

Orcus Rulebook

A retroclone of 4th Edition

Version 0.2 (Alpha)

Dedicated to the hobbyists, designers, developers and publishers that have released their work under the Open Game License.

Orcus is a work in progress. All feedback is welcome.

The Core Mechanic

Whenever you attempt an action that has some chance of failure, you roll a twenty-sided die (d20). To determine if your character succeeds at a task you do this:

- Roll a d20.
- Add any relevant modifiers.
- Compare the result to a target number.

If the result equals or exceeds the target number, your character succeeds. If the result is lower than the target number, you fail.

Dice

Dice rolls are described with expressions such as “3d4+3,” which means “roll three four-sided dice and add 3” (resulting in a number between 6 and 15). The first number tells you how many dice to roll (adding the results together). The number immediately after the “d” tells you the type of die to use. Any number after that indicates a quantity that is added or subtracted from the result.

d%

Percentile dice work a little differently. You generate a number between 1 and 100 by rolling two different ten-sided dice. One (designated before you roll) is the tens digit. The other is the ones digit. Two 0s represent 100.

Modifiers

A modifier is any bonus or penalty applying to a die roll. A positive modifier is a bonus, and a negative modifier is a penalty.

Stacking

In most cases, modifiers to a given check or roll stack (combine for a cumulative effect) if they come from different sources and have different types (or no type at all), but do **not** stack if they have the same type. If the modifiers to a particular roll do not stack, only the best bonus and worst penalty applies.

Modifier Types

Note there are also "untyped" modifiers, which do not have a type specified. They stack.

Ability Modifier

The bonus or penalty associated with a particular ability score. Ability modifiers apply to die rolls for character actions involving the corresponding abilities.

Armor Bonus

An armor bonus applies to Armor Class and is granted by armor.

Enhancement Bonus

An enhancement bonus represents the benefit from using an item, often a magic item.

Feat Modifier

A feat modifier comes from one of your feats.

Power Modifier

A power modifier comes from your or another's use of a power.

Racial Bonus

A bonus granted because of the culture a particular creature was brought up in or because of innate characteristics of that type of creature.

Shield Bonus

A shield bonus improves Armor Class and is granted by a shield or by a power or effect that mimics a shield.

Rounding Fractions

In general, if you wind up with a fraction, round down, even if the fraction is one-half or larger.

Exception: Certain rolls, such as damage, have a minimum of 1.

Abilities

Six abilities provide a quick description of every creature's physical and mental characteristics:

- **Strength**, measuring physical power
- **Constitution**, measuring endurance, hardiness and health
- **Dexterity**, measuring agility, quickness and fine motor skills
- **Intelligence**, measuring reasoning and memory
- **Wisdom**, measuring perception and insight
- **Charisma**, measuring force of personality

Is a character muscle-bound and insightful? Brilliant and charming? Nimble and hardy? Ability scores define these qualities - a creature's assets as well as weaknesses.

The three main rolls of the game - the ability check, the saving throw, and the attack roll - rely on the six ability scores. The book's introduction describes the basic rule behind these rolls: roll a d20, add an ability modifier derived from one of the six ability scores, and compare the total to a target number.

Ability Scores and Modifiers

Each of a creature's abilities has a score, a number that defines the magnitude of that ability. An ability score is not just a measure of innate capabilities, but also encompasses a creature's training and competence in activities related to that ability.

A score of 10 or 11 is the normal human average, but adventurers and many monsters are a cut above average in most abilities. A score of 18 is the highest that a person usually reaches.

Each ability also has a modifier, derived from the score and ranging from -5 (for an ability score of 1) to +10 (for a score of 30). The Ability Scores and Modifiers table notes the ability modifiers for the range of possible ability scores, from 1 to 30.

Table - Ability Scores and Modifiers

Score	Modifier
1	-5
2-3	-4
4-5	-3
6-7	-2
8-9	-1
10-11	+0
12-13	+1
14-15	+2
16-17	+3
18-19	+4
20-21	+5
22-23	+6
24-25	+7
26-27	+8
28-29	+9
30	+10

To determine an ability modifier without consulting the table, subtract 10 from the ability score and then divide the total by 2 (round down).

Because ability modifiers affect almost every attack roll, skill check, ability check, and defense, ability modifiers come up in play more often than their associated scores.

Using Each Ability

Many tasks that a character or monster might attempt in the game are covered by one of the six abilities. This section explains in more detail what those abilities mean and the ways they are used in the game.

Strength

Strength measures bodily power, athletic training, and the extent to which you can exert raw physical force.

Strength Checks

The GM might call for a Strength check when you try to accomplish tasks like the following:

- Force open a stuck, locked, or barred door
- Push through a tunnel that is too small
- Hang on to a wagon while being dragged behind it
- Tip over a statue
- Keep a boulder from rolling

Skill Checks

Athletics skill checks add your Strength modifier.

Attack Rolls and Damage

You add your Strength modifier to your attack roll and your damage roll when making a basic attack with a melee weapon such as a mace, a battleaxe, or a javelin. You use melee weapons to make melee attacks in hand-to-hand combat, and some of them can be thrown to make a ranged attack.

Certain powers use a Strength attack roll and/or add Strength modifier to damage.

Fortitude Defense

Add the higher of your Strength modifier and your Constitution modifier to your Fortitude defense.

Lifting and Carrying

Your Strength score determines the amount of weight you can bear. The following terms define what you can lift or carry.

Carrying Capacity: Your carrying capacity is your Strength score multiplied by 10. This is the weight (in pounds) that you can carry, which is high enough that most characters don't usually have to worry about it.

Lift: You can push, drag, or lift a weight in pounds up to twice your carrying capacity. While lifting weight in excess of your carrying capacity, you get the slowed condition.

Push or Drag: You can push a weight in pounds up to five times your carrying capacity. While pushing or dragging weight in excess of your carrying capacity, you get the slowed condition.

Constitution

Constitution measures health, stamina, and vital force.

Constitution Checks

The GM might call for a Constitution check when you try to accomplish tasks like the following:

- Hold your breath
- Quaff an entire stein of ale in one go

Skill Checks

Endure skill checks add your Constitution modifier.

Attack Rolls and Damage

Certain powers use a Constitution attack roll and/or add Constitution modifier to damage.

Fortitude Defense

Add the higher of your Strength modifier and your Constitution modifier to your Fortitude defense.

Hit Points and Recoveries

Your Constitution contributes to your hit points. You add your Constitution score to your hit point total.

If your Constitution score changes, your hit point maximum changes as well, as though you had the new score from 1st level.

You add your Constitution modifier to the number of recoveries that you have.

Dexterity

Dexterity measures agility, reflexes, and balance.

Dexterity Checks

The GM might call for a Dexterity check when you try to accomplish tasks like the following:

- Control a heavily laden cart on a steep descent
- Steer a chariot around a tight turn
- Securely tie up a prisoner
- Play a stringed instrument
- Craft a small or detailed object

Initiative

An initiative check is a special Dexterity check that you make at the beginning of every combat. Initiative determines the order of creatures' turns in combat.

Skill Checks

Acrobatics, Stealth and Sleight of Hand skill checks add your Dexterity modifier.

Attack Rolls and Damage

You add your Dexterity modifier to your attack roll and your damage roll when making a basic attack with a ranged weapon, such as a sling or a longbow, or with a light throwing weapon.

Certain powers use a Dexterity attack roll and/or add Dexterity modifier to damage.

Armor Class and Reflex Defense

If you wear light or no armor, add the higher of your Dexterity modifier and your Intelligence modifier to your Armor Class and your Reflex defense.

Intelligence

Intelligence measures mental acuity, accuracy of recall, and the ability to reason.

