

PLAYER'S GUIDE

Like board games? Remember Dungeons & Dragons? Want to try improv? Welcome to Deckahedron World!

WELCOME TO ROLE-PLAYING

Deckahedron World is a system for telling a story. The authors of the story are you and your friends, sitting around a table.

This story is improvisational, interactive, and collaborative.

The rewards for playing are laughter and excitement while you play, and warm conversations for years afterwards that start with "Remember that time we were playing Deckahedron World and..."

HOW TO MAKE A GREAT STORY

Imagine the audience for this story is the inner children of all the players. What evokes the feelings we had when we were children playing pretend? Can you remember being 11 years old and watching a spectacular Steven Spielberg movie? Or maybe a cheap-but-awesome Sam Raimi movie?

You are going to collaborate with all the other players to make this story, so when you add your parts, think of what will give your friends around the table a thrill, put them in suspense, ratchet up their feelings of tension, or make their jaws drop with awe.

Sometimes inner children get a big kick out of blood and guts. Your inner child might giggle at the brothel scenes in HBO's Game of Thrones. If you don't know what topics your friends consider "off-limits", it is a good idea to ask and tell before you start playing.

The story that emerges from Deckahedron

World is not a precisely crafted thing. That's ok. It doesn't have to be high art or even a cartoon on Adult Swim. It gets shaped by each player, and when your turn comes, you adapt, do your best improvisational "Yes, and", and see where it goes from there. It might sound like chaos, but with some faith in your friends, you will delight at how the plot solidifies, and how real the characters become.

SPECIFICALLY, WHAT TO DO

In a game of Deckahedron World, one person will take on the role of the Game Master, or "GM". The other people will be called simply "Players".

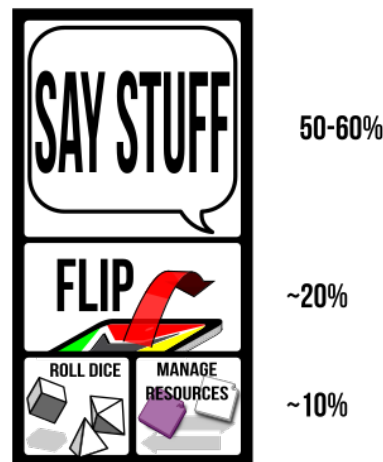
THE GM

The GM's job is to know all the rules, and say stuff. Occasionally they will write notes and scribble some quick numerical facts.

The GM's domain is the world.

THE PLAYERS

Player, your domain is your character.



The player's job

Most of your time will be spent saying stuff. You are part of a conversation. Ask questions, use your imagination, chime in when someone

inspires you. Think about your character like a hero of a movie, and try playing as the writer of the movie, or the director, or immerse yourself like a method actor standing in the character's shoes and seeing with their eyes.

Deckahedron World invites you to:

- Describe your character and their actions
- Act out their dialogue
- Describe *how* they act
 - flourishes and stunts
 - their facial expressions, voice, and body language
- Tell what they say / hear / see / smell / taste / feel
- Describe their thoughts & memories
- Chime in when they interact with or support the other characters
- Tell parts of the story
- Tell your character's backstory
- Contribute ideas and assert facts when the GM asks questions
- Command your character's hirelings and animal companions
- Refer to your **moves** to generate more ideas and see what boundaries you can push





As the conversation unfolds, the rules will chime in as well. When that happens you will be called do things beyond just "saying stuff":

- Flip your Deckahedron
- Move tokens around
- Roll dice

This guide will teach you how to do those things.

THE DECKAHEDRON

Every player except the GM gets a Deckahedron. Inspect your Deckahedron. You should have 20 cards. There are 4 symbols, or "suits", on the fronts and backs of the cards:

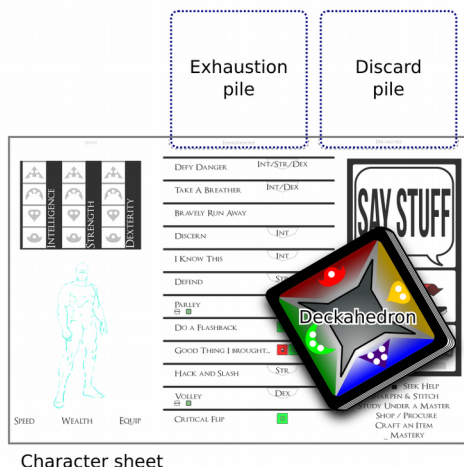
Name	suit	odds	color	rank
Anchor		indicates the weakest odds	red	rank 1
Bulb		indicates below average odds	yellow	rank 2
Crescent		indicates above average odds	green	rank 3
Dart		indicates the best odds	blue	rank 4

Shuffle your Deckahedron and place it face-down in front of you.

Whenever your character attempts something risky, where the outcome is not certain, the GM calls for you to use your Deckahedron and "flip".

First, the GM names the move you're attempting and which of your character's attributes -- Strength, Dexterity, or Intelligence -- you use to resolve the flip.

GM Note: The attributes used to resolve a move are listed at the top of each card. Sometimes a card gives the option of several attributes, like "Str / Dex". You may need to ask the player for more detail about what they are attempting before calling for a flip.



Character sheet

Look at the attribute on your character sheet -- what suit is it, Anchor, Bulb, Crescent, or Dart? Take the top card and flip it face up. Put it down so that the GM can read the result.

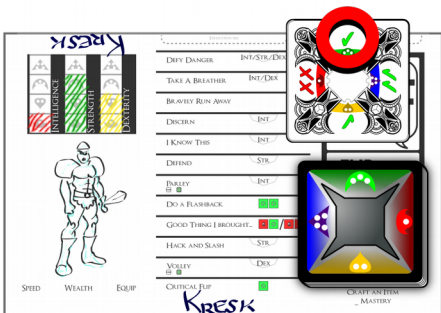
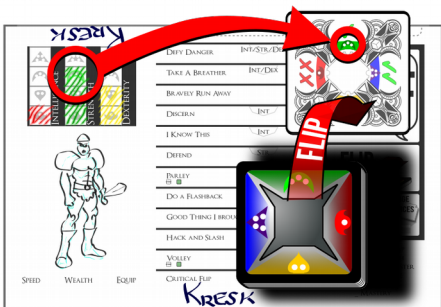
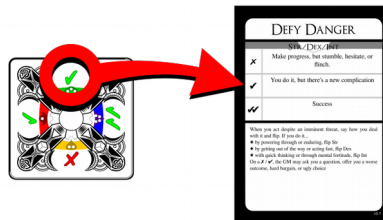


Illustration of flipping a card

The top of the flipped card shows Xs or ✓s. These tell you the result of the move. When you flip, be consistent with how you orient the card so the GM can easily read it. This helps

simplify the GM's bookkeeping and keeps the game fast-paced.



Finally, find the move card named by the GM and read its instructions. It tells you how the GM should interpret the Xs and ✓s.

Afterward, any card used during a flip goes face-up in a *discard pile*. Later, you will start another pile of cards called an *Exhaustion pile*. Keep them separate.

Note: some move cards give you or the GM a choice between several options. If one of the options is impossible (fictionally or mechanically), it may not be chosen. Choose one of the other options instead.

FOR EXAMPLE,

You're playing a character named Kresk. You say:

Kresk sees the pit of spikes in front of him, but isn't scared. He just takes a running start and mightily leaps over the pit, landing safely on the other side.

The GM might say to you:

Ok, sounds good, but let's see if Kresk's legs are strong enough. Please flip Defy Danger with your Strength.

