Tactile Tabletop

By: Ory and Robin

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### Hands On Gaming

# Introduction

Tactile Tabletop is a combination role playing and deck building game. It’s about building a character through choosing cards for a deck, and picking the right ones for a new encounter. It aims to provide a complex but deep system for engaging combat in a roleplaying setting. It tries to reward both mixing and matching different styles, while also those that commit to one core idea. With attack and defense die, something we call and influence die, die tokens, and more, we hope to allow for more risky but gratifying gameplay.

We created this game in response to inspirations and frustrations we’ve had with many games. We wear our influences proudly, because for every one we love, we can point out something we’d like to see be different. While we can’t name them specifically for legal reasons, we hope you notice and enjoy the bits from each of them that we have borrowed and adapted to our game.

While we are fans of learning and exploiting game systems, complexity can be paid for depth that isn’t worth having. Some examples from game experiences we’ve had: all-encompassing rule sets, feeling punished for not having a singular focus, translating lots of rules from one or more books into one or more character sheets that need to be flipped through during tense situations, and on.

Some familiar facets from our inspirations you might notice are missing, and these are in response to the above examples. You may find some scenario that is unspecified in our rules; you are encouraged to create what rules you need to make a fun game experience, of course including changing the rules we’ve decided to include in this version of the game. We believe most GM’s and players of tabletop games are used to home brewing solutions anyway, and it’s that spirit that we created this game in the first place.

Tactile Tabletop doesn’t specify a particular setting. By focusing on the mechanics of combat, our intent is to facilitate all sorts of settings: the traditional dungeon crawler, a space adventure, a post apocalyptic survival setting, any and all should work with our game system.

One more thing to note, this game is primarily focused on combat. While many tabletop games try to satisfy all possible ways to engage with the world, towards political intrigue or mystery solving, our interests are mostly around the combat systems, so our game reflects that influence. By no means should this limit you! There must be connective tissue tying the players from one combat encounter and another, and with some ingenuity these combat-focused abilities can be used out of combat for all sorts of shenanigans.

We hope this is a game you enjoy! May your adventures be exciting and timeless!

* Robin and Ory

# Character Creation

Creating a character is your first step into the system of Tactile Tabletop. There are some decisions to make and trade-offs to consider: we will walk through them and provide a working example.

## **Character Cards**

All characters start with **9** Character Cards which make up your **Character Deck.** These cards dictate the Abilities you can use in and out of combat, the Passives that define your character, and Restrictions that must be met before they can be added to your deck.

### Abilities

Each Character Card comes with 2 abilities, a top and bottom. Each ability describes how they function in these ways (described from left to right, top to bottom):

* Target: enemy, ally, self, plant, animal, area, etc.
* Range: Whether the range of the ability is dictated by your weapon or Influence range
* Duration: instant, 1 round, x rounds, etc.
* Cost: exhausted, discarded, returned to hand
* Name: how to refer to the ability
* Descriptors: Shorthand descriptions for elements of the ability (is it an attack, does it involve influence, can variables help the description be succinct).
* Description: The actual rules for the ability. This relies on the descriptors to be succinct, and uses specific wording for consistency and clarity.

Further particulars of each of these parts of abilities are explained in the combat section.

### Passives

Each card comes with Passive effects, or Passives. Most of the time, these grant a number of Level Points, a flexible currency you can use to add Health, Skill points, or Contact Tokens to your character. See following sections for more details on each of these, see the section on Feature Cards for more details on different kinds of passives.

### Restrictions

The cards at level 1 cannot have requirements, as your character only has stats once they are finished being built. As you level up, you add more cards to your Character Deck, and the more powerful cards will have minimum stat requirements. You cannot add a character card to your deck if you don’t meet the requirements.

## Health

Health is a resource in combat you lose when taking damage. You start with one health point, and spending one level point gets you 1 health point.



These can be of the form of a slider (to be drafted later), a token (as above, with a healthy and damaged side) or simply written down. The section on combat goes into more details about how this resource is managed and consequences for losing them, but suffice to say, the more health you have, the more threats you can survive.

## Stats

Stats define your characters effectiveness in various general aspects of how they interact with and interpret the world around them. Spending one level point gets you 1 stat point.

Stats are expressed in 3 ways: higher level cards which have stat requirements can be added at level up if the related stat(s) are high enough, non-combat challenges are more easily overcome when the relevant stats are increased, and your characters general influence improves the more stats they have.

You get to allocate the stat points to whichever stat you prefer of this list:

* **Strength**: your ability to physically move something (if damage is dealt, debuff enemy defense, multiple targeted enemies/multiple hits)
* **Finesse**: your ability to finely control and contort your body (movement, damage unblockable)
* **Vigor**: your ability to fight off poisons, deadly blows, and other effects (heal self, improve defense, reduce enemy attack)
* **Spirituality**: your connectedness to the world and people around you on a metaphysical level (heal ally, buff ally, summon, teleporting)
* **Knowledge**: your ability to solve problems, intuit conclusions, and understanding and influence over natural forces (return cards from discard, move tokens, additional ability uses, changing when ability uses happen, debuff self defense)
* **Charisma**: your ability to persuade and influence others (control others targeting, control others movement, change others rolls)
* **Perception**: your ability to see and exploiting opportunities (targeting, mark, buff self attack)
* **Craftsmanship**: your ability to turn ideas into reality (create consumables, static area effects, static buffs, influence item effectiveness)

When your character interacts with the world, the Influence die is rolled. The number of total stat points you have, regardless of where they are allocated, dictates the size of your influence die. This reflects general experience and competency as your character grows.