Intelligence Checks

The GM might call for an Intelligence check when you try to accomplish tasks like the following:

- Communicate with a creature without using words
- Estimate the value of a precious item
- Pull together a disguise to pass as a city guard
- Forge a document
- Recall lore about a craft or trade
- Win a game of skill

Skill Checks

Arcana, History and Religion skill checks add your Intelligence modifier.

Attack Rolls and Damage

Certain powers use an Intelligence attack roll and/or add Intelligence modifier to damage.

Armor Class and Reflex Defense

If you wear light or no armor, add the higher of your Dexterity modifier and your Intelligence modifier to your Armor Class and your Reflex defense.

Wisdom

Wisdom reflects how attuned you are to the world around you and represents perceptiveness and intuition.

Wisdom Checks

The GM might call for a Wisdom check when you try to accomplish tasks like the following:

- Get a gut feeling about what course of action to follow
- Discern whether a seemingly dead or living creature is undead

Skill Checks

Dungeoneering, Heal, Insight and Perception skill checks add your Wisdom modifier.

Attack Rolls and Damage

Certain powers use a Wisdom attack roll and/or add Wisdom modifier to damage.

Will Defense

Add the higher of your Wisdom modifier and your Charisma modifier to your Reflex defense.

Charisma

Charisma measures your ability to interact effectively with others. It includes such factors as confidence and eloquence, and it can represent a charming or commanding personality.

Charisma Checks

The GM might call for a Charisma check when you try to accomplish tasks like the following:

- Find the best person to talk to for news, rumors, and gossip
- Blend into a crowd to get the sense of key topics of conversation

Skill Checks

Deception, Persuasion, Intimidate and Streetwise skill checks add your Charisma modifier.

Attack Rolls and Damage

Certain powers use a Charisma attack roll and/or add Charisma modifier to damage.

Will Defense

Add the higher of your Wisdom modifier and your Charisma modifier to your Reflex defense.

Generating Abilities

Your character can be assigned ability scores in various ways. Here are two ways.

These methods are done *before* racial bonuses are applied.

Point Buy

You get 32 points to buy your abilities using the chart below.

You cannot have more than one ability score below 10.

Table - Ability Score Costs

Ability	Cost
18	18
17	14
16	11
15	9
14	7
13	5
12	4
11	3
10	2
9	1
8	0

Roll 'em

Roll 4d6 for each of the six ability scores (Strength, Constitution, Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma). Drop the low die in each roll. Put the scores into any order to best fit the character you want to play.

Personalization

Alignment

A typical creature in the game world has an alignment, which broadly describes its moral and personal attitudes.

These brief summaries of the five alignments describe the typical behavior of a creature with that alignment. Individuals might vary significantly from that typical behavior, and few people are perfectly and consistently faithful to the precepts of their alignment.

Lawful good creatures can be counted on to do the right thing as expected by society. They follow a strict moral code.

Good folk do the best they can to help others according to their needs.

Unaligned is the alignment of those who prefer to steer clear of moral questions and don't take sides, doing what seems best at the time. Lizardfolk, most druids, and many humans are unaligned.

Evil is the alignment of those who do whatever they can get away with, without compassion or qualms. Many drow, some cloud giants, and goblins are evil.

Chaotic evil creatures act with arbitrary violence, spurred by their greed, hatred, or bloodlust.

Languages

Your race indicates the languages your character can speak by default. Note these languages on your character sheet.

Choose your languages from the Standard Languages table. If you learn a language at a level later than 1, you can also select from the Exotic Languages table or a secret language, such as thieves' cant or the tongue of druids.

Table - Standard Languages

Language	Typical Speakers	Script
Common	Humans	Common
Dwarvish	Dwarves	Dwarvish
Elvish	Elves	Elvish
Goblin	Goblinoids	Common
Deep Speech	Aboleths, cloakers, underworld traders	Elvish
Draconic	Dragons, dragonborn	Draconic
Giant	Orcs, giants	Dwarvish
Primordial	Elementals	Abyssal

Table - Exotic Languages

Language	Typical Speakers	Script
Abyssal	Demons	Abyssal
Celestial	Celestials, devils	Celestial

Levels, Tiers and Bonuses

A character's level, from 1 to 30, describes roughly how powerful they are. Player characters have levels, but so do monsters, traps, items, rituals, diseases, poisons, powers and incantations. Everything with a level also belongs to a tier, which is a rough way of identifying the genre of play.

The table below shows how many experience points (XP) are required to reach a particular level, and what benefits (ability score increases, feats and features) you get upon doing so.

Table - Levels and Their Benefits

Level	XP to Reach Next Level	Cumulative XP	Ability Scores	Feats	Features
1	1,000	-		1	Class features, racial traits
2	1,250	1,000		+1	
3	1,500	2,250			
4	1,750	3,750	Increase two by +1	+1	
5	2,000	5,500			
6	2,500	7,500		+1	
7	3,000	10,000			
8	3,500	13,000	Increase two by +1	+1	
9	4,000	16,500			
10	5,000	20,500		+1	
11	6,000	25,500	Increase all by +1		Select a prestige class
12	7,000	31,500		+1	
13	8,000	38,500			
14	10,000	46,500	Increase two by +1	+1	
15	12,000	56,500			
16	14,000	68,500		+1	
17	16,000	82,500			
18	20,000	98,500	Increase two by +1	+1	
19	24,000	118,500			
20	28,000	142,500		+1	
21	32,000	170,500	Increase all by +1		Select an epic class
22	40,000	202,500		+1	
23	48,000	242,500			
24	56,000	290,500	Increase two by +1	+1	
25	64,000	346,500			

Level	XP to Reach Next Level	Cumulative XP	Ability Scores	Feats	Features
26	80,000	410,500		+1	
27	96,000	490,500			
28	112,000	586,500	Increase two by +1	+1	
29	128,000	698,500			
30	N/A	826,500		+1	

Level Bonus

Characters have a level bonus equal to half their level, rounded down, which applies to:

- defenses
- attack rolls
- initiative
- ability checks
- skill checks

Retraining

If you are unsatisfied with a feat, skill or power you chose, you may trade one old option for a new one each time you gain a level. One retraining per level, only.

You cannot retrain a feat, skill or power that serves as a requirement for any other character option you have.

While some details are given below, the key is that retraining is meant to allow the player character to make a different decision, but not a better one. You cannot choose a level 1 *sleep* power at level 1, and then retrain it into a level 30 *power word: kill* power at level 30.

The one exception to this rule is feats; because you can meet the requirements for more powerful feats over time, it is acceptable to trade out a weaker feat for a more powerful one once you meet the requirements of the more powerful one.

Feat: The new feat can be any that you meet the requirements of. If you gained the original feat in a special way (e.g. through a class feature), the new selection must have been available to you at the time.

Power: The new power can be any that you meet the requirements of, that is of the same type, level and class as the power you are replacing.

Skill: The new trained skill must have been available to you at the time you selected the old skill.

Tiers

Adventures that take place with Adventurer tier monsters, traps and player characters (i.e. those between levels 1 and 10) will likely be focused on more local issues, like rescuing a village or defeating a clan of orcs. Prestige tier adventures might involve more dramatic concerns, like the fate of kingdoms. You might end up fighting a dragon or rooting out an extraplanar plot to control an entire city. In Epic tier, you may fight the devils that run Hell or save the entire world from devastation.

The levels correspond to the tiers as follows:

Level 1-10: Adventurer tier

Level 11:-20 Prestige tier

Level 21-30: Epic tier

Tiers do not have a mechanical effect in and of themselves, but they represent a new stage in the player characters' journeys. An epic character is much more capable than an adventurer character.

Powers

A power is something that your character can do, typically quickly (fast enough to be useful in battle) and with clear rules and effects.

Since this is a role-playing game, you are not limited by your powers. Anything your character could do, they can attempt to do - even if there are no rules for it. And even if you have a power that says you can do something, the GM may rule that you cannot because it does not fit the fiction.

Overall, however, powers work the way the rules say they should work almost all of the time.