Look over at the character sheet and see that Kresk has rank 3 (Crescent) Strength. Flip over the top card of your Deckahedron and look for that Crescent suit.

Let's say you get ✓✓. The GM uses the instructions on the Defy Danger card ("You do

it, but there's a new complication") to improvise what happens next:

You leap through the air, landing with a thud on the other side of the pit, kicking up a cloud of dust on this forgotten jungle trail. Rising to your feet, you notice that more than dust has been stirred. The sounds of movement and a threatening rattle alerts you to something approaching from inside the pit. What do you do?

OTHER WAYS TO FLIP: ADVANTAGE / DISADVANTAGE

Some flips are a little more complicated. Some moves in Deckahedron World instruct you to "take +1 advantage", "add an advantage card" or "flip with advantage". Sometimes you are given the opposite instruction, "add a disadvantage card" or "flip with disadvantage".

ADVANTAGE

With an advantage, flip over your top card as usual, and then flip over the next card as well. Compare the results (the number of **X**s or **✓**s next to the relevant suit) and *resolve the flip* with the card that has the **best** result.

If it's a tie, you may choose whichever card to be the card that *resolves the flip*.

All cards that got flipped go face-up in your *discard pile*.

Complete Flip Rule

You must flip over all the cards you were instructed to, even if the first card shows **✓✓✓**.

DISADVANTAGE

With a disadvantage, do the same thing, but

use the **worst** result.

MULTIPLE ADVANTAGES / DISADVANTAGES

For a given flip, you may be instructed to add two advantage cards or two disadvantage cards. This means you flip **3 cards in total** and take the **best** or **worst**, respectively.

No flip may use more than 3 cards in total, so adding advantage cards beyond 2 is just ignored.

Sometimes there's a situation where you are instructed to both "flip with advantage" and "flip with disadvantage". To resolve any of these combinations, simply add up all the advantages, and then subtract all the disadvantages to arrive at your sum of advantage or disadvantage. The maximum is still two extra cards, so if the sum is -3, you only flip with two disadvantage cards.

OTHER FLIP COMPLICATIONS: GREEN TOKEN CARDS



Green token symbol

A green token card

Resolving flips is the main way that players acquire green tokens in Deckahedron World. Green tokens are sometimes called "risk rewards" and they are a player's most important mechanical currency in the game.

Some Deckahedron cards have a green token symbol in the middle. After a flip is resolved by a card showing a green token symbol, take a green token from the supply.

You may only do this when the card *resolves* a flip. (ie, when flipping multiple cards, only if the *green token card* was the one from which

the ✗ or ✓ symbols were used to interpret the result of the move)

Green tokens are a currency you spend to activate "meta" parts of the game. See below for moves that let you "break" or "bend" rules, or partially take control of the narrative.

OTHER FLIP COMPLICATIONS: WOUND CARDS

Sometimes you flip over a wound card and must lose a Stamina point. See the [Combat chapter](#).

Wound cards are not used in the One-Shot Campaign, so you can skip these instructions when you start playing a longer campaign.

OTHER FLIP COMPLICATIONS: TEAMWORK FLIP

Before a flip is executed, if other players have characters in the same scene as the spotlighted character, and there is nothing in the fiction preventing it, those other players may choose to have their characters *aid* the spotlighted character. They just chime in before the flip and say how their character helps out.

Another time the Teamwork Flip is triggered is when the characters are all bound together in success or failure. (ie, Defying Danger in a canoe travelling over whitewater) In that case, the GM asks the players "who is taking the lead?". That player is the spotlighted player, and the other players are supporting.

The spotlighted player flips as they normally would, the supporting players say how they are helping and flip one Anchor.

The players choose the best result to resolve the flip.

Only the card that resolved the flip can generate a green token, and only for the player who played it.

If there are any negative consequences

(damage, danger, etc) from the result, all the participating characters must suffer them.

Supporting players may not Do a Flashback on Teamwork Flips.

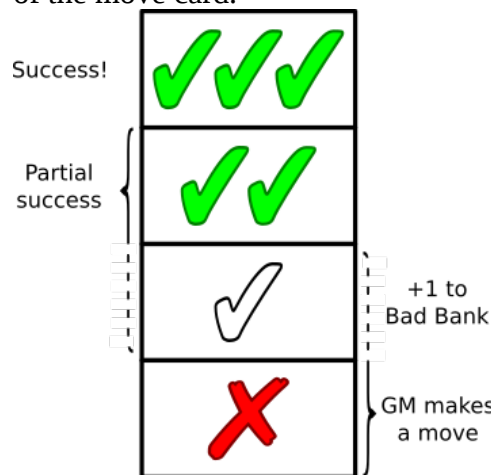
RESHUFFLING

At any time before a flip, or after a flip is resolved, you may take your *discard pile* and shuffle it back into your Deckahedron.

Whenever your Deckahedron is down to 5 or fewer cards, you **must** take your *discard pile* and shuffle it back into your Deckahedron.

INTERPRETING THE RESULT OF A FLIP

When a player's character performs a move, the player executes a flip, and the GM interprets the narrative result, based on the text of the move card.



Usually ✓✓✓ means an unfettered success, and ✓✓ means success, but with complication.

When the result is a single ✓, it sometimes means the same as a ✓✓, but often it is slightly worse.

Any time a flip results in a single ✓ the GM should add a point to the *Bad Bank* -- even when the move card says it has the same

narrative effect as a ✓✓.

When the result is ✗, it is the GM's turn to make a move. The GM narrates the consequences of the move the player just attempted and has license to take the narrative where they like.

See the GM Guide for explanations of the *Bad Bank* and for a list of moves the GM is allowed to make.

EXCEPTIONS ON ✓ AND ✗ FLIPS

Sometimes a card does not say how a ✓ should be interpreted. In that case, the GM gets to make a move, just like ✗.

Rarely, a card will have instructions for how to interpret a ✗ result. These instructions should be executed, but might only be *part* of the GM's move -- the GM gets to decide if they have more to add.

When the move card has the tag *IMMEDIATE*, the GM does not get to make a move on a ✗. Instead, the GM should just add 2 points to the *Bad Bank*.

FLIPS ONLY HAPPEN WHEN THE SITUATION IS UNCERTAIN OR RISKY

A GM only calls for a flip when the situation is uncertain or risky for the character. If the outcome is certain, the GM may just narrate what happens. Or they may ask you some clarifying questions.

Deckahedron World is a conversation between people, so there is variability in how it plays out. Different GMs will draw their line of certainty at different places.

Consider a situation where the GM has described your character, Kresk, waking up after making camp in a forest. Beside Kresk is a squirrel, nibbling an acorn.

You might respond by saying,

"Kresk wants that acorn! I Hack and Slash the squirrel!"

It would be bizarre, but completely within the rules for the GM to write up some stats for the squirrel (1 Stamina, 1 attack power), and begin a melee combat between Kresk and the squirrel, and ask you to flip Strength to resolve the Hack and Slash move.

But the GM will more likely interpret your action, as described, as having a *certain* outcome. Perhaps the GM will respond:

- "As you raise your fist to smash the squirrel, it darts off into the forest, never to be seen again."
- "How is Kresk going to overcome the squirrel's natural speed and reflexes?"
- "You smash your fist down and flatten the rodent. Strangely, it didn't even flinch. Does this odd behaviour remind Kresk of the rumors he heard about this forest being enchanted?"

