# Combat

[[Nice Header about combat being inevitable in the life of an Exalt.]]

## Endurance

Endurance is a value measuring how much fight a character has left in them. Once a character’s Endurance Pool has been exhausted, either through pain, disheartenment, or whatever means are employed, the character is considered out of the battle.

### Defeat

Characters who are knocked out of battle are typically not dead--they are simply at the mercy of the opposing characters.

Non-recurring antagonistic characters' fates should be left to the players. Depending on the narrative type of damage (slashing, stabbing, etc.) these minor characters may perish without aid.

#### Player Character Defeat

For defeated Player Characters, this often will mean that their antagonist will successfully accomplish their plans, gloat about it, and then introduce a **Major Complication** into the player’s lives.

#### Recurring Antagonist Defeat

If they are intended to be a recurring antagonist, they should always manage to get away, though suffering a major blow to their own plans--they will often be forced to retreat and lick their wounds.

If you force a retreat on these Antagonists, you must bribe your players each with a [**Strife Point**](#_qlg0g56pfcyu) as compensation.

Remember, though, that recurring antagonists can only be used so many times--eventually you will have to move to the Final Confrontation, where the fate of these antagonists should be placed into the Players’ hands.

#### Death and Dying

The death of any central characters to the story should be pivotal and moving to the story. Player Characters will only die on defeat if it is something the Player wishes for their character.

A dramatic moment of death is a perfect send-off and ending for one of the members of the Exalted.

Likewise, central Non-Player Character deaths should be determined by the Storyteller, although they must bribe all the Players with a **Strife Point** to avoid such a fate--something that the Players are allowed to reject should they so choose.

## Impulse

Impulse is a representation of a character’s general tactical advantage, which they may use at any moment to press attacks, or perform more complex martial Arts Techniques and Charms.

A character cannot have more than **15 Impulse** at a time.

Impulse can be gathered through two means:

### Claim Advantage

**Primary Action**

The character actively tries to sway the battlefield in their favor through such acts as feints, insults, or studying the battlefield. The Player takes a standard Action Roll based on their action, and then receives the Number of Successes as Impulse.

**Sample Actions**

* **Feinting attack** (Dex + Melee)
* **Analyze Battlefield** (Int + Awareness)
* **Intimidate** (Str + Physique)

### Recover

**Secondary Action  
Gain (Essence) Impulse, or (Essence)x2 Peripheral Motes, or a combination of the two.**

The character catches their breath between moments in combat, stabilizing themselves and quickly scanning the battlefield for an opening. The Player immediately giants ( **Essence**) Impulse, (Essence) x2 Peripheral Motes, or a divided combination of the two.

## Static Defense

Characters use a Static **Defense Value (DV)** to defend against all attacks made. By default, this is the greater of **Evasion** or **Soak.**

Defense mitigates attacks, reducing the incoming damage by the characters DV. An attack that reduces the incoming attack damage to Zero (0) is considered a **Miss**.

### Armor

Armor grants a **Soak Bonus** protection to a character, but at the cost of a **Evasion Penalty**.

All armor is of three categories: Light, Medium, and Heavy. Martial Arts Styles will often dictate and restrict what level of armor can be worn.

### Bypassing Defenses

There are attacks that can bypass certain defenses, which then must rely on other defenses instead of pure DV. The Prime examples of these are **Undodgeable** and **Unsoakable** attacks.

**Undodgeable** attacks bypass Evasion. Examples would be room-filling explosions and damage from gravity.

**Unsoakable** attacks bypass Soak Examples would be piercing damage, and attacks that manage to get under armor.

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| **There’s Always a Defense** There is no such thing as a Perfect Attack--there is always some sort of flaw or counter to an attack, even if the damage can’t be mitigated through DV. This must be taken into account when creating your own custom Powers.  Environmental Damage, such as Fire, is both Undodgeable and Unsoakable when applied. However, it is tied to specific parts of the environment--simply moving outside of the burning building will counter this source of damage.  Even mighty Sorcerous Spells have a great disadvantage: the slow and obvious buildup to the attack beforehand. |

## Situational Defense

There are two levels of Situational Defenses in Exalted: **Partial** and **Full**.

**Partial** means that the Attacking Player has a -3 Disadvantage--effectively increasing the defending Player’s DV by 3.

**Full** means that they cannot be attacked by mortal means.

Situational Defenses often can be countered by natural means: characters can move across the battlefield, or scale a wall.

**Situational Defenses do not stack.** It is either Partial, or Full. However, multiple defenses must often be addressed individually. If a character is hiding behind a wall (Full) as well as at a distance (Partial), if the wall is destroyed by an action, the Range Defense would still apply.

### Cover

Characters may use the terrain to gain Situational Defenses, such as by ducking against rubble or hiding behind a wall. Taking Cover is not an assumed action: it is a specific **Secondary Action** that characters may take.

Cover is considered **Partial** when at least half a character’s body is blocked by a material that can withstand weapon blows--such as a chest-high wall of broken stone rubble.