Power Category and Frequency

There are two categories of power:

- Attack
- Utility

An attack power is directed against one or more targets, typically enemies (although you can catch allies in friendly fire in some cases). It usually involves an attack roll which, if it hits, has some kind of negative effect on the target. Some powers also have effects when they miss, or regardless of whether they hit or miss.

A utility power may affect you, an ally, the environment, etc., but typically not an enemy. They can still serve a function in combat, however.

There are three frequencies of power:

- **At-will:** You can use this power as many times as you like.
- **Encounter:** After using this power, you have to take a short rest before using it again.
- **Daily:** After using this power, you have to take a long rest before using it again.

Power Sources

- **Arcane:** Arcane characters draw their power from their study of magic, pacts with or control over magical beings, or their innate magical talent.
- **Divine:** Divine characters draw their power from the gods, saints, or devotion to other higher powers.
- **Natural:** Natural characters draw their power from their connection to the natural, primordial world.
- **Martial:** Martial characters draw their power from skill at arms, force of will and warcraft.

Power Description

When a character uses a power, the same basic rules are followed, regardless of the character's class or the power's effects.

Each power description begins with a block of information, including the power's name, category, source, level, tags, frequency, action required, attack range and targets, and duration.

The rest of a power entry describes the power's effects.

Action Required

Most powers require a standard action to use, but some powers require a move action, swift action, immediate action, or other. Some only require a free action.

Some powers have a "Trigger" listed. You can only use the power if the trigger is satisfied.

Tags

A power's tags tell you various information about it, which can be relevant for other parts of the game. For example, if you get a +2 bonus on attack rolls with fire powers, that refers to powers with the Fire tag.

A power with the Weapon tag uses the weapon you are currently wielding to determine some of its effects (typically, at least damage, and often range as well). If the weapon you use the attack power with is one you're proficient in, add its proficiency bonus to the attack roll. You need a weapon (or an unarmed strike) to use a Weapon power.

A power with the Focus tag may use the focus you are currently wielding to determine some of its effects.

Targeting

There are four elements to targeting: origin of effect, area of effect, range and targets.

Origin of effect

The five origins of effect for powers are:

- **Melee:** The power originates with the user, and targets one or more creatures the user can reach with a melee weapon.
- **Ranged:** The power originates with the user, and either targets one or more creatures the user can reach with a ranged weapon, or targets one or more creatures in a range specified by the power.
- **Near area:** The power originates in the user's space and targets squares from there, or creatures in those squares.
- **Far area:** The power originates in a distant square and targets squares from there, or creatures in those squares.
- **Self:** The power originates with you and affects only you. You are always within range of yourself.

You can see here that the first four origins can be sorted two different ways: whether the power affects those near the user (Melee, Near) or far from them (Ranged, Far); or whether the power targets creatures directly (Melee, Ranged) or targets an area of effect (Near, Far).

Ranged and Far powers provoke opportunity attacks. Melee, Close and Self powers do not.

Areas of effect

Areas of effect only apply to Near and Far powers.

Each Near or Far power describes its area of effect, usually by giving its size and one of the following area types:

- **Burst:** A burst has an area of effect reaching a number of squares in each direction from the area's base square equal to its size. For example, a "burst 2" will affect the base square and each square within two squares of the base square.
- **Arc:** An arc creates a quadratic area of effect where the length of each side is a number of squares equal to the size of the arc. For example, an "arc 2" will create an area two squares on each side (four squares total). The area of effect is adjacent to the area's base square.
- **Wall:** A wall creates an area of effect filling a number of squares equal to the area's size, starting with a square adjacent to the area's base square. Each square in the area must share an edge with at least one other square in the area and may not share more than two edges with other squares at the same height. However, wall squares may be stacked on top of each other.

Other areas are possible as specified by individual powers.

When an area of effect attack affects multiple targets you make a separate attack roll for each of them, but you only roll damage once for all targets. Damage that depends on the attack roll, such as critical hit bonus damage, is rolled separately for each target.

If a creature that is Large or larger is affected by an area of effect power it is only affected once, even if more than one of its squares are within the area of effect.

When you make an area attack with a ranged weapon you need one projectile or thrown weapon for each target.

Range

For Weapon powers, this is simple: the reach of the melee weapon (usually 1, i.e. adjacent squares only) or the range of the ranged weapon.

For other ranged powers, the range is specified in squares.

Melee "touch" means the power has range equal to the user's reach. Medium and Small creatures typically have a reach of 1, and the rules will specify if the creature has a longer reach. This is separate to the user's weapon's reach.

Near powers have no range; they originate with the user and have a set area of effect.

Far powers have a range specified; the origin square of the area of effect has to be within that range.

To calculate range, count how many squares are between the user and the target. Remember that diagonal squares are adjacent to one another when you count range.

Targets

Melee and Ranged powers will specify whether they have one or more targets.

Area of effect powers may target every character in the area of effect, or the nearest ally in the area of effect, or only enemies in the area of effect but not allies, or one or more targets of the user's choice in the area of effect.

Allies and Enemies

You choose who your allies are when you use a power. Your enemies are any creatures you do not choose as your allies. A creature can choose to not count as your ally for the purposes of a power.

A Clear Path to the Target

To target something with a Ranged or Far power, you must have a clear path to it, so it can't be behind total cover.

If you place an area of effect at a point that you can't see and an obstruction, such as a wall, is between you and that point, the point of origin comes into being on the near side of that obstruction.

Line of Sight

Some effects require your target to be within line of sight. To determine if a target is within line of sight, draw a line from any corner of a square in your space to any part of the target's space. If you can draw such a line without passing through something that blocks your vision, you can see the target.

Line of Effect

A line of effect is similar to a line of sight, except it is only blocked by solid obstacles. Note that an obstacle can be solid but transparent, meaning it blocks line of effect but not line of sight.

Targeting Yourself

If a power targets a creature of your choice or ally of your choice, you can choose yourself, unless the creature must be hostile or specifically a creature other than you. If you are in the area of effect of a power you use, you can target yourself.

If a power simply targets "allies in range", it does not include you.

Nearest

To determine the nearest target, determine the range to each possible target and then pick the one at the shortest range. If the range to two or more targets is equal you can choose which is the nearest.

Power Attack Rolls

Some powers require the user to make an attack roll to determine whether the power effect hits the intended target (one attack roll per target, in the case of a power that targets multiple creatures).

Your attack bonus with an attack power equals the ability modifier specified in the power + half your level + any other relevant modifiers.

All attacks target one of the four defenses: Armor Class, Fortitude, Reflex or Will.

Power Effects

A power can have three kinds of effects:

- **Hit:** If the attack roll meets or exceeds the target's defense.

- **Miss:** If the attack roll does not meet the target's defense.
- **Effect:** This applies regardless of the attack roll result, or if there is no attack roll.

A creature always knows the effect of a power that has affected it.

"dW"

The term "dW" refers to weapon dice. Every weapon has a given damage die. Roll that die as many times as specified, and add up the results. For example, if you use a power with a longsword (weapon die: 1d10), and the Hit effect is "3dW damage" that means you do 3d10 damage. If it is "3dW + Strength modifier damage" and your Strength modifier is +2, you roll three d10s, add them up and then add 2.

Duration

The following are common effects:

- Until the end of the target's next turn
- Until the end of the user's next turn
- Until the start of the target's next turn
- Until the start of the user's next turn
- Save ends

Save ends means you make a saving throw at the end of your turn for every effect that is affecting you. If you roll 10 or higher, you are no longer affected by that effect.

Persistent damage

If a power's effect includes persistent damage, the target does not take that damage right away. Instead, they take it at the start of their next turn. Usually the duration of persistent damage is "save ends".

Maintain

Some powers require you to maintain concentration in order to keep functioning. If you lose concentration, such a power ends.

