a duty depends on the frequency with which it is demanded:

Almost all the time (roll of 15 or less): *-15 points.*

Quite often (roll of 12 or less): *-10 points.*

Fairly often (roll of 9 or less): *-5 points.*

Occasionally (roll of 6 or less): *-2 points.*

To be significant, a duty should be dangerous. An ordinary job is not a “duty.” If a duty does not require you to risk your life, at least occasionally, reduce its value by 5, which negates those less frequent than “quite often.” However, an *Extremely Hazardous Duty* (typical of special forces units and ninja clans), where you are “on duty” all the time and risk death or serious injury, is worth -20 points.

Legal Enforcement Powers **5/10/15 points**

You are an officer of the law, with all the accompanying rights, powers, and restrictions. In some times and places, this amounts to a license to kill; in others, it's little more than the right to carry a badge and write parking tickets.

The point cost is determined by the rights and privileges of the character's branch of law enforcement. Generally, a policeman with local jurisdiction, the ability to arrest suspected criminals, the right to perform searches with an appropriate warrant, and *possibly* the right to carry a concealed weapon, has 5 points' worth of Legal Enforcement Powers.

Someone with national or international jurisdiction, *or* not obligated to respect the civil rights of others, *or* free to engage in covert investigations, *or* able to kill with relative impunity, must pay 10 points for his powers.

An officer with three or more of the above abilities has 15 points of Legal Enforcement Powers.

Legal Enforcement Powers usually go hand-in-hand with an appropriate Duty disadvantage (above) and a Reputation (see below) which may be an advantage, a disadvantage, or both.

Military Rank **5 points/level of rank**

Just as Status (p. 7) reflects your position in society, Military Rank (also called “grade”) reflects your position in a military or paramilitary organization. Each rank has authority over lesser ranks – regardless of personal ability. Cost: 5 points per rank, up to Rank 8.

Titles of ranks vary between organizations. Enlisted men are typically Rank 0, NCOs will be Rank 1 or 2, and officers will be Rank 3+, with generals or the equivalent being at least Rank 7.

In many lands, Military Rank carries automatic Status, which need *not* be paid for separately. The “default” here is one level of Status for every 3 of Rank, rounding to the closest number.

Military Rank almost always involves a significant Duty (see above).

Reputation **Variable**

Some people are so well-known that their reputation actually becomes an advantage or a disadvantage. For game purposes, reputation affects the *reaction rolls* made by NPCs. The details of your reputation are entirely up to you; you can be known for bravery, ferocity, eating green snakes, or whatever you want. If you have a reputation, either your name or your face will be enough to trigger a “reputation roll” to see if the people you meet have heard of you. Roll once for each person or small group you meet. For a large group, the GM may roll more than once if he likes.

There are three components to your reputation: *Type of Reputation*, *People Affected*, and *Frequency of Recognition*.

Type of Reputation affects the reaction modifier that you get from people who recognize you. For every +1 bonus to a reaction roll (up to +4), the cost is 5 points. For every -1 penalty (up to -4), the cost is -5 points.

People Affected modifies the value of your reputation. The larger the “affected class” (people who might have heard of you), the more your reputation is worth, as follows:

Everyone you will meet in your campaign: use listed value.

Large class of people (all people of a particular faith, all mercenaries, all tradesmen): $\frac{1}{2}$ value (round down).

Small class of people (all priests of Wazoo, all literate people in 12th-century England, all wizards in modern Alabama): $\frac{1}{3}$ value (round down).

If the class of people affected is so small that, in the GM's opinion, you would not meet even one in the average adventure, your reputation doesn't count at all.

Frequency of Recognition also modifies the value of your reputation. The more often you are recognized by members of the “affected class,” the more important that reputation is:

All the time: no modifier.

Sometimes (roll of 10 or less): $\frac{1}{2}$ value, rounded down.

Occasionally (roll of 7 or less): $\frac{1}{3}$ value, rounded down.

Social Stigma **-5/-10/-15/-20 points**

You are of a race, class, or sex that your culture considers inferior. The “stigma” must be obvious to anyone who sees you; otherwise it's a reputation. The point bonus depends on the reaction penalty:

Second-class citizen (e.g., a woman in 19th-century America, or members of some religions): -5 points. -1 on all reaction rolls except from others of your own kind.

Valuable property (e.g., a woman in 18th-century America or 16th-century Japan): -10 points. This usually takes the form of limited freedom or lack of intellectual respect.

Minority group (at GM's discretion): -10 points. -2 on all reaction rolls made by anyone except your own kind, but +2 on rolls made by your own kind.

Outsider, outlaw, or barbarian (e.g., a 19th-century American Indian in white man's territory, a Goth in Imperial Rome, or an Untouchable in India): -15 points. This only applies if the “barbarian” is outside his own culture. You get -3 on all reaction rolls, but +3 from your own kind when met outside your home culture.

Anyone who takes a Social Stigma disadvantage must be bound by it . . . roleplay the difficulties it causes!

Wealth Levels

Variable

Dead Broke: You have no job, no source of income, no money, and no property other than the clothes on your back. Either you are unable to work, or there are no jobs. *-25 points.*

Poor: Your starting wealth is only $\frac{1}{5}$ "average" for your society. You spend 50 hours per week at your job. Some jobs are not available to you, and no job you find will pay you very well. *-15 points.*

Struggling: Your starting wealth is only $\frac{1}{2}$ "average" for your society. You spend 40 hours per week at your job. Most jobs are open to you, but you don't earn much. This is appropriate if you are (for instance) a 20th-century student. *-10 points.*

Average: You have exactly the average starting wealth for your society. You spend 40 hours per week at your job, and support an average lifestyle. *No points.*

Comfortable: You work for a living, but your lifestyle is better than average. You spend 40 hours per week at your job. Your starting wealth is twice the average. *10 points.*

Wealthy: Your starting wealth is 5 times average; you live very well. Your job takes only 20 hours per week. This level of wealth, and higher ones, may not be chosen without the permission of the Game Master! *20 points.*

Very Wealthy: Your starting wealth is 20 times the average. You spend only 10 hours a week looking after business (this is hardly a "job"). *30 points.*

Filthy Rich: Your starting wealth is 100 times average. You spend 10 hours a week on business. You can buy almost anything you want without considering the cost. *50 points.*

Multimillionaire: Once you have purchased the Filthy Rich advantage, you may buy additional levels of Wealth. Each level increases your wealth by a factor of ten (e.g., the first level would increase total wealth to 1,000 times the average). Each level also grants a free level of Status, to a maximum bonus of +2 over the free level already given for high Wealth. *25 points/level.*

FRIENDS AND FOES

Many characters have NPCs who are especially well or ill disposed toward them. Powerful friends you can call upon in times of need are an *advantage*; weaker friends you must defend are a *disadvantage*, as are powerful enemies.

Frequency of Appearance: When a character has friends or enemies like this, the GM rolls dice once per adventure to see if they will get involved. The chance on 3 dice of a powerful friend showing up or otherwise aiding you, or of a weaker friend or an enemy somehow complicating your life, is called his *frequency of appearance*. This adjusts a NPC's value as an advantage or disadvantage, after all other factors have been considered, as follows:

Appears almost all the time (roll of 15 or less): triple cost.

Appears quite often (roll of 12 or less): double cost.

Appears fairly often (roll of 9 or less): listed cost.

Appears rarely (roll of 6 or less): half cost (round up).

A Note on Power Level: The rules below all assume 100-point PCs; in a more (or less) powerful game, adjust the point values of these NPCs by the same amount.

Dependents

A NPC for whom you are responsible is a *Dependent*, and is considered a disadvantage. This may be your child, sidekick, spouse, or anyone else you feel an obligation to look after. If your Dependent is kidnapped during play, you must go to the rescue as soon as you can. If your Dependent is in trouble and you don't go to his aid immediately, the GM can deny you bonus character points (see p. 21) for "acting out of character." Furthermore, you

can never get any character points for a play session in which your Dependent is killed or badly hurt.

The Dependent is created just like any other character, but instead of the 100 points used to create a PC, you use 50 points or less. A Dependent built with 0 or fewer points is worth -16 points; one who is built with 1 to 25 points is worth -12 points; one built with 26 to 50 points is worth -6 points. A Dependent built with 50+ points is not worth any bonus points.

The more important the Dependent is to you, the more you multiply his worth in points. For an employer, acquaintance or other person you may weigh risks to in a rational fashion, *halve* the value above. For a friend you must *always* protect, unless something even more important is on the line, use the listed value. For a loved one whose safety comes first, no matter what, *double* the listed value.

Finally, pick a frequency of appearance (see above) that fits the "story" behind the Dependent.

No character may ever earn points for more than two Dependents at once.

Allies

These are loyal comrades, faithful sidekicks, or life-long friends who are competent enough to accompany you on adventures. Having an Ally is an advantage. An Ally is a NPC, and should be played as such. While Allies are usually agreeable to the suggestions of their PCs, they are not puppets. As well, a PC should receive no character points for any play session in which he betrays, attacks, or unnecessarily endangers his NPC Ally.

An Ally character is created just as though he were a PC. An Ally built on 51-75 points is worth no points, but must be protected like a Dependent. An Ally built on 76-100 points costs 5 points; one built on 101-150 points costs 10 points; and an Ally built on over 150 points more than his PC is actually a *Patron* (see below).

An Ally who has special abilities – magic powers in a non-magical world, equipment far beyond the world's tech level (see p. 32) – costs an extra 5 to 10 points, at the GM's discretion.

As for a Dependent, pick a frequency of appearance that fits the "story" behind the Ally.

Note that NPC Allies must all pay the points to have their PC as an Ally. For a normal, 100-point PC, this will cost 5 points.

Patrons

The most powerful NPC friends are known as *Patrons*. Like Allies, Patrons are NPCs, created initially by the player but controlled by the GM. A Patron may be an advisor, protector, or employer (but you can have a job without having a Patron; a Patron is more than an ordinary boss). Unlike an Ally, a Patron does not adventure with a PC. Instead, the Patron offers advice, knowledge, equipment, influence, or the like.

The point value of a Patron depends on his power. A single powerful individual (created with at least 150 points), or a group with assets of at least 1,000 times starting wealth for the world, is worth 10 points. An extremely powerful individual (created with at least 200 points) or a reasonably powerful organization (assets equivalent to at least 10,000 times starting wealth) is worth 15 points. A very powerful organization (assets equivalent to at least a million times starting wealth) is worth 25 points. A national government or giant multi-national organization (net worth basically incalculable) is worth 30 points.

If a Patron supplies useful equipment, that increases its point value if you can use the equipment for your own purposes. In most cases, this adds 5 points to a Patron's cost. If the equipment is worth more than the standard starting wealth of the campaign, it adds 10 points.

Like an Ally, a Patron who has special abilities may cost an extra 5 to 10 points, at the GM's discretion.

Finally, pick an appropriate frequency of appearance.

Enemies

An NPC or organization that is working against you, or just trying to kill you, is an *Enemy*. You are responsible for determining the nature of your Enemy when you first create your character, and must explain to the Game Master why this Enemy is after you. The GM always has the right to veto your choice of Enemy if it seems silly or would be too hard to fit into the campaign.

The point value of an Enemy is governed by his (or its) strength: the more powerful the Enemy, the more points he, she or it is worth as a disadvantage. A single above-average individual (created with 50 points) is worth -5 points. A single very formidable individual (created with 100 points) or a group of 3 to 5 “average” 25-point people is worth -10 points. A medium-sized group (6 to 20 people) is worth -20 points. A large group (20 to 1,000 people) or a medium-sized group which includes some formidable or superhuman individuals is worth -30 points. An entire government or some other utterly formidable group is worth -40 points.

Once you know the base point value of the Enemy, pick an appropriate frequency of appearance.

Since too many Enemies can disrupt a game, no character may take more than two Enemies, or total more than 60 points bonus from Enemies.

ADVANTAGES

These are innate abilities. In general, a character may only be given these advantages when he is first created. After that, there is no way to gain or “earn” them. (But note that magic or high technology may permit exceptions to this rule!) Each advantage has a cost in character points. A character may have as many advantages as he can afford.

For some advantages, the cost is fixed. Others are bought in levels, at a certain point cost for each level.

Absolute Direction **5 points**

You always know which way is north, and you can always re-trace a path you have followed within the past month, no matter how faint it may be. This ability does not work in environments such as interstellar space or the limbo of the astral plane, but it *does* work underground, underwater, and on other planets. Also gives a +3 bonus on your Navigation skill.

Acute Sense(s) **2 points/level**

You have better-than-average senses. *Acute Hearing* gives you a bonus to your IQ whenever you must roll to hear something, or when the GM rolls for you. *Acute Taste/Smell* gives you a bonus when rolling to notice a taste or smell. *Acute Vision* gives you a bonus when rolling to see something. Each acute sense is a separate advantage, and costs 2 points for every +1 bonus to your roll. E.g., Acute Hearing +6 costs 12 points.

Alertness **5 points/level**

A general bonus you get on *any* sense roll (p. 24), or when the GM rolls against your IQ to see if you notice something. This advantage can be combined with any or all of the acute senses. Cost: 5 points for each +1 bonus to your roll.

Animal Empathy **5 points**

You understand animals and like them, and they like you. You get +2 on any reaction roll by a wild animal, and +4 on any reaction from a tame animal. You also get a +4 bonus on Animal Handling, Riding, and other “animal” skill rolls. However, you may never kill an animal without a very good reason, and you should try to prevent others from doing so. Note that killing for food is perfectly acceptable, and in a hunting situation you will get a +3 bonus to find game.

Combat Reflexes **15 points**

You have extraordinary reactions and are very rarely surprised for more than a moment. You get a +1 to any Active Defense in combat (see p. 26). You never “freeze up” in a surprise situation, and you get a +6 on any IQ roll to wake up or to recover from surprise or a mental “stun” (see p. 28).

Common Sense **10 points**

Any time you start to do something that the GM feels is STUPID, he rolls against your IQ. A successful roll means he must warn you, “Hadn’t you better think about that?” This advantage allows an impulsive *player* to take the part of a thoughtful character.

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 . . . If you have Danger Sense, the GM rolls once against your IQ, secretly, in any situation involving an ambush, impending disaster, or similar hazard. A successful roll means you get a warning that something’s wrong. 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 (GM’s option) you get a +1 to all skill rolls. Furthermore, you may reroll any critical failure that occurs while you are engaged in high-risk behavior.

Example: If you’re attacked by a gang with Uzis, you don’t get this bonus if you crouch behind a wall and return fire from cover, but you *do* get it if you vault over the wall and charge, screaming!

Double-Jointed **5 points**

Your body is unusually flexible. You get a +3 on any Climbing roll, on any roll to escape from ropes, handcuffs or other restraints, or on any Mechanic roll (to reach into an engine, of course!)

Empathy **15 points**

You have a “feeling” for people. When you first meet someone, or when you are reunited after an absence, you may request the GM to roll against your IQ. He will then tell you what you “feel” about that person. (A failed roll means the GM may lie to you.) This talent, when it works, is excellent for spotting imposters, ghostly possession, and the like, and determining the true loyalties of NPCs. You can also use it to determine whether someone is lying . . . not what the truth really is, but just whether they are being honest with you.

High Pain Threshold **10 points**

You are as susceptible to injury as anyone else, but you don’t *feel* it as much. If you are hurt in combat, you are not stunned and do not have a “shock” penalty (p. 28) on your next turn. (*Exception:* a head blow can still stun you.) If you are tortured physically, you are at a +3 to resist. The GM may let you roll at +3 to ignore pain in other situations.



High Technology

20/50/100 points

You have technology that is significantly better than the average PC in the campaign. The greater the technology gap, the more this advantage is worth. GMs should be cautious with this advantage, since it will give some PCs better tools and weapons than others. See p. 32 for Tech Levels.

+1 TL: 20 points +2 TLs: 50 points +3 TLs: 100 points

An advantage of more than 3 Tech Levels is not appropriate for PCs, and will make NPCs into demigods, especially if the campaign's base TL is 10+.

Immunity to Disease/Disease Resistant 5/10 points

Your body naturally resists disease organisms. Virus and fungus invasions are also considered "disease," though larger parasites (e.g., a tapeworm) are not. If you are Disease Resistant, you get +8 to HT to avoid catching any disease. *5 points.*

If you are Immune, you will *never* catch any infection or disease, even if you are forcibly injected with it! You may not take Immunity unless you start with a HT of 12 or better. However, it will remain even if HT is later reduced below 12. *10 points.*

Language Talent

2 points/level

You pick up languages quickly. Whenever you learn any language skill (see p. 17), add your level of Language Talent to your IQ.

Literacy

Variable

The GM decides the norm for literacy in his campaign: Are most people *literate*, *semi-literate*, or *illiterate*? Literacy is the norm in most high-tech settings, semi-literacy is usual in Renaissance and post-holocaust settings, and illiteracy is generally the default in low-tech and fantasy settings. Skip this section entirely in settings where there are no written languages!

Having a higher *personal* degree of literacy than the campaign norm is an *advantage*. A lower degree of literacy is a *disadvantage*.

Literacy: You can read and write any language you know (see *Languages*, p. 17), limited only by your skill in that language. This is worth 0 points when literacy is the norm, 5 points when semi-literacy is the norm and 10 points when illiteracy is the norm.

Semi-literacy: You can understand simple, everyday words, and may read and write slowly, but complex words, written poetry, and so on are beyond you. This is worth -5 points when literacy is the norm, 0 points when semi-literacy is the norm and 5 points when illiteracy is the norm.

Illiteracy: You cannot read or write at all. This is worth -10 points when literacy is the norm, -5 points when semi-literacy is the norm and 0 points when illiteracy is the norm.