PUSHING BUTTONS OR STAYING IN CHARACTER

The GM doesn't always have to invoke a move and call for a flip. But in this example, the player literally names a move ("I Hack and Slash..."). That's a strong signal to the GM, and the GM is likely to follow strong signals.

If you enjoy playing in a style where things flow like a conversation or a story, from question to answer, from description to dialogue and back around again, rather than pushing a limited set of buttons laid out in front of you, try playing without naming the moves. Just describe what your character does in a natural way.

"Kresk wants that acorn! I slam my fist down on the squirrel!"

FICTIONAL POSITION *MATTERS*

Because uncertainty is a key requirement before a flip is called for, the fiction that you and your friends establish in Deckahedron *World matters*.

If a character threatens to punch a towering Mountain Giant in the shin, the GM will not call for a Parley flip. A wound to the arm or hand might be described in such a way that would clearly make using a bow for Volley or Called Shot impossible. Or successful application of an Amulet of Amiability might mean that Pick Pockets can be skipped - the affected NPC might just offer to share their precious items.

COMBAT - STAMINA/HARM/WOUNDS

Here are rules to determine when your character is able to endure exertion and injury to keep moving forward or when they're completely spent and collapsed in a heap.

When a character is in a fight, they are running, dodging, striking, and being struck and assailed by their foe. All of this stuff is scary and exhausting. So a character gets weaker the longer they're in this exchange, even if they're able to dodge every blow.

This weakening is represented by cards from your Deckahedron being lost into your *Exhaustion pile*.

Have you ever watched a boxing match or a mixed martial arts match? During the later rounds, the athletes are worn down, they don't dance around the ring with as much vigor, and drop their guard more frequently. The contest is not always decided with a knockout punch, it often comes down to who can better endure the exertion.

Your character has 10 Stamina points. When your character loses all 10, they are incapacitated. After that, their fate is up to the GM.

PHASES

When your character gets attacked or falls victim to some other danger, you have choices about exactly how they are affected. They may dodge, and just lose Stamina, they may stand stubbornly against a blow, taking Harm to perhaps absorb the blow with their armour (or with their face), or they may be wounded by the attack.

The **first phase** is rolling dice to arrive at a number. This number is called the *attack power*.

The **second phase** is deciding how to split that number among 3 categories, Stamina, Harm, or Wounds.

The **third phase** is optional: absorbing some points using any relevant move cards and item cards.

The **fourth phase** is losing Stamina points and receiving Exhaustion, Harm, and Wound tokens.

Finally, the **fifth phase**: you interpret those results into the narrative. Did your character dive into the dirt? Did they take a punch to the jaw and respond with a bloodied grin? Did the spear bounce right off their steel breastplate?

FIRST PHASE

When your character suffers the consequences of violence, you roll dice or read instructions from a move card to get a number. This number is called the *attack power*.

SECOND PHASE

If you choose not to split up the *attack power*, you will simply lose that many Stamina points.

Let's say your character was attacked with a sword and the dice were rolled and summed up to 7. You can either lose 7 Stamina points, or choose to split it up.

Let's say you already lost 3 Stamina points earlier. You only have 7 Stamina points left, and you don't want your character to be incapacitated. You have the option to turn *attack power* into Harm tokens at a rate of 3-for-1.

For example, you may split the attack power of 7 into:

- 4 Stamina points
- 1 Harm token

You may even do that twice, splitting the attack power of 7 into:

- 1 Stamina point
- 2 Harm tokens

Attack power turns into Harm tokens at *exactly* a rate of 3-to-1. You cannot choose a Harm token when facing an attack power of 2.

THIRD PHASE

In the third phase, you can absorb Stamina and Harm with your armour, shield, or with moves like Good Cardio, Mystic Breathwork, Like A Second Skin, and Sangfroid.

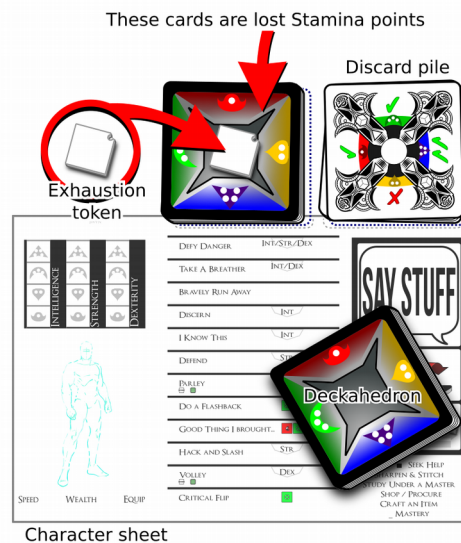
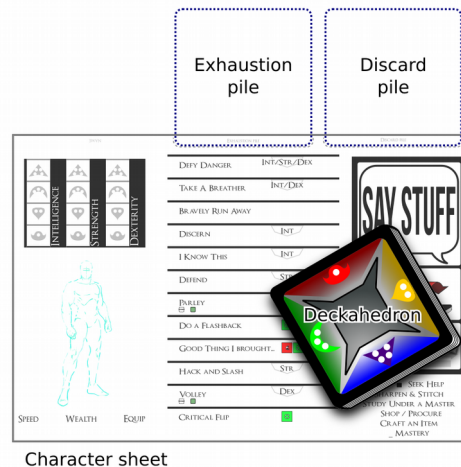
FOURTH PHASE: STAMINA / EXHAUSTION

Characters have 10 Stamina points.

To win at combat, a character's foes must be subdued or pacified before the player loses 10 cards from their Deckahedron.

When you are instructed to lose a Stamina point:

1. Take a card off the top of your Deckahedron, do not look at the face side.
2. Put that card face-down on your *Exhaustion pile*
3. Place an Exhaustion token on your *Exhaustion pile*



(So, if you were instructed to lose 3 Stamina points, you add 3 cards from the top of your Deckahedron onto your Exhaustion pile, then you put 3 Exhaustion tokens on top of it as well.)

If your Deckahedron does not contain enough cards, the player **must** reshuffle their *discard pile* into the Deckahedron and continue.

Note: Players *may* choose to reshuffle their *discard pile* back into the Deckahedron *before* moving cards onto their *Exhaustion pile*.

Once the *Exhaustion pile* grows to 10 cards, the character is *incapacitated* and can take no further actions. It is up to the GM to decide what this incapacitation means - whether the character is dead, unconscious, or just unable to stand or move. The GM has rules for this, see the GM Guide.

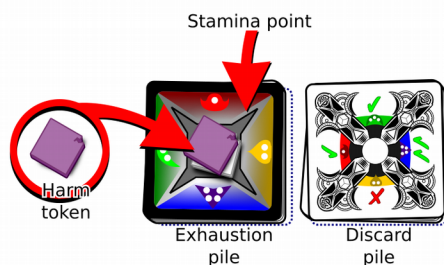
FOURTH PHASE: HARM

Think of that boxing match again. If Stamina represents dancing, ducking, and dodging, then Harm represents landing a blow. These rules are also for representing mental strain that is so significant that the negative effects last for a while.

RECEIVING HARM IN A ONE-SHOT CAMPAIGN

When you are instructed to take a Harm token:

- **If you already have 2 Harm tokens on your Exhaustion pile:**
 - the character is incapacitated
- **Otherwise:**
 1. Lose a Deckahedron card to your *Exhaustion pile* as you would when you lose a Stamina point.
 2. Place a *Harm token* on your *Exhaustion pile*



Harm token

Note, you will see this "1-2-bust" pattern repeated in many of Deckahedron World's rules

RECEIVING HARM IN LONGER CAMPAIGNS

When you are instructed to take a Harm token:

- **If you already have 2 Harm tokens on your Exhaustion pile:**
 - Take a *Wound* instead
- **Otherwise:**
 1. Lose a Deckahedron card to your *Exhaustion pile* as you would when you lose a Stamina point.
 2. Place a *Harm token* on your *Exhaustion pile*

WOUNDS

Getting wounded sucks, and when wounded, all intelligent creatures seek to cure their condition as a very high priority.