If a power must be maintained with concentration, that fact appears in a Maintain entry, and the power specifies what action is required from you each turn to maintain it. You can end concentration at any time (no action required).

You can maintain any number of powers, provided you have the actions to do so.

Conjuration

A conjuration is an object or monster that is created by a power. It normally cannot be attacked. Allies of its creator can pass through its space but enemies cannot. If it makes attacks or is attacked, it uses the power user's attack modifiers and defense scores. A conjuration cannot be affected by conditions or persistent damage.

A conjuration disappears if its creator is killed.

Summon

A summon is a monster that is created by a power or other effect. It is an ally of its summoner, and of its summoner's allies. It uses your defenses. If the summon is reduced to 0 HP, it is destroyed. The summoner loses a recovery, if able to do so, or HP equal to half their Staggered value, if not able to lose a recovery.

Unless otherwise mentioned, calculate the summon's stats as follows:

- **Defenses, Skill Modifiers, Attack Roll Modifiers:** Equal to the summoner's, unless otherwise mentioned. Don't include temporary bonuses and penalties the summoner may happen to have at the moment.
- **Hit Points:** Equal to the summoner's Staggered value

A summoner can dismiss their summon with a swift action. Otherwise it disappears after five minutes.

Zones

A zone is an area of effect that remains for a while, created by a power with the Zone tag. It may be a set duration, or until the creature that created it stops Maintaining it. A zone cannot be attacked, it just is. Squares in a zone do not count as occupied just because there is a zone there.

A zone disappears if its creator is killed.

Combat

A typical combat encounter is a clash between two sides, a flurry of weapon swings, feints, parries, footwork, and spellcasting. The game organizes the chaos of combat into a cycle of rounds and turns. A **round** represents about 6 seconds in the game world. During a round, each participant in a battle takes a **turn**. The order of turns is determined at the beginning of a combat encounter, when everyone rolls initiative. Once everyone has taken a turn, the fight continues to the next round if neither side has defeated the other.

Combat Step by Step

1. **Determine surprise.** The GM determines whether anyone involved in the combat encounter is surprised.
2. **Establish positions.** The GM decides where all the characters and monsters are located. Given the adventurers' marching order or their stated positions in the room or other location, the GM figures out where the adversaries are on the grid.
3. **Roll initiative.** Everyone involved in the combat encounter rolls initiative, determining the order of combatants' turns.
4. **Take turns.** Each participant in the battle takes a turn in initiative order.
5. **Begin the next round.** When everyone involved in the combat has had a turn, the round ends. Repeat step 4 until the fighting stops.

The Grid

These rules assume you're using a square grid and miniatures or other tokens to denote positions for participants in the combat.

Each space on the grid is called a square. The point where four squares meet is a corner, and the line between two squares is an edge.

Sometimes you need to extend the grid into three dimensions. Each space is still called a square, even though from a geometric point of view it is shaped like a cube. In 3D, a corner is the point where eight squares meet, and edge is used both for the line between two squares meeting diagonally and for the plane between two squares meeting orthogonally. (If geometry is not your thing, don't worry too much about it. For the most part, the rules make sense even if you don't understand the exact details of these definitions.)

Two squares are adjacent if they have at least one corner in common.

Surprise

A band of adventurers sneaks up on a bandit camp, springing from the trees to attack them. A gelatinous cube glides down a dungeon passage, unnoticed by the adventurers until the cube engulfs one of them. In these situations, one side of the battle gains surprise over the other.

The GM determines who might be surprised. If neither side tries to be stealthy, they automatically notice each other. Otherwise, the GM compares the Stealth checks of anyone hiding with the passive Perception score of each creature on the opposing side. Any character or monster that doesn't notice a threat is surprised at the start of the encounter.

If you're surprised, you can't take actions on your first turn of the combat, and you can't take immediate actions until that turn ends. A member of a group can be surprised even if the other members aren't.

Initiative

Initiative determines the order of turns during combat. When combat starts, every participant makes an Initiative check to determine their place in the initiative order. The GM makes one roll for an entire group of identical creatures, so each member of the group acts at the same time.

The GM ranks the combatants in order from the one with the highest Initiative check total to the one with the lowest. This is the order (called the initiative order) in which they act during each round. The initiative order remains the same from round to round.

If a tie occurs, the creature with the highest initiative modifier goes first. If initiative roll and initiative modifier are tied, flip a coin.

Your Turn

At the start of your turn, take any persistent damage you are subject to.

On your turn, you can take four types of action, in any order you like, but unless otherwise noted you have to finish one action before you can take another.

- **One standard action:** E.g., a basic attack. Alternatively, use your standard action to take another move or a swift action.
- **One move action:** E.g., walking. Alternatively, use your move action to take another swift action.
- **One swift action:** E.g., drawing or sheathing a weapon.
- **Any number of free actions (within reason):** E.g., talking.

The most common actions you can take are described in the "Actions in Combat" section later in this chapter. Many class features and powers provide additional options for your action.

You can forgo taking one or more actions, or doing anything at all on your turn.

Swift Actions

- Interact with an object. For example, you could open a door or you could draw your weapon.

Free Actions

- Communicate however you are able, through brief utterances and gestures, as you take your turn or on other characters' turns.
- Drop an item.
- Drop prone.
- End a grapple (if you are the grappler, not the one being grappled).
- Spend an action point.

Variant Rule

You can only take one free action per turn (including other characters' turns). For example, you could drop one item on your turn, and then another item on the creature's turn following yours.

Action Points

A player character's Action Points are reset to 1 after each long rest. A character gains an additional Action Point after every second encounter they have between long rests.

Once per encounter (but not during a surprise round), a character can spend an Action Point to take one additional standard, move or swift action during their turn.

The End of Your Turn

At the end of your turn you make saving throws against any effects that require them.

Any effects that require an action to maintain concentration, which you have not spent, end now.

Other effects may also resolve at the end of your turn as noted in their descriptions. You can choose in which order to resolve effects that happen at the end of your turn.

Saving Throws

A saving throw - also called a save - represents an attempt to shake off an effect. You don't normally decide to make a saving throw; you are forced to make one because your character or monster is at risk of harm or trying to shake off a condition, persistent damage or other negative effect.

To make a saving throw, roll a d20. If specified, add other bonuses. If the result is 10 or higher, the save succeeds. Typically, if the save is successful it means the effect ends.

Outside of Your Turn

Immediate Actions

Certain special abilities, powers, and situations allow you to take a special action called an immediate action. It must occur on someone else's turn.

Some immediate actions interrupt the other creature's action. When your immediate action interrupts another creature's action, that creature can continue its action right after the immediate action.

Other immediate actions react to the other creature's action, and occur after the creature completes their action. That creature can continue its turn right after the immediate action.

Opportunity Attacks

In a fight, everyone is constantly watching for a chance to strike an enemy who is fleeing or passing by. Such a strike is called an opportunity attack.

You can make an opportunity attack when a hostile creature that you can see moves out of your reach or otherwise provokes an opportunity attack. To make the opportunity attack, you use your immediate action to make one melee attack against the provoking creature. The attack occurs right before the creature leaves your reach.

You can avoid provoking an opportunity attack by **shifting**, e.g. by taking the Five-Foot Step action. You also don't provoke an opportunity attack when you teleport or when subject to unwilling movement. For example, you don't provoke an opportunity attack if an explosion hurls you out of a foe's reach or if gravity causes you to fall past an enemy.

You can only take one opportunity attack against a creature on their turn, even if they provoke an attack multiple times.

On rare occasions, you can perform a non-attack action when someone provokes an opportunity attack. These are called "opportunity actions".

Making an Attack

Whether you're striking with a melee weapon, firing a weapon at range, or making an attack roll as part of a power, an attack has a simple structure.

