

UNTOLD AEONS

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ROLLING DICE

A standard dice roll in Untold Aeons has two "pools" of dice: the skill pool and the difficulty pool. For each pool you roll a number of d6 dice equal to your skill level, or difficulty level respectively. You don't simply add up the values of these dice, but instead you count successes and failures. If you rolled more successes than failures you succeed, otherwise you fail. Successes and failures are counted as follows:

| Roll | Skill Dice | Difficulty Dice |
|------|-------------|-----------------|
| 6 | 2 Successes | 2 Failures |
| 5 | 1 Success | 1 Failure |
| 4 | | |
| 3 | | |
| 2 | | |
| 1 | 1 Advantage | 1 Drawback |

In addition to this, whenever you roll a 1 on a skill dice you generate an *Advantage*, and when you roll a 1 on a difficulty dice you generate a *Drawback*. These cancel each other out. These don't affect whether you succeed or fail, but they add additional effects to your roll.

Idea: When appropriate, let players roll their skill but without the difficulty dice, and the Narrator rolls the difficulty dice behind the screen. This way the players have some idea of how well they did but are never quite sure.

BONUSES & PENALTIES

Any situational bonuses simply add extra dice to the *skill pool*. Similarly, situational penalties add extra dice to the *difficulty pool*. Bonuses and penalties also cancel each other out.

CHARACTER CREATION

CHARACTERISTICS

There are 4 main characteristics that define your character, which all range from 1 to 5. Each of them represents an aspect of your character. Sometimes they can be used like regular skills (*e.g. an Intellect roll could be used to solve a puzzle*), but they're mostly used to influence other mechanics.

To create your character you must distribute 12 points between the 4 characteristics, with a minimum of 1 and maximum of 5 for each characteristic.

Agility

Your character's physical nimbleness, speed, and general athletic capability. It is mostly used for dodging / diving for cover in combat, athletic feats, and your speed in chases.

Toughness

Your character's physical strength, endurance, and health. It determines your Wound limit and Soak, generally making you capable of taking more hits in a fight.

Willpower

Your character's mental fortitude, discipline, drive, and ability to withstand stress. It determines your Stress limit, and is used to resist the effects of stress and retain your composure.

Intellect

Your character's intelligence, education, and ability to learn and process information. Characters with a higher Intellect will have higher initial skills. Intellect can also be used as a "General Knowledge" skill.

DERIVED ATTRIBUTES

After deciding on your Characteristics you should calculate your derived attributes:

Wound Limit ($10 + Toughness$)

This represents how much physical damage you can take before you become incapacitated.

Stress Limit ($10 + Willpower$)

Characters with a higher Stress limit are able to withstand more stress before succumbing to it.

BACKGROUNDS

Your character's background represents how you make a living and what your expertise is. In more concrete terms, your background determines your starting professional skills you have access to, but doesn't have much direct influence on the game beyond that.

Todo: *more fluff and more example backgrounds (With a reference to more later in the book?)*

ARTIST

Art/Craft (Any two), History or Science (Biology), Language (Any)

AUTHOR

History, Science (Literature), Science (Any) or Occult, Language (Any)

CRIMINAL

Locksmithing, Sleight of Hand, Appraise, Electronics or Heavy Machinery

LIBRARIAN

Accounting, Language (Any), Any 2 skills as personal specialties

DOCTOR OF MEDICINE

Language (Latin), Science (Biology), Medicine, Science (Pharmacy)

OCCULTIST

Science (Anthropology), Art/Craft (Photography), Occult, Language (Any)

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR

Art/Craft (Photography), Disguise, Locksmithing, Law

PSYCHOLOGIST

Psychoanalysis, Language (Any) or Accounting, Science (Pharmacy or Biology), Any skill as personal specialty

PROFESSOR / SCIENTIST

Language (Any), Any 3 skills as academic specialties

SOLDIER

Navigation, Heavy Machinery, Language (Any), Any skill as specialty

STARTING SKILLS

After distributing points between your primary characteristics and picking a background you can get started with developing your skills. This is done by spending Experience to improve your skills (as explained below).

