### Attributes and Attribute Checks

Each character is defined by a set of 10 primary attributes and 5 secondary attributes. Each primary attribute is obtained by rolling 4d6-4, producing a bell curve from 0-20. A zero would indicate that a character is severely handicapped in that attribute. A twenty would mean that the character is one of the best specimens of his species. A ten is average.

Attributes define the character and give players a means of describing their characters. A character with a 15 strength score might be described as strong while one with a 6 might be considered weak. Attribute scores also affect the character’s starting skill levels. A strong and fast character will start with a higher sword skill than a slow and clumsy one.

When the character is adventuring, he may come across situations that test his attributes. Lifting a boulder from a passageway would be a test against strength. Diving out of the way of a swinging blade trap is a test against agility.

An attribute check is made by taking the relevant attribute and comparing it to a difficulty determined by the GM. The GM will set a difficulty level (DL) for the attribute check. This DL will be based on the conditions of the test and the GM’s discretion.

###### Suggested Difficulty Levels

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Description of Task** | **DL** |
| Yawn! Everyone does this every day with little or no trouble. In general, a roll is not even needed. | 3- |
| Simple. This task might pose some difficulty for the clumsy or dumb, but not for most. | 5 |
| Pretty easy. Though simple, you could still mess this up if you are not careful. | 7 |
| Moderate. A normal task that will take some time and care to perform. | 9-11 |
| Pretty Tough. This task gives most people a fair bit of difficulty. Only the clever or strong will get it the first time. | 14 |
| Hard. Difficult for all but the best. | 18 |
| Nasty. Even the strongest, smartest and fastest will fail more often than not. | 24 |
| Impossible. It would take superhuman talent to perform this task. | 27+ |

To determine the success of an attribute check, both the player and GM roll 1d12. The player adds his attribute and the GM adds the DL of the test. If the player equals or exceeds the GM’s total the check is successful, otherwise it fails. Players that are familiar with other game systems might be interested in alternate methods for resolving skill and attribute checks.

In the case of a test that is being opposed by another character (say a chess game, or arm wrestling contest), then each character rolls a d12 and adds their relevant statistic to determine a winner.

Based on the situation and the numbers rolled, the GM may rule that the character can try a test again immediately, after some time has passed, or he may rule that no further attempts are possible. If the roll is missed by a significant amount, or the situation is grave, the character might be the victim of dire consequences from his failure.

In some cases, a character performing a task that requires an attribute check might have a skill that also seems to apply. If the GM rules that a skill or attribute might be appropriate for a particular task, the player may choose the higher of the two to determine his chance of success.

Please note that the system for skill checks is similar to the system for attribute checks just described. Also realize that nearly all the actions that take place in the game use this d12 system. Thus, if you understand how to perform attribute checks, you know how to play the rest of the game.

**Attribute Check Example:** Vorlund is trying to lift a small boulder to clear a blocked doorway. This is a strength test. The GM rules that the boulder is pretty heavy and so the DL is 14. Vorlund has a strength score of 12. His player rolls a d12 and gets an 8. Adding this roll to his strength score results in a 20 for Vorlund. The GM rolls a 5 and adds the DL of 14, for a total of 19. Vorlund strains a bit, but moves the boulder.

**Another Example** : Davross the Scholar is trying to figure out a puzzle box he picked up from an exotic bazaar. The box is quite complex. The GM rules that deciphering the box will take an intelligence test against a DL of 23. Luckily, Davross has an intelligence score of 19. He rolls a 7 and adds his 19 intelligence for a total of 26. The GM rolls a 5 for a total of 28. Davross has failed to open the box. However, the GM rules that since Davross only failed by a small amount, he may try again after a day or so of reflection. On his second attempt, Davross gets a total of 21 (he rolled a 2) and the GM gets a total of 32. This is a significant failure and the GM rules that Davross may not make another attempt until he “gets a fresh set of eyes” and consults someone else about the nature of the box.

#### Strength (STR)

Strength measures the physical prowess of the character. It has to do with the mass of the character as well as how efficiently that mass is brought to bear. Large, muscle-bound characters have a high strength. However, a thin and wiry fighter might also have an impressive strength score.

Strength affects many weapon skills, as well as physical skills like jumping, climbing and swimming. In combat, strength helps determine the damage done when striking with a melee weapon. Also, characters with a high strength can wear heavier armor without suffering penalties to their ability to dodge.