- **Choose a target.** Pick a target within your attack's **Range**: a creature, an object, or a location. Some attacks will let you choose multiple targets, or choose the targets for you.
- **Determine modifiers.** The GM determines whether the target has cover and whether you have combat advantage against the target. In addition, powers, class features, and other effects can apply penalties or bonuses to your attack roll.
- **Resolve the attack.** You make the attack roll. On a hit, you roll damage, unless the particular attack has rules that specify otherwise. Some attacks cause special effects in addition to or instead of damage.

If there's ever any question whether something you're doing counts as an attack, the rule is simple: if you're making an attack roll, you're making an attack.

Attack Rolls

When you make an attack, your attack roll determines whether the attack hits or misses. To make an attack roll, roll a d20 and add the appropriate modifiers. If the total of the roll plus modifiers equals or exceeds the target's relevant defense, the attack hits.

As a reminder, defenses are Armor Class (AC), Fortitude, Reflex and Will.

Modifiers to the Roll

When a character makes an attack roll, the two most common modifiers to the roll are an ability modifier and the character's proficiency bonus. When a monster makes an attack roll, it uses whatever modifier is provided in its stat block.

Ability Modifier. The ability modifier used for a basic melee weapon attack is Strength, and the ability modifier used for a basic ranged weapon attack is Dexterity (except for heavy thrown weapons, which use Strength).

Powers will specify which ability modifier is used.

Proficiency Bonus. You add a proficiency bonus to your attack roll when you attack using a weapon with which you have proficiency.

Combat Advantage

When an enemy is at a disadvantage defending themselves, you have combat advantage against them. Add +2 to your attack rolls against them.

Rolling 1 or 20

Sometimes fate blesses or curses a combatant, causing the novice to hit or the veteran to miss.

If the d20 roll for an attack is a 20, the attack hits regardless of any modifiers or the target's defenses. This is called a critical hit, which is explained later in this chapter.

If the d20 roll for an attack is a 1, the attack misses regardless of any modifiers or the target's defenses.

Types of attack

Attack types are the origins of effect of the attack. The chapter on Powers explained that power origins are Melee, Ranged, Near, Far and Self. Attacks can have any of the first four origins.

Ranged powers have their range given as a number or they take the range of the weapon used to make the attack. This is the maximum range from the user's space to the target. Far powers also have a range; the maximum range from the user's space to the area's origin square.

Area of effect powers that use a square in your space as the area's base square have a range of Near.

Melee

Used in hand-to-hand combat, a melee attack allows you to attack a foe within your reach. A melee attack typically uses a handheld weapon such as a sword, a warhammer, or an axe. A typical monster makes a melee attack when it strikes with its claws, horns, teeth, tentacles, or other body part.

Your reach is primarily used to determine which enemies you can make melee attacks against. Tiny creatures have a reach of 0, meaning they must be in the same square as their target to attack them in melee.

Most creatures have a 1-square **reach** and can thus attack targets within 1 square of them when making a melee attack. Certain creatures (typically those larger than Medium) have melee attacks with a greater reach than 1 square, as noted in their descriptions. However, note that opportunity attacks are provoked when a creature leaves an *adjacent* square, so even if you have a longer reach you do not make opportunity attacks when they leave your reach.

A melee attack with a range of **Melee touch** uses the user's reach, rather than their weapon's reach.

Ranged

You can make ranged attacks only against targets within a specified number of squares.

If your target has a space greater than one, it's enough to reach one of the squares in its space.

If a ranged attack, such as one made with a spell, has a single range, you can't attack a target beyond this range.

Some ranged attacks, such as those made with a longbow or a shortbow, have two ranges. The smaller number is the normal range, and the larger number is the long range. Your attack roll has a -2 penalty when your target is beyond normal range, and you can't attack a target beyond the long range.

Ranged and Far Attacks in Close Combat

Aiming a Ranged or Far attack is more difficult when a foe is next to you. When you make a ranged attack (whether it's with a weapon or not) you provoke an opportunity attack.

Two-Weapon Fighting

When you have a weapon in each hand, you choose which one to use for each attack power.

Near and Far

See Introduction to Powers for more.

Unseen Attackers and Targets

Combatants often try to escape their foes' notice by hiding, turning invisible, or lurking in darkness.

When you attack a target that you can't fully see, they have cover or concealment.

Cover

Walls, trees, creatures, and other obstacles can provide cover during combat, making a target more difficult to harm. A target can benefit from cover only when an attack or other effect originates on the opposite side of the cover.

There are two degrees of cover. If a target is behind multiple sources of cover, only the most protective degree of cover applies; the degrees aren't added together. For example, if a target is behind a creature that gives half cover and a tree trunk that gives three-quarters cover, the target has three-quarters cover.

A target with **half cover** gives a -2 penalty to attack rolls. A target has half cover if an obstacle blocks at least half of its body. The obstacle might be a low wall, a large piece of furniture, a narrow tree trunk, or a creature, whether that creature is an enemy or a friend.

A target with **three-quarters cover** gives a -5 penalty to attack rolls. A target has three-quarters cover if about three-quarters of it is covered by an obstacle. The obstacle might be a portcullis, an arrow slit, or a thick tree trunk.

Concealment

A target has concealment when some kind of terrain or other effect prevents you from seeing or otherwise perceiving your target clearly. Commonly this is caused by lighting conditions or soft cover such as leaves or fog.

Like cover, concealment comes in two levels: Concealment (-2 penalty to attack rolls) and total concealment (-5 penalty to attack rolls).

Concealment penalties do not apply to Near or Far attacks.

When lighting or other conditions cause creatures in an area to be harder to see, the squares in that area are obscured. A square can be lightly obscured, heavily obscured, or totally obscured.

Targets in obscured squares gain concealment as follows:

- A target in a lightly obscured square or an adjacent target in a heavily obscured square has concealment.
- A non-adjacent target in a heavily obscured square or any target in a totally obscured square has total concealment.
- An invisible target also has total concealment.

Damage

Injury and the risk of death are constant companions of those who explore fantasy gaming worlds. The thrust of a sword, a well-placed arrow, or a blast of flame from a *fireball* spell all have the potential to damage, or even kill, the hardiest of creatures.

Hit Points

Hit points represent a combination of physical and mental durability, the will to live, and luck. Creatures with more hit points are more difficult to kill. Those with fewer hit points are more fragile.

A creature's **current hit points** (usually just called **hit points**) can be any number from the creature's hit point maximum down to 0. This number changes frequently as a creature takes damage or receives healing.

Whenever a creature takes damage, that damage is subtracted from its hit points. The loss of hit points has no effect on a creature's capabilities until the creature drops to 0 hit points.

Damage Rolls

Each weapon, spell, and harmful monster ability specifies the damage it deals. You roll the damage die or dice, add any modifiers, and apply the damage to your target. Magic weapons, special abilities, and other factors can grant a bonus to damage. With a penalty, it is possible to deal 0 damage, but never negative damage.

When making a **basic attack**, you add your ability modifier - the same modifier used for the attack roll - to the damage. A **power** tells you which dice to roll for damage and whether to add any modifiers.

If a power or other effect deals damage to **more than one target** at the same time, roll the damage once for all of them. For example, when a wizard casts *fireball* or a cleric casts *flame strike*, the power's damage is rolled once for all creatures caught in the blast.

Critical Hits

When you score a critical hit, you do maximum damage with the attack. When an effect adds bonus dice on a critical hit, roll those extra dice (don't maximize them).

Damage Types

Different attacks, damaging powers, and other harmful effects deal different types of damage. Damage types have no rules of their own, but other rules, such as damage resistance, rely on the types.

Weapons typically don't have a type of damage. They just do damage. The types are:

- **Acid:** The corrosive spray of a black dragon's breath and the dissolving enzymes secreted by a black pudding deal acid damage.