If you are playing the One-Shot Campaign, you can skip this section. The Wound rules are for the longer campaign formats.

SECOND PHASE: TRADING ATTACK POWER FOR WOUNDS

During the second phase of *attack power* resolution, you may choose to turn *attack power* into Wound tokens.

You can choose to turn *attack power* into Wound tokens at a rate of 6-for-1

For example, you may split the *attack power* of 7 into:

- 1 Stamina point
- 1 Wound token

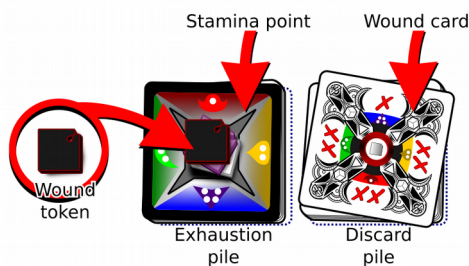
Attack power turns into Wound tokens at *exactly* a rate of 6-to-1. You cannot choose to take a Wound token when facing an *attack power* of 5.

FOURTH PHASE: RECEIVING WOUNDS

When you are instructed to take a Wound token:

- **If you already have 2 wounds:**
 - the character is incapacitated
- **Otherwise:**
 1. the GM describes how the character was wounded
 2. Lose a Deckahedron card to your *Exhaustion pile* as you would when you lose a Stamina point.
 3. Place a *Wound token* on your *Exhaustion pile*
 4. Randomly draw a *wound card* from the supply and place it in your *discard pile*. It will now start

cycling between your Deckahedron and your *discard pile*.



Wound token

A WOUND CARD



Having a *wound card* in your Deckahedron causes some nasty effects.

Whenever you **flip** and reveal a wound card, follow these rules:

- Say or act out the guttural noise emitted by your character
- You must immediately stop flipping (eg, if you were instructed you to "flip 3", you stop short once you hit the wound card - resolve the move with only the card(s) you flipped. This overrides the **Complete Flip Rule**)
- Lose a Stamina point

Wound cards can be used to represent different fictional aspects. They usually represent literal wounds, but may also be used for the effects of disease, poison, or other effects inflicted by monsters or the environment.

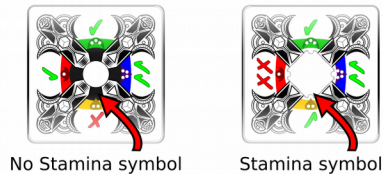
Note: some moves instruct you to match Chinese Zodiac symbols on the corners of cards. Wound cards' corners have the "goat" symbol which does not match any symbol.

STAMINA - HEROIC MODE

The Stamina rules described above are known as "Lucky Mode". Those rules allow the players to lean on luck at the beginning of the game, because the "worse cards" of the Deckahedron might end up in the *Exhaustion pile*, shifting the odds to increase a player's chances to succeed at moves.

During longer campaigns, players will have the choice to switch to "Heroic Mode", sacrificing their potential to get lucky for more knowledge and control over their outcomes.

In "Heroic Mode" characters have 10 Stamina points. These points are represented by cards in your Deckahedron with a Stamina symbol

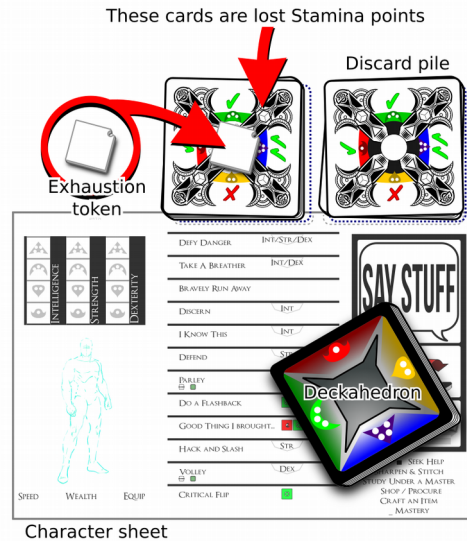


Cards with and without Stamina symbol

To win at combat, a character's foes must be subdued or pacified before the player's Deckahedron has been emptied of Stamina points.

When you are instructed to lose a Stamina point, you may absorb it using any relevant move cards and item cards, otherwise:

1. Reveal cards in your Deckahedron until you find a card with a Stamina symbol
2. Put that card aside, face-up in your *Exhaustion pile*
3. Place an Exhaustion token on your *Exhaustion pile*
4. The other revealed cards go into your *discard pile*



Exhaustion token

(So, if you were instructed to lose 3 Stamina points, you add 3 cards with Stamina symbols onto your Exhaustion pile)

If searching through their Deckahedron does not yield a card with a Stamina symbol, the player **must** reshuffle their *discard pile* into the Deckahedron and continue searching.

Note: Players *may* choose to reshuffle their *discard pile* back into the Deckahedron *before* searching for Stamina points.

If there are no Stamina points in the Deckahedron *or* the *discard pile*, then all 10 must be in the *Exhaustion pile*. In this case, the character is *incapacitated* and can take no further actions.

SPEED/WEALTH/PACK

Your character has a movement speed, a certain lightness-of-foot, they carry a certain amount of equipment and items, and they carry a certain amount of wealth. These attributes are tracked with the Speed/Wealth/Pack system. The more equipment and wealth carried, the lower their speed.

Daily-use amounts of money and food are not tracked. It is assumed your character will always be able to scrounge a meal somehow.

Movement speed is not an exact measurement in meters-per-second. It will matter when attempting moves where being laden with loot and gear matters. Particularly moves with the tag "UNENCUMBERED". When your speed goes below 4, you may not perform any "UNENCUMBERED" moves.

You have 6 tokens that can be allocated between 3 slots on your character sheet (Speed, Pack, Wealth) and Item cards.

If you don't want to carry any items, equipment or wealth, you can put all 6 tokens on Speed.

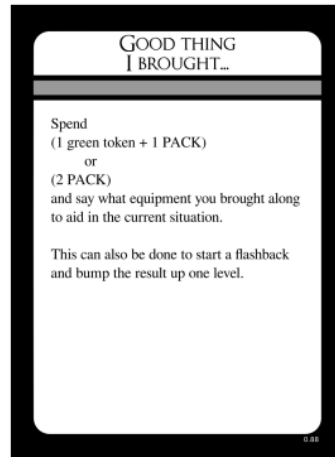
Tokens represent weight or difficulty to carry, when they're not on speed.

Some Item cards require more than 1 token.

Beyond the effects Speed has on certain moves, the number of tokens you have on Speed can have fictional effects. The GM may interpret a Speed of 0 as limiting a character's gait.

MOVES

GOOD THING I BROUGHT...



Adventurers are always finding themselves in tricky situations. Luckily, they come prepared with adventuring gear. They have been known to carry 50 feet of rope, smelling salts, books of racy poems, sometimes even a 3-day-old pork chop to distract hounds or hungry goblins.

It's a fact. You know this and Deckahedron World knows this, so it doesn't ask you to keep fine-grained notes of every candle and spare button in your character's inventory.

