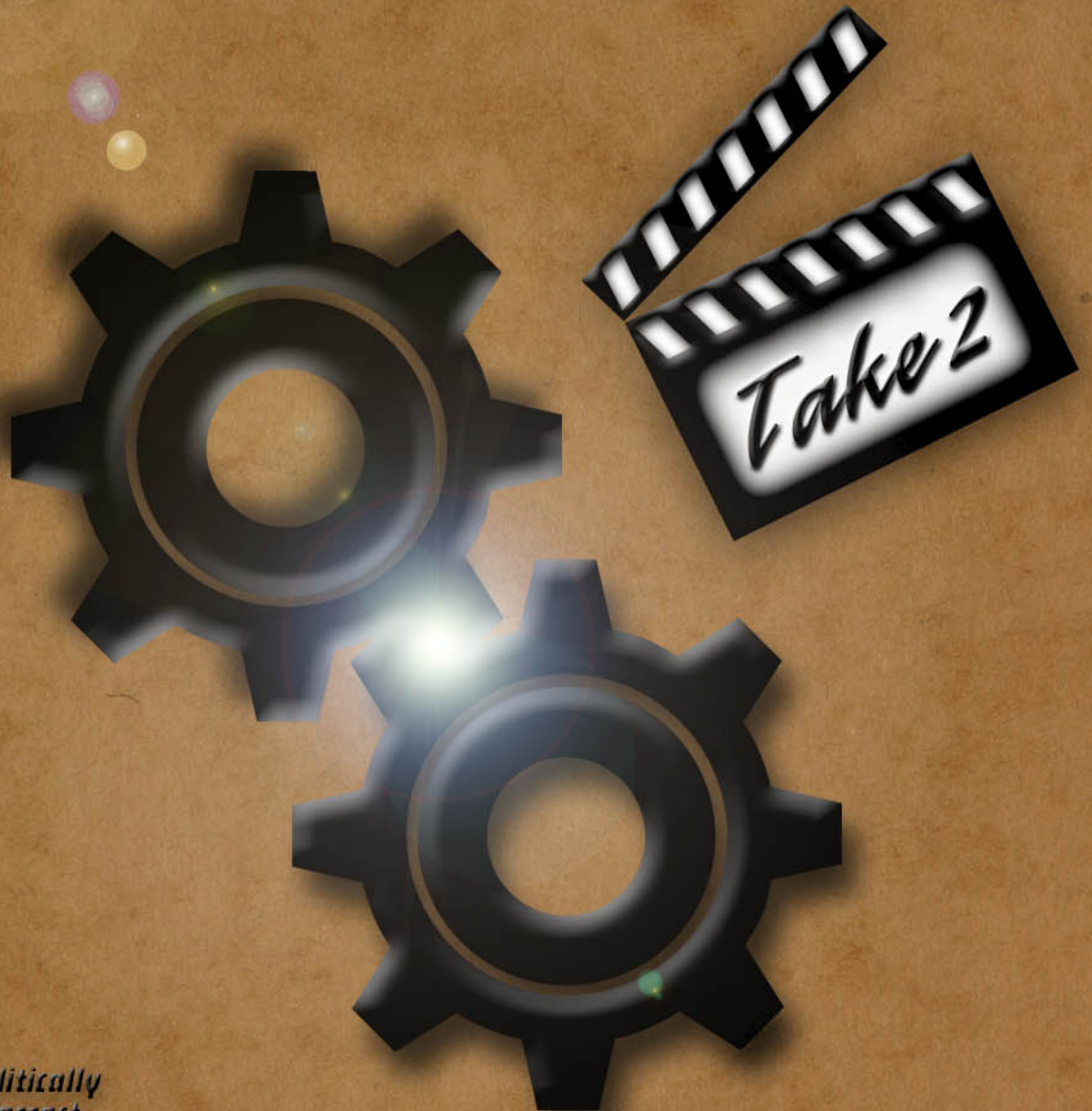


Active
EXPL^{⚙️}ITS™
diceless roleplaying



Active **EXPL** **ITS** diceless roleplaying

- second edition -



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ALL OF THE ADVENTURE, NONE OF THE DICE!

VERSION 1.1

Written and Designed by Brett M. Bernstein. Edited by Matt Drake.

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Special thanks to everyone on the Active Exploits Discussion List and all the past supporters who have contributed to making this system what it is today.

All questions and comments may be directed to info@pigames.net or posted at the pigames.net forum.

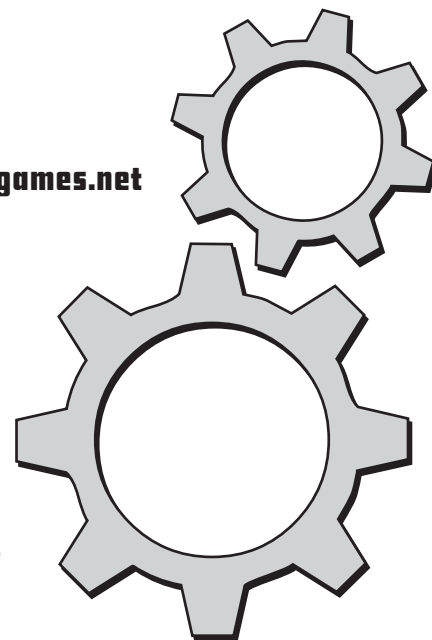


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INTRODUCTION

What's this diceless roleplaying all about?

Welcome to the world of **Active Exploits Diceless Roleplaying TAKE2**. This is the second release of the core rules. If you are familiar with the first edition, learning **TAKE2** should be a breeze. Extra features and new/updated rules have been added to both enhance and simplify game play, while maintaining full compatibility with the original version and existing settings.

TAKE2 has also been written so that it maintains as much consistency as possible with Impresa Modular Roleplaying System and Impresa Express. These two systems are very similar to Active Exploits in their foundation, using abilities, gimmicks, and so on. Whereas Active Exploits uses diceless mechanics, Impresa's task resolution is managed through rolling ten-sided dice. Conversion between Active Exploits and Impresa is relatively simple—conversion guidelines are available at the Politically Incorrect Games web site.

Before we begin, let's discuss what  means. You will see this symbol throughout the book. It is a signal to you, the reader, that the accompanying text indicates a change from the first edition rules and how you should go about reconciling your existing characters or setting information. Changes will be minimal and, in most cases, you will only be required to make a mental note.

You will also see  appear with some optional rules. This indicates that the rules present are dependent on other optional rules listed beside the symbol.

One more thing to look for is a box like this. The text within is used to illustrate a point or present an example.

The rules have been separated into four distinct sections, with two others as complimentary chapters.

Chapter 1: Basic Exploits

First we go over the basic rules, intended to get you into the action as quickly as possible.

Chapter 2: Advanced Exploits

Then we move on to the advanced and optional information, such as convictions, threads, vehicles, expanded tasks, and combat rules. This chapter can be used right away by readers accustomed to the first edition or by those wishing to expand upon the basic rules.

Chapter 3: Setting Specifics

Once you have perused the rules and have a firm understanding of them, we move on to setting specific rules for the arcane (magic and occult) and martial arts. New abilities, skills, and gimmicks can be found here.

Chapter 4: Master Lists

You'll find a huge list of skills and gimmicks here. Of course, not all of them are necessary and you can always add more, but this is a master list you can use for easy reference.

Chapter 5: Live Exploits

If you are interested in live action roleplaying (LARP), this section is a must. These rules provide a common method for interacting with large groups of people.

Chapter 6: Director's Notes

Finally, we touch on what the director needs to know in order to make his job a lot easier, while helping his players enjoy the game. Some alternate methods of task resolution are found here, along with a distribution agreement for creating your own **not-for-profit** settings for use with Active Exploits.

Now that you know what to expect, let us review the purpose of this book before continuing.

✓ **WHAT IS ROLEPLAYING?**

Roleplaying is similar to the production of a film and requires two or more people. One person assumes the role of director, who sets the stage and casts the actors and extras. The remaining players are the actors, assuming the personalities of their respective characters within the confines of the game.

The most important function of the director is to produce an interesting story which flows smoothly and quickly. He should also give the players room to explore their characters while preventing them from getting out of control.

There are many different schools of thought as to how roleplaying games should be played. Some people let the dice determine their fate, while others prefer to narrate their own destinies. Whatever your preference, roleplaying is a storytelling game meant to entertain.

✓ **DICELESS ROLEPLAYING?**

Roleplaying games typically use a combination of dice to determine the outcome of a situation. Active Exploits removes that element of chance to encourage players to think before they act and then roleplay their way out of situations or describe their actions in such a way as to inspire the others in their group. Playing in this cinematic fashion will make the game much more entertaining than rolling dice every few minutes. Some elements of chance have been substituted with a form of resource management and secrecy on the director's part. At the end of the day, don't worry about this and just have fun.

This book is your portal to adventure for any genre imaginable. It can be expanded with new rules and possibilities by adding supplemental game settings published by Politically Incorrect Games and licensed third parties.

✓ **WHAT DO I NEED TO PLAY?**

Since Active Exploits was designed to permit game play without the need for dice, it only requires paper, a pen or pencil, and these rules. Although it is not necessary, you should also have a photocopied or printed character sheet (there are a few different sheets provided) ready for each player. Obviously, aside from the materials listed above, you'll need two or more friends and a little imagination.

✓ **BASIC CONCEPTS**

The rules presented here are only guidelines for play. If you prefer not to use a specific rule, that's fine, but consider what the rule does. Chances are the rule won't make sense at first, but as you play and understand how the system works, you will probably come to realize why it was included. The following concepts will help familiarize yourself with the basics of the rules. You won't know how to play by reading these descriptions, but they will help you grasp the details presented in later chapters.

Story

This is a complete plot line or adventure which the director has decided to utilize for play. It can encompass many subplots or simply consist of a single, long and complicated tale.

Episode

It is very likely that a well thought-out story will take longer than a single session of play. Each gaming session is therefore referred to as an episode since more than one is required to make up a complete story.

Scene

Scenes encompass an entire exchange of dialog or non-time specific actions (ritual prayer or riding on a stagecoach, for example) in one particular location. The exact amount of time is irrelevant—it takes as long as necessary to complete the exchange. The purpose of a scene is to allow for a quicker passage of time, resulting in smoother game play by ignoring tedious events.

Focus

This element of play represents a point in the story when a scene is broken down into an orderly and detailed series of actions, rather than using an abstract flow of time. Some examples would be combat and contests of skill.

Turn

Whenever the focus element is used, turns are utilized to track its progress. A turn represents five seconds and is tracked in order to ensure that players act in an orderly and fair manner.

Player Character

Player Character is the term applied to all roles which are assumed by the players.

Non-Player Character

Non-Player Character is the term applied to all major roles acted out by the director as opposed to the players.

One of the players is portraying Sherlock Holmes and the director is portraying Professor Moriarty, the chief antagonist. While it is possible for a player to portray a villain in the game, it would probably be best if all the players were on the same side in order for them to work together.

Extra

Extras represent the minor roles (characters not important to the story) which are acted out by the director.

Setting

This is the game-world in which the story is told. The game could be played in a futuristic utopia, ancient fantasy land, or even an alternate reality. These rules can be adapted to fit whichever setting you require by limiting or adding skills, or creating new special abilities. We'll get to them later.

Abilities

Each character in the game has a set of abilities which are used to represent what he is capable of accomplishing. These abilities are used to measure a character's raw talent and capacity to learn.

Skills

Each character has some sort of training or life experience which provides knowledge and proficiency used in aid of a career or simply survival. Whereas abilities determine a character's potential, skills determine what he knows or is trained to do.

Tasks

Whenever a character attempts to put an ability or skill to use in order to accomplish some feat, it is called a task. More complex or difficult tasks require the character to exert effort, which represents the character's concentration and energy expended. Since effort is a measure of the character's potential, it is derived from his abilities.

Exerting a lot of effort can be very tiring and is limited by the discipline ability. If a character exerts more effort than his discipline rating in a single turn, he begins to tire. This may affect future tasks, because if he becomes fatigued enough, it will reduce the amount of effort which he is capable of expending. There is also something called **free effort**. This works exactly the same as regular effort, except that it does not contribute to fatiguing a character. Think of it more as a bonus to succeed rather than actually an exertion by the character.

Skill is also important and increases the amount of free effort used on a task. Since the character is somewhat versed in the skill, it merely aids him in the task.

Let's recap. Abilities exert effort as a measure of potential. Skills add a bonus due to training and experience. What do we measure these numbers against? Difficulty. The more difficult the task, the more effort/skill is required to succeed at it. There are five degrees of difficulty: trivial, routine, challenging, improbable, and impossible. Each requires a specific amount of effort to be exerted in order for the task to succeed. Now, the director is not going to tell the players outright what the difficulty is, so that it adds an element of chance (and risk). The players will not know how much effort to exert, just like in real life, making the game a bit more interesting.

Experience

As skills are used by characters, they will gain experience points. These points may be used to add free effort to a related task, increase the skill's rating, or even learn a new skill.

☑ **WHAT ELSE IS THERE?**

Apart from the rules presented in this book, you need nothing additional to play. That is, nothing additional in the way of materials. You will need a little imagination and inspiration—novels, television, and films are great resources for ideas. Politically Incorrect Games also offers setting books should you wish to further your exploits. There are both free and affordably-priced setting books available for Active Exploits Diceless Roleplaying.

A wealth of new and optional rules are also available on the **Active Exploits Collaborative Site** which can be found on the internet at:

[HTTP://WWW.PIGAMES.NET/COLLABORATIVE/](http://www.pigames.net/collaborative/)

If you would like to keep up to date on the rules or new settings, or be able to add your own material to the collaborative site, feel free to join the **Active Exploits Discussion List** at:

[HTTP://GROUPS.YAHOO.COM/GROUP/ACTIVEEXPLOITS](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/activeexploits)

Chapter 1

BASIC EXPLOITS

Getting into the action without reading the whole book.

This chapter discusses the quick-play variant of Active Exploits. It is meant as an introduction to diceless roleplaying and can either be disregarded for the advanced rules once the basics are understood or utilized as the main rules set for your gaming group.

All rules are subject to your own preferences, so if you like a specific mechanic from the advanced rules, but wish to continue using these, it is just a matter of amalgamating the two to make your own house rules. Nothing is written in stone—please experiment and use any combination of rules with which you feel the most comfortable.

✓ ABILITIES

The most important element of a character (aside from his background, motivations, and nature) is his potential, which is measured by four abilities. These determine his physical, sensory, spiritual, and mental capacities.

Abilities are rated on a scale from $|-1|$ to $|+5|$ and will most likely not change during play. A negative value denotes a penalty on all related tasks, while a positive value indicates the maximum amount of effort which may be applied to related tasks (and replenished at the end of every turn). We will explore the concept of effort soon, but in the meantime, it describes how much energy the character exerts in order to accomplish a task.

ABILITY RATINGS	
-1	disabled
0	average
+1	talented
+2	very talented
+3	super human
+4	beyond human
+5	unimaginable ability

Fitness represents the character's strength, agility, and physical health. Fitness can be used to exert effort in the following situations:

- PHYSICAL MANEUVERS SUCH AS IN FIGHTS OR SPORTS
- MAINTAINING AND REGAINING BALANCE
- CLIMBING, JUMPING, THROWING, AND CATCHING
- USING PHYSICAL STRENGTH
- INCREASING THE SPEED AT WHICH ONE ACTS IN COMBAT
- USING ANY APPLICABLE SKILL

Awareness represents the character's sensory ability and is the power of observation and intuition. Awareness can be used to exert effort in the following situations:

- SEARCHING FOR HIDDEN CLUES
- DISCOVERING SOMEONE SNEAKING ABOUT OR WITH THEIR HAND IN THE 'COOKIE JAR'
- PREDICTING THE OUTCOME OF A SITUATION BASED ON INTUITION
- INCREASING THE SPEED AT WHICH ONE ACTS IN COMBAT
- USING ANY APPLICABLE SKILL



Creativity represents the character's spiritual, personal, and artistic affinity, or in other words, inspiration, originality, and style. Creativity can be used to exert effort in the following situations:

- INVENTING A NEW FASHION STYLE OR BUZZ WORD
- THINKING UP AN ELABORATE SPEECH OR STORY
- FINDING NEW AND USEFUL WAYS TO ACCOMPLISH TASKS
- USING ANY APPLICABLE SKILL

Reasoning represents the character's mental ability—logical deduction, rational thought, and memory. Reasoning can be used to exert effort in the following situations:

- STUDYING ACADEMIA
- ATTEMPTING AN EDUCATED GUESS
- USING COMMON SENSE
- PREDICTING THE OUTCOME OF A SITUATION BASED ON LOGICAL DEDUCTION
- USING ANY APPLICABLE SKILL

✓ ASPECTS

-  Aspects were called Mutable Abilities in the first edition rules.
-  Revelation is not used in the basic rules.

Aspects can be used to regulate or assist abilities, and as such, will change very often. Unlike abilities, these are not connected to skills and do not replenish easily; once spent, aspects can only be regained under certain circumstances (discussed below). Aspects are rated on a scale from zero (0) to six (6), each having its own measure of the scale.

Luck is fate incarnate.

Consider what happens when the universe intervenes on behalf of your character—you get lucky. It may be restored through the use of principles (we will discuss them soon) or the director may decide to reward a character with one (1) point for good roleplaying. Luck may be expended in order to benefit from one of the following effects:

LUCK RATINGS	
0	unlucky
1	typical luck
2	lucky
3	very lucky
4	super lucky
5	supernatural influence
6	master of fate

- INCREASES THE AMOUNT OF EFFORT USED BY ONE FOR EACH POINT EXPENDED
- ONE POINT MAY BE EXPENDED TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF DAMAGE INFLICTED IN AN ATTACK AGAINST SOMEONE OR SOMETHING
- DECREASES THE AMOUNT OF FATIGUE OR INJURY SUSTAINED BY ONE FOR EACH POINT EXPENDED

Discipline describes a character's willpower, composure, and resolve.

It determines how much effort a character can exert in a turn before tiring and allows him to press on in the face of danger and even extreme pain. Although it cannot be raised above the starting value, discipline is restored to that value at the end of each episode. Discipline may be expended in order to benefit from the following effect:

DISCIPLINE RATINGS	
0	feeble will
1	weak will
2	average will
3	strong will
4	iron will
5	super human will
6	unimaginable will

- DECREASES THE AMOUNT OF FATIGUE OR INJURY SUSTAINED BY ONE FOR EACH POINT EXPENDED

✓ SPECIAL ABILITIES/ASPECTS

Special abilities and aspects are used to add magic and other powers to the game. Since not all characters possess these abilities, they are ignored unless a specific game setting makes use of any or all of them. Special abilities and aspects function in the same manner as standard abilities and aspects respectively. A few samples are listed below, but you can create your own depending on your needs.

SPECIAL ABILITY RATINGS	
-1	cursed or allergic reaction
0	no ability; typical
+1	subtle ability
+2	obvious ability
+3	unusual ability
+4	super ability
+5	unimaginable ability

ESP (ability), or extra sensory perception, acts as an extension to awareness by increasing a character's sense of intuition. It also allows a character to utilize ESP-based skills such as telepathy or telekinesis. ESP can be used to exert effort in the following situations:


- ADDING EFFORT TO AWARENESS-BASED TASKS (AT DIRECTOR'S DISCRETION)
- USING ANY APPLICABLE SKILL


Endowment (aspect)

indicates that the character has access to supernatural powers granted by an entity existing in another realm. Endowments are typically granted in exchange for favors and if a character does not live up to his end of the bargain, this special ability may be taken away or the entity may punish him. Endowment is used to supplement other abilities—choose an endowed ability and expend points to add extra free effort to tasks involving the chosen ability. Endowment points may be restored by renegotiating a new agreement with either the same or a different entity, but only one entity at a time.

ENDOWMENT RATINGS	
0	no capacity
1	weak capacity
2	subtle capacity
3	obvious capacity
4	unusual capacity
5	super capacity
6	unimaginable capacity

✓ SKILLS

 This edition of the rules do not differentiate between aptitudes and academia, although skills which cannot be used unskilled (those followed by *) are the same as the latter.

 The **apprentice** skill rating has been replaced with **novice**. Feel free to use whichever term you are more comfortable.

Skills represent general knowledge, training, and fields of study. Each skill is governed by a single ability and

rated in the following manner: unskilled, novice, proficient, and expert.

Unskilled is the default rating for all skills and indicates that the character has no training or experience with the specific skill.

Novice (or Apprentice) represents that the character has a basic understanding of the skill or has the minimum of experience and training required to use it.

Proficient indicates that the character has had professional training or extensive experience in the skill.

Expert indicates that the character is at the top of his field. This level is unsurpassed in understanding or experience.

A character's ability and skill ratings determine his chances of success when attempting a task. Other factors may also apply, but these are directly related to the character. Any skill may be attempted unskilled unless it has an asterisk (*) next to it. Feel free to add your own skills to fit the setting.

Fitness-Based Skills

Archery covers the use and construction of bows and arrows.

Athletics helps a character climb, swim, throw objects, perform acrobatic stunts, and dodge attacks.

Brawling covers punching, kicking, grappling, and parrying in combat situations.

Driving covers the operation of automobiles, trucks, and motorcycles. It can also be used for general vehicle maintenance when used with **reasoning** instead of **fitness**.

Firearms covers the use of any pistol or rifle. It can also be used for general gun maintenance when used with **reasoning** instead of **fitness**.

Melee is used to fight an opponent using hand-to-hand weapons such as staves, knives, swords, and clubs.

Piloting* covers the operation of air-based vehicles such as helicopters and planes. It can also be used for general vehicle maintenance when used with **reasoning** instead of **fitness**.

Riding is the knowledge of controlling horses (or other riding animals) and steering horse-drawn wagons and carriages.

Sailing is the art of steering and navigating a boat using only the wind and the sails. It can also be used for general sail-boat maintenance when used with **reasoning** instead of **fitness**.

Awareness-Based Skills

Criminal covers racketeering, confidence scams, picking locks and pockets, safecracking, hiding from the law, and escaping from bonds such as chains or ropes. **Fitness** may be used instead of **awareness** for physical maneuvers.

Gambling allows a character to play games of chance and deduce the odds of winning in a given situation. The character can also bluff when this skill is used with **influence** (an optional ability; see Advanced Exploits) in place of **awareness**.

Subterfuge is the art of concealing one's true motives. It can also be used for disguises, forgery, and sabotage when used with the mechanical or electrical skills.

Creativity-Based Skills

Crafts is the shaping and baking of clay pottery and forging of crude metallic alloys such as bronze.

Design covers all forms of artistic training, including painting, drawing, sculpting, metal working, graphic design, photography, and even forgery.

Instrument is the art of designing and playing musical scores with a specific type of instrument. For example, string, percussion, or horn.

Literacy is the art of language and literature. Literacy is used for reading and writing, and analyzing the written word when used with **reasoning** instead of **creativity**.

Performance is the art of oration, singing, acting, and performing on stage. **Influence** (an optional ability; see Advanced Exploits) can be used in place of **creativity**, if the director prefers.

Reasoning-Based Skills

Boating is the building of small wooden sea vessels, such as canoes, rafts, or rowboats. It can also be used to steer boats when used with **fitness** instead of **reasoning**.

Computers covers the operation, hacking, and basic repair of all computer systems.

Electrical is the knowledge of designing, building, and repairing electronic devices.

Financial covers all basic avenues of monetary application, including accounting, business management, and trading.

First Aid is the application of basic medical techniques in order to sanitize and bandage small wounds, and act in emergency situations. A successful task indicates that one grade of fatigue is restored to the patient at the end of the day.

Investigation is the acquisition of data through examination, observation, inquiry, and research.

Engineering* covers a wide array of construction arts—architectural, civil, and aerospace.

Leadership is the art of delegating responsibility and gaining the trust, respect, and loyalty of one's subordinates. **Influence** can be used in place of **awareness**, if the director prefers.

Legends is the knowledge of superstitions, the occult, fairy tales, and mythology.

Mechanical is the knowledge of designing, building, and repairing mechanical devices.

Medicine* is the knowledge of healing and treating the wounded or ill.

Natural Sciences* covers a wide array of studies, including astronomy, biology, chemistry, geology, and physics.

Parapsychology* is the methodical study and organization of the paranormal and other occurrences which are inexplicable by science. It can also be used to identify supernatural creatures and their properties.

Social Sciences* covers a wide array of studies, including economics, law, politics, sociology, and theology.

Streetwise is the knowledge to survive on the streets. It is the urban equivalent of the survival skill. **Influence** can be used in place of **awareness**, if the director prefers.

Survival is the knowledge of staying alive in the wilderness. Survival allows characters to build shelters, locate food sources, hunt, and follow paths.