Luck

15/30/60 points

Some people are just born lucky. Once per hour of play, you may reroll a single bad die roll twice (this must be the last roll you made) and take the best of the three rolls! If the GM is rolling (e.g., to see if you notice something), you may tell him you are using your luck, and he must roll three times and give you the best result. *15 points.*

Extraordinary Luck works the same way, but it is usable every 30 minutes, instead of every hour. *30 points.*

Ridiculous Luck is usable every 10 minutes! *60 points.*

Your luck only applies on rolls for your character to try to do something, 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!).

Luck cannot be shared. If Strong Sam is trying to kick open a door, Lucky Lou can't stand behind him and transfer his luck. He'll have to kick that door himself.

Once you use your Luck, you must wait an hour (30 minutes for Extraordinary Luck, 10 minutes for Ridiculous Luck) before using it again.

You cannot use Luck at 11:58 and then again at 12:01. And your Luck cannot be saved up. You cannot play for hours without using Luck and then use it several times in a row!

Musical Ability

1 point/level

You have a natural talent with music and musical instruments. Your level of musical ability is a bonus when you study Singing or an instrument. That is, when you learn a musical skill, you learn it as though your IQ were equal to (IQ + Musical Ability). This bonus also adds to HT for the Singing skill. Cost: 1 point for each +1 bonus.

Magical Aptitude (Magery)

15/25/35 points

You are a natural magic-user. When you learn any spell (see p. 30), you learn it as though your IQ were equal to your IQ plus your level of Magery. When you first *see* any magical object, and again when you first *touch* it, the GM rolls against your (IQ+Magery) to see if you notice that it is magic.

Level 1: 15 points; Level 2: 25 points; Level 3: 35 points.

Night Vision

10 points

Your eyes adapt rapidly to the darkness. You cannot see in *total* dark – but if you have any light at all, you can see fairly well. Whenever the GM exacts a penalty because of darkness, except for total darkness, this penalty does not apply to you.

Rapid Healing

5 or 15 points

This advantage is only available if your basic HT is 10 or above. You recover rapidly from all kinds of wounds. Whenever you roll to recover lost HT (p. 28), *or* when you roll to see if you can get over a crippling injury (p. 28), add 5 to your effective HT. This ability does not help you get over stunning or similar incapacities. Cost: *5 points.*

Very Rapid Healing: As above, but when recovering lost HT, a successful HT roll heals *two* hits, not one. Cost: *15 points.*

Resistant to Poison

5 points

Poison affects you less; +3 to HT to resist its effects.

Single-Minded

5 points

When you put your mind to something, you *concentrate!* You get a +3 bonus when working on lengthy tasks, but you may ignore other important tasks while obsessed (make a Will roll to avoid this). Roll at -5 to *notice* interruptions.

Strong Will

4 points/level

You have much more "willpower" than the average person. Your level of Will is added to your IQ when you make a Will roll (p. 24) for any reason, including any attempt to resist distraction, intimidation, seduction, torture, hypnosis, or mystical attempts to take over your mind. However, this advantage does not help against combat shock and the like. In questionable cases, the GM's ruling is law. Cost: 4 points per +1 bonus.

Toughness

10/25 points

Your skin and flesh are tougher than the average human's. Your body itself has a "Damage Resistance" (DR) score – see p. 18. This DR is treated just like the DR from armor: you subtract it from the damage done by any blow *before* you multiply the damage done by a cutting or impaling weapon.

Toughness does not let your skin "turn" weapons. They still break the skin – they may even draw blood. But you're not *hurt*. If a poisoned weapon breaks your skin, the poison will do its normal damage.

Cost: 10 points for DR 1, or 25 points for DR 2. Higher bodily DRs are not possible for "natural" humans.

DISADVANTAGES

These are problems acquired before the character first comes into play. As a rule, a character may only be given disadvantages when he is created.

Each disadvantage has a *negative* cost in character points – the worse the disadvantage, the higher this cost. Thus, disadvantages give you extra character points, which will let you improve your character in other ways. Besides, an imperfection or two makes your character more interesting and realistic, and adds to the fun of roleplaying.

It is possible to “buy off” certain disadvantages and get rid of them later on by spending points equal to the value of the disadvantage; see p. 21.

“Good” Disadvantages: Virtues such as Truthfulness and Sense of Duty are listed as “disadvantages” because they limit your freedom of action. For instance, a Truthful person will have trouble lying, even for a good cause. Therefore, within the framework of the game, several virtues are treated as “disadvantages.” Thus, if you want a wholly heroic character, you don’t have to take any “character flaws” at all. You can get points by choosing only those disadvantages that are actually virtuous!

Limiting Disadvantages: GMs should be careful how many disadvantages they allow players to take; too many disadvantages can turn your game into a circus. **A suggested limit: disadvantages should not total more than -40 points.** Negative social traits (poverty, ugliness, bad reputation, low Status, and so on), Dependents, Enemies, and points gained by reducing an attribute to less than 8 count against this limit. However, if only a single severe disadvantage is taken, it may have *any* cost.

Mental Problems: Many mental disadvantages let the afflicted character make IQ or Will rolls to avoid their bad effects. In these cases, any roll of 14 or over *still fails*. Otherwise, very smart or strong-willed people would be almost immune to their own bad habits – which isn’t the way life works!

Bad Sight -10/-25 points

You may be either nearsighted or farsighted – your choice. If you are nearsighted, you cannot read small print more than a foot away, or signs at more than about 10 yards. When using a weapon, you are at -2 to your skill rolls.

If you are farsighted, you cannot read a book except with great difficulty (triple the normal time), and you are at -3 DX on any close manual labor.

Any character at TL5 or higher can acquire glasses which will compensate totally for bad sight while they are worn; in the 20th century, contact lenses are available. Remember that eyewear can be lost or damaged while adventuring! For anyone starting at a tech level in which vision can be corrected, Bad Sight is worth only -10 points. For a character from a time in which vision cannot be corrected, Bad Sight is worth -25 points.

Bad Temper -10 points

You are not in full control of your emotions. In any stressful situation, you must make a Will roll. A failed roll means you lose your temper, and must insult, attack, or otherwise act against the cause of the stress.

Bully -10 points

You like to push people around whenever you can get away with it. Depending on your personality and position, this may take the form of physical attacks, intellectual harassment, or social “cutting.” Make a Will roll to avoid gross bullying when you know you shouldn’t – but to roleplay your character properly, you should bully anybody you can. Nobody likes a bully – others react to you at a -2.

Code of Honor -5 to -15 points

You take pride in a set of principles which you follow at all times. Codes of honor differ, but all require (by their own standards) “brave” and “honorable” behavior. A Code of Honor may also be called “pride,” “machismo”

or “face.” Under any name, it is the willingness to risk death rather than be thought dishonorable . . . whatever that means. Only one who truly follows the code may get points for it as a disadvantage.

A Code of Honor is a disadvantage because it will often require dangerous (if not reckless) behavior. Furthermore, an honorable person can often be forced into unfair situations, because his foes know he is honorable.

The point value of a specific Code varies, depending on just how much trouble it gets its followers into, and how arbitrary and irrational its requirements are. As a general rule, an informal code that applies only when among one’s peers (e.g., pirate’s or mercenary’s code) is worth -5 points, a formal code that applies only among peers (e.g., gentleman’s code) or an informal one that applies all the time (e.g., the code of the Merry Men) is worth -10 points, and a formal code of conduct that applies all the time (e.g., chivalry) or which requires suicide if broken (e.g., *bushido*), is worth -15 points. The GM has the final word!

Compulsive Behavior -5 to -15 points

You have a habit (usually, but not always, a vice) which you feel compelled to indulge on a daily basis. You waste a good deal of your time indulging your habit.

Examples of compulsive behavior include gambling, attraction to another person, arguing, or even fighting.

In general, a Will roll is required if the player wants his character to avoid the compulsion in a specific instance (or for a specific day). Note that it is very bad roleplaying to attempt to avoid the compulsion often!

The specific point value of the disadvantage depends on what the behavior is, how much money it costs, and how much trouble it is likely to get the PC into. The GM is the final judge.

Cowardice -10 points

You are extremely careful about your physical well-being. Any time you are called on to risk physical danger, you must roll against Will. If there is a risk of death, the roll is at a -5. If you fail the roll, you must refuse to endanger yourself – unless you are threatened with *greater* danger! Soldiers, police, and the like will react to you at -2 once they know you are a coward.

Gluttony -5 points

You are overfond of good food and drink. Given the chance, you must always burden yourself with extra provisions. You should never willingly miss a meal. Presented with a tempting morsel or good wine which, for some reason, you should resist, you must make a successful Will roll to do so. Gluttony is not a terrible weakness, but by its nature it will soon be obvious to everyone who meets you.

Greed -15 points

You lust for wealth. Any time riches are offered – as payment for fair work, gains from adventure, spoils of crime, or just bait – you must make a Will roll to avoid temptation. The Game Master may modify this roll if the money involved is small relative to your own wealth. Small amounts of money will not tempt a rich character (much), but a *poor* character will have to roll at -5 or even more if a rich prize is in the offing. *Honest* characters (see p. 12) roll at +5 to resist a shady deal and +10 to resist outright crime. However, almost any greedy character will eventually do something that is illegal.

Hard of Hearing -10 points

You are not deaf, but you have some hearing loss. You are at -4 to IQ on any Hearing roll (so your roll is IQ-4, rather than IQ). You are at -4 to your language skill roll (p. 17) for any situation where you must 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. You are compulsive about it; this is essentially another type of *Code of Honor* (see p. 11). This is a disadvantage, because it will often limit your options! Faced with unreasonable laws, you must roll against IQ to see the “need” to break them, and against Will to avoid turning yourself in afterward! If you ever behave dishonestly, the GM may penalize you for bad roleplaying.

You are allowed to lie if it does not involve breaking the law. *Truthfulness* (p. 13) is a separate disadvantage.

Impulsiveness

-10 points

You hate talk and debate. You prefer action! When you are alone, you will 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! If it is absolutely necessary to wait and ponder, you must make a Will roll to do so.

Jealousy

-10 points

You have an automatic bad reaction toward anyone who seems smarter, more attractive, or better-off than you! You will resist any plan proposed by a “rival,” and will *hate* it if someone else is in the limelight. If an NPC is Jealous, the GM will subtract 2 to 4 points from his reaction to the victim(s) of his jealousy.

Lame

-15/-25/-35 points

You have some degree of impaired mobility. The point bonus depends on the damage, as follows:

Crippled leg: You have one bad leg; your Move and Dodge (see p. 21) are reduced by 3. You suffer a -3 penalty to use any physical skill that requires walking or running. This definitely includes all hand weapon and bare-handed combat skills (missile weapon ability is unimpaired). **-15 points.**

One leg: You have lost a leg. You have a -6 penalty on any physical skill that requires the use of your legs. You cannot run; using crutches or a peg leg, you have a maximum Move of 2. (Otherwise, you cannot walk at all.) If you have access to TL6 (20th-century) prosthetics, you can reduce the effect to that of a crippled leg, but you must buy off the point difference in some way. (TL8+ technology could replace the leg, possibly with one that was better than the original, but then it’s no longer a disadvantage.) **-25 points.**

Legless or paraplegic: You are confined to a wheelchair or wheeled platform. If you power it with your own hands, its Speed is ¼ your ST, rounded down. Alternately, you may be carried piggyback or on a stretcher. The GM should assess all reasonable penalties for this handicap; e.g., you cannot pass through narrow doors, navigate staircases or steep curbs, travel except in specially equipped vehicles, fight effectively (except with guns or crossbows), and so on. If you have to fight with a hand weapon, you will be at -6 to skill. **-35 points.**

Laziness

-10 points

You are violently averse to physical labor. Your chances of getting a raise or promotion in *any* job are halved. If you are self-employed, your weekly income is halved. You must avoid work – especially hard work – at all costs. Roleplay it!

Miserliness

-10 points

Like *Greed* (p. 11), except that you are more concerned with holding on to what you already have. You may be both greedy *and* miserly! You must make a Will roll any time you are called on to spend money, and you must always hunt for the best deal possible. If the expenditure is large, the Will

roll may be at a -5 (or even greater) penalty. A failed roll means you will refuse to spend the money – or, if the money absolutely *must* be spent, you should haggle and complain interminably.

One Arm

-20 points

You have lost an arm (or you were born without it). It is assumed that you lost the left arm if you were right-handed, or vice versa. You cannot use a sword and shield simultaneously, or any two-handed weapon, or do anything requiring two arms. Anything requiring only one hand can be done without penalty. In borderline cases, it is best to allow the character to attempt the action at a -4 DX penalty, or try a quick reality check if possible!

One Eye

-15 points

You have only one good eye; you may wear a glass eye, or cover the missing eye with a patch. You suffer a -1 DX penalty on combat and anything involving hand-eye coordination, and a -3 to use missile weapons, throw objects or drive any vehicle faster than a horse and buggy. You will also suffer a -1 on any reaction roll except with utterly alien creatures. *Exception:* If you have Charisma, or are Handsome or Very Handsome, the patch just looks romantic, and does not affect reaction rolls.



Overconfidence

-10 points

You think you are far more powerful, intelligent, and competent than you really are, and you should act that way. Any time (in the GM’s opinion) you show too much caution, you must roll against IQ. A failed roll means you can’t be cautious . . . you must go ahead as though you were able to handle the situation. An overconfident character will get +2 on all reaction rolls from the young or naive (they believe he’s as good as he says he is), but -2 from experienced NPCs. This requires roleplaying. An overconfident person may be proud and boastful, or just quietly determined – but play it up!

Pacifism

-15 points

You are opposed to violence. There are two different forms:

Self-defense only: You will only fight to defend yourself or those in your care, using only as much force as may be necessary (no pre-emptive strikes allowed!). You must do your best to discourage others from starting fights. **-15 points.**

Cannot kill: You may fight freely, and even *start* a fight, but you may never do anything that seems likely to kill another. This includes abandoning a wounded foe to die. You must do your best to keep your companions from killing, too. If you kill someone (or feel responsible for a death), you immediately suffer a nervous breakdown. Roll 3 dice and be totally morose and useless (roleplay it!) for that many days. During this time, you must make a Will roll to offer any sort of violence toward *anyone*, for *any* reason. **-15 points.**

Phobias

Variable

A “phobia” is a fear of a specific item, creature, or circumstance. Many fears are reasonable, but a phobia is an unreasonable, unreasoning, morbid fear. 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 Will roll . . . but the fear persists. Even if you master a phobia, you will be at -2 IQ and -2 DX 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 a Will roll to overcome a phobia, you will cringe, flee, panic, or otherwise react in a manner that precludes sensible action.

If a phobia victim is threatened with the feared object, he must immediately roll at +4 to Will; if enemies actually inflict the feared object on him, he must roll versus Will. If the roll is failed, the victim breaks down, but does not necessarily talk.

Some common phobias: blood (hemophobia; -10 points), crowds (demophobia; -15 points), darkness (scotophobia; -15 points), dogs (cynophobia; -5 points), enclosed spaces (claustrophobia; -15 points), heights (acrophobia; -10 points), number 13 (triskaidekaphobia; -5 points), open spaces (agoraphobia; -10 points), spiders (arachnophobia; -5 points), strange and unknown things (xenophobia; -15 points).

Primitive -5 points per Tech Level

You are from a culture with a *lower* Tech Level (see p. 32) than that of the campaign. You have no knowledge (or default skill) relating to equipment above your own TL. You can start only with skills or equipment from your own culture.

The value of this disadvantage is -5 points for each TL by which your native TL is less than that of the campaign.

You may not acquire Mental skills relating to high-tech equipment until you buy off this disadvantage. Physical skills (driving, weaponry, and so on) may be acquired at no penalty if you find a teacher.

Pyromania -5 points

You like fires! You like to *set* fires, too. For good roleplaying, you must never miss a chance to set a fire, or to appreciate one you encounter. When absolutely necessary, make a Will roll to override your love of flame.

Sense of Duty -5/-10/-15/-20 points

You suffer from a self-imposed feeling of duty. If you feel a sense of duty toward someone, you will never betray them, abandon them when they're in trouble, or even let them suffer or go hungry if you can help. If you are known to have a sense of duty, others will react to you at a +2 to trust you in a dangerous situation. If you have a sense of duty, and go against it by acting against the interests of those you are supposed to feel duty toward, the GM will penalize you for bad roleplaying.

The player defines the group toward which the character feels the sense of duty, and the GM sets its point value. Examples: only toward close friends and companions (-5 points), toward a nation or other large group (-10 points), toward everyone you know personally (-10 points), toward all humanity (-15 points), toward every living being (-20 points).

Stubbornness -5 points

You always want your own way. Make yourself generally hard to get along with – roleplay it! Your friends may have to make a lot of Fast-Talk rolls to get you to go along with perfectly reasonable plans. Others react to you at -1.

Truthfulness -5 points

You hate to tell a lie – or you're just bad at it. To keep silent about an uncomfortable truth (lying by omission), you must make a Will roll. To actually *tell* a falsehood, you must make a Will roll at a -5 penalty! A failed roll means you blurt out the truth, or stumble so much that your lie is obvious.

Vow -1 to -15 points

You have sworn an oath to do (or not do) something. You take this oath seriously. If you didn't, it would not be a disadvantage. The precise value of a Vow is up to the GM, but should be directly related to the inconvenience it causes the character. A *Trivial Vow*, like "Always wear red," is a -1 point *quirk* (see below). A *Minor Vow*, like vegetarianism, is worth -5 points. A *Major Vow*, like, "Use no edged weapons," is worth -10 points. A *Great Vow*, such as "Always fight with the wrong hand," is worth -15 points.

