⋀ Advantage	☼ Success	⊛ Triumph		♦ Ability	🟡 Proficiency	🟦 Boost
⟲ Threat	✗ Failure	⊗ Despair		♦ Difficulty	🔴 Challenge	⬛ Setback

Dark Heresy

Combat Overview

1. Determine Initiative – If the character is aware and ready for combat, use Cool. Otherwise, use Vigilance. Rank results of each check in order from the most ☼ to the lowest (with ⋀ as a tie breaker).
2. Assign Initiative Slots for NPCs and PCs
3. Take turns – The players and GM fill each Initiative slot one at a time with a character turn. If it is a PC slot, the players agree on one character, who has not yet acted this turn, to fill the slot. Each character may perform one action and one maneuver, as well as various incidentals (dropping an item, speaking to another character, peeking around a corner, etc.)

Combat Checks

1. Declare an attack and select targets – Select what skill to use, and if applicable, the weapon to use.
2. Assemble the dice pool – Based on the skill, its characteristic, and any applicable talents or abilities. Other situational, conditional, or environmental modifiers may apply, in addition to any defensive talents or abilities the target has, including melee or ranged defense. The base difficulty of melee attacks is always Average (♦♦).
3. Pool results and deal damage – Each uncancelled ☼ adds +1 damage to the attack. ⊛ count as successes.
4. Resolve ⋀ and ⊛ – The player controlling the active character determines how to spend them.
5. Resolve ⟲ and ⊗ – The GM determines how to spend them generally, but in some cases (such as checks made by NPCs), they may give the players the option to spend these instead.
6. Reduce damage, apply to wound threshold, and apply critical injuries

Actions

Type	Effect
Exchange an Action for a Maneuver	Exchange the character's action for an additional maneuver during their turn, but still may not perform more than two maneuvers per turn.
Spend an Action to Activate an Ability	Certain abilities or talents require an action to activate.
Perform a Skill Check	Perform a skill check within structured time. The GM may determine that certain checks require multiple actions or cannot be performed while the encounter continues.
Perform a Combat Check	Use a combat skill to attack a target.

Maneuvers

Type	Effect
Aim	Add 🟦 to the next combat check, or 🟦🟦 if two consecutive maneuvers are spent aiming without moving. Target a specific part of a target or item carried and add ⬛⬛ to the next check, or ⬛ if two consecutive maneuvers are spent aiming without moving.
Assist	Add 🟦 to an engaged ally's next check. Must be used on the assisted character's next turn or be discarded.
Guarded Stance	Add ⬛ to any combat checks the character makes until the end of their next turn but gain +1 melee defense until the end of their next turn.
Interact with Environment	Moving a large item, opening or closing a door, or taking cover to gain ranged defense (as some examples).
Manage Gear	Draw, holster, ready, or load a weapon or item, or put it away.
Mount or Dismount	Mount a vehicle or gunnery station, or a domesticated creature (requires a successful Average (♦♦) Survival check).
Move	Change a range band increment, engage or disengage with an opponent, or move within Short range.
Drop Prone or Stand from Prone	Dropping prone allows a character to add ⬛ to all ranged attacks made against them, but all melee attacks made against them add 🟦 instead.
Preparation	Some actions require additional preparation to be used.
Concentrate	*Psykers Only.* Powers requiring concentration last until the end of the character's next turn. If the maneuver is performed during that next turn, the power's effects last until the end of the character's following turn instead.
Rebuke (Counterspell)	*Psykers Only.* All opponents within medium range upgrade the difficulty of checks to manifest psychic powers once, until the end of the character's next turn.

Ranged Attack Difficulties

Range Band	Difficulty
Engaged	♦
- with Ranged (Light)	Add ♦
- with Ranged (Heavy)	Add ♦♦
- with Gunnery	Cannot make Gunnery check
Short	♦
Medium	♦♦
Long	♦♦♦
Extreme	♦♦♦♦

Movement

Range Band	Maneuver Cost
Engaged	1 to Short (or disengage)
Short	1 to Engaged / Medium
Medium	1 to Short / 2 to Long
Extreme	2 to Long

Story Points

- Upgrade the ability of the character's starting dice pool once.
- Upgrade the difficulty of any opponent NPC's skill check once.
- Spend to activate some talents & abilities.
- Introduce a "fact" or additional context into the narrative.
- The active player always decides first whether to use a Story Point. Once they have decided, the other party involved has the chance to spend one as well. The active player cannot change their mind after the opponent decides to spend one.