ESP-Based Skills

Mesmerism can be used to put another person within eye contact into a hypnotic trance. The target character may then be given instructions which he must carry out. The difficulty of the task is determined by the complexity of the instructions—simple one-word commands are routine, while longer, more complex orders are challenging. Tasks which instruct the target to put himself in harms way are improbable.

Telekinesis is the power to move objects with the mind. Difficulty is based on the range to target, but the size of the item should also affect it.

Telepathy allows a character to communicate his thoughts to another person or animal without speaking. Reading someone's thoughts is a bit harder and increases the difficulty by one or two. The difficulty is determined by range.

☑ GIMMICKS

Gimmicks are special properties which are used to better define a character's background, physical oddities, or personality.

Authority indicates that the character has certain responsibilities which permit him to exercise special rights. He can be involved in law enforcement, the justice department, or even city hall.

Connections indicates that the character has friends or associates in some sort of criminal, political, community, religious, or military organization which he can call on for assistance. The connections can also take the form of students, followers, or employees.

Fugitive indicates that the character is an outlaw and on the run from law enforcement agencies. He should avoid the law as much as possible.

Internal Compass indicates that the character can never become lost in the wilderness or a city. He can extrapolate his general location from signs in nature.

Internal Clock indicates that the character possesses a knack for always knowing the exact time and date.

Military Rank indicates that the character is in the military and holds an officer's rank. He may also have access to sensitive material and weapons.

Multilingual indicates that the character can speak up to two languages in addition to his native tongue as a result of growing up in a household or culture where more than one language is used.

Prestige indicates that the character is widely known in a region, nation, or even the world for one reason or another. He could be a famous musician, actor, political figure, or businessman.


Servitude indicates that the character is in debt to another person and must work it off as a servant (butler, maid, assistant, etc.).

Tolerance to Pain indicates that the character is somehow immune to pain and can ignore all penalties caused by fatigue and injury.

Vulnerability indicates that the character is extremely sensitive to a specific substance or mystical force (such as ESP). He receives two (2) grades of fatigue when directly exposed and double the normal amount of injury or fatigue when the contact is the result of an attack.

Wealth indicates that the character is extremely rich. He can usually scrape together enough cash for any deal.

✓ PRINCIPLES

 This is new to Active Exploits and is merely a simplified alternative to convictions.

Principles represent a character's personal goals, mission objectives, and aspirations. They help define a character's purpose in the game and reward him for achieving that which his principles represent. It is the director's task to announce when a principle belonging to a character comes into play. There are three types of principles: codes, faults, and objectives. Each has its own method of interaction.

Codes represent a character's moral values and ideological beliefs. This principle comes into play when a character is faced with committing actions that oppose his code, or receives information or witnesses events contradicting it. Codes may be suppressed by expending one point of discipline or gaining one grade of fatigue. Otherwise, the character suffers from severe guilt or distress and receives an increase in difficulty by one grade on all non-fitness tasks until the effects subside (typically a few days). Alternately, if the player wishes to act out the conflict (meaning roleplay it), he can do so without expending discipline or gaining fatigue. However, if the director is not convinced by his performance, he may still suffer from effects of guilt. Some examples of codes are:

- RELIGION; THE CHARACTER IS A DEVOUT FOLLOWER AND WOULD NOT STRAY FROM THE TEACHINGS OF HIS FAITH
- THE CHARACTER BELIEVES THAT THE EARTH IS ALIVE AND PROTECTING ALL ANIMALS AND ECOSYSTEMS IS HIS DUTY
- CHIVALRY; THE CHARACTER FOLLOWS THE KNIGHTLY CODE AND WOULD NEVER HURT AN INNOCENT OR REFUSE AID TO ANYONE IN DISTRESS


Faults represent a character's overwhelming personal demons. These can take the form of habits, dependencies, and fears. This principle comes into play when a character is faced by one of his faults—it may be suppressed by expending one point of discipline or luck, or gaining one grade of fatigue. Otherwise, the character must react appropriately. For example, a fear of spiders might cause a character to scream or run away at the sight of one; or the smell of cigarette smoke may force a character to partake of his nicotine fix. Alternately, if the player wishes to act out the urge (meaning roleplay it), he can do so without expending discipline or gaining fatigue. However, if the director is not convinced by his performance, he may still indulge in the appropriate behavior. Some examples of faults are:



- ALCOHOL ADDICTION
- ACROPHOBIA; THE CHARACTER IS DEATHLY AFRAID OF HEIGHTS
- NERVOUS TICS; THE CHARACTER HAS BIZARRE MANNERISMS WHICH CANNOT BE CONTROLLED, EXCEPT BY EXTREME CONCENTRATION

Objectives represent a character's personal ambitions, life-long goals, or even directives pertaining to his occupation or other responsibilities. This principle comes into play when a character achieves his objective—he receives one (1) point of luck for short term objectives and either two (2) points of luck or one (1) point of discipline (not additional discipline, it is merely restored to the character's initial rating, if points have been expended) for long term objectives. Some examples of objectives are:

- GET MARRIED, OWN A HOUSE, AND HAVE TWO CHILDREN
- SECRET MISSION; RETRIEVE SPECIAL DOCUMENT
- EARN PILOT'S LICENSE

✓ HEALTH

 All forms of health now have five grades of severity instead of four.

 Fatigue can either be represented by the symbol  or the abbreviation **FAT**.

 Injury can either be represented by the symbol  or the abbreviation **INJ**.

Health is used to measure a character's current physical condition. There are two types of health which are measured in this version of the rules: fatigue and injury. Both have five grades of severity. The amount of effort which the character can exert on a task may be reduced when fatigued or injured. This penalty is not applied from fatigue during combat situations, however, since a character is most likely pumping large amounts of adrenaline to keep him going.

FATIGUE GRADE	INJURY GRADE	PENALTY
1 dazed	bruised	-
2 stressed	sprained	-1
3 strained	wounded	-2
4 exhausted	maimed	-3
5 unconscious	incapacitated	—

Fatigue represents excessive effort which wears down a character, causing him to tire. Fatigue can result from blunt trauma and physical strain. When a character has sustained five grades of fatigue, he falls unconscious. If he receives any more fatigue, it is applied as injury.

which trade or profession is he trained? What does he do for a living? Is he wealthy?

Players should discuss all character concepts with the director first. Bear in mind that the director runs the show. A particular concept may not be compatible with the story he has created.

Step 2: Assigning Ability Ratings

All characters possess a zero (0) in all abilities by default. The reality level determines:

- THE NUMBER OF BONUSES (EACH POINT OF EFFORT) AND PENALTIES (|-1| RATING) YOU CAN DISTRIBUTE AMONG ABILITIES
- THE NUMBER OF STARTING POINTS FOR LUCK AND DISCIPLINE
- THE MAXIMUM RATINGS FOR ABILITIES AND ASPECTS

BONUSES	DRAMATIC	HEROIC	EPIC
a) abilities	+2	+4	+6
b) luck	4	4	4
c) discipline	2	4	6
MAXIMUMS	DRAMATIC	HEROIC	EPIC
d) abilities	+2	+4	+5
e) -1 abilities	2	3	4
f) luck	6	6	6
g) discipline	4	5	6

- a ▶ This is the total number of bonuses you may allocate among the abilities.
- b/c ▶ This is starting value for the luck and discipline abilities.
- d ▶ This is the maximum rating for each ability.
- e ▶ This is the maximum number of |-1| abilities a character may have.
- f/g ▶ This is the maximum rating for luck and discipline.

If an ability is set at |-1| or discipline is reduced by one point, you receive one of the following benefits:

- YOU MAY ADD |+1| TO ANY OTHER ABILITY AS LONG AS IT DOESN'T GO OVER ITS MAXIMUM
- YOU MAY ADD |1| TO AN ASPECT AS LONG AS IT DOESN'T GO OVER ITS MAXIMUM
- YOU MAY CHOOSE ONE ADDITIONAL SKILL AT NOVICE LEVEL

Special abilities may only be used if the director authorizes them. He may choose to restrict their use or even create new ones. The use of special abilities also means that he will need to decide how many additional bonus/points are available to be allocated to them.

Step 3: Assigning Skills and Skill Ratings

The reality level determines the number of skills at specific ratings and how many extra experience points to

allocate among them (we'll discuss experience soon, so just trust us when we say that they are important).

SKILL RATING	DRAMATIC	HEROIC	EPIC
h) novice	2	*	*
i) proficient	3	3	6
j) expert	1**	2	3
k) extra experience	3	6	***

* technically none, but the director can allow extra skills at novice level to fit the character's background
 ** only at the director's discretion
 *** 9 - the number of skills chosen

- h/i/j ▶ This is the total number of novice, proficient, and expert skills with which the character may begin play.
- k ▶ This is the amount of extra experience points which may be allocated among the skills possessed by the character.

You may choose to lower the rating of one of your character's skills by one level in return for an increase of one level in another. This can only be done once and as always, it is subject to the director's approval.

Step 4: Assigning Gimmicks

Gimmicks are also important and typically aid the character in some way, although some can also be detrimental to him. They add flavor to the game, but are not necessary in order to enjoy play. The director is free to allow as many gimmicks as he sees fit as long as it works with the character's background.

Step 5: Assigning Principles

Principles are optional, but like gimmicks, they add flavor to the game and can increase the entertainment factor. Remember, there are codes, faults, and objectives.

Codes: What religious or political views does the character have? Is he honorable? Is he moral?

Faults: What kind of personality does the character have? Does he get upset easily? Does he suffer from an irrational fear? Is he mentally unstable or paranoid? Is he in the habit of repeating a particular phrase or making a gesture.

Objectives: What motivates him? Does he have a dream? Is he in search of wealth, power, or some archaeological artifact?

Our character, Detective Stan Winston, will be physically adept and intelligent at the same time. He was a marksman at the police academy. That's as much as we need for Step 1. Of course, your characters should be fleshed out a bit more than that.

On to Step 2. We'll be using the dramatic level when playing Detective Winston, so we'll set up his abilities like this: fitness |+1|; awareness |0|; creativity |0|; and reasoning |+1|. Luck is at the default of 4 and discipline is at the default of 2. If we wanted to increase his fitness rating to |+2|, we could do this by reducing his discipline to 1, but that would leave him very susceptible to fatigue and injury.

In Step 3, we assign skills. Here is what we decided: brawling (proficient); driving (proficient); athletics (novice); investigation (proficient); criminal (novice); and the director has authorized firearms (expert). We'll dump his extra experience into firearms to make him a real crack shot.

The only gimmick that fits his background is authority, so we give that to him in Step 4.

Step 5 is all about principles and we decide that he believes in justice, but also has violent outbursts due to stress from his job. So his code is justice and his fault is rage. We decide not to give him an objective.

And that's pretty much it. Sure, there are some loose ends in his background that need to be tied up, but that's easy enough, and you don't need the rules for that.

Skills also add free effort to the task. The actual amount depends on the skill rating. In addition, up to three (3) points of experience belonging to the related skill may be expended in order to increase the amount of effort (not free effort) by one (1) for each point.

FREE EFFORT	
unskilled	0
novice	+1
proficient	+2
expert	+3

The amount of effort required for a success is dependent upon the difficulty of the task. Any effort beyond what is needed to succeed is called **overkill** and is used by the director to determine additional effects at his discretion (additional damage, further distances, etc.). Some examples of difficulty are listed below.

EFFORT REQUIRED	
trivial	0/1*
routine	2
challenging	4
improbable	6
impossible	8

* the director has the option to make this 0 or 1

DIFFICULTY	CARRYING	LIFTING	JUMPING
trivial	15kg/35lbs	45kg/100lbs	1m
routine	30kg/65lbs	60kg/125lbs	2m
challenging	60kg/125lbs	115kg/250lbs	3m
improbable	75kg/165lbs	230kg/500lbs	4m
impossible	100kg/225lbs	320kg/700lbs+	5m+

✓ TASK RESOLUTION

The success table has been removed in favor of simple addition. Since the mechanics are pretty much the same, the table is still usable if preferred by players and can be found in Chapter 6. Conditions have also been simplified into different types of tasks for the basic rules, making the game run more smoothly.

Tasks are tests of skill and/or ability. There are many aspects of a task which can affect the outcome.

All tasks are resolved by exerting effort from one or more abilities. Characters may exert an amount of effort up to the rating of the appropriate ability. If used in conjunction with a skill, the appropriate ability is that which the skill is based upon. If the ability has a rating of |-1|, the total amount of effort applied to the task (from other sources) is reduced by one (1).

Luck points may also be expended (and not regained until a time determined by the director) in order to increase the amount of free effort by one (1) for each point.

Trivial tasks require a negligible amount of effort and little or no training. They represent actions which we commonly take for granted. The director has the option to bypass task resolution and permit the character to succeed automatically.

- ▶ typing a letter
- ▶ making a sandwich
- ▶ walking up stairs
- ▶ chopping firewood

Routine tasks require a minimum of effort and very little skill. They represent every day labors which often become second nature. As with the trivial difficulty, the director may bypass task resolution and decide for himself whether or not the character succeeds at the task.

- ▶ filleting a fish
- ▶ riding a calm horse
- ▶ making an arrow
- ▶ starting a fire

Challenging tasks require significant effort and/or skill. They represent mostly innocuous action which must rely on the proper training and experience. Most challenging tasks will only be successful by skilled characters.


- ▶ writing a poem
- ▶ picking a lock
- ▶ painting a landscape under time constraints

Improbable tasks require extreme effort and skill. These are typically unfamiliar and somewhat dangerous actions. It is unlikely that anyone other than a highly skilled character will be able to succeed at an improbable task.

- ▶ forging a document based on second hand knowledge
- ▶ swimming in rapids
- ▶ picking an unfamiliar locking

Impossible tasks require a maximum of effort and skill, and are not likely to be successful. They represent dangerous and infeasible actions. The director should always caution a player once he announces how much effort is being applied to the task (but not before). If the character decides to back down at this point, he may do so, but cannot alter the amount of effort exerted on the task.

- ▶ breaking a thick board with your head
- ▶ shooting an arrow while severely intoxicated
- ▶ properly cooking a whole chicken in ten minutes
- ▶ finding a needle in a haystack

 The first edition rules used the symbol **1** to denote an increase in difficulty by a number of grades equal to the number, while **1** denoted a decrease. While you can still use this symbol, this version of the rules will write out the change in difficulty. For example: increase by one grade of difficulty.

While chasing a suspect on rooftops, Detective Winston attempts to jump across a wide gap. Since falling is rather low on his list of things to do, Winston exerts 1 point of effort from fitness to do so. Because jumping is covered by the athletics skill (and his rating in athletics is novice), the detective receives +1 free effort. He also decides to spend 1 point of luck just in case.

The director decides that the difficulty is challenging since the distance he must jump is about 3 meters (or 10 feet) and the character has enough speed to give him a boost. This means that the character needs a total of 4 points of effort in order to succeed.

The 1 point of effort from fitness, 1 point from his athletics skill, and 1 point of luck totals three, meaning he fails the jump and falls to the ground. Ouch!

Let's suppose that he had a fitness of +2 and allocates 2 points instead of 1. This is enough for him to succeed, so he would be able to continue his pursuit of the suspect.

Let's take this one step further. We'll say that somehow he was able to exert 3 points of effort from his abilities (the how doesn't matter, we're concentrating on the result). This means that he exerted more effort than his discipline rating, so he gains 1 grade of fatigue. He can counter this by spending 1 point of discipline, but he'd rather save that in case he fights the suspect, so his fatigue is increased by 1 grade.

Contested Tasks

A contested task is a direct competition against another character. Both players attempt their tasks with difficulties assigned by the director (routine under normal circumstances, but adjust for weather, lighting, reach of weapon, etc.). The character with the highest overkill wins the contest. If there is a tie, the director can either call it a draw or base the win on who has the highest relevant ability or skill rating.

Resisted Tasks

A resisted task is one which is attempted in order to counter a previously successful task or thwart one which is directed at the character (an attack, for example) using a different skill or ability. For example, attempting to parry a punch. The original task's overkill determines the amount of effort required to succeed, although in cases where difficulty can vary (ranged combat, for example), the difficulty is increased by the amount of overkill.

Sustained Tasks

Some tasks either require a specific amount of time or may be easier achieved by spending extra time on the attempt. The director must decide the minimum time required (if applicable; this number can either be in turns, minutes, or hours) and the incremental amount of time at

which a character receives a bonus. If a character spends more time on the task than the minimum, add one (1) point of free effort for each incremental amount of time beyond the minimum spent concentrating. If the minimum amount of time is not met, reduce the amount effort applied to the task by one (1) or two (2) points.

United Tasks

Some tasks can be performed by multiple characters with one acting as the leader. Only the leader must check for success, but he may add one (1) extra point of free effort for each additional character assisting who contributes more than one (1) point of effort, and has a skill rating of at least novice for simpler tasks (such as lifting) or proficient for more complex tasks (such as surgery).

Prostrated Tasks

Whenever a character exerts an amount of effort (but not free effort) greater than his discipline rating in a single turn, he gains one (1) grade of fatigue. This represents pushing one's self by way of extreme concentration or physical strain. This effect may be countered by spending one point of luck or discipline.

EXPERIENCE

One point of experience is gained whenever a character succeeds at a challenging, improbable, or impossible task. Directors may also award one point of experience for failed tasks if the situation was roleplayed in an entertaining manner by the player. This experience point is attached to the respective skill and may be used to add extra effort to tasks (see task resolution), but no additional effort is gained in this situation. Twenty (20) experience points can also be expended to raise the respective skill rating by one level.

New skills at novice level may also be obtained by expending twenty (20) experience points. These may be taken from any existing skill(s). The character must have a darn good reason for gaining this new skill, however. "Because I want to" just doesn't do it. The character must have attempted to perform tasks covered by the desired skill many times throughout play or he must have a highly skilled teacher guiding him in its use. These rules are not about maxing out characters, but rather roleplaying, so make sure there is a logical and story-driven reason for a new skill.

Abilities cannot be raised under normal situations. Intense conditioning, however, can result in a slight change in ability (no more than one point). Maximums listed in the character creation section still apply. This

increase costs twenty experience points which may be taken from any skill related to the respective ability. For example, intense physical training over a period of several months can increase a character's fitness rating by one ($|+1|$), but he must also expend twenty experience points from any fitness-based skills. All changes are at the discretion of the director.

COMBAT



Combat has been drastically simplified in this version of the rules.

Whenever a situation arises which calls for more detail (like combat), the characters act on a turn by turn basis. This is referred to as bringing the scene into **focus**. Each turn represents approximately five (5) seconds.

The first step is to determine the order in which characters act. By default, all characters act simultaneously. Players may decide to exert effort from fitness or awareness (or ESP) in order to act in haste, however. This means that they can perform a task before the others, usually at the expense of accuracy. When haste comes into play, characters act in order of highest amount of effort exerted to lowest. If there are ties, the actions occur simultaneously.

More than one action may also be attempted each turn, but once effort has been exerted for a task (or haste), it is not available until next turn, and if too much effort is exerted, the character can become fatigued (see prostrated tasks). Additional actions occur after every character has had a chance to complete their first. Effort may also be exerted on additional actions in order to act in haste. It is up to the director to determine if multiple actions chosen by the character are feasible given the situation. Basically, a character may run across the room and fire his gun, or stay alert while defusing a bomb, but he cannot run across the room and defuse the bomb at the same time.

If an action occurs before another character may act, it is resolved before play continues. All simultaneous actions have no effect on each other. In other words, if Joe hits Bob with his gun, Bob may still act. After all simultaneous actions occur, however, damage is applied, and Bob may just be down for the count.

The following actions may be attempted in a turn:

Move. The character can walk, run, crawl, climb, or swim. Distances are in meters per turn. The amount of effort (or difficulty) required for these actions is determined by the desired speed and the skill used is athletics. The director may either allow a character to

move the desired distance simply by forfeiting the required effort for the remainder of the turn or make the character attempt a task.

DIFFICULTY	WALK	RUN	CRAWL/CLIMB	SWIM
trivial	2m	15m	1m	2m
routine	3m	20m	2m	4m
challenging	5m	30m	4m	8m
improbable	7m	40m	6m	12m
impossible	9m+	50m+	8m+	16m+

Attack. The character may attack an opponent. The actual skill used varies by attack. Base difficulty for all attacks is routine, except for ranged weapons (listed below), or resisted and contested tasks.

ATTACK TASKS	
unarmed (punch, kick, grapple)	fitness & brawling
melee (sword, axe, club)	fitness & melee
gun	fitness & firearms
thrown	fitness & athletics
bow	fitness & archery

Weapon modifiers can also adjust the task:

A **Recoil Modifier** is applied if burst fire is used or multiple shots are fired. This number represents a decrease in effort on the task (this can be ignored if firing at targets within short range or the weapon is mounted or is otherwise stabilized), but also increases the damage by one (1) grade if used.

An **Aiming Modifier** is used if one turn is spent aiming—the task receives one (1) extra point of free effort.

RANGE	THROWING DISTANCE	DIFFICULTY
point blank (☉)	3m	trivial
short (☽)	6m	routine
medium (☾)	20m	challenging
long (☾)	50m	improbable
extreme (☾)	75m	impossible

All hits are assumed to be non-specific. In other words, the damage is caused by hits to the chest or from general bruising. If a specific body part is targeted, the attack receives an increase in difficulty by one grade. A success indicates that the targeted body part is hit. If the roll is not successful, but it would have been if a specific body part was not targeted (i.e. one less difficulty), the attack is successful, but the specific body part is not hit.

Other modifiers may be applied to attack tasks as well.


Environmental situations may increase difficulty. For example, it may be improbable to hit someone in the dark or challenging when he is running. Other factors such as technical knowledge may increase a character's free effort on a task. For example, a character's engineering skill may add an extra point of free effort to his firearms skill to correct a jam.

Defend. The character may defend against an opponent. Like attacks, the actual skill used varies by defense. This is a resisted task, so the amount of overkill from the defense roll becomes the amount of effort required for all attacks except firearm, thrown, and bow/crossbow; the difficulty is merely increased for these. No additional actions are possible in a turn which a character blocks an attack.

DEFENSE TASKS	
unarmed block	fitness & athletics
unarmed parry	fitness & brawling
shield/missile block	fitness & melee
melee parry	fitness & melee
dodge	fitness & athletics

Use Skill. The character may attempt a non-combat related skill.

☑ DETERMINING DAMAGE

 Damage classes are not used in the basic rules. See Chapter 2 for a discussion on them.

Each type of weapon or strike inflicts a specific amount of either fatigue or injury if the attack is successful. Unarmed attacks inflict no damage unless there is overkill, in which case, it is limited to one (1) or two (2) points of fatigue, depending on just how much overkill. Special attacks such as punching with brass knuckles or biting may inflict injury at the director's discretion. Melee attacks may inflict additional damage (above and beyond their damage rating) from overkill. All extra damage from overkill is up to the director, but it should be limited to one to two points.

Armor can be used to protect against certain types of damage. When a character wearing armor is attacked and the armor offers protection against the type of damage inflicted by that attack, reduce the amount of damage by the rating of the armor. It is important to note that not every part of the body may be protected by the armor. The director should also take this into account when determining damage. The armor rating is a fixed value and would stop all attacks which inflict an equal or

WEAPON TYPE	RECOIL	DMG	PB	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG	AMMO
snub nosed pistol	-	2INJ	5m	10m	40m	75m	6
9mm and .45	-	3INJ	5m	10m	40m	75m	9
magnum	-1	4INJ	5m	10m	40m	75m	6
carbine	-1	4INJ	5m	10m	40m	100m	20
assault rifle	-2	4INJ	5m	10m	50m	100m	20-50
heavy machine gun	-3	6INJ	5m	20m	50m	150m	50-100
hi-tech laser pistol	-	5INJ	10m	20m	30m	50m	50
hi-tech laser rifle	-	5INJ	10m	20m	30m	75m	100
club	-	1FAT	-	-	-	-	-
knife	-	1INJ	-	-	-	-	-
staff	-	1FAT	-	-	-	-	-
sword	-	2INJ	-	-	-	-	-
arrow	-	2INJ	10m	25m	75m	100m	1

lesser amount of damage. In order to produce realistic results when dealing with armor (a plucky penetrating shot or striking between joints), any attack which results in more than two (2) points of overkill, partially penetrates the armor and inflicts one to two points of damage.

ARMOR TYPE	ARMOR RATING	PROTECTION
heavy skins/clothing	1	fatigue
leather armor	2	fatigue
medieval armor	1	fatigue & injury
older bullet-proof vest	2	fatigue & injury
modern armored vest	3	fatigue & injury
synthetics	3	fatigue & injury
hi-tech armor	4	fatigue & injury
hi-tech force field	5	injury

A character may also expend luck or discipline in order to ignore one grade of fatigue or injury per point. If a character receives two or more grades of injury, or three or more grades of fatigue (before the expenditure of an aspect to decrease fatigue or injury), he is knocked down and must spend the next turn returning to his feet or may act on the ground, but the total effort applied to a fitness-based task is reduced by two.

