

THE COMBAT ROUND

Once the guns come out, a fight shifts into **combat rounds**. A round generally lasts six seconds, and a full fight is considered to count as one scene for the purposes of tracking special ability usage or other abilities that can only be used once per scene.

THE COMBAT SEQUENCE

When combat begins, the engagement follows a set sequence of events.

1. If one side is completely surprised and not expecting any danger, their opponents get a free full round of actions before moving to step 2. People on active alert for danger cannot be surprised under normal circumstances.
2. Each side rolls initiative, rolling 1d8 plus the side's best Dexterity attribute modifier, if they have any. The side that rolls highest goes first, and then the others in order. PCs win ties.
3. Each member of the side gets a turn to act. PCs can act in any order the group finds agreeable. NPC sides act in whatever order the GM thinks is reasonable.
4. During a turn, a person can take one Main Action, one Move action, and as many On Turn actions as the GM thinks is plausible. Instant actions can be taken at any time, even during someone else's turn or after a roll has been made. Common actions are listed on page 34.
5. If a combatant moves away from a foe in melee without taking a *Fighting Withdrawal* action, each enemy in melee gets a free out-of-turn attack against them as they turn and flee the fight.
6. Once every member of a side has acted, the next side acts. If they've taken losses or are facing defeat, they may need to make a Morale check to keep fighting, as explained on page 183. PCs never check Morale.
7. When all sides have had their turn, the round is over and the sequence repeats from step 3. Initiative is not re-rolled.

MAKING AN ATTACK

To make an attack, spend your Main Action and follow the steps below.

1. Roll 1d20 for your attack. Add your base hit bonus, your weapon's relevant attribute modifier, and your relevant combat skill. Good gear or special situations may add modifiers
2. If your total equals or exceeds your target's appropriate Armor Class, you inflict damage. Ranged attacks target ranged AC and melee attacks target melee AC. A natural 1 on your attack roll is always a miss and a natural 20 is always a hit, if a hit is physically possible.
3. If you hit, roll your weapon's Trauma Die, possibly modified by special abilities such as the *Killing Blow* Edge. If the roll equals or beats their Trauma Target you've inflicted a Traumatic Hit as explained on page 37.
4. If you hit, roll your weapon's damage dice and add its relevant attribute modifier. Unarmed hits using the Punch skill can also add that skill level. If you've inflicted a Traumatic Hit, multiply the total by the weapon's Trauma Rating.
5. If you miss, and your weapon's Shock rating is equal or higher than their Armor Class you still inflict Shock damage as explained on page 36. Normally, only melee weapons have a Shock rating.
6. If you inflict Shock damage, it's equal to your weapon's base Shock plus the weapon's relevant attribute modifier plus any damage modifiers that explicitly add to Shock like the *Killing Blow* Edge. Shock never causes Traumatic Hits.
7. Subtract the damage you inflicted from the target's hit points, taking them from their armor damage soak (if any) before harming the wearer. If they're reduced to zero hit points they're either dead, mortally wounded, unconscious, or stunned and helpless depending on what kind of mayhem you inflicted on them. See the rules on page 40 for handling downed PCs and foes.

A successful hit doesn't always represent a direct impact on a target; it might be a glancing blow, a bullet that forces them to duck, or a tax on their luck. Lethal attacks that really do bring a PC down to zero hit points indicate an actual physical injury.

ACTIONS IN COMBAT

When the clock's not ticking and an operator has all the time they need to accomplish something, it doesn't matter how long it takes to do it. They can tell the GM what they want to do, and the GM will tell them how much time they need for their efforts.

In combat and other high-pressure situations, however, things become more tense, and time is usually tracked in **combat rounds**. A person can only accomplish so much in a six-second round, and this section explains how to measure those frantic efforts.

TYPES OF ACTIONS

PCs and other creatures in combat or time-sensitive circumstances get a certain number of actions they can take each round.

