

SERENITY RPG Rules Clarifications/Revisions (V2.0)

Rules for Combat

Attributes for Attacking: Agility is rolled for ranged attacks, Strength for most hand-to-hand attacks.

Called Shots (p. 153): This chart expands on Table 5-10 (revised using the *GM's Screen*), differentiating effects based on the type of damage. The extra effects of a called shot are in addition to normal damage.

Area	Skill Modifier	Stun/Basic Damage Effect	Wound Damage Effect
Arm/Elbow	-1 step	Victim must make Endurance roll or lose use of limb for 1d6 turns. Incapacitated arms cannot be used to attack or block/parry.	Victim must make Endurance roll or lose use of limb until given medical treatment. Incapacitated arms cannot be used to attack or block/parry.
Leg	-1 step	Victim must make Endurance roll or lose use of the limb for 1d6 turns. Each incapacitated leg reduces base speed by one-half.	Victim must make Endurance roll or lose use of limb until given medical treatment. Each incapacitated leg reduces base speed by one-half.
Head	-2 step	Damage die increased by +2 steps. Victim must make Endurance roll or be knocked out for 1d6 turns.	Damage die increased by +2 steps. Victim must make Endurance roll or be comatose until treated by surgery.
Groin/Buttocks	-2 step	Victim must make Endurance roll or be impaired (-2 Attribute step on all actions, base speed reduced by one-half) for 1d6 turns.	Victim must make Endurance roll or be impaired (-2 Attribute step on all actions, base speed reduced by one-half) until given medical treatment.
Hand	-4 step	Victim must make Endurance roll or drop any object held and lose use of the hand until given medical treatment.	Victim must make Endurance roll or drop any object held and lose use of the hand until treated by surgery.
Kneecap	-4 step	Victim must make Endurance roll or be knocked prone and incapacitated by pain for 1d6 turns.	Victim must make Endurance roll or be knocked prone and incapacitated by pain for 1d6 turns. Use of the leg is lost until treated by surgery. Each incapacitated leg reduces movement speed by one-half.
Heart	-4 step	No additional effect unless the attack is electrical, in which case the victim must make an Endurance roll or fall down incapacitated for 1d6 turns.	Damage die increased by +4 steps. The victim must make an Endurance roll or fall dead instantly.

- **Endurance rolls** required by a called shot are at Average Difficulty *or* at a Difficulty equal to the total Stun damage (for unarmed, bludgeoning, or stunning attacks) or Wound damage (for guns and most weapons) suffered after armor reduction—whichever is greater.

- For example, a character hit on the head by a club (d6 B increased +2 steps to d10 B) takes 2 B from the attack roll and 7 B from the damage roll, suffering 5 S and 4 W from the blow. Since the 5 S is less than 7, the victim's Endurance roll is Average Difficulty. If the victim had been shot by a gun with the same rolls, the 1 W from basic damage + 7 W gun damage would put the Endurance roll at Difficulty 8 (since the total Wound damage is greater than Average Difficulty).
- **Body armor** negates the special effects of a called shot to covered areas—a helmet negates a called shot to the head, a body suit negates a called shot to the limbs, and a vest or body suit negates a called shot to the heart. Only if the attacker scores an extraordinary success on a called shot will the attack bypass the body armor and cause the special effect.
- A called shot is a determined **single attack**. Extra actions, bursts, or autofire cannot be called shots.

Combat, Unarmed: There are four distinct specialties for the Unarmed Combat general skill—*wrestling* (used for grappling, tripping, and disarming), *offensive martial arts* (used for attacking, grappling, and blocking), *defensive martial arts* (used for grappling, tripping, disarming, and blocking), and *brawling* (used for everything, including fighting with improvised weapons). A character without the Unarmed Combat general skill cannot attempt more than one unarmed attack in a turn. A character with the Unarmed Combat general skill can attempt up to two unarmed attacks in a turn. Only characters with the *wrestling* or *offensive martial arts* specialties can attempt three unarmed attacks in a turn. A character with the *defensive martial arts* specialty can block melee weapon attacks without automatically suffering the weapon damage if he gets an extraordinary success on the defense roll. For color, players can name the specific style of their character's specialty (e.g., karate, judo, boxing, etc.).

Cover and Dodging (p. 152): A character cannot benefit from both dodging and cover. Keeping under cover uses innate defense. A character can move behind nearby cover as part of a successful dodge.

Cover and Explosions (p. 152): If a character caught by an explosion is behind solid cover, an amount of the explosive damage is absorbed equal to the Difficulty modifier provided by the type of cover (e.g., light cover absorbs 4 damage). This is treated like and stacks with armor worn. Depending on the sturdiness of the cover, it might be destroyed after absorbing the blast. Lying face-down prone acts as light cover against explosions (unless you're right by the blast source).

