

Feng Shui Task Check Briefing

Whenever you tell the group that your character is trying to do something, your GM has to decide whether he is successful. If he is successful, your GM will need to decide just how successful he is. If he fails, the GM needs to know what the consequences of the failure might be. This process is called a **task check**.

The Dice

Whenever you are called upon to roll dice in a *Feng Shui* game, you will be rolling **two standard six-sided dice**. Each should be a **different color**. One die represents a **positive** value; the other, a **negative**. At the beginning of each session, tell your GM which color is which and stick to this choice. No fair deciding which is positive after you've seen the roll results!

Whenever you roll the dice, subtract the negative die roll from the positive. The result may be a negative number.

Example: Mary designates her green die as positive and her red die as negative. She rolls and gets a 3 on the green die and a 1 on the red. She subtracts the result for the red die from the green die: $3 - 1 = 2$. Her die result is 2.

Closed and Open Rolls

Sometimes your GM will ask you to make a **Closed Roll**. This is a normal roll of the two dice, as given above.

Most of the time, you will be asked to make **Open Rolls**. In an open roll, you reroll any die that comes up 6, adding to that die's total. This gives a wider range of results, which simulates the wild and chancy actions typically undertaken by *Feng Shui* characters.

Example: Mary makes an open roll, and gets a 6 on her green die and a 5 on her red die. She rerolls the green die, getting a result of 4. She adds the results of the two green die rolls: $6 + 4 = 10$. She then sub-

tracts the negative result, $5: 10 - 5 = 5$. Her final result is 5.

If, on an Open Roll, both dice come up sixes (**boxcars**), the GM should decide that something unusual happens. You re-roll both dice, ignoring each instance of boxcars (but not a single 6) in your final total. The unusual happening may be good or bad, depending on the overall result of the roll.

Determining Success or Failure

Usually when you make a roll, you will then add the result to another number—that number is usually one representing one of your character's abilities, and is called an **Action Value** (abbreviated as **AV**). When you choose your character type, you will want to make sure that she has high Action Values in the abilities you want her to be especially good at. There's a chart in the rulebook (p. 10) that gives you an idea of the level of ability that various Action Values correspond to.

When you add the final roll to an Action Value, you get a number we call the **Action Result**. When your character tries to do something, that Action Result is compared to a number decided upon by the GM which represents the difficulty of the task your character is attempting. This number is called—surprise, surprise—the **Difficulty**. If the Action Result equals or exceeds the Difficulty, your character succeeds at the task. How well she does depends on the difference between the Difficulty and the Action Result. The difference is called the **Outcome**. If the Action Result is lower than the Difficulty, the attempt fails. Again, the difference between the two numbers can determine the degree of the failure if necessary.

Example: Chin's character, Jimmy Kwan, is attempting to break a board with his head at a kung fu

tournament. His Action Value for Martial Arts is 6. The GM decides that the Difficulty of breaking the board without injury is 6. Chin rolls 2 on his positive die and 4 on his negative die, for a total of -2. He adds this to his Action Value: $-2 + 6 = 4$. This is below the Difficulty, so Jimmy Kwan fails. The GM decides how to describe the failure. Since the difference between the Action Result and the Difficulty is only 2, the GM decides that Jimmy half-succeeds—he breaks the board but stuns himself in the process, embarrassing himself in front of the large audience. Had the difference been 4 or more, the GM might rule that not only did Jimmy fail to break the board, but he also injured himself.

Way-Awful Failure

Even outrageously skillful heroes have their off moments. Bad luck can strike at any time, bringing with it humiliation, agony, humiliation, slapstick embarrassment, or humiliation. A task check that results in this sort of way-awful failure is called a **fumble**. Fumbles occur in one of two ways:

- You get a negative Action Result.
- You roll double sixes (boxcars) and then fail to meet the Difficulty of the check when you re-roll.