Reasonable daily-use items are presumed to be in your character's pack. If you're unsure, remember Deckahedron World is a conversation, so just ask the table.

But sometimes you will be in a situation where having that 50 feet of rope or an old pork chop would really *solve a problem* for your character.

When your character reaches into their pack and produces the item that solves their current problem or helps them overcome a challenge, just say what it is and spend the tokens.

DO A FLASHBACK



Sometimes you plan out something really great, and then you resolve a flip, and don't get the results you need.

A Flashback serves as sort of a "mulligan" in those situations, but it also provides a way to develop your character's backstory and personality.

After a player makes a flip, and before the GM describes the consequence of the flip, the player can declare they're going to do a flashback.

The player spends 1 green token. Then they describe how something that happened in the past particularly prepared their character for this situation.

Then the original flip is ignored, and a new flip is executed, using the same advantage or disadvantage as the original flip.

The player may then spend additional green tokens to "bump up" the result. Each green token spent increases the result, from ✖ to ✔ to ✔✔ to ✔✔✔.

Technically, this flip is *resolved* only after the green tokens are spent, so if the card was a *green token card*, the player should receive the green token it grants only after they finished

spending their green tokens to "bump up" the results.

MERCY FLASHBACKS

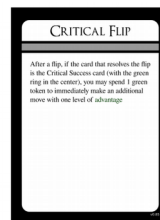
Players may find themselves in a situation where they forgot to do something when they had the chance, like use healing magic while they were resting, or leveling up a move before they left a steading, or getting some key information from an NPC before that NPC died.

As long as the player and the GM both agree that the player had the necessary resources when the action was available, the GM may allow the player to spend those resources and effect that action now, as a "Mercy Flashback".

The player must spend a green token, in addition to whatever cost the action incurs.

Even the most conscientious of us sometimes loses track of small details, so the cost is kept "cheap" at only one green token. But there must be a cost. It is necessary to keep the flow of the game going. This is a game of improv storytelling, and improv means rolling with the punches sometimes.

CRITICAL SUCCESS



Critical Flip card

One of the 20 cards in your Deckahedron is the "Critical Success card". It has a ✔✔✔ symbol on every edge and a circular green symbol in the middle.

If you *resolve a flip* with the Critical Success

card, you can do two things:

- Say how your character's practice has finally paid off, or how they had an insight or epiphany about the move they just accomplished. Spend green tokens 1-for-1 to go up levels in the move that was just resolved.
- Spend 1 green token to make another move, right now, and get an advantage card on that move.

If you choose to Critical Flip, the spotlight stays on you for a little bit longer while you make your bonus move.

TAKING A BREATHER



Take a Breather card

Taking a Breather is a move that a character can take during combat. This action allows a character to regain up to 4 Stamina points.

The player may use either Intelligence or Dexterity to perform the **Take a Breather** action.

If they use Int, they say how they execute a tactic or recognize a favourable position that lets them gather their breath and their wits.

If they use Dex, they say how they maneuver into a safe position that offers some temporary safety.

Regaining Stamina may be done either by taking cards from the *Exhaustion pile* and putting them into the *discard pile*, or by returning Exhaustion tokens to the supply.

When recovering cards from the *Exhaustion pile*, the player may choose any cards they want.

When combat or a pursuit ends, and it is appropriate for the narrative (e.g. when there's a scene transition and the characters reasonably have a few minutes to catch their breath), the players may **Take a Breather** using Str as an IMMEDIATE move (ie, no negative consequences to ✗ or ✓).

MAKING YOUR OWN CHARACTER

The GM has rules to guide you through creating your character in the GM Guide.

Take turns picking your starting moves. During character creation, you can't pick a move another player has already picked, but your character can become skilled in those moves later. See the Move Levels and Study Under a Master sections below.

Moves with the *RECEIVE CARDS* tag allow you to get some item cards during character creation.

- "Use a Magic Item" move gives you 1 magic item of your choice
- "Channel the Living Light" move gives you Sigil of the Living Light
- "Entreat the Blood-Bound" move gives you Blade of Echoes

After you choose your starting moves, Choose 2 items * a weapon is a popular choice. Unarmed, your attack power will be 1d2 * You may choose 1 magical item * Note, even without studying the Use A Magic Item move, it's still possible to use magic items.

CARRYING ITEMS REDUCES SPEED

There are blanks on some item cards, and some items are designed starting from entirely blank cards. You get to give your items descriptive names and define what they are. But you do not get to change the rule that each item you carry reduces your speed.

It is common for a player to ask why the magic amulet or ring they've created, a trinket that is normally a couple grams, reduces their speed. The GM didn't give the item its descriptive name, so an explanation isn't the GM's responsibility. The GM may even return the question, "Yes, why does it weigh you down? What about magic in this world, or

what about your character makes them especially burdened by magical items? Does your character even know?"

The narrative of Deckahedron World is a collaboration.

FITTING THE FICTION

One of the joys of Deckahedron World is **building** your character up from a scrappy adventurer to a force to be reckoned with.

Characters start out just a little bit more powerful than a common villager. They've got an edge over regular folk, (their Stamina and special abilities) but the game mechanics put them on nearly even footing in a fight. You can invent any backstory you like, but you may need to answer questions about how the backstory fits where the characters is, mechanically.

Nothing stops you from creating a hulking, 7 foot tall barbarian, with a rich history of warring and slaughtering enemies, but at the very beginning of the game, with a couple unlucky flips, that barbarian may suffer a sound drubbing at the hands of a farmer with a shovel and his overprotective goat.

This doesn't mean you shouldn't create the barbarian character. You should. That sounds awesome! But if you do, be prepared to find some narrative justification (drunkard? battle-worn? magically cursed?) that they're currently at a "scrappy adventurer" level.

THE SESSION OPENER

Every session after the first session, there is a special move to execute at the very beginning, **The Session Opener**. It is a player's opportunity to generate an extra green token.

ASK FOR NOTES

Take turns and ask your friends sitting around you at the table if there's anything about your own play-style you should keep in mind to improve the fun had by everyone (this includes the GM's fun too!).

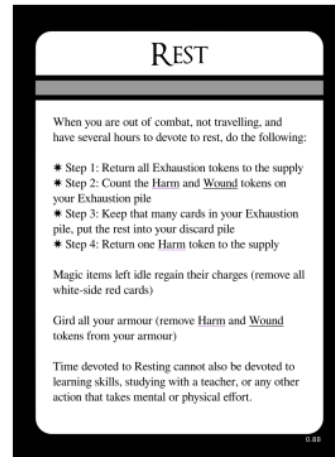
GIVE NOTES

When your fellow players ask you the same, answer them honestly and gently. This is a suggestion for improvement, given in a take-it-or-leave-it manner. Never say "You are having fun wrong". Just say "There are more fun parts over here if you want to take a look". No response is ever required of the person asking for notes.

This move's purpose is to practice an open dialogue and help everyone *improve* their play. If it feels like bargaining, argumentation, excuse-creation, litanizing of sins, the move has not been executed correctly. Just take a deep breath and move on.

MORE MOVES - REST, SEEK HELP

RESTING



Rest card

Resting is an action that a character may take when they are out of combat, not travelling, and have several hours to devote to rest (sleeping qualifies).

- Step 1: Return all *Exhaustion* tokens to the supply
- Step 2: Count the *Harm* and *Wound* tokens on your *Exhaustion pile*
- Step 3: Keep that many cards (player chooses which ones) in your *Exhaustion pile*, put the rest into your *discard pile*
- Step 4: Return one *Harm* token to the supply

When resting, magic items that are not being used regain all charges, up to their maximum capacity. Remove all white-side red cards on your magic items.