Main actions include making an attack, executing a hack, manipulating an object, complex maneuvers, and anything else that the GM thinks shouldn't take more than six seconds to do. A combatant gets one Main action each round.

Move actions allow the subject to move up to their full Move rate, which is 10 meters for a normal human. Some actions that are too complex for On Turn actions but not demanding enough for Main actions might also be Moves, such as picking up an object or standing up from prone. A combatant gets one Move action each round, but can spend their Main action as an additional Move if they wish.

On Turn actions are quick, simple acts that take no more than a moment of time and no real concentration. Speaking a few words, falling prone, or triggering certain cyber systems might all be On Turn actions. A combatant can make as many On Turn actions in a round as the GM thinks is reasonable; a quick shout is fine, but a lengthy soliloquy may not be acceptable.

Instant actions are responses so quick that they can be performed at any time, even during another person's turn. Instant actions can even be triggered after dice have already been rolled. Only certain abilities are Instant actions, like the *Veteran's Luck* Edge or the activation of certain cyber systems. A combatant can trigger as many Instant actions as they have available, up to the limit of what the GM finds plausible. If multiple Instant actions are triggered in response to each other they are resolved in the order the GM finds most logical.

EXAMPLE ACTIONS

The following actions are some of the most common that operators and their foes will undertake while under fire. Other unlisted possibilities exist, and a GM should be ready to make on-the-spot decisions about what kind of action an effort will require if the PCs come up with something novel.

Make a Melee Attack

Main Action

The combatant attacks an enemy within melee range with a fist or Readied weapon, rolling a normal hit roll and inflicting damage on a successful hit. If the attack is unarmed, it can add the user's Punch skill to the damage roll, but not the Shock. *Body Blades* and other body weaponry can use the Punch skill but do not add it to their damage. Most melee attacks inflict Shock damage on a miss, if the target's Armor Class is low enough, and no successful hit does less damage than the weapon's Shock would have done on a miss.

Make a Ranged Attack

Main Action

The combatant fires or throws a Readied ranged weapon at a target. The combatant can't *Make a Ranged Attack* with a two-handed weapon such as a rifle if there's a enemy armed with a melee weapon within melee range; it's too easy for the assailant to hinder the use of a rifle. One-handed ranged weapons and thrown weapons can still be used, albeit at a -4 penalty to hit.

Make a Snap Attack

Instant Action

A combatant with a Ready weapon can rush their attack, sacrificing accuracy for speed. The combatant must still have their Main Action impending or available. As an Instant, they can sacrifice it to make a melee or ranged attack against a foe, whether a snap shot with a bow or a quick thrust at an adjacent melee foe. This attack takes a -4 penalty to its hit roll. If multiple *Snap Attacks* go off at the same time, they are resolved simultaneously.

Snap Attacks are normally only possible for PCs and other very well-trained or talented combatants. If an opponent isn't significant enough to have been given a name, they probably shouldn't be using *Snap Attacks*.

Make a Swarm Attack

Main Action

Each assailant takes this action against a target in range of their current weapon, until up to four have done so. When the final participant has taken this action, one of the mob can elect to make an immediate melee or ranged attack against their target, gaining a +2 bonus to hit and +1 to damage for each other surviving attacker, up to +6/+3. This damage bonus does not add to Shock and it cannot drive the attack's damage over the maximum usually possible for the blow, but Shock from this attack always harms the target, even if they have a too-high AC, are using a shield, or have a Focus immunity to Shock. The sheer swarming numbers of foes are bound to inflict some kind of harm on the target provided they're not completely immune to the mob's weaponry.

Charge	Special
A combatant can make a wild charge before hurling a weapon or crashing into a foe, moving up to twice their normal move in a straight line before making a melee or thrown attack at +2 to hit. The charging attacker must be able to move at least 10 feet to gain momentum and suffers a -2 AC penalty for the round. Charging takes both a Move and Main Action.	