### Influence Die Chart

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill Points Amount** | 0 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 12 | 16 | 19 | 23 | 27 | 31 | 36 |
| **Influence Die Size** | 1d4 | 1d6 | 1d8 | 1d10 | 1d12 | 3d4 | 3d6 | 3d8 | 3d10 | 3d12 | 3d20 |

Some abilities from character cards dictate when they require an influence roll. Much like how attack values are responded with defense values (see combat section for details), your ability to influence a foe is countered by their own influence.

Outside of character card abilities, the influence die and relevant stats are combined to determine success with non-combat challenges.

Some examples:

* If you were going to kick down a door, your strength stat would be added to a roll of your influence die to determine if it was successful (the GM would determine the number you need to reach to succeed).
* Say you want to convince a shopkeeper to let you into an underground market. In order to do this you will need to convince them to tell you. You would roll your influence die and add your Charisma stat total to the roll, and if high enough (determined by the GM), you would be let into the market.

## Contact Tokens

Contact Tokens allow for more powerful influence over a battlefield. Spending 2 level points gets you one contact token. These tokens come in three types: Attack, Defense, and Influence. These map on to the 3 categories of Dice types used in the game.

### Contact Token Uses: Improve Rolls

One function of Contact Tokens is to place them on a target to increase die rolls against them. They perform as follows:

* For every Defense Contact token you have applied, increase by one all defense values you calculate against that target
* For every attack contact token you have applied, increase by one all attack values you calculate against that target
* For every influence contact token you have applied, increase by one all influence values you calculate against that target

Contact tokens used this way must be placed at the start of your turn.

### Contact Token Uses: Use Abilities

The other function of Contact Tokens is to consume them to use or empower certain powerful character card abilities. A card will dictate if it requires consuming a token to use, or if it takes additional effects *if* a token is consumed, and will describe which tokens to be used in this way.

These contact tokens cannot already be in use: if a token is applied to an enemy to improve rolls against them, this token cannot be consumed for character card abilities.

All Contact Tokens that get consumed, or are applied to a target that dies, are flipped over to indicate that they are expended, and cannot be used again. All Contact Tokens are returned to you upon a Long Rest, in the same way that exhausted cards are returned to you.

**Sample Character : Zin Fantallay**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Character Card** | **Passives** |
| Gain Confidence / Risky Maneuver | 2 Level Points |
| Reposition / Coward’s Ultimatum | 2 Level Points |
| Land of Barbs / Fibrous Hold | 2 Level Points |
| Mockery / Encourage | 2 Level Points |
| Demand Resilience / Demand Weakness | 2 Level Points |
| Pinned / Murder Markings | 2 Level Points |
| Setup / Takedown | 2 Level Points |
| Pocket Sand / Slippery Escape | 2 Level Points |
| Dodge / Expect | 2 Level Points |
| Total allocations: | +8 Health Points | +6 Stat Points | 2 Contact Tokens |

**Skills Allocated: Charisma 2, Finesse 2, Strength 1, Knowledge 1**

**Influence Die: 1d6**

**Contact Tokens: 1 Attack ; 1 Influence**

**Total Health: 8 HP**

## **Leveling**

Tactile Tabletop doesn’t have a native leveling system such as experience points or milestones. It is left up to the GM to decide when it is appropriate to apply a level up, depending on whatever rubric they decide.

Each time you level up, you add 2 character cards that you meet the requirements for. Once added to your deck, the passives they grant can be allocated as before: to health, stats, or contact tokens

In addition, any cards in the graveyard are returned to you (see Additional Rules: Graveyard for details).

## Weapons

Beyond the character’s abilities and their tokens to withstand attacks/empower their abilities, the character have weapon(s).

Weapons define:

* The dice to roll for Attack and Defense rolls
* The distances that attacks can reach with the Range value
* Requirements that must be met in order for them to be used, usually having 1-hand or 2-hands occupied by using them.
  + more powerful weapons may be offered that carry stat requirements as well, and some rare weapons might not have any handed-ness requirements
* Finally, special rules unique to that weapon that enable a style of use in combat

Specific weapon descriptions are left unspecified intentionally. If you want your character to use a tree branch, or a piece of rebar, or a neon staff, or psychic/magical effects, all could be described by the Short Weapon. A long bow, or a rifle, or a railgun, or a magical beam, could all be described by the Long Shot Weapon. We encourage creativity in defining your characters weapons to best suit them to your character.

Unless the game requires a particular flow/way of interaction, it’s pretty vital for characters to have at least one of these weapons, so we have placed it in the Building a Character section.

**Weapons**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Weapon Name** | **Attack Die 1** | **Attack Die 2** | **Defense Die** | **Range** | **Requirement1** | **Requirement2** | **Extra Notes** |
| Long Shot Weapon | D4 | NA | D4 | 60 | 1-hand | 1-hand | If attacking beyond 30 feet, increase attack by 1d6 |
| Great Castor | D6 | NA | D4 | 40 | 1-hand | 1-hand | Damage from attack tokens is 2 instead of 1 |
| Reach Weapon | D6 | D4 | D6 | 10 | 1-hand | 1-hand | Can be thrown at ranges beyond 10 ft:  Range = 25  Damage += 1d6 |
| Great Weapon | D6 | D4 | D6 | 5 | 1-hand | 1-hand | If you slay an enemy, add 1d6 to your next attack |
| Short Shot Weapon | D4 | NA | D4 | 25 | 1-hand | NA | If you use two hands on this weapon, add 1d6 to damage and 10 feet to range |
| Hand Castor | D4 | NA | D4 | 20 | 1-hand | NA | On dealing damage, you may return a used attack token |
| Short Weapon | D6 | NA | D6 | 5 | 1-hand | NA | If your attack die rolls a 1, reroll that die (once per combat) |
| Blocking Weapon | D4 | NA | D8 | 5 | 1-hand | NA | If you successfully defend an attack, deal 1 damage to enemy |
| Hand Weapon | D4 | D4 | D4 | Close | 1-hand | NA | Add 1 damage for consecutive attacks on same opponent |
| Unnarmed | D2 | NA | D2 | Close | 1-hand | NA |  |

### Armor Set

Armor Sets grant limited use abilities. They are best selected when they cover a weakness in your character’s setup.