Most of the time, your GM will think up excruciatingly appropriate fates for your character to meet when you fumble. Standard fumble results are provided for some common task checks. Gun-wielding characters who suffer fumbles usually have their guns malfunction on them. Sorcerers suffer something nasty called **backlash**. But that's detail, and you can find the details in the rulebook.

Feng Shui Character Creation Briefing

Characters in action movies generally conform to a number of basic types: the maverick cop, the stalwart young kung fu student, the crusty old kung fu master, and on and on. So do characters in a *Feng Shui* game. Each of these is presented as a **type**, which provides you with a numerical starting point for your character as well as ideas that will help you portray your character in play. Available types are described on pp. 20-45. Pick the one you think is coolest.

Once you've picked a type, then you should think of all of the things that makes your character unique. Pick a name for her. Figure out what her past history is. Decide on her basic personality traits—is she humble, boastful, obnoxious, witty, bitter? Pick a couple of catch phrases she uses in conversation.

Each *Feng Shui* character must have a **melodramatic hook**. This is a fact about your character that the GM can use to create storylines. It should be a classic staple of adventure fiction, one that motivates or haunts the character. Whenever this hook comes up in the story, your character should have a strong emotional reaction to it.

Attributes

Attributes are numbers that measure the character's innate physical, mental and spiritual abilities. These are all natural talents or aptitudes rather than learned capabilities. There are four **primary attributes**; each of these can, if you want, be broken down into three or four **secondary attributes**. This allows you to refine your notion of what your character is talented at. A character's score in all secondary attributes is the same as the relevant primary attribute unless otherwise specified.

Skills

Skills are things that your character has learned to do. They are measured by **Skill Bonuses**, which reflect the level of training that your character has invested in a skill. The Action Value for each skill is based on a secondary attribute (such as Fortune or Perception), which is called the **Base Attribute** for that skill. To get your Action Value for a given skill, you add the Skill Bonus to the Base Attribute.

Don't Forget This

If an attribute or skill appears after an '=' sign on your type, you can't increase that number at all during character creation.

Changing Attributes

After the type's starting attributes, you are given some changes you can make to attributes that don't appear after an '=' sign. Some attributes also give you a **Maximum Action Value**, abbreviated as **Max**. You may not increase an attribute beyond its max during character creation.

Example: The Big Bruiser type's starting attributes are: Bod =11 (Tgh =12), Chi 0, Mnd 5, Ref 5. This type allows you to "Add 2 to one primary attribute." You could therefore increase Chi to 2, Mnd to 7, or Ref to 7. (Bod can't be changed here.)

Changing Skills

For each skill, you are given a Skill Bonus and an Action Value.

Changes you make in your character's attributes affect the character's skills, also. Before you start changing your skills around, note which skills have increased because the secondary attribute on which they are based has increased.

Below the skill listing for each type, you are given a number of skill bonuses you can use to customize your character. You can add these to the existing skills, or

use them to start new skills.

Adding a new skill doesn't cost you any extra. You just spend one of the skill bonuses you have available, and you get that skill at +1.

Skills may also have Maximum Action Values, in which case you can't raise them above that number. If you add a skill that does not appear on your type, it automatically has a Max of 12.

Pick Your Shticks

Most characters come with **shticks**—particular nifty things associated with their character types. For example, many martial artist types can perform a number of fu shticks, which are described in detail in Chapter 5 (p. 75).

Some characters are given Unique Shticks that apply only to their types. You can decide not to take a Unique Shtick if it doesn't fit your character conception, but you can't trade it for something else.

In game terms, shticks operate differently from type to type. Some shticks use skills as a base number, while other shticks use an attribute, such as Kung Fu or Chi. Still other shticks don't have a base skill or attribute. Look over the descriptions of each ability, and you'll be able to tell soon just how that shtick works.

For each type, we provide a number of **quick shtick picks**. These are good choices if you're in a hurry to create a character and want to get started right away. You're not obligated to take them, though, so if you have the time, feel free to look over the relevant chapters and pick the shticks you like best. If you don't have time and the GM wants to get started quickly, take the shticks given for your first session. Like attributes and skills, you can always choose different ones before the next session if you don't like the ones you've chosen.