Detective Winston has found his suspect, who is holding a 9mm pistol. Both parties have their guns drawn...

The suspect, who is currently high, decides to exert 1 point of effort from fitness to act in haste. The detective does not. This means that the suspect can act first. He shoots (using his novice firearms skill), exerting another point of effort from fitness. Since the two of them are in short range, the effort required to succeed is 2. The suspect hits Winston, but with some quick thinking, he dives for cover (actually, he expends 2 points of luck) and is grazed by the bullet (the 2 points of luck reduces the 3 grades of injury down to 1; the fact that he dived just helps to explain why the damage was lessened). Since Winston is knocked down, however, he cannot act until next turn.

On the next turn, Winston goes all out since his life depends on it. He exerts one point of fitness to act in haste, but the suspect is a bit cocky and does not. The detective fires his gun at the suspect (using his expert firearms skill), expending his 2 last points of luck and 2 points of experience. Since the range is still short, the 7 points (2 from luck, 2 from experience, and 3 from expert skill) is plenty. In fact, all this effort means that there is overkill (7 points less the 2 required). The director decides that the overkill has killed the suspect, since 3 grades of injury is inflicted by the weapon plus 2 extra grades from the overkill. There is always chance of revival by rushing the suspect to the hospital, but Winston is not in a charitable mood after being shot himself.

☑ RECOVERY

Recovery of a character's health and ability relies on treatment, rest, and the passage of time.

Health

Fatigue may be decreased at a rate equal to the character's fitness rating per day (negative and zero values are counted as a one). For example, if Jim's fitness rating is $|+2|$, he can restore two grades of fatigue each day.

Injury may be decreased at a rate equal to the character's fitness rating per week (negative and zero values are counted as a one).

The first aid skill can increase the rate at which fatigue is restored by one grade, while the medicine skill can increase the rate at which both fatigue and injury are restored (also by one grade).

Ability

Abilities are always restored to their starting values at the beginning of each **scene** or **turn** (if in a focus situation like combat). Discipline is restored to its original value at the beginning of each episode, while other aspects may not be restored except by specific rules previously mentioned (achieving objectives, good roleplaying, etc.).

NAME

SETTING

Active **EXPLORITS** diceless roleplaying

LUCK

DISCIPLINE

FITNESS

AWARENESS

CREATIVITY

REASONING

FATIGUE

- dazed
- stressed
- strained
- exhausted
- unconscious

-
- 1
- 2
- 3
-

INJURY

- bruised
- sprained
- wounded
- maimed
- incapacitated

PRINCIPLES

SKILLS

CV **OP** **CE** _____
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CV **OP** **CE** _____
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CV **OP** **CE** _____
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GIMMICKS

EQUIPMENT

BACKGROUND, NOTES, ETC.

BASIC EXPLOITS REFERENCE

DIFFICULTY	EFFORT	CAPACITY		RANGE		MOVEMENT			CRAWL	
		CARRYING	LIFTING	CLASS	THROW	JUMP	WALK	RUN	CLIMB	SWIM
trivial	0/1	15kg/35lbs	45kg/100lbs	point blank	3m	1m	2m	15m	1m	2m
routine	2	30kg/65lbs	60kg/125lbs	short	6m	2m	3m	20m	2m	4m
challenging	4	60kg/125lbs	115kg/250lbs	medium	20m	3m	5m	30m	4m	8m
improbable	6	75kg/165lbs	230kg/500lbs	long	50m	4m	7m	40m	6m	12m
impossible	8	100kg/225lbs	320kg/700lbs+	extreme	75m	5m +	9m +	50m +	8m +	16m +

FITNESS-BASED SKILLS
Archery
Athletics
Brawling
Driving
Firearms
Melee
Piloting*
Riding
Sailing

REASONING-BASED SKILLS
Boating
Computers
Electrical
Financial
First Aid
Investigation
Engineering*
Leadership
Legends
Mechanical
Medicine*
Natural Sciences*
Parapsychology*
Social Sciences*
Streetwise
Survival

AWARENESS-BASED SKILLS
Criminal
Gambling
Subterfuge

CREATIVITY-BASED SKILLS
Crafts
Design
Instrument
Literacy
Performance

ESP-BASED SKILLS
Mesmerism
Telekinesis
Telepathy

ATTACK SKILLS	
unarmed	brawling
melee	melee
gun	firearms
thrown	athletics
bow	archery

DEFENSE SKILLS	
unarmed block	athletics
unarmed parry	brawling
shield/missile block	melee
melee parry	melee
dodge	athletics

FREE EFFORT	
unskilled	0
novice	+1
proficient	+2
expert	+3

ARMOR TYPE	ARMOR RATING	PROTECTION
heavy skins/clothing	1	fatigue
leather armor	2	fatigue
medieval armor	1	fatigue & injury
older bullet-proof vest	2	fatigue & injury
modern armored vest	3	fatigue & injury
synthetics	3	fatigue & injury
hi-tech armor	4	fatigue & injury
hi-tech force field	5	injury

WEAPON TYPE	RECOIL	DMG	PB	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG	AMMO
snub nosed pistol	-	2INJ	5m	10m	40m	75m	6
9mm and .45	-	3INJ	5m	10m	40m	75m	9
magnum	-1	4INJ	5m	10m	40m	75m	6
carbine	-1	4INJ	5m	10m	40m	100m	20
assault rifle	-2	4INJ	5m	10m	50m	100m	20-50
heavy machine gun	-3	6INJ	5m	20m	50m	150m	50-100
hi-tech laser pistol	-	5INJ	10m	20m	30m	50m	50
hi-tech laser rifle	-	5INJ	10m	20m	30m	75m	100
club	-	1FAT	-	-	-	-	-
knife	-	1INJ	-	-	-	-	-
staff	-	1FAT	-	-	-	-	-
sword	-	2INJ	-	-	-	-	-
arrow	-	2INJ	10m	25m	75m	100m	1

Chapter 2

ADVANCED EXPLOITS


Optional, advanced, and alternate rules.

ADVANCED CHARACTERS

Now that we've got the basics out of the way, let's move on to some more advanced options. First, we'll discuss these options related to abilities, special abilities, skills, and other concepts revolving around characters. Then we'll go more in depth with tasks and focus situations, such as combat.

Bear in mind that all of this optional. You can mix and match whichever rules work best for your group. Whether you come up with a completely new mechanic or just modify an existing one, please share it with others and post it on the Active Exploits Collaborative Web Site at WWW.PIGAMES.NET/COLLABORATIVE/.

FLAIRS

 This is new to Active Exploits and expands the definition of a character's ability.

By now, it should be obvious that abilities are somewhat generalized. That is, each encompasses a wide array of related traits. For example, the fitness ability regulates both strength and dexterity. Some players may find this restricting and want to further define specific functions of an ability. To remedy this, let us introduce **Flairs**.

Whereas abilities measure a general talent of the character, flairs modify those abilities by refining the talent. Flairs can be either positive or negative, but must follow the limitations established for abilities in the character creation rules.

Going back to our friendly neighborhood detective, Stan Winston, we decide that he would be better off with better dexterity since he is a marksman. To balance this, we'll make him a bit stiff and reduce his flexibility. This means that his dexterity flair is +1, but flexibility is -1. So, his rating for dexterity-based tasks is +2 (1 + 1), but for all tasks based on flexibility, his rating is 0 (1 - 1).

We've also decided that he is getting a bit senile, so we'll reduce his memory flair. To balance this, we want to keep him on his toes, so we increase his instincts. To recap, he has the memory flair for reasoning at -1 and the instincts flair for awareness at +1. He has a rating of 0 (1 - 1) for all tasks which rely on his memory and a rating of +1 (0 + 1) for all tasks when he is surprised.

For every flair assigned during character creation, there must be a balance—each positive flair must have a negative flair to balance the character. The flair does not have to belong to the same ability, however.

A character with a fitness rating of $|+1|$ can also have a flair with a rating of $|-2|$ for all tasks involving physical strength. This would mean that the character has an ability rating of $|-1|$ ($1 - 2$) for situations where strength is a factor, but the original $|+1|$ for all other fitness tasks. Since $|-1|$ is the lowest possible rating for an ability, the flair could not be $|-3|$ (this would bring the rating down to $|-2|$ which is not possible). Conversely, the flair's rating could not be more than $|+1|$ for a dramatic game, because $|+2|$ is the maximum allowed for dramatic level characters.

The purpose of flairs is actually two-fold. The first, as mentioned above, is to fine tune a character's ability. The second is intended to enhance player interaction. When a player describes his character's actions, flairs may be called upon to embellish the scene with the goal to create a more cinematic atmosphere. This paints a clearer picture of the action, thereby engaging the players and increasing the excitement.

When a flaired ability of $|+2|$ or greater is used in this fashion and the director believes that the player properly conveyed the feel of the task in narration alone, it is automatically successful without the need to compare effort. Of course, this assumes that the character had the potential to accomplish the task in the first place.

In the course of a game, a player may realize that he can not succeed at a task after he has already exerted effort, but before determining the outcome. If the character possesses a flaired ability of $|-2|$ or less, he has the option to fail gracefully at a task of challenging difficulty or greater. The player must narrate the results of the failure in a vibrant and cinematic manner. If this is accomplished to the satisfaction of the director, the character receives one point in luck, revelation (see convictions), or any aspect which has been reduced during play (director's choice).

When using flairs, the director should prohibit the raising of ability ratings by expending experience. Instead, experience should be used to raise a single flair at a time. For example, since a player cannot raise his character's fitness ability, he opts to increase the character's dexterity flair.

Fitness Refining Flairs

Dexterity comes into play when a character attempts tasks involving hand-eye coordination, such as firing a gun, using a pencil, catching a ball, parrying a strike.

Muscle comes into play when a character attempts tasks involving his strength. This includes arm wrestling, kicking in a door, doing push-ups, and blocking.

Agility comes into play when a character attempts tasks involving physical grace and full body coordination, such as walking a tight rope, swimming, and dodging a blow.

Quickness comes into play when a character attempts tasks involving outrunning another person or performing sustained tasks in shorter times (counters part or all of a penalty from acting in less than the minimum time required). It can also be used to add extra effort in order to act in haste.

Flexibility comes into play when a character attempts tasks involving contorting or stretching one's body (even freeing oneself from bonds).

Awareness Refining Flairs

Hearing comes into play when a character attempts to sense anything by listening.

Vision comes into play when a character attempts to sense anything by looking around.

Touch comes into play when a character attempts to sense anything by touching with his hands, feet, etc.

Smell comes into play when a character attempts to sense anything by smelling.

Taste comes into play when a character attempts to sense anything by tasting.

Instinct comes into play when a character is surprised. He may expend effort from this flair.

Cognizance comes into play when a character attempts to observe his surroundings without knowing what it is he is looking for.

Empathy comes into play when a character attempts to discern what another character is thinking or feeling.

Creativity Refining Flairs

Manipulation comes into play when a character is negotiating terms of a deal or attempting to bribe or seduce.

Improvisation comes into play when a character is performing tasks which require materials, notes, or rules which are not available. Giving a speech without notes or repairing a watch without a screwdriver are two examples. This basically allows him to find an alternate source when his plans have been unexpectedly altered.

Visualization comes into play when a character is attempting to translate an image in his head (such as a mental photograph) to a painted or drawn form. In other words, when he is trying to illustrate on paper what he sees mentally.

Harmony comes into play when a character is attempting to compose a musical score or maintain harmony with a band or orchestra while singing or playing an instrument.

Emulate comes into play when a character is attempting to mimic another person, such as by acting on stage or as part of a disguise.

Reasoning Refining Flairs

Memory comes into play when a character attempts to remember something from his past or something which he observed recently.

Deduction comes into play when a character attempts logical and deductive analysis.

Numbers comes into play when a character attempts mathematical analysis.

ESP Refining Flairs


Touch comes into play when a character attempts an ESP-based task upon touching the target. For example, when he is touching someone with whom the character wishes to use telepathy.

Family comes into play when a character directs an ESP-based task at a family member within two generations. This would apply to sibling, parents, grandparents, parents' siblings, children, and grandchildren.

Other Flairs

It is also possible for flairs to be used with special abilities. For example, an ability for use with magical spells called arcane can be modified by flairs so that more effort can be exerted when used at specific ranges or perhaps, less effort when targeted at more than one person. We'll get to additional special abilities and their compatible flairs later.

✓ ACCENTED ABILITIES

 This is new to Active Exploits and serves to reduce the number of special abilities required by characters if they wish to use different properties of the same ability.

Accented abilities rely on flairs to define their use and are, therefore, always rated at zero (the flair represents the actual rating). Unlike regular abilities, if a character does not possess a particular flair, he cannot benefit from the flair's effects.

The director invents a new accented ability for his space opera campaign. He calls it 'psionics' and creates the following flairs: active, passive, and intrusive. Psionics may not be used by a character without a flair.


Julian takes psionics with the passive flair at a rating of [+2]. This means that he cannot use psionics for tasks involving active or intrusive use. When he attempts those involving passive, however, he can exert a maximum of 2 points of effort from psionics.

✓ OPEN ASPECTS

 This is new to Active Exploits and replaces the **Infinite Mutable Abilities** as introduced in Dreamwalker Diceless and the Ravaged Europe fantasy series.

Open aspects function in the same manner as regular aspects, except that there is no defined limit to their rating. They can range from zero (0) to infinity (∞); five (5), one hundred (100), and one thousand (1000) are all theoretically possible, but will most likely be limited by actual game usage. The director may, at his option, impose a limit on the ability in order to maintain game balance. We have chosen to differentiate regular aspects from the open variety for one reason—the latter should be used sparingly. They can be both burdensome and unbalancing to the game. Any given setting should be limited to using no more than one open aspect.

✓ FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

 This is new to Active Exploits and is meant as an alternative to using skills.

Fields of expertise replace the need for skills. Each represents a single occupation or trade to which the character belongs, but encompasses many skills. The use of fields of expertise is different to that of skills.

All fields of expertise are just that—expert skill areas. This means that all characters who possess a field of expertise possess it at expert level.

When attempting tasks, the director must determine the appropriate ability to be used. If the action is within the field, but not the central focus (a policeman delivering a baby, for example), the director has two courses of action. He can either reduce the field's rating from expert to proficient (or even novice), or increase the difficulty of the task. The former is best when using basic tasks, while the latter is best for advanced tasks. This simulates how a character may be well versed in the

field, but not its fringe, theoretical, or neglected components.

While fields of expertise may not be raised (since they are already at expert level), experience is used in the same manner as skills when it comes to task resolution. This comes in handy when attempting those fringe actions.



Sophie Nestine is a mighty heroine in a fantasy setting. One of her fields of expertise is healer. For tasks directly related to healing, such as first aid and curing the sick, she is an expert. When it comes to tasks such as finding antidotes to toxins or defeating an epidemic, she is only a novice, because these situations do not happen often (and can only be accomplished in theory); Sophie is not as experienced with these.

The director is free to create his own fields of expertise for characters, but a sample list is provided in Chapter 5.

When creating characters using fields of expertise, the rules for abilities and aspects are unchanged, but the number of fields of expertise possessed by a character is limited by the reality level.

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE	
Dramatic	1
Heroic	2
Epic	3 to 5

✓ CONVICTIONS

-  Convictions have been reorganized in this version of the rules, but their function remains the same.
-  Convictions require the use of **Dementia** (a form of health) and **Revelation** (an aspect).

Most of us live in a society of values, traditions, and beliefs. To some, these concepts are nothing more than unnecessary chores, while others see them as the cornerstone of humanity. Convictions are used to simulate these notions as well as the baser, instinctive and subconscious concepts such as fears, desires, and dependencies. Convictions are broken down into five categories. Each affects game play differently.

Beliefs represent particular elements of a character's perception of reality. They are used to define what the character thinks is going on around him and how he views facets of history or everyday life. Beliefs must be overcome in order to 'think outside the box' (see Conviction Tasks, below).

- ▶ false memories of abuse or trauma
- ▶ schizophrenia
- ▶ paranoia

Values represent a character's moral or ethical code. They are used to determine how the character would react in certain situations. Values must be overcome in order to violate 'proper' behavior and protocols.

- ▶ code of honor
- ▶ religious doctrine/piousness
- ▶ chivalry
- ▶ lawyer's ethics
- ▶ loyalty

Fears represent irrational anxiety or dread often brought on by phobias. Fears must be overcome in order to act without apprehension or panic.

- ▶ fear of spiders
- ▶ fear of social interaction
- ▶ fear of heights
- ▶ fear of divine justice

Temptations represent subconscious desires and dependencies. Some are the result of past experiences (upbringing, trauma, etc.), while others are brought on by addictive substances such as drugs and alcohol. Temptations must be overcome in order to refrain from the specified action.

- ▶ drugs, alcohol, nicotine
- ▶ impulsive
- ▶ nervous disorders
- ▶ lust
- ▶ greed
- ▶ sadism

Triggers represent situations which cause irrational impulses upon which the character reacts. These are often the result of past experiences which lead to emotional scarring. Each trigger must have one belief (the character denies that the situation ever occurred), fear (the character fears the situation), or temptation (the character is tempted to ease his anxiety by way of intoxication or nervous tics) assigned to it. These represent the mind's way of coping with whatever is associated to the situation.

- ▶ disrespect
- ▶ witnessing injustice
- ▶ failure
- ▶ poverty

In order to gauge the severity of a conviction, each is assigned one of four ranks.

Inclination indicates that the character has strong tendencies toward the conviction and often uses it as a guide for behavior and/or ambition. The character will not voluntarily place himself in a situation which requires the conviction to be overcome, unless it is the result of another conviction or important part of the story. The character can overcome it without effort, however.

Habit indicates that the character has acted upon the conviction so often, it has become a routine occurrence in his life. The character will avoid the need to overcome the conviction subconsciously, not even realizing what he is doing. In order to overcome it, the character must realize that the conviction exists and that he is facing it.

Commitment indicates that the character either has pledged to uphold the conviction or acknowledges its existence and consciously nurtures it to a point where it has become a major factor in his life. The character can easily overcome the conviction with conscious effort, but doing so would mean going against his very nature.

Compulsion indicates that the character is psychologically or ideologically compelled to uphold or act upon his conviction. It can not be overcome without consequences. It is also unlikely for a character to even attempt overcoming a compulsion unless under extreme pressure due to the presence of danger or coercion.

Conviction Tasks

A conviction task is one which is attempted to perform an action which requires a conviction at commitment or compulsion rank to be overcome (for example, a character with a compulsion to not kill attempting to shoot someone). Experience may not be applied to the task unless the character expends one point of revelation. The difficulty of the task is also increased by one grade if the conviction is at compulsion rank. If the task is successful, the following effects are applied:

- THE CHARACTER GAINS ONE POINT OF DEMENTIA AS A RESULT OF GUILT AND ANXIETY
- THE CHARACTER MAY NOT RECEIVE ANY EXPERIENCE FROM THE TASK
- THE CHARACTER RECEIVES ONE POINT OF REVELATION AS A RESULT OF ACCEPTING THE FACT THAT OVERCOMING HIS CONVICTION IS A POSSIBILITY, ALBEIT A DIFFICULT ONE

Detective Winston is a gentleman. He has a compulsive trigger whenever someone strikes a lady. The good detective is under cover on a drug bust and sees the dealer slap Veronica, the dealer's mistress. Winston must remain calm while inspecting the merchandise. Using the criminal skill, he makes sure the goods are legitimate. The task receives an increase in difficulty by one grade, because of his trigger. He can only spend experience on this task if he expends one point of revelation.

Changes in Convictions

Convictions can be very hard to break for some people, especially compulsions. Characters may, however, reduce the severity of their

EXPERIENCE COSTS

inclination	5
habit	10
commitment	15
compulsion	20

convictions by spending experience points. Here's the catch—the director may only allow this if he feels that the character has made sufficient effort to control or resist the relevant conviction. In other words, if the character is repeatedly going against the conviction or otherwise attempting to ignore it, the director may allow him to reduce the conviction by one grade of severity. The number of experience points required is determined on the current grade (see table at right). Reducing an inclination means that the character no longer possesses the conviction.

It is also possible for characters to gain or increase the severity of convictions according to their behavior. If the director witnesses a trend or habitual behavior from the character (or player), he may assign a new conviction or an increase in an existing conviction's severity based on that behavior. For example, Bob, a private detective, runs to the bar every single day after work. Since he never goes a day without drinking, the director may give him the temptation (alcohol) conviction at inclination level. If this has been going on for years, the director may even decide to make it a commitment or compulsion.

☑ THREADS



This is new to Active Exploits and is used to explore group interactions.

Threads can be assigned within a group of characters to help describe its dynamics in terms of rapport, rivalry, dissent, synergy, and adoration. The number of threads connecting each character to another is variable,

depending on the backgrounds and beliefs present in the group. All threads should be defined before play and at the director's discretion.

Rapport represents a common set of convictions and/or career training between characters. This often strengthens the resolve of a character when attempting to overcome his convictions. Characters linked with rapport gain the following advantages when the director feels that the players have narrated their actions appropriately:

- A CHARACTER MAY EXPEND ONE POINT OF REVELATION OR LUCK ON BEHALF OF ANOTHER LINKED CHARACTER ATTEMPTING TO OVERCOME A SHARED CONVICTION
- A SUSTAINED TASK USING A SKILL POSSESSED BY LINKED CHARACTERS RECEIVES ONE POINT OF FREE EFFORT IF BOTH OF THEM CONTRIBUTE
- A CONTESTED TASK USING A SKILL POSSESSED BY LINKED CHARACTERS RECEIVES ONE POINT OF FREE EFFORT IF IT IS ESTABLISHED THAT THE ORIGINAL TASK WAS PERFORMED BY THE LINKED CHARACTER

- ▶ Professor and his student
- ▶ Fellow engineers
- ▶ Doctor and his nurse
- ▶ Brotherhood of policemen

Rivalry represents a set of common temptations and/or triggers which often lead two characters to compete for fame, riches, or other objects of their desires. This can often lead to one character crossing the other in order to prevent him from succeeding. While there is no way to stop them from playing dirty, violence should be avoided in favor of eliminating clues or finding allies to block a rival. Characters linked with rivalry gain the following advantages when the director feels that the players have narrated their actions appropriately:

- THE CHARACTER GAINS ONE POINT OF LUCK IF HE MANAGES TO THWART THE PLANS OF A LINKED CHARACTER
- THE CHARACTER MAY AUTOMATICALLY RESIST A TEMPTATION OR TRIGGER IF IT OCCURS WHILE HE IS ATTEMPTING TO THWART THE PLANS OF A LINKED CHARACTER

- ▶ Competing safecrackers
- ▶ Egotistical martial artists
- ▶ Ambitious businessmen
- ▶ Fellow drag racers

Dissent represents a set of opposing convictions (beliefs or values) between characters which leads to debates, arguments, and animosity. This has the potential to add conflict and subplots, increasing the players' immersion into the game, and thereby enhancing intrigue and excitement. Characters linked

with dissent gain the following advantages when the director feels that the players have narrated their actions appropriately:

- THE CHARACTER WHO WINS A DEBATE OR ARGUMENT RECEIVES ONE POINT OF REVELATION AND AUTOMATICALLY RESISTS OR OPPOSES ONE CONVICTION THE NEXT TIME IT COMES INTO PLAY
- THE CHARACTER WHO LOSES AN ARGUMENT CANNOT RESIST OR OPPOSE ONE CONVICTION THE NEXT TIME IT COMES INTO PLAY

- ▶ Liberals vs. conservatives
- ▶ Parapsychologists vs. scientists
- ▶ Satanists vs. Christians
- ▶ new generation vs. older generation

Synergy represents an uncanny connection linking two characters. This is most often the result of the characters being married to each other, growing up in the same household, or sharing occupational duties. Being in the presence of these characters can be very disconcerting as they tend to finish each other's sentences and operate as if they were a single entity at times. Characters linked with synergy gain the following advantages when the director feels that the players have narrated their actions appropriately:

- A UNITED TASK USING A SKILL POSSESSED BY LINKED CHARACTERS RECEIVES ONE EXTRA POINT OF FREE EFFORT IF BOTH OF THEM CONTRIBUTE
- A CHARACTER MAY EXPEND ONE POINT OF REVELATION ON BEHALF OF ANOTHER LINKED CHARACTER ATTEMPTING AN IMPROBABLE OR IMPOSSIBLE TASK

- ▶ Identical twins
- ▶ Husband and wife
- ▶ indoctrinated cult members
- ▶ comedy writing team

Adoration represents two characters linked by an overwhelming desire to be with one another. This is not necessarily a sexual attraction, as it may also manifest as idol worship. One character is typically in a more dominant position and may use this bond for his own profit. Examples might be character who is stalked by another or a mentor using his ever present student to perform menial tasks such as laundry or bringing him coffee. Characters linked with adoration gain the following advantages when the director feels that the players have narrated their actions appropriately:

- A SUBSERVIENT CHARACTER MAY AUTOMATICALLY RESIST A CONVICTION IF IT OCCURS WHILE HE IS IN THE PRESENCE OF A LINKED CHARACTER

- A SUBSERVIENT CHARACTER MUST OBEY A LINKED CHARACTER UNLESS HE SEEKS TO HURT THEIR RELATIONSHIP

- ▶ Lovesick student and her college professor servant
- ▶ Master and his willing ▶ Patty Hearst and her kidnapers

✔ OPTIONAL FORMS OF HEALTH

In addition to fatigue and injury, there are also two optional types of health: **dementia** and **toxemia**.