For example, a character can have abilities that involve lots of card discarding and recovering, so the Preparation Set is good for them. For another example, a character could have a low amount of health, so the Deflector set or the Clutch set can be useful.



While armor sets aren’t as crucial as weapons, it’s recommended that the characters start with one, so they exist in the Building a Character section.

**Armor Sets**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Armor Name** | **Set Ability** |
| Drifter Set | Once per combat: prevent attack against you |
| Deflector Set | Once per combat: reroll defense dice |
| Preparation Set | Once per day: increase your hand size for combat by 1 |
| Marauder Set | Once per day: Play additional action in a turn after taking damage |
| Mending Set | Once per day: heal yourself by an amount equal to your level |
| Clutch Set | Once per day: if an attack would Down you, set health to 1 instead |

## **Enhancing A Character**

Beyond creating a character, we have other built in mechanisms for enhancing the character, granting them additional health, stats, or abilities that are separate from the character themselves.

### Equipment

Other than armor, specific slots on your character are for wearing Equipment. These provide bonus abilities, capabilities, or modifiers to certain kinds of rolls.

Regardless of body type or number of limbs, only one item of each slot can be used at one time. For example, if you have 2 helmets, even if you have 2 heads, you have to pick one to have an effect at the start of combat.



**Equipment Examples**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Equipment Name** | **Slot** | **Effect** |
| Thinking Hat | Head | While worn, grants +1 **Knowledge** |
| Enchanted Breastplate | Body | Add 1 to all defense values |
| Ring of Aulm | Accessory | While worn, grants +1 spirituality |
| Hydraulic Grip Gauntlet | Hands | Cannot be disarmed |
| Angel’s Blessing | Arms | Can float 5 feet off the ground, reduce fall speed |
| Nice Pants | Legs | While worn, grants +1 charisma |
| Spring Shoes | Feet | When Jumping, gain an extra 10 feet of movement |

### Consumables

Consumables can be used in place of character card abilities in combat when taking a non-card action (see combat section), and generally are removed from your deck upon use. You decide whether the consumable acts in the place of a top or bottom ability when acting in a turn.

These are items like a potion that can be quaffed, a magical staff with limited charges, some mechanical equipment with limited battery, a bag of souls, and so on. The specifics are up to your GM and the setting. Below are just some examples:

**Consumable Examples**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Description** |
| Small Healing Potion | Twice, heal 1d4 Health Points |
| Hand Mirror | Polished Silver with a handle, covered in etchings |
| Emerald | A green gem |
| Wind Instrument | Either a flute, bagpipe, or whatever else |
| Pint of honey | Honey from bees in a glass jar |
| Lighter | A pressurized container of flammable oil, with a sparkwheel and button on top to create a small flame |
| Glass Bottle | Bottle made of glass, can hold a pint of liquid or whatever else can fit |
| Bag of metal balls | Can be dropped on an adjacent space to make it a tripping hazard, Finesse of 2 or become Toppled |
| Metal Chain, 5 ft. | A chain of iron, 5 feet long |
| Wooden Pole, 10 ft. | A thick wooden dowel, 10 feet long (comes in 2 5ft sections) |
| Set of dice | Can be used to roll random numbers |
| Bag (Linen) | A bag made of fabric, volume of 20 gallons |
| Magnifying glass | Polished concave lens with a handle, shows fine details |
| Grappling Hook | A grappling hook on the end of 30 feet of rope. Finesse difficulty to attach to a point is +1 For every 5 feet of distance |
| Net (Rope) | A net made of rope. If dropped on a foe, their movement cannot exceed 5 ft until they free themselves. Must attack the net (HP 3) or succeed a strength check (3) to escape the net |
| Rope | 50 feet of rope made of animal fibers |
| Staff of Magical Missles | 3 times a day, you can use this staff to cast a spell launching a 3d6 blast towards a target within 30 feet |
| Wand of Suggestion | Once a day, you can use this wand to increase your next calculated influence value by 1 |
| Reusable wallpaper | Up to 5 times, place a decorative paper wallpaper (10x100 ft) |

You’ll probably notice that we don’t specify prices. Partly, this is because the currency you use will depend on the setting of your campaign (dollars, gold pieces, company scrip, seashells, etc.), and partly this is because anything we put would be arbitrary anyway. No one is going to simulate a full economy of supply and demand and inflation and so on. Items cost as much as is reasonable for them to cost, if they have a cost at all. Work with your GM on managing what can be bought and for how much.

### Augment Cards

Finally, there are augment cards. These can be positive or negative, but are added to your character card deck (meaning they can be drawn for combat, see later section on Starting Combat for more details).

Augmnet cards are very contextual, so we provide blank cards for the GM to fill out. To give you ideas, below are some examples.