Defense (Block/Parry) (p. 152): The size and heft of the weapon a character uses to parry compared to the attacker's weapon affects the defense roll. If the defender tries to parry with a much smaller/lighter weapon (knife vs. sword), there is a -2 step Skill penalty. If the defending weapon is somewhat smaller/lighter (knife vs. machete), there is a -1 step Skill penalty. There is a +1 step Skill bonus if the defending weapon is somewhat larger/heavier than the attacking weapon and a +2 step Skill bonus if the defending weapon is much larger/heavier.

Defense (Innate) (p. 152): Characters may forfeit their innate Agility roll and simply take a defense of 3.

Extraordinary Success in Combat (p. 141): When an attacker beats the Difficulty to hit a defender by 7 or more, the target must make an Endurance roll or suffer a special effect (p.141). Alternatively, the attacker may choose to bypass the victim's **body armor** instead of inflicting a special effect. When bypassed, armor may be torn or cracked and its AR reduced by 1 until repaired (*GM's discretion*).

Getting out of Harm's Way (p. 142): A character can roll Agility + Alertness (Average Difficulty) to leap away from an explosion. The character moves 5 feet away from the blast on a success, 10 feet on an extraordinary success. This extra distance probably will reduce the blast damage—and may be enough to land the character behind cover or at least hit the ground prone. If the character fails the roll, he is caught flatfooted and is hit by the full blast. Getting out of harm's way costs 1 action (like dodging).

Prone (p. 155): A character lying on the ground suffers a –2 step Agility penalty while making combat actions—though not when the character is firing a handgun or larger firearm properly braced. A character prone on the ground has the benefits of light cover against ranged attacks—but not against hand-to-hand attacks from nearby enemies. A prone character must spend 1 action to get back up and, due to being off-balance, still suffers the –2 step Agility penalty on the next combat action in that same turn.

Rules for Guns and Armor

Autofire (p. 154): Autofire costs 1 action and spends 10 bullets from the magazine. If the gun has less than 10 bullets left, it cannot make an autofire attack. Most automatic firearms can make only 1 autofire attack per round (only machine guns can make multiple autofire attacks in a round). **Cover** adds to the base attack Difficulty, which is normally Easy (3), applied as appropriate to each target.

Body Armor, Damage Conversion, and Coverage: Ballistic armor (mesh, plate, and riot gear) convert Wound damage into Stun damage from bullets that hit covered areas. “Called shots” to uncovered areas ignore body armor. **Suits** of body armor (including riot gear) cover the torso, arms, and legs. **Vests** (ballistic mesh, plate) normally only cover the torso—but can be modified and extended to cover the arms and legs at double the weight and cost. **Helmets** reduce damage from “called shots” to the head. An extraordinary success on an attack roll can bypass armor (see **extraordinary success in combat** above).

Burst-fire (p. 154): As a variant rule, a burst attack costs 1 action, uses 3 bullets from the magazine, and is resolved by one attack roll at a +1 step Skill bonus or +1 step bonus to damage (shooter’s choice).

ROF and Range (p. 79/153; range revised on the *GM’s Screen*): ROF is the number of attack actions a gun can make in one round. A target up to 10 feet away is within Point Blank range (+1 step skill bonus), up to one full range increment is Close (+0), the second is Short (–1 step skill penalty), the third is Medium (–2 step), and the fourth is Long (–4 step). Anything beyond that is Extreme range (–6 step).

Suppressive/Cover Fire: Gunfire can be used to pin down an enemy. No damage is inflicted, but the target must make a Willpower + Discipline/Morale roll at a Difficulty equal to the attack roll result. If the target fails his roll, he cannot move or attack on his next turn—he is pinned down and can only take defensive actions. If the target succeeds on his roll, he can act normally. Multiple shots or bursts can be fired at a target as suppressive fire, but only the highest outcome is kept as the Difficulty for the Willpower roll. Autofire can be used to lay down suppressive fire against all enemies in a ten-foot spread: An attack roll at Easy Difficulty is made to cover the area, and any enemy who fails the Average Difficulty defensive roll must make the Willpower roll (as above) instead of taking damage.

Rules for Vehicles and Spaceships

Operating Ships/Vehicles: A ship/vehicle operator’s Attribute die normally cannot exceed the ship/vehicle’s Attribute die—e.g., a pilot with d10 Agility flying a d6 Agility ship rolls a d6 Attribute die. However, a successful Intelligence + Mechanical Engineering check (“open up that thrust value,” “reroute power to engines,” or some comparable trick) at a Difficulty step equal to the number of steps between the pilot’s Attribute and the ship’s Attribute can allow a pilot to exceed a spaceship’s limitations and use his full Attribute die for the current scene. If the check fails, the pilot is stuck using the lower die for the scene—and there is likely some mechanical damage that must be repaired later (either increase the monthly maintenance cost or require a repair check at the same Difficulty).