Dementia represents excessive strain on one's psyche, causing severe mental issues such as psychoses. It can result from fright or altered states of reality. When a character has sustained five grades of dementia, he becomes delirious and control of the character is handed over to the director until the dementia level is lowered. The director may also choose to give the character a mental illness as a result of delirium (see new gimmicks). Penalties from dementia are applied to all reasoning and awareness tasks. Dementia may be decreased at a rate equal to the character's awareness rating per week (negative and zero values are counted as a one) or by psychological treatment (the psychology skill can increase the rate at which fatigue is restored by one grade).



DEMENTIA GRADE		PENALTY
1	sensitive	-
2	agitated	-1
3	distracted	-2
4	irrational	-3
5	delerious	—

 Dementia can either be represented by the symbol  or the abbreviation **DEM**.

Toxemia represents a poisoned blood stream, eventually causing disease or even death. It can result from viral or bacterial infections, and the introduction of toxic material such as poisons, alcoholic spirits, and drugs. After the character receives five grades of toxemia, the character begins to receive fatigue, injury, or dementia, depending on the source of toxemia. For example, a hallucinogenic agent which is meant to affect one's reality would apply additional health levels to dementia, while a sedative would go to fatigue. The director should pick the most obvious form based on the highest dosage. Penalties are not used until

another form of health is reduced. The rate at which toxemia is decreased is dependent on the type of toxin or at the director's discretion.

TOXEMIA GRADE	
1	exposed
2	tainted
3	infected
4	afflicted
5	diseased

 This is new to Active Exploits and is represented by the symbol  or abbreviation **TOX**.

☑ **OPTIONAL ABILITY**

Influence represents the character's social standing, charisma, and popularity. It can be used as an ability for social interaction and/or to maintain compatibility with Impresa™-based characters and settings. Influence can be used to exert effort in the following situations:

- INTIMIDATING, INTERVIEWING, OR INTERROGATING PEOPLE
- SEDUCING MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITE SEX
- BARGAINING AND NEGOTIATING


Influence-Refining Flairs

Charm comes into play when when a character attempts tasks in which his personality is a factor—making people like or trust him, for example.

Financial comes into play when a character attempts tasks in which his wealth is a factor—convincing someone to loan him money or agree to a business deal, for example.

Appearance comes into play when a character attempts tasks in which his appearance is a factor—getting close to a child or another person in a dark ally, for example.

☑ **OPTIONAL ASPECT**

 Revelation is no longer required for play unless convictions or flairs are used.

Revelation represents moments of epiphany and sudden clarity of thought. Its primary use is for convictions and flairs. Revelation may be expended in order to benefit from one of the following effects:

REVELATION RATINGS

0	oblivious
1	intuitive
2	insightful
3	very insightful
4	consciously aware
5	cosmically attuned
6	virtually omniscient

- INCREASES THE AMOUNT OF EFFORT USED BY ONE FOR EACH POINT EXPENDED ON A CONTESTED, RESISTED, SUSTAINED, OR CONVICTION-RELATED TASK
- ONE POINT MAY BE EXPENDED TO CANCEL THE EFFECTS OF DELIRIUM
- ONE POINT MAY BE EXPENDED TO CANCEL THE EFFECTS OF OVERCOMING A CONVICTION
- ONE POINT MAY BE EXPENDED TO ALLOW EXPERIENCE TO BE USED WITH CONVICTION-RELATED TASKS
- SIX POINTS MAY BE EXPENDED TO LESSEN A COMPULSION TO A COMMITMENT
- DECREASES THE AMOUNT OF DEMENTIA SUSTAINED BY ONE FOR EACH POINT EXPENDED
- ONE POINT MAY BE EXPENDED TO TURN A NORMAL SUCCESS INTO A TRIUMPH (SEE TASK OUTCOME LATER IN THIS CHAPTER)

Revelation may be increased in the following ways:

- A PLAYER NARRATES ONE OF HIS CHARACTER'S CONVICTIONS IN A CONVINCING AND ENTERTAINING MANNER
- A PLAYER ACTS OUT ONE OF HIS CHARACTER'S NEGATIVE FLAIRS IN A CINEMATIC STYLE
- A CHARACTER SUCCESSFULLY RESISTS A CONVICTION AT COMMITMENT OR COMPULSION LEVEL

ADVANCED TASK RESOLUTION


In addition to using grades of difficulty (routine, challenging, etc.), the director can express difficulty as the actual amount of effort required in order for a task to succeed. The following notation affects the amount of effort required rather than grades of difficulty: $\pm x$ DIFF; where + or - is increase or decrease respectively, and x is the amount of change. To recap, changes in the **grade of difficulty** refer to changes in the established difficulties (trivial, challenging, etc.), while $\pm x$ DIFF refers to numeric changes in difficulty (+1, -3, etc.).

An improbable task requires 6 points of effort for a success, but the director may decide to lessen the amount to 5 or increase it to 7 in order to use less extreme changes in difficulty.

Reducing the difficulty by one would be noted as -1 DIFF. Increasing the difficulty by 1 would be noted as +1 DIFF.

So, +2 DIFF would increase a task requiring 3 effort to 5. -3 DIFF would decrease a task difficulty of 7 down to 4.

✓ TASK CONDITIONS

 The first edition applied bonuses and penalties as changes in effort. They are now changes in difficulty when using conditions.

In addition to the specific types of tasks presented in the previous chapter, the director can also apply the effects from the following conditions when resolving tasks.

Harried

The character is attempting a task at an accelerated pace. This task may not be prostrated and receives +1 DIFF.

Surprised

This is an impulsive task attempted when the character is caught off guard. No more than $|+1|$ (or the rating of the character's INSTINCT flair if the task is related to the AWARENESS ability or the director decides that it may be used) may be applied from an ability for this task.

Detective Winston is patrolling a dark ally. A perp tries to sneak up behind him. Combat ensues with Winston being surprised. Because of this, Winston cannot exert more than one point of effort this turn on haste or the actual task. Fortunately, his instinct flair is +1, so Detective Winston can use that point of effort towards haste or a task related to awareness.

Coerced

The character is attempting a task against his will. The character gains one grade of dementia if the task is successful. This is used to simulate the guilt and mental stress resulting from the situation.

Detective Winston's niece has been taken hostage. Her captor insists that if Winston does not hand over the gun, the niece gets it. The good detective has run out of ideas and reluctantly gives his gun to his enemy. Since this was a coerced task, Winston is feeling stressed out and guilty that he couldn't save his niece. Now he's really in a mess. He gains one grade of dementia to simulate this.

Encumbered

The character is carrying heavy or bulky equipment which weighs him down and affects his movement and maneuverability. Fitness-based tasks receive +1 DIFF or +2 DIFF (director's discretion).

Subdued

The character has been knocked down, fallen, physically restrained, or otherwise hampered in his movement and maneuverability. Fitness-based tasks receive +2 DIFF.

Feinted

The character is attempting to bluff or misdirect others before executing a planned action in the same turn. Only one additional action is possible that turn, but if the feint is successful, it receives -1 DIFF. Additional actions may be permitted for each additional point effort exerted from the improvisation flair, however.

Detective Winston has been jumped in a dark ally. He has decided to feint a punch after returning to his feet in order to gain the upper hand. The attacker anticipated the punch and tries to block it. Both the detective's and the attacker's tasks were successful: the feint worked because the attacker blocked it, not realizing that it was not the main strike. Winston follows up the feint punch with a real one from the other hand. This task receives a reduction in difficulty by 1, but he has less effort to work with. Not to worry; the perp used all of his effort to block. He could use luck or experience to increase effort, however, but so can Winston.

Fatigued

The character has gained more than one grade of fatigue. All tasks receive an increase in difficulty based on the severity of the fatigue (but not during combat). This replaces the method used in the previous chapter.

FATIGUED	
stressed	+1
strained	+2
exhausted	+3

Injured

The character has gained more than one grade of injury. All tasks receive an increase in difficulty based on the severity of the injury. This replaces the method used in the previous chapter.

INJURED	
sprained	+1
wounded	+2
maimed	+3



Injury is applied during combat situations, unlike the first edition rules.

Demented

The character has gained more than one grade of dementia. All reasoning and awareness tasks receive an increase in difficulty based on the severity of the dementia. This replaces the method used in the **Optional Forms of Health** section earlier in this chapter.

DEMENTED	
agitated	+1
distracted	+2
irrational	+3

✔ TASK RISKS

Some tasks are inherently dangerous and pose the threat of harm if not completed successfully. There are several grades of risk and the director is free to assign any one to a task in order to raise the stakes and simulate a real threat to the character.

Slight

The task can be somewhat dangerous and if a character fails, he gains one (1) grade of fatigue.

Precarious

The task is fairly dangerous and if a character fails, he gains one (1) grade of injury.

Disastrous

The task is extremely dangerous and if a character fails, he gains two (2) grade of injury.

✔ TASK STUNTS

Stunts are feats of ability which are beyond the ordinary. They are typically more difficult than your average task and often increase the risk. Stunts are similar to conditions, except that instead of being the result of situational or environmental factors, they result from a character's choice of action. The director is free to disallow certain stunts depending on the degree of realism intended for his setting. The director may also allow characters to exert effort from the creativity ability towards stunts. This simulate a character's style and ingenuity when attempting unusual and sometimes surreal feats. The use of creativity should be limited, however. It should be reserved only for stunts which the director feels are legitimately original and imaginative.

A few examples of stunts are listed below.

Walking a Tight Rope

The character attempts to walk across a narrow rope. The difficulty for this stunt is impossible and if the rope is high off the ground, the risk is disastrous (or falling; see advanced combat).

Impersonation

A character may attempt to impersonate another by altering his speech and body patterns (using the performance skill). This is mostly for the sake of entertainment—anything else may require additional skills and increase the difficulty. The difficulty for this stunt is improbable.

✔ TASK OUTCOME

Determining the outcome of an advanced task is slightly different from that of a basic task. In addition to failing and succeeding, there are two other possible outcomes—triumphs and calamities. These replace the use of overkill in most situations and are completely optional.

Triumph

The director declares a triumph when a character achieves overkill equal to two (2) or greater. This represents a superb success and provides the following effects:

- INSTEAD OF THE STANDARD OVERKILL RULES, DAMAGE IS EITHER INCREASED BY TWO POINTS OR DOUBLED AT THE DIRECTOR'S DISCRETION.
- THE CHARACTER MAY NARRATE THE OUTCOME OF THE TASK IN PLACE OF THE DIRECTOR. HE CAN EMBELLISH HIS ACTIONS IN ORDER TO PAINT A VIBRANT AND ENTERTAINING PICTURE OF EVENTS. THE DIRECTOR MUST MODERATE HIS NARRATION, HOWEVER, PREVENTING IT FROM HINDERING THE STORY OR GAME PLAY.
- ANOTHER CHARACTER MAY EXPEND ONE POINT OF LUCK IN ORDER TO CANCEL THIS TRIUMPH.
- THE CHARACTER MAY EXPEND ONE POINT OF REVELATION IN ORDER TO TURN A NORMAL SUCCESS INTO A TRIUMPH.

Calamity

The director declares a calamity when a character fails at a task by two (2) or more points of effort. This represents a miserable botch and provides the following effects:

- IF THE TASK WAS ASSIGNED A RISK, THE DAMAGE TO THE CHARACTER IS EITHER INCREASED BY ONE OR DOUBLED AT THE DIRECTOR'S DISCRETION.
- THE CHARACTER MAY EXPEND ONE POINT OF LUCK IN ORDER TO CANCEL THIS CALAMITY.
- THE CHARACTER MAY NOT GAIN EXPERIENCE FROM A CALAMITY (UNLIKE REGULAR FAILURES).

ADVANCED COMBAT

☑ INTERRUPTING HASTE

Let us suppose that a character has decided to act in haste and runs toward his opponent. Does this mean that the opponent will get attacked first? Not necessarily. If the character has some distance to run to reach his opponent, he is ripe for an attack from his opponent. Ouch!

The director needs to maintain a sense of logical flow and progression. Just because a character acts faster than another, it does not mean that he will be able to strike first. Elements such as distance and a weapon's reach must also be factored into the equation.

Detective Winston is running to dive at another character. His movement may be interrupted by an action taken against him. If Winston gets shot and falls to the ground, he no longer has a target at which to dive. Or, after he begins his run, the target decides to take cover and he can no longer dive at his opponent.

Or, his opponent is wielding a staff and strikes Winston thanks to its long reach. The strike causes Winston to fall, thereby interrupting his movement.

Detective Winston blocked a punch last turn. His opponent exerted one point of effort to act in haste this turn, but Winston did not. Winston must wait for his opponent to act first. Then and only then may Winston declare an action and execute it. Until that point, however, since he has not been able to declare his action yet, the good detective is still continuing his block from last turn.

☑ DEFERRING ACTIONS

Characters who act in haste are not only permitted to declare and execute actions before those who do not, but they are also allowed to save their actions and wait in a state of readiness. Once their opponent acts, the character may choose his own course of action, executing it simultaneously. Characters who defer actions may not be surprised unless they are totally oblivious to the source of the surprise.

☑ CONTINUOUS ACTIONS

Actions from a previous turn which are not dependent on timing and position, such as blocking and carrying objects are considered to be still in effect the following turn until the character gets a chance to declare a new action.

☑ COMBAT CONDITIONS

⚙️ Combat conditions require the use of **Advanced Tasks**.

Just as regular tasks may be modified by conditions, so may combat.

Concealment

The target of an attack is partially hidden in a patch of similar color or shading. For example, camouflage in a jungle. While spotting the target may be difficult, it is only marginally more difficult to hit when his location is known. This task receives +1 DIFF.

Cover

The target is hiding behind partial cover and makes it harder for the attack to hit. This task receives +1 to +3 DIFF (director's discretion based on the degree of cover).

In/Under Water

The combat exchange is occurring in or under at least a few feet of water. This task receives +1 DIFF when the character is submerged up to his waist and +2 DIFF when totally submerged.

Large Target

The target is larger than normal and makes for easier prey. This task receives -1 to -3 DIFF (director's discretion based on the target's size).

Poor Visibility

The target is hard to spot because of poor lighting, fog, or smoke. This task receives +1 to +4 DIFF (director's discretion based on the level of visibility).

Small Target

The target is smaller than normal and makes for tougher prey. This task receives +1 to +3 DIFF (director's discretion based on the target's size).

Moving Target

The target is moving, preventing a clear and stable shot. This task receives +2 DIFF.

☑ **COMBAT STUNTS**

⚙️ Combat stunts require the use of **Advanced Tasks**.

Combat stunts function the same as regular task stunts. The more common ones are listed below.

Wrong Hand

The character attempts to attack using his off-hand. This is a rather clumsy action, unless the character is ambidextrous. This task receives +2 DIFF.

Precision

The character attempts to focus his attack (a strike or gunshot) on a particular location on a target (opponent's body, bullseye, etc.). This task receives +2 DIFF.

Sweep

The character attempts to sweep the legs of an opponent either with his own legs or a melee weapons such as a staff. A success indicates that the opponent is knocked down. This task receives +2 DIFF.

Unbalance

The character attempts to make his opponent fall to the ground by way of shoving or throwing. This task receives +2 DIFF.

Pin

The character attempts to keep his opponent on the ground once he is knocked down. This is a contested task against each character's fitness (muscle, agility, or even flexibility flairs may be used).

Constrict

The character attempts to grapple an opponent, making it difficult for him to breathe. This is a contested task against each character's fitness (muscle, agility, or even flexibility flairs may be used).

Disarm

The character attempts to knock a weapon (or other object) out of an opponent's hand. This can be done by hitting it with a strike or melee weapon, or by locking his

joints in a grapple (which may be contested). A success indicates that the weapon drops to the ground. This task receives +2 DIFF.

Take Weapon

This is similar to the disarm stunt, except the character actually attempts to take the weapon. This may be a contested task against each character's fitness (muscle, agility, or even flexibility flairs may be used) if there is sufficient warning for the opponent to react. Success indicates that the character now wields the weapon. This task receives +3 DIFF.

Quickdraw

The character attempts to ready his weapon and use it in the same action. This also requires the expenditure of two (2) points of effort from either awareness or fitness and it receives +1 DIFF.

Dive

The character attempts to plunge head first away from an area or into a body of water. The risk should be gauged by the height of the dive.

Unarmed Block

The character attempts to block a melee weapon with his bare hands (or arms or legs). This makes the task a precarious risk if blocking a weapon which causes fatigue and disastrous if it causes injury. Otherwise, the block is handled normally.

☑ **WEAPON TRAITS**

⚙️ Weapon traits require the use of **Advanced Tasks**.

We have covered two forms of task modifiers so far—conditions (environmental and situational factors) and stunts (advanced skill use). Weapon traits are also task modifiers, but they are derived from the abilities of weapons.

Scope

The weapon may be aimed more accurately by way of its attached telescopic sight. The task receives -1 DIFF at medium, long, and extreme ranges when at least one turn is spent aiming.

Burst Fire

The weapon is capable of firing short bursts of typically three rounds. This increases the damage by one (1) grade of injury when directed at a single target, but the task receives +1 DIFF at medium, long, and extreme

ranges. Any additional attacks at the same target next turn receive -1 DIFF.

Spray Fire

The weapon is capable of firing a large number of rounds at a high rate (approximately twenty rounds). This increases the damage by two (2) grades of injury when directed at a single target. The task receives +1 DIFF at medium, long, and extreme ranges and -1 DIFF at point blank and short ranges. No other actions are possible in a turn when spray fire is used.

Heavy Weapons

The weapon is extremely heavy (a sledge hammer, for example) and may increase the difficulty of a task (usually +1 to +3 DIFF) when used by weaker characters (fitness ratings of |-1| and |0|). The decision to increase the difficulty is up to the director. It may not be necessary to penalize all tasks, just those which require a bit more muscle in order to succeed. An increase in risk may also be relevant. For example, a character with a low fitness rating who is attempting to hammer (with a maul no less) a reinforced wooden door may be required to make a task with a +2 DIFF penalty and a slight risk of injuring himself with the war hammer.

☑ COMBAT RISKS

⚙️ Combat risks require the use of **Advanced Tasks**.

While regular task risks are abstract in nature, combat risks are more defined. Either way, risks are something which characters should avoid unless seeking an adventurous setting.

Confined Spaces

The area in which a character is fighting is very restricting. The use of large melee weapons such as swords and staves may be blocked by an obstruction and cause the weapon to bounce back at the character, causing damage. Characters should only receive a fraction of the damage normally delivered by whatever weapon he is using.

Kinetic Damage

The character is attempting to block an attack which may cause fatigue (blunt trauma) from the kinetic energy of the attack. For example, blocking a club with a shield or taking a bullet to armor may still cause damage, because while there is no bodily penetration, there is impact on his person.

Breaking Weapons

The character is attempting to attack an opponent or structure which is heavily reinforced. This can potentially break a weak weapon, such as a staff or wooden nightstick if striking a strong wall of cement with excessive force.

Falling

See Falls in Other Damage Sources.

☑ DAMAGE CLASSES

The basic rules included a damage listing for the more common types of weapons. Since this cannot possibly include all forms of weapons, we have included standardized classes of damage. Each class represents a general category of weapon or attack. You are free to use this as a guide for designing your own weapons or to simplify weapon damage by referencing a single class for all weapons of the same category.

All knives are of class B1 and inflict 1 grade of injury. While this may be slightly inaccurate since some knives are sharper or longer than others, it simplifies the process of determining which weapon does what.

CLASS	WEAPON TYPE	DAMAGE
A1	wooden bludgeons	1FAT
A2	metal bludgeons	2FAT
A3	large smashing bludgeons	3FAT
B1	knives	1INJ
B2	swords and small axes	2INJ
B3	large axes	3INJ
C1	bow and arrow/crossbows	2INJ
C2	antique firearms	3INJ
C3	modern firearms	4INJ
D	explosives	4 - 10INJ*
E	heavy weapons/machine guns	5-8INJ*
F1	stun weapons	4INJ
F2	laser weapons	5INJ
F3	particle weapons	6INJ

* the damage can vary at the discretion of the director

☑ DRUGS AND MEDICINES

Drugs and medicines function similarly, but are created by different means. Drugs are synthetic in nature, requiring a chemistry lab and a lot of experimentation, more often than not. On the other hand, medicines are typically herbal remedies, created from plants and naturally occurring substances. Many are passed down from generation to generation as cultural traditions.

The application of both drugs and medicines are identical and affect a character's health or even a task. Specific effects are categorized in one of the following ways:

Anesthetics are used to numb a character's pain (hence pain killers like aspirin and morphine are also in this category even though, they are technically something different). They are usually applied directly to the skin, although ingestion or injection is also possible. Anesthetics reduce the penalty on tasks for being injured by one.

Aphrodisiacs use pheromones to cause attraction between the sexes. All influence-based tasks used against a member of the opposite sex in the presence of an aphrodisiac receive -1 DIFF.

Relaxants are used to calm people by numbing the senses. One grade of dementia is automatically reduced when ingested. One grade of fatigue is inflicted by each dose. In addition, all awareness-based tasks received +1 DIFF.

Salves are used to heal wounds. One grade of fatigue is automatically reduced when applied, and one additional grade of injury is restored during normal recovery time.

Sedatives are used to promote sleep by inflicting two (2) grades of fatigue per dose.

Poisons are used to inflict injury upon ingestion or any other means which cause them to enter the bloodstream. This can either be a one time effect (three grades of injury) or a continuing effect (one grade of injury each hour) and represent snake venom, insect bites, or poisonous substances such as arsenic and cyanide. Weaker, non-fatal poisons are possible too—they inflict fatigue instead of injury.

Toxins are similar to poisons, except instead of inflicting fatigue or injury, they inflict toxemia through any means desired by the director. Toxins can take the form of radiation, bacterial and viral infections, or even toxic gases (see Doses below).

Antidotes are used to counter the effects of poisons. While antidotes don't reverse existing fatigue or injury,

they do cease the poison from inflicting additional harm. All poisons require specific antidotes—the director should require players to get their antidotes right or they could do even more damage.

Radiation, while not technically a drug or medicine, functions similarly to poisons and toxins, so it is included here. Radiation can inflict fatigue or injury as with poisons or simply increase the character's toxemia level. The exact nature and degree of the radiation is up to the director.

Doses

Each time a medicine or drug is introduced into the character's body, he gains one grade of toxemia in addition to the specific effects. This represents the presence of outside agents working to alter or harm the character's physiology.

☑ OTHER DAMAGE SOURCES

Since natural disasters also occur in this world, it is possible for characters to be harmed in situations besides combat. A few are covered below.

Fire and Smoke

Characters who are on fire suffer one (1) to two (2) grades of injury per turn (director's discretion based on the intensity of the flames) until the fire is extinguished. If characters are in enclosed spaces where smoke becomes overbearing, they receive one (1) to two (2) grades of fatigue (director's discretion based on the amount of smoke) per turn.

Falls

Falling a great distance can either cause fatigue or injury at the director's discretion. For example, a fall on a padded mat may cause only fatigue damage ('having the wind knocked out of you'), while a fall on jagged rocks would most likely cause sever injury. The damage is equal to one (1) grade per six foot drop. This can also apply to being thrown by another character as part of an attack, such as by martial artists (for example, add extra grades for overkill).

Asphyxiation

Characters can normally hold their breaths for a minute or two at the most. But when caught off guard, they can receive damage from asphyxiation. A character in this situation gains one (1) grade of fatigue. Another grade of fatigue is then sustained after a number of turns equal to the character's fitness rating plus two. Once the character is unconscious, he receives injury instead of fatigue. It is

also possible to receive other damage from the actual cause of the asphyxiation. For example, if a character is being choked by someone, he may also be taking damage from whatever is wrapped around his neck.

Exposure

A character who has been in the wilderness during periods of extreme heat or cold, or has been otherwise exposed to the elements, is subject to one (1) grade of fatigue per day until he can find shelter or receive medical attention. Characters with the survival skill avoid gaining fatigue each day if they take the appropriate precautions. Injury is also possible from severe conditions such as frostbite and dehydration; the exact details are up to the director.