**Influence Cards**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Description** |
| Blessing of Yindar | Duration: 5 Rnds ; Action: As long as sunlight is touching you, gain +1 to all rolls |
| Bog Witch Curse | Duration: 1 day ; Action: flip a coin after each attack. If heads, take a -3 penalty |
| Broken Leg | Action: gain 10 ft movement, take 1 point damage. Passive: -1 strength |
| Faulty Computer | Duration: Instant ; Action: Move vehicle 20 feet in a random direction |
| Augment lvl 1: Legs | Action: powered kick, 2d8 damage, 5ft range ; Passive: +1 strength |
| Fresh Coffee | Duration: 1 hour ; Passive: +2 Knowledge checks, +5ft movement when taking an action that gives movement |
| Curse | As soon as you can, you must play this card when it is drawn. Take 2 damage, discard a card, and then place this card in discard |

**Sample Character Continued : Zin Fantallay**

**Armor: Drifter Set  
Weapons: Short Weapon (Curved Sword), Short Weapon (Gladius)**

**Equipment: Thinking Cap (New Knowledge total: 2)**

**Consumables: Bag of Metal Balls, Hand Mirror, Small Healing Potion**

## Feature Cards

**To be clarified later. Ideas: play around with the rules/fundamentally change gameplay somehow, get one at 3, 7, 11?**

## Character Creation Review

You may intend to eventually add one or more higher level cards that have specific requirements, and build your character stats accordingly. You may have a particular kind of character in mind, and set aside stats that fit the idea of that character; In this case, as you level, you’ll *discover* what kinds of cards end up fitting the character you’ve built.

There’s no wrong way to build a character, and no one card should or shouldn’t feel necessary to include for any one character deck. People are multi-faceted and surprising, and your characters can be too!

### 

### **Sample Character Finished : Zin Fantallay**

## Combat

Combat is when opposing forces (the characters and some other non-player entity(ies)) come to a clash. Differing goals come into conflict, and resources (namely health) are tested against attacks (namely abilities/actions)

All attacks are responded to by the defender with defense rolls. All influence rolls affecting a target are met with opposed influence rolls; when opposing values tie, the aggressor wins.

### Starting Combat

At the start of combat, shuffle your deck and draw 7 cards to bring into play.

Then combat order is defined, starting with whichever group initiated the combat. Turns alternate between the players and enemies. When one person of the party enters combat, the whole party enters combat.

### Turn Order

When it’s the opponent’s turn, they all act in no particular order, but all of them act before their turn finishes.

When it’s the player’s turn, they act in whatever order they collectively choose, and all have a chance to act before their turn finishes.

Turn order for combat is established by whoever initiates. This carries with it some implications:

Much like real life, tense conversations can escalate into violence. If you think a fight is about to happen, it’s probably in your interest to be the one to start it. However, violence usually comes with consequences (who is at fault/to be reprimanded, but also who lives to reach the next day). Tread carefully!

In addition, surprise rounds are particularly effective against enemies, and can be quite debilitating against the players, especially if they have particular setups that can be interrupted. Tread carefully!

### Taking a Turn

Each character’s turn consists of taking two actions. These can either be card abilities, or non-card actions.

Non-card actions are more generic types of actions, but typically non-consequential/non-aggressive activities. They could be pulling a lever or pushing over a table, but often are used to regain cards from discard. All non-card actions grant 15 feet of movement.

Card abilities describe their effect. Some grant movement, establish an attack (assuming there’s a target to attack in range), apply an effect to an area, summon an ally, apply a buff, or apply a debuff. The particular flavor of how they are played out are left to the player to describe. For example, the same basic attack from the fighter is a sword swing, but to the mage is a blast of magic, and so on.

You decide both actions you’re going to take before you take either and play out your turn.

### Movement

By deciding both actions before you play out your turn, you add together the movement granted by the card abilities and non-card actions. This total of movement can be used in 5 ft increments and be used before, between, and after your actions & abilities.

As an example, for your turn you decide to play an action card’s top ability, and for your second action you decide to take a non-card action to read from a book in your items. The card’s ability that you played states that you may add up to 20 feet to your movement, and also targets an enemy for an attack. The book you read (which activates some buff to allies around you) is played as a non-card action: by being a non-card action, you gain up to 15 feet added to your movement from that alone. Altogether, this means you have 35 feet of movement to use this turn.

Say an enemy is 10 feet away. You could use up 10 feet of movement (leaving 25 feet of movement left) to get in range, and then attack with your top card ability. You decide to move another 10 feet (leaving 15 feet of movement left), and then read your book. With the last 15 feet of movement, you choose to move 15 more feet away from the battlefield, using up the rest of your 35 feet of movement for that turn.

Card abilities that grant movement, but can’t meet target/range requirements (target is still too far away after moving) will still resolve (ie: go to discard/exhaust), but any movement they provide is granted regardless.

## **Taking Actions: Details**

### Non-card Actions

Any use of a non-card action grants the character up to 15 ft of movement. In addition to this, one of the following at your discretion also happens:

**Game Mechanics Ability**

* Returning target card from the discard pile to your hand
* Use of a consumable

**Interact with World Ability**

* Arming/disarming of a weapon
* Locking a door
* Pushing a boulder
* Striking a pose
* etc...

Many card abilities go into the discard pile, so typical play involves using a non-card action to return your cards to your hand for the following round.

In addition, many cards don’t grant movement as a part of how they execute. Using a non-card ability to position yourself before taking a card ability is common.

### Card abilities

Each card has a top and bottom ability: usually you’ll play the top ability from one card and bottom ability of another card for your entire turn, though combining a card-ability and a non-card ability is a valid play. The text on the card will describe how the ability is executed.

Each card ability has a target, a duration, may involve one or more die rolls, and eventually end in some state: discarded, exhausted, or returned to hand.

For sake of conciseness, cards might describe values in terms of variables (X, Y). How those variables factor into the ability are determined by the card’s rules.

You cannot play 2 top or 2 bottom card abilities simultaneously. You must meet card text requirements (ie: be in range, have cards to discard, etc.) for them to take the state effect.

#### How Targeting Works

In order to target an enemy, they must be in range for the type of action. A target of a weapon attack must be in range of the weapon via the weapons stats, and a target of an influence action must be inside your influence range (default 50 feet, requires line of sight).

If the target is an enemy and the ability is an attack, the opponent rolls their defense die to reduce the amount of incoming damage.