Feng Shui Sequence and Shots Briefing

Combat is handled in **sequences**. Each sequence represents roughly three seconds of time. In turn, each sequence is divided into a variable number of **shots**. Shots are a game abstraction; they are a way of determining who gets to do something in what order within a single sequence.

Initiative

At the beginning of each sequence, each participant in the fight makes an **Initiative Check**. This is a roll of one die, to which the character's Speed is added. Sixes are not re-rolled. The resulting number is the shot at which the character first gets to act. A sequence starts with the highest Initiative Check Result of any character participating in the fight.

Once the highest shot has been determined, the character with the highest shot gets to act. Then the GM counts down shots from highest to lowest to see who gets to act next. Actions that take place during the same shot occur in the order of the GM's preference. When a character's shot comes up, he can act. The complexity of the action he chooses to make determines how many shots elapse before he can act again. Even the slowest characters generally get to act several times during a sequence.

Shot Cost of Actions

Most complex actions cost three shots. In three shots a character can (for example) attack in hand-to-hand combat, aim and fire a weapon, reload a revolver, draw and nock an arrow, pick up an object, or throw an object. At the same time, he can also travel a distance up to his Move rating in meters. If just running, he can travel twice his Move rating in meters (this can't be a snapshot). In a sequence in which he rolled initiative, he can move a total of three times his Move. (If not in

combat, he could go four times his Move.)

Some simple actions take only one shot. In one shot a character can, for example: parry or block an attack, resist a wrestling maneuver, draw a weapon from a scabbard or holster, reload a clip-fed gun, duck or dive flat, or catch a thrown object.

Once the GM has counted down through the shots, and resolved all actions that take place on shot 1, a new sequence starts with a new round of Initiative Checks. There is no shot 0.

Running out of Shots

At shots 2 and 1, characters may take actions that cost up to 3 shots even though there aren't enough shots left. There's no penalty for this, and the unaccounted-for shot cost is not carried over to the next sequence.

Actions with a shot cost higher than 3, however, do carry over. See "Extra-Long Actions" for more information.

Defensive Actions

It is possible to take defensive actions even when it is not your shot, as long as your next shot is greater than 0. Defensive actions include dodging or parrying incoming blows and dodging incoming missiles such as bullets or arrows. Reduce your next shot number by 1 unless otherwise specified.

If your opponent is significantly faster than you, it is possible to spend all of your shots on defensive actions and not ever get to take an offensive action. Hint: You're in big trouble.

When attacked, often the best thing to do is to execute a stunt to not only prevent your opponent from attacking you, but to give yourself an advantage of some sort over that opponent. See the discussion of stunts that begins on p. 127.

Snapshots

It is possible to decrease the shot cost of an action by doing it recklessly. An action performed in this manner is called a **snapshot**. To reduce the shot cost by 1, subtract 2 from your action value for the task check. To reduce the cost by 2, subtract 5 from the action value. You can't reduce your action value any further with a snapshot.

For those of you who really like putting things into categories, a snapshot can be considered a type of stunt. It is possible to combine a snapshot with other stunt elements for an even greater Action Value penalty but a cooler result.

Continuous Actions

Sometimes your character will be doing one thing throughout a sequence while also trying to perform other actions. These are called **continuous actions**. Examples of continuous actions include driving, attempting to remain balanced on a precarious or slippery perch, or using certain fu powers. These do not have a shot cost, but increase the shot costs of all other attempted actions by 1.

Extra-Long Actions

Some actions in a sequence take more than 3 shots. Certain fu powers require more time than it takes to make a standard attack. Or your character might also be engaging in a non-combat action, such as defusing a bomb or frantically trying to repair an out-of-control vehicle, while her pals and enemies are furiously hammering on one another.

Characters who wish to take actions that take 4 or more shots when there aren't that many shots left in the sequence subtract the remaining number of shots from their first shot of the next sequence. This result gives them the shot on which their current action is completed and a new one may begin.