###### Strength Chart

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **STR** | **Damage Die** | **Enc. Mod** |
| 0-3 | 1d3-1 | X 2.0 |
| 4-5 | 1d3 | X 1.5 |
| 6-8 | 1d4 | X 1.0 |
| 9-12 | 1d6 | X 1.0 |
| 13-16 | 1d8 | X 0.9 |
| 17-20 | 1d10 | X 0.8 |
| 21-22 | 1d12 | X 0.7 |
| 23-24 | 1d12+1 | X 0.6 |
| 25-26 | 1d12+2 | X 0.5 |

The strength chart shows the damage die rolled when striking with a melee weapon. This damage is added to the leverage damage done by the weapon. The encumbrance modifier is used when calculating encumbrance due to wearing heavy armor, or carrying lots of equipment. See the section on encumbrance for more details.

Strength tests would be needed when the character is using his muscles to power his way through a situation. Opening a stuck door, or breaking through the strands of a giant spider’s web would require such a test.

###### Suggested Strength Difficulties

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Situation** | **DL** |
| Opening a stuck door | 6 |
| Opening a locked door (weak) | 12 |
| Opening a locked door (strong) | 18 |
| Breaking giant spider webs | 16 |
| Bending a bar (soft metal) | 6 |
| Bending a bar (hard metal) | 14 |
| Bending a bar (tempered metal) | 24 |
| Lifting a small boulder | 14 |
| Lifting a large boulder | 24 |

#### Agility (AGI)

Agility is a measure of how light the character is on his feet. Agility determines if the character is a good dancer, able to walk a tightrope, or keep his feet on a slippery floor. Agility affects many combat skills, including the ability to dodge blows. Also, certain physical skills like jumping, climbing and stealth require agility.

Agility tests might be required when the character is trying to fight on bad footing, sidestep a trap or keep his balance while standing on a moving cart.

###### Suggested Agility Difficulties

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Situation** | **DL** |
| Dodging a rolling boulder trap | 6-12 |
| Walking a wide balance beam | 8 |
| Walking a narrow balance beam | 11 |
| Skipping rope (simple moves) | 6 |
| Skipping rope (complex moves) | 13 |
| Crossing a still rope bridge | 7 |
| Crossing a swaying rope bridge | 14 |

#### Dexterity (DEX)

Dexterity measures the hand-eye coordination of a character, as well as his ability to do fine work with his hands. This skill would be critical for lockpicks, street magicians and fencers. Dexterity affects a character’s ability to hit with a weapon and many of the skills that make a good thief.

Dexterity checks are called for when a character must tie a knot quickly, or when he must catch something that has been thrown to him. If fine manipulation is required and no skill applies to the situation, a DEX check can determine success.

###### Suggested Dexterity Difficulties

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Situation** | **DL** |
| Threading a needle (first try) | 5-8 |
| Threading a needle with arms extended | 12 |
| Holding on to a slick, oily object | 9-13 |
| Catching a swaying rope bridge | 10 |
| Getting keys from a key ring (under duress) | 8 |
| Typing without error (under duress) | 8 |

#### Speed (SPD)

Speed measures the reaction time of a character and to a lesser degree, his foot speed. Some combat skills (knife, for example) rely on speed more than coordination. In addition, speed helps determine if a trap surprises a character, or whether he can react in time to dodge. Speed also helps a character dodge blows in combat.

Speed tests occur when a character must react to a surprising situation. An arrow trap going off in front of him is a good example. Note that speed differs from dexterity and agility in that it measures pure reaction time and reflexes whereas the other two are more refined indicators of ability. A character might be a great dancer (high AGI) but not be particularly fast (low SPD). Another example would be a character that was very accurate at using his weapons (high DEX), but tended to panic and freeze in a live combat situation (low SPD).

###### Suggested Speed Difficulties

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Situation** | **DL** |
| Avoiding a medusa’s gaze | 8-12 |
| Dodging an arrow trap | 14 |

#### Toughness (TOU)

Toughness measures the ability of the character to take damage and resist the effects of poison and diseases. Toughness is the most important element in determining a character’s starting hit points. Toughness also plays a part in skills that take a high level of endurance. Fighting characters should consider the benefits of a high toughness score when they are assigning rolls.

Toughness checks are used whenever the character encounters a substance that will cause him harm. A successful toughness test might allow the character to ignore the effects of the substance, or at least take less damage. Depending on the situation, one check might be enough, or several periodic checks might have to be made before the character is out of danger.

Examples of places where toughness checks would be appropriate are a character walking into a smoke or poison gas filled room. A character bitten by a poisonous spider, or touched by a diseased ghoul would need a check to avoid the effects of the poison or disease. A character sprayed by weak acid may make a toughness check to avoid damage, while a stronger acid would do half damage, even if the check were made.