- **Cold:** The infernal chill radiating from an ice devil's spear and the frigid blast of a white dragon's breath deal cold damage.
- **Fire:** Red dragons breathe fire, and many spells conjure flames to deal fire damage.
- **Force:** Force is pure magical energy focused into a damaging form. Most effects that deal force damage are spells.
- **Lightning:** A lightning bolt and a blue dragon's breath deal lightning damage.
- **Necrotic:** Necrotic damage, dealt by certain undead and a spell such as *chill touch*, withers matter and even the soul.
- **Poison:** Venomous stings and the toxic gas of a green dragon's breath deal poison damage.
- **Psychic:** Mental abilities such as a mind flayer's psionic blast deal psychic damage.
- **Radiant:** Radiant damage, like that dealt by an angel's smiting weapon, sears the flesh like fire and overloads the spirit with power.
- **Thunder:** A concussive burst of sound deals thunder damage.

Damage Resistance and Vulnerability

Some creatures and objects are exceedingly difficult or unusually easy to hurt with certain types of damage.

If a creature or an object has **resistance to X #**, damage of type X is reduced by #. If a creature or an object has **vulnerability to X #** to a damage type, whenever it takes damage of type X it takes +# damage.

Movement and Position

In combat, characters and monsters are in constant motion, often using movement and position to gain the upper hand.

Move actions include:

- **Walk:** Move a distance up to your speed.
- **Five-Foot Step:** Move one square, without provoking opportunity attacks.
- **Dash:** Move a distance up to your speed +2, with penalties.
- **Crawl:** Move a distance up to half your speed, even if prone.
- **Stand Up from Prone:** Stop being prone.

Your movement can include jumping, climbing, and swimming. These different modes of movement can be combined with walking, or they can constitute your entire move. However you're moving, you deduct the distance of each part of your move from your speed until it is used up or until you are done moving.

Moving from one square to another that is diagonal to it counts for 1 square of movement, just as moving orthogonally (forward, back, left and right) does.

Speed

Every character and monster has a speed, which is the number of five-foot squares that the character or monster can walk in 1 round. This number assumes short bursts of energetic movement in the midst of a life-threatening situation.

Using Different Speeds

If you have more than one speed, such as your walking speed and a fly speed, you can switch back and forth between your speeds during your move. Whenever you switch, subtract the distance you've already moved from the new speed. The result determines how much farther you can move. If the result is 0 or less, you can't use the new speed during the current move.

For example, if you have a speed of 6 and a fly speed of 12 because a wizard cast the *fly* spell on you, you could fly 4 squares, then walk 2 squares, and then leap into the air to fly 6 squares more.

Difficult Terrain

Combat rarely takes place in bare rooms or on featureless plains. Boulder-strewn caverns, briar-choked forests, treacherous staircases-the setting of a typical fight contains difficult terrain.

Every square of movement in difficult terrain costs 1 extra square. This rule is true even if multiple things in a space count as difficult terrain.

Low furniture, rubble, undergrowth, steep stairs, snow, and shallow bogs are examples of difficult terrain.

Being Prone

Combatants often find themselves lying on the ground, either because they are knocked down or because they throw themselves down. In the game, they are prone, a condition described in appendix A.

You can **Drop Prone** as a free action. **Stand Up from Prone** is a move action.

To move while prone, you must **Crawl** or use magic such as teleportation. Every foot of movement while crawling costs 1 extra square, and you provoke opportunity attacks while crawling.

Moving Around Other Creatures

You can move through an allied creature's space. In contrast, you can move through a hostile creature's space only if the creature is at least two sizes larger or smaller than you.

Whether a creature is a friend or an enemy, you can't willingly end your move in its space.

If you leave a square adjacent to an enemy, e.g. by moving into their space, you provoke an opportunity attack.

Flying Movement

Flying creatures enjoy many benefits of mobility, but they must also deal with the danger of falling. If a monster is flying, it typically has to move at least 2 squares per round, or it crashes to earth. It cannot shift or make opportunity attacks while flying.

Some flying creatures have the ability to **hover**, which makes them hard to knock out of the air. Such a creature stops hovering when it dies. A hovering creature does not have to move at least 2 squares per round, can shift and can make opportunity attacks.

Some creatures will specify how high they can fly. If they fly beyond that height, they crash.

If a creature has the **clumsy on ground** trait, they suffer a -4 penalty to attack rolls and defences while on the ground. If a creature has the **clumsy in air** trait, they suffer a -4 penalty to attack rolls and defences while flying.

Creature Size

Each creature takes up a different amount of space. The Size Categories table shows how much space a creature of a particular size controls in combat. Objects sometimes use the same size categories.

Table - Size Categories

Size	Squares Taken Up
Tiny	0.5 x 0.5
Small	1 x 1
Medium	1 x 1
Large	2 x 2
Huge	3 x 3
Gargantuan	4 x 4 or more

Space

A creature's space is the area in squares that it effectively controls in combat, not an expression of its physical dimensions. A square is 5-feet by 5-feet, but a typical Medium creature isn't 5 feet wide, for example, but it does control a square. If a Medium hobgoblin stands in a square, other creatures can't get through that square unless the hobgoblin lets them.

Unwilling Movement

Creatures can be moved against their will with three forms of unwilling movement:

- *Push X*: The creature is moved X squares, as the attacker chooses, but each move must be away from the attacker (or from the origin of the attack, if it is a Far attack).
- *Pull X*: The creature is moved X squares, as the attacker chooses, but each move must be towards the attacker (or towards the origin of the attack, if it is a Far attack)
- *Slip X*: The creature is moved X squares, as the attacker chooses.

Actions in Combat

When you take actions on your turn, you can take the actions presented here, use powers, and/or actions that you improvise. Many monsters have action options of their own in their stat blocks.

When you describe an action not detailed elsewhere in the rules, the GM tells you whether that action is possible and what kind of roll you need to make, if any, to determine success or failure.

Aid Another (standard action)

You can lend your aid to another creature in the completion of a skill check. See the Aid Another section of the Skills chapter.

Basic Attack (standard action)

With this action, you make a melee basic attack or a ranged basic attack.

Basic Melee Attack

Melee weapon, 1 target

Attack Strength vs AC

Hit:

Level 1: 1dW + Strength modifier damage.

Level 21: 2dW + Strength modifier damage.

Basic Ranged Attack

Ranged weapon, 1 target

Attack Dexterity vs AC

Hit:

Level 1: 1dW + Dexterity modifier damage.

Level 21: 2dW + Dexterity modifier damage.

Special: Heavy thrown weapons use Strength not Dexterity for the attack and damage rolls.

Charge (standard action)

You must move at least 2 squares. You must move to the closest square from which you can attack the opponent. (If this square is occupied or otherwise blocked, you can't charge.) Your movement provokes opportunity attacks as normal movement does.

After moving, you may make a single basic melee attack or shove. You get a +1 bonus on the attack roll.

Coup de Grace (special)

When you make an attack (including using an attack power) against a helpless adjacent opponent, using a standard action, it is a Coup de Grace.

If you hit, you score a critical hit. If the damage equals or exceeds their Staggered value, they die. Otherwise they just take the damage.

Crawl (move action)

When you take the Crawl move action, you move half your speed. Your movement provokes opportunity attacks as normal movement does.

You cannot Walk or Dash while prone, which is why you might choose the Crawl action.

Dash (move action)

When you take the Dash move action, you move your speed +2. Until the end of your next turn, you grant combat advantage and suffer a -5 penalty to attacks.

Your movement provokes opportunity attacks as normal movement does.

Five-Foot Step (move action)

If you take the Five-Foot Step move action, you shift 1.

Delay (N/A)

By choosing to delay, you take no actions and then take your turn normally on whatever initiative count you decide to act. When you delay, you voluntarily reduce your own initiative result for the rest of the combat. When your new, lower initiative count comes up later in the same round, you can act normally. You can specify this new initiative result or just wait until some time later in the round (in between other creatures' turns) and act then, thus fixing your new initiative count at that point.

