
A Hurt by Any Other Name

by John Ughrin (jughrin @ yahoo.com)

Roleplaying games have traditionally reduced wounds to a single notation (either a number or wound track.) While this makes sense in the first approximation, it also loses some of the flavor of reality or different genres. People don't fear fire so much because it is so damaging, but because the wounds are so much more gruesome and difficult to heal. Some damage is more than physical, or at least different. When situations like this arise, Fudge is easily adaptable to cover our bases. I've handled this by adding damage "Types" to my game. These types are noted by changing the letter used to note the wound in the wound track.

The following damage types are typical of the markings we may need. More can be added in a campaign that needs them. Note that this is an extension of the normal Fudge rules.

Physical (S, H, V, or X)

[RUKASU: TREAT AS "WOUND"]

These are just the normal or traditional physical damage. If hit locations are used, the damage may only affect the activities associated with that limb. Otherwise, the effects are considered to affect only physical actions. (At least until you're Incapacitated, and then -- well -- you're out!)

Fatigue (F)

[RUKASU: TREAT AS "STUN"]

Fatigue damage is usually self-inflicted by extending a character too far. Often fatigue is the result of pushing magical or special abilities. Fatigue damage affects anything the character does.

Mental or Psychic (P – or Greek letter Psi)

[RUKASU: CHOSE OTHER TYPE OF DAMAGE, E.G. "STUN"]

Most commonly the result of a magical or psychic attack, P damage represents the delusions, phobias, nightmares or whatnot that accompany having your thoughts and memories scrambled. If a character is Incapacitated by P damage, that character is reduced to a semi-vegetative state. Characters that are killed this way die from the inside out. P damage affects all actions a character makes, and doesn't really need any hit location. As the mood strikes him, the GM may specify the nature of the mental illness inflicted.

Toxin or Disease (T or D)

As with Fatigue or P damage, the character experiences the damage to all actions. Unlike those other types, this can be a progressive effect that is related to hit location. For example, a snake bite in the ankle can slowly incapacitate the rest of the body. Such effects should be noted in the description of the poison or disease.

[RUKASU: VARIOUS SPECIAL EFFECTS ARE POSSIBLE, E.G. A) ALL HEALTH ROLLS SUFFER -1 MODIFIER; B) 4DF SORE WOUNDS / DAY; C) 4DF HEALTH LADDER WOUND / WEEK; D) 4DF HURT STUNS / HOUR; E) TEMPORARILY LOSE 1 TRAIT; F) PERMANENTLY CHANGE A TRAIT TO ONE NARROWER IN SCOPE; F) GAIN 1 DISADVANTAGEOUS TRAIT; POTENTIAL "NEGATIVE" ROLL RESULTS SHOULD BE IGNORED]

Magical (M)

[RUKASU: CHOSE OTHER TYPE OF DAMAGE; MOST USUALLY LOSE A TRAIT]

Magical damage is harder to pin down. This is not the same damage done by a magical fire blast or lightning bolt, that's just a Burn or Physical. This is damage to the Karmic life force itself. It may include paralysis or other sundry effects. Magical damage might even be inflicted by a curse.

Burn (B)

[RUKASU: TREAT AS "WOUND" WITH SPECIALS, E.G. IT TAKES TWICE AS LONG TO HEAL]

Burn damage is caused by energy like heat, electricity, cold, or even some chemicals like acids or bases. While Scratches, and usually Hurts heal normally, ~~Very~~ Hurt or worse Burns often leave horrid scars, and they heal very slowly due to the tissue damage. Such wound may impose permanent penalties to the victim's good looks.

Stacking Damages

This is all well and good, but what happens if I have taken two Magical (M) ~~scratches~~ [RUKASU: "SORES"] and then take a Burn (B) ~~scratch~~ [RUKASU: "SORE"]? It's simple, there's plenty of room on the wound track, so write Bs or B/S in the Hurt box.

Healing and Recovery

Hopefully, your character will be lucky enough to attempt a recovery from injuries received in the course of duty. Each special damage type carries its own healing concerns. Note that these healing times and methods may vary by genre and adventure.

Recovery by Damage Type

Physical (S, H, V)

~~Scratch level damage heals automatically within a day. Especially if the character gets rest, this can be erased quickly.~~

~~Hurt and worse damage~~ [RUKASU: "WOUNDS"] requires a Constitution roll [RUKASU: FITTING TRAITS] to heal. The difficulty of the roll is determined by the level of the wound [DIFFICULTY FOR SORE DEFAULTS TO -1, FOR HURT DEFAULTS TO 0, ETC.]. ~~This is conveniently referenced on the Universal Translator Table.~~ Please note that this roll is ~~penalized~~ [RUKASU: "NOT PENALIZED"] by the effects of the wounds. Such Constitution rolls occur ~~the day~~ [RUKASU: "ONE WEEK"] after the wound is received, and every ~~46 days~~ [RUKASU: "WEEK"] after that. Each individual wound gets a roll. Successful checks reduce the wound by one step until gone.

