Code Name: Melee

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# Introduction

# How to Play

## Turn Order

In Melee, the turn order is not done like most games where one character takes a turn, goes through each phase, and then moves on the the next character. In this game the turn happens for every player at once and everyone moves through the sequences together. So for most phases everyone does things at the same time and all effects are simultaneous. When it matters ones initiative roll in the beginning of combat determines which effect happens first with a simple roll off being the tie breaker.

So as follows this is the phase order and how each turn works:

**Start phase:**   
This phase is a lot like the upkeep phase in MTG. At this phase you handle any counters or remove any spell effects that end at the beginning of your turn. The main thing that most characters will be doing this phase is handling stress and exhaustion. Characters can handle up to two stress without negative effects, but if they start in this phase with more then 2 stress, they remove 1 and then they are exhausted for the rest of the turn, meaning that all Maneuvers are automatically downgraded to a slow, and your initiative is move to the bottom for the turn (If multiple characters are exhausted, then they maintain there initiative among each other).

*In the future this number can change and might even scale with level or with different classes, but for now everyone gets 2 before the effects of exhaustion come into play.*

**Selection phase:**   
During this phase players pick which card they play and place it face down. Once all players have place a card faced down, the GM will announce what the NPCs will do. When this is done all players reveal and then next phase starts.

*I should mention here that it might be good for a GM to allow player to discuss strategy here, especially for inexperience players.*

*In game the whole turn is about 2 seconds of action so for more experienced players it may be good to only allow a quick sentence or two of discussion. This is defiantly up to the discretion of the GM.*

**Fast Maneuver phase:**   
Any card with a fast icon (Red mana) effects go off at this phase. Anyone can choose to delay their maneuver to the slow phase but this must done before any effect resolves, so it is important for the GM to ask the players if anyone wants to downgrade to the slow phase before starting the resolving of this phase. In the process of this down grade the player can also change their move to another fast maneuver or the Move/Rest maneuver. This maneuver is revealed immediately and does not take place until the slow phase.

Once that is done the all cards that are set to be resolved in the phase are resolved. Players can choose any valid target for there maneuvers. All card effects resolve simultaneously, meaning that no effect happening on the same phase can make another invalid. One exception for this is if another maneuvers effect directly states that it forces other maneuvers to fail, like the dodge maneuver.

Another exception to this rule is that cards with the interruptible trait will always fail if a successful attack was made against them even in the same phase. So in this way an interruptible is always trumped by a successful attack. Note, that this attack does not need to come from the same person that you are targeting; any successful attack made against you this turn will cancel interruptible abilities. If two successful interruptible attacks against each other then they both force each other to fail and no other effects occur (Imagine both characters about to make a successful attack on one another but they unintentionally just lock blades in the process). Also if an interruptible maneuver was completed and uninterruptible in this phase, then regardless of any attacks that occur in the slow phase the maneuver is complete.

*This may seem cumbersome and I believe at first it will be, but it allows for some interesting choices being made at the card selection phase. Also I think it will actually speed the rounds up as people get a hang of it. For this way all rolls that need to happen for an entire round happen at the same time. Then the GM just needs to make the outcomes of those rolls happen. Once people get the hang of it then it should actually be rather quick.*

Then in order of initiative any player who wishes to move now can move as they wish or they choose to wait until a certain trigger. Remember that any maneuver effects that force movement like knockback will use that characters movement.

Once all effects are resolved this phase is complete and the round moves to the slow phase.

**Slow Maneuver phase:**   
This phase is the same as the Fast Maneuver Phase with a few key differences. In this phase only the slow actions (Blue mana) or fast actions that were downgraded to slow happen on this phase. Note that any effects that happened in the fast phase still hold true to this phase, so if your slow move is interruptible and a fast attack was successful against you in the fast phase then that attacks still makes your interruptible slow maneuver fail. Also if an event in the fast phase made one of your slow maneuvers invalid like a knockback effect making it so your attack has no valid targets, then that maneuver fails. Lastly even maneuver like Counter that are played in the fast phase effect slow phase maneuvers. So yes a fast Counter will still effect a slow attack.

The last important difference to this phase is if a successful attack was made against a character in the fast phase, any roll the character must make for the slow phase phase has disadvantage.

After that the is another movement phase. It does not refresh the movement for the turn so if a characters movement is already completely used up then they cannot move during this phase.