Weak Will -8 points/level

You are easily persuaded, frightened, bullied, coerced, tempted and so on. For every level taken, your IQ is effectively reduced by 1 whenever you make a Will roll (p. 24), including attempts to resist distraction, seduction, torture, mind control, and so on. Weak Will also affects all attempts to master phobias and avoid giving in to mental problems.

A character cannot have both Strong and Weak Will.

Youth -2 to -6 points

You are underage by your culture's standards: 1 to 3 years underage, at -2 points per year. You suffer a -2 reaction roll whenever you try to deal with others as an adult; they may like you, but they do not fully respect you. You may also be barred from nightclubs, vehicle operation, war parties, guild membership, and so on, depending on the game world. You *must* keep track of time, and "buy off" this disability when you reach "legal age" (usually 18) for your society.

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 each . . . so, if you do, you will have 5 more points to spend on other things. These do *not* count against the maximum number of disadvantage points allowed in your campaign.

The only drawback to a quirk is this: you *must* roleplay it. If you take the quirk "dislike of heights," but blithely climb trees and cliffs whenever you need to, the GM will penalize you for bad roleplaying. The points you lose this way will cost you much more than you earned for taking the quirk. So don't choose a quirk you aren't willing to play!

Examples of quirks include beliefs and goals, likes and dislikes, habits, expressions, peculiarities of dress, and so on.

SKILLS

A "skill" is a particular kind of knowledge. Karate, auto mechanics and the English language are all skills.

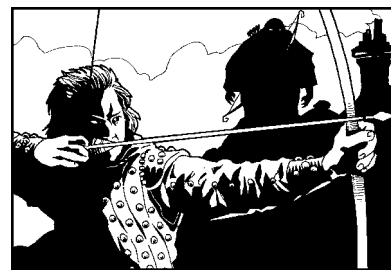
Each of your skills is represented by a number called a *skill level*; the higher the number, the greater the skill. When you try to do something, you (or the GM) will roll 3 dice against the appropriate skill, modified as the GM sees fit for that particular situation. If the number you roll is *less than or equal to* your (modified) score for that skill, you succeed! But a roll of 17 or 18 is an automatic failure.

Certain skills are different at different *tech levels* ("TL" for short). Such skills are designated by /TL. See p. 32 for more on tech levels.

Learning Skills

To learn or improve a skill, you must spend character points. Skills are divided into *mental* and *physical*. The tables below show the point cost to learn each skill.

The first column shows the skill level you are trying to attain, *relative to the controlling attribute*. This is usually DX for physical skills and IQ for mental ones; exceptions are noted in individual skill descriptions. If your DX is 12, then a level of "DX-1" would be 11, "DX" would be 12, "DX+1" would be 13, and so on.



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

PHYSICAL SKILLS

| Your Final Skill Level | Difficulty of Skill | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Easy | Average | Hard |
| DX-3 | – | – | ½ point |
| DX-2 | – | ½ point | 1 point |
| DX-1 | ½ point | 1 point | 2 points |
| DX | 1 point | 2 points | 4 points |
| DX+1 | 2 points | 4 points | 8 points |
| DX+2 | 4 points | 8 points | 16 points |
| DX+3 | 8 points | 16 points | 24 points |
| DX+4 | 16 points | 24 points | 32 points |

MENTAL SKILLS

| Your Final Skill Level | Difficulty of Skill | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| | Easy | Average | Hard | Very Hard |
| IQ-4 | – | – | – | ½ point |
| IQ-3 | – | – | ½ point | 1 point |
| IQ-2 | – | ½ point | 1 point | 2 points |
| IQ-1 | ½ point | 1 point | 2 points | 4 points |
| IQ | 1 point | 2 points | 4 points | 8 points |
| IQ+1 | 2 points | 4 points | 6 points | 12 points |
| IQ+2 | 4 points | 6 points | 8 points | 16 points |

Further increases follow the same progressions: 8 additional points per level for physical skills, 4 per level for Very Hard mental skills, 2 per level for other mental skills.

Limit on Beginning Skills

The *maximum* number of character points a starting character can spend on skills is equal to twice his age. For instance, an 18-year-old could apply no more than 36 points to skills. This limit does not apply to skills added after a character is created.

Skill Defaults

Most skills have a “default level.” This is the level at which you perform the skill *without training*. Nobody can know every skill; a default roll can save your life. A skill has a default level if it is something that everybody can do . . . a little bit.

For instance, the “default” for Lockpicking is IQ-5. If your IQ is 11, and you have to pick a lock, you can do it on a roll of 6 or less. Why? Because 11 minus 5 is 6, so 6 is your “default” skill at Lockpicking. You fumble around with the lock, sliding a credit card around the latch like the detective in a movie you saw once . . . and sometimes it works!

Some skills (especially Very Hard ones) have *no* default.

List of Skills

The listing for each skill gives the following information:

Name. The name of the skill. If the skill varies at different tech levels, this will also be shown – e.g., “Blacksmith/TL.”

Type. The variety of skill (mental or physical) and its difficulty (Easy, Average, Hard, or Very Hard).

Defaults. The basic attribute(s) to which the skill defaults if the skill itself is not known – for instance, “DX-6”. If there is more than one possible default, use the one that gives the highest default level.

Description. A *brief* description of what the skill is used for and when (or how often) to roll. The GM should permit routine tasks to be performed on a straight skill roll; more or less difficult tasks, or adverse or favorable conditions, will result in modifiers to skill – set at the GM’s discretion.

Acrobatics (Physical/Hard)

DX-6

This is the ability to perform acrobatic and gymnastic stunts, roll, take falls, and so on. A separate skill roll is required for each trick you attempt.

Acting (Mental/Average)

IQ-5

The ability to counterfeit moods, emotions and voices, and to lie convincingly over a period of time. Roll a Quick Contest versus the IQ of each person you wish to fool.

Animal Handling (Mental/Hard)

IQ-6

This is the ability to train and work with all types of animals. Daily rolls are required when training an animal.

Area Knowledge (Mental/Easy) IQ-4 for area residents only

The skill of familiarity with the people, politics, and geography of a given area. Roll for each piece of knowledge required.

Armoury/TL (Mental/Average)

IQ-5

The ability to build and repair weapons and armor at the appropriate tech level. Roll to make, repair, or find a problem with a weapon.

Artist (Mental/Hard)

IQ-6

The ability to draw and paint with both accuracy and beauty. Roll once per work.

Bard (Mental/Average)

IQ-5

The ability to tell stories and to speak extemporaneously. Also called *Public Speaking*. Roll once per speech or story.

Blacksmith/TL (Mental/Average)

IQ-5

The ability to work nonprecious metals by hand, given the right tools. Roll once per hour of work.

Boxing (Physical/Average)

No default

Formal training in fisticuffs. When you punch, roll against Boxing skill to see if you hit, and add ½ of your skill (round down) to damage. You may use your bare hands to parry attacks at ⅔ of Boxing skill (at a penalty of -2 for kicks, -3 for nonthrusting weapons).

Brawling (Physical/Easy)

No default

The skill of unscientific, unarmed combat. When you punch or kick, roll vs. Brawling to hit, and add ⅓ of your skill (round down) to damage. You may parry *bare-handed* attacks at ⅔ skill.

Camouflage (Mental/Easy)

IQ-4

The ability to use natural material or paints to disguise yourself, your equipment, your position, and so on. Roll once per person, vehicle, or campsite hidden.

Carpentry (Mental/Easy)

IQ-4 or DX-4

The ability to build things out of wood, given the right tools. Roll once per hour of work.

Climbing (Physical/Average)

DX-5 or ST-5

The ability to climb mountains, rock walls, trees, the sides of buildings, and so on. Roll once to start a climb; long climbs may require more rolls. See p. 23.

Computer Operation/TL (Mental/Easy)

IQ-4

The ability to operate a computer. Roll whenever you need to call up data, run a program, or perform any similar task.

Computer Programming/TL (Mental/Hard) No default

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

Cooking (Mental/Easy) IQ-4

The ability to prepare a pleasing meal from basic ingredients. Roll once per meal.

Criminology/TL (Mental/Average) IQ-4

The study of crime and the criminal mind. Roll to find and interpret clues, guess how criminals might behave, and so on.

Dancing (Physical/Average) DX-5

The ability to perform dances appropriate to your own culture and learn new dances quickly. Roll once per performance.

Demolition/TL (Mental/Average) IQ-5

The ability to blow things up with explosives. A Demolition roll is necessary whenever you use explosives.

Diagnosis/TL (Mental/Hard) IQ-6

The ability to tell what is wrong with a sick or injured person, or what killed a dead person. Roll once per diagnosis.

Disguise (Mental/Average) IQ-5

The ability to make yourself look like someone else. Roll a Quick Contest of Skills (Disguise vs. IQ) for each person (or group) that your disguise must fool.

Electronics/TL (Mental/Hard) No default

The ability to design and build electronic apparatus. A successful roll will let you identify the purpose of a strange device, diagnose a glitch, perform a repair, or design a new system.

Electronics Operation/TL (Mental/Average) IQ-5

The ability to use electronics gear. For normal, everyday use of equipment, no skill roll is required. Rolls should only be required in emergency situations.

Engineer/TL (Mental/Hard) No default

The ability to design and build complex machinery. A successful roll lets you identify the purpose of strange machinery, diagnose a problem, perform a repair, or design new machinery.

Escape (Physical/Hard) DX-6

The ability to get free from ropes, handcuffs, and similar bonds. The first attempt to escape takes one minute; each subsequent attempt takes 10 minutes.

First Aid/TL (Mental/Easy) Defaults to IQ-5

The ability to patch up an injury in the field (see p. 28). Roll once per injury.

Forensics/TL (Mental/Hard) No default

The general science of “laboratory” criminology. Roll to analyze each piece of physical evidence.

Forgery/TL (Mental/Hard) IQ-6 or DX-8

The ability to produce a fake passport, banknote, or similar document. Roll once per forgery.

Gambling (Mental/Average) IQ-5

The skill of playing games of chance. A successful Gambling roll can tell you if a game is rigged, identify a fellow gambler in a group of strangers, or “estimate the odds” in a tricky situation.

Hand Weapon (Physical/Varies) Defaults vary

Each class of hand weapons requires a separate physical skill; roll against this when attacking. Most hand weapons may also *parry* (p. 26); this is done at ½ skill unless noted. Assume that P/E weapon skills default to DX-4, P/A ones to DX-5 and P/H ones to DX-6. Skills include:

Axe/Mace (P/A): Any short or middle-sized, unbalanced, one-handed weapon, such as an axe, mace, or pick.

Blackjack (P/E): The blackjack or sap. May not parry.

Broadsword (P/A): Any 2- to 4-foot, balanced, one-handed weapon, such as a broadsword or baseball bat.

Fencing (P/A): The rapier, smallsword, and saber. Parry is ⅔ Fencing skill, not ½. Your encumbrance must be Light or less to use Fencing.

Flail (P/H): Any unbalanced weapon with the head attached to the handle by chain or rope, such as a flail, morningstar, or nunchaku. Any attempt to block a flail weapon is at -2; any attempt to parry it is at -4, and knives and fencing weapons cannot parry flails at all!

Force Sword (P/A): A weapon which produces a short beam of energy and is wielded as a sword. A typical TL11 force sword has a reach of 1, does 8d cutting damage (4 impaling), costs \$3,000, weighs 2 lbs. and looks like a flashlight until it’s turned on. It takes one turn to activate, one more turn for the beam to form and stabilize. Its power cell lasts about 5 minutes.

Knife (P/E): Any knife, dagger, or stiletto.

Knife Throwing (P/E): Throwing any throwable knife.

Polearm (P/A): Any very long, unbalanced pole weapon, such as a poleaxe, glaive, or halberd.

Shortsword (P/A): Any balanced, one-handed weapon, 1-2 feet long, such as the shortsword, baton, or billy club.

Spear (P/A): Any sort of spear, javelin, fixed bayonet, pike, or similar long, light, pointed weapon.

Staff (P/H): Any quarterstaff or improvised pole like a quarterstaff, used in two hands. Parry is ⅔ skill, not ½.

Two-Handed Axe/Mace (P/A): Any long, unbalanced, two-handed weapon, such as a battleaxe or maul.

Two-Handed Sword (P/A): Any long (4- to 5-foot), balanced, two-handed weapon.

Holdout (Mental/Average) IQ-5

The skill of concealing items on your person or the persons of others, or finding such hidden items. Roll once per item.

Humanities (Mental/Hard) IQ-6

Each academic “humanity” or “arts” subject (such as History, Literature, Philosophy, or Theology) is a separate Mental/Hard skill that defaults to IQ-6. Roll versus skill to recall references, perform critical analysis, etc.

Influence Skills (Mental/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 (M/H): Negotiation and compromise. Defaults to IQ-6.

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

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

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

Sex Appeal (M/A; based on HT, not IQ): Vamping and seduction, usually of the opposite sex. Defaults to HT-3.

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

Interrogation (Mental/Average) IQ-5

The ability to question a prisoner. To do so, you must win a Contest of Skills: your Interrogation skill vs. the prisoner’s Will.

Jumping (Physical/Easy) No default

This is the trained ability to use your strength to its best advantage when you jump (see p. 22). Roll once per jump.

Karate (Physical/Hard) No default

The skill of *trained* punching and kicking. When you punch or kick, use Karate skill rather than DX to determine the odds of hitting, and add 1/3 of your skill level (round down) to damage. You may also parry attacks (even weapons) at 2/3 skill. Your encumbrance must be Light or less to use Karate.

Law (Mental/Hard) IQ-6

A successful Law roll lets you remember, deduce, or figure out the answer to a question about the law. An actual trial is handled as a Quick Contest of Law skills.

Leadership (Mental/Average) ST-5

The ability to coordinate a group in a dangerous or stressful situation. Roll to lead NPCs into a dangerous situation.

Lockpicking/TL (Mental/Average) IQ-5

This is the ability to open locks without the key or combination. Each attempt to open a lock requires one minute and a skill roll; cracking a safe may take considerably longer!

Masonry (Physical/Easy) IQ-3

The ability to build things out of brick or stone, given the right tools. Roll once per hour of work.

Mechanic/TL (Mental/Average) IQ-5

The ability to diagnose and fix ordinary mechanical problems in machines of your TL. Roll once per diagnosis or repair.

Merchant (Mental/Average) IQ-5

The ability to act as a “trader,” buying and selling merchandise. A successful skill roll lets you judge the value of common goods, locate markets and so on.

Meteorology/TL (Mental/Average) IQ-5

The study of the weather and the ability to predict it, given the appropriate instruments. Roll once per prediction.

Missile Weapon (Physical/Varies) Default varies

Missile weapons are ranged weapons that launch projectiles, as distinct from *thrown* weapons (see p. 27). Each general class requires a separate skill; roll against this when attacking. P/E skills default to DX-4, P/A ones to DX-5, and P/H ones to DX-6. Add 1 to your skill for an IQ of 10-11, and 2 for an IQ of 12+, when using any missile weapon skill labeled with “/TL.”

Missile weapon skills include:

Beam Weapons/TL (P/E): Any beam-type weapon, such as a blaster, laser, or stunner.

Black Powder Weapons/TL (P/E): Any black-powder weapon, including the musket, pistol, and rifle.

Bow (P/H): The longbow, shortbow and all similar bows, as well as the modern compound bow.

Crossbow (P/E): All types of crossbow, including the “prodd,” which fires pellets rather than bolts.

Guns/TL (P/E): Each type of 20th-century, cartridge-type gunpowder weapon is a separate *Guns* skill. Types include pistol, rifle, shotgun, and light automatic weapon.

Sling (P/H): The sling and staff sling.

Musical Instrument (Mental/Hard) No default

The ability to play a musical instrument. Each instrument is a separate version of this skill. Roll once per performance.

Natural Sciences (Mental/Hard) IQ-6

Each specialty (such as Botany, Chemistry, Geology, Physics, or Zoology) is a separate Mental/Hard skill that defaults to IQ-6. Roll versus skill to recall general knowledge within the field, analyze data, perform lab work, and so on.

Naturalist (Mental/Hard) IQ-6

A general knowledge of animals and plants, and of nature in its various forms. Roll to identify plants, animals, and so on.

Navigation/TL (Mental/Hard) No default

Ability to find position by the stars, ocean currents, etc. A successful roll will tell you where you are, at sea, or on land.

Occultism (Mental/Average) IQ-6

The study of the mysterious and supernatural. Roll to identify each magical or mystical belief or ritual.

Photography/TL (Mental/Average) IQ-5

The ability to use a camera competently, use a darkroom, and so on. Roll once per roll of film shot or developed.

Physician/TL (Mental/Hard) IQ-7

The general professional ability to aid the sick, prescribe drugs and care, etc. This is the skill to use if the GM requires a single roll to test general medical competence or knowledge.

Pickpocket (Physical/Hard) DX-6

The ability to steal a small object (purse, knife, etc.) from someone’s person. Roll once per theft; if the target is alert, treat this as a Quick Contest vs. the target’s IQ.

Research (Mental/Average) IQ-5

General skill at library or electronic research. A successful Research roll in an appropriate place of research will let you find a useful piece of data, if that information is to be found.

Riding (Physical/Average) DX-5

The skill of riding a beast. A different version of this skill must be learned for each *animal type*. Roll once when the beast is first mounted and again any time a difficult situation is encountered while riding.

Running (Physical/Hard) No default

This skill is based on HT, not DX. It represents training in sprints and long-distance running. If you have studied this skill, divide your skill level by 8 (don’t round down) and add the result to your Speed for the purpose of calculating your Move score (this affects land movement only). See p. 22 for details.