All damage types heal according to the wound level as dealt. Hence, a character who is incapacitated [RUKASU: "OUT"] from three Hurts, need only beat a ~~Fair~~ [RUKASU: "DIFFICULTY 0"] Constitution roll three times. A ~~Very~~ Hurt character who has taken four ~~scratches~~ [RUKASU: "SORES"] will recover ~~after a day of rest~~ [RUKASU: "WITH FOUR DIFFICULTY -1 ROLLS"]. When a wound is healed, the other wounds 're-stack'. This means that if the character has two Hurts, and the first one makes the roll, the other H, in the ~~Very Hurt~~ [RUKASU: "CRIPPLED"] box, is reduced to a Hurt wound.

Characters who are ~~Near-Death~~ [RUKASU: "IN AGONY"] will not generally recover without outside care. This is described in the Medicine skill description.

Fatigue (F)

[RUKASU: USE FITS STANDARD FOR HEALING "STUNS"]

Fatigue damage heals [RUKASU: A LEVEL] after a ~~full day of~~ rest, regardless of Constitution or wound penalties. This does not just mean eight hours of sleep. This means ~~a day of~~ sitting and resting and eating and drinking.

Mental or Psychic (P)

[RUKASU: IN MOST CASES — AS FOR THE PARALLEL TYPE OF DAMAGE]

~~After an incident that deals Mental or Psychic Damage, a wounded character makes a Willpower roll to fend off permanent emotional scars. If the roll fails, then the injury is sustained.~~ Mental or Psychic damage can only be healed in two ways. The natural way is that a week of rest can possibly allow the mental phantoms to leave. This rest permits a mental recovery roll, which may be affected by Gifts, but is straight circumstantial roll. If this roll is failed, the damage becomes permanent, and can only be removed by the second recovery method. However, this can be erased from the Wound Track and noted as a fault on the character. For example a ~~Very Hurt~~ [RUKASU: "CRIPPLED"] P wound could become: Hydrophobia (V, fault) -- The character must make Good Willpower rolls to enter or approach water. ~~Notice how the Universal translator table provides the difficulty of the roll.~~

A healer with Telepathy or similar powers may also attempt to fix the problem.

The second recovery method is more complicated. A character with the appropriate magical or psychological skills or powers can attempt therapy. The difficulty of such therapy is affected by the extent of the injuries. So a ~~Very Hurt (M)~~ [RUKASU: "CRIPPLED"] character imposes a -2 to the therapy roll.

Toxin or Disease (T or D)

Wounds caused by Toxins or Disease do not have a general curing method. Indeed, each toxin or disease will have a prescribed treatment or antidote. If such an injury will not heal on its own accord, an herbalist or physician can attempt to remove it through treatment.

[RUKASU: EFFECTS MAY LAST FOR MINUTES, DAYS, OR MONTHS — OR TILL THE FIRST, SECOND OR TENTH SUCCESSFUL RECOVERY ROLL — DEPENDING ON SOURCE OF THE INJURY; POSSIBLE RESULTING DAMAGE IS TREATED AS NORMAL, HOWEVER, AND WITH NO REGARDS TO THE SPECIAL EFFECT ITSELF]

Magical (M)

[RUKASU: OFTEN IMPOSSIBLE; AS FOR THE PARALLEL TYPE OF DAMAGE, OTHERWISE]

Magical Damage requires use of the Thaumaturgy skill to remove. Alternatively, magical damage will fade with time like a normal wound. The determination is made by the nature of the damage. Damage not initially directed at the character proper, perhaps through an enchanted area or food, fades as normal damage. Damage directed straight at the character, usually through sorcery, requires another wizard to remove it.

Burn (B)

Burn damage is perhaps the worst type of damage available. Burn damage heals at a rate of one ~~Constitution~~ roll [RUKASU: DIFFICULTY FOR HEALING INCREASES BY 1 OR MORE] every ~~412 days~~ [RUKASU: "2 WEEKS"]. There is no roll the morning after. ~~Very~~ Hurt burns are subject to infection or scarring, which might impose permanent penalties to the character in the form of Faults like 'Disfigured Left Arm' or 'Grotesque Scars on Face'

Well, I hope that this offers some ideas for people to use in their games. It adds a bit of depth that players may find interesting. For example, a pyromancer in my campaign recently enchanted a sword so that it does Burn damage instead of normal damage. I have printed a "GM screen" for myself with an abbreviated healing chart on it, and it takes up not one-fourth of a page.