✓ **ARMOR CLASSES**

Just as weapon classes simplify the use of applying damage, armor classes may be used to generalize all types of armor which fall into the same category. In addition, each class offers specific protection against different classes of damage.

Medieval armor only protects against damage from class A and B weapons (bludgeons and bladed weapons). This type of armor was clearly never designed to stop bullets or energy weapons.

ARMOR TYPE	PROTECTION	AMOUNT
heavy skins/clothing	A	1
leather armor	A	2
makeshift shield	A	2
	B	1
medieval armor	A B	1
medieval shield	A B	2
older bullet-proof vest	A B C D	2
modern armored vest	A B C D	3
modern shields	A B	3
	C	1
synthetics	A B C D	3
	F2	1
pressure suit	A	3
	B	1
armored pressure suit	A	4
	B	2
	CD	3
	E	1
hi-tech armor	A B C	4
	D E	3
	F2	2
hi-tech force field	A B C D E F1 F2	5
	F3	3

✓ **PERMANENT INJURIES**

When a character has been maimed or incapacitated, there is a chance that he will suffer from permanent injury due to infection or improper treatment. For that matter, it may be impossible to treat some injuries. The director must decide the outcome of these injuries at the end of a story, although he can be generous and allow the character to heal completely. The following outcomes may be used (or ignored):

Small Scar(s)

The scar tissue from his injuries is barely noticeable to the casual eye, but nevertheless, it is present and apparent to anyone looking carefully.

Disfiguring Scar(s)

The character carries a physical reminder of his experiences. His scar is apparent at first glance and may unsettle some people. The character gains the **disfiguring scar** gimmick (see master gimmick list in the back of the book).

Muscle Atrophy

The character's fitness rating (or muscle, agility, or flexibility flair) is reduced by one (|-1|). These can be raised via normal experience rules in the **Basic Exploits** section.

Damaged Sensory Organ

The character's awareness rating (or a specific sensory flair) is reduced by one (|-1|). This cannot be raised via normal experience rules.

Head Injury

The character has suffered from brain trauma and lost part of his mental ability. The character's reasoning rating (or memory, deduction, or numbers flair) is reduced by one (|-1|). This cannot be raised via normal experience rules.

VEHICLES

Using vehicles, such as motorcycles, military jets, starships, and so on, is based upon the same concepts used for characters. Each has a set of abilities, aspects, and health assigned, although vehicle abilities are actually limited by the skill of the driver or operator (see below). The only concept which really separates vehicles from characters is that of scale. Automobiles and Airplanes are close enough in scale that they can work together with some literary license by the director. In other words, having a military jet strafe a highway with its machine gun would work with little problems, although racing a motorcycle against the same jet would require a little common sense from the director (the jet would obviously win the race).

There are two other types of vehicles which can only be pitted against other like craft—**starships** and **sea vessels**. These vehicles do not normally cross into the domain of others. For example, a starship operates in space and a sea vessel only operates on or below the seas. There may be times, however, when one of these vehicles is required to function in a different domain. In such cases, the director must use his own judgement how to handle the situation. For example, a starship may be able to operate within an atmosphere and land. If it comes under attack while landing, the director may assign a new set of abilities to reflect its potential in a different environment (perhaps the vehicle's handling rating is decreased and its speed is increased within an atmosphere).

✓ VEHICLE ABILITIES

Vehicles are capable of performing certain abilities in much the same way as characters. Every vehicle is assigned two abilities: **handling** and **speed**. These may be used to exert free effort for piloting or driving tasks. While it is considered free effort when determining prostrated tasks for characters, it is not free effort when doing the same for vehicle fatigue, referred to as mechanical stress (see Vehicle Health).

Like character abilities, vehicle abilities are rated on a scale from $|-1|$ to $|+5|$. The amount of effort which may be exerted from these abilities is limited by the piloting or driving skill of a character, however.

ABILITY RATINGS	
-1	poor performance
0	average performance
+1	good performance
+2	excellent performance
+3	outstanding perf.
+4	next generation perf.
+5	unimaginable perf.

CHARACTER'S SKILL	MAX VEHICLE EFFORT
unskilled	0
novice	+1
proficient	+3
expert	+5

Speed represents the vehicle's top velocity and acceleration, and allows effort to be used in conjunction with vehicle tasks for the following situations:

- OUTRUNNING ANOTHER VEHICLE OR OBJECT
- CATCHING UP TO ANOTHER VEHICLE OR OBJECT
- REACHING A DESTINATION IN A GIVEN TIME

Handling represents the vehicle's maneuverability and responsiveness, and allows effort to be used in conjunction with vehicle tasks for the following situations:

- PRECISION STEERING
- RAMMING ANOTHER VEHICLE
- SHARP TURNS, STUNTS, AND REGAINING CONTROL OF VEHICLE
- DODGING INCOMING FIRE

These examples should help you understand how to assign your own flairs for use with the handling ability:

Off-Road covers the operation of land vehicles off the beaten-track.

Hyperspace covers the operation of space vehicles when travelling at super-luminal speeds.

Sub-Orbital covers the operation of space vehicles when travelling with a planet's upper atmosphere.

Surface covers the operation of sea vehicles on the surface of the water.

Submerged covers the operation of sea vehicles beneath the surface of the water.

✓ VEHICLE ASPECTS

Frame represents the size, efficiency, durability, and degree of shelter offered to the passengers of the vehicle. This aspect functions in the same manner as discipline for characters.

Whenever effort exerted from vehicle abilities is greater than the frame rating in a single turn, the vehicle receives one grade of mechanical stress (see Vehicle Health). Frame may be expended in order to benefit from one of the following effects:

- ONE POINT MAY BE EXPENDED TO NEGATE ONE DAMAGE GRADE INFLICTED UPON THE VEHICLE
- ONE POINT MAY BE EXPENDED TO NEGATE ONE DAMAGE GRADE INFLICTED UPON A PASSENGER

FRAME RATINGS	
0	feeble frame
1	weak frame
2	average frame
3	strong frame
4	reinforced frame
5	armored frame
6	next generation frame

Shields represents the effectiveness of a vehicle's defensive energy fields when used with science fiction settings. All damage sustained by the vehicle is reduced by the current

shields value. For example, laser hit inflicting four points of damage would be reduced to one if the vehicle currently has a shields rating of three. If the amount of damage is greater than the vehicle's shields rating, however, not only does the vehicle receive structural damage, but its shield rating is also reduced by one (1) point. Shields may be expended in order to benefit from one of the following effects:

- ONE POINT MAY BE EXPENDED TO EXTEND PROTECTION OF SHIELDS TO A NEARBY SMALLER CRAFT
- TWO POINTS MAY BE EXPENDED TO EXTEND PROTECTION OF SHIELDS TO A NEARBY CRAFT OF THE SAME SIZE

SHIELDS RATINGS	
0	no shields
1	weak shields
2	average shields
3	strong shields
4	reinforced shields
5	multi-layered shields
6	next generation shields

✓ VEHICLE GIMMICKS

The director may assign (and create his own) gimmicks to vehicles as if they were characters. For example, vehicles can use gimmicks such as prestige, internal clock, and vulnerability. Some additional gimmicks specific to vehicles are listed below.

Cargo Capacity

The vehicle is able to carry a large amount of cargo by way of roof racks, cargo bays, or storage containers.

Passenger Capacity

The vehicle is able to carry a large amount of passengers by way of extra seating. The number depends on the purpose and frame of the vehicle—the director is free to decide.

Power Booster

The vehicle has a one-shot device, which can boost the vehicle's speed ability by |+1| for five turns or |+2| for two turns. Once used, the device must be recharged. The director may choose to limit recharging to fueling stations, docks, or construction yards.

✓ VEHICLE HEALTH

Vehicles possess health levels just like characters. While the term may not be accurate, it does maintain consistency so that players may better understand its use. There are two types of vehicle health: **structural integrity** and **mechanical stress**. Like character health, both have five grades of severity and the amount of effort which may be exerted by the vehicle's abilities can be reduced when fatigued or injured.

	STRESS GRADE	INTEGRITY GRADE	PENALTY
1	engaged	dented	-
2	distressed	impaired	-1
3	overworked	breached	-2
4	overheated	compromised	-3
5	disabled	wrecked	—

Mechanical Stress represents fatigue and wear on the vehicle's drive components (engine, transmission, ailerons, etc.). When a vehicle receives five grades of stress, it is disabled and may not function.

Structural Damage represents damage sustained by the vehicle. When it receives five grades of damage, the vehicle may not function and offers no protection to its passengers.

✓ VEHICLE TASK CONDITIONS

- ⚙ Vehicle conditions require the use of **Advanced Tasks**.

Stressed

The vehicle has gained more than one grade of mechanical stress. All tasks receive an increase

STRESSED	
distressed	+1
overworked	+2
overheated	+3

in difficulty based on the severity of the stress. This

replaces the penalties to effort by normal health rules if conditions are used in play.

Damaged

The vehicle has gained more than one grade of structural damage. All tasks receive an increase in difficulty based on the severity of the damage. This replaces the penalties to effort by normal health rules if conditions are used in play.

DAMAGED	
impaired	+1
breached	+2
compromised	+3

Poor Visibility

The target is hard to spot because of poor lighting, fog, or smoke. This task receives +1 to +4 DIFF (director's discretion based on the level of visibility). Military vehicles, those fitted with infrared technology, or characters with night vision can ignore this condition.

Impediment

The vehicle's performance is hindered due to an obstacle, hill, patch of mud, turbulence, or other rough terrain. The task receives +1 to +4 DIFF depending on the severity of the impediment.

✓ VEHICLE TASK STUNTS

⚙️ Vehicle stunts require the use of **Advanced Tasks**.

Vehicle stunts are usually a function of a pilot's skill, although the vehicle's abilities may also be a factor.

Aiming

The character attempts to aim a projectile weapon while steering the vehicle. This does not increase the difficulty, but at least one point of effort from fitness must be spent for this stunt. The collision risk is also present.

Precision

The character attempts to focus an attack at a particular location on a target vehicle's frame or a specific passenger. A success indicates that the location or passenger is hit. The difficulty to hit a passenger is adjusted by the current integrity of the target vehicle. For example, targeting a passenger on a vehicle with an integrity of 3 adds +3 DIFF to the task. The collision risk is also present.

Nudge

The character attempts to push another vehicle off the road or to follow a specific route. The collision risk is also present.

Ram

The character attempts to steer the vehicle into another, causing a violent impact. The target vehicle receives a number of grades of damage equal to the amount of effort exerted from the speed ability. The ramming vehicle receives half of that amount. The collision and flammable risks are also present.

High Speed Maneuvers

When a vehicle attempts handling-based tasks at high speeds, it receives +2 to +4 DIFF and the collision risk is present.

✓ VEHICLE TASK RISKS

⚙️ Vehicle risks require the use of **Advanced Tasks**.

All standard risks previously listed may either be applied to the passengers or the vehicle itself. In the case of the latter, mechanical stress may be substituted for fatigue and structural damage may be substituted for injury. The following risks may also be used.

Collision

A failure indicates that the vehicle has crashed into an obstacle, another vehicle, or building. Assign a number of damage grades equal to the current amount of effort exerted from speed. Luck and a character's own effort exerted for use with a vehicle skill is also counted. This damage is applied to both the vehicle (structural damage) and the passengers (injury). Characters wearing seat belts receive one less damage grade and half of that value is converted to fatigue instead of injury.

Flammable

A failure indicates that the vehicle bursts into flames, causing D class damage to the vehicle as well as injury to passengers.

✓ VEHICLE RECOVERY

Mechanical stress may only be restored by one grade after at least one hour of rest. This gives the internal components time to cool down. Repairs can be performed at any level of stress, provided the vehicle is at rest.

The only way to remove a vehicle's structural damage is to have it repaired, but only if it has not passed beyond the compromised level of damage. Repair requires the appropriate engineering skill. A relevant piloting skill is also acceptable, but the task should be penalized for more difficult repairs. Parts may also be a factor and

should be taken into account when characters are performing repairs.

☑ **VEHICLE WEAPON DAMAGE**

Additional classes are provided for larger vehicle weapons. They are assumed to be used at the proper scale (space ships vs space ships, tanks against tanks and helicopters, etc.)

CLASS	WEAPON TYPE	DAMAGE
D	explosives	4-10*
U	antique cannon	2
V1	rockets	5
V2	torpedoes/missiles	6
X1	laser weapons	3-4*
X2	particle weapons	4-6*

* the damage can vary at the discretion of the director

VEHICLE TYPE	SPEED	HANDLING	FRAME	SHIELDS	WEAPONS	ARMOR
Motorcycle	+1	+2	0	—	—	—
Typical Car	+1	+1	1	—	—	—
Sports Car	+2	+2	1	—	—	—
Luxury Car	+2	+1	2	—	—	—
VIP Limousine	+2	+1	2	—	—	3
Truck	0	-1	3	—	—	—
Tank	+1	0	6	—	cannon, machine gun	4
Helicopter	+2	+2	3	—	10 rockets	2
Private Plane	+2	+1	2	—	—	—
Private Jet	+3	+2	2	—	—	—
Fighter Jet	+4	+4	4	—	machine gun, 4 missiles	2
Motor Boat	+2	+2	2	—	—	—
Sail Boat	0	+1	1	—	—	—
Yacht	+1	+2	3	—	—	—
Space Shuttle	0	0	1	—	—	—
Space Cargo Transport	-1	0	2	—	laser cannon	—
Space Fighter	+2	+3	2	2	twin laser canons	1
Space Explorer	+3	+2	3	3	4 laser turrets	2
Space Cruiser	+1	+1	4	4	8 laser turrets, 4 torpedo tubes	4
Space Dreadnought	+2	+1	5	5	10 laser turrets, 10 torpedo tubes	5

VEHICLE TYPE

SETTING

Active EXPL[⚙]ITS

diceless roleplaying

FRAME
SHIELDS

SPEED HANDLING

FLAIRS

MECHANICAL STRESS	BASIC	ADVANCED	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
	engaged <input type="checkbox"/>	-	
distressed <input type="checkbox"/>	-1 EFFORT	+1 DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/> impaired
overworked <input type="checkbox"/>	-2 EFFORT	+2 DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/> breached
overheated <input type="checkbox"/>	-3 EFFORT	+3 DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/> compromised
disabled <input type="checkbox"/>	—	—	<input type="checkbox"/> wrecked

GIMMICKS, CREW, PASSENGERS, CARGO, NOTES, ETC.

WEAPONS AND ARMOR

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VEHICLE TYPE

SETTING

Active EXPL[⚙]ITS

diceless roleplaying

FRAME
SHIELDS

SPEED HANDLING

FLAIRS

MECHANICAL STRESS	BASIC	ADVANCED	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
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disabled <input type="checkbox"/>	—	—	<input type="checkbox"/> wrecked

GIMMICKS, CREW, PASSENGERS, CARGO, NOTES, ETC.

WEAPONS AND ARMOR

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ADVANCED EXPLOITS REFERENCE

FITNESS-BASED FLAIRS	AWARENESS-BASED FLAIRS
Dexterity	Hearing
Muscle	Vision
Agility	Touch
Quickness	Smell
Flexibility	Taste
	Instinct
REASONING-BASED FLAIRS	Cognizance
Memory	Empathy
Deduction	INFLUENCE-BASED FLAIRS
Numbers	Charm
CREATIVITY-BASED FLAIRS	Financial
Manipulation	Appearance
Improvisation	ESP-BASED FLAIRS
Visualization	Touch
Harmony	Family
Emulate	

BASIC RISKS	
slight	+1 fatigue
precarious	+1 injury
disastrous	+2 injury

ARMOR TYPE	PROTECTION	AMOUNT
heavy skins/clothing	A	1
leather armor	A	2
makeshift shield	A	2
	B	1
medieval armor	A B	1
medieval shield	A B	2
older bullet-proof vest	A B C D	2
modern armored vest	A B C D	3
modern shields	A B	3
	C	1
synthetics	A B C D	3
	F2	1
pressure suit	A	3
	B	1
armored pressure suit	A	4
	B	2
	CD	3
	E	1
hi-tech armor	A B C	4
	D E	3
	F2	2
hi-tech force field	A B C D E F1 F2	5
	F3	3

CONDITIONS	
harried	+1 DIFF
encumbered	+1 or +2 DIFF
subdued	+2 DIFF
stressed (fatigue)	+1 DIFF
sprained (injury)	+1 DIFF
agitated (dementia)	+1 DIFF
distressed (mechanical)	+1 DIFF
impaired (structural)	+1 DIFF
strained (fatigue)	+2 DIFF
wounded (injury)	+2 DIFF
distracted (dementia)	+2 DIFF
overworked (mechanical)	+2 DIFF
breached (structural)	+2 DIFF
exhausted (fatigue)	+3 DIFF
maimed (injury)	+3 DIFF
irrational (dementia)	+3 DIFF
overheated (mechanical)	+3 DIFF
compromised (structural)	+3 DIFF
concealment	+1 DIFF
cover	+1 to +3 DIFF
in/under water	+1 to +2 DIFF
large target	-1 to -3 DIFF
poor visibility	+1 to +4 DIFF
small target	+1 to +3 DIFF
moving target	+2 DIFF
impediment	+1 to +4 DIFF

CLASS	WEAPON TYPE	DAMAGE
A1	wooden bludgeons	1FAT
A2	metal bludgeons	2FAT
A3	large smashing bludgeons	3FAT
B1	knives	1INJ
B2	swords and small axes	2INJ
B3	large axes	3INJ
C1	bow and arrow/crossbows	2INJ
C2	antique firearms	3INJ
C3	modern firearms	4INJ
D	explosives	4 - 10INJ*
E	heavy weapons/machine guns	5-8INJ*
F1	stun weapons	4INJ
F2	laser weapons	5INJ
F3	particle weapons	6INJ
U	antique cannon	2
V1	rockets	5
V2	torpedoes/missiles	6
X1	laser weapons	3-4*
X2	particle weapons	4-6*

* the damage can vary at the discretion of the director

Chapter 3

SETTING SPECIFICS

Additional special abilities, skills, and gimmicks.

THE ARCANÉ

Magic can be a very diverse element of play. It can take the form of divinely inspired miracles, spirit summoning, or even numerology-based inscriptions. Whatever the form, all magic follows the same simple mechanics as everyday tasks. Each type of magic must be powered by an ability and focused into an effect by way of a skill. The skill does not necessarily need to be linked to the actual ability, however, as in the case of the endowment ability.

☑ **ASTRAL INHABITANTS**

- ⚙️ This addition to the Endowment ability may require the use of **Convictions** to represent entity worship at the director's discretion.

These are the entities which which characters may call upon for power for use with the endowment ability (discussed in Chapter 1). They exist in the Astral Realm, a dimension mirroring ours, but lacking physicality and corporeality. The Astral Realm is sometime entered unknowingly while we sleep, exposing ourselves to the nightmares which occupy it.

Some entities require they be worshiped before granting endowments to mortals, while others will only do so at their own whim. This can also limit the manner in which the endowment ability is used.

Some entities will also go out of their way to ruin the plans of other astral inhabitants. Because of this, characters may expend endowment points to cancel out the use of endowment by other characters if their

respective entities oppose each other (one point cancels out one point). In addition, points may also be used to add effort to a task attempted by another character if their respective entities do not oppose each other (one point adds one point of free effort)

Some of the more powerful entities which endow humans with power in exchange for worship and favors are:

Guardians

Guardians are the monitors of the gateways between the realms. They oppose actions taken by or on behalf of the Shambalans and refuse to be worshiped, endowing mortals only when it suits their needs.

Guides

Guides often come to us in our dreams, offering advice and knowledge. Their ultimate goal seems to be the enlightenment of humanity. While they do not typically make their presence known, there are times when they contact individuals openly during meditation and trances. They oppose actions taken by or on behalf of the Overlords and Jinn, and endow mortals without the need of making covenants with them. Their endowment may only be used to add free effort to reasoning-based skills.

Overlords

Overlords are the masters of mortal souls, and guide departed souls to their destinies from behind the scenes or by way of worshipping minions. They oppose actions

taken by or on behalf of the Guides and Jinn, and their endowment is used in the same manner as the revelation ability.

Mythos

Mythos are the masters over man, beast, and vermin, and commonly recruit minions to interfere with the societies and cultures of man. They oppose actions taken by or on behalf of the Jinn and Oni, and their endowment may only be used to add free effort to any fitness-based skill.

Jinn

Jinn are the masters of the Astral Realm and seek worship. They oppose actions taken by or on behalf of the Mythos and Oni, and their endowment is used in the same manner as the discipline ability.

Shambalans

Shambalans are the fabled creators of our realm and everything in it. They seek to inspire the creativity of the mortal realm. Shambalans oppose actions taken by or on behalf of the Guardians, and their endowment may only be used to add free effort to any creativity-based skill.

Oni

Oni are the masters of nature and seek to motivate change and evolution in all living creatures, while preserving the harmony of shared existence. They oppose actions taken by or on behalf of the Mythos, and their endowment may only be used to add free effort to any awareness-based skill.

☑ CHANNELING (ABILITY)

Channeling is an accented ability used to gather pure energy from one's surroundings, convert it to a usable form of magical energy, and focus it into an effect (or spell) directed at the same type of source. Channeling can be used to exert effort for any applicable skill in conjunction with the following flairs:

Air allows characters to focus energies from all gaseous materials, including oxygen, methane, and propane.

Earth allows characters to focus energies from all solid minerals substances, such as rock, dirt, and raw gems.

Fire allows characters to focus energies from all occurrences of flames, heat, or light.

Beast allows characters to focus energies from living animals or their derivatives, such as parchment and leather.

Man allows characters to focus energies from living human beings.

Plasma allows characters to focus energies from electrical sources, such as power lines, computers, and wall sockets.

Water allows characters to focus energies from all liquid materials, such as the sea, alcohol, or soda.

Wood allows characters to focus energies from all living vegetation or their derivatives, such as trees, shrubs, weeds, and paper.

☑ FAITH (ABILITY)

⚙ Faith requires the use of **Convictions**.

Faith represents pure devotion to the character's deity and in return, he radiates divine energies which can be harnessed to create miracles. This ability requires the character to possess the beliefs and values convictions (to represent his faith in the deity and doctrines, respectively) and cannot be used by anyone with the channeling ability. Faith can be used to exert effort for any applicable skill which does not violate the character's values.

☑ RELICS

Relics represent a unique magical relic, and when in the possession of a character, can either be used as an ability or aspect. When used as an ability, the relic has a limitless supply of power and is only limited by its rating (since it is a potential ability, the rating replenishes each turn). When used as an aspect, the relic has limited power and when all points are expended, it becomes a mundane item. The director is free to decide how a relic may be used. For example, a magical sword may add free effort when used to strike an opponent, a magical crown may add free effort when attempting reasoning-based skills, or a magical shield may allow its user to expend points to reduce grades of damage. The following examples are included to help you understand how to create your own relics:

The First Bible

This is one of the first complete bible manuscripts. It is hand-written and has survived for over a thousand years. It boosts any character's faith ability by two (2) points when read aloud for use in prayer.

Four Leaf Clover

Four leaf clovers are rare, so don't expect a character to find one anytime soon. If one does, however, it provides him with four (4) extra points of luck. Once the

points are used or the clover is no longer in the character's possession, it wilts and becomes useless.

Tudor's Sheathe

Tudor's Sheathe is a leather scabbard fitted with small rubies along one side, and large enough to hold a long sword. When a sword is kept in the sheathe for more than one day, it inflicts one extra grade of fatigue when used. No more than one sword can gain this bonus at a time and if even one ruby is removed, it becomes just another scabbard.

☑️ **ARCANE GIMMICKS**

Astral Magnet

For one reason or another, the character attracts entities from the Astral Realm which have manifested into our world. There is no telling what their motivations or intentions are.

Guardian Angel

The character enjoys the protection of a guardian angel. It will attempt to divert the character's path from danger through natural occurrences, but cannot do so if the character willfully seeks danger.

Astral Vision

The character is haunted by visions of entities from the Astral Realm. He can see those present in the immediate vicinity, although he cannot speak to or hear them. This can be used to replace the clairvoyance skill if the director wishes to use a more abstract method of visions of the Astral Realm.

Resistant

The character is incapable of using the channeling ability and is also immune to all effects from it. He may not be targeted by channeling-based skills.

Mortal Focus

The character is susceptible against channeling-based skills—their difficulty is reduced by two (2) grades when targeted at the character. In addition, all channeling-based tasks performed by the character receive a decrease in difficulty by two (2) grades.

Mortal Demise

The character dreams about his death every night. He is now accustomed to it, but anything he experiences while he is awake that hints that his time is near causes anxiety and panic. On the other hand, the character knows how he will die (this should be fleshed out before play) and may put himself in harm's way if it does not appear that his course of action is linked to his death.

☑️ **ARCANE SKILLS**

The following skills are for use with the new abilities presented above as well as the ESP ability.