Shadowing (Mental/Average)

The ability to follow another person through a crowd without being noticed. Roll a Quick Contest of Skill every 10 minutes: your Shadowing vs. the subject's Vision roll. If you lose, you lose the target – or he spots you!

IQ-6**Shield (Physical/Easy)**

The ability to use a medieval-type shield or police riot shield. The active defense from a shield – your Block score (p. 26) – is equal to *half* your Shield skill.

DX-4**Singing (Physical/Easy)**

Study of this skill is based on HT, not DX. This is the ability to sing in a pleasing fashion. Roll once per performance.

HT-4**Social Sciences (Mental/Hard)**

Each “social science” (e.g., Anthropology, Archaeology, Psychology or Sociology) is a separate Mental/Hard skill that defaults to IQ-6. Roll versus skill to recall general knowledge within the field, identify traits that characterize an individual, culture or society (as applicable), and so on.

IQ-6**Stealth (Physical/Average)**

The ability to hide and to move silently. Roll a Quick Contest of Skills between your Stealth and the Hearing roll of anyone you're trying to hide from.

IQ-5 or DX-5**Survival (Mental/Average)**

Ability to “live off the land,” find food and water, avoid hazards, build shelter, etc. A different Survival skill is required for each type of terrain. Roll once per day in a wilderness situation.

IQ-5**Swimming (Physical/Easy)**

This skill is used both for swimming and for saving a drowning victim. Roll once per swim, dive, or lifesaving attempt. See p. 23.

ST-5 or DX-4**Tactics (Mental/Hard)**

The ability to outguess the enemy when the fight is man-to-man or in small groups. A successful Tactics roll during a battle will sometimes (GM's discretion) allow you information about immediate enemy plans.

IQ-6**Teaching (Mental/Average)**

The ability to instruct others. The GM may require one or more skill rolls to teach another character a skill.

IQ-5**Throwing (Physical/Hard)**

The ability to throw whatever you can pick up. It helps both accuracy (roll against Throwing skill to throw anything you can lift) and distance (add 1/6 of Throwing skill to ST when determining distance). Roll once per throw. See p. 23.

No default**Thrown Weapon (Physical/Easy)**

The ability to throw any one type of *throwable* weapon. This skill is different for each type of weapon; e.g., Knife Throwing, Axe Throwing, Spear Throwing, and so on.

DX-4**Tracking (Mental/Average)**

The ability to follow a man or animal by its tracks. Make one Tracking roll to pick up the trail, and one further roll for every 5 minutes of travel.

IQ-5**Traps/TL (Mental/Average)**

The skill of building and avoiding traps and detection devices. Roll to build, detect, disarm, or reset a trap.

IQ-5 or DX-5**Vehicle Skills (Physical/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 (P/E)*, *Boating (P/A)* for rowboats and sailboats, *Driving (P/A)* for cars, *Motorcycle (P/E)* for motorbikes, *Piloting (P/A)* for aircraft, and *Powerboat (P/A)* for motorboats.

Writing (Mental/Average)**IQ-5**

This is the ability to write in a clear and/or entertaining manner. Roll once per article, or daily for long works.

Languages

Languages are treated as skills. The *Language Talent* advantage (p. 10), makes it easier to learn languages.

Language Skills (Mental/Varies)**No default**

Each language is a separate Mental skill. Your native language skill starts out equal to your IQ, and costs only 1 point per level to improve. Other languages are improved like any other skill. Difficulty of languages varies:

Easy: Pidgin English, Esperanto, and the like.

Average: Most languages – French, Chinese, Elvish, Rumanian, etc.

Hard: Basque, Navajo, and most alien languages.

Very Hard: Alien languages which cannot be pronounced with your natural vocal equipment or simple mechanical aids.

When two people try to communicate in a language that is *not* the native language of one or both parties, roll against language skill to understand or be understood.

Gesture (Mental/Easy)**IQ-4**

The ability to communicate through simple, improvised hand signals. Roll once to communicate each *general* concept.

Sign Language (Mental/Average)**No default**

Any of the many true languages of gesture. Each form of sign language is a separate skill, and treated like any other language skill.

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.

A Note on Buying Things: You start with money equal to the campaign starting wealth, modified by your personal wealth level (see p. 7). 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 (the sample character on p. 4 has a few items you won't find on the tables below, for instance). Subtract the price of each item you buy from your starting wealth to determine how much money you have left.

Armor

Armor is vital in combat situations. Heavy armor gives the best protection, but it slows you down! Another limitation is your wealth; the best armor is very expensive.

Armor protects you in two ways. Its *passive defense* (PD) adds to your defense roll when you wear it. Its *damage resistance* (DR) protects you when you get hit. In both cases, higher numbers are better; see p. 26.

Armor Stats

For each type of armor, the following information is listed:

General Description: The item's name and how it is used.

Passive Defense (PD): This adds to your defense roll, and represents the fact that some blows will bounce off the armor. PD of armor normally ranges from 1 to 6.

Damage Resistance (DR): This is the amount of protection the item gives, in terms of hits subtracted from a blow which strikes you; e.g., if you are hit while wearing DR 6 armor, and the attacker rolls 8 points of damage, only 2 will affect you.

Weight: This is given in pounds; it adds to your total *encumbrance* (see *Speed, Encumbrance, and Move*, below).

Cost: The price of the armor in \$.

| Type | TL | PD | DR | Cost | Weight |
|---------------------|-----|----|-----|---------|--------|
| Ordinary clothing | any | 0 | 0 | varies! | 1 |
| Padded cloth armor | 1-4 | 1 | 1 | \$180 | 14 |
| Leather jacket†† | 1-8 | 1 | 1 | \$50 | 4 |
| Light leather armor | 1-4 | 1 | 1 | \$210 | 10 |
| Heavy leather armor | 1-4 | 2 | 2 | \$350 | 20 |
| Chainmail | 3-4 | 3* | 4* | \$550 | 45 |
| Scale armor | 2-4 | 3 | 4 | \$750 | 50 |
| Half plate** | 2-4 | 4 | 5 | \$2,000 | 70 |
| Light plate** | 3-4 | 4 | 6 | \$4,000 | 90 |
| Heavy plate** | 3-4 | 4 | 7 | \$6,000 | 110 |
| Flak jacket† | 6 | 2 | 3 | \$220 | 17 |
| Kevlar (light) | 7 | 2* | 4* | \$220 | 5 |
| Kevlar (heavy) | 7 | 2* | 12* | \$420 | 9 |
| Light body armor | 7+ | 4 | 15 | \$270 | 22 |
| Medium body armor | 8+ | 6 | 25 | \$1,520 | 32 |
| Heavy body armor | 9+ | 6 | 50 | \$2,520 | 52 |

* PD 1, DR 2 vs. impaling.

** All combat skills at -1 due to helm; Vision and Hearing at -3.

† Protects torso only. †† Protects torso and arms only.

Shields

Shields are very valuable in low-tech combat; they can protect the user both actively and passively. First, a shield will stop many blows automatically, with no particular effort on the part of the user. The bigger the shield, the better it does this. This is the shield's *passive defense* (PD). Second, you may also deliberately try to "block" a blow. This is an *active defense* (see p. 26).

A shield has no "damage resistance" – it does not reduce the damage from any blow that hits you. It makes you hard to hit, by active and passive defense, but that's all!

Weapons

The weapons you carry should be determined first by your skills, and then by your strength and budget. If you can't use it, don't buy it. High-tech weapons (like guns) will work for anyone who knows how to use them. Low-tech weapons, such as clubs and swords, do more damage when wielded by a strong person.

Basic Weapon Damage

Basic damage is the impact damage a weapon does, before its point or cutting edge is considered. Your basic damage depends on your ST. Damage is shown as "dice+adds" (see p. 2). For example, "2d+1" means that you roll two dice and add 1 to the result. Thus, a roll of 7 would mean 8 hits of damage.

Types of Attack

There are two main types of weapon attack: *thrusting* and *swinging*. A swinging attack does more damage, because the weapon acts as a lever to multiply your ST. The following table shows how much basic damage each type of weapon does, according to the user's ST. The columns show the number of dice rolled to determine damage.

Damage Types and Damage Bonus

Weapons do three basic types of damage: *impaling*, *cutting*, and *crushing*.

Impaling weapons are those that strike with a sharp point. When you hit with an impaling weapon, the damage that gets through the armor is *doubled*.

Cutting weapons strike with an edge. When you hit with a cutting weapon, all damage that gets through the target's armor is *increased by 50%*, rounded down.

Crushing weapons strike with a blunt surface. They score no bonus damage.

Minimum Damage: If you hit with a cutting or impaling attack, or a bullet, you always get at least one hit of basic damage before any DR is subtracted. Thus, if you strike with a dagger for "1d-4" damage, and roll a 2, you still do 1 hit of damage. However, if you hit the foe with a crushing attack, you *can* do zero damage.

Maximum Damage: Some weapons, especially impaling weapons such as daggers, can only do so much damage on any one blow, no matter how strong the user is.

| ST | Thrusting | Swinging |
|-----------|-----------|----------|
| 4 or less | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | 1d-5 | 1d-5 |
| 6 | 1d-4 | 1d-4 |
| 7 | 1d-3 | 1d-3 |
| 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 |

Recording Weapon Stats

Cost and *Weight* are copied directly from the *Weapon Tables* onto your character sheet (see p. 4).

Minimum Strength is the minimum ST required to use the weapon properly. You may still fight with a weapon if you are too weak for it, but for every point of ST by which you are too weak, you will be at -1 to your weapon skill.

Damage is also copied from the *Weapon Table*. Some weapons can be used in different ways. For instance, some swords can be swung for a cutting attack or thrust for an impaling attack. Before you strike with such a weapon, specify how you are attacking. To calculate damage, take your basic damage for that type of attack, and add the damage shown on the table for your weapon. If your ST is 10, your basic swinging damage is 1d; so if a broadsword does "swing+1," your damage with a broadsword is 1d+1.

Ranged Weapons: If you have a "ranged" weapon (anything that can be thrown or fired), see p. 27. Copy the stats from the *Ranged Weapon Table*. Only Max. (maximum range) is used in *GURPS Lite*.

Speed, Encumbrance, and Move

Your *Speed* score (or *Basic Speed*) determines your reaction time and running speed. It is figured from your HT and DX attributes, and shows how fast you can run without encumbrance (see below). An average person has a Speed of 5 – that is, with no encumbrance, he runs about 5 yards per second.

Add your HT and DX together. Divide the total by 4. The result is your Basic Speed Score; don't round it off! If (for instance) your Basic Speed is 5.25, your unencumbered movement is 5 yards per second. But there will be times when a 5.25 is better than a 5!

ANCIENT/MEDIEVAL HAND WEAPON TABLE

Weapons are listed in groups, according to the skill required to use them.

Weapons which can be used in two ways (for instance, a shortsword can either cut or impale) have two lines – one for each type of attack.

“Type” is the type of damage (p. 18) the weapon does.

“Damage” is the die roll (p. 18) for the damage done to the foe.

“Reach” indicates the distance at which the weapon can be used if you are playing with figures on a combat map marked off in hexagons; this stat is not used in *GURPS Lite* but is retained to keep this table consistent with the one in *GURPS*.

Weight includes the weight of a scabbard for swords, knives, and the like.

“Min ST” is “minimum strength.” If you are weaker than this, your skill is at -1 for every point of difference . . . the weapon is too big for you!

| Weapon | Type | Damage | Reach | Cost | Weight | Min ST | Special Notes |
|--|------------------|--------|-------|-------|---------|--------|---|
| AXE/MACE (DX-5) † | | | | | | | |
| Axe | cut | sw+2 | 1 | \$50 | 4 lbs. | 12 | 1 turn to ready. |
| Mace | cr | sw+3 | 1 | \$50 | 5 lbs. | 12 | 1 turn to ready. |
| BLACKJACK (DX-4) | | | | | | | |
| Blackjack or sap | cr | thr | C | \$20 | 1 lb. | 7 | May not parry. |
| BROADSWORD (DX-5, Shortsword-2 or Force Sword -3) See p. 15 for Force Sword stats. | | | | | | | |
| Broadsword | cut | sw+1 | 1 | \$500 | 3 lbs. | 10 | Standard broadsword has <i>blunt</i> point. |
| | cr | thr+1 | 1 | | | | |
| Light club | cr | sw+1 | 1 | \$10 | 3 lbs. | 10 | |
| FENCING (DX-5) See p. 26 for fencing parry rules. | | | | | | | |
| Smallsword | imp | thr+1 | 1 | \$400 | 1 lb. | – | Maximum damage 1d+1. |
| Rapier | imp | thr+1 | 1, 2 | \$500 | 1½ lbs. | – | Maximum damage 1d+1. |
| Saber | cut | sw | 1 | \$700 | 2 lbs. | 7 | Thrust: maximum damage 1d+2. |
| | imp | thr+1 | 1 | | | | |
| FLAIL (DX-6) Any attempt to <i>parry</i> a flail weapon is at a -4. Fencing weapons <i>cannot</i> parry flails. † | | | | | | | |
| Morningstar | cr | sw+3 | 1 | \$80 | 6 lbs. | 12 | 1 turn to ready. |
| Flail | cr | sw+4 | 1, 2* | \$100 | 8 lbs. | 13 | 2-handed. 1 turn to ready. |
| KNIFE (DX-4) | | | | | | | |
| Large knife | cut | sw-2 | C, 1 | \$40 | 1 lb. | – | Maximum damage 1d+2. Throwable; Maximum damage 1d+2. |
| | imp | thr | C | | | | |
| Small knife | cut | sw-3 | C, 1 | \$30 | ½ lb. | – | Maximum damage 1d+1. Throwable; Maximum damage 1d+1. |
| | imp | thr-1 | C | | | | |
| Dagger | imp | thr-1 | C | \$20 | ¼ lb. | – | Throwable; Maximum damage 1d. |
| POLEARM (DX-5) All polearms require 2 hands. | | | | | | | |
| Glaive | cut | sw+3 | 2, 3* | \$100 | 8 lbs. | 11 | 2 turns to ready. 1 turn to ready after thrust. |
| | imp | thr+3 | 1-3* | | | | |
| Poleaxe | cut <i>or</i> cr | sw+4 | 2, 3* | \$120 | 10 lbs. | 12 | 2 turns to ready after swing. |
| Halberd | cut | sw+5 | 2, 3* | \$150 | 12 lbs. | 13 | 2 turns to ready after swing. |
| | imp | sw+4 | 2, 3* | | | | 2 turns to ready after swing. May get <i>stuck</i> . |
| | imp | thr+3 | 1-3* | | | | 1 turn to ready after thrust. |
| SHORTSWORD (DX-5, Broadsword-2 or Force Sword-3) | | | | | | | |
| Shortsword | cut | sw | 1 | \$400 | 2 lbs. | 7 | Sabers can be used with Shortsword skill. |
| | imp | thr | 1 | | | | |
| Baton | cr | sw | 1 | \$20 | 1 lb. | 7 | A short, well-balanced club. |
| | cr | thr | 1 | | | | |
| SPEAR (DX-5 or Staff-2) | | | | | | | |
| Javelin | imp | thr+1 | 1 | \$30 | 2 lbs. | – | Primarily for throwing. |
| Spear | imp | thr+2 | 1* | \$40 | 4 lbs. | 9 | Used 1-handed. Throwable. Same spear used 2-handed. |
| | | thr+3 | 1, 2* | | | | |
| STAFF (DX-5 or Spear-2) Requires two hands. | | | | | | | |
| Quarterstaff | cr | sw+2 | 1, 2 | \$10 | 4 lbs. | 6 | Parry is 2/3 Staff skill. |
| | cr | thr+2 | 1, 2 | | | | |
| TWO-HANDED AXE/MACE (DX-5) Requires two hands. † | | | | | | | |
| Great axe | cut | sw+3 | 1, 2* | \$100 | 8 lbs. | 13 | 1 turn to ready. |
| Maul | cr | sw+4 | 1, 2* | \$80 | 12 lbs. | 14 | 1 turn to ready. |
| TWO-HANDED SWORD (DX-5 or Force Sword -3) Requires two hands. | | | | | | | |
| Greatsword | cut | sw+3 | 1, 2 | \$800 | 7 lbs. | 12 | Usually has <i>blunt</i> point. |
| | cr | thr+2 | 2 | | | | |

*Must be *readied* for one turn to change from long to short grip or vice versa.

†Becomes unready if used to parry.