Firstly, add all your background skills to your character sheet with a starting rank of 1 (unless they are already on there). Then you can spend 30 Experience, plus an additional $4 \times$ *Intellect* Experience, on any of your skills. If you want to add more professional skills on top of your background skills you will have to pay the cost to learn them.

Note: you are *not* allowed to improve your "Mythos Knowledge" skill during character creation. This can only be done during play.

IMPROVING SKILLS

To improve a skill – or learn a new skill – you need to spend Experience. Experience is typically awarded by the Narrator at the end of every session (or plot arc).

Improving a skill costs Experience equal to the *current* rank in that skill. For example: *if your Persuasion skill is currently rank 3, then it would cost 3 Experience to increase it to rank 4*. To learn a new professional skill you have to spend 2 Experience to gain your first rank in your new skill. You'll have to spend additional Experience to increase it beyond that.

MOTIVATIONS

Todo: *Talk about character Motivations and guide the player to picking starting motivations.*

SKILLS

There are two different kinds of skills: standard and professional skills. Standard skills are all the skills that are on the character sheet by default and start at rank one. These are skills that everyone knows at least to some extent.

Professional skills on the other hand are skills that only some people know, and they aren't listed on the character sheet by default. They're usually more specialised and unique skills.

STANDARD SKILLS

Standard skills are skills that every character possesses (at least at a basic level), and have a starting rank of 1. Professional skills are skills that must be learned either in character creation or during play, therefore these have a starting rank of 0.

| General | Social | Combat |
|---------------|--------------|----------|
| Driving | Charm | Brawl |
| First Aid | Deception | Firearms |
| Investigation | Insight | |
| Perception | Intimidation | |
| Stealth | Persuasion | |
| Streetwise | | |
| Survival | | |

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Professional skills can be just about anything you want, but here's a list of some more common ones. Some skills, like "Science" or "Language", require a specific specialisation to be listed, which is done in parentheses after the skill. (These are also marked in the list by having "(*Specific*)" after the skill.)
E.g. "Science (Biology)"

| | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Accounting | History | Piloting |
| Appraise | Language (<i>Specific</i>) | Psychoanalysis |
| Animal Handling | Law | Science (<i>Specific</i>) |
| Art/Craft (<i>Specific</i>) | Locksmithing | Sleight of Hand |
| Disguise | Medicine | |
| Electronics | Navigation | |
| Heavy Machinery | Occult | |

STORY POINTS

There are two pools, the Narrator and player pool. The Narrator starts with one Story point, and the players pool starts with 1 point for each player. When a point is used it moves to the other pool. E.g. a player uses a Story point it moves to the Narrator's pool. This means that using a Story point can give you benefits, but will likely come back to bite you at some point in the future.

Whenever someone uses a Story point to get a bonus or re-roll a check they should also describe what's actually happening that would change the outcome of the roll. For example: a player using a Story point to re-roll an Investigation check could say, "...".

All uses of story points are always at the Narrator's discretion.

PLAYER USES:

- +2 on any roll
- +2 difficulty to an NPC's roll
- Reroll any roll (*sorta like pushing*)
- deus ex machina: "good thing I brought that shovel!"
- Trigger a critical hit in combat (more details on page 17)

NARRATOR USES:

- +2 on an NPC's roll
- +2 difficulty to a player's roll
- Trigger a hallucination, phobia, mania, ...
- I need more here :p

STRESS & SANITY

Instead of a Sanity number, characters just have permanent side effects (manias, phobias, ...) when stress goes above the limit. These can then be roleplayed and can also change over time. (e.g. "recovering in a mental ward" as a way to getting rid of them)

SANITY CHECKS

When something happens that could cause distress to a character the Narrator may ask for a "Sanity Check" to see how they react. Sanity checks always use the character's Willpower, and the difficulty of the check will be set based on the severity of the cause. Any Advantages or Drawbacks rolled will result in a short term effect.

| Effects | |
|------------------|--|
| Success | Gain Stress equal to the difficulty |
| Failure | Gain Stress equal to the difficulty plus number of failures (<i>before</i> cancelling them out) |
| Advantage | Adrenaline rush, fearless, bonus on next san check, ... |
| Drawback | Scream in terror, involuntary action in combat, freeze, ... |

If your stress goes above your limit you must make an Willpower roll with 1 difficulty dice for each point you are above your limit. If you succeed nothing happens, though you must roll again if you gain more stress, but if you fail you become Shaken.