If you do not take your turn by the end of the round, your turn for that round is wasted.

You can't interrupt anyone else's turn (as you can with the Ready action).

You cannot Delay if you have already taken actions this turn.

You cannot maintain powers if you Delay. Beneficial effects that end at the end of your turn end as soon as you Delay.

Initiative Consequences of Delaying

Your initiative result becomes the count on which you took the delayed turn.

Grapple

When you want to grab a creature or wrestle with it, you can grapple.

The target of your grapple must be no more than one size larger than you and must be within your reach. Using at least one free hand, you try to seize the target by making a Strength attack vs Reflex. You succeed automatically if the target is incapacitated.

If you succeed, you subject the target to the grappled condition. The condition specifies the things that end it, and you can release the target whenever you like (as a free action).

If either of you ceases to be adjacent to the other (e.g. through unwilling movement affecting one or the other of you), the grapple ends.

Escape a Grapple (standard action)

A grappled creature can use its standard action to escape. To do so, it must succeed on an Athletics check vs the grappler's Fortitude or Acrobatics check vs the grappler's Reflex defence.

Move a Grappled Creature (standard action)

Make a Strength attack vs the grappled creature's Fortitude.

Hit: You can drag or carry the grappled creature with you, but your speed is halved. Your movement provokes opportunity attacks as normal movement does.

Help Attack (standard action)

You can aid a friendly creature in fighting a creature within your reach. You feint, distract the target, or in some other way team up to make your ally's attack more effective.

You grant a +2 bonus to your ally's next attack roll against that target (if not used, this bonus expires at the end of your next turn).

Help Defense (standard action)

You can aid a friendly creature in fighting a creature within your reach. You feint, distract the target, or in some other way team up to make your ally's defense more effective.

You grant a +2 bonus to your ally's defenses against the target's next attack against them (if not used, this bonus expires at the end of your next turn).

Rally (standard action)

Each player character has the option to rally once an encounter, as a standard action to Rally.

When you rally, you spend one of your recoveries and regain your recovery value in HP.

You also get +2 to all defenses until the start of your next turn.

Ready (N/A)

The ready action lets you prepare to take an action later, after your turn is over but before your next one has begun. Readying is a standard action.

You can ready a standard action, a move action, or a swift action. To do so, specify the circumstances under which you will take it. Then, any time before your next turn, you may take the readied action in response to those circumstances. The action occurs just before the action that triggers it. If the triggered action is part of another character's activities, you interrupt the other character. Assuming the other character is still capable of doing so, they continue their actions once you complete your readied action. Your initiative result changes. For the rest of the encounter, your initiative result is the count on which you took the readied action, and you act immediately ahead of the character whose action triggered your readied action.

Initiative Consequences of Readying

Your initiative result becomes the count on which you took the readied action. If you come to your next action and have not yet performed your readied action, you don't get to take the readied action (though you can ready the same action again). If you take your readied action in the next round, before your regular turn comes up, your initiative count rises to that new point in the order of battle, and you do not get your regular action that round.

Shove (standard action)

You can make a special melee attack to shove a creature away from you.

The target must be no more than one size larger than you and must be adjacent.

Attack: Strength attack vs Fortitude.

Hit: You push the target 1 square and shift into the space it left.

Stand Up from Prone (move action)

Standing up from a prone position requires a move action. If there is another creature already in your space, shift 1 into an unoccupied square.

Squeeze (move action)

A creature can squeeze through a space that is large enough for a creature one size smaller than it. Thus, a Large creature can squeeze through a passage that's only 5 feet wide. While squeezing through a space, a creature must spend 1 extra square for every square it moves there, and attack rolls against the creature have combat advantage while it's in the smaller space.

You provoke opportunity attacks as you would with normal movement.

While squeezing, you grant combat advantage and suffer a -5 penalty to attacks.

Total Defense (standard action)

You can defend yourself as a standard action. When you take the Total Defense standard action, you focus entirely on avoiding attacks.

+2 to all defenses until the start of your next turn.

Use a Power (various actions)

You use a power. If it is an attack power, you will typically follow all the standard steps of an attack.

Walk (move action)

When you take the Walk move action, you move your speed. You provoke opportunity attacks.

Healing

Unless it results in death, damage isn't permanent. Even death is reversible through powerful magic. Rest can restore a creature's hit points, and magical methods such as a *cure wounds* spell or a *potion of healing* can remove damage in an instant.

When a creature receives healing of any kind, hit points regained are added to its current hit points. A creature's hit points can't exceed its hit point maximum, so any hit points regained in excess of this number are lost. For example, a druid grants a ranger 8 hit points of healing. If the ranger has 14 current hit points and has a hit point maximum of 20, the ranger regains 6 hit points from the druid, not 8.

A creature that has died can't regain hit points until magic such as the *revivify* spell has restored it to life.

Recoveries

Each PC has a certain amount of **recoveries**, which represent the PC's ability to heal or bounce back from damage. Many healing spells and potions require you to use up a recovery. So does rallying during a battle.

When you use a recovery, regain lost hit points equal to your recovery value.

Recovery Value: Equal to one-quarter your maximum HP.

Staggered

When you are reduced to half your maximum hit points or fewer, you're **Staggered**. Some powers, spells, and monster interactions work differently when you are Staggered.

Dropping to 0 Hit Points

When you drop to 0 hit points, you either die outright or fall unconscious, as explained in the following sections.

Instant Death

Massive damage can kill you instantly. When damage reduces you to 0 hit points and there is damage remaining, you die if the remaining damage equals or exceeds your Staggered value. The same applies if you are on 0 HP and take damage that equals or exceeds your Staggered value.

For example, a cleric with a maximum of 22 hit points currently has 11 hit points. If she takes 22 damage from an attack, she is reduced to 0 hit points, but 11 damage remains. Because the remaining damage equals her Staggered value (11, i.e. half her maximum HP), the cleric dies.

Note that you cannot fall below 0 HP. If an attack fails to cause instant death, none of the extra damage remains for subsequent attacks.

Falling Unconscious

If damage reduces you to 0 hit points and fails to kill you, you fall unconscious. This unconsciousness ends if you regain any hit points.

Death Saving Throws

Whenever you start your turn with 0 hit points, you must make a special saving throw, called a death saving throw, to determine whether you creep closer to death or hang onto life. You are in the hands of fate now, aided only by powers and features that improve your chances of succeeding on a saving throw.

Roll a d20. If the roll is 10 or higher, you succeed. Otherwise, you fail. A success or failure has no effect by itself. On your third failure, you die. The successes and failures don't need to be consecutive; keep track of both until you collect three of a kind. The number of failures is reset to zero when you take a short or long rest.

Rolling 20 or higher: When you make a death saving throw and roll 20 or higher, you can spend a recovery. You heal equal to your recovery value, and therefore stop dying and become conscious, although you are still prone. If you have no recoveries to spend, treat this result as a 19.

Stabilizing a Creature

If a dying creature gets the opportunity to spend a recovery to heal but it has no recoveries left, it heals 1 HP only.

Monsters and Death

Most GMs have a monster die the instant it drops to 0 hit points, rather than having it fall unconscious and make death saving throws.

Mighty villains and special nonplayer characters are common exceptions; the GM might have them fall unconscious and follow the same rules as player characters.

Knocking a Creature Out

Sometimes an attacker wants to incapacitate a foe, rather than deal a killing blow. When an attacker reduces a creature to 0 hit points, the attacker can knock the creature out. The attacker can make this choice the instant the damage is dealt. The creature falls unconscious. It heals 1 HP after a short rest.

Temporary Hit Points

Some powers and features confer temporary hit points to a creature. Temporary hit points aren't actual hit points; they are a buffer against damage, a pool of hit points that protect you from injury.