ANCIENT/MEDIEVAL RANGED WEAPON TABLE

Weapons are listed in groups, according to the skill required to use them. The only one of the four "range" stats that matters in *GURPS Lite* is Max, which is the weapon's maximum range in yards. Note that a thrown weapon's maximum range depends on its user's Strength!

| Weapon | Type | Damage | Ranges | | | | Cost* | Weight† | Min ST | Special Notes |
|---|------|--------|--------|-----|-------|-------|--------------|---------|--------|------------------------|
| | | | SS | Acc | 1/2D | Max. | | | | |
| AXE THROWING (DX-4) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Throwing axe | cut | sw+2 | 10 | 2 | ST | ST×1½ | \$60 | 4 lbs. | 11 | |
| BOW (DX-6) 2 hands to fire. 2 turns to ready. | | | | | | | | | | |
| Short bow | imp | thr | 12 | 1 | ST×10 | ST×15 | \$50/\$2 | 2 lbs. | 7 | Max. dam. 1d+3. |
| Regular bow | imp | thr+1 | 13 | 2 | ST×15 | ST×20 | \$100/\$2 | 2 lbs. | 10 | Max. dam. 1d+4. |
| Longbow | imp | thr+2 | 15 | 3 | ST×15 | ST×20 | \$200/\$2 | 3 lbs. | 11 | Max. dam. 1d+4. |
| Composite bow | imp | thr+3 | 14 | 3 | ST×20 | ST×25 | \$900/\$2 | 4 lbs. | 10 | Max. dam. 1d+4. |
| Quiver | | | | | | \$10 | ½ lb. | | | Holds 10 arrows/bolts. |
| CROSSBOW (DX-4) 2 hands to fire, 4 turns to ready (8 if ST is greater than yours). | | | | | | | | | | |
| Crossbow | imp | thr+4 | 12 | 4 | ST×20 | ST×25 | \$150/\$2 | 6 lbs. | 7 | Max. dam. 3d. |
| Prodd | cr | thr+4 | 12 | 2 | ST×20 | ST×25 | \$150/\$0.10 | 6 lbs. | 7 | Fires lead pellets. |
| KNIFE THROWING (DX-4) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Large knife | imp | thr | 12 | 0 | ST-2 | ST+5 | \$40 | 1 lb. | - | Max. dam. 1d+2. |
| Small knife | imp | thr-1 | 11 | 0 | ST-5 | ST | \$30 | ½ lb. | - | Max. dam. 1d+1. |
| Dagger | imp | thr-1 | 12 | 0 | ST-5 | ST | \$20 | ¼ lb. | - | Max. dam. 1d. |
| SLING (DX-6) 2 hands to load, 1 to fire. 2 turns to ready. | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sling | cr | sw | 12 | 0 | ST×6 | ST×10 | \$10 | ½ lb. | - | Fires rocks. |
| Staff sling | cr | sw+1 | 14 | 1 | ST×10 | ST×15 | \$20 | 2 lbs. | - | Fires rocks. |
| SPEAR THROWING (DX-4 or Spear Thrower-4) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Javelin | imp | thr+1 | 10 | 3 | ST×1½ | ST×2½ | \$30 | 2 lbs. | 7 | |
| Spear | imp | thr+3 | 11 | 2 | ST | ST×1½ | \$40 | 4 lbs. | 9 | |
| DX-3 or THROWING SKILL | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rock | cr | thr-1 | 12 | 0 | ST×2 | ST×3½ | - | 1 lb. | - | |

*Cost: The number after the slash is the cost per shot (arrow or other missile) for a missile weapon.

†An arrow weighs 2 oz.; a crossbow bolt, sling-stone, or prodd pellet weighs 1 oz.



FIREARMS TABLE

Firearms have three additional statistics: *RoF*: The rate of fire for the weapon. This is how many shots the user can fire in one turn.

Shots: The number of shots that the weapon holds.

TL: The *tech level* of the gun (see p. 32). The costs given are at the TL of introduction; be sure to adjust this for changes in wealth level from TL to TL. For instance, a .38 that cost \$20 in 1900 (TL6, starting wealth \$750) would cost \$400 in 1998 (TL7, starting wealth \$15,000).

| Weapon | Type | Damage | SS | Acc | Wt | RoF | Shots | Min. ST | Cost | TL |
|--|------|--------|----|-----|-----------|-----|-------|---------|---------|----|
| PISTOLS – Use Guns/TL (Pistol) skill. | | | | | | | | | | |
| .38 Special | cr | 2d-1 | 10 | 2 | 2 lbs. | 3 | 6 | 8 | \$20 | 6 |
| Luger | cr | 2d+2 | 9 | 4 | 2.75 lbs. | 3 | 8 | 9 | \$25 | 6 |
| Colt .45 | cr | 2d | 10 | 2 | 2.75 lbs. | 3 | 7 | 10 | \$30 | 6 |
| Walther PPK | cr | 2d-1 | 10 | 2 | 1.25 lbs. | 3 | 7 | 8 | \$75 | 6 |
| .44 Mag. Revolver | cr | 3d | 10 | 2 | 3.25 lbs. | 3 | 6 | 11 | \$100 | 7 |
| Glock 17 | cr | 2d+2 | 10 | 3 | 2 lbs. | 3 | 17 | 9 | \$450 | 7 |
| SHOTGUN – Use Guns/TL (Shotgun) skill. | | | | | | | | | | |
| Remington 12G | cr | 4d | 12 | 5 | 8 lbs. | 3 | 5 | 12 | \$235 | 7 |
| RIFLES – Use Guns/TL (Rifle) skill. | | | | | | | | | | |
| Winchester .44-40 | cr | 3d | 13 | 7 | 7.1 lbs. | 2 | 6 | 10 | \$40 | 5 |
| Winchester .30-30 | cr | 5d | 13 | 8 | 7 lbs. | 2 | 6 | 10 | \$475 | 5 |
| Lee-Enfield .303 | cr | 6d+1 | 14 | 10 | 10.2 lbs. | 1 | 10 | 12 | \$130 | 6 |
| M1 Garand .30-06 | cr | 7d+1 | 14 | 11 | 10 lbs. | 3 | 8 | 12 | \$590 | 6 |
| AR-15 .223 | cr | 5d | 12 | 11 | 8 lbs. | 3 | 20 | 9 | \$540 | 7 |
| BEAM WEAPONS – Use Beam Weapons/TL skill. | | | | | | | | | | |
| Laser Pistol | imp | 1d | 9 | 7 | 2 lbs. | 4 | 20 | - | \$1,000 | 8 |
| Laser Rifle | imp | 2d | 15 | 13 | 5 lbs. | 3 | 12 | - | \$2,000 | 8 |
| Blaster | imp | 6d | 10 | 6 | 2 lbs. | 3 | 20 | 8 | \$2,000 | 9 |
| Blaster Rifle | imp | 12d | 14 | 13 | 10 lbs. | 3 | 12 | 9 | \$3,000 | 9 |

Encumbrance

Your *encumbrance* is the total weight you are carrying. Encumbrance reduces your movement rate. It also makes swimming and climbing much more difficult, and travel (p. 23) slower.

Your *encumbrance level* is a measure of that weight relative to your strength. A strong person can carry more than a weak one; therefore, the ratio of weight to strength determines encumbrance level, as follows:

Weight up to 2×ST: no encumbrance. You have no penalty.

Weight up to 4×ST: light encumbrance. Movement penalty of 1.

Weight up to 6×ST: medium encumbrance. Movement penalty of 2.

Weight up to 12×ST: heavy encumbrance. Movement penalty of 3.

Weight up to 20×ST: extra-heavy encumbrance. Movement penalty of 4.

You cannot carry a weight more than 20 times your ST for more than a few feet at a time; 30 times ST is the absolute most you can carry.

Move

Your *Move* is the distance (in yards) you can actually run in one second. To find your Move, add up the total weight of all your possessions and find your encumbrance level. Now subtract your encumbrance penalty from your Speed score, and round *down*. The result is your Move score – always a whole number, not a fraction. Your Move controls:

(1) How fast you can move. (If you have the Running skill, add 1/8 of your skill level to Basic Speed for this purpose only. Don't round off until the very end! Running doesn't affect your Speed score, but it will help your Move.)

(2) When you move.

(3) Your Dodge defense (p. 26). This *active defense* is equal to your Move. The less weighted-down you are, the quicker you can dodge!

Your Move can never be reduced to 0 unless you are unconscious, unable to use your legs, or lifting over 30 times your ST.

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. "Good play" is anything that advances your mission or shows good roleplaying (including adherence to your disadvantages and quirks) – preferably both.

Bonus points are awarded separately to each character. A typical award is 1-3 points, with 5 points being the absolute upper limit for *amazing* play. Note that you get no points for a session in which your Dependent (p. 8) is killed, seriously wounded, or kidnapped and not recovered.

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, with a few differences:

Basic Attributes: To improve one of your basic attributes (ST, DX, IQ, or HT), you must spend character points equal to *twice* the beginning point-cost difference between the old score and the new one. E.g. to go from ST 10 (beginning cost 0) to ST 11 (beginning cost 10) would cost 20 points.

If you improve an attribute, all skills based on that attribute also go up by the same amount.

Advantages: Most advantages are inborn, and cannot be "bought" later on. Exceptions include Combat Reflexes and Literacy, 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.

Buying Off Disadvantages: No character may get extra points by adding disadvantages after he is created. However, you 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.

Adding and Improving Skills: Earned character points can be used to increase your skills or add new ones. Normally, these must be skills that, in

the GM's opinion, were significantly used in the adventure in which those character points were earned. When you improve a skill, the cost is the difference between your current skill level and the cost of the new skill level.

NONHUMANS

Many backgrounds, especially fantasy and science fiction, include characters who aren't human. In these rules, a *race* is defined as a single species and its typical cultural background.

Racial Templates

The game mechanics of a nonhuman race are covered by its *racial template* – a set of attribute modifiers, advantages, disadvantages, quirks, and skills that apply to every member of the race. Just as in character creation, each of these elements has a point value. Add these values to find the net point value of the racial template. All elements of a racial template must be purchased together by all members of the race, so the template has a single, overall point cost, known as the *racial cost*. Normally, it is the GM's job to create racial templates and set racial costs.

Attribute Modifiers

Attribute modifiers are used to determine the attributes of an *average* member of a race with average scores other than the human norm of 10. They are paid for according to the table on p. 3, reading attributes above 10 as bonuses and attributes below 10 as penalties. For instance, a -1 to IQ gives a racial average IQ of 9 and would cost -10 points, while a +3 to ST gives a racial average ST of 13 and costs 30 points.

A character pays for his attribute scores normally, *then* applies any racial modifiers; e.g., a member of a race with +3 ST pays 20 points to get ST 12, then applies the racial modifier to get a final ST score of 15.

Advantages, Disadvantages, and Quirks

A nonhuman race could possess almost any advantage or disadvantage that an individual could, within reason. Racial quirks are minor disadvantages or personality traits that apply to all members of a race; they can be a useful tool for defining the "personality" of a race. Racial disadvantages and quirks don't count against the -40 points of disadvantages and -5 points of quirks suggested earlier.

Skills

A race may have skills which all its members acquire automatically. In most cases, these will be innate or instinctive. E.g., a race with padded feet might possess the Stealth skill. A racially learned skill is expressed as, for instance, "Stealth at DX." Note that the actual level of skill possessed by each individual will vary according to his underlying attribute score. The point cost of racially learned skills is figured according to the chart on p. 14. These may be increased with experience, just like normally bought skills.

Racial Description

Once the game mechanics are taken care of, you must come up with a racial description: what the race looks like, what environmental pressures combined to give its advantages and disadvantages, how the race lives and governs itself, how they think, and how well they get along with others.

It's easy to figure out what nonhumans look like, and even how they act. The hardest part about playing a nonhuman is deciding how he *thinks* – which is what roleplaying is all about!

When choosing racial advantages and disadvantages, avoid assigning point values to purely cosmetic alterations in the race's anatomy, and instead concentrate on those abilities that actually affect play. The single most important thing to keep in mind when designing nonhuman races is that outward appearance is *only a special effect!*

Settling Rules Questions

In any question of rules, the GM's word is *law*. The GM decides which optional rules will be used, and settles any specific questions that come up. A good GM will always discuss important questions with the players before deciding – but a good player accepts the GM's decision once it is made.

When a situation is not covered by the rules, there are several techniques that can be used:

Success rolls. Roll 3 dice to test a character's strength, dexterity, skill, or whatever. Use a success roll when a question arises about someone's ability to do some particular thing.

Random rolls. For a question like "Are the keys in the car?" a random roll is often best. The GM decides what the chances are, and rolls the dice. The GM decides what the odds should be, and leaves the rest to fate.

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.

BEASTS

Animals or monsters will often appear in games. The point value of such beings is irrelevant – the GM simply assigns reasonable abilities. A few notes on beasts:

Attributes: These have the same meaning for beasts as for humans, with one exception: for beasts, hit points need not be equal to HT. HT determines how hardy the beast is, but hit points are largely dependent on size, and very large or small creatures may have more or fewer hit points than HT.

Abilities and Skills: Most creatures have keen senses. The "generic" roll for an animal to sense something (sight, hearing, smell, taste) is 14, regardless of its IQ, although this may vary. Some animals also have the equivalent of skills; e.g., a bloodhound might have the Tracking skill at level 18!

PD and DR: Many creatures have a hide, shell, scales, or thick fat that protects like armor.

Attack Roll: To hit, an animal rolls against its DX; use the same modifiers as if a human were attacking.

Damage: Use the chart on the right; an animal's bite (or claw) damage depends on its ST. When a carnivore bites, this is treated as a *cutting* attack, figured at full ST. The bite of a herbivorous creature is a *crushing* attack, figured at *half* its actual ST. An animal bite – even from a carnivore – can do zero damage.

Basic Speed: Except in the case of loaded riding and draft animals, this will also be the creature's Move.

Dodge: This is the only active defense of most beasts. It is equal to half DX or half Move, whichever is better, up to a maximum of 10.

| ST | Damage |
|-------|-----------------|
| 1-2 | 1d-5 |
| 3-5 | 1d-4 |
| 6-8 | 1d-3 |
| 9-11 | 1d-2 |
| 12-15 | 1d-1 |
| 16-20 | 1d |
| 21-25 | 1d+1 |
| 26-30 | 1d+2 |
| 31-35 | 2d-1 |
| 36-40 | 2d |
| 36-40 | 2d |
| 41-45 | 2d+1 |
| 46-50 | 2d+2 |
| 51-55 | 3d-1 |
| | and so on . . . |

Encumbrance and Movement: Encumbrance for beasts works as it does for men: the level of encumbrance reduces the beast's Move score. The encumbrance table for four-footed creatures is different:

No encumbrance (up to 2×ST): Move is unaffected.

Light encumbrance (up to 6×ST): Move is reduced by 2.

Medium encumbrance (up to 10×ST): Move is reduced by 4. Few animals will carry greater than 10×ST on their backs!

Heavy encumbrance (up to 15×ST): Move is reduced by 6.

Extra-heavy encumbrance (up to 20×ST): Move is reduced by 8, but never to less than 2.

Maximum encumbrance (up to 30×ST): Move is reduced to 1. Only a very willing beast will attempt to move a load this heavy.

PLAYING THE GAME

We've seen the rules for creating and equipping characters. Now here's how to *do* things. Essentially, 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.

PHYSICAL FEATS

Running

In combat, running is just a series of Move maneuvers. Your running speed is equal to your Basic Speed score, plus Running skill bonus (p. 16), plus a one yard per second "sprint bonus" if you are running in a straight line for more than one turn. This is modified downward by encumbrance (p. 21).

When figuring *long-distance* speed (i.e., for runs of a few hundred yards, as opposed to combat movement), do *not* round down your Speed. A Basic Speed of 5.5 would let you run 65 yards in 10 seconds, if you were unencumbered.



Jumping

Usually, when you want to jump over something, the GM should say "OK, you jumped over it," and get on with play. In combat, jumping over an "ordinary" obstacle costs 1 extra yard of movement but is automatically successful. Only when the obstacle seems really significant should you resort to math to see if the character can actually make the jump!

RIDING AND DRAFT ANIMALS

| Type | ST | DX | IQ | HT | Move | Cost | Wt. (lbs.) | Notes |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|------|----------|------------|-------------------------|
| Donkey | 25 | 10 | 4 | 13 | 8 | \$1,000 | 500 | |
| Small mule | 30 | 10 | 4 | 14 | 8 | \$1,000 | 800 | Too small to ride. |
| Large mule | 40 | 10 | 4 | 14 | 9 | \$2,000 | 1,400 | |
| Pony | 30 | 10 | 4 | 13 | 13 | \$1,500 | 800 | |
| Racehorse | 32 | 9 | 4 | 13 | 18 | \$4,000+ | 1,100 | Some are faster! |
| Saddle horse | 35 | 9 | 4 | 14 | 12 | \$1,200 | 1,200 | Ordinary riding horse. |
| Cavalry horse | 40 | 9 | 4 | 15 | 16 | \$4,000 | 1,400 | A light warhorse. |
| Heavy warhorse | 50 | 9 | 4 | 16 | 15 | \$5,000 | 1,900 | Usually vicious. |
| Draft horse | 60 | 9 | 4 | 16 | 12 | \$2,000 | 2,000 | |
| Ox | 80 | 8 | 4 | 17 | 8 | \$1,500 | 2,500+ | |
| Camel | 40 | 9 | 4 | 15 | 10 | \$1,500 | 1,400 | Vicious; drinks little. |

The maximum distance you can jump is determined by your ST score, as follows:

High jump: $(3 \times ST) - 10$ inches. Add 2 feet to the above if you have 4 yards for a running start.

Standing broad jump: $(ST - 3)$ feet.

Running broad jump: As above, but add 1 foot for every yard of "take-off" distance, up to double your standing broad jump distance.

Jumping Skill: If you have this skill, you may *substitute* your skill level for ST in the height and distance formulas above.

Climbing

To climb anything more difficult than a ladder, a Climbing roll is required. One roll is required to start the climb, with a further roll every five minutes; a failed roll means you fall. Modifiers to the roll depend on the difficulty of the climb – see the table below. Your encumbrance level is also subtracted from your Climbing skill.

| Type of Climb | Modifier | Short Climb | Long Climb |
|---------------------|----------|----------------|---------------|
| 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, going up | -2 | 1 ft./sec. | 20 ft./min. |
| Rope, going down | | | |
| (w/o equipment) | -1 | 2 ft./sec. | 30 ft./min. |
| (w/equipment) | -1 | 12 ft./sec. | 12 ft./sec. |



Lifting and Moving Things

In general, the GM may let characters lift whatever they need to, without die rolls; but when very heavy weights are involved, a check against ST may be needed. The maximum weight you can lift is governed by ST.