If your Stress goes above *twice* limit make an Willpower save or go temporarily insane / fall unconscious. This follows the same pattern as the save

for becoming Shaken. So the difficulty is how far you're above your limit (twice the limit in this case), and failing the save makes it happen while succeeding postpones it a bit.

SHAKEN

The goal should be to give the players an "oh no..." feeling when they become shaken.

When you initially become Shaken you suffer from a temporary bout of madness. You are free to roleplay this however you like. Additionally, the Narrator can also use Story points to trigger phobias, manias, delusions, ... for Shaken characters.

While shaken the effects of any Advantages or Drawbacks you roll on a Sanity check become amplified. Drawbacks might cause you to flee in terror, become catatonic or even gain a phobia or mania. On the other hand, if you roll an Advantage on a Sanity check with a difficulty *higher* than your relevant Hardened level your Hardened level increases by one.

ADAPTING TO HORROR

Hardened levels represent how used your character is to seeing different kinds of horrors. There's 3 categories: *Violence*, *Helplessness*, and *Unnatural*. These levels act like the mental equivalent of armor, reducing the stress "damage" you take by your hardened level in the relevant category.

Being hardened also affects and changes the personality of the character, becoming more cold and uncaring for example.

RECOVERING STRESS

Once a day you make an unopposed Willpower check. If your stress is below your limit you lose 1 stress for every success. If it is above your limit you lose stress equal to half the number of successes (rounded up). You always recover at least 1 Stress.

GOALS FOR SANITY MECHANICS

- Mental Trauma instead of a "Sanity" stat
- Harden over time (i.e. stress "armor")
- Temporary Positive Effects (Adrenaline rush, ...)
- Temporary Negative Effects (Flee, ...)
- Stress gain from Sanity checks
- Shaken when \geq Stress Limit
- Go insane / faint when $\geq 2 \times$ Stress Limit
- Give players more agency in the outcome of sanity checks? (like Trail of Cthulhu)

— CHAPTER 6 —

COMBAT

Goal for combat: Every roll should be meaningful, not just endless "roll to hit, roll for damage, repeat"

WOUNDS

The health / wounds system is very analogous to the stress system.

If your total damage taken is more than your limit you must make a Toughness roll with 1 difficulty dice for each point you are above your limit. If you succeed nothing happens, though you must roll again if you take more damage, if you fail you are Severely Injured.

If your total damage taken goes above *twice* your limit you must make a Toughness save or die. (same mechanic as above) You must also make another save every time you take additional damage (including the damage from being Severely Injured).

The Narrator is also always allowed to ask for stress rolls when significant injuries are suffered. This is done at the discretion of the Narrator.

SEVERELY INJURED

You have suffered a severe injury and are currently incapacitated (be it passed out or simply unable to fight / act). Additionally, you take one damage every minute (or round?) until you receive medical care.

HEALING

MEDICAL CARE

A character can receive medical care for wounds either from a First Aid or Medicine skill. First Aid can only be attempted shortly after the injury was suffered, and can only be attempted once. First aid checks are always

unopposed (difficulty 0), and you simply heal a number of wounds equal to *half* (rounded up) the number of successes rolled.

The Medicine skill works very similarly except it takes at least 1 hour and proper supplies to execute, and it heals for the full number of successes rolled instead of just half.

NATURAL HEALING

Every day you get a full night's rest you recover some wounds. If your injuries are below your limit you make an unopposed Toughness check, and heal a number of wounds equal to *half* (rounded up) the number of successes rolled. If you rolled no successes you still heal one wound. If your wounds are above your limit you only heal a single wound per day.

COMBAT ROUND

Combat is handled in Rounds, where each Round is about 10 seconds long. During one round every combatant gets a single turn during which they can act. What someone can do during their turn is split into two categories: Maneuvers and Actions. Of course everyone can also freely do minor things like speaking, dropping something, looking around, and so on.