Channeling-Based Skills

Conjuring is the art of illusion. It allows a character to create an insubstantial image which has no physical properties other than appearance. The illusion must be fashioned after an appropriate magical energy. For example, an air-based illusion can appear as a tornado or a water-based one may appear as rain or a puddle. The director should assign a difficulty on the task based on the size of the illusion. A fixed rule on difficulty is not included here so that directors can alter the power of the characters to fit the setting.

Countermagic is the art of draining magical energy from any arcane task in order to counter its effect(s). In essence, this skill is used to contest any channeling or faith-based task.

Summoning is the art of conjuring physical objects or creatures. The summoned target must be fashioned after an appropriate magical energy. For example, a beast-based summoning can create a mouse or a plasma-based one can create a bolt of lightning. A fixed rule on difficulty is not included here so that directors can alter the power of the characters to fit the setting. Countermagic can be used to dispel summoned items.

Warding allows a character to create a protective sphere around him or a circle engraved or inscribed on the ground. The difficulty should be affected by the desired size of the circle, but a fixed rule is not included here so that directors can alter the power of the characters to fit the setting. A success indicates that all damage applied to anyone within the perimeter of the circle from a source outside of it is reduced by a number of grades equal to the amount of effort applied from the channeling ability.

Faith-Based Skills



The Inscription and Seals skills have been removed in order to simplify the system. They have been replaced by skills representing the different types of seals present in the first edition rules.

Bless allows a character to imbue another with divine emanations. This causes all attempts at tasks by the target character which do not violate the original character's beliefs to receive a decrease in difficulty by one grade for a period of one day to a week (director's discretion).

Curse allows a character to block divine emanations from another character. This causes all attempts at tasks by the target character which violate the original character's beliefs to receive an increase in difficulty by one grade for a period of one day to a week (director's discretion).

Divine Archway allows a character to bless a door or other portal. Only those who share his religious beliefs or values may pass through the door.

Healing Touch allows a character to restore a number of grades of injury, fatigue, or dementia equal to the amount of one plus any overkill from the task.

Mana allows a character to pray for food. When successful, mana, a nutritious food source similar in taste to coriander, will fall from the heavens in the immediate area. It will dissolve if not collected within two hours on a hot and sunny day.

Purify allows a character to eliminate all sources of poison from a food or beverage, or eliminate all toxins from a person's body (reduces toxemia level to zero, but does not heal the character if he has sustained dementia, fatigue, or injury).

Rapport allows a character to form a bond with an animal or person, causing the target to trust and feel comfortable around him. This can easily be countered if the character behaves in a manner which conflicts with the target's instincts (in the case of animals) or convictions, or becomes hostile toward him. This lasts for a period of one to two days (director's discretion).

Truth allows a character to sense if the words coming out of another character's mouth are true.

Ward allows a character to create an area around a holy symbol (which the character must hold) which protects all those touching him. A success indicates that all attacks made against anyone within the perimeter of the circle receive an increase in difficulty by one or two grades (director's discretion). Characters or creatures opposed to the character's religious beliefs receive one grade of injury if they touch any of the affected characters.

ESP-Based Skills

Astral Projection allows a character to remove his consciousness (or soul) from his body while in a dream state. It then manifests midway between our world and the Astral Realm. This renders his soul incapable of interacting physically with either world (including communication with both mortals and astral inhabitants), but it can move throughout either, seeing whatever is present. The character's soul must return to

his body within a specific time frame (novice skill level: fifteen minutes; proficient: forty-five minutes; and expert: two hours) or his consciousness will manifest completely in the Astral Realm and he will become trapped forever.

Clairaudience allows a character to communicate with astral inhabitants within the character's immediate vicinity. He can hear them as if they were speaking and vice versa.

Clairvoyance allows a character to look into the Astral Realm and see all inhabitants present in his immediate vicinity.

Reasoning-Based Skills

Alchemy allows a character to mix a potion which, when activated through ingestion or application on a surface (painting or throwing the potion on it), creates a single effect from a channeling-based skill. Once the potion has been created, it may be activated by anyone. The duration of the effect is decided by the director as appropriate for the circumstances, but can be cancelled by the countermagic skill.

Runes allows a character to imbue a series of symbols, called runes, with any single effect from a channeling-based skill. The runes must use a magical language and therefore, can only be read by those who are familiar with the language. Their effect can either be activated upon being read or made active at the time of writing. The duration is typically permanent, but can be cancelled by the countermagic skill.

☑ **ARCANE DAMAGE**

Damage inflicted by arcane effects should be based on the source of the effect—fire-based does fire damage, water-based may cause asphyxiation, telepathy-based causes dementia, and so on. The amount of damage should be limited to one (1) to two (2) grades of damage and is left up to the director's discretion, based on the amount of overkill (or luck expended).

☑ **WHAT'S NEXT?**

You should have enough of a base from this section to provide a wealth of ideas for creating your own arcane abilities, skills, and gimmicks. Imagination is your only limit. Give your players ESP or faith to help track down ghosts and demons (don't forget to also let them use the martial arts rules in the next section), make them part of a warlock cabal conspiring to take over the world, or simply use it as-is for a magical fantasy world. If you come up with something cool, let us know on the **Active Exploits Discussion List**, **Collaborative Site**, or **Forum**.

MARTIAL ARTS

There are two basic varieties of martial arts—those which solely rely on strength and positioning and those which also focus a character’s internal energy (or chi). These rules are intended for the latter because they rely on chi, which supplements the fitness ability, primarily in conjunction with the brawling and melee skills. If you wish to use martial arts without chi, simply work with the fitness ability and skills such as brawling and melee.

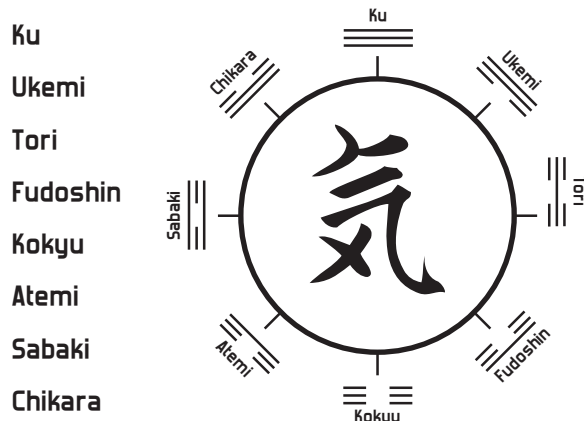
☑ CHI

Chi is the life energy of the universe. It propagates itself in nature and permeates all living things. If this sounds like “the force” then you already know what it is. It is not a supernatural or mythical concept—it is real to those who understand and can control it.

The Chinese call it chi, the Japanese call it ki. Regardless of its pronunciation or spelling, it is universally recognized as the flow of life energy throughout not only the human body, but all animals, plants, and even streams of water. Chi must be in harmony with the entity or object through which it flows. States of unbalance result in illness and disease. When a character learns to balance his chi, it can become a source of unbelievable power.

Chi is an accented ability (or, you may choose to use it as an aspect, replenishing only after rest or meditation) and can only be used to exert effort in a manner described by one of the following flairs (based upon Japanese terminology, but generic in nature):

THE EIGHT TRIGRAMS OF CHI



Ku is the discipline of emptiness of the mind and one’s faith that universal harmony will provide for him. It allows a character to act on reflexes and training without interference from emotions or thoughts. The ku flair can be used to exert effort in the following situations:

- INCREASING HASTE WHILE ACTING IN COMBAT
- TASKS IN WHICH THE CHARACTER IS SURPRISED
- ARCHERY AND FIREARM ATTACKS

Ukemi is the discipline of protecting one self from harm by preventing weak points from being exposed while in combat and minimizing injury. It also allows a character to regain his balance and recover from a fall quicker and safer. This is often observed as flexibility, responsiveness, and subtle movements. The ukemi flair can be used to exert effort in the following situations:

- PARRYING AND DODGING ATTACKS OR OBJECTS
- MAINTAINING ONE’S BALANCE
- RECOVERING FROM A FALL

Tori is the discipline of restraining one’s opponent by recognizing his weak spots (balance, poor positioning, etc.). The tori flair can be used to exert effort in the following situations:

- GRAPPLING INCLUDING INCREASING INJURY BY WAY OF ADDING TO OVERKILL
- UNBALANCE AN OPPONENT BY THROWING, PUSHING, OR TRIPPING
- PINNING A CHARACTER ON THE GROUND

Fudoshin is the discipline of immovability through blending with outside momentum. The fudoshin flair can be used to exert effort in the following situations:

- MAINTAINING A STRONG BALANCE AND ROOTING ONE’S SELF TO THE GROUND
- BLOCKING AN ATTACK OR OBJECT

Kokyu is the discipline of breathing and relaxation. It is often observed as exhales and kiai (short scream) The kokyu flair can be used to exert effort in the following situations:

- RELAXING ONE’S SELF TO REDUCE FATIGUE SUSTAINED BY A BRAWLING ATTACK. DIFFICULTY SHOULD BE CHALLENGING
- CONTESTED ACTION INVOLVING STRENGTH
- THROWING OBJECTS

Atemi is the discipline of striking an opponent, and understanding his vulnerable areas and typical responses from such a threat. The atemi flair can be used to exert effort in the following situations:

- PUNCHING AND KICKING
- MELEE ATTACKS
- FEINTED ACTION

Sabaki is the discipline of moving one's body gracefully. Opponents commonly speak of certain practitioners suddenly disappearing or somehow appearing behind them. The sabaki flair can be used to exert effort in the following situations:

- WALKING, RUNNING, SWIMMING, AND JUMPING
- DODGING AN ATTACK OR OBJECT
- INCREASING HASTE WHILE ACTING IN COMBAT

Chikara is the discipline of extending one's chi outside of his body. This is often observed as unusually warm emanations and static shock from practitioners. The chikara flair can be used to exert effort in the following situations:

- INCREASING INJURY WHEN PUNCHING, KICKING, AND THROWING OBJECTS BY WAY OF ADDING TO OVERKILL
- UNBALANCING AN OPPONENT BY GRAPPLING
- PINNING A CHARACTER ON THE GROUND

✓ MARTIAL ARTS RANKS

Many styles (and schools) of martial arts track a student's progress by way of rank. Promotions in rank are typically achieved by passing a test encompassing specific techniques and body movements. Some promotions are given as a result of the student's dedication or the amount of time he has been practicing, however.

Ranks are not necessarily a measurement of skill, but they should be a rough indication of it. Some schools are lenient when it comes to handing out promotions, while others are quite finicky and rightfully so. There can be a huge difference in proficiency from two students of identical rank, but from different schools. It all boils down to the teacher and his top students.

Japanese Belts

Japanese martial arts use different colored belts to track rank. There are two clear sides of the track: **white belts** (kyu ranks; also called mudansha) are for beginning students, while **black belts** (dan ranks; also called yudansha) are somewhat experienced and have proceeded to learn more advanced techniques. Within each group (or belt color), there are multiple sub-ranks,

which denote progress. Many styles (and schools), however, assign additional belt colors (green and brown, for example) to non-black belt ranks, and some styles only use five ranks of white belt rather than ten. Of course, colors and ranks used can vary from school to school depending on traditions.

RANK	BELT COLOR	MAXIMUM SKILL	
10	juku	white	unskilled
9	kuku	white (yellow)	unskilled
8	hachiku	white (orange)	unskilled
7	nanaku	white (green)	unskilled
6	roku	white (green)	novice
5	goku	white (blue)	novice*
4	yonku	white (blue)	novice
3	sanku	white (brown)	proficient
2	nikku	white (brown)	proficient
1	ikku	white (brown)	proficient
1	shodan	black	proficient
2	nidan	black	proficient
3	sandan	black	expert
4	yandan	black	expert
5	godan	black	expert
6	rokudan	black (red & black)	expert
7	nandan	black (red & black)	expert
8	hachidan	black (red & black)	expert
9	kudan	black (red)	expert
10	judan	black (red)	expert

* unskilled if school starts at goku.

Korean Belts

The Korean belt system is similar to those used in Japanese martial arts.

RANK	BELT COLOR	MAX SKILL	
10	shippup	white	unskilled
9	koogup	white w/ yellow stripe	unskilled
8	palgup	yellow	unskilled
7	chilgup	yellow w/ green stripe	unskilled
6	yookgup	green	novice
5	ohgup	green w/ blue stripe	novice
4	sagup	blue	novice
3	samgup	blue w/ red stripe	proficient
2	eegup	red	proficient
1	ilgup	red w/ black stripe	proficient
1	ildan	black	proficient
2	eedan	black	proficient
3	samdan	black	expert
4	sadan	black	expert
5	ohdan	black	expert
6	yookdan	black	expert
7	childan	black	expert
8	paldan	black	expert
9	koodan	black	expert
10	shipdan	black	expert

Chinese Sashes

Traditionally, Chinese martial arts were not taught with the aid of progress ranks such as belts. Some modern (western) school have adapted the use of colored sashes in order to give students incentive to maintain rigorous practice. These ranks can vary from school to school.

SASH COLOR	MAXIMUM SKILL
yellow	unskilled
green	novice
red	proficient
black	expert

Teaching Ranks

It is unlikely that a non-black belt (or yellow or green sash) student will be assigned to teach others except in rare cases. Second or first kyu/gup students are sometimes responsible for assisting beginners, especially when they are disciples, but other than that, only black belts are permitted to instruct when the head teacher is not available.

The head teacher always has the final say. He is the most respected member of the school. Well, usually, there are always exceptions. We won't get into that, however. Here are some common terms used:

Sensei (Japanese; head teacher and all those above him)

Shihan (Japanese; senior teacher for a region or style)

Sempai (Japanese; student senior to another)

Kohai (Japanese; student junior to another)

Deshi (Japanese; disciple, uchi-deshi is a live-in student)

Sifu (Cantonese; teacher)

Sigung (Cantonese; a teacher's teacher)

Sidai (Cantonese; student junior to another)

Sihing (Cantonese; student senior to another)

Sa Bum Nim (Korean; teacher)

Kyo Bon Nim (Korean; assistant teacher)

Kwan Chang Nim (Korean; grandmaster)

Sun Bae Nim (Korean; student senior to another)

Hoo Bae Nim (Korean; student junior to another)

☑ CHI-BASED SKILLS

There are also skills which are not part of specific styles of martial arts, but still utilize chi. They represent training which is typically taught to more experienced practitioners or those of alternate philosophies.

Healing Arts

There are various forms of healing arts, but all are based on the principles of Chi Kung, a series of exercises based on breathing, which are used to channel energy for the purposes of bringing one's body into harmony with the elements and itself. Not all of the chi flairs are compatible with healing arts, but those which are promote different effects. All healing arts tasks require no less than five minutes worth of preparation.

Kokyu Chi can be used to raise the character's body temperature, thereby reducing injury due to cold weather and the elements (see exposure in Advanced Combat). The director must assign a difficulty based on the degree of cold (maybe challenging for freezing temperatures, improbable for -10°F; also adjusting for wind chill). A success indicates that one (1) grade of injury is reduced when received due to the conditions. Overkill can reduce two (2) to three (3) grades.

Kokyu Chi can also be used to raise the character's inner power. This functions in the same manner as above, except that fatigue is reduced from exposure and prostrated tasks.

Chikara Chi can be used to remove bruises from one's or another character's body. By preparing his chi and working the affected area, the character can remove bruising. This can be simulated in game play by also removing one grade of fatigue or injury, although that decision is up to the director. In heroic stories, it may also be possible to use Chikara Chi to remove scars.

Similarly, Chikara Chi can be used to alter the chi flow in another character's body, so that toxins are secreted or moved to less susceptible areas. This reduces a character's toxemia level in the same manner as injury and fatigue above.

Shadow Arts

In addition to fighting and healing art, some secret societies specialize in stealth and deception.

Sabaki Chi can be used to exert effort on a stealth task.

Sabaki Chi can also be used on an athletics task to allow him to walk on water, or snow and sand without leaving tracks.

Ukemi Chi can be used on a parrying task to change all injury sustained from a bladed weapon to fatigue.

Killing Arts

There are various ways to kill a man, but none more precise than the killing arts. Rumored to exist, and in reality only known to a few masters, this knowledge uses chi to cause an unbalance an opponent's own chi flow, leading to disease or death. Different forms of chi create different effects.

Chikara Chi can be used on a punching task to instantly kill an extra. This can also be used with a time delay, causing the character to suffer the attack's effects up to two days later.

Atemi Chi can be expended in a turn to allow the character to make a number of continuous attacks equal to that amount of effort. Only one task is made for all attacks and no further actions are possible this turn. The effort from Atemi Chi may not be counted with the task.

☑ **MARTIAL ARTS GIMMICKS**

Infamous Teacher

The character's teacher is known for being particularly cruel or incompetent. As a result, other martial artists view the character with animosity when they find out about his teacher.

Famous Teacher

The character's teacher is known for being extremely adept or compassionate. As a result, other martial artists treat the character graciously when they find out about his teacher.

Action Star

The character has starred in countless action movies and is well known throughout the world. He can't enter a public place without being surrounded by a horde of fans seeking his autograph.

Infamous School

The character's school is known for its callous or incompetent students, or break with traditions. As a result, other martial artists view the character with animosity when they find out where he trains.

Famous School

The character's school is known for its extremely competent students or constructive work in the community. As a result, other martial artists view the character with respect when they find out where he trains.

School Rivals

The character is at odds with a fellow student from his school. They often compete in order to prove which one is more proficient. Rivals also try to show each other up in other ways, such as career, wealth, and love.

Disciple

The character is a dedicated student to his teacher. He sleeps in the school, watching over and maintaining it (i.e cleaning, repairs, etc.).

Inner Circle

The character is part of his school's inner circle when it comes to making decisions and knowing what is going on in its finances, plans, and events. The character is also very close to the other members of this circle.

Competing School

The character's school has a long standing feud with another school. Competitions are big deals as both schools wish to defeat the other in order to win the glory. Some students of either school may even go to extremes to win.

School Outcast

The character has been thrown out of the school and excommunicated by its other students. The character may not join other schools which are in some way affiliated with this school or those with which the teacher is a friend of the character's own teacher. Other martial artists view the character with animosity when they find out about his excommunication.

☑ **MARTIAL ARTS STYLES**

There are countless styles of martial arts, each with its own unique techniques and methods of practice. It is these differences which determine how chi may be used by a character—the style indicates which flairs may be used by the character and at which level (the skill level determines the sum total allowed of all forms of chi). This is only a guide, however, so that directors are not left with characters who are Chi Masters. Ignore it, if you'd like. Each style is a separate skill.

Characters who wish to learn other flairs, must train in another style utilizing it or find a martial arts grand master—they are accessible, but require a great deal of practice and training. Good luck, Grasshopper!

Studying martial arts can be a long process, often taking five or ten years, or even a lifetime to even begin to grasp the underlying principles which give way to chi. Directors are encouraged to make their characters work

for their knowledge when playing dramatic games—make them ache and feel fatigued when practicing a new style.

These are just a few examples and one person's observations. The director is free to create his own styles to fit his needs.

Aikido (Japanese)

Aikido focuses on one's connection to the universe and is purely defensive, although taking the offensive is quite simple with enough training. Aikido uses an opponent's momentum against him. This results in being thrown or guided to a pinning position. Joint locks are also used to immobilize and control opponents—an experienced practitioner can control the degree of force used. Training with Aikido weapons (wooden sword, staff, and knife) are also encouraged in order to promote better movement and timing.

Karate (Japanese)

There are many forms of Karate, some bear more resemblance to a Chinese style rather than Japanese. Indeed, Karate has many incarnations and the use of chi can vary with each.

Tai Chi Chuan (Chinese)

Tai Chi Chuan is a fighting style based on the intricate patterns of movement and breathing of Tai Chi. This style shares many similarities with Aikido, although the movement and use of chi are different. Tai Chi Chuan also utilizes powerful strikes intended to cripple and do serious harm to an opponent. Weapons such as the long sword and staff are often taught in conjunction with Tai Chi Chuan, although that training is not technically part of the style.

Wing Chun (Chinese)

Wing Chun is a no-nonsense style of martial arts. Its intent is to incapacitate an opponent as quickly and efficiently as possible, utilizing mostly punches and joint locks.

Kung Fu (Chinese)

Kung Fu is the term given to any form of Chinese boxing style. Like Karate, its function and form can vary greatly.

Tae Kwon Do (Korean)

Tae Kwon Do shares many similarities with Karate, although it utilizes kicks as a more central element.

Capeoria (Brazilian)

Capeoria was created by Brazilian slaves and has to be one of the most fascinating styles to watch. Movements are based on rhythm, similar to a dance, but with the intent to confuse and misdirect an opponent. Kicks are an important element of Capeoria.

☑ **WHAT'S NEXT?**

Now that you have a framework for martial arts games, you could use it to play in a wuxia, street fighter, or even anime setting. Use the rules to create your own martial arts skills, such as chi projection or chi sorcery, or invent entirely new martial arts styles. There's also nothing stopping you from adding new chi flairs or creating a dark chi ability. If you come up with something cool, let us know on the [Active Exploits Discussion List](#), [Collaborative Site](#), or [Forum](#).

MARTIAL ART	TYPES OF CHI LEARNED FROM NORMAL TRAINING							MAXIMUM ALLOWED CHI				
	KU	UKEMI	TORI	FUDOSHIN	KOKYU	ATEMI	SABAKI	CHIKARA	UNSKILLED	NOVICE	PROFICIENT	EXPERT
Aikido		✓	✓		✓		✓		0	0	+2	+5
Judo			✓		✓				0	0	+1	+3
Karate					✓	✓		✓	0	+1	+2	+3
Tai Chi Chuan			✓	✓	✓			✓	0	+1	+2	+5
Wing Chun			✓			✓			0	0	+1	+2
Kung Fu						✓	✓	✓	0	+1	+2	+5
Tae Kwon Do						✓	✓		0	+1	+2	+3
Capeoria							✓		0	0	0	+2

Chapter 4

MASTER LISTS

Skills, fields of expertise, and gimmicks.

☑ SKILLS OF THE TIMES

While the director is free to use any skills described in this book, not all are relevant for specific time periods. For example, no one would have any knowledge of computers in a fantasy setting (unless, of course, they are aliens or time travelers). In order to indicate the proper usage, symbols are listed with each skill. Bear in mind that any skill followed by an asterisk may not be used unskilled.

SKILLS OF THE TIMES	
☉F	fantasy settings 16th century and older
☉A	antique settings 17th - 19th centuries
☉M	modern settings 20th - 21st centuries
☉S	science fiction settings 22nd century and up

Some of the skills listed below also include sample stunts in order to better illustrate their use.

☑ FITNESS-BASED SKILLS

Archery

☉F☉A☉M☉S

Use and construction of bows, arrows, and crossbows.

Athletics

☉F☉A☉M☉S

Running, climbing, swimming, throwing, dodging, and gymnastics.

Precision +2 to +4 DIFF
Stunts requiring delicate movements such as walking on narrow ledges, swimming between sharp coral, and back flips. The director should adjust the risk accordingly.

Sling +2 DIFF
Hurling items at a target from a sling-like pouch.

Evade +1 DIFF
Dodging incoming projectiles while running in a zig-zag motion or erratic pattern. This is a resisted action, affecting the difficulty of the attack.

Dive +2 DIFF
Plunging head first away from an area or into a body of water. The risk of falling is gauged by the height of the dive.

Dive for Cover +1 DIFF
Getting under cover as quickly as possible. This takes an entire turn and can also be used as a dodge with a +1 DIFF.

Roll +2/+4 DIFF
Rolling can be used to lessen injury received from falls by one grade. It can also help a character restore balance. The difficulty is +2 if the cause of the fall did not inflict injury, otherwise it is +4.

Unarmed Block
Block a weapon with bare hands. Precarious risk if weapon inflicts fatigue or disastrous if it causes injury.

Brawling

☉F☉A☉M☉S

Punching, kicking, parrying, and wrestling. See Advanced Combat for more rules regarding Brawling.

Wrong Hand +2 DIFF
Strike with character's off-hand.

Precision +2 DIFF
Strike to a particular location.

Sweep +2 DIFF
Sweep legs of opponent to cause him to fall.

Unbalance +2 DIFF
Grappling attack to cause the opponent to fall.

Pin
Keep opponent immobile. Contested against fitness.

Constrict
Strangle opponent. Contested against fitness.

Disarm +2 DIFF
Make opponent lose grip on weapon. May be contested by fitness.

Disarm +3 DIFF
Take weapon away from opponent. May be contested by fitness.

Driving 

Operation and maintenance of automobiles, motorcycles, and trucks. See Vehicles for more rules regarding Driving.

Nudge
Push another vehicle off the road. Risk of collision.

Ram
Steer vehicle into another. Risk of collision and flammable.

High Speed Maneuvers +2 to +4 DIFF
Controlling the vehicle at high speeds. Risk of collision.