#### Intelligence (INT)

Intelligence is the reasoning and learning ability of the character. Intelligence is an important statistic for mages, sages, alchemists and healers, since it is a requirement for many of their skills. Almost all knowledge skills are based on intelligence. In addition, skills with a technical or magical aspect have intelligence as an important attribute.

Intelligence checks are made when the character is learning new skills or solving a puzzle. A hobbit and gollum engaging in a riddle game could be a contest of intelligence, as could a game of chess. If a player forgets a name, or a critical piece of information and you are pretty certain that his character would remember (and you are feeling generous), a check could be made to prod his memory.

###### Suggested Intelligence Difficulties

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Situation** | **DL** |
| Solving a find-a-word puzzle | 3-5 |
| Solving a simple logic puzzle | 8-12 |
| Solving a complex logic puzzle | 14+ |
| Recalling the names of the people in a room (about a dozen or so) | 9-11 |

#### Will (WIL)

Will measures the character’s willpower. It is the ability to overcome fear and temptation. Many spells dealing with charm and illusion can be resisted through a high will. Mages require a high willpower to harness the power of their runes. Finally, the will to survive gives a character more hit points – something required by anyone desiring a long and prosperous adventuring career.

Will tests are hard to quantify and are generally the result of a spell. However, a character resisting torture, or powerful temptation might need a will check to successfully resist. The difficulty of this test will be up to the GM.

#### Charisma (CHA)

This is a mixture of a character’s appearance and their personality. Characters with a high charisma score are natural leaders, speakers and performers. Many interpersonal and information gathering skills are based on this attribute. At least one character in the group should have a good charisma and some charisma-based skills. Charisma is important to traders and confidence men, as well as public officials and generals.

Charisma tests are hard to quantify and there are probably few times in a game where such a test would be made. Often, situations where success would be determined by a character’s charisma can be resolved with a skill test, or by simply role-playing the event. If the GM had absolutely no idea how an NPC would react to the characters and needed a general guideline, then perhaps a charisma check might be in order.

#### Spirit (SPI)

Spirit measures the character’s ability to mold magical forces to his advantage. In a mage, this attribute would contribute to his magic skill and thus, his chance to cast more difficult spells. In a character that does not use magic, it would act as a measure of luck and the ability to resist harmful magic.

Spirit tests occur as a result of many types of spells. Skills like survival and pickpocket that depend on a fair bit of luck also are affected by spirit. Also, if a situation calls for an attribute check that just does not fit into any other attribute, it is a matter of luck, and a spirit check should be made.

#### Perception (PER)

Perception is the ability to see and hear the world around you and recognize important items. It helps determine a character’s defensive scores and figures into skills such as detect traps and tracking. It is a good attribute for rangers and thieves.

Perception checks are made any time the character is searching for a hidden object or if they are just looking for “something”, a test can determine whether they recognize an item that is important or out of the ordinary. If someone is sneaking up on the characters, a perception check can be made to detect the danger. Some traps require a perception check to see if their effects can be avoided or reduced.

### Figured Attributes

Figured attributes are mainly used in combat situations and determine how well a character can defend himself against attack, how quickly he can act in a combat situation and how far he can move on the tactical map. Figured attributes are not rolled. Instead, they are calculated from the 10 main attributes. Hit points and dodge are figured using a simple formula. The other three scores are determined by adding three primary attributes together and then referencing a simple chart.

#### Hit Points (HIT)

Hit points indicate how much damage a character can take before being wounded, knocked unconscious and killed. In a game where combat is a common occurrence, having a lot of hit points is a good thing. In other games, having lots of hit points cannot hurt.

Hit points are figured using the following formula:

**HIT = TOU + ½ STR + ½ WIL + 8**

When using this formula, a half point of STR or WIL round up. Thus a character with 10 STR will get 5 hit points for his attribute, but a character with 11 STR gets 6 hit points. The same goes for WIL.

**Figuring Hit Points Example**: Ferd the Clumsy has a STR of 17, a TOU of 14 and a WIL of 7. His hit points are calculated as 14 + (17/2) + (7/2) + 8 = 14 + 9 + 4 + 8 = 35.

After figuring a character’s hit points, you should figure out his “wound categories” by determining ¼, ½ and ¾ the character’s hit points (round to the nearest integer) and writing this information on his sheet. The effects of damage, wounds and going unconscious are discussed in the next section of these rules.