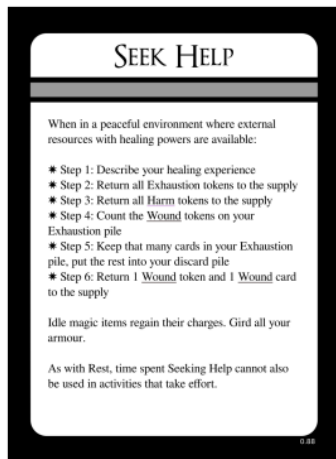
You may gird all your armour, where applicable. Remove all Harm and Wound tokens from your armour cards and from move cards that represent armour effectiveness (eg, *Like A Second Skin*).

Time devoted to *Resting* cannot also be

devoted to learning skills, studying with a teacher, or any other action that takes mental or physical effort.

The Harm token returned to the supply in Step 4 may come from your *Exhaustion pile* or from a slot on a move card (eg, Bloody But Unbowed).

SEEK HELP



Seek Help card

Seeking Help is an action that a character may take when they are in a peaceful environment where external resources with healing powers are available.

Eg, if they are in a primitive camp possessing medicine men or a contemporary city with doctors and hospitals or a tranquil oasis infused with healing magic.

When you spend a day healing:

- Step 1: Describe your character's healing experience
- Step 2: Return all *Exhaustion* tokens to the supply
- Step 3: Return all *Harm* tokens to the supply
- Step 4: Count the *Wound* tokens on your *Exhaustion pile*
- Step 5: Keep that many cards (player

chooses which ones) in your *Exhaustion pile*, put the rest into your *discard pile*

- Step 6: Return one *Wound* token and one *wound card* to the supply

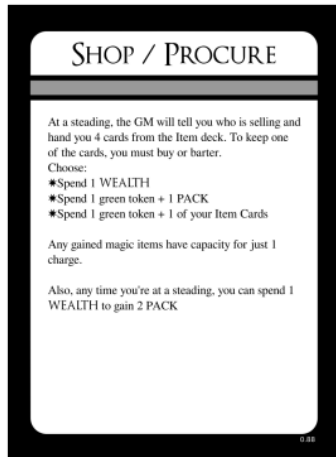
As with *Resting*, time spent *Seeking Help* cannot also be used in activities that take effort.

Magic items that are not being used regain all charges, up to their maximum capacity. Remove all white-side red cards on your magic items.

You may gird all your armour, where applicable. Remove all Harm and Wound tokens from your armour cards.

SHOPPING, EQUIPMENT, AND ITEMS

THE SHOP / PROCURE MOVE



Shop / Procure card

When the Shop / Procure move is used, the scene can be described as an everyday shopping trip or a theiving and bribery escapade, or anything else that makes sense in the narrative, so long as the mechanical outcome would be certain.

The GM presents to the player 4 cards of any mix of items: mundane, magical, a special commodity established in the narrative, or even something purely decorative. It is ok for the GM and player to discuss the items beforehand to any level of detail, and it is also ok for the player to outright say what they want to go shopping for.

The GM should be honest with the narrative, stay true to their goals and try to provide the kind of fun the player has signaled they want to have.

The GM shall not hand a player a card with mechanical requirements the player's character doesn't meet.

MUNDANE ITEMS: ARMOR, WEAPONS, ETC

There are mundane items in Deckahedron World, as well as magical ones. Deckahedron World has rules for weapons, shields, and armour. But characters may have other items as well. Those other items may just be decorative or they may have narrative value (carrying around a small barrel of brandy may earn you a welcome from the thirsty dwarves you meet).

You can even create rules of your own for certain classes of item. See the [Extending Deckahedron World](#) chapter for hints on how to do that.

Item Damage

Damage to items is represented as black-side red cards. When an item is damaged a third time -- when it would take a 3rd black-side red card -- it is instead destroyed. The card is returned to the supply.

Weapons

Weapons cards describe what the character has armed themselves with. These cards might describe "weaponry" rather than a singular item, as the Many Knives card demonstrates.

Weapons have a "power level": d4, d6, or d10. This determines what die to roll when you roll attack power. Higher power weapons should not be given out lightly. Generally players should seek weapon power increases from the Craft a Weapon and _ Mastery moves.

The GM should decide how many Speed / Wealth / Pack tokens the weaponry requires. Is the item particularly heavy or large?

Here are the weapons available to characters during character creation:

Name	S/W/P token requirement	notes
_ Sword	1	
Many Knives	1	At close range, can be thrown
_ Bow	1	Long range

Armour

When an armour-clad character would normally take Harm or a Wound, the player may put the Harm or Would token into an appropriate empty slot on their Armour card.

The armour available to characters during character creation is simply Leather Armour. This style of armour has 2 slots for Harm tokens and cannot absorb a Wound.

When a character goes shopping, goes a-thieving, discovers treasure, or loots a battlefield, the GM may offer new, more useful armour.

The GM should draw up to 3 slots on the card. A slot shall be designated to receive either:

- 1 Harm token
- or 1 Harm or Wound token

The GM should decide how many Speed / Wealth / Pack tokens the armour requires. Better armour tends to be heavier and more impeding to graceful movement.

The GM and player should agree on a descriptive name for the armour like "Padded" or "Chainmail" or "Full plate" and write that at the top of a card. The GM may use the name to create implications in the narrative -- it's hard to sneak or swim in full plate armour.

If a GM writes narrative circumstances that cause a disadvantage on the armour card when it is created, no points need to be spent from *Bad Bank* to create the disadvantage later.

Here are some example armours:

Suggested Name	token requirement	slots
Leather Armour	1	2 Harm
Padded Armour	2	2 Harm, 1 Harm/Wound
Full Plate	3	3 Harm/Wound

Shields

Shields are a way to avoid Harm and Wound tokens, but they test your Dex in order to succeed. See the Bracers card for an example.

To make a Shield card, first the GM chooses the ✓✓✓, ✓✓, and ✓ effects by choosing 3 sequential effects from this list:

- Avoid the x
- Avoid the x, but choose to lose 1 Stamina or this item takes 1 damage
- Avoid the x, lose 1 Stamina
- Avoid the x, lose 1 Stamina and this item takes 1 damage

The x can be either:

- Harm
- Harm or Wound

Then the GM and player come up with a name for this kind of shield together, using the same rules as the Armour name-creation above.

MAGIC ITEMS

Deckahedron World supports stories involving magic. To avoid presuming too much about the narrative, the rules do not dictate the nature of magic or the "how" of magic. That's for you to decide during play.

Is magic woven from subtle threads that pervade the universe? Is it based on words of power? Is it high technology hidden in the planet's crust by alien benefactors? Is it copied exactly from a concept in your Touchstone List? You decide.

The rules give you a way to have scrappy adventurers begin with magic items. These artifacts have 3 charges, and are rechargeable during Rest. Your character can eventually build themselves up in power to a point where they can cast magic spells without needing the items.

The rules also give names for two sources of magical power, "The Living Light" and "The Blood-Bound". It's up to you to give these names narrative meaning, if you want.

Charges and Capacity

By default magic items have capacity for 3 charges. When a charge is used from a magic item, place a red card on it, white-side-up.

Sometimes charges are lost *permanently*. This means it loses a charge and its capacity for charges decreases by 1. When this happens, place a red card on the item, black-side-up.