Maintenance
Uses reasoning.

Makeshift Repairs
Restore one grade of structural damage without the aid of a fully equipped garage. The difficulty is dependent on the extent of damage. Uses reasoning.

DAMAGE	DIFFICULTY
dented	trivial
impaired	routine
breached	challenging
compromised	improbable
wrecked	impossible

Firearms 

Operation and maintenance of pistols, rifles, shotguns, and submachine guns. See Advanced Combat for more rules regarding Firearms.

Wrong Hand +2 DIFF
Shoot with character's off-hand.

Precision +2 DIFF
Aim and shoot weapon at a particular location.

Quickdraw +1 DIFF
Ready weapon and shoot in same turn. Requires expenditure of two points of effort from awareness or fitness.

Maintenance
Uses reasoning.

Heavy Weapons 

Operation and maintenance of machine guns, grenade launchers, and mortars. See Advanced Combat for more rules regarding Heavy Weapons.

Precision +2 DIFF
Shoot weapon at a particular location.

Maintenance
Uses reasoning.

Jousting 

Using a lance on horseback.

Melee 

Use of knives, swords, staves, axes, and clubs. See Advanced Combat for more rules regarding Melee.


Wrong Hand +2 DIFF
Use weapon with character's off-hand.

Precision +2 DIFF
Use weapon to strike a particular location.

Sweep +2 DIFF
Sweep legs of opponent with weapon, causing him to fall.

Quickdraw +1 DIFF
Ready weapon and use it in same turn. Requires expenditure of two points of effort from awareness or fitness.

Disarm +2 DIFF
Make opponent lose grip on weapon. May be contested by fitness.

Piloting (aircraft)* 

Operation and maintenance of airplanes and helicopters.

High Speed Maneuvers +2 to +4 DIFF
Controlling the vehicle at high speeds. Risk of collision.

Maintenance
Uses reasoning.

Makeshift Repairs
Restore one grade of structural damage without the aid of a fully equipped hangar. The difficulty is dependent on the extent of damage. Uses reasoning.

DAMAGE	DIFFICULTY
dented	trivial
impaired	routine
breached	challenging
compromised	improbable
wrecked	impossible

Piloting (spacecraft)* 

Operation and maintenance of starships and space shuttles.

Ram
Steer vehicle into another. Risk of collision.

Atmospheric Maneuvers +1 to +3 DIFF
Controlling the vehicle at high speeds. Risk of collision. Pilot craft in the atmosphere.

Maintenance
Uses reasoning.

Makeshift Repairs
Restore one grade of structural damage without the aid of a fully equipped space dock. The difficulty is dependent on the extent of damage. Uses reasoning.

DAMAGE	DIFFICULTY
dented	trivial
impaired	routine
breached	challenging
compromised	improbable
wrecked	impossible

Piloting (watercraft)* ◊M◊S

Operation and maintenance of motorboats, yachts, and trawlers. See Vehicles for more rules regarding Piloting.

Nudge

Push another vehicle into an obstacle. Risk of collision.

Ram

Steer vehicle into another. Risk of collision and flammable.

High Speed Maneuvers +2 to +4 DIFF
Controlling the vehicle at high speeds. Risk of collision.

Maintenance

Uses reasoning.

Makeshift Repairs

Restore one grade of structural damage without the aid of a fully equipped dry dock. The difficulty is dependent on the extent of damage. Uses reasoning.

DAMAGE	DIFFICULTY
dented	trivial
impaired	routine
breached	challenging
compromised	improbable
wrecked	impossible

Riding ◊F◊A◊M◊S

Controlling horses and other riding animals.

Wild Animals +2 DIFF
Controlling or riding wild, untamed animals. Risk of falling if riding the animal.

Training animals +1 DIFF
Uses reasoning.

Sailing ◊F◊A◊M◊S

Operation, navigation, and maintenance of sail boats.

Maintenance

Uses reasoning.

Makeshift Repairs

Restore one grade of structural damage without the aid of a fully equipped dry dock. The difficulty is dependent on the extent of damage. Uses reasoning.

DAMAGE	DIFFICULTY
dented	routine
impaired	challenging
breached	improbable
compromised	impossible

☑ **AWARENESS-BASED SKILLS**

Criminal ◊F◊A◊M◊S

Racketeering, scamming, picking locks, pilfering, and other criminal activities.

Gambling ◊F◊A◊M◊S

Playing games of chance and bluffing.

Subterfuge ◊F◊A◊M◊S

Disguises, forgery, misdirection, and sabotage. Director may decide on best ability for the circumstances: creativity for disguise; influence for fast-talking, etc.

☑ **CREATIVITY-BASED SKILLS**

Crafts ◊F◊A◊M◊S

Creating pottery and forging crude alloys.

Design ◊F◊A◊M◊S

Painting, drawing, sculpting, metal working, and graphic design.

Instrument ◊F◊A◊M◊S

Playing musical score with a specific type of instrument.

Literacy ◊F◊A◊M◊S

Reading and writing.

Performance ◊F◊A◊M◊S

Oration, singing, acting, and performing.

☑ **REASONING-BASED SKILLS**

Advanced Sciences* ◊S

Advanced theoretical sciences such as genetic engineering, temporal physics, and robotics. Use this skill when you don't require a lot of individual skills.

Alchemy ◊F◊A◊M

Brewing potions with magical effects.

Astronomy* ◊A◊M◊S

Knowledge of the stars, constellations, and other heavenly bodies.

Biology* ◊A◊M◊S

Science of living organisms such as humans, animals, plants, viruses, and insects.

Boating ◊F◊A◊M◊S

Constructing and steering canoes, rafts, and rowboats.

Botany* ◊A◊M◊S

Science of plant life. Also see herbal medicine.

Chemistry* ⚙️⚙️⚙️⚙️

Design, construct, and analyze chemical formulas.

Computers ⚙️⚙️

Operation and maintenance of computer systems.

Hacking +1 to +3 DIFF
Breaking in and locating information.

Reconfiguring +2 to +4 DIFF
Reprogramming a system for a completely new use.

Court Etiquette ⚙️⚙️⚙️⚙️

Behaving properly in a royal court.

Manipulate the court
Uses influence.

Economics* ⚙️⚙️⚙️⚙️

Knowledge of taxes, commodities, currency, and business practices.

Electrical ⚙️⚙️

Designing, building, and repairing electronic devices.

Hot Wiring +1 to +3 DIFF
Engaging a device without the required key.

Engineering (Aerospace)* ⚙️⚙️

Designing and constructing airplanes and space shuttles.

Engineering (Astronautical)* ⚙️

Designing and constructing starships and space shuttles.

Engineering (Architectural)* ⚙️⚙️

Designing and constructing buildings.

Engineering (Civil)* ⚙️⚙️

Designing and constructing bridges and dams.

Engineering (Electrical)* ⚙️⚙️

Designing and constructing complex electrical and electronic systems.

Engineering (Mechanical)* ⚙️⚙️

Designing and constructing complex mechanical systems such as engines.

Engineering (Nano)* ⚙️

Designing and constructing microscopic machines.

Engineering (Temporal)* ⚙️

Designing and constructing time travel devices.

Financial ⚙️⚙️⚙️

Accounting, business management, and trading.

First Aid ⚙️⚙️⚙️

Basic and emergency medical techniques.

General Medicine* ⚙️⚙️⚙️

Performing standard medical procedures, diagnosis, and treatment.

Field Medicine

Restore one grade of injury without the aid of a fully equipped hospital. The difficulty is dependent on the extent of damage.

DAMAGE	DIFFICULTY
bruised	trivial
sprained	routine
wounded	challenging
maimed	improbable
incapacitated	impossible

Genetics* ⚙️⚙️

Design, construct, and analyze DNA.

Geology* ⚙️⚙️

Science of rock, minerals, tectonic plates, and other terrestrial elements.

Herbal Medicine ⚙️⚙️⚙️⚙️

Using herbs and other plants to create a medicine.

Investigation ⚙️⚙️⚙️

Examination, observations, and research.

Masonry ⚙️

Designing and constructing buildings from stone.

Mathematics* ⚙️⚙️⚙️

Advanced theoretical mathematics including, but not limited to statistics, trigonometry, and calculus.

Law* ⚙️⚙️⚙️

Knowledge of corporate, criminal, tax, and probate law.

Leadership ⚙️⚙️⚙️⚙️

Command over others.

Rallying Troops +1 to +3 DIFF
Increase the morale of troops by oration—provides one extra point of effort to each character present on their next relevant task. Uses Influence.

Legends ⚙️⚙️⚙️

Occult, superstitions, and mythological stories.

Parapsychology* ⚙️⚙️

Study of supernatural elements such as ESP and ghosts.

Pathology* ⚙️⚙️

Study and diagnosis of diseases and their effects on organs. Also used for autopsies.

Pharmacology* ⚙️⚙️

Study of the effects of drugs and chemicals on the human body.

Photography

⚙️⚙️⚙️⚙️

The art of taking and developing photographs.

Physics*

⚙️⚙️⚙️

Study of the building blocks of the universe: gravity, magnetism, and electricity, and the theories which attempt to bind them together: relativity, quantum theory, and string theory.

Politics*

⚙️⚙️⚙️⚙️

Knowledge of government.

Psychology*

⚙️⚙️⚙️⚙️

Performing standard psychological diagnosis and treatment.

Field Treatment

Restore one grade of dementia without proper extended treatment. The difficulty is dependent on the extent of dementia.

DAMAGE	DIFFICULTY
sensitive	trivial
agitated	routine
distracted	challenging
irrational	improbable
delirious	impossible

Runes

⚙️⚙️⚙️⚙️

Inscribing magical effects.

Sociology*

⚙️⚙️⚙️⚙️

Knowledge of cultural and social traditions and behavior.

Surgery*

⚙️⚙️⚙️

Performing medical procedures to repair serious injuries using a fully equipped hospital. Overkill can be used to heal more than one point of injury.

DAMAGE	DIFFICULTY
bruised	trivial
sprained	trivial
wounded	routine
maimed	challenging
incapacitated	improbable

Field Medicine

Restore one grade of injury without the aid of a fully equipped hospital. Overkill can be used to heal more than one point of injury. The difficulty is dependent on the extent of damage.

DAMAGE	DIFFICULTY
bruised	trivial
sprained	routine
wounded	challenging
maimed	improbable
incapacitated	impossible

Survival

⚙️⚙️⚙️⚙️

Staying alive in the wilderness.

Theology*

⚙️⚙️⚙️⚙️

Knowledge of religion and its origins.

Veterinary Medicine*

⚙️⚙️⚙️

Knowledge of animal anatomy and performing medical procedures, diagnosis, and treatment on animals.

Warfare

⚙️⚙️⚙️⚙️

Knowledge of military tactics and strategy, as well as explosives.

Defusing a Bomb

Disarm an explosive device.

+1 to +3 DIFF

Xenobiology*

⚙️⚙️⚙️⚙️

Science of non-terrestrial living organisms (aliens).

☑️ INFLUENCE-BASED SKILLS

Leadership

⚙️⚙️⚙️⚙️

See Leadership under Reasoning-Based Skills.

Performance

⚙️⚙️⚙️⚙️

See Performance under Creativity-Based Skills.

Seduction

⚙️⚙️⚙️⚙️

Using the allure one has with the opposite (or the same) sex to convince him to listen to the character.

Streetwise

⚙️⚙️⚙️⚙️

Surviving on the streets.

☑️ ESP-BASED SKILLS

Astral Projection

⚙️⚙️⚙️⚙️

Removing one's consciousness from his body and exploring the Astral Realm.

Clairaudience

⚙️⚙️⚙️⚙️

Communicate with Astral Inhabitants.

Clairvoyance

⚙️⚙️⚙️⚙️

See Astral Inhabitants.

Mesmerism

⚙️⚙️⚙️⚙️

Hypnotise other characters.

Dig

Determine specific commands previously implanted in another character's subconscious.

+2 DIFF

Deprogram

Remove specific commands previously implanted in another character's subconscious.

+2 DIFF

Telekinesis

⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

Moving objects with the power of the mind.

Strike +1 DIFF
Telekinetically project mental energies at a specific target with the intent of causing harm. This causes the target to gain one or more grades of fatigue or injury if there is sufficient overkill (director's discretion).

Wall +2 DIFF
Project a physical barrier around self or another character in order to deflect incoming attacks. This is the same as blocking, but by using effort from ESP instead of fitness.

Telepathy

⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

Communicating thoughts to another character.

Noise +2 DIFF
Scramble mental processes in order to confuse telepathic intruders. This is a contested task.

Shock +1 DIFF
Telepathically project mental energies into the mind of a specific target with the intent of causing harm. This causes the target to gain one or more grades of dementia if there is sufficient overkill (director's discretion).

☑ CHANNELING-BASED SKILLS

Conjuring

⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

The art of illusion.

Countermagic

⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

The art of nullifying arcane effects.

Absorb +2 DIFF
Draw energy from a countered effect instead of simply dispelling it. The character may redirect all overkill from his successful absorption to a channeling-based effect of his own.

Summoning

⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

The art of manifesting solid matter.

Warding

⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

The art of creating protective circles.

☑ FAITH-BASED SKILLS

Bless

⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

The miracle of divine intervention (reduces difficulty on tasks which do not violate the character's beliefs).

Curse

⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

The miracle of divine intervention (increases difficulty on tasks which violate the character's beliefs).

Divine Archway

⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

Only those who do not violate the character's beliefs may enter the doorway.

Healing Touch

⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

Restores injury, fatigue, or dementia.

Mana

⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

The miracle of food from heaven.

Purify

⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

Eliminates toxins and toxemia.

Rapport

⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

Helps people trust the character.

Truth

⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

Detects the truth of another character's words.

Ward

⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

The miracle of divine intervention (increases difficulty on attacks against the protected area).

☑ CHI-BASED SKILLS

Healing Arts*

⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

Restores health.

Killing Arts*

⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

Makes attacks more efficient.

Shadow Arts*

⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

Keeps a character out of sight.

☑ FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

This is by no means a complete list. The fields below are intended to give directors a better understanding of fields of expertise, so that they may create their own to fit the setting in which they are running.

Actor

⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

Performer extraordinaire.

Combat Pilot

⚡⚡⚡⚡

Trained in aerial warfare and combat.

Doctor

⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

Includes training by physicians. It can be used for surgery, pharmacology, pathology, and biology.

Investigative Priest

⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

A special agent of the Vatican in search of stigmata or demons. Trained in theology, the occult, and parapsychology.

Judge

⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

Trained in the law.

Law Enforcement



includes the training required by police officers, detectives, and federal investigators. It can be used for tasks related to weapons, investigation, computers, and the law.

Magician



Trained in the art of illusion. Nothing magical, just sleight of hand tricks.

Organized Crime Boss



Trained in all aspects of criminal activity, as well as firearms and surviving on the streets.

Psychologist



Mental health professionals. Used for psychology.

Parapsychologist



Includes training in parapsychology, the occult, and investigation.

Psychiatrist



Mental health professionals. Used for psychology and general medicine.

Rogue



Includes training by cat burglars, racketeers, and con artists. It can be used to pick pockets, bypass security systems, attempt confidence scams, and escape from bonds.

Scholar



An academic. Studies many different fields of knowledge, such as history, art, and literature.

Scientist



Inventor and theorist, scientists may have training in just about any scientific field.

Sensei



A martial arts master.

Soldier



Trained in warfare and combat. May specialize in a particular technical field such as aircraft mechanic.

Wizard



A practitioner of the arcane.

✓ **GENERIC GIMMICKS**

Animal Kinship

The character can understand the language of one classification of animal (birds, felines, canines, rodents, etc.). He may speak to them in his own language and they speak to him in their own.

Authority

The character has certain responsibilities which permit him to exercise special rights. He can be involved in law enforcement, the justice department, or even city hall.

Connections

The character has friends or associates in some sort of criminal, political, community, religious, or military organization which he can call on for assistance. The connections can also take the form of students, followers, or employees.

Dependent

The character is in charge of protecting or caring for someone. It could be a professional assignment, sick family member, or minor.

Enemies

Someone doesn't like the character and either enjoys or is duty bound to thwart his efforts. The enemy may even go so far as to actively hunt the character or put a price on his head.

Fugitive

The character is an outlaw and on the run from law enforcement agencies. He should avoid the law as much as possible.

Immunity

The character can ignore all damage from one source. Bullets, extreme color, and fire are some examples.

Internal Compass

The character can never become lost in the wilderness or a city. He can extrapolate his general location from signs in nature.

Internal Clock

The character possesses a knack for always knowing the exact time and date.

Jack of All Trades

The character has a knack for learning new skills. Whenever he succeeds at a task for a skill which he does not possess, the character may spend ten experience points (taken from any skills) to gain that skill at novice level. This skill may never be raised above proficient, however, since he is a jack of all trades, but master of none.

Lackies

The character has an entourage of fans, devotees, or henchmen. In any case, they are always around to protect the character and can be sent away to run errands for him.

Military Rank

The character is in the military and holds an officer's rank. He may also have access to sensitive material and weapons.

Multilingual

The character can speak up to two languages in addition to his native tongue as a result of growing up in a household or culture where more than one language is used.

Natural Armor

The character has some sort of tough hide, scales, or other defensive covering which increases his armor rating. The armor value and form of protection may vary, but the following table should be used as a guide.

ARMOR TYPE	PROTECTION	AMOUNT
tough hide	A	1
scales	A	1
	B	1
carapace	A	2
	B	2
genetically modified	A	3
material	B	3

Natural Weapon

The character has some sort of natural weapon (claws, fangs, etc.) which can be used to damage an opponent. This damage rating can vary, but the following table should be used as a guide.

WEAPON TYPE	CLASS	DAMAGE
small fangs*	A1	1FAT
large fangs*	A2 or B1	2FAT or 1INJ
stingers*	A1 or B1	1FAT or 1INJ
small claws	B1	1INJ
large claws	B2	2INJ
horns	B3	3INJ
strong tails	A3	3FAT

* These weapons may also inject venoms (see drugs and medicines), causing further harm and toxemia.

Peripheral Vision

The character can see out of the corner of his eye. This allows him to spend one point of effort on tasks while surprised (normally a character cannot spend effort when surprised).

Prestige

The character is widely known in a region, nation, or even the world for one reason or another. He could be a famous musician, actor, political figure, or businessman.

This gimmick can be used to add one (1) point of free effort to an influence-based task a number of times per episode equal to the character's influence rating ($|+2|$ would allow a character to use it two times, for example).

Property

The character carries a particular item wherever he goes, such as a cane or a pocket watch. No matter what happens, the item is never lost—merely misplaced. It always turns up before the end of an episode.

Servitude

The character is in debt to another person and must work it off as a servant (butler, maid, assistant, etc.).

Stoic

The character is very rational and can control his emotional responses when faced with trauma and the supernatural. He can ignore all penalties caused by dementia, but is not immune to the effects of delirium once the dementia has reached that point.

Tolerance to Pain

The character is somehow immune to pain and can ignore all penalties caused by fatigue and injury.

Vulnerability

The character is extremely sensitive to a specific substance or mystical force (such as ESP). He receives two (2) grades of fatigue when directly exposed and double the normal amount of injury or fatigue when the contact is the result of an attack.

Wealth

The character is extremely rich. He can usually scrape together enough cash for any deal.

ARCANE GIMMICKS

Astral Magnet

For one reason or another, the character attracts entities from the Astral Realm which have manifested into our world. There is no telling what their motivations or intentions are.

Astral Vision

The character is haunted by visions of entities from the Astral Realm. He can see those present in the immediate vicinity, although he cannot speak to or hear them.

Guardian Angel

The character enjoys the protection of a guardian angel. It will attempt to divert the character's path from danger through natural occurrences, but cannot do so if the character willfully seeks danger.

Mortal Demise

The character dreams about his death every night. He is now accustomed to it, but anything he experiences while he is awake that hints that his time is near causes anxiety and panic. On the other hand, the character knows how he will die (this should be fleshed out before play) and may put himself in harm's way if it does not appear that his course of action is linked to his death.

Mortal Focus

The character is susceptible against channeling-based skills—their difficulty is reduced by two (2) grades when targeted at the character. In addition, all channeling-based tasks performed by the character receive a decrease in difficulty by two (2) grades.

Resistant

The character is incapable of using the channeling ability and is also immune to all effects from it. He may not be targeted by channeling-based skills.

MARTIAL ARTS GIMMICKS

Action Star

The character has starred in countless action movies and is well known throughout the world. He can't enter a public place without being surrounded by a horde of fans seeking his autograph.

Competing School

The character's school has a long standing feud with another school. Competitions are big deals as both schools wish to defeat the other in order to win the glory. Some students of either school may even go to extremes to win.

Disciple

The character is a dedicated student to his teacher. He sleeps in the school, watching over and maintaining it (i.e. cleaning, repairs, etc.).

Famous School

The character's school is known for its extremely competent students or constructive work in the community. As a result, other martial artists view the character with respect when they find out where he trains.

Famous Teacher

The character's teacher is known for being extremely adept or compassionate. As a result, other martial artists treat the character graciously when they find out about his teacher.

Infamous School

The character's school is known for its callous or incompetent students, or break with traditions. As a result, other martial artists view the character with animosity when they find out where he trains.

Infamous Teacher

The character's teacher is known for being particularly cruel or incompetent. As a result, other martial artists view the character with animosity when they find out about his teacher.

Inner Circle

The character is part of his school's inner circle when it comes to making decisions and knowing what is going on in its finances, plans, and events. The character is also very close to the other members of this circle.

School Rivals

The character is at odds with a fellow student from his school. They often compete in order to prove which one is more proficient. Rivals also try to show each other up in other ways, such as career, wealth, and love.

School Outcast

The character has been thrown out of the school and excommunicated by its other students. The character may not join other schools which are in some way affiliated with this school or those with which the teacher is a friend of the character's own teacher. Other martial artists view the character with animosity when they find out about his excommunication.

Chapter 5

LIVE EXPLOITS

Alternate rules for live action roleplaying (LARP).

Since the very nature of Live Action Roleplaying encourages social interaction and only quick rules exchanges, the Live Exploits rules have been streamlined to play very quickly and smoothly. This is the most basic set of rules utilizing Active Exploits.

This chapter is not about explaining how to organize, plan, or design live action games, since that is not the purview of this book. Instead, you will find mechanics derived from other parts of this book used to power a live action game.

✓ ABILITIES

Abilities work the same as the rules presented in the Basic Exploits section. Note that aspects are not used, however, so fatigue is not gained by over-exerting oneself. Also, effort from only one ability may be exerted per turn. Special abilities may also be assigned depending on the setting and discretion of the gamemaster.

✓ FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Fields of expertise are used in the same manner as described in the Advanced Exploits section.

✓ GIMMICKS

Gimmicks may also be used. No changes should be required in order to accommodate them in these rules.

✓ HEALTH

Injury is the only form of health used for these rules. Injury reduces the amount of effort exerted, as per Basic Exploits. Injuries heal between game sessions, but the number of grades restored depends on the amount of time which passes in-game.

PASSAGE OF TIME	GRADES RESTORED
none (no time passes)	1
days	2
week	3
months	4
years	all

✓ TASK RESOLUTION

Determining the outcome of tasks in Live Exploits is quite easy compared to the Advanced or even Basic Exploits. Whenever a character attempts an action and it is in the purview of his training, he is successful unless another character contests the task or it is considered a complex task.

The validity of a basic, successful task may be questioned by players and brought to the attention of the director if he was not present to witness it. The director has final say as to the outcome of the task. Both players questioning tasks and those attempting them should carefully consider their actions. Crying wolf or performing game-balancing actions can have serious consequences and it is unlikely that any director will stand for it.

Contested Tasks

Contested tasks are the only situation where effort comes into play. All players involved in the contest announce how much effort they are exerting simultaneously—a good way of doing this is by counting to three and then holding out their hand(s) with the chosen number of fingers extended to represent the amount of effort used. Effort may only be used from one relevant ability (physical exertion requires the effort to come from fitness and writing poetry requires effort from creativity, for example).

If the task falls under the training and knowledge of a field of expertise, the amount of effort is doubled (or

increased to one if it was zero). If the task is only loosely connected to the field (fringe training), the effort is increased by one (1), but only if it is greater than one (1). In other words, if the task is somewhat covered by the field, but not enough to warrant expert knowledge, the character must exert two (2) or more points of effort in order for it to gain the extra point.

Other modifiers may also come into play, but these are at the director's discretion if he happens to be judging the contest. Modifiers directly affect the total amount of effort which the character is using. A positive modifier increases effort and a negative modifier reduces it.

After all the modifiers are applied, the winner of the contest is the character who has the largest amount of effort. In the case of ties, both characters fail.

Complex Tasks

Complex tasks are those which are uncontested and either affect a number of people, affect the plot of a story directly, or are near-impossible. The director is required to judge such tasks as they can create serious problems in the game. The following guidelines should be used:

- The character requires a field of expertise which covers the situation completely.
- If the character has only fringe training, he must also possess the appropriate ability at a rating of at least | +1 |.