*I have some mix feelings about this, but part of the reason for this is it seems like acting in the slow phase from effects like exhaustion might not be as punishing as it should for characters that can keep doing non-interruptible actions like heavy attacks in this phase. Part of me feels like another good solution to this problem is to only allow characters that are exhausted or played a slow maneuver (not just down graded), to move that the end of this slow phase and not in the end of the fast phase, so fast characters can better create situations that make slow maneuvers invalid.*

**Ending phase:**   
This phase has the players picking back up their cards and any effects that end at the end of the turn end here. Some other effects may occur in this phase but generally it just signifies the end of the turn. After this starts a new turn back at the Start phase.

*That’s basically the turn order. Its fairly simple and the main mechanic is not knowing what exactly what the opponent is trying to do. You both sort of operate from this wait state and act at the same time. I have given thought to other forms of combat that develop on top of this. One thought was to add it so a player plays 2 cards that allowed them to make to maneuvers at once (one for slow phase, one for fast phase), or that you would need to perform wings of glory style maneuvers where your maneuver you plan on for this turn doesn’t happen until the next turn. Those were all really interesting, but I ultimately decided against it as I don’t want to “overgameify” the role playing game and I’m trying to keep this relatively easy for the novice roleplayer and gamer. So I think one action per turn while trying to predict what your opponent is actively going to do is both mechanically interesting enough and does not detract from a narrative experience, at least in my current estimation. I think some of these ideas would be best saved for a sort of class choice or feature later down the line, like say a rogue might be able to generate combo points of some kind and maybe could yous those points to play two maneuvers in one turn. This way you slowly progress the number of options you have.*

*I also want to elaborate on a comment I mentioned earlier, and as you read some of the abilities and understand their design I would assume you may notice this pattern. In the previous paragraph specified what someone actively does. When I say this I really mean directly active, for example when you review basic maneuvers you may notice that there is know block maneuver. The closest on to this is dodge which is purposely different then a simple side step would be. In the design I do not want to bog down the combat with many passive defensive rolls. So blocking a strike is directly related to your defense stat verses there attack roll. This is way there are 6 defense stats that are simple difficulty numbers for opponents to reach instead of having both characters roll, potentially slowing the game down even just a little bit. On the other hand dodge is a very active action which you need to be swifter then your opponents reflexes so you need to actively roll higher then there reflex defense allows them to adjust to your movement mid action.*

## The Stats

There 8 stats called attributes which symbolizes your general skill in that area. For almost everything you roll to do something you will roll a d20 and add the relevant attribute to your roll and that determines how well you do in that action. The 8 attributes are **Constitution**, **Strength**, **Dexterity**, **Focus**, **Wisdom**, **Charisma**, **Cunning**, **Knowledge**.

Then there are your skills which are always categorized with a attribute. Typically these will almost never be used in combat settings but sort of out line the skills that you have specific knowledge and practice in. For example you my have some skill points in acrobatics meaning you have specifically practice performing aerial stuns before on top your general dexterity. So you can add those acrobatic points to your roll with your dexterity when ever you are performing a sort of aerial stun. You can think of attributes as a combination of natural talent and general practiced talent and skills as the direct practice of a very specific action. A good example of this separation is when one cuts down a tree with an axe often gain a bit of strength and my have even been born with some extra strength naturally, but knowing how to drive the Axe efficiently is a very specific talent that does not simply just rely on your strength but also muscle memory of driving the ax into the tree. At the end of this section is a list of the current skills. This is not an exhaustive list as skills are not the focus of any current development.

Outside of those there are your defiances. Defiances are your more passive defenses against a negative action. They directly correlate with ones attributes as each defiance is calculated based one exactly 2 attribute bonuses. There are 6 of them, **Fortitude** based on Constitution and Strength, **Reflex** based on Dexterity and Focus, **Willpower** based on Wisdom and Charisma, **Reason** based on Cunning and Knowledge, **Perception** based on Focus and Wisdom, and **Deception** based on Charisma and Cunning. Here are descriptions of each defiance:

**Fortitude**   
Fortitude is ones ability to resist pain or physical force. A common usage for this defiance is when a enemy has you grappled and is ready to through you to the ground, that foe must roll there strength against your fortitude to force you to the ground.

**Reflex**  
Reflex is ones ability to react mid action to a change in the situation instinctively. A good example of this is when an opponent dodges you when attacking, they roll dexterity and need to beat your reflex so that there dodge is too swift for you to adjust your attack to still hit them mid dodge.

# Character Creation

# Classes

# Cards