Full Burn: Full burn uses up +50% more fuel (as on p. 108), not contrary amounts given elsewhere.

Rules, Miscellaneous

Encumbrance: A character's carrying capacity is based on the maximum value of the Strength die. Beyond a massive load, the character can barely move at all. Encumbrance effects are not cumulative (the higher load effects replace the previous effects). Agility penalties from Encumbrance and **body armor** do not stack—only the largest penalty applies.

Total Weight (lbs.)	Load	Effect
up to STR x 5	Light	None
up to STR x 10	Moderate	-1 Skill step on movement actions (running, climbing, etc.)
up to STR x 20	Heavy	-1 Skill step on movement actions; -1 step on Agility
up to STR x 30	Massive	-1 Skill step on movement actions; -1 step on Agility; Base speed reduced by ½

Healing Wounds (p. 159): After a wounded character receives successful surgery, 1 Wound is converted into Stun damage. If conducted in superior or cutting-edge conditions (properly stocked ambulance, hospital, or infirmary) another 1 Wound is converted to Stun, and if a dermal mender is used 1 Wound more is converted to Stun. The patient must avoid physical strain until the Stun damage heals normally or the wounds will re-open (and the Stun damage will re-convert back to Wound). Any remaining Wound damage must be healed naturally over time (1 Wound per 2 days of rest).

Traits, Revised

TOUGH AS NAILS (MINOR/MAJOR ASSET)

You gain 2 or 4 extra Life Points.

Problem: The trait costs as much as just raising Vitality or Willpower, providing virtually no benefit.

Revision: In addition to the extra Life Points, you get a +2 step bonus to Vitality on Endurance rolls against Shock Points (p. 157), passing out (p. 156), and dying (p. 158). As a Major Trait, any Plot Points spent to reduce Wound damage inflicted by an attack are improved as if you had spent 2 additional points.

Traits, New

DOWN BUT NOT OUT (MAJOR ASSET)

Nobody should ever count you out of a fight. You have a nasty way of bouncing back.

Benefit: You may make two Second Wind (p. 158) rolls every day to shake off Stun damage, though you cannot make more than one roll in the same turn.

TAKES A PUNCH (MINOR/MAJOR ASSET)

You can take a lickin' and keep on kickin' *pi gu*. It's gorrarn hard to knock you down for the count.

Benefit: You gain a +2 step bonus to Vitality on Endurance rolls to resist being knocked unconscious by unarmed or bludgeoning attacks. As a Major Trait, any Plot Points spent to reduce Stun damage inflicted by unarmed or bludgeoning attacks are improved as if you had spent 2 additional points.

DANDY (MINOR COMPLICATION)

Life is better when you're dressed well. You spend a lot of time and money on your appearance.

Penalty: You hesitate to take actions that could harm your clothes or appearance, and you may be distracted by even a minor stain or tear. The GM may require you to make a Willpower + Discipline roll to focus your attention back on matters at hand, or to resist the urge to fritter away your hard-earned coin on pretties in a clothier shop.

GLASS JAW (MINOR/MAJOR COMPLICATION)

You just can't take a punch. One solid crack across the jaw and you're down for the count. Blustery villains whose bark is worse than their bite often have this trait.

Penalty: You suffer a -2 step Attribute penalty to Vitality on Endurance rolls to resist being knocked unconscious by Stun damage from an extraordinary success on an unarmed attack, a "called shot" on a punch to the head, or similar effects. As a Major Trait, you also cannot use your Second Wind (p. 158) during a fight. You must wait until the action scene is over and you can rest a moment, and even then your roll suffers a -2 step Attribute penalty.

PAPER TIGER (MINOR/MAJOR COMPLICATION)

You're not as tough as you look, and probably not as tough as you think you are. Bad guys who look scary but drop in large numbers when bullets start flying often have this trait.

Penalty: You reduce your normal total Life Points by 2. As a Major Trait, you reduce it by 4 instead.

TRIGGER HAPPY (MINOR COMPLICATION)

Maybe you're a little panicky, or maybe you just get too excited in combat, but you inefficiently squeeze off more bullets in a gunfight and waste a lot of ammunition.

Penalty: You use half again (round up) more bullets than normal when making a burst or autofire (p. 154) attacks. You gain no benefits or additional rolls for these wasted bullets.

UNEDUCATED (MINOR COMPLICATION)

You haven't been blessed with an overabundance of schooling. Unlike Slow Learner, which revolves around one area you aren't good at, this trait reflects a lack of basic schooling and general knowledge.

Penalty: You suffer a -2 step Intelligence penalty to any Knowledge-based skill checks.