If the target is an enemy and the ability involves an influence die, the opponent rolls their influence die to prevent the success of the ability.

Some abilities have a target but don’t involve a die roll at all: the rules of the ability will dictate what effect it will have.

#### How Duration Works

If the duration is something longer than Instant, then it lasts in **Active**. The ability can expire in one of three ways: either the duration expires, another Active effect is put into play, or the trigger for the ability happens within the timeframe of the duration.

For example, a card ability might have a duration of one round, and state that the next attack against you is reduced by your level in value (ie: at level 2, enemy’s attack is reduced by 2). Because the ability is triggered by the next attack, the first attack against you is reduced, while the **second attack** **is not reduced**. Also, if you are **not attacked** by the end of that round, the effect ends having not been used. Finally, **playing a second Active card replaces the original effect**. Regardless of how the effect ends, the card is moved to the specified location afterwards, hand, discard, or exhaust (see next section: How Abilities Finish).

1 round is relative to the character, and is from the start of their current turn to the start of their next turn.

We recommend tracking an active cards duration with a die placed on the active card until it expires or is replaced.

[tracking summons health]

#### How Abilities Finish

Icons on the card indicate where the card goes after being used: returning back to your hand, to the discard pile, or to the exhaust pile.

*Discard*

Discarded cards go into a separate pile during combat, the discard pile. Discarded cards cannot be used again until returned from the Discard pile. This can be done with certain card abilities, or with a non-card ability.

At the end of combat, or when using card abilities outside of combat, generally discarded cards return to be used immediately. There isn’t a turn order outside of combat, so (within reason) it’s assumed you can spend a little time resting between using an ability and using it again (returning it from discard pile via a non-card ability).

*Exhaust*

Exhausted cards go into a separate pile during combat, the exhausted pile. Exhausted cards cannot be used again until the character performs a Long Rest. Abilities that are exhausted are generally more powerful abilities.

Outside of combat, these exhausting abilities are still exhausted.



*To Hand*

To Hand cards return to your hand immediately after use. These cards often have smaller and immediate effects.

## **Giving and Receiving Damage**

When attacking (or being attacked), those impacted must make opposing attack and defense rolls. These add to an Attack Value or Defense Value, respectively.

If the defense value is higher, then no damage is dealt. If the attack value is higher, then the difference in values is how much damage gets dealt to the defender.

For example, if my defense roll is 1d4 + 1d6, and I roll a 2 and a 4 respectively, then my defense value (with no other considerations) is 6. If the opponent’s attack roll is 4d4 and they roll a 1, 3, 2, and 2, then their attack value is 8 (without any other considerations). The difference, 8 - 6, is 2, so I take 2 points of damage, flipping over 2 health tokens to the damaged state.

Attack and defense values can be modified by abilities (buffs from allies or debuffs from opponents), equipment (armor or magical items that increase/decrease effects), and Contact Tokens. Ultimately however, both attack and defense values evaluate to a singular value before they are compared with each other



## **Range, Targeting, and Facing**

Targeting is a combination of meeting range requirements, and targeting requirements.

### Range

Ranges vary from Close, and then every 5ft increment (close, 5, 10, 15, etc.). It takes 5 ft of movement to move from 5 ft to Close. Close range means you occupy the same square as the opponent.

Weapons dictate their range of effectiveness. This range applies to any attack action from a card ability.

Abilities that use the Influence die must be within the Influence Range. The Influence Range is 50 ft at base.

### Targeting

Provided a target is in range, a target falls into one of these categories:

* Enemy: enemy combatant, be it a creature, an illusion, or anything else considered hostile
* Enemies: multiple enemy combatant
* Ally: other players you’re playing with, or NPC that is helpful
* Self: your self.
* Area: a space, occupied or otherwise, of some specified dimension. Card ability should dictate the radius, or length/width of an area that is affected.
* Plant: whether an ally, enemy, or neutral party, sapient or otherwise, this target must be a plant. Up to GM discretion
* Animal: Same as Plant target, but for Animals.

## **Overstep Attack**

An Overstep Attack is a ‘free’ attack by an enemy, when moving into our out of close range. These attacks are the combatant’s most simple attack: Unless supported by an ongoing buff/debuff, these attacks are not otherwise modified by effects (cannot apply special effects to this attack)

Overstep Attack do not happen if the enemy has not perceived the player.

## **Movement**

Through use of non-card actions, or card abilities that grant movement, you can move in 5 ft. increments around the battlefield. Any ability that has the phrasing “you gain XX movement” applies to the total movement you can make this turn.

Movement can be applied before, between, or after your actions. For example, if your movement is 15 ft., you can move forward 5 ft., attack, and then move away with your remaining 10 ft.

### Example

Below is an example of how a combat might start and then play out in a couple of rounds:





## Non-combat

Generally, non-combat interactions play by the same rules as combat, but on a longer scale. Cards that are exhausted still get exhausted, but cards that are discarded and can return to your hand pretty much immediately within reason (at the GM’s discretion).

When taking an action that may fail, and isn’t covered by a character card (in particular, isn’t a combat action), then the influence die is used, combined with the relevant accumulated stat value, to come to a total stat value. The GM determines on a case-by-case basis how difficult the action is, and whether the generated value is sufficient.

For example, assume a warrior wishes to climb a steep cliff quietly, to get the jump on some enemies. The GM might prompt them to roll influence and add their Strength stat. If they have a D4 for their influence die, and roll a 2, and add their Strength stat value (3), then their total value for accomplishing this is 5. Given the context (this should be technically possible for non-strong characters too albeit with some difficulty, but it’s not just climbing, but climbing carefully and quietly), the GM could decide that this value of 5 is sufficient, and the warrior is successful. See notes later in the document for recommended GM practices for more details.