Ultimately, the decision is left up to the director and he can ignore the guidelines above if he so chooses.

✓ **DAMAGE**

Successful attacks inflict damage on the opponent. The amount is determined by the nature of the attack (see the Live Exploits Reference page). The director may also apply damage from other sources as part of complex tasks or the environment. All damage is reduced by any armor being worn (see the Live Exploits Reference page). A character may also expend up to two points of experience to negate one grade of injury per point.

✓ **EXPERIENCE**

Each successful contested task gives the character one (1) point of experience if and only if it was a fair match. This means that characters cannot go around picking on weaker individuals simply to gain experience. The opponent must possess the same field of expertise or one in which the action is a key component. The director may also award a point to anyone he feels has done a superb job of roleplaying when a task would have normally determined the outcome of a situation.

Experience may be used to increase the amount of effort used in a task or negate one grade of injury per point. No more than two (2) points of experience may be used at a time. Points used to increase effort are counted after all modifiers to the task—fields of expertise do not double or otherwise alter this value.

✓ **OPTIONAL RULES**

Threads and principles would also work quite well with live action roleplaying (consult the respective section of this book). House rules and other options from the Advanced Exploits section may be employed, but please keep in mind that live action is intended to be quick and easy, so as not to drag out encounters.

Another interesting option is to have players make note of all tasks at which their characters succeed that are not central to their field(s) of expertise. When this task is performed more than four times successfully, the player may spend ten (10) points of experience to make it part of his character's field of expertise.

Detective Winston, whose field of expertise is law enforcement, has successfully completed five attempts at delivering babies over the course of his five month tour (the tour being part of the live action game). As a result, he can spend 10 experience points (if he has them) to make this task part of his law enforcement expertise. All future attempts are considered to be central to law enforcement for him.

✓ **SUMMARY**

Abilities [Basic Exploits]

Fitness, Awareness, Creativity, Reasoning, [influence]

Special Abilities [Basic Exploits]

any

Fields of Expertise [Advanced Exploits / custom]

any

Gimmicks [Basic Exploits]

any

Custom Task Resolution

Regular tasks are automatic.

Questioned and complex tasks are determined by the Director.

Contested tasks are determined by the most effort.

Health [Basic Exploits]

Injury only; reduces effort.

Custom Experience

One point awarded for winning fair matches or excellent roleplaying.

Up to two points can increase effort.

Up to two points can decrease injury.

NAME

SETTING

Active
EXPL^{⚙️}ITS
 diceless roleplaying

FITNESS	AWARENESS	CREATIVITY	REASONING		
----------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------	--	--

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

INJURY

- bruised -
- sprained -1
- wounded -2
- maimed -3
- incapacitated —

CHARACTER BACKGROUND, GIMMICKS, NOTES

NAME

SETTING

Active
EXPL^{⚙️}ITS
 diceless roleplaying

FITNESS	AWARENESS	CREATIVITY	REASONING		
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FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

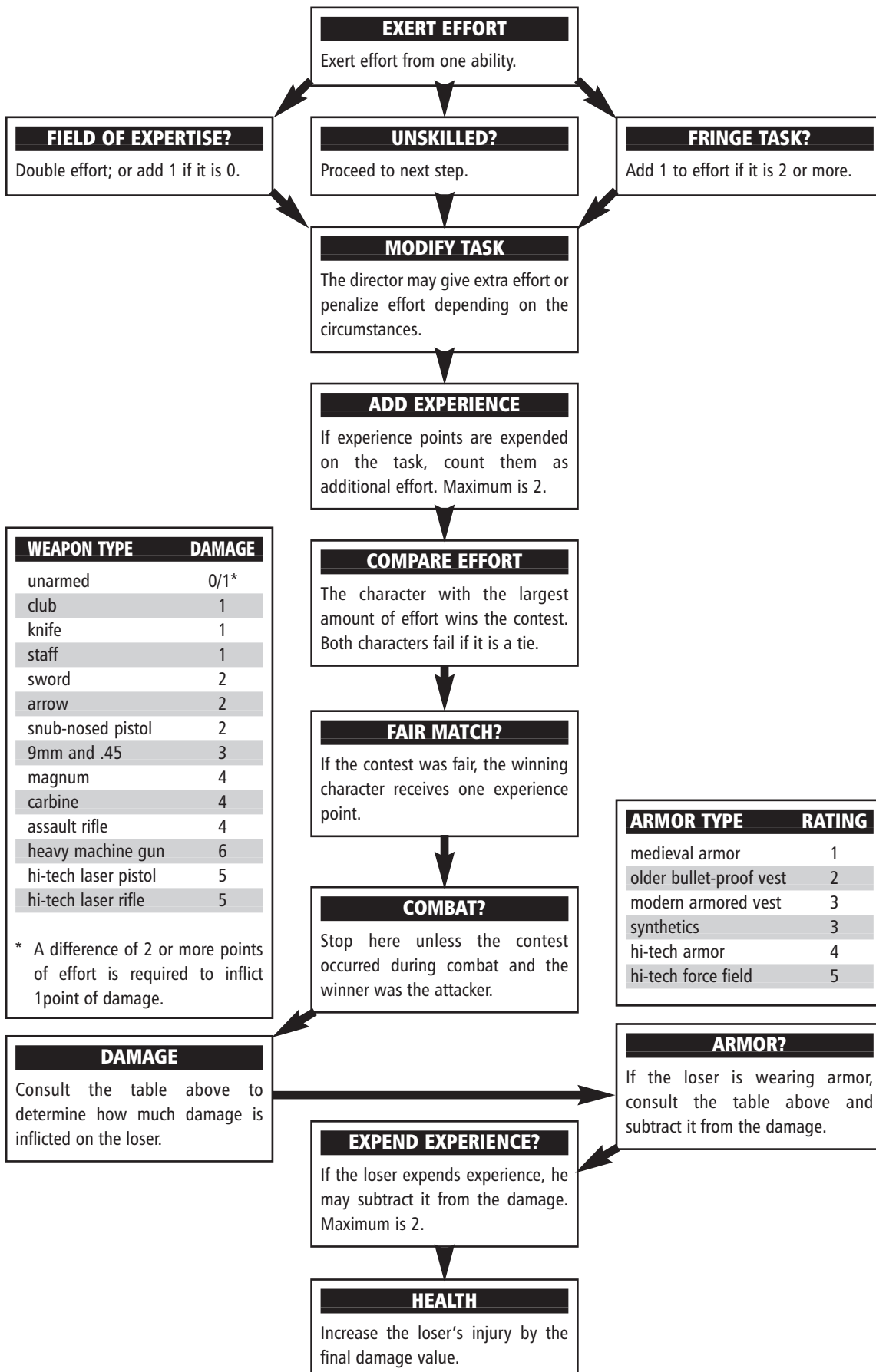
INJURY

- bruised -
- sprained -1
- wounded -2
- maimed -3
- incapacitated —

CHARACTER BACKGROUND, GIMMICKS, NOTES

LIVE EXPLOITS REFERENCE

Contested Tasks



Chapter 6

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Some final words about the rules and expanding them.

☑ USING DICE

There may be times when a more random method is desired for determining the outcome of a task. For this purpose, we have included optional rules to use dice. Since the purpose of this system is to participate in a diceless roleplaying experience, the use of dice should be reserved for action sequences or tense moments where luck could help break up monotony.

Tasks require a number of six-sided dice equal to the total amount of effort exerted. Skill ratings add a bonus to the die roll. Add this bonus to the sum of the dice rolled.

SKILL BONUS	
unskilled	0
novice	+5
proficient	+10
expert	+15

If the final total is equal to or greater than the required total, the task is successful. If the dice total is greater than the required total by ten (10), it is a triumph. If the dice total is less than the required total by ten (10), it is a calamity.

REQUIRED TOTAL	
trivial	3
routine	6
challenging	16
improbable	26
impossible	36

When using advanced tasks, all references to $\pm x$ DIFF (a change in actual effort required for success) should be multiplied by five (5) in order to make them compatible with the dice rules. If you would prefer a more thorough set of rules using ten-sided dice, try **Impresa Express**, which is available for free at the Politically Incorrect Games web site. Its basic foundation is identical to that of Active Exploits.

Detective Winston is exerting 3 points of effort on an investigation task. He rolls 3 dice (one for each point of effort) and gets a 2, 5, and 6, totalling 13. Now, he adds his skill bonus of +10 (for proficient) to it, making a grand total of 23.

The director has determined that the difficulty of the task is challenging, or 16. Since 23 is higher than 16, Winston is successful at the task.

If a condition was applied to the task, however, requiring +2 DIFF, the director would multiply the 2 by 5, making an increase in the difficulty of this dice roll of 10 (2x5). Since the 23 that he rolled is less than 26, Winston would fail this roll.

☑ APTITUDES & ACADEMIA

Although the terms aptitude and academia are no longer used in these rules, they represent an important distinction between skills. As the director, you may choose to use these labels so that characters can better identify with what they are trying to do.

Aptitudes can be attempted unskilled. They represent general knowledge and training, and therefore, anyone has a chance of performing a task based on one. Think of aptitudes as skills which are developed from trade schools, apprenticeships, and life experience.

Academia, on the other hand, consist of a large body of knowledge and rely on extensive training. These are the skills listed with an asterisk (*) beside them; the ones which cannot be attempted unskilled. Characters need to invest considerable time and dedication to studying and

practicing these skills in order to even have a chance with them. Think of academia as skills which are developed from college, graduate school, flight school, and other extensive courses.

✓ **BALANCING GAME ELEMENTS**

Some directors may wish to use game elements such as convictions and gimmicks to balance characters. This is a way for characters to possess higher than normal ratings for skills and abilities by suffering from the detriments of a gimmick or conviction. For example, a character may use a conviction such as a temptation for alcohol as a way to balance an above normal ability or skill rating.

The director is free to assign specific convictions and gimmicks as negative elements, which would provide bonuses for a character during his creation. This assignment is completely relative to the game setting and other characters in the group. Put simply, the fugitive gimmick in a setting where the law is everywhere would be detrimental to a character and therefore, negative.

Some negative gimmicks may include fugitive, mannerisms, vulnerability. Some negative convictions may include temptation (alcohol), belief (delusions), triggers (insult), fears (people). These should be called into play quite often so that they become perceived as disruptive to the character's life and, in turn, a negative influence. This is how game balance is achieved. For while the character may have better ability, it does not come without a price.

The exact bonus received from possessing a negative conviction or gimmick is up to the director, but a good rule of thumb is:

- EACH NEGATIVE GIMMICK OR CONVICTION INCREASES ANY ONE ABILITY BY $\lfloor +1 \rfloor$. THIS ABILITY MAY NOT BE AFFECTED BY ANOTHER GIMMICK.

OR

- EACH NEGATIVE GIMMICK OR CONVICTION INCREASES ANY ONE SKILL RATING BY ONE LEVEL. THIS SKILL MAY NOT BE AFFECTED BY ANOTHER GIMMICK.

✓ **OUTCOME TABLE**

 This is the success table used in the first edition rules.

Directors can use this success table as reference to determine the amount of effort required for each level of skill. It is virtually identical to the basic method for calculating success, but does not reflect the use of advanced difficulty levels.

	UNSKILLED	NOVICE	PROFICIENT	EXPERT
trivial	0 or 1*	0	0	0
routine	2	0 or 1*	0	0
challenging	4	3	2	1
improbable	6	5	4	3
impossible	8	7	6	5

* director's discretion

✓ **RAW ABILITY TASKS**

There will most likely come a time when a character will attempt an action for which there is no apparent skill. In this situation, the director has two choices.

1. Choose a skill which is even remotely close to what the character is attempting.
2. Decide whether the character succeeds based on the needs of the story (see Outcome without Tasks). Or you could toss a coin as a last resort, but please do not rely on tossing a coin every time.

✓ **OUTCOME WITHOUT TASKS**

Trivial and routine tasks occur every day and are annoyingly common. So, why bother wasting time in going through the motions of exerting effort, determining the outcome, and so on? You don't. In fact, unless the character is attempting a contested task, don't bother. The story is more important. If the task helps to progress the story, let the character succeed. If it hinders the story, make him fail. It is as simple as that. Do not allow the story to become sidetracked or encumbered with monotonous and unnecessary task attempts.

It's all about the drama. Think of yourself as the director of a movie or play. Set the scene with language that places the players in the action. Setting the proper mood and maintaining it is more important than the rules if the players are enjoying themselves.

✓ **RULES' EXTORTION**

Players are all different. Each wants to go his own way or do his own thing. With this variability of players' actions, it may be hard for directors to keep the story properly focused. Directors may be tempted to force their players into a particular course of action, but this could seem too forceful and give the impression of a lack of freedom, hindering the players' enjoyment of the game.

One way around this is to extort players to do what the director wants. Since aspects and health change during play, they are the perfect element with which to extort players. Directors can offer players the choice of gaining

fatigue, injury, or dementia, or the reduction of an aspect in exchange for a particular course of action. This works particularly well as a form of willpower for the character. In other words, giving the player a choice between losing a point of discipline or acting on a conviction retains the illusion of freedom. He may not make the best decision, but at least the director has not taken away his free will.

Detective Winston is listening in on the questioning of a suspect. Let's suppose that he has a trigger of disrespect at the compulsion level. The director wants Detective Winston to attack the suspect, so he has the suspect insult Winston's mother. Winston now has a choice. He can either ignore the insult or strike the suspect. Since his trigger encourages the detective to act, he must do so to stay in character.

The director makes a deal with the player controlling Winston: either spend a point of discipline to remain calm or strike the suspect (remaining calm requires discipline).

Or, the director makes this deal: either gain one grade of fatigue to remain calm or strike the suspect (remaining disciplined takes a toll on your energy).

✓ **UPDATING CHARACTERS**

Using characters created for the first edition rules with Take2 is very simple. The only change required is that of organizing the older separate convictions into the newer categories or principles. The following table lists the first edition conviction and the appropriate Take 2 category to which it should be grouped.

FIRST EDITION	CONVICTION	PRINCIPLE
dependency	temptations	faults
delusional	beliefs	faults
duty bound	values	codes
egotist	beliefs	faults
greedy	temptations	faults
honor bound	values	codes
impulsive	triggers	faults
judicial	values	codes
loyalty	values	codes
money hungry	temptations	objectives
moralistic	values	codes
paranoid	beliefs	faults
passionate	temptations	faults
phobic	fears	faults
pious	values	codes
power hungry	temptations	objectives
raging	triggers	faults
sadistic	temptations	faults
timid	fears	faults
worship	beliefs	codes or faults

✓ **CONVERTING CHARACTERS**

Transferring characters from other systems should be handled as best the director can. A **Character Conversion Kit** is planned for release, providing notes on converting characters from over fifteen roleplaying game systems. It will be made available at the Politically Incorrect Games web site.

✓ **EXTRAS VS. NPCs**

While it may seem that extras and non-player characters are the same, they are totally different entities. Extras are used as background material. They are not important to the story and can offer very little help in the final climax. Extras may be killed with one shot or sent to prison without a second thought. They do not require ability or health ratings. At most, assign them one or two skills or a field of expertise. Use them to further the story.

Non-player characters, on the other hand, are typically pivotal to the story and can take the form of protagonists or antagonists—heroes or villains. These characters should be fully fleshed out by the director. Their lives should not be ended quickly or easily. They are important to the story and should be treated as such.

✓ **GENRES**

The amount of settings and themes available for your game is mind-boggling. You can get good ideas from watching movies or television, or reading books. There are numerous sources for stories available, so we will not discuss that element of playing, but a few common genres are listed below. If you like the sound of one, do a little research and try your hand at penning a story around it.

Anachronism

Create a new world where technology is either more advanced than it should be or strangely different to what we are familiar. Try adding magically-powered appliances to modern day or electrically-charged swords to a world of holy knights and their crusade against evil.

Anime

Put together your own Japanese animated cartoon. Portray wild heroes or clever villains. Anything can happen in a universe based on anime.

Apocalyptic

It's the end of the world as we know and only a handful have survived. Those who did have mutated and must scrounge to survive.

Creatures of the Night

The heroes are the monsters. Will they embrace their instincts? Will they survive the hunt?

Espionage

Go under cover and discover plots to overthrow the world or assassinate world leaders.

Fantasy

Go back to the Middle Ages or create a custom fantasy world, where magic is prevalent and the sword rules.

Historical

Fight in the American Civil War; flee Tibet and the Chinese invasion; explore the pyramids and unlock the mummy's curse; sail the high seas in search of treasure; enforce the law in the old west; track down Jack the Ripper in London; or even act out Greek tragedies.

Mystery

Call on the heroes to investigate a murder—Sherlock Holmes to the rescue.

Occult

Hunt ghosts, investigate the paranormal, battle evil minions, or introduce other tales of horror.

Pulp Action

Heroes are larger than life and villains seek to dominate all. Try it using the epic reality rules and see just what your characters can get away with. Combine this Science Fiction and set course for wild space opera.

Science Fiction

This can include just about anything futuristic in nature. Take to the stars in starships the size of small cities or go to work in the dark future of cybernetics and psionics-wielding punks.

Superheroes

Villains have threatened to destroy the city. Only one group is powerful enough to stop them.

Wild Adventure

Hit the wilds of Africa or explore the Brazilian rain forest.

MAKING IT YOUR OWN

Should you wish to provide material compatible with Active Exploits to the public, you may do so for free. Setting books and rules expansions are examples of what you can publish, provided that they are distributed at no charge. The included **Active Exploits Distribution and Expansion License** grants you this benefit. The basics are explained below.

1. You may distribute Active Exploits Diceless Roleplaying, provided that it is distributed in its entirety and that you charge no fee, whether distributed in print or electronically.
2. You may distribute supplements or add-on products for the core rules, provided that you charge no fee, whether distributed in print or electronically—this is considered **Compatible Material**. You may use the term **Active Exploits Compatible** if the product relies on the Active Exploits rules. You may use terminology specific to Active Exploits in order to retain continuity. You must contact info@pigames.net in order to arrange a convenient method of delivery of one copy of your game to Politically Incorrect Games, whether electronically or in print.

You must also include the **Active Exploits Compatibility Notice** on the first page or copyright section of your **Compatible Material**. This is what it should say:

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RULES' ADDENDUM

A selection of new material has been added from the Politically Incorrect Games Collaborative Site.

(<http://www.pigames.net/collaborative/>)

☑ QUICK & DIRTY EXTRAS

Extras can be important in a game. They are used as henchmen, friends, obstacles, sources of information, and of course, cannon fodder. The following text explains how to quickly create extras for use in any genre. You will need to become familiar with the 'Fields of Expertise' optional rules from Advanced Exploits, but apart from that, it is relatively simple. Samples can be found on the Collaborative Site.

Abilities

Extras only possess one ability which determines their primary function. Awareness is not an important ability for extras, as its use is not relevant much of the time, but feel free to use it should the need arise.

TYPE OF EXTRA	ABILITY
physical	fitness
intelligent	reasoning
artistic	creativity
social	influence

A police officer would possess the fitness ability since he must chase down suspects, but a police detective whose job it is to solve cases through investigation would possess the reasoning ability.

The director must also decide whether the extra is feeble, typical, or talented in his ability. This decision along with the game's reality level determines the extra's ability rating.

REALITY LEVEL	FEEBLE	TYPICAL	TALENTED
dramatic	0	+1	+2
heroic	+1	+3	+4
epic	+2	+4	+5

Luck

Extras typically do not use luck, although the director may add +1 effort to any one task or ignore one successful attack targeted at the extra per episode.

Fields of Expertise

All extras should have one area of knowledge in which they specialize (a scientist specializes in science, a police detective specializes in investigation, a thief specializes in burglarly, for example). The director must use his discretion as to which field of experience an extra possesses.

Gimmicks

Some extras may possess gimmicks just like regular characters. Police would possess the authority gimmick, while a famous actor would possess prestige, for example. The director must choose the most relevant gimmick(s) for the extra, or ignore them completely—gimmicks are not necessary for extras, but go that extra mile to flesh them out.

Gear

The equipment an extra carries should be limited to that which his field of expertise requires. The director is free to give an extra the property gimmick, however.

Discipline and Health

Extras do not use discipline, gain fatigue from expending effort, or require the director to keep track of health. Instead, successful attacks which inflict fatigue cause extras to fall unconscious, and attacks which inflict injury cause extras to become incapacitated. In addition to one successful attack being ignored from luck, an additional attack may be ignored for every two points in the fitness ability. Dementia and toxemia are not used with extras.

☑ QUICK & DIRTY COMBAT

In order to speed up combat resolution, these rules require only two elements to determine the outcome: total effort exerted by each contestant and a damage value for attacks (for simplicity, use the Weapons Class table in Advanced Exploits, page 34).

1. All actions occur simultaneously, unless effort has been exerted in order to act in haste (see combat in Basic Exploits, page 15).

2. Each contestant determines the form his task will take. This can be an attack or defense. Effort is applied and total effort is determined by factoring in the free effort from the skill level of the relevant skill. Other modifiers may also be applied, such as those from aiming, recoil, or even conditions (read changes in difficulty as inverse changes in effort: $n\text{Diff} \times -1 = -n\text{Effort}$) from the Advanced Exploits section (page 32). The director is free to assign modifiers as needed—one contestant swinging a staff on higher ground, for example, may receive one extra point of effort.

3. The contestant with the most effort is the victor. If he attacked, damage is applied to his opponent (factoring in armor, of course). If the victor defended, he has successfully parried or evaded his opponent's attack.

If the contest was a tie, an attacker deals one grade of the relevant type of damage (fatigue or injury) to his opponent.

That's it. Repeat as needed.

☑ SUPPLEMENTAL EXPERIENCE

In addition to characters gaining experience through certain tasks, it may also be awarded to them at the end of each episode and story.

After Each Episode

Players who chose to forego violence and roleplayed their way out of a dangerous situation receive two (2) points of experience in any combination of creativity, reasoning, or influence-based skills. This is awarded for each occurrence.

Players who have won an honest one-on-one duel receive one (1) point of experience in any combination of combat-oriented skills. This is awarded for each occurrence.

Players who stayed in character the entire episode, not straying from their character's beliefs or background, receive three (3) points of experience in any combination of skills.

Players who have described their character's actions cinematically or creatively receive two (2) points of experience in any combination of creativity-based skills.

After Each Story

Players who acted heroically throughout the story receive two (2) points of experience in any combination of skills.

Players who accomplished all goals set before them receive two (2) points of experience in any combination of skills.

Players who were successful at uncovering dastardly plans, secret plot elements, etc. receive two (2) points of experience in any combination of awareness-based skills.

☑ EXPLOITS EXPERIENCE

Players may prepare a list of situations during the character creation process in which their characters have had previous experience. These are called exploits. If a character should find himself in one of these situations, he gains the use of extra experience points. Exploits should fit logically within a character's background.

The maximum number of exploits which may be chosen for each character is limited by the reality level chosen for the game.

MAXIMUM EXPLOITS	
dramatic	2
heroic	3
epic	4

To determine how many experience points are gained for each exploit, consult the table below, using the rating of the most appropriate ability.

ABILITY RATING	EXPERIENCE
-1	1
0	2
+1	3
+2	4
+3	5
+4	6
+5	7

Lonnie has been playing a lot of poker lately. His most appropriate ability for gambling is awareness (or could also be influence if he bluffs a lot), which has a rating of +1. Therefore, he receives 3 experience points which can be used whenever he plays poker.

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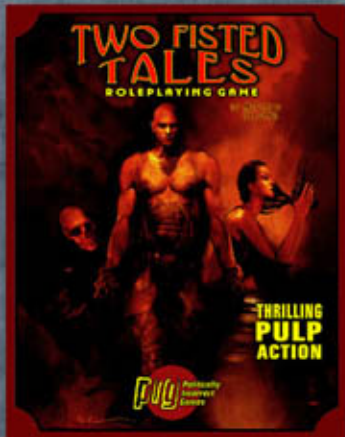
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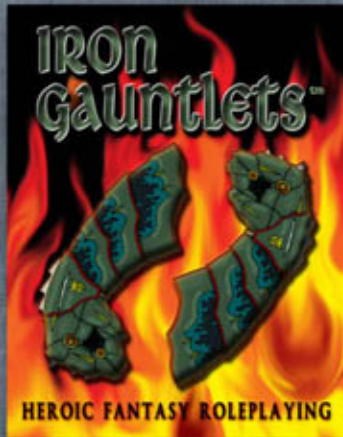
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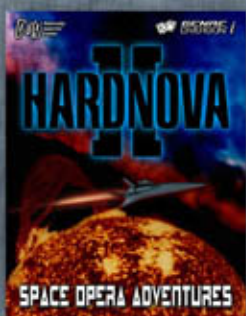


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