Situational & Conditional Combat Modifiers

Type	Effect
Ranged Attack into Engaged.	Upgrade the difficulty of the check once if an ally is engaged with the target. If the attack succeeds but generates ⊗, that ⊗ is automatically spent to make the attack hit one of the individuals engaged with the target, instead of the target.
Ranged Attack while Engaged	An opponent engaged with a character when the character makes a ranged attack (regardless of target) adds 🟦 to their next Brawl or Melee check against that character as long as they remain engaged.
Prone Attacker	A prone character suffers ⬛ when making a melee attack.
Prone Target	A character attacking a prone target with a ranged attack suffers ⬛, but gains 🟦 when attacking a prone target with a melee attack.
Two-Weapon Combat	Make a combined check using the difficulty of whichever weapon the character has fewer ranks in, and the characteristic that they have fewer ranks in, using those to assemble the dice pool. Then compare the difficulty of the combat checks they would make with each weapon and select the one with the higher difficulty. Finally, increase the difficulty of the check by one. On success, hit with the primary weapon. May spend ⋀⋀ or ⊛ to hit with the secondary weapon as well. If both weapons hit, may spend additional ⋀ or ⊛ to activate item qualities from either weapon. Each hit deals base damage plus one damage per uncancelled ☼.
Unarmed Combat	Generally uses the base damage of the attacker's Brawn rating, a range of Engaged, a Critical Rating of 5, and the Knockdown quality. May choose to deal strain damage instead of wounds, still reduced by the target's soak.
Size Differences	When attacking an opponent with a silhouette that is two larger than the character, decrease the difficulty by one. When attacking an opponent with a silhouette that is two or more points smaller, increase the difficulty of the check by one.

Environmental Combat Modifiers

Type	Effect
Concealment	Add a number of ■ to ranged combat and Perception checks against a target in concealment, and ■ to Stealth checks while in concealment, or other checks if appropriate.
Cover	A character with cover increases their ranged defense by 1 (or more, at GM discretion).
Difficult Terrain	Requires twice as many maneuvers as normal to move through.
Impassable Terrain	At GM discretion, the character may move through the terrain by spending an action, and possibly maneuvers as well, to succeed on a specific skill check (usually Athletics or Coordination).
Gravity	Add up to ■■■ to any Brawn and Coordination based skill checks (except Resilience) in heavy gravity, or up to ■■■ to in low gravity. Zero gravity does not add any ■ or ■, but counts as moving through difficult terrain, and does not change item encumbrance or encumbrance threshold.
Water	Counts as difficult or impassable terrain at GM discretion.
Vacuum	Suffer 3 wounds at the beginning of each turn while exposed without protective gear. If wound threshold is exceeded, become incapacitated and suffer a Critical Injury, plus one additional Critical Injury for each additional round in which they exposed to vacuum (in addition to any Critical Injuries suffered due to suffocation).
Dangerous Atmosphere	Suffer a number of wounds at the start of each turn equal to the atmosphere's rating. May be able to hold breath to avoid exposure at GM's discretion. May be able to stop the damage caused by a fire by making an Average (◆◆) Coordination check on hard surfaces or Easy (◆) check on soft ground.
Suffocation	A character can hold their breath for a number of rounds equal to their Brawn rating before suffocating. Suffer 3 strain at the beginning of each turn. If strain threshold is exceeded, become incapacitated and suffer a Critical Injury. This continues until the character stops suffocating or dies.
Falling	Damage is reduced by soak; however, the strain is not. May reduce damage from falling by making an Average (◆◆) Athletics or Coordination check. Each ✶ reduces damage by 1, while each ⋏ reduces strain suffered by 1. A ⊕ may, at GM discretion, reduce the distance fallen by one range band.