The Obsessive Contemplation move can be used to gain capacity. When a magic item gains capacity, remove one black-side red card from it, or, if there aren't any black-side red cards on it, write down its new capacity on the card.

Magic items cannot be damaged.

(Weapons granted magical effects via Tool Twisting *can* be damaged)

The ONGOING tag

When you Use a Magic Item, you are "flowing magical energy" into it. Then the magical effects happen.

Some magic effects happen immediately.

Some magic effects persist even after you have finished flowing magical energy into the item. (eg, _ of Light, Reaching _)

Some magical effects persist only if you continue to flow magical energy into the item. These items are identified by the ONGOING tag. While you are flowing energy into such an item, you may not regain Stamina points while using the Rest or Seek Help moves.

USING MAGIC ITEMS

Magic is an element that pervades stories of fantasy. It can be obscure and stemming from nature like in Lord of the Rings, it can be elemental and allegorical like in The Wheel of Time, and it can be linguistic and self-aware like in The Invisibles.

To allow you and your table of friends to invent and explore the magical concepts that excite you most, Deckahedron World takes a light touch, provides a mechanical foundation and some optional narrative paths.

Deckahedron World invites you to play with and expand into a well-tested framework.

One thing to keep in mind is that characters may attempt any move that resolves with Str / Dex / Int. (See [Move Levels](#)) So even if moves like Use a Magic Item or Fundamental Magic were not chosen at character creation or gained via Study Under a Master, any character may attempt them.

That said, using magic invokes some of the more complicated rules of Deckahedron World. Players are challenged with managing and balancing charges, capacity, stamina, requirements and narrative effect. This kind of play is ideal for players excited by complexity and the potential of explorable branches.

USE A MAGIC ITEM

Use a Magic Item

When a character holds a magic item and flows energy into it, the player flips Int, and on any result other than **X**, the item activates and the effects described on the magic item card happen.

Using a magic item causes it to lose a charge. This loss can be avoided with moves like Entreat the Blood-Bound and Channel the

Living Light.

Following that, results of ✓ and ✓✓ cause a further cost to be incurred, as chosen from the list by the GM or the player, respectively.

Note: if the magic item being used is a magical weapon created via Tool Twisting, another choice is available: "the weapon is damaged"

An item has 3 charges by default, and is considered "depleted" when they are all used. The term used for this maximum number of charges is "capacity" or "charge capacity".

When a magic item loses a charge, take a red card and place it white-side-up on top of the magic item card.

When a magic item **permanently loses** a charge, take a red card and place it **black-side-up** on top of the magic item card.

If the magic item has the *ONGOING* tag, magical energy continues to flow into the item. This has mechanical interactions with the Rest and Sever-Pulse Shield moves and might also have narrative consequences.

ENTREAT THE BLOOD-BOUND

Entreat the Blood-Bound

If it has not yet been established, when a player first uses this move, it's a great time for the GM to ask them a question: "Who or what is the Blood-Bound?"

GM Note: this is a great way to stretch your improv muscles. Say "Yes, and..." no matter if they identify the Blood-Bound as tiny, parasitic insects or as monstrous, extradimensional dark gods.

Note: Entreat the Blood-Bound is not available during a One-Shot Campaign,

because it requires the use of Wounds.

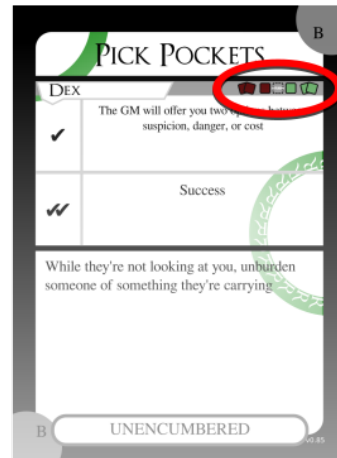
CHANNEL THE LIVING LIGHT

Channel the Living Light






If it has not yet been established, when a player first uses this move, it's a great time for the GM to ask them: "Who or what is the Living Light?"

MOVE LEVELS

Some Move cards have icons on them that indicate "levels". These levels represent how good your character is at that skill. For example, the move Pick Pockets has 5 icons.



These are the "move levels" for Pick Pockets. From left to right, these icons are called:

-  wild or "2 red"
-  novice or "1 red"
-  "base level"
-  expert or "1 green"
-  master or "2 green"

If you chose Pick Pockets during character creation, you would receive the card and your character would be "studied" in the skill. The word "STUDY" is over "base level", so that's the level you would start at.

Note: some moves, like Void Transfusion, don't start you off at the base level.

INCREASED MOVE LEVELS

Later, you can go up a level in Pick Pockets. Either by using the Study Under a Master move, or when you resolve a Pick Pockets flip and happen to get a *Critical Success* card --

See [Critical Success](#)



Take a green card, and put it on top of the move card. Put the green card black-side-up.

With Pick Pockets leveled up, any time you perform that move in the future, you will add an advantage card when you flip.

Because the Pick Pockets card shows the "2 green" icon, you can repeat this process again later, which would let you add 2 advantage cards when you flip.

DECREASED MOVE LEVELS

But what about the 2 "red" levels?



In Deckahedron World, any character can attempt any move that is performed by flipping Str, Dex, or Int -- even if the player doesn't have that move card!

For any such moves, all characters start at the lowest level shown on the card. So every character is "wild" or "novice" at every skill that is tested by flipping Int, Str, or Dex.

Every character, at any time, can attempt to hit two opponents in combat (via Goreography). Every character can attempt to cast a spell (via Fundamental Magic). But, their odds are very low.

You can attempt moves even if you don't meet the requirements shown.

Just as the "expert" and "master" levels cause the flip to be done with advantage, the "wild" and "novice" levels cause the flip to be done with disadvantage.

-  flip with 2 levels of disadvantage
-  flip with 1 level of disadvantage

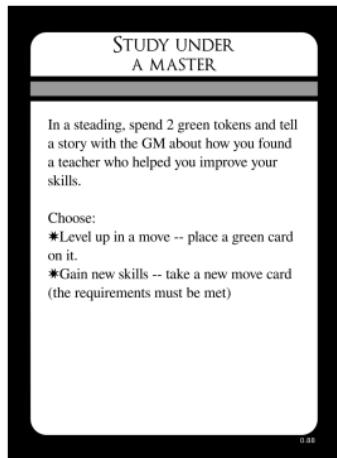
If you perform a "wild" level move, and you resolve that flip with a *Critical Success card*, you can spend 1 green token to graduate to "novice" level.



Red card

If you choose to do so, take the move card and a red card. Place the red card on top of the move card, black-side-up.

STUDY UNDER A MASTER

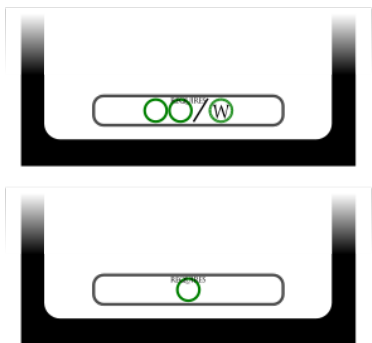


This is the move by which your character becomes a powerful force in the world.

When your character is in a steading (a villiage, city, etc. -- any safe place where resources and commerce present themselves), you can spend 2 green tokens to either:

- Increase the level of a move you already have (See [Move Levels](#))
- Take a new move card from the supply

If you want to take a move card that another player already has or one that was scribbled over in a previous campaign, or just has been ruined by spilled beer, you can copy the text onto a new card.



requirements

Some moves have requirements. These are illustrated as green rings, sometimes with a letter inside -- *R*, *F*, or *W*. Requirements are sometimes separated by a slash, /, which means "or".