MANEUVERS

A maneuver is anything that would take some time and effort to perform, but is easy enough to not need a skill check. This includes (but isn't limited to): moving, interacting with your environment, diving for cover or standing up, disengaging from melee, aiming a gun, ...

Todo: *Define these a little more concretely*

ACTIONS

Actions are the primary activity a combatant performs during their turn. There are two main types of actions: attacks and skill checks. An attack can

be anything from shooting a gun to stabbing someone with a knife. Skill checks could be a daring feat of athleticism, lockpicking a door, performing first aid, ...

INITIATIVE

When a new round begins every combatant must decide if they wish to take a Fast or Slow turn this round. In a Fast turn you can take an action *and* a maneuver (or two maneuvers), while in a Slow turn you can only take an action *or* a maneuver. Then everyone must take their turn in the following order: Fast turns from the initiating side go first, followed by Fast turns from the defending side, then Slow turns from the initiating side, and finally Slow turns from the defending side. If multiple combatants go at the same time they can choose the order in which they act among themselves.

ATTACKING & DEFENDING

ATTACK ROLL

Melee attacks always use your Brawl skill, and have a base difficulty of 2. Ranged attacks on the other hand use your Firearms skill, and the base difficulty depends on how far away the target is: 1 for short range, 2 for medium range, 3 for long range, and 4 for extreme range. The difficulty is also increased by one for every range band beyond the weapon's effective range. For example, if you try to shoot a pistol (with an effective range of medium) at long range the difficulty would be 4 (3 from long range + 1 for being one range band beyond the effective range).

Todo: *Explain range bands in more detail*

SITUATIONAL BONUSES & PENALTIES

Todo: *Explain stuff*

When melee attacking an outnumbered target you get a +1 bonus for every ally that is also engaged with them.

- +1 difficulty when firing at moving target, small target, partial cover, ...
- -1 difficulty when firing at a large target, ...

You also get a +2 bonus to your skill if you spend a round aiming and preparing the shot.

DODGING

When being attacked you have the option to dodge by trying to duck behind cover or jumping out of range of the attacker. You can only dodge when you're aware you're being attacked.

Dodging increased the difficulty of the attacker's roll by half your Agility (rounding up). However, if you dodge you will be prone until they get up again (which takes a Manuever).

DAMAGE

The damage dealt by a successful hit is equal to the base damage of your weapon, plus the number of successes rolled (*before* cancellation). Instead of having a fixed base damage like firearms, melee weapons will often deal extra damage based on your Toughness. This is denoted by a "+" after the damage number. The additional damage is equal to *half* your toughness, rounded up. So for someone with a Toughness of 3, a weapon dealing "2+" damage will have a total base damage of 4.

Unarmed attacks always have a base damage of "0+", so their base damage is entirely determined by your Toughness.

CRITICAL HITS

Critical hits double the amount of damage you deal from your successes (but not the weapon base damage). They can only be triggered by spending a Story point after successfully landing the hit.

RESOLVING ADVANTAGES & DRAWBACKS

(See Genesys p.104 for ideas)

Advantage: - 1: - +1 on next allied skill check - notice something useful - -1 to target enemy next skill check - 2: - extra maneuver - bypass cover/armor/... - 3: - ?

Drawback: - 1: - Suffer 1 stress - 2: - opponent gets free maneuver - +1 to all opponents when targeting this player until next turn - 3: - ?

WEAPONS

MELEE WEAPONS

| Weapon | Damage | Effects |
|-----------------|--------|---------|
| Unarmed | 0+ | ... |
| Brass Knuckles | 2+ | ... |
| Knife | 2+ | ... |
| Club | 3+ | ... |
| Machete / Sword | 4+ | ... |
| Hatchet | 4+ | ... |

FIREARMS

| Weapon | Damage | Range | Effects |
|----------------|--------|--------|---|
| Small pistol | 4 | Short | Easier to conceal |
| Pistol | 5 | Medium | ... |
| Heavy pistol | 6 | Medium | ... |
| Shotgun | 10 | Medium | Full damage at Short range, $\frac{1}{2}$ at Medium range, and $\frac{1}{4}$ beyond that. |
| Submachine Gun | 6 | Medium | Full Auto? |
| Rifle | 7 | Long | ... |