Cover is considered **Full** when the character’s entire body is blocked, such as behind a wall.

Typically, cover works both ways: a character in Full Defense from attacks is also blocked from attacking others for the same reason.

### Range

Range is the most prevalent and common source of Situational Defense, so much so that it has special rules.

#### Range Bands

Characters are constantly in motion during combat, running down alleyways and leaping off tree limbs. Rather than rely on absolute positioning, Exalted works off of *relative* positioning between characters, divided into specific **Range Bands**.

Characters are assumed to keep in their same relative Range Band until one side makes a deliberate effort to change it through a **Move Action**.

Move Actions may also change relative range bands to other characters. If moving towards a character in a group, all characters in that group would be one range band closer. This secondary effect is dependent on the Storyteller’s judgement.

There are Eight Range bands, split along Five Categories: **1x Close, 1x Short, 2x Medium, 3x Long,** and **1x Far.**

**Close**

Within arm’s reach.

**Short**

Within a few yards of each other--a distance able to be crossed within a quick sprint.

**Medium**

Far enough that conversations would have to be shouted, and an archer would have to take preparations for a proper attack.

**Long**

Across an entire field, far enough away that visual, rather than verbal, signals would have to be used.

**Far**

Term for “outside of the battlefield”. Characters cannot get *to* the Far Range band through Move actions, but any late-comers to the battle will show up at this Range Band.

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| **Alternate Rules:  Battlemaps and Absolute Positioning**  While relative Range Bands are the recommended method of playing Exalted, some players prefer to play with absolute positioning and battlemaps. If that is your preference, make the following changes:   1. Distance will be measured in meters. Typically, hexagonal space (hex) will represent 5 meters. 2. Characters have a **Speed** Static value, which is 3 + (Dex + Athletics )/2. The distance travelled is Speed x5 meters--or (Speed) Hexes at a time. 3. Whenever the Move Action is taken, the character moves (Speed) hex.    1. A Dash moves (Speed)x2. 4. A character may move 5 meters (1 hex) on their action without taking a Move Action. 5. All references to (Range Band) as a distance is 25 meters (5 hexes).   The definition for range bands are altered:   * 0-5 meters (0-1 hex): **Close** * 6-20 meters (2-5 hex): **Short** * 21-70 meters (6-15 hex): **Medium** * 71-145 meters (16-30 hex): **Long** * 146+ meters (31 hex): **Far** |

#### Close Attacks

**Close Attacks**, such as those made with **Melee** and **Brawl**, may be made at Close Range with no defense applied, and at Close Range with Partial Defense. Any further ranges enjoy a Full Defense.

* **Close**: None (0)
* **Short**: Partial (-3)
* **Medium+**: Full (N/A)

Attacking a Short range (or further, with the right Powers) does not change the relative range band. It is assumed that the character rushes in, attacks, and then cannot hold the position for more than an instant.

#### Ranged Attacks

**Ranged Attacks,** such as those made with **Archery** and **Thrown** are made at Short Range with no defense. At Medium they suffer a Partial Defense, whereas Long+ cannot be attacked at all.

**Ranged** attacks may take an **Aim** action to eliminate Range Partial Defense of Medium+ attacks.

At **Close** range, ranged attacks are hampered by the control the opponent has claimed over the area, and so also suffer a Partial Defense. However, this defense *cannot* be countered with an **Aim** action.

* **Close**: Partial (-3)  
  Cannot use Aim action to counter.
* **Short**: None (0)
* **Medium:** Partial (-3)
* **Long+:** Full (N/A)

## Attacks and Damage

A standard attack is equal to the number of Successes from **Attack Roll**, plus the character’s **Base Damage**. The total damage dealt is the difference between that number and the target’s **DV**, and is subtracted from the target’s Endurance.

**Attack Power = [Attack Roll] + Base Damage**

All Powers and modifiers applied to an attack must be declared in use *before* the attack roll is made, unless specifically detailed otherwise.

The Attack Power must then be finalized. Only then will the Defense Powers be declared and activated. No additional attack modifiers may be made at this point.

**Damage = Attack Power - DV**

#### Miss

A **Miss** will occur when either the Attack Roll as 0 Successes, or if the total calculated damage is 0 or less after DV. A Miss does no damage to the target.

### Attack Roll

The standard attack’s Dice Pool depends greatly on the weapon that is used during the attack. The Ability depends on how they are using a weapon--a sword will typically be used with the Melee ability, but may be used with the Thrown if it is used as a javelin.

The Martial Art Style that a character will use will restrict what types and weights of a weapon may be used.

**Attack Roll** = (Attribute + Ability) + Accuracy

#### Attack Attribute

**Light** weapons depend on the nimble motions and precise placements of attacks for the most effect in their attack, and so rely on **Dexterity** as their Attribute to calculate an attack.

**Heavy** Weapons depend mostly on pure force, forgoing any sense of precision. They thus use **Strength** as their Attribute.