# Additional Rules

### **Mark Tokens**

The last type of token is a Mark Token. Certain character abilities apply or consume Mark Tokens according to the rules written on the card. These tokens are ephemeral, only lasting in the context of the combat encounter. Though they are harder to apply, they also enable even more powerful card abilities than what, say, an Attack Contact Token could do alone.

**Long Rest**

A long rest is considered 8 hours of inactivity. Typically this is by sleeping, but resting in a single location in some form is sufficient, depending on the setting.

After a long rest, all exhausted cards are returned to the deck, and the character heals for 2 \* level hit points.

## **Buff/Debuff rules**

Multiple allies can buff the same character, but they each can only apply one buff to that ally. Said another way, you can receive buffs from multiple allies, but each ally can only give you one buff each. If already buffed by one ally, and that ally applies another buff, it replaces the previous buff.

Debuffs act the same as buffs.

## **Being Downed**

When all of your health tokens are flipped to the damaged state, you are Downed. This means:

* your character is unconscious (can take no actions)
* You choose a number of cards (current level in amount) and move them to the Graveyard pile. These can be from any location (in hand, discard, exhaust, character deck).

## **Graveyard**

Cards in the Graveyard cannot be used in or out of combat, but they still apply their passive effects (increasing stats or health).

Each subsequent death results in more cards put into the graveyard, but the graveyard can only increase until you only have your hand size left in cards. You always have your hand size in cards available to use.

In order to regain cards lost to the graveyard you must level up. This returns all cards in the graveyard to your Character Deck.

## **Recovery**

Recovery from being downed, and being able to take actions again, requires:

* Being healed for half of your health tokens (rounded down), or
* If the encounter ends and you are still downed, you recover with up to your level in hitpoints.

## **Death**

If you continue to take damage while Downed up to your max health, then your character is permanently slain. You can track this by rotating each damage token for each point of damage you take past 0 health.The purpose of this ruling is not to encourage character death through normal interactions, but rather to enable character death due to extreme factors, such as jumping in lava with no special equipment.

## **Currency**

Tactile Tabletop doesn’t have a native currency system such as gold coins or dollar bills. It is left up to the GM to decide if currency is relevant for their game, and how to offer or use it.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Average Player Level** | **Cheap Priced Item Examples** | **Moderate Priced Item Examples** | **Expensive Priced Item Examples** |
| 1-3 | Food | Lodging | A decent Weapon |
| 4-6 | Excessive Adventure Supplies | Travel | A base of operations |
| 7-9 | Buying the pub a round | A powerful artifact/weapon | One-of-a-kind items |
| 10+ | A hefty bribe | A trading ship | A small army |

## **Impediments**

Impediments are a specific ailments that fit into (or on top of in-use) equipment slots. The GM can assign these curses to players in a number of forms: If the character equips a cursed magical item, if the character breaks a leg, if a status effect of an area has a more permanent effect, and so on.

Like other equipment cards, the card will describe the debuff that it applies, but will also list how it can be lifted.

## **Rules Around Durations**

Only one summoned creature or effect on an area can exist at one time. Using another ability to summon something before the first summoned thing naturally expires banishes that first summon.

Any ability that has an effect lasting longer than an Instant amount of time can be dismissed by the caster on their turn.

## **Die Chart**



## **Physical Changes**

Some card abilities, potions, blessings, or other effects might have temporary or permanent effects on tha character. The mechanics of these changes should be specified in the situation that they are applied, but implied in this effect is how it might impact how you can interact with the world. An attack that grants you arms of fire might cause a tapestry to catch fire; a hardened skin of stone might terrify a populace unfamiliar with such a feature; and on. We can’t provide rules for each and every contingent effect or change in ones body, but keep it in mind for fruitful roleplaying.

# Notes for GMs specifically

## **Creating NPC’s**

This section lists some guidelines and a few examples of how a GM might create NPC’s, but it is by no means intended to be definitive or exhaustive. Those taking on the GM role are encouraged to create interesting NPCs that fit whatever setting is being played that will produce the most fun experience for your players.

### Principles

* NPCs should have lower defense die, but higher health points total. The lower defense die means people attempts to do damage are not suddenly dwindled, and the higher health total allows for more rounds of engagement and back and forth tactics
* The abilities NPCs have don’t need to directly emulate the character cards, and arguably shouldn’t. Good NPC abilities are specific and simple, while fitting narratively with the given NPC
* Contact tokens are particularly potent, so you can give some of them to powerful NPCs to give them an upper hand.
* NPC abilities, when used, don’t generally go into piles like discard, exhaust, etc. unless specified otherwise. The same actions can be used round after round. They will have a set of actions with a defined ruleset for their use. These actions are tied to themselves, and not to a card.
* NPC abilities can be specified as top or bottom to control what combinations can be deployed, but some NPCs have actions that are not specified as top or bottom. These can be treated as a top or bottom at the will of the GM.
  + In addition, typically an NPC can only use one action per turn (cannot use the same action multiple times), unless it’s not specified as either top or bottom

### Examples

Goblin

HP: 10

Defense: 1D4

Top action: Stab. attack 2D4, range Close

Top action: Bow. attack 1D4, range 15 ft

Bottom action: Scurry. Gain 20 ft. movement

Bottom action: stink bomb. Range 15ft., attack 1d6, if attack beats defense then target has -2 to all attack values for 1 rnd

Holy Knight

HP: 60

Defense: 1D6

Action: Slash. Attack 1D10, range 5 ft

Action: Holy Ray. Attack 1D8, range 20 ft.

Action: Consecration. Attack 2D6, area around self 15 ft., 1 use per battle

Action: Angelic Flight. Movement 25 ft.

