

# Game Rules

Weight: Rail Gun: 900 lbs (405 kg).

Mega-Damage: A burst is 80 rounds and inflicts 1D4x10 M.D., one round does 1D4 M.D.

Rate of Fire: Each burst counts as one melee attack.

Effective Range: 4000 feet (1219 m).

Payload: 20,000 round drum, that's 250 bursts. Reloading a rail gun requires special equipment or another giant size robot. It will take about 15 minutes for those not trained, but a mere five minutes by somebody trained in Robot Mechanics (or an Operator).

**2. T-001 Shoulder Missile Launchers (2):** These are medium-range missile launchers mounted in the shoulders.

Primary Purpose: Anti-Aircraft & Anti-Armor.

Mega-Damage: Varies with missile type. Any medium-range missile can be used. See missile stat.

Effective Range: 40-80 miles (64 to 128 km).

Rate of Fire: One at a time or in volleys of two, three, or four.

Payload: Ten total, five each shoulder.

**3. T-001 Mini-Missile Leg Launchers (2):** Mounted on the side of each leg is a small missile launcher.

Primary Purpose: Anti-Personnel & Defense.

Missile Type: Any type of mini-missile can be used, but standard issue is fragmentation (anti-personnel, 5D6 M.D.) and plasma (1D6x10).

Mega-Damage: Varies with missile type.

Effective Range: One mile (1.6 km).

Rate of Fire: One at a time or in volleys of two, three, or four.

Payload: Twelve, six on each leg.

**4. T-001 Laser Turrets (1):** A laser turret is mounted in the chest, capable of 90 degree angle of fire (up and down).

Primary Purpose: Anti-Personnel & Defense.

Mega-Damage: 4D6 per twin blast (2D6 M.D. per single blast).

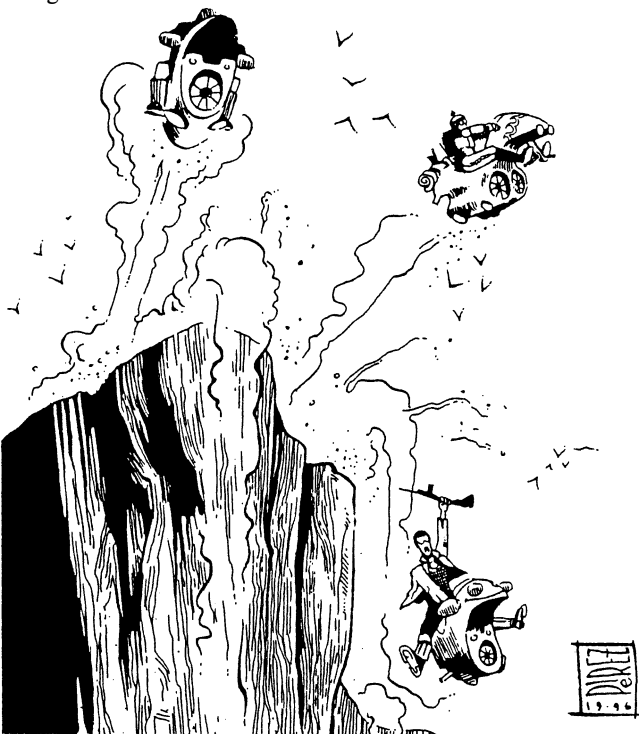
Effective Range: 2000 feet (610 m).

Rate of Fire: Each (single or) dual blast counts as one melee attack.

Payload: Effectively unlimited.

**5. Hand to Hand Combat:** Rather than use a weapon, the pilot can engage in Mega-Damage hand to hand combat. Retractable Vibro-

Claws: Adds 2D6 M.D. to open hand slap/clawing and tearing damage.



