

# **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	1 Success	1 Failure
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 instead also 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**

Craft (Any two), History or Knowledge (Biology), Language (Any)

**AUTHOR**

History, Knowledge (Literature), Knowledge (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), Knowledge (Biology), Medicine, Knowledge (Pharmacy)

**OCCULTIST**

Knowledge (Anthropology), Craft (Photography), Occult, Language (Any)

**PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR**

Craft (Photography), Disguise, Locksmithing, Law

**PSYCHOLOGIST**

Psychoanalysis, Language (Any) or Accounting, Knowledge (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  $4 \times \textit{Intellect}$  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. Though this is only possible if you have a source to learn from, this could be a teacher (including other players), a book, or any other source of knowledge. To increase the skill beyond the first rank you have to spend additional experience, just as you would to increase any other skill.

## BACKSTORY

**Todo:** *Some fluff intro*

First, choose a character motivation, the thing that drives your character forward. This purely serves to deepen the personality of your character, and can be just about anything. For example: *"I want to further my knowledge of X", "I need to avenge X", "Faith", ...*

Next, choose a Flaw or Vice. Similarly this can be whatever you want. For example: "*Terrible gambler*", "*Addict*", ...

**Todo:** *Get better examples :p*

## **BONDS**

Bonds are people, or groups of people your character draws strength from. These can weaken or get stronger over time, but they are essential in keeping your character grounded and sane. You start with two bonds, and you can have 3 bonds at most. They always start with a value of 3, but can change over time, either by nurturing them or by drawing strength from them in tough times and possibly straining them.

See page 11 for more detail of how to use Bonds in play.

# 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
Alertness	Charm	Brawl
Driving	Deception	Firearms
First Aid	Insight	
Investigation	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 "Knowledge" 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. "*Knowledge (Biology)*"

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Accounting	History	Occult
Animal Handling	Knowledge ( <i>Specific</i> )	Psychoanalysis
Craft ( <i>Specific</i> )	Language ( <i>Specific</i> )	Sleight of Hand
Disguise	Law	
Electronics	Locksmithing	
Heavy Machinery	Medicine	

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While this list is trying to include the most common professional skills an investigator might have, it is by no means meant to be complete. If you think your character should have a skill that is not listed here you can absolutely use that as long as you discuss this with your Narrator beforehand.

## 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. When spending story points to gain additional successes on a roll you can spend as many as you want on the same roll. *However* you can not buy extra successes on a roll you've already re-rolled using a story point.

### PLAYER USES:

- One extra success after rolling
- 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:

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

**Todo:** *Move this to a separate "Coping Mechanisms" subsection*

Whenever you gain Stress you also have to option to "project" it onto one of your bonds. This lets you temporarily draw strength from but you also damage the Bond in the process. If you choose to do so the incoming stress is halved (rounding down), and then the rank of the Bond is also reduced by one. If the rank of your Bond reaches 0 you lose it entirely.

## **REACHING YOUR LIMIT**

If your Stress goes above your limit you must make a check using one of your Bonds 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.

You must do the same if your Stress goes above *twice* your limit. If you fail this check you go temporarily insane or fall unconscious.

**Idea:** Fight, Flight, or Freeze?

## **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)

# 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, taking a defensive stance, ...

**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 Slow turn you can take an action *and* a maneuver (or two maneuvers), while in a Fast 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. They can even interweave their actions and/or maneuvers if they want to.

## **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 (by either a ranged or melee attack) you have the option to dodge by desperately trying to duck behind cover or jumping out of range of the attacker. You can only dodge when you're aware of the incoming attack.

Dodging increases 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 Maneuver).

### **DEFENSIVE STANCE**

During your turn you can also spend your maneuver to adopt a defensive stance. This means that until the start of your next turn you are harder to hit by melee attacks, increasing the difficulty of any attacker's roll by half your Brawl skill (rounding *up*).