One-Handed Lift: $6 \times ST$ pounds.

Two-Handed Lift: $25 \times ST$ pounds.

Carry on Back: $30 \times ST$ pounds. Thus, you can carry more than you can lift by yourself. (Note that every *second* you carry more than $20 \times ST$ pounds, you lose one *fatigue* point; see p. 29.)

Shove and Knock Over: $25 \times ST$ pounds, or $50 \times ST$ pounds with a running start.

Shift Slightly: $100 \times ST$ pounds.

Drag: On a rough surface, you can drag only about as much as you can carry. If you are dragging something on a smooth, level surface, halve its effective weight.

Pull on Wheels: As for dragging, but divide effective weight by 10 for a two-wheeled cart, or by 20 for a good, four-wheeled wagon. Halve effective weight again if it is being pulled on a good road.

Picking Things Up in Combat: In combat, a light item is picked up with the Ready maneuver, which takes 1 second. It takes 2 seconds to pick up a heavy item (weight in pounds greater than your ST).

Throwing Things

Anything you can lift – i.e., anything with a weight of $25 \times$ your ST or less – can be thrown. To hit a target, roll against DX-3 or Throwing skill. To lob something into a general area, roll against Throwing or DX. The distance you can throw an object depends on its weight and your ST. Find the weight nearest to that of the object on the table below, then multiply the distance listed there by your ST to get the distance, in yards, that you can throw it.

Throwing Skill: If you have the Throwing skill, divide it by 6 (round down) and add the result to your ST to determine how far you can throw something.

Throwing Things in Combat: Throwing an object during combat (whether as an attack or not) requires the Attack maneuver (p. 25). You must pick it up first, as described above. To see if you hit, roll against the Throwing skill or an appropriate Thrown Weapon skill.

If something weighs more than 25 times your ST, forget the formula – you can't throw it!

If you are hit by a (blunt) thrown object, the damage it does depends on its weight and the ST with which it was thrown.

| ST | 1/2 to 10 lbs. | 10+ to 50 lbs. | 50+ to 100 lbs. | over 100 lbs. |
|-------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 5-6 | 1d-5 | 1d-4 | 1d-5 | – |
| 7-8 | 1d-4 | 1d-3 | 1d-3 | – |
| 9-10 | 1d-3 | 1d-2 | 1d-2 | 1d-3 |
| 11-12 | 1d-2 | 1d-1 | 1d-1 | 1d-2 |
| 13-14 | 1d-1 | 1d | 1d | 1d |
| 15-16 | 1d | 1d+1 | 1d+2 | 1d+2 |
| 17-18 | 1d+1 | 1d+2 | 2d-2 | 2d-1 |
| 19-20 | 1d+2 | 2d-2 | 2d-1 | 2d |

A fragile object (or a thrown character) will take the same amount of damage it inflicts. Roll damage separately for the thrown object and the target.

Swimming

Swimming short distances, your Move is equal to $1/10$ your Swimming skill (round down), minimum 1 yard per second. Over long distances, the number of yards you swim in 10 seconds equals your Swimming skill minus *twice* your encumbrance. Swimming long distances can cause fatigue – see p. 29.

Make a Swimming roll when you enter the water, and again every 5 minutes. Subtract *twice* your encumbrance level, and add 3 if you entered the water intentionally. Fat characters (p. 5) get a bonus here. If you fail this roll, lose one point of fatigue (p. 29) and roll again in 5 seconds, and so on until you reach ST 0 and drown, get rescued, or make the roll. If you recover, roll again in 1 minute. If you make that roll, go back to rolling every 5 minutes.

Swimming skill can be used to rescue a drowning person. Make a Swimming roll at -5, plus or minus the difference in ST between you and the person you are rescuing.

Travel

Distance traveled in a day, either on foot or horseback, is a direct function of your encumbrance. Under ideal travel conditions, a party in good shape may plan on traveling the following distances in one day's march:

THROWING DISTANCE TABLE

| Weight | Distance |
|---------------|----------|
| 1 lb. or less | 3.5 |
| 1 1/2 lbs. | 3.0 |
| 2 lbs. | 2.5 |
| 3 lbs. | 1.9 |
| 4 lbs. | 1.5 |
| 5 lbs. | 1.2 |
| 7 1/2 lbs. | 1.0 |
| 10 lbs. | 0.8 |
| 15 lbs. | 0.7 |
| 20 lbs. | 0.6 |
| 25 lbs. | 0.5 |
| 30 lbs. | 0.4 |
| 40 lbs. | 0.3 |
| 50 lbs. | 0.25 |
| 60 lbs. | 0.2 |
| 80 lbs. | 0.15 |
| 100 lbs. | 0.1 |
| 200 lbs. | 0.05 |

No encumbrance: 50 miles
Light encumbrance: 40 miles
Medium encumbrance: 30 miles
Heavy encumbrance: 20 miles
Extra heavy encumbrance: 10 miles



A party's speed is equal to the speed of its slowest member. Whatever your daily mileage, you will spend about the same amount of time traveling. But the heavier your load and the worse the traveling conditions, the more slowly you will walk and the more frequently you will stop to rest.

Parties with mechanical transport will move at that transport's best speed, depending on the terrain. Remember that driving or piloting for over 8 hours a day, or about 4 hours at a single shift, can be dangerously tiring or boring and may require a roll against the appropriate Vehicle skill to avoid a mishap.

MENTAL FEATS

Sense Rolls

Sense rolls include Vision rolls, Hearing rolls, and Taste/Smell rolls. All Sense rolls are made against the character's IQ. The Alertness advantage is a bonus to *all* Sense rolls.

Vision

To see something small or hidden, make a Vision roll with a bonus equal to your level of Acute Vision (if any). The GM may make this roll easier or harder for things that are more or less well-hidden. Partial darkness can give from -1 to -9. A nearsighted person has -6 to Vision rolls for items farther away than 3 feet; a farsighted person has -6 on Vision rolls for things within 3 feet. Blind characters, or those in total darkness, can see nothing!

Hearing

To hear a faint sound, roll against IQ with a bonus equal to your level of Acute Hearing, if any; Hard of Hearing gives -4. The GM may make this roll easier or harder, depending on the loudness of the sound, surrounding noises, and so on. Once a sound is heard, a regular IQ roll may be required to *understand* its significance. Deaf characters can hear nothing!

Smelling and Tasting

These are two manifestations of the same sense. To notice an odor or a taste, roll vs. IQ with a bonus equal to your level of Acute Smell/Taste, if any. In some cases, the GM may require a separate IQ roll to *understand* the significance of a smell or taste that everyone notices.

Will Rolls

When someone is faced with a frightening situation, or needs to overcome a mental disadvantage, the GM should require a *Will roll*. Normally, Will is equal to IQ, so this is just an IQ roll. However, if the character has the Strong Will advantage or the Weak Will disadvantage, this is added to or subtracted from IQ.

On a successful Will roll, the character overcomes his fear, bad impulse, or whatever. On a failed roll, he is frightened or gives in to the "lower impulse," whatever that is. Any Will roll of 14 or over is an automatic failure (this does *not* apply to Will rolls made to resist influence skills and mind control).

Furthermore, if someone has an IQ of more than 14, treat his IQ as only 14 *before* subtracting Weak Will. If you have an IQ of 14 or higher and 3 levels of Weak Will, your Will is only 11.

* The full *GURPS* system includes Advanced Combat rules which allow for the use of a map divided into hexagons, each 1 yard (or 1 meter) across. If you see a reference in a *GURPS* book to a "hex" as a unit of measure, read that as a yard or a meter, as appropriate.

COMBAT

As violent and dangerous as it may be, combat is a staple of adventure stories, and PCs are very likely to end up fighting at some point. Here is a simple system for resolving such conflicts:

Combat Turn Sequence

Characters act one at a time, until they have all taken a *turn*; then they start over. The *sequence* in which they act is set as follows:

Before combat begins, compare the Move scores of all characters. The highest Move goes first, the second-highest Move score goes next, and so on. In case of ties, the highest *Basic Speed* goes first; here is where a 5.5 is better than a 5.25, for instance. If anyone is *still* tied, roll dice to see who goes first.

Your turn *starts* when you choose a maneuver, and *ends* when you choose your next maneuver – that is, after *all* other characters have acted once. Each turn represents *one* second of real time.

Maneuvers

Start each turn by choosing any one of the following maneuvers. The maneuver you choose will also affect your defenses (see p. 26) if you are attacked before your next turn. You do not select a defense until you are actually attacked – but the maneuver you choose will govern the defenses you can use.

Move

Move, and do *nothing* else (except for a "free" action – see below). You may use any legal active defense.

Movement and special actions are wholly abstract; no gameboard is required.* If a detail about movement is important ("How long will it take me to run across the room and grab the jewel?"), the GM decides. The number of yards you can run per second is equal to your Move score.

Change Position

Go from standing to prone, kneeling to standing, or any other position change. (It takes two turns to go from prone to standing: first you kneel, then you stand.) *Exception:* You can go from kneeling to standing, or vice versa, and attack on the same turn.

You can use any defense on the turn you change position. The following table summarizes the effects of various positions on combat:

TABLE OF POSITIONS

| Position | Attack | Defense |
|------------|---|--------------------------|
| Standing | Normal | Normal |
| Crouching | -2 Ranged weapons -2 to hit you | Normal vs. others |
| Kneeling | -2 Ranged weapons -2 to hit you | -2 to any active defense |
| Crawling | Cannot attack Ranged weapons -4 to hit you | -3 to any active defense |
| Sitting | -2 | As for kneeling |
| Lying down | -4, except with crossbow or gun | As for crawling |

Ready

Ready any weapon or other item. Any weapon is "unready" if it is in its scabbard or holster. An axe, mace or other heavy weapon becomes "unready" when you swing it; it must be readied again before each use! Some weapons must be "readied" for more than one second after each use.

You can parry with a weapon, or block with a shield, as soon as you have readied it – that is, on the same turn! You can also use any other legal active

defense on the turn when you ready an item. *Exception:* If you are “readying” a missile weapon by reloading it, your only defense is to dodge – and if you dodge, you lose the benefit of that turn of reloading.

Note that, even if you are ambidextrous, you cannot ready one weapon on the same turn you attack with another.

Reload

Use the “Ready” maneuver to reload a missile weapon. This takes several turns. With a sling, for instance, you need a second to “ready” the rock, and a second to put the rock in the sling. If you don’t aim, you can fire on the third second. Crossbows take much longer. First you must *cock* the bow – this takes 2 seconds for a bow of your ST, or more for a heavier bow. Then you must ready the arrow (1 turn) and load the bow (1 turn).

Some sample reload times:

Sling: 2 seconds to reload – can be fired every 3 seconds.

Bow: 2 seconds to reload – can be fired every 3 seconds.

Crossbow (your ST or less): 4 seconds to cock and reload – can be fired every 5 seconds. If ST is up to 2 greater than yours: 8 seconds to cock and reload – can be fired every 9 seconds.

Guns: Changing magazines for a replaceable magazine gun takes 3 seconds. Revolvers take 3 seconds of preparation, plus one additional second for each round loaded.

Aim

Aim a ready *ranged* weapon at a specific target. You must name your target. Your attack is at -4 if you use a ranged weapon without aiming *unless* your effective skill is at least equal to the weapon’s *Snap Shot* number (listed on the *Weapon Tables*, pp. 19-20). If you aim for 1 turn, your attack is at your normal skill level plus the weapon’s *Accuracy* modifier (also on the *Weapon Tables*). You may aim for up to 3 more turns, getting a further +1 bonus for each additional turn you aim.

You can use any defense while aiming . . . but it spoils your aim and you lose all the accumulated benefits. If you are injured while aiming, you must make your Will roll or lose your aim.

Attack

Attack any foe with your ready weapon. The GM always has the option of ruling (for any reason having to do with the situation) that some combatants may not attack certain foes. If the battle is in close quarters, bows and similar missile weapons should only be allowed one shot each – then the fight will go to hand weapons.

You may parry (with a ready weapon), block (with a ready shield) or dodge on the same turn you attack.

All-Out Attack

Attack any foe with hands, feet, or a ready hand weapon. You have three choices:

(a) 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;

(b) Make a single attack, at a +4 bonus to your skill!

(c) Make one attack, at normal skill, doing +2 damage if you hit.

However, if you choose any form of all-out attack, you may make *no active defenses at all* until your next turn!

All-Out Defense

Defend yourself; do nothing else this turn. If you fail your defense roll against any attack, you may try *another* (different) defense – in other words, you get two defense rolls, using two *different* active defenses against the same attack. You are limited to *two* blocks and *two* parries per turn when you choose All-Out Defense, and you can’t parry twice with a weapon that becomes unready after a parry.

Long Action

This is a “generic” choice that allows for one second’s worth of *any* multi-second action (picking a lock, for instance, or defusing a bomb). The GM decides how many turns each “long action” will take. As a rule, no defense except dodging is possible during a long action, but the GM can vary this as he sees fit. Any sort of defense may also interfere with whatever you are trying to do.

Free Actions

Things you can do during any maneuver, including talking, dropping a weapon or other object, and crouching down behind cover (not kneeling).

Making An Attack

If you choose the *Attack* or *All-Out Attack* maneuvers, you may try to hit a foe. You may attack any foe, unless the GM rules that attack is impossible for some reason.

You cannot attack unless your weapon is *ready*. A sword or knife is ready every turn. An unbalanced weapon, such as an axe, becomes unready when you swing it, so it can only be used every other turn.

Each attack is resolved by three die rolls. First is your *attack roll*. If this 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 is not hit. If he misses his defense roll, your blow struck home and you *roll for damage*.

Rolling to Attack

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

Applicable modifiers include:

Bad light: -1 to -9 (GM’s decision); -10 for total darkness.

One eye: -1 for hand-weapon attacks, -3 for ranged attacks.

Blind: -6; blinded *suddenly:* -10.

Bad footing: -2 or more (GM’s option).

Attacker is in a strange position (e.g., hanging upside down): -2 or more (GM’s decision).

Attacker is Crawling or Lying Down: -4.

Attacker is Crouching, Sitting, or Kneeling: -2.

Off-hand attack: -4 (no penalty if Ambidextrous).

Shield: -2 to attacks if using a large shield (it gets in your way).

ST under minimum ST for that weapon: -1 for each point of difference.

Wounds: Penalty equal to hits you took on the preceding turn. High Pain Threshold advantage eliminates this penalty.

Now roll 3 dice. If your roll is *less than or equal to* your “effective” skill, you have rolled well enough to hit the foe, and he must roll to defend. Otherwise, you missed!

Critical Hits: 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 hits. Other critical hits bypass the defense roll, but roll normally for damage.

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

Defense

If you make your attack roll, you have not (yet) actually struck your foe, unless you rolled a critical hit. You have thrown a blow that is *good enough* to hit him – *unless* he defends.

Your foe's defense is equal to the sum of his *passive* defenses (armor and shield) and his *active* defense (Dodge, Block, or Parry). Passive defenses always protect, but active defenses must be specifically chosen from those that are "legal" at the moment. This depends on the maneuver he chose on his last turn – see p. 24.

The defender rolls 3 dice. If his roll is *less than or equal to* his total defense, he blocked the blow (or dodged or parried it). Otherwise, his defense was ineffective and your blow struck home. If your blow hits your foe, you can roll for damage.

A defense roll of 3 or 4 is *always* successful – even if your total defense is 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.

Active Defense

There are three *active defenses* that can protect you against an attack. Each of these defenses is calculated in advance. When you are attacked, you may choose *one* active defense as part of your total defense roll. (If you took *All-Out Defense*, you may make *two* separate defense rolls, using different defenses.)

Your active defense will depend on your situation – *especially* the maneuver you chose last turn. Some maneuvers limit the active defenses you can make. A stunned character's active defense is at -4.

Sometimes you will have *no* active defense. A stab in the back from a "friend," a sniper's shot, or a totally unexpected booby trap would be attacks against which no active defense is possible.

The Combat Reflexes advantage gives a +1 to each of your active defenses.

Dodging

Your Dodge defense is the same as your Move score (*not* modified for Running skill, however). An *animal's* Dodge score is half its Move or half its DX, whichever is better – up to a maximum of 10.

You may dodge *any* attack, except one that you did not know about! There is no limit to the number of times you may dodge in one turn.

Blocking

You must have a ready shield, which you use to "block" the attack. Your Block defense is half your Shield skill, rounded down. In general, you can block any hand weapon, whether it is thrust, swung, or thrown. You may also block arrows and similar low-tech missiles. You *cannot* block bullets or beam weapons . . . these come too fast to be stopped with a shield. (However, the shield's *passive* defense helps against all missile weapons.)

You may only block one attack per turn, unless you chose the *All-Out Defense* maneuver. This lets you block two attacks per turn.

Parrying

Hand weapons (blades, clubs, axes, spears, polearms) can be used for defense as well as offense. When you parry with a weapon, *half* your skill with that weapon (round down) counts as active defense. Thus, if you have a Sword skill of 20, you would have a Parry defense of 10 when you use a sword.

You cannot parry unless your weapon is *ready*. Parrying with an unbalanced weapon will make it "unready." For instance, you can't parry with an axe on the same turn you attacked with it; you have to re-ready it first.

A weapon parry won't stop anything except hand-weapon attacks. A further exception: A weapon has a $\frac{1}{3}$ chance of breaking if it parries anything of three or more times its own weight! (If it breaks, that parry counts.)