Screen an Ally	Move Action
The PC moves up to their normal Move rate towards an ally and then physically blocks opponents from attacking them, provided they remain within ten feet. Until the PC's next turn, enemies who wish to make a melee or ranged attack against the screened ally must succeed in a successful Str or Dex-based opposed skill check against the PC using the combat skill applicable to their weapon; on a failure, the attack roll is automatically directed toward the screening PC.	

A PC can screen against a number of attackers in one round equal to their highest combat skill; thus, Stab-2 lets them block the attacks of two different attackers. PCs with level-0 or worse combat skills can't effectively screen. Multiple PCs can try to screen the same ally; in such a case, the attacker's skill check is compared against all blockers and the lowest-rolling successful blocker is attacked. PCs can only screen against foes and attacks they could plausibly physically parry or block with their bodies. Gunfire cannot normally be screened without integral cyber-armor.

Total Defense	Instant Action
As an Instant action, the combatant focuses on nothing other than avoiding knives, arrows, bullets, or other perils in the vicinity. Using <i>Total Defense</i> costs the user their Main Action for the round, and cannot be used if they've already employed their Main Action. They become immune to Shock damage for the round, including from <i>Swarm Attacks</i> , and gain a +2 bonus to their Armor Class until their next turn.	

Run	Move Action
The combatant moves their normal combat movement rate, which is 10 meters for most humans. If they're engaged in melee combat with an armed foe as they take this action, they need to make a <i>Fighting Withdrawal</i> first as described below or each melee enemy gets a free attack on them as they turn and flee.	

Make a Fighting Withdrawal	Main Action
The combatant disengages from any melee foes around them. They don't actually move away, but they can now move away from their assailants with a Move action without giving them a free melee attack as explained above. Movement taken as part of an <i>Enhanced Reflexes</i> cyberware activation or other hyper-accelerated extra action does not require a <i>Fighting Withdrawal</i> before disengaging.	

Use a Skill	Main Action
The combatant uses a skill that could be plausibly applied in a few seconds. An Int/Heal or Dex/Heal skill check to stabilize a wounded comrade is one such potential use, as is firing up a car's engine, shouting out a stirring rallying cry to timorous NPC allies, or anything else that might be done in six seconds.	

Ready or Stow an Item	Main Action
The combatant draws a weapon, extracts an item from their pack, digs a medical kit out of a belt pouch, or otherwise moves an object around on their person. They can Ready an item this way or Stow it, as explained in the Encumbrance rules on page 48.	

Reload a Weapon	Main Action
The combatant reloads a weapon like a pistol or rifle with a Readied magazine or a quarrel from a Readied quiver. Modern bows and crossbows can be reloaded as an On Turn action, assuming the archer has a Readied quiver and Shoot-1 skill; otherwise it's a Move action.	

Drop an Item	Instant Action
The combatant drops something they're holding. They can do this Instantly at any time to free up their hands.	

Pick up an Item	Move Action
The combatant can scoop an object off the floor if they have a free hand, leaving it Readied in their grip.	

Stand Up	Move Action
The combatant gets up from a prone position, gathering any dropped belongings. Most characters that have just been revived from unconsciousness must get up before they do much else.	

Go Prone	On Turn Action
The combatant falls flat, forcing distant ranged attackers to take a -2 penalty to hit them. Adjacent ranged and melee enemies find them an easier target, however, gaining +2 to hit. The combatant's movement rate is halved while prone.	

Hold An Action	Move Action
By choosing to <i>Hold An Action</i> , the combatant can delay taking the rest of their actions until later in the round, activating them as an Instant action. Thus, an operator whose side wins initiative might use their Move action to <i>Hold An Action</i> . Later in the round, as an enemy rushes around a corner, he may Instantly elect to use his Main Action to <i>Make A Ranged Attack</i> with his readied pistol. If acting in response to someone else's impending action, the held action is resolved first.	