For example, using the Study Under a Master move can gain you the card Fundamental Magic only if you have two green rings or one *W* ring.

What, then, are these rings?

Take a look through the move cards and see that there are partial rings printed on them - either in the corners or on the sides.

When you can arrange your own move cards together in such a way that a ring is completed, you "have" a ring. If your cards can arrange to show 2 rings, then you "have" 2 rings.

ring arrangements

If your card arrangement had the cards Pick Pockets and Not On My Turf next to each other, you could complete an *R* ring. If you had the Scent of Blood card instead of the Not On My Turf card, you could arrange it next to Pick Pockets to complete a ring, but it would not be an *R* ring or an *F* ring, it would just be a regular green ring.

You do not have to keep your cards in this arrangement while you play,

The RECEIVE CARDS tag

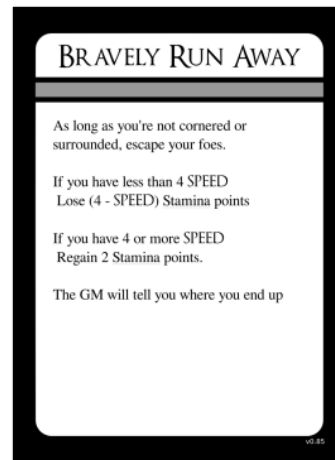
Sometimes when you Study Under a Master, you are given study aids.

When you Study Under a Master to gain...	You also take...
Channel The Living Light	Sigil of the Living Light
Entreat The Blood-Bound	Blade of Echoes
Use a Magic Item	Any magic item card

You use the RECEIVE CARDS tag only during character creation and when you gain a

move card via Study Under a Master. You do not use it when you gain competence with the skill by flipping Critical Success cards.

BRAVELY RUN AWAY



Bravely Run Away card

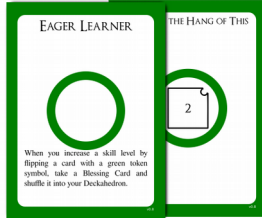
When players find themselves on the losing side of a battle, or want to avoid a daunting threat, they may choose to run away. If their characters are positioned in a way that their escape is possible, according to the established fiction, the GM will allow them to escape, but there is a cost. The players temporarily lose narrative control and the GM gets to say where the players' characters end up.

There may also be a Stamina cost (or Stamina gain) depending on how weighed down the characters were by their equipment.

The GM can resolve this move by: * putting the characters somewhere completely safe * putting the characters in a place where some (new or old) danger exists, but is, for the moment, not directly threatening the characters * spending a point from the *Bad Bank* and putting the characters in a place where they must directly confront or defy a new danger

LEVEL CARDS AND GREEN RINGS

At the beginning of a session, players should arrange their move cards to count how many green rings they have. Usually, players will not have any green rings at the beginning of session 2 -- session 3 tends to be the first session where this rule matters.



level cards

Once per session, if you have more green rings than *level cards*, you can take one new level card.

Like move cards, level cards may also have requirements. Some require that you have a certain amount of green rings to access them.

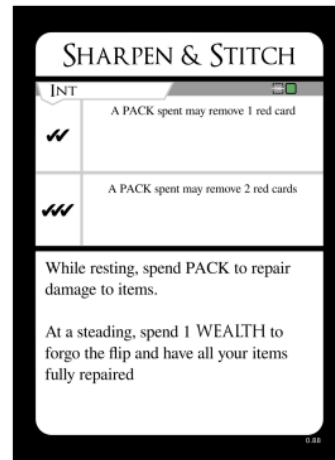


Some level cards will instruct you to take blessing cards. When instructed to do so, draw one blessing card at random from the supply.

Blessing cards improve your Deckahedron by giving you better chances to succeed at moves.

Note: some moves instruct you to match Chinese Zodiac symbols on the corners of cards. The corners of blessing cards have a "dragon" symbol, which matches all other symbols except for the "goat" symbol on the wound cards.

SHARPEN AND STITCH



Sharpen and Stitch card

Non-magical items can be damaged in Deckahedron World. Usually this happens narratively as the result of a GM move, but it can also be caused by player moves, eg. Armour Mastery.

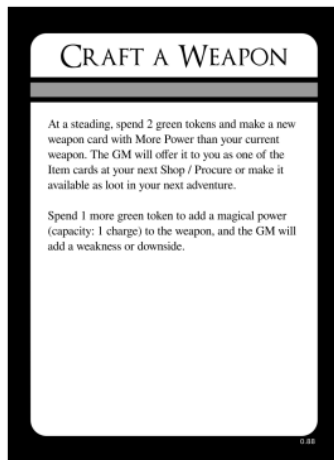
The "1-2-bust" mechanism is used to represent damage.

The first two times an item is damaged, place a red card on the Item card, black-side-up.

The third time an item is damaged, it is destroyed. Return it and the red cards to the supply.

MORE POWER

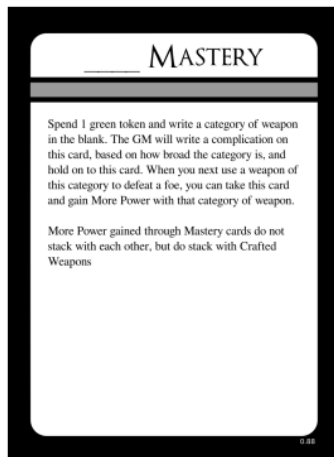
CRAFT A WEAPON



Craft a Weapon card

The GM should decide how many Speed / Wealth / Pack tokens the weapon requires. Is the item particularly heavy or large? The GM should weigh that cost against the weapon's other features.

WEAPON MASTERY



Weapon Mastery card

PLAYER VS PLAYER

COMBAT

When a player asserts their character violently against another player's character, the rules are special. In general, negative consequences are only applied by consent. These are different than the rules for fighting NPCs and monsters.

Fights among player characters can be great to introduce drama and increase tension in your narrative. But they are designed so that one player cannot force another player out of the decision making process. The narrative you create in Deckahedron World is a *shared* one.

When a player's character attacks another player's character, moves are triggered as they would normally be, and costs are paid (eg, if the attacker uses a magic item, they may lose a charge), but there are two differences:

- Green token cards do not generate a green token if they resolve a flip
- Critical Success cards cannot be used to go up levels in moves
- Attack power is not rolled

Instead of rolling attack power, the *defender* alone describes the negative consequences (if any) their character suffers. This includes loss of resources (like Stamina / Harm / Wounds) as well as narrative consequences.

Optionally, the attacker may also describe negative consequences for their own character, mimicking the way the Hack and Slash move causes both the attacker and defender to suffer attack power.

The GM can still collaborate with the players to describe narrative outcomes of the altercation, and may even use the situation to bring dangers to bear, but may not reduce player resources as a result of the specific action.

Inter-party conflict can provide some of the

most interesting and dramatic moments of a campaign. Those moments arise from a group of friends at the table collaborating together.

THEFT, PERSUASION, MIND-CONTROL

Just as in PvP combat, when one player tries to:

- reduce another player's resources
- eg, by using the Pick Pockets move
- use a move to dictate another player's character's action
- eg, by using mind control magic

Green token cards do not generate green tokens, Critical Success cards cannot be used to go up levels, and the *defender* gets to say what the result was.