### **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, ½ at Medium range, and ¼ beyond that.
Submachine Gun	5	Medium	Full Auto*
Rifle	7	Long	...

\* When using this weapon you can choose to fire in full automatic mode.

## FULL AUTOMATIC FIRE

You must choose to use full automatic mode before making your attack, and if you do so your attack suffers one additional penalty dice. If the attack succeeds you land a number of hits equal to your number of successes (after cancelling them out). However, each hit *only* deals damage equal to the weapons base damage (so no extra damage from the number of successes). You *can not* spend story points to turn an automatic fire shot into a critical hit.

# OPEN QUESTIONS & FEEDBACK

## COMBAT

- 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? (*also could* do this for stress too tbh)
- double check CoC combat maneuvers to see if I wanna add something like that
- maybe allow 1 extra maneuver / round for a certain stress cost (like Genesys)

## SANITY & MOTIVATIONS

- Look at Darkest Dungeon for Stress ideas
- Maybe let people roll for sanity with Mythos Knowledge instead of Willpower when it's appropriate
- Insanity: Fight, Flight, or Freeze (or Faint?)
- Idea: when you hit 2x limit you FFFF, (or *just* faint?) then once a minute(?) you make an unopposed willpower check and recover that much Stress. (or just one stress / minute instead to make it a little more even?) Repeat until you go below 2xlimit again
- Also have a look at savage worlds with their "edges and hindrances"
- 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
- I *NEED* a bonds / relationships system!
  - Maybe something like: 2 "normal: ones, and one with another party member

- instead of stress reductions I *could* instead also use bonds instead of Willpower occasionally. Though that *always* makes the player have to think what stat they wanna use for a stress check, so probably not the best design
- New Idea:
  - \* Start with 2 bonds (max 3, so there's room to add one during play)
  - \* Don't use Willpower for Shaken / Insanity saves, but use bonds instead. (but still use Willpower for Stress checks and such)
  - \* *In addition* you can "risk" your bonds to lower any instance of stress gain
    - Some options: reduce it by a fixed amount, by the level of the bond, by number of unopposed successes rolled,
    - *or my favourite*: roll your Bond with a difficulty equal to the stress gain. Regardless of success or failure you reduce the stress gain by the level of the bond, and if you fail your bond lowers by one.
  - \* just need a nice way to (re)increase existing bonds and/or gain new bonds for the sake of longer-term games
- rename Sanity checks to Stress checks and be consistent
- Also, what do advantages / drawbacks on shaken saves mean?
- Ideas from tooboots:
  - Okay, how bout up to your limit disadvantages cause instantaneous effects (eg scream, drop something, or have a momentary hallucination); from your limit to twice your limit disadvantages cause ongoing effects (eg too scared to speak, too scared to run, persistent hallucinations, migraine); and after twice you automatically get a severe permanent trauma
  - Oh!! What if the player can choose to take permanent traumas to regain san! after a certain amount of time passes That lets the players recover, and it treats mental illness as a way of coping. It's very thematically appropriate, and it's more nuanced than the way CoC treats mental illness as a punishment Plus it puts the choice in the players' hands, which is more dramatic

## **GENERAL**

- be explicit about Idea / Knowledge rolls (Intellect)
- need more Story point uses (especially for the Keeper) and a reason to avoid hoarding them

- 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!
- now that I changed penalties to be +1 diff. instead of -1 skill I might be able to bring back having a penalty when Shaken or Severely Injured. Though I'd still have to be careful with it also messing with their respective saves and such, but it's an option.
- I need to be way clearer and more consistent about bonus/penalty dice terminology. i.e. don't say "+1", but "one bonus dice"
- Rename "Accounting" to "Bureaucracy"?
- Maybe remove the "+1 success" from the story point options and instead give it a stress cost, like BitD does (p. 13)

## PLAYTESTERS

Thank you to everyone who's helped me with playtesting and providing valuable feedback!

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

# **RULES SUMMARY**