Table Dragon

HP: 100

Defense: 1D6

Action: Claw. 2D4, range 10 ft., can be used once without using up a top/bottom action

Top Action: Fire Breath. 2D6, Range 100 ft., Can be used once every 1d6 rounds

Top Action: Flight. Movement 50 ft, can be through the air

Alien Mech Ball

HP: 40

Defense: 1D4

Top Action: Rollout. Movement 30 ft, all opponents in path defend against 1D6 + 1D4 damage. Those who take damage are toppled and don’t block ball’s path, those who don’t take damage prevent ball from moving through their space. Toppled enemies can be approached in close range.

Bottom Action: Sticky Bits. 3D4, range Close

## **Creating your own cards**

Homebrewing is something we’ve experienced with all tabletop games at one point or another. It’s essentially why Tactile Tabletop exists in the first place. In the spirit of this, we encourage the player’s and GMs creativity in creating their own character cards.

We recommend these principles when designing your own cards:

* Don’t make card abilities that are too useful. A card that you always want to use every round for most any combat makes for less varied gameplay for you and your fellow players
* Consider what you have available to you to balance the card:
  + if it’s an attack, where is its bonus derived and does it scale?
  + Is the target a specific type of enemy, any enemy, or multiple enemies/things in an area?
  + What are the passives, if any, for this card?
  + When the card is played, does it return to the hand, go to the discard pile (to be used again on the turn after next usually), or go to the exhaust pile (once per day)?
  + Generally cards that exhaust themselves are more powerful than those that are discarded, and discarded cards are more powerful than those that return to your hand
  + Level one cards (those that have no stat requirements to be taken) should only give one health point or one skill point
* Cards that apply Mark should, generally, either be of high cost or be at risk of not being applied
  + In reflection of that, abilities that act upon marked targets should be more powerful
* Cards that discard/exhaust other cards have a high cost, and so should have a powerful effect
* Cards that play around an enemies movement or denying them actions can be conditionally powerful, keep this in mind

# Alternative Rules

We’ve provided here a set of rules and guidelines that should result in fair and fun gameplay, but each gaming group is different and for difficulty or ease it might make sense to tweak or dramatically change some of what’s been written down here. Here are some suggestions that your group might decide to take.

* Increase the health you start with & gain with each level
* Apply a cap on the number of character cards that can make up your deck (would probably result in swapping out cards on level up instead of gaining cards)
* Allow for swapping out one card at each level up (to not make meeting requirements confusing, the card swap must happen before the additional cards are added
* Related to the above, swapping out 3 cards when going to level 2, then swapping 2 cards going to level 3, etc. to emulate refining a character (figuring out what they are as they grow)
* **Sneak Attacks Type 1**

Normally, the when the group of enemies or players decide to start the fight, this determines the turn order (which group starts first, with alternating turns to follow). Sneak attacks are special, because they are for when attacking an enemy that isn’t aware of you, but are related: immediately after a sneak attack, the fight starts. The group aligned with the one who performed the sneak attack will start the turn order, and the one who performed the sneak attack won’t act in that first turn.

Sneak attacks confer 1.5 multiplier to the attack.

It’s important to stress that the enemy isn’t aware of you for a sneak attack to work. If you are arguing with someone and then pull out a weapon, you do not get the 1.5 multiplier for damage.

* **Sneak Attacks Type 2**

Another type of sneak attack: let the players take 2 turns before the enemy takes their first.

# 

# Glossary

**Exhaust**: when a card is removed from use until rest

**Discard**: removing a card from your hand and placing it in the discard/used pile, can be received by certain card abilities or taking a non-card ability

**Recover**: returning a card from your discard pile to your hand

**Attack**: an attack roll combining all attack die that your equipment provides + buffs

**Defense**: a defense roll combining all defense die your equipment provides + modifiers from equipment + buffs

**Hidden**: opponents cannot see you or take action against you. Hidden is lost when you take any action outside of movement

**Status**: When played, card is placed separate from all other piles. This card has an affect or trigger, and after expiring ends up in the discard/lost card pile as specified

**Downed**: unconscious

**Graveyard**: Card(s) lost upon being downed, returned on leveling

**Toppled:** Being toppled means target is knocked prone

**Prone:** Getting up from Prone consumes one Action and disables movement for the remainder of the turn

**Close:** less than 5 ft

**No sight**: can’t get visual descriptions of surroundings, and can’t make targeted attacks

**Active**: a card with Active in its duration occupies a slot during play to apply an ongoing effect. Only one Active effect can be in play at once.