Spending ⋏, ⊕, ⋎, and ✹ in Combat

Cost	Result Options
⋏ or ⊕	• Recover 1 strain • Add ■ to the next allied character's check • Notice a single important point in the ongoing conflict, such as the location of a door's control panel or a weak point on an armored car. • Inflict a Critical Injury with a successful attack that deals damage past soak (⋏ cost may vary).
⋏⋏ or ⊕	• Perform an immediate free maneuver that does not exceed the limit of two maneuvers per turn. • Add ■ to the targeted character's next check. • Add ■ to any allied character's next check, including that of the active character.
⋏⋏⋏ or ⊕	• Negate the targeted enemy's defense until the end of the current round. • Ignore penalizing environmental effects until the end of the active character's next turn. • When dealing damage to a target, have the attack disable the opponent or one piece of equipment rather than dealing wounds or strain. This should be agreed upon by the player and GM, and the effects are up to the GM, but should be temporary and not too excessive. • Gain +1 melee or ranged defense until the end of the active character's next turn. • Force the target to drop a single weapon they are wielding.
⊕	• Upgrade the difficulty of the targeted character's next check. • Upgrade the ability of any allied character's next check, including that of the current active character. • Do something vital, such as shooting the controls to the nearby blast doors to seal them shut. • On an Initiative check, perform an immediate free maneuver before combat begins.
⊕⊕	• When dealing damage to a target, have the attack destroy a piece of equipment the target is using.
⋎ or ✹	• The active character suffers 1 strain. • The active character loses the benefits of a prior maneuver until they perform the maneuver again.
⋎⋎ or ✹	• An opponent may immediately perform one free maneuver as an incidental in response to the active character's check. • Add ■ to the targeted character's next check. • The active character or an allied character suffers ■ on their next action.
⋎⋎⋎ or ✹	• The active character falls prone. • The active character grants the enemy a significant advantage in the ongoing encounter, such as accidentally blasting the controls to a bridge the active character was planning to use for their escape.
✹	• The character's weapon immediately runs out of ammunition and may not be used for the remainder of the encounter. • Upgrade the difficulty of an allied character's next check or the next check of the current active character. • The tool or weapon the active character is using becomes damaged.

Concealment

Dice Added	Examples
+1	Mist, shadows, waist-high grass
+2	Fog, darkness of early morning or late evening, thick, shoulder-high grass
+3	Heavy fog, thick and choking smoke, the darkness of night, head-high underbrush, thick grass

Falling Damage

Range	Damage	Strain
Short	10	10
Medium	30	20
Long	Wound threshold + 1, Critical Injury + 50	30
Extreme	Wound threshold + 1, Critical Injury +75 (or death, at GM discretion).	40

Medicae Check Difficulty

Health State	Difficulty
Wounds ≤ ½ Threshold	Easy (◆)
Wounds > ½ Threshold	Average (◆◆)
Wounds > Threshold	Hard (◆◆◆)
Critical Injury	Critical Injury severity rating
Lacking medical equipment	Add ◆
Attempt to heal self	Add ◆◆

Status Effects

Staggered: cannot perform actions (including downgrading actions to maneuvers), but may still perform one maneuver per turn.

Immobilized: Cannot perform maneuvers (including maneuvers purchased via strain or spending ⋏), but may still perform actions.

Disoriented: Add ■ to all checks. If disoriented multiple times, increase the duration of the effect.

Healing & Recovery

Natural Rest: Recover 1 wound per night of full rest.

Medical Care: Target heals a number of wounds equal to ✶ generated on the check, and strain equal to ⋏ generated.

Strain: Make a Simple (-) Discipline or Cool check at the end of each encounter. Each ✶ recovers 1 strain. A good night's rest generally removes all strain suffered.

Critical Injuries: May attempt Medicae check once per week to remove the Critical Injury. Alternatively, after a full week of rest, may make a Resilience check with difficulty equal to the injury's severity to remove the injury. If unsuccessful, still heal 1 wound. A ⊕ result allows the character to heal one additional Critical Injury.