**Rifts®** is a game that can be played on many levels.

For players who love science fiction, robots, bionics and weird science, **Rifts®** is for you. For players who prefer all kinds of magic and dragons, battling demons, and visiting strange worlds, **Rifts®** is the ultimate. (And how many games actually let you play a *dragon*?) For those who like intrigue, treachery, and sociopolitical overtones, you've got it in **Rifts®**. If you enjoy games of adventure, exploration and discovery, that's **Rifts®** too. Or maybe you're looking for all-out action and combat, then **Rifts®** is your dream come true.

What's that? You love superheroes! **Rifts®** is packed with superhumans and you can easily convert characters from the *Heroes Unlimited* RPG (or any of our other games) into **Rifts®**. Looking for space opera, check out the *Rifts® Dimension Books for Phase World®*. And if you'd rather play offbeat heroes who use their heads rather than musclebound warriors, wizards or superhumans, well **Rifts®** has them too.

**Rifts®** was intentionally designed to provide a fun and plausible setting unlike any role-playing game ever made. A game that would include every genre and allow gamers the luxury of playing anything and anywhere they might desire. I strove to create a backdrop that was epic in scope yet identifiable and easy to find a starting point. I wanted an RPG where players were, honestly, limited only by their imaginations and could have the time of their lives. Welcome to **Rifts®**.

What follows are the basic rules for playing **Rifts®**. All of Palladium's games use the same *basic rules*, so once you've learned to play one, you can play any of our games. Because **Rifts®** offers such a wide range of possibilities, the hardest part will be picking which intriguing character to play and getting started. Try not to over-think matters, pick an Occupational Character Class (O.C.C.), build your character and jump into the action. Each of Palladium's RPGs is tailored to the setting, and the setting of **Rifts®** challenges the characters to be more than they appear. To be heroes, champions and worldbeaters without losing their own humanity.

**If you have never role-played before**, you're in for a treat, because there's nothing like role-playing games. New players should follow one golden rule: *Sit back and have fun*.

At first glance, a role-playing game can look intimidating. Page after page of rules and information. How can you ever learn it all? Well, relax. First of all, *you* don't have to learn *everything* there is to know about this game. That's why you have this handy book as a companion and reference. Second, a lot of the material is fun to read, but it's not stuff you must know. As a player, you don't need to understand every little nuance of the game (that's the *Game Master's* job). All you need to know are the basics of how to create a character, how skills and special abilities apply to your particular character, how combat works, and which dice to roll. That's pretty much it.

When you try a role-playing game for the first time, it's natural if the experience feels a little odd or confusing. The text is filled with terms like M.D.C., I.S.P., and P.P.E., as well as "2D6" this and "2D4" that, and lots of other strange terms that may seem like an incomprehensible secret language you can scarcely wrap your head around. You might need help in rolling up your character, picking out skills and equipment, as well as figuring out which dice to roll. Don't worry! This

will pass quickly. By the third or fourth time you've role-played (if not sooner), you should stop feeling like a fish out of water. The more you play, the clearer things will get and the better you'll play.

## How to Role-Play

Role-playing games are really just a super-advanced form of regular board games. In fact, they are so advanced that they no longer use a board and the playing pieces are the characters in each player's imagination. Pretty cool already, if you ask me, and you haven't even started playing.

Some of the elements remain the same as a board game: you still need paper and pencil, dice and players, but that's where the similarities end. Role-playing games are all about *unleashing your imagination*.

## Let's Take it a Step at a Time

### Imagine the Scene

Picture this: A shabby hut made out of the cargo bay of a U-Haul truck. The doorway is nothing more than an opening cut into one side, a tarp hooked to the top of the opening serves as the door. The insides are about the size of a bedroom, roughly 8x15 feet (2.4 x 4.6 m). The walls are covered in white paint, and the interior is surprisingly clean. As you stand in the doorway there is a potbelly stove to your right with an exhaust pipe rising up through the ceiling. A woman sits at a small table peeling potatoes, the other three chairs are empty. Behind the table is a shelf filled with basic cooking supplies: herbs, spices, and a selection of fruits and vegetables. Across from the woman in the opposite corner are six bedrolls. A pair of children look up at you, their eyes sparkling from behind dirty faces.