OPEN QUESTIONS & FEEDBACK

- What a bout a RQ-esque Passions mechanic?
- There isn't enough damage...
 - Maybe remove Toughness as armor?
 - * Or use $\lfloor \frac{Toughness}{2} \rfloor$ instead?
 - * This would mess with the Piercing trait too
 - Or use $5 + Toughness$ for wound limit? (could do this for stress too tbh)
 - Re-think crits / chances for extra high damage
 - * It doesn't really make sense to have crits based on advantages, that sorta goes against the "two axes of success". It'd also mean that crit hits generally have lower damage, cause advantages and successes are inversely-correlated.
 - * Maybe crits when your MoS > some number? Maybe as a weapon trait?
 - * Or... Story points for crits? This has potential! :p
- All Stress saves should be Willpower
 - This does mean we need more things to do with Intellect.
 - * Magic / reading tomes is one option
 - * Idea rolls; maybe make them more mechanically relevant
 - * Honestly, just starting skills, idea rolls, and magic is *probably* enough...
- need more Story point uses (especially for the Keeper) and a reason to avoid hoarding them
- maybe also remove Knowledge in favour of Intellect
- Maybe let people roll for sanity with Mythos Knowledge instead of Willpower when it's appropriate
- Idea: what about just getting rid of Backgrounds entirely? instead players could just pick 4(?) professional skills + spend xp on anything. Simple. Quick. Free!
- HYPERLINK ALL THE THINGS!
- Rename Science to Knowledge? it's more general and just better I think

- How to handle shotguns? No clue :p
- Maybe get rid of item traits as a system:
 - work rapid-fire into the weapon ammo stat or something (like coc)
 - still have effects for weapons, but don't strictly codify them
- Look at Darkest Dungeon for Stress ideas
- Also have a look at savage worlds with their "edges and hindrances"
- Combat Idea:
 - Combine Dodge and Disengage into one "action"
 - Instead of always falling prone, just do it on disadvantage?
 - This leaves Defend and fight back as the two main combat options
 - Or maybe totally get rid of the defend/fight back distinction, but just have regular "passive" defense, with the fight back effect as a result of rolling advantages on your defense check
 - Look at the DG combat system too!
 - Idea: only options are Dodge and passive defense (opposed Brawl). Passive defense doesn't do anything special, except you deal your base damage against your opponent if you get an advantage on the opposed roll. Dodging (or disengaging) uses Agility, and means you're scrambling for cover or distance. It's still an opposed roll against your opponent's Brawl, but if you lose you will fall prone.
- Rename Perception to Alertness? (DG style)
- Insanity: Fight, Flight, or Freeze
- Bond idea: Bonds are 1-5, you can use them to lower Stress damage. To do so you roll the Bond and Stress is reduced by the number of successes, afterwards you lower that bond's score by one. (or maybe no rolling, maybe just reduce stress damage by the bond rank (or rank + roll))
- Fainting: what about an option to faint whenever you gain stress to negate said stress entirely. I think some version of this is part of trail of cthulhu
- have a good look at the Genesys combat system, especially for maneuvers / actions and such. The way they do it would tie in very nicely with the SotDL initiative system. The one thing I'd add is the option to Dodge when attacked (as long as you still have a maneuver or action available this round)
- Move Dodge to it's own section instead of having it split between melee and ranged sections.

- double check CoC combat maneuvers to see if I wanna add something like that
- IMPORTANT: I think very-low skill with high difficulty are a bit too punishing. A good way to fix that would be to remove the successes on 4s (so just 1 success on 5, two on 6). Though this'd definitely need some re-tweaking here and there cause the number of successes will be lower on average (Actually, it seems like the difference in damage rolls turns out to not be *that* big...)

PLAYTESTERS

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- Gabriel Reich
- Wayne (@Wayne Rossi#2400)
- ... and others!

RULES SUMMARY