You may only parry one attack per turn, unless you have two weapons (in which case you may parry once with each weapon) or you chose the *All-Out Defense* maneuver (in which case you may parry twice – or twice with each weapon, if you have more than one).

If you successfully parry a bare-handed attack with a weapon, you may injure your attacker. Immediately roll against your own weapon skill (at -4 if your attacker used Karate). If you hit, your parry struck the attacker's limb squarely; roll normal damage.

Some special parrying rules:

Thrown weapons may be parried, but at -1. Thrown knives and similar small, hurled weapons are parried at -2.

Knives and equally small weapons are at -1 to parry *with*.

Flails are at -4 to parry *against*.

Quarterstaves parry at $\frac{2}{3}$ skill rather than $\frac{1}{2}$.

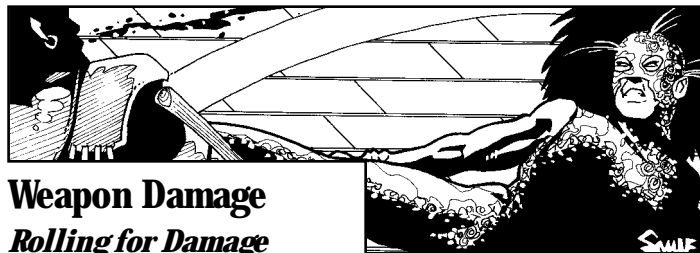
Fencing weapons use a unique fighting form that emphasizes defense, allowing a fencer to parry better than other fighters. If you have the Fencing skill and appropriate gear (a smallsword, rapier, or saber; no larger than a small shield and no greater than "light" encumbrance), your Parry is $\frac{2}{3}$ your Fencing skill (round down). Furthermore, you may parry *twice* per turn, rather than just once. (An All-Out Defense will let you parry *any number* of times!)

Passive Defense

When you are attacked, you *may* also have a "passive" defense factor operating in your favor, thanks to your armor and shield. Passive defense *always* protects you, even if you are unconscious or unaware of the attack. If you have any passive defense at all, a defense roll of 3 or 4 will succeed for you!

Armor: The passive defense from your armor depends on its type, varying from 1 to 6.

Shield: The passive defense of your shield depends on its size: 1 for a buckler, up to 4 for a large shield. It does not protect against attacks from behind.



Weapon Damage

Rolling for Damage

If an enemy fails his defense roll, you have hit him and may make a "damage roll." This roll tells how much damage you did to your target. The number of dice you roll for damage is determined by your weapon (and, for low-tech weapons, by your own strength).

If the enemy is wearing armor, the armor's Damage Resistance (DR) is subtracted from the damage you roll. The Toughness advantage may also provide DR, which works just like armor and which adds to that of any armor worn.

If you are lucky, you will roll enough damage to exceed your foe's protection and injure him!

Injury

If the total damage you roll *exceeds* the Damage Resistance of your foe (armor, skin, and so on) the excess hits are taken as damage. *Example*: Your "basic damage" when swinging your sword is 2d. You roll 2 dice and get an 8. The target has 3 points of DR, so 5 points of damage get through. Add the 50% damage bonus for a cutting weapon (2 points, because you always round down). The total is 7. So the target takes 7 hits of damage.

Effects of Injury

All injuries are assumed to be to the torso; specific hit locations are beyond the scope of *GURPS Lite*. Subtract the hits you take from your HT score. See p. 28 for more details.

Shock: If you take a wound, your attack roll will be reduced (on your next turn only) by the number of hits you took. Wounds taken during the same turn are cumulative for this purpose. See p. 28.

Knockdown and Stunning: If you take a single wound that does damage of *more than half* of your *basic* HT score, you must roll against your *basic* HT. If you fail the roll, you are *knocked down!*

Whether or not you fall down, you are *stunned*. All active-defense rolls are at -4 until your next turn. At that time, you must roll against your basic HT. A successful roll means you recover, and can act normally that turn and thereafter. A failed roll means you are still stunned, and continue to stand there (or lie there) without making any maneuvers – and continue to take -4 on each active-defense roll!

Severe Wounds: If you are reduced to *3 hit points or less*, your Move and Dodge scores are both cut in half (round down). Your wounds are slowing you!

Unconsciousness: If you take enough wounds to reduce your HT to *zero or less*, you are hanging on to consciousness by sheer willpower. At the beginning of each turn that your HT is zero or less, make a roll against *basic* HT, modified by Strong or Weak Will (if you have either). A successful roll means you can take your turn normally; a failed roll means you fall unconscious! Roll each turn, until you fail a roll and fall unconscious.

Death: If your HT goes fully negative (for example, -10 if your basic HT is 10), you risk death – see p. 28.

Ranged Weapons

Thrown Weapons

There may be times when you want to throw a weapon. Do *not* roll against your weapon skill when you throw a weapon; roll against a “throwing” skill instead. A Snap Shot (one made without aiming) is at a -4. See *Aim*, p. 25.

If a weapon can be thrown, *throwing* it is a separate skill. All weapon-throwing skills are “easy” to learn, defaulting to DX-4.

There is also the “generic” skill called Throwing. This is a “hard” skill. But if you have this skill, you can use it to throw anything – a knife, a baseball, a brick, a spear.

Your target can dodge, block, or parry a thrown weapon.

If you hit, you do normal damage. Whether you hit or miss, your weapon falls on the floor. In a big fight, the GM probably shouldn't let you recover the weapon at all; in a small battle, he may roll one die to see how many turns it takes you to get your weapon back!

Missile Weapons

Missile weapons are treated like other weapons; make your attack roll, let your foe make his defense roll, and then roll for damage. In *GURPS Lite*, assume all attacks are at a fairly close range unless the GM rules otherwise. To hit with a missile weapon, roll against your weapon skill. Attack at -4 for a Snap Shot (no aim); see *Aim*, p. 25. The target of a missile weapon may dodge, but may not parry. Arrows and quarrels may be blocked with a shield; higher-tech missiles cannot be blocked.

Bows and slings do not fire every turn. A bow, for instance, normally takes 2 seconds to reready, so it can only fire every third second. See *Ready*, p. 24.

Modifiers for Ranged Attacks

The GM may wish to apply the following situational modifiers to ranged attacks. If the target is:

prone or crawling: -4 (-7 if behind cover)

crouching, sitting, or kneeling: -2 (-4 if behind cover).

behind someone else: -4.

only partially exposed: -3.

Explosions

Explosions do concussion damage to *everything* nearby. World War II grenades would do from 2 to 5 dice damage, depending on type. A mere 10 lbs. of TNT would do 6d×20 damage. Apply full damage to anyone within 2 yards. More distant targets divide damage by 4 per 2 yards range (1/4 at 2 yards, 1/16 at 4 yards, and so on). Only fully sealed armor, or the DR from a sealed vehicle, protects against concussion.

Explosions may also produce fragments; the radius of fragment effect is 5 yards times the number of dice of concussion damage. The chance of someone's being hit depends on far too many factors (cover, position, type of explosion) to discuss here; the GM should just assign a chance he thinks reasonable, and roll the dice! Anyone who is hit takes cutting damage, from 1d-4 for thrown dirt to 2d for grenade shrapnel.

Unarmed Combat

Sometimes you will have to fight without weapons. This is unarmed combat. Anyone can engage in unarmed combat, but there are certain skills – *Karate* and *Brawling* – that will make you a more effective unarmed fighter.

Punching

A punch is an attack. Your “skill” for a punch is the best of DX, Brawling, or Karate skill. Damage is determined by your ST: it is Thrust-2 crushing damage, determined from the table on p. 18.

Example: With ST 12, your Thrust damage is 1d-1, so your punch does 1d-3 damage.

Brass knuckles or plate-mail gauntlets add +2 to your punching damage. A rock or roll of coins in your fist will add +1 to the damage you do with a punch. The Karate and Brawling skills also give bonus damage – see the skill descriptions for details.

Kicking

A kick is treated exactly like a punch, but you roll at an additional -2 and you do straight thrust/crushing damage – or Thrust+1 if you are wearing heavy boots or something similar. If you kick and *miss*, you must make a DX or skill roll to avoid falling down!

Parrying Bare-Handed

If you are fighting bare-handed, you may parry a *kick* or *punch* with your hands, using half your basic DX as your Parry. Unarmed combat skills give you a better bare-handed parry: 2/3 your Brawling or Karate skill (round down).

If you parry a weapon bare-handed, your defense is at -3 unless you parry a *thrust* or are using Karate (use your normal parry). A failed parry means the weapon hits; the attacker may choose to hit where he was aiming, or to hit your arm! If your arm takes damage of more than half your HT, it is automatically *crippled* (see p. 28).



INJURY, ILLNESS, AND FATIGUE

The life of an adventurer is not all song and glory. You get tired. You get dirty. You may actually get *hurt*, or even worse, *dead*.

Wounds and other injuries cause bodily damage, or “hits.” Your HT (health) score tells how many hits you can take. A character who goes down to 0 hit points will soon fall unconscious. It is possible to survive with a negative hit point-total.

General Damage (Lost Hit Points)

Someone who is wounded repeatedly will eventually weaken and collapse, even if no single injury is very great. Record hits on your character sheet. The effects of lost hit points are:

3, 2, 1 hit points left: Your Move and Dodge are cut in half; you are reeling from your wounds.

0 or less hit points left: You are in immediate danger of collapse. At the beginning of each turn, roll against your basic HT, plus or minus Strong/Weak Will. A success means you may take your turn normally. A failed roll means you fall unconscious.

-HT hit points: You must make your HT roll (use basic HT) or die. Another roll is required after each further loss of 5 hit points.

-5×HT: Automatic death. You have lost a total of 6 times your original hit points; no one can survive that much injury.

Shock

When you are injured, your IQ and DX are reduced by that amount, *on your next turn only*. Example: If you take 3 hits of injury, your IQ, DX, and skills will be at -3 on your next turn. Active defenses are not DX-based skills.

This subtraction will most often affect weapon attacks – but *any* use of IQ, DX, or skills is affected. Therefore, on the turn after you are badly hurt, it may be a good idea to try flight, All-Out Defense, or the like, rather than counterattacking instantly.

This is only a temporary effect due to shock. On your following turn, your skills are back to normal.

Knockdown

Anyone who takes damage *greater than* half his HT in one blow must immediately roll against his basic HT. If he fails the roll, he *falls* and is *stunned* (see below). If he makes his HT roll, he keeps his footing, but he is still stunned.

Stunning

Someone will be “stunned” if he takes damage *greater than* half his HT in one blow.

If you are stunned, all your active defenses are at -4 until your next turn. At that time, roll against basic HT to see whether you recover. A successful roll means you can act normally *on that turn*. A failed roll means you are still stunned and stand there mindlessly . . . The “stunned” state continues until you can make your HT roll and snap out of it. You may act again on the turn you roll successfully and shake off the daze.

Mental Stun: Someone who is surprised or shocked may also be *mentally* “stunned.” The effects of this sort of stunning are just the same, but you must make your IQ roll, rather than your HT roll, to snap out of it. You’re not *hurt* – you’re *confused*.

Crippling Injuries

Sometimes, the GM may rule that a particular limb has been injured (by a trap, botched bare-handed attack or parry, or similar mishap). In this case, enough damage to an arm, leg, hand, or foot in one blow will cripple it. A hand or foot is crippled if it takes damage *greater than* $\frac{1}{3}$ your HT. An arm or leg is crippled if it takes damage *greater than* half your HT.

For simplicity, any body part that has been rendered useless will be referred to as “crippled.” A crippled arm or hand cannot be used to attack or hold anything; for the effects of a crippled leg or foot, see the *Lame* disadvantage. Make a HT roll for each crippled limb. On a success, the limb will work again once the victim has regained *all* his lost hit points. On a failure, the limb will be crippled for 1d months. A critical failure indicates that the limb is *severed* or otherwise rendered permanently useless.

First Aid

Most of the HT loss from an injury is due to shock rather than actual physical damage. Therefore, prompt treatment after a fight can restore some of the lost hit points.

Simple bandaging, *even done by a totally unskilled person*, will restore 1 lost hit point per fight – but no more, no matter how bad the injury. This takes 30 minutes per victim.

First aid (a successful First Aid skill or default roll) will restore a variable number of hit points, depending on the tech level of the First Aid skill (see the table below) and the degree of success. A minimum of 1 point is always restored. This is *not* cumulative with simple bandaging . . . sometimes, first aid is no more effective than plain bandaging.

Great Success or Failure: On a critical success, the victim regains the maximum possible HT for that tech level. On a critical failure, the victim *loses* 2 hits, and bandaging will not help.

Natural Recovery

Natural recovery will cure any number of hits. At the end of each day of rest and decent food, the victim may roll against his *basic HT*. A successful roll results in the recovery of 1 hit point. The GM may modify the roll downward if conditions are bad, or upward if conditions are very good.

If the victim is under the care of a competent Physician (skill level 12 or better) the victim gets a +1 on all healing rolls.

Recovering From Unconsciousness

This depends on the severity of your injuries. If your HT is still positive, roll vs. HT every hour to awaken (or, if you have lost no more than 2 HT, roll every 15 minutes).

If your HT is negative, but not fully negative, you will become conscious in as many hours as your HT is negative, or a maximum of 12 hours. Example: Your HT is -8 after the battle. You will wake up (still with -8 HT) in 8 hours. When you awaken, you can call for help or even try to drag yourself to shelter.

If your HT has gone “fully negative” – e.g., HT of -10 or worse for someone with a basic HT of 10 – you are in bad shape. If you can make a roll on basic HT, you will awaken (as above) after 12 hours, and can try to help yourself. If you fail the roll, you stay in a coma and die unless you are helped within (HT) hours.

Other Hazards

Adventurers often face other dangers, including . . .

Flame

Walking through fire does 1d-3 damage per second; actually *standing* in fire does 1d-1 damage per second. Armor protects you completely against ordinary heat or flame for a number of turns equal to 3 times its DR. After that, it still protects against flame, but the wearer must roll vs. HT every turn to resist the heat of the fire. A failed roll costs 1 point of fatigue (p. 29). Example: Heavy leather protects against all damage for 6 turns. After that, the wearer starts making HT rolls.

| Tech Level | Time per victim | Hits restored |
|------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 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 |

Falling

When you fall, roll for damage as follows:

1 or 2 yards: (1d-4) damage per yard

3 or 4 yards: (1d-3) per yard

5 or more yards: (1d-2) per yard

If you land on something soft, subtract 1 point per yard fallen. A successful Acrobatics roll will reduce the effective distance of your fall by 5 yards.

Terminal velocity – the maximum speed a falling object can achieve – varies for humans, but is normally reached after 3 or 4 seconds of falling. Therefore, treat any fall of more than 50 yards as only 50 yards.

For simplicity, assume that armor protects against falling damage at half its usual DR.



Falling Objects

If you are hit by a *hard* falling object, calculate the damage done as follows: round its weight off to the nearest 10 pounds, and the distance it fell to the nearest 10 yards. Multiply the number of 10-pound and 10-yard increments . . . and take that many dice of damage. For simplicity, when dealing with falling objects, treat any fall of more than 200 yards as 200 yards.

Example: A 20-lb. rock, falling 30 yards, does $(2 \times 3) = 6$ dice of damage.

A very *light* object, or one that falls a short distance, does less damage. Any weight or distance of 2 or less should be treated as 10 – but halve the final damage. *Soft* objects (living things, for instance) do half damage for their weight.

Poisons

Types of poison include *contact* agents (which only have to touch the skin); *blood* agents (which must enter the body through a wound or injection); *digestive* agents (which must be swallowed); and *respiratory* agents (which must be inhaled).

Poison is commonly met on weapons; on darts, needles, or spikes in traps; in food or drink offered by a treacherous foe; and in the bite of certain animals.

The effects of an individual poison are up to the GM. Aside from damage, poisons may temporarily reduce ST, DX or IQ (and all related skills and abilities).

As a rule, anyone who is poisoned will get a modified HT roll to avoid the poison's effects. The more toxic the poison, the harder the HT roll. Some especially virulent poisons will have a reduced effect even on those who resist!

The description of a poison should include:

Name, general description, and source.

Type: contact, blood, respiratory, digestive, or a combination.

Cost per dose (a dose is enough to poison one person or envenom one weapon).

Effects of the poison if it is not resisted. Most poisons are slow; time will be specified. Unless specified otherwise, multiple doses will have no extra effect.

HT roll allowed to resist the poison.

Effects of the poison (if any) on someone who resists it.

Illness

Strange diseases may affect the adventurer in far lands. The invention of diseases is an excellent opportunity for the GM to exercise a morbid sort of creativity!

Anyone in a disease-ridden area, or encountering a disease carrier, is in danger. (*Exception:* the Immunity to Disease advantage protects wholly against disease.) Most diseases allow a HT roll to resist, made in secret by

the GM. Roll against HT once per day; a failed roll means you catch the disease. From the table below, choose the least advantageous roll each day:

Avoided all contact with possible victims: HT+4

Entered dwelling or shop of victim: HT+3

Spoke with victim at close quarters: HT+2

Touched victim briefly: HT+1

Used victim's clothes, blankets, and so on: HT

Ate victim's cooked flesh (animal, we hope!): HT

Ate victim's raw flesh (ditto!): HT-1

Prolonged contact with living victim(s): HT-2

Kissing or other intimate contact with victim: HT-3

These chances are not cumulative; roll anew each day. The GM may require a harder roll for a virulent plague, or an easier one for a less contagious one.

Symptoms

Disease symptoms usually appear at least 24 hours after the disease is caught. Most diseases aren't contagious until after symptoms appear. Typical symptoms include daily HT loss (which may endanger the victim) for several days; loss of ST, DX, or IQ; fatigue; sneezing, coughing, spots, sores, or rash. Severe symptoms could include delirium, unconsciousness, blindness, and so on.