**Figuring Categories Example**: Ferd has 35 hit points. This breaks up into categories of 9, 18 and 27.

#### Base Defense/Parry Modifier (BD)

This score represents the character’s ability to defend himself from harm by dodging or blocking attacks. Base defense represents the lowest that a character’s defense can ever be, regardless of negative modifiers, or how many attackers he is facing.

Base defense directly affects a character’s starting dodge score (see below). In addition, it modifies the character’s starting parry values. This modifier is called the parry modifier and it is calculated and listed alongside the base defense.

Calculate base defense by adding **agility, perception** and **speed** and consulting the table below. In the table, the number before the slash is the base defense score and the number after the slash is the parry modifier.

**Base Defense Calculation Example**: Max has an AGI of 13, PER of 11 and SPD of 14. The total of these scores is 38. Consulting the chart below, we see that Max has a base defense of 8. His current parry modifier is 0.

#### Dodge (DOD)

Characters dodging arrows and spells use this statistic to defend. In addition, a character may choose to use this statistic to defend in lieu of his parry or shield block. This may be necessary when a character is facing multiple opponents. Blocking and dodging attacks will be discussed in the combat section.

The formula for dodge is:

**DOD = BD + (SPD/5) + 1**

**Dodge Calculation Example**: After figuring Max’s BD, we can easily find his dodge. His speed is 14. Divide this by 5 and we get 2.8, which rounds to 3. His dodge score is thus 8+3+1 = 12.

#### Initiative (INI)

In combat, it is sometimes critical who strikes first. A character’s initiative score helps determine the order of attacks in a combat situation. Calculate initiative by adding **speed, perception** and **spirit** and consulting the table below.

**Initiative Calculation Example**: Max has a SPD of 14, a PER of 8 and a SPI of 11. His total is 33 and his INI is +1.

#### Base Move (BMV), Swim and Jump

In a combat round, a character may move his base move in hexes and still keep his ability to parry, dodge and shield block attacks directed against him. Characters may move up to ½ this score in hexes and attack. Characters moving more than their base move in hexes will take severe penalties to defense. Calculate base move by adding **speed, agility** and **strength** and consulting the table below. Swim speed and jump distance are both calculated using the same attributes.

**Calculate Base Move Example**: Max has a SPD 14, AGI 13 and STR 11. His total is 38 and so his base move is 7 hexes each combat round.

Swimming is slightly different than running or jumping in that not all characters can swim. To be able to swim, you must purchase the swimming skill for your character. If you have the swimming skill, you can then swim at the rate listed. If your character does not have the swimming skill, then he cannot swim at all.

#### Tables

###### Base Defense

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Total** | **0-2** | **3-7** | **8-12** | **13-17** | **18-22** | **23-27** | **28-32** | **33-37** | **38-42** | **43-47** | **48-52** | **53-57** | **58-62** | **63-67** | **68-72** |
| **BD** | 0/-3 | 1/-3 | 2/-2 | 3/-2 | 4/-1 | 5/0 | 6/0 | 7/0 | 8/0 | 9/+1 | 10/+2 | 11/+2 | 12/+3 | 13/+3 | 14/+4 |

###### Initiative

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Total** | **0-2** | **3-7** | **8-12** | **13-17** | **18-22** | **23-27** | **28-32** | **33-37** | **38-42** | **43-52** | **53-57** | **58-62** | **63-72** |
| **INI** | -6 | -5 | -4 | -3 | -2 | -1 | 0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 | +5 | +6 |

###### Base Move

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Total** | **0-2** | **3-7** | **8-17** | **18-27** | **28-37** | **38-42** | **43-47** | **48-52** | **53-57** | **58-62** | **63-67** | **68-72** |
| **BM** | 2” | 3” | 4” | 5” | 6” | 7” | 8” | 9” | 10” | 11” | 12” | 13” |

###### Swim

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Total** | **0-2** | **3-7** | **8-17** | **18-27** | **28-37** | **38-42** | **43-47** | **48-52** | **53-57** | **58-62** | **63-67** | **68-72** |
| **Swim** | 1” | 1” | 1” | 2” | 2” | 2” | 3” | 3” | 3” | 4” | 4” | 4” |

###### Jump Distance

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Total** | **0-2** | **3-7** | **8-17** | **18-27** | **28-37** | **38-42** | **43-47** | **48-52** | **53-57** | **58-62** | **63-67** | **68-72** |
| **Jump** | 0.5m | 1m | 2m | 3m | 4m | 5m | 6m | 7m | 8m | 8.5m | 9m | 9.5m |