When you have temporary hit points and take damage, the temporary hit points are lost first, and any leftover damage carries over to your normal hit points. For example, if you have 5 temporary hit points and take 7 damage, you lose the temporary hit points and then take 2 damage.

Because temporary hit points are separate from your actual hit points, they can exceed your hit point maximum. A character can, therefore, be at full hit points and receive temporary hit points.

Healing can't restore temporary hit points, and they can't be added together. If you have temporary hit points and receive more of them, you decide whether to keep the ones you have or to gain the new ones. For example, if a spell grants you 12 temporary hit points when you already have 10, you can have 12 or 10, not 22.

If you have 0 hit points, receiving temporary hit points doesn't restore you to consciousness or stabilize you. They can still absorb damage directed at you while you're in that state, but only true healing can save you.

Unless a feature that grants you temporary hit points has a duration, they last until they're depleted or you finish a short rest.

Regeneration

Creatures with this extraordinary ability automatically heal damage at a fixed rate at the start of each of their turns, as given in the creature's entry.

If you have regeneration and receive it from another source, you receive the highest value (do not sum them).

Conditions

Conditions alter a creature's capabilities in a variety of ways and can arise as a result of a power, a class feature, a monster's attack, or other effect. Most conditions, such as blinded, are impairments.

A condition lasts either until it is countered (the prone condition is countered by standing up, for example) or for a duration specified by the effect that imposed the condition.

If multiple effects impose the same condition on a creature, each instance of the condition has its own duration, but the condition's effects don't get worse. A creature either has a condition or doesn't.

The following definitions specify what happens to a creature while it is subjected to a condition.

Blinded

- You can't see and automatically fail any ability or skill check that requires sight.
- Attack rolls against you have combat advantage.
- -10 penalty to Perception.
- Cannot flank.

Controlled

- You are dazed.

- The creature controlling you decides what actions you take, but they can't make you spend action points or encounter or daily powers.

Dazed

- Attack rolls against you have combat advantage.
- Cannot flank.
- You can only take one standard action on your turn (though you can take free actions as normal). You can convert the standard action to a move or swift action if you like.
- You can't take immediate or opportunity actions.

Deafened

- You can't hear and automatically fail any ability or skill check that requires hearing.
- -10 penalty to Perception.

Dying

- You make a death saving throw at the end of each of your turns.
- You are unconscious.

Helpless

- Attack rolls against you have combat advantage.

Immobile

- You cannot willingly move into another square.

Marked

- -2 penalty to attack rolls on attacks that do not include the creature that marked you as a target.
- If the creature that marked you dies or falls unconscious, you lose the marked condition.

Petrified

- You are transformed into a solid inanimate substance (usually stone).
- You can't move or speak, and are unaware of your surroundings.
- You can't take any actions.
- Attack rolls against you have combat advantage.
- Resistance to all 20.
- You do not age.

Prone

- Your only movement option is to Crawl, unless you stand up and thereby end the condition. If you are climbing or flying when you become prone, you fall to the ground.
 - A flying creature that falls prone descends squares up to its fly speed and then falls the rest of the way.
- -2 to attack rolls.
- Melee attack rolls against you have combat advantage.

- +2 to AC, Fortitude, Reflex and Will defense against ranged attacks (unless attacker is adjacent to you).

Restrained

- You cannot be moved into another square, willingly or with unwilling movement.
- -2 penalty to attack rolls.
- Attack rolls against you have combat advantage.

Slowed

- Your speed for any form of movement other than teleportation is reduced to 2 and can't be increased.

Stunned

- You are incapacitated (see the condition), can't move, and can speak only falteringly.
- Attack rolls against you have combat advantage.
- You can't take actions or reactions.
- Cannot flank.

Surprised

- Attack rolls against you have combat advantage.
- On your turn, you can only take a single standard action.
- You can't take free actions.
- You can't flank.
- You lose this condition when the surprise round ends.

Unconscious

- You can't take any actions.
- You can't flank.
- You suffer a -5 penalty to all defenses.
- When you become unconscious you also fall prone.

Weakened

- The damage of your attacks is halved, except persistent damage.

Adventuring

Time

In situations where keeping track of the passage of time is important, the GM determines the time a task requires. The GM might use a different time scale depending on the context of the situation at hand. In a dungeon environment, the adventurers' movement happens on a scale of **minutes**. It takes them about a minute to creep down a long hallway, another minute to check for traps on the door at the end of the hall, and a good ten minutes to search the chamber beyond for anything interesting or valuable.

In a city or wilderness, a scale of **hours** is often more appropriate. Adventurers eager to reach the lonely tower at the heart of the forest hurry across those fifteen miles in just under four hours' time.

For long journeys, a scale of **days** works best.

In combat and other fast-paced situations, the game relies on **rounds**, a 6-second span of time.

Falling

A fall from a great height is one of the most common hazards facing an adventurer. At the end of a fall, a creature takes 1d10 damage for every 10 feet it fell, to a maximum of 50d10. The creature lands prone, unless it avoids taking damage from the fall.

Vision and Light

The most fundamental tasks of adventuring - noticing danger, finding hidden objects, hitting an enemy in combat, and targeting a spell, to name just a few - rely heavily on a character's ability to see. Darkness and other effects that obscure vision can prove a significant hindrance.

A given area might be lightly or heavily obscured.

- In a **lightly obscured** area, such as dim light, patchy fog, or moderate foliage, a creature has partial concealment.
- In a **heavily obscured** area - such as darkness, opaque fog, or dense foliage - a creature has full concealment, except for creatures adjacent to it (where it has partial concealment)

The presence or absence of light in an environment creates three categories of illumination: bright light, dim light, and darkness.

- **Bright light** lets most creatures see normally. Even gloomy days provide bright light, as do torches, lanterns, fires, and other sources of illumination within a specific radius.
- **Dim light**, also called shadows, creates a lightly obscured area. An area of dim light is usually a boundary between a source of bright light, such as a torch, and surrounding darkness. The soft light of twilight and dawn also counts as dim light. A particularly brilliant full moon might bathe the land in dim light.
- **Darkness** creates a heavily obscured area.

Characters face darkness outdoors at night (even most moonlit nights), within the confines of an unlit dungeon or a subterranean vault, or in an area of magical darkness.

Blindsight

A creature with blindsight can perceive its surroundings without relying on sight, within a specific radius. Creatures without eyes, such as oozes, and creatures with echolocation or heightened senses, such as bats and true dragons, have this sense.

If a monster is naturally blind, it has a parenthetical note to this effect, indicating that the radius of its blindsight defines the maximum range of its perception.

Darkvision

Many creatures in fantasy gaming worlds, especially those that dwell underground, have darkvision. A creature with darkvision can see in darkness or dim light as if it were bright light.

Tremorsense

A creature with tremorsense can detect and pinpoint the origin of vibrations within a specific radius, provided that the monster and the source of the vibrations are in contact with the same ground or substance. Tremorsense can't be used to detect flying or incorporeal creatures. Many burrowing creatures, such as ankhegs, have this special sense.

Truesight

A creature with truesight can, out to a specific range, see in normal and magical darkness, see invisible creatures and objects, automatically detect visual illusions and succeed on saving throws against them, and perceive the original form of a shapechanger or a creature that is transformed by magic.

Resting

Heroic though they might be, adventurers can't spend every hour of the day in the thick of exploration, social interaction, and combat. They need rest-time to sleep and eat, tend their wounds, refresh their minds and spirits, and brace themselves for further adventure.

Adventurers can take short rests in the midst of an adventuring day and a long rest to end the day.

Short Rest

A short rest is a period of downtime, at least five minutes long, during which a character does nothing more strenuous than eating, drinking, reading, and tending to wounds.

Long Rest

A long rest is a period of extended downtime, at least 6 hours long, during which a character sleeps or performs light activity, such as reading, talking, eating, or standing watch.

A character can't benefit from more than one long rest in a 24-hour period.

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