Diagnosis

When symptoms of a disease are apparent, the GM should roll each character's Diagnosis skill, or IQ-6. Success means he identifies the disease. Totally new illnesses can't be identified, but a very good roll might give enough information to help.

Recovery

Typically, a disease sufferer must make a daily HT roll (possibly at a penalty). This roll, and the effects of failure, vary with each illness. For a "generic" disease, a failed roll might mean you lose 1 HT; a success would let you regain 1 HT.

When you have recovered all HT lost to an illness, you are cured. If your illness allows HT rolls to attempt to recover, a roll of 3 or 4 means the disease has vanished (lost HT must be recovered in the normal fashion).

For some diseases, recovery will be aided by use of appropriate drugs. For most diseases, a physician's care (as for injuries) will aid attempts to recover.

Fatigue

Fatigue represents lost strength, just as injury represents lost health. If your ST is 10, you can lose 10 "fatigue points" before falling unconscious from exhaustion. Keep separate track of any fatigue you lose or regain. Fatigue does not affect HT at all.

You can suffer fatigue from exertion, running long distances, heatstroke, and so on. You will also suffer fatigue at the end of each battle that lasts more than 10 seconds; the amount is equal to your encumbrance, plus 1. Fighting in armor is hard work!

While your ST is reduced due to fatigue, any "test of skill," attempt to lift or throw an object, or other use of ST will be made at the reduced ST score. Likewise, your score in any ST-based skill will be reduced by the amount of your fatigue.

The basic damage you do with weapons is unchanged. This is for playability, to avoid constant re-figuring of weapon effects!

Likewise, your Move score is not affected by fatigue *until your ST reaches 3*. At that point, cut your Move in half, rounding down.

If fatigue reduces your ST to 0, you fall unconscious and automatically rest until your ST reaches 1 and you awaken. You cannot have "negative" fatigue or a "negative" ST.

Sample Fatigue Costs

Marching: Each hour of road travel gives fatigue equal to your encumbrance level +1. Add 1 more in hot climates.

Running or Swimming: After each 100 yards traveled, roll vs. HT. A failed roll costs 1 point of fatigue.

Overexertion: Carrying more than 20 times ST, or pushing or pulling a very heavy load, costs 1 fatigue per second.

Losing Sleep: A night without sleep costs 5 fatigue. Losing a half-night of sleep costs 2 fatigue.

Recovering from Fatigue

Anyone suffering fatigue may regain the lost ST by resting quietly. Talking and thinking are allowed; walking, or anything more strenuous, is *not* rest! Each 10 minutes of rest will cure 1 point of fatigue. The GM may allow an extra point of fatigue to be regained if you eat a decent meal while resting.

Fatigue due to *lost sleep* is regained only by getting a *full* night of sleep! This restores *all* lost fatigue.

MAGIC

Magic is a fickle supernatural force that can sometimes be used to perform miraculous feats.

Basic Concepts

Magical Aptitude (Magery): The advantage (see p. 10) of being attuned to magic.

Mage: Someone with Magery.

Spell: A magical skill. Spells are usually Mental/Hard skills. When learning spells, add Magery to IQ (so someone with IQ 15 and Magery 3 earns spells as if his IQ were 18). You must spend at least 1 point on each spell.

Wizard: Anyone who knows spells.

Casting a Spell: Using a spell skill. This requires a roll against one's skill level with the spell.

Caster: The person using the spell.

Subject: The target of a spell, which may be a person (including the caster), place, or thing.

Mana: The source of magic. Its strength (mana level) varies in different places, as set by the GM or scenario. In no mana, magic doesn't work. In low mana, only mages can cast spells, and at -5 to skill. In normal mana, mages can cast spells at full skill. In high mana, anyone can cast spells at full skill.

Properties of Spells

Each spell has some basic statistics:

Time to Cast: The time required to activate the spell. Unless specified otherwise, time to cast is 1 second.

Duration: The length of time the spell will last. Until a spell's duration ends, it's considered to be "on" and gives the wizard a -1 penalty when casting other spells.

Cost: The number of ST points temporarily "spent" by the wizard to fuel the spell (see *Fatigue*, p. 29). This returns at the rate of 1 point per 10 minutes if the wizard rests.

Prerequisite: IQ or Magery requirements that must be met and spells that must be known at level 12+ before the spell can be learned. Some spells have no prerequisite.

Casting Spells

To cast a spell, the wizard must concentrate for the entire "time to cast." At the start of his next turn, he rolls against his skill with the spell. He's at -1 for every spell he has "on" and -5 if he can't see or touch the subject. The subject's Magic Resistance (if any) is also subtracted from skill.

If the roll succeeds, the caster pays the cost and the spell is activated; on a critical success, he pays no cost! If the spell fails, the caster pays 1 ST and nothing happens; on a *critical failure*, he pays the full cost and suffers a minor disaster (a bad smell, blinding flash, slight damage, etc. – the GM chooses). Regardless of the outcome, the caster may act normally after he rolls the dice; that doesn't count as his action for the turn.

Distraction: A wizard who is grabbed, shoved, wounded, or forced to make an active-defense roll (p. 26) while concentrating may be distracted. He must make a Will-3 roll or lose his spell.

Injury: A wizard who's injured while concentrating casts his spell at a penalty equal to his wounds.

Maintaining Spells

Some spells can be *maintained*: when the duration expires, more ST can be spent to keep the spell going for another period equal to the duration. This can be kept up until the wizard runs out of ST. If it's possible to maintain a spell, a "cost to maintain" will be listed.

Canceling Spells

Once cast, a spell lasts for the entire duration. If a wizard wishes to end his spell before that time, he loses 1 point of ST.

Classes of Spells

Every spell belongs to a class: *regular*, *area*, *missile*, or *resisted*. *Regular* spells use the rules as written.

Area spells affect a circular area. They have a "base cost" stat instead of "cost." This is multiplied by the desired radius in yards to get the final ST cost. If the spell succeeds, the entire area is affected.

A *missile* spell appears in the caster's hand when the spell roll is made. The wizard then hurls it like a thrown weapon (p. 27). The attack is rolled against Spell Throwing skill (Physical/Easy). If it hits, the missile injures the target as per the spell description.

Resisted spells are treated as quick contests (p. 2). The caster rolls against his spell level, modified as usual. The subject rolls against an attribute (*which* attribute is determined by the spell) plus Strong Will or Magic Resistance (if any). The caster must *win* the contest to affect the subject.

SOME COMMON SPELLS

Many more spells exist; see *GURPS Magic*.

Create Fire

Area

Creates fire without fuel. This will fill the entire area, igniting flammables and inflicting damage as per the *Flame* rules (p. 28). Cannot be cast *within* an object.

Duration: 1 minute.

Base Cost: 2; half that to maintain.

Prerequisite: Ignite Fire.

Daze

Resisted by HT

The subject looks and acts normal, but simply won't notice what's going on around him, or remember it later. Any injury, or successful resistance to a spell, breaks the spell.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds.

Cost: 3 to cast; 2 to maintain.

Duration: 1 minute.

Prerequisite: Foolishness.

Detect Magic

Regular

Lets the caster determine whether any one object is magical. A critical success will also identify the exact spell.

Time to Cast: 5 seconds.

Cost: 2.

Duration: Instantaneous.

Prerequisite: Magery.

Fireball

Lets the caster throw a ball of fire from his hand. When it strikes something, it does damage and vanishes in a puff of flame that may ignite flammables.

Time to Cast: 1 second per 1d damage (maximum 3).

Duration: Until thrown.

Cost: 1 to 3; the fireball does 1d damage per point of ST spent (maximum 3).

Prerequisite: Magery, Create Fire, Shape Fire.

Foolishness

Reduces the subject's IQ temporarily. Ability with all spells and IQ-based skills is reduced as well.

Duration: 1 minute.

Cost: 1 for every point of IQ reduction (maximum 5); half that (round up) to maintain.

Prerequisite: IQ 12+.

Haste

Increases the subject's Move and Dodge by 1 to 3.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds.

Duration: 1 minute.

Cost: 2 to cast and 1 to maintain for every point added to Move and Dodge (maximum 3).

Ignite Fire

Sets fire to a *readily* flammable, nonliving object.

Duration: 1 second.

Cost: Depends on heat. 1 will light a candle, tinder in 1 second; 2 will ignite paper in 1 second, someone's clothing in 4 seconds; 3 will ignite dry firewood or someone's clothing in 1 second, leather in 2 seconds, and heavy wood in 6 seconds; 4 will ignite coal in 1 second, heavy wood in 2 seconds. Same to maintain.

Lend Health

Lets the caster spend ST to *temporarily* restore any amount of the subject's lost HT; when the spell ends, the injuries return. Cannot increase HT above its original level.

Duration: 1 hour.

Cost: 1 per point of HT restored. Cannot be maintained.

Prerequisite: Lend Strength.

Lend Strength

Lets the caster transfer ST to restore someone else's missing ST. Cannot raise ST above its original level.

Duration: The subject's ST is restored instantly; the caster's ST recovers normally.

Cost: Any; ST is transferred on a one-to-one basis.

Prerequisite: Magery or the Empathy advantage.

Light

Produces a small light like a candle flame. The caster may move it at 5 yards per second by concentrating.

Duration: 1 minute.

Cost: 1 to cast; 1 to maintain.

Minor Healing

Restores up to 3 HT to the subject. Skill is at -3 per attempt after the first, when used on a given subject more than once per day by the same caster.

Duration: The injury is fully healed.

Cost: 1 to 3 – the amount of HT restored to the subject.

Prerequisite: Lend Health.

Missile

Shape Fire

Lets the caster move flame around, changing its shape but retaining its volume. Fire can be moved at 5 yards per second, but won't move to a place where it cannot burn.

Duration: 1 minute.

Base Cost: 2; half that to maintain.

Prerequisite: Ignite Fire.

Shield

Adds to the subject's passive defense. This PD behaves as if it were armor.

Duration: 1 minute.

Cost: Twice the PD added, up to +5 PD (costs 10); half that to maintain.

Prerequisite: Magery 2.

Sleep

The subject falls asleep (if standing, he falls down) and sleeps for 8 hours unless awakened. Upon awakening, he is mentally stunned (p. 28) and must make an IQ roll to recover.

Time to Cast: 3 seconds.

Cost: 4.

Duration: An instant; the ensuing sleep isn't magical.

Prerequisite: Daze.

Regular

Regular

Regular

Regular

Regular

Area

Regular

Resisted by HT

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.

Cultures and Customs

Adventure Settings

Skills, Jobs, and Professions

Medicine

Monsters and Animals

Transportation

Technology and Communications

Maps

Weapons and Combat

Politics and Religion

Special Advantages and Disadvantages

Mana Level(s)

JOBS

It's up to the GM to define the jobs available in his game world. A job is defined by several things:

Description: The job's title, and exactly what the job entails.

Prerequisite Skills: The skills needed to do the job (if any), and the minimum required level in each. Some jobs also have prerequisite advantages.

Job Success Roll: At the end of every month in which a character works, he must roll against one of the prerequisite skills for his job (selected by the GM) – possibly at a penalty, for difficult jobs. Jobs without prerequisites may have a flat success roll (e.g., all characters roll vs. 12) or require an attribute roll (e.g., ST or IQ). If you roll anything but a critical success or critical failure, just collect the *monthly pay* (below) and go on. On a critical success, you get a 10% permanent raise in income. Results of a critical failure vary; loss of the job is typical, but the GM should be creative.

Monthly Pay: The amount of money earned on a successful roll. Remember that unless the economy is under some sort of stress or outside control, jobs will never be high-paying unless they are difficult (hard success roll), dangerous (severe consequences on a failed success roll), highly trained (difficult skill prerequisites), or privileged (difficult Status or Wealth prerequisites; e.g., see *Wealth Level*, below).

Wealth Level: Each job has a *wealth level*, which can be *poor*, *struggling*, *average*, *comfortable*, or *wealthy*. This is the minimum level of wealth a *character* must have if he holds that job. Very Wealthy and Filthy Rich characters get "wealthy" jobs, but Very Wealthy people take home twice the listed pay for any job, and the Filthy Rich get 10 times the listed pay!

GAME TIME

Game time is the time that passes in the game world. The GM is the judge of how much time has passed.

Time During Adventures

Combat is played out in “slow” time. One combat turn equals one second. It may take a minute or so for each combat turn, especially if players are inexperienced or the battle is a large one. But combat is usually a life-or-death situation, and you need to give players time to think.

Conversations, attempts to pick locks, attempts to escape from traps, and similar situations are played in “real” time. If the players spend 10 minutes discussing how to best approach an NPC merchant . . . their *characters* spent 10 minutes talking outside the shop.

Routine travel, and so on, is handled in “fast” time. When the party is walking along a trail, for instance, the GM can simply skip the time between encounters. Tell the players when they meet someone, when they come into a town, or when night falls. Just compress the rest of the time.

Time Between Adventures

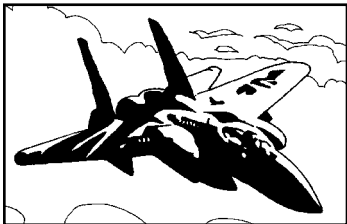
In a continuing campaign, you also need to keep track of time between adventures. This can always be the same amount of time, or the GM and the players can simply agree on a “logical” time to pass between the end of one adventure and the beginning of the next. It is often a good idea to let a month or two go by, to allow time for healing, earning money at “ordinary” jobs, and so on.

Of course, no game time at all has to pass between *sessions*, if you can't finish an adventure in one session. If, when you quit play, the party has just confronted a rampaging Tyrannosaurus, that Tyrannosaurus will get no closer in the real-world week before you can play again!

TECH LEVELS

A *tech level* (TL) is a general description of a culture's highest achievement in technology. It is possible for a locale, nation, or world to have widely varying TLs in different subjects. Tech levels run from 0 to 16. High TLs are likely to seem like magic to anyone of a sufficiently low TL! Standard tech levels are:

0. Stone Age: fire, lever, language.
1. Bronze Age (Athens): wheel, writing, agriculture.
2. Iron Age (Rome): keystone arch.
3. Medieval (pre-1450): steel weapons, math with zero.
4. Renaissance/Colonial (1450-1700): gunpowder, printing.
5. Industrial Revolution (1701-1900): mass production, steam power, telegraph.
6. World War I - II (1901-1950): cars, airplanes, radio.
7. Modern (1951-2000): nuclear energy, computer, laser, rockets.
8. Spacefaring (2001-2050?): slower-than-light space travel, fusion power, implants.
9. Starfaring: faster-than-light star travel, sentient computers, artificial longevity.
10. Antimatter: AM power, artificial gravity, slow FTL radio.
11. Force: force screens, tractor beams, fast FTL radio.
12. Gravitic: contragravity, grav compensators, personal force screens.
13. Worldbuilding: full terraforming of planets.
14. Dysonian: construction of worlds, ringworlds, and so on.
15. MT: matter transmission, cosmic power.
16. As you wish . . .



Characters and Tech Levels

Skills: Many skills are different at each tech level. These skills are indicated by a /TL on the Skill List. When you take this skill, supplement the TL with the tech level at which you learn the skill. An engineer in a medieval world, for instance, would learn Engineer/TL3, while a modern engineer would learn Engineer/TL7; for game purposes, these are *separate skills*.

When characters are from differing tech levels, being from a higher TL than the campaign norm is an advantage; being from a lower TL is a disadvantage. To reflect this, use the advantage High Technology (p. 10) or the disadvantage Primitive (p. 13).

TRAVEL BETWEEN GAME WORLDS

One of the chief purposes of the *GURPS* design is to let players move between different game worlds without learning a whole new set of rules each time. A player can participate in several campaigns, each in a different place or time, and play a different character in each one. Each character stays in his own world. But the *characters* can also move from one world to another, in two ways:

(1) A player can develop a character in one game world and then bring that character into another game world. An example might be a medieval wizard, hurled hundreds of years into the future by a magic spell, participating in a World War II adventure.

(2) An entire campaign can move from one game world to another. For example, suppose the party is the crew of an interstellar trading ship. They crash-land on a primitive planet. Until they can make their way to the spaceport, on the other side of the world, they have effectively been dropped into the 12th century!

Differences in Worlds

As a rule, the more different two worlds are, the harder it should be for PCs to move between them deliberately. Significant differences would include:

- Very low-tech world vs. very high-tech world.
- Low-mana world, with little or no magic, vs. high-mana world.
- Largely- or all-human world, vs. world with many races.
- War-racked, plague-ridden world, vs. peaceful, decadent world.

Certainly any or all of these differences could exist on a single planet! But they would not be found next door to each other. So GMs should make travel between incompatible worlds *difficult*. This achieves an effect that is very rare in gaming; it improves both realism and playability. “Rule changes” can be a lot of fun, but don't make them *too* much of a surprise.

There you have it. You can use *GURPS* for any kind of roleplaying campaign, in any world you can dream of . . . and you can move easily between worlds, with the same characters or different ones. Lots of support is available . . . but all you really need is this booklet. Have fun!

GURPS on the World Wide Web

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There is so much free material on the web (articles, adventures, world descriptions, characters . . .) that with *GURPS Lite* and a net connection, you could play for the rest of your life without ever spending a penny. But we hope that you like the system enough to occasionally buy a book . . .

You may also want to check our online magazine, *Pyramid* (www.sjgames.com/pyramid), which covers not just *GURPS*, or even just roleplaying, but all kinds of games: computer games, boardgames, card games . . . the whole field.