**Target:** In order to target, the receiver of the ability must be in range and in sight

**Target card from discard**: get to choose what’s returned

**Distracted:** target gets -2 to next die roll

**Buff**: a positive effect to an influence/defense/attack value

**Debuff**: a negative effect to an influence/defense/attack value

**Unconscious**: Not able to take any actions

**GM**: Game Master. They generally create the world, creatures, and story that the players engage with.

**Full rest**: 8 hours of inactivity/sleep

### **TODO’s**:

#### For Now:

* Game is slow…. Engagement might be a big part of this
  + Might be related to how we handle movement, thoughts:
    - since we don’t give a base movement, it comes from cards, people often don’t do lots of moving, since they’re more thinking of actions to take than making moves?
    - not many cards give movement… need more?
    - The cost to set something up is higher, need to get into range, means need to think multiple steps in advance, which slows things down
  + Might be related to how we have top and bottom actions…. And that they need to be decided up front
    - Allow for more flexibility, choose cards whenever in the middle of the character’s turn?
    - Have more cards, but only a single ability per card? Comes back to why/how we distinguish top and bottom actions, I think. It allows for Balance, to pair a powerful thing with a less powerful thing so the card isn’t useless/we can get some fun card titles, and means no card should be useless because there’s two actions on each, but maybe it’s not worth it
  + Might be related to side banter, planning, etc.
    - Maybe we can time how l0ng people take to plan, talk, enemies to take their turn, etc.
  + Turn ordering…
    - go in order in who gets hit?
      * Maybe don’t have all players and then all enemy’s go, increases engagement
    - For each enemy, add 15 seconds. 10 enemies, 150 seconds to get through turns before cutoff, then enemies go. Or scales with # of players
      * Last player is under more frantic… maybe makes it more fun?
      * More pressure leads to more planning out of game
      * Rewards more experience with the game
      * **Common XP objective?**
* What makes something a top action versus a bottom action?
  + What is the Rubric for determining it, beyond vibes?
  + We have so far seen it hard to get combo’s going, and hard when the player happens to draw lots of exhaust cards in one area, if we could find a good way to balance this, specifically **a predictable model players could follow to meaningfully build their decks**, I think we’d have a lot less friction
  + Record what top and bottom cards are sort of like
* Tokens “states” needs to be clear, suggest making a graph of when and where tokens are available and used
  + States:
    - When a token isn’t consumed or applied to an enemy it’s just… there
    - When applied to an enemy, they’re consumed (but apply their buff until enemy dies/exits range)
    - When a card says it consumes a token, it can consume a token (duh)
  + When Tokens move:
    - Tokens are placed from a player on enemy(ies) at the start of their turn, before they take card actions, and it’s as many as they want
      * Currently don’t have a limit on how many tokens can be moved to In Use at a time…
    - Tokens just get consumed if card consumes them
    - Tokens come back to the player when they full rest
    - Tokens come back to player from being on an enemy if a card ability says they do
    - Tokens can move from one enemy from another if card says so
    - Tokens come back from consumed state if card says it does
    - Tokens come back from consumed state if Hand Castor is used
      * No difference between token on enemy or just consumed
* Github integrated task scheduling thing? Like JIRA or Slack or whatever
* Create level 3 cards
* Feature Cards
  + Feature cards add to hand size, are always available for combat? Make that a passive that all feature cards have?
* XP cards at start of encounter, make it harder but give more XP, Objective cards
  + Draw 2 at start of encounter, pick one
  + Challenge applies to all players (if one fails, they all fail)
  + Cards in landscape
  + Each challenge requires defeating all combatants (which can allow for incapacitating, chasing off, making them run away, etc.)
* Roleplay xp cards
  + Draw 3 and pick one each level
  + If you don’t complete it before next level up, it gets replaced
  + Reward applies to whole party, encourages co-operation
* Frostgrave: buy book, use nebulous abstractions. Wizards, make a party, dungeoneering, independent goals

#### For later:

Level 4, 5, “Ultimate” cards

Think about more niche requirements for higher level cards (standing in water, given an insult)

Level 5,

Level 3, no attack cards…

Level 4 = special attack

Level 5 = ultimate, really high requirements but lots of damage, infinite healing, getting multiple cards from exhaust, etc.

What makes something a top or a bottom ability… stacked exhaust on bottom, then each turns gets harder to make decisions stuff

Card idea: armor, or artifact, which increases your defense if you successfully defend

Consider: +1 defence from token isn’t as impactful? Maybe, maybe not.

A card that does something at 1 health, combo’s with high defense/clutch armor set builds

Get manual feedback

* Ask: what do you want to know? What do you want to know next?
* Reactions, clean up
* Core book, extra depth in following book
* Create most succinct guide
* Make manual finalized (double check glossary notably, but also layout, order, wording, etc.)
* Move armor/weapons into character creation
* Reorganize character creation, start with 1 weapon and 1 armor set, think about moving armor and stuff into character building section
* Simplify equipment

Look into GM notes to expand how to GM well

Stats as tokens (token for +5 and +1)

Add adv/disadv next to equipment & consumables

Higher level armor sets?

Continue fleshing out campaign’s

More things like poison/fire, not active but a persisting effect, at various levels (maybe mostly level 3?)

Make a card creator app thing

* Thinking again about a card creator app thing… maybe we should create a design document for it, and that’ll help us make some of these additions
  + Along those lines, I think maybe considering abilities as atomic things, instead of as pairs, might be required if we’re going to seriously tackle balancing top/bottom stuff

Color borders according to requirements

Print everything out and do a full game

Have enemies that cause player’s to discard a card

### INFLUENCES

Dicey dungeons, into the breach, DnD, Divinity: Original Sin, Dark Souls, Xcom, Magic the gathering, gloomhaven, TheAngryGM, avatar the last airbender

You and 4 players build a deck, random enemies, defend against hem, castle defender

Reinforced doors, oil to drop on them

Since sitdown session game

Hero’s building decks…

Sand-dial

Build a hero, defend against random waves

First wave.

Level 1: 6 pts

1, goblin. 1, goblin. 4, orcs. That’s the wave

Level 2 8 points

Draw 5, shot arrow, one enemy,

Spear, 3 damage

Kick down ladder…

Enemies small… 4 gobs, 3 orcs, 2 trolls

Gob 1 dmg, 1 health

Orc 3

Troll 5

Spear and arrows

Diff power for diff number enemies

End of each turn, reshuffle enemies, and add siege card added (ram, ballista, etc.)

Get additional cards… bombs = can destroy equipment

More rewards to kill more things…

Last long as possible

Players get more stuff over time

Draw 5 cards,

Character abilities - repair castle for 1…

Diff character decks… different cards, some overlap,

Siege card enters enemy deck, better cards enter your deck

Objectives

Choose character ability…. Extra damage for arrows, extra bomb when get bomb

Break card: 18 points, but drawn at 12, wave ends early

Gold, items?

Make with space

What you can’t defend damage the castle

Goblins requite 1 attack, orcs - 1 cannon or 4 attacks

Resource to create characters