Feng Shui Combat Briefing

When you want your character to hit another character in combat, you make a task check using the appropriate combat skill. If you are hitting in hand-to-hand combat, the relevant skill is Martial Arts. If you are hitting an opponent from a distance with a missile weapon, the relevant skill is Guns. If you are attempting to hit an opponent with a spell, use Sorcery. Some attacks can be made with the Arcanowave Device or Creature Powers skills; if you have a schtick that requires that these skills be used, this will be indicated in the schtick descriptions.

If your opponent is stationary and does not defend against you, the Difficulty of the task check is 0. If the opponent is dodging or parrying, the Difficulty equals the Action Value of the opponent's dodge or parry attempt (this is covered in the next section). Your opponent might also successfully execute a reactive stunt that prevents you from attacking him at all.

Other factors such as range, cover, and impairment from wounds can alter Action Values and Difficulties during combat.

How Not To Get Hit

Few characters who know that they're in the middle of a fight are going to stand stock still waiting to be creamed. Any character engaged in combat is assumed to be moving about; this is considered to be a *passive dodge* and has no shot cost. If a character is making a passive dodge, the Difficulty of any attempt to hit her equals her Dodge Action Value.

A character's Dodge Action Value equals her highest Action Value from the following list: Arcanowave Device, Creature Power, Guns, Martial Arts, Sorcery (if they have Blast), or the Agility secondary attribute. You should always have the Dodge Action

Value for characters you are running available for easy reference.

Characters may also choose to make an *active dodge* against any attack. This means that the character is, for the moment, concentrating entirely on not getting hit. An active dodge has a shot cost of 1. Making an active dodge increases your Dodge Action Value by 3.

An active dodge counts as a defensive action, as does a parry (explained next).

In especially close quarters, dodges—whether passive or active—may be especially tricky: your GM will reduce your Dodge Action Value accordingly.

A *parry* is a kind of active dodge, in which you are placing a hard object such as a shield or sword between you and the incoming blow. Or maybe you're grabbing the guy's sword arm or otherwise forcefully preventing him from going upside your head. Your Parry Action Value is always equal to your Martial Arts Action Value (though Sorcerers can use Blast or Movement schticks instead if they have them). There is no other rules difference between active dodging and parrying, but the result is described differently by GM and players. It is merely a matter of style. GMs may rule that parrying is inappropriate in certain circumstances, and insist that characters dodge instead.

Unnamed Characters

Many of the opponents you will be facing are of low skill; their only advantage is numbers. Heroes in action flicks mow through cheap henchmen with little trouble. In *Feng Shui*, we call these opponents *unnamed characters*. If the GM hasn't bothered to give them a name, they're not really important to the plot. They're set dressing, basically, but more fun to beat up. (Don't get too overconfident, though—they can still do

damage to you when the GM rolls high.) Unnamed characters follow a different set of rules than named characters, as explained below.

When Unnamed Characters Get Hit

If an unnamed character is hit and the Outcome of the attack was 5 or more, he is out of the fight. If the Outcome is between 1 and 4, the GM may elect to describe various ill effects of the fight that the unnamed character might be suffering, but this is simply a style thing: the character suffers no impairment or other game consequence.

Named Characters

Named characters are harder to take out in a fight, because they are sufficiently important to the story for the GM to have given them names. PCs are all named characters, as are the main bad guys your characters will be fighting.

When Named Characters Get Hit

Here's the basic formula for determining the result of a successful hit on a named character: **Attack Outcome + Damage - Victim's Toughness = Wound Points suffered.**

Here's how this works: when a character hits an opponent, take the Outcome of the attack check; this is the difference between the attacker's higher attack Action Result and the defender's lower Dodge or Parry Action result.

Add this figure to the *damage* value of the attack form. Each type of attack does a different amount of damage: see the Damage Values Charts on page 139. Then subtract the victim's Toughness value.

The result of the equation is the number of Wound Points that the character suffers. If the result is 0 or less, the character suffers no Wound Points.