**Medium** and **Unarmed** Weapons can be used with finesse or force, and so use the greater of Dexterity or Strength.

### Base Damage

Base Damage is how much damage an attack will do, regardless of chance.

## Flow

A Combat Scene starts with a **Join Battle** Roll, which is 1d10 + **Initiative**. The order is from highest to lowest.

All characters start with **5 Impulse**

During their turn, a character may take One (1) **Primary Action**, and One (1) **Secondary Action**.

After all characters have taken their action, the order starts from the top and a new **Round** starts.

Combat ends when it has become clear which side is the victor, in which all but one side of the conflict has lost all of their endurance. Play will then enter into the next scene, which is often a recuperation and consequences scene from combat.

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| **Calling a Fight** There will come times when the results have become clear, even if one side or the other has not exhausted their Endurance. This could be simply characters “mopping up” characters that cannot harm them, a protracted fight, or even a stalemate. There is no need to continue a Combat Scene in these cases.  Once the result is known, simply exit out into narrative space to describe how the combat finishes. |

## Primary Actions

### Standard Attack

**Impulse Cost**: 0 + (X)

Attack a single valid target.

The character may choose to *Push the Attack*, increasing their Base Damage by 1 for every 2 Impulse spent. This may be declared *after* the attack roll is made, but *before* the attack is finalized.

### Flurry Attack

**Impulse Cost**: 1 per target

Make a Flurry Attack against multiple, but different, valid targets, spending 1 Impulse per target selected.

A Flurry attack does *not* use Base Damage: only the rolled dice is the Attack Power.

**Attack Power = [Attack Roll]**

The attack roll is made once, and then applied to each target’s DV individually.

### Claim Advantage

**Impulse Cost:** --

Take an Action Roll action on the battlefield to gain advantage. This can be a feinting attack, studying the battlefield, or distracting enemies with a song.

The number of successes on the action results in the number of Impulse gained.

### Distract/Stun/Disadvantage

**Impulse Cost:** 2

Take an [Att + Abi] Roll against the target’s Resolve in an attempt to distract, stun, or otherwise Disadvantage the target. The target then loses (Threshold Successes) of Impulse.

The Action Roll may be things such as:

* Intimidation (Strength + Physique)
* Tactical Routing (Intelligence + Leadership)
* Distracting Song (Charisma + Performance)

### Grapple

**Impulse Cost:** 2

Make an (Dex + Brawl) against a target’s **Evasion** in Close Range. For 1 Action, and an additional action per ½ Threshold Success, the target becomes grappled.

While grappled, the target cannot take a voluntary **Move** Action. As well *neither characters* may perform Flurries or use any weapon that requires both hands.

When the controlling character takes a **Move** action, they must make a contested (Str + Physique) roll against the clinched target. On a success, both characters move a range band.

#### Size and Grappling

This action gains +2 Automatic Success for each size category larger than the target the attacker is, or -2 Automatic Failure for each size smaller. I.e. A Medium character grappling a small character would gain +2, while a small character grappling a Large would suffer -4.

Characters grappling targets at least 2 sizes larger than them cannot **Move** the target, and are often characterized as only restraining a certain limb.

## Secondary Actions

### Recover

**Impulse Cost**: --

Gain either 2 + (Essence) Impulse, (2 + (Essence))x2 Peripheral Motes, or a split combination of the two.

### Move

**Impulse Cost:** 0 (+1, -1DV)

Change relative position to a target character by one Range Band, either closer or further, terrain permitting.

At the cost of +1 Impulse, and -1 DV until the next character’s action, the character can *Rush* to move two Range Bands. This cannot be done two rounds in a row.

### Aim

**Impulse Cost:** 1

Counter the Range Partial Defense of an attack made at Medium + range.

### Change Initiative

**Impulse Cost:** 1 per +1 Initiative, (0 for dropping)

Move up 1 Initiative for every 1 Impulse spent, which takes effect at the start of the round.

Alternatively, the character may drop down any number of Initiative at no cost, applied immediately.

### Dive for Cover

**Impulse Cost:** 2

Take Cover, gaining either Partial or Full Defense depending on the terrain.

### Defend Other

**Impulse Cost:** 1 per target.

Until your next action, you protect the target(s), using your Soak value (if it is higher).

The target(s) must be within Short Range of your character to take this advantage.

## Environmental Effects

[[**Todo: I need to flesh out the following:]]**

* Fire
* Unsteady terrain
* Winds and other projectile suppressing tactics.
  + Counted as some sort of Situational Defense.

## Ambush Round

If one side of a combat is prepared, and catches the other off guard, this starts combat with an **Ambush Round**. Player Character should always get a chance to counter this ambush with a (Cunning + Awareness) Roll.

The Ambushed characters:

* Do not act until after the non-ambushed characters.
* Suffer -2 DV until their action.
* May only take a Primary *or* Secondary Action on their round--as they are readying their weapons.

Ambushes are premeditated affairs--requiring setup, planning, and coordination between the party. Players cannot suddenly go into combat if things are not going their way and declare it an Ambush.