To your left are three or four wooden crates partially covered by a pale blue blanket. Three cardboard boxes and an unlit lantern rest on top of the crates. A pile of other boxes and things, some draped with cloth coverings, fill the other corner. Directly in front of you are a trio of men sitting on a makeshift couch covered in pillows that double as cushions. There are no windows, so it's like stepping into a cave. The only light comes from a lantern, turned to low, on a small crate serving as an end table at one side of the couch. A bit of sunlight peeks in every time the wind blows the tarp draped in the door.

Can you picture this scene? Try to keep the mental image in your mind. Don't worry if you forget the details; one of the great things about role-playing is the way your memory is improved with practice. Now you are ready for the next step . . .

### Imagine the Setting

The atmosphere inside the one-room dwelling is stifling hot and heavy with the scent of sweat mixed with cooking spices, booze and machine oil. The fresh air that sneaks in with the sunlight when the tarp blows is a welcomed visitor. The woman, kids and the man leaning forward on the couch are all human. On the man's left is a chunky, pale, green-skinned, reptilian humanoid who you recognize as a D-Bee known as a Larmac. To his right is a smaller figure dressed in heavy robes, his hood pulled down so he can smoke a pipe. His red skin and filed down horns reveal he is a D-Bee known as a Devil Man; his ram-shaped horns filed down to nubs so he can fit in a crowd more easily and slip by Coalition patrols without drawing attention to himself.

Like watching a film, the scene is established, and now our attention is focused on the *three men* in the overall scene. We have also established an atmosphere and the beginning of action.

Got all that? Good. Now let's figure out where *you*, the player, fit into this.

## Imagine Your Character

Now here comes the tricky part. *You* are not in the hut, but there is somebody whose eyes you see through. That person is *your character*. An imaginary persona that exists only as stats on a sheet of paper and in your imagination. This is your *playing piece* in the game. Just like an actor assuming a role for a movie, *you* play a fictitious character in the game. It is your imaginary character who is standing in the doorway, the tarp flapping gently in the slow breeze. It is your imaginary character who has psychic powers, or wields magic, or is a warrior born. It is he (or she) who reacts and interacts with the other playing pieces – the other player characters, and the Non-Player Characters, the ones the Game Master plays.

As a rule, you will spend an hour or more developing a player character. Once the character has been created, you'll probably continue playing that character for many weeks, months, even years.

In our example, your character has been invited inside the home of a human living in one of the slums outside the walls of the fortress city of Chi-Town. The gentleman leaning forward may have something you want – or more precisely, something your playing piece, your character, wants. Remember the scene, the setting? See how it all comes together? See how a story is starting to build from this encounter?

### Imagine the Action

Actually, you need one more important ingredient to make a role-playing game work, the *Game Master*.

The Game Master, or *G.M.*, is another player (a real person) who controls and acts out all the characters in the game which are *not* the characters of other players. It is also the Game Master who, like the director of a film, establishes the setting, introduces antagonists and keeps the action moving. This means the Game Master will play/act out the friendly police officer, the grumpy old man next door, and the three men on the couch. In this written example, *you* are the only player and I am acting as the Game Master (G.M.) describing the scene, establishing the setting and prepping for the encounter/conflict.

The Game Master says to you: "The human leans forward and says, 'I'm glad you came. I know we have what you're looking for. Please,' he says with a smile, as he stands up and gestures with his hand toward the large crates. 'Come in and take a look.' – What are *you* (your character) going to do?"

At this point, *you* must decide what your playing piece, your character, is going to do. Does he walk in toward the crates to see what merchandise the man has to offer? Does he keep an eye on the two D-Bees who remain seated, but following his every move with their eyes? Or does the character forget about them when he sees some marvel the man has for sale? Or maybe, he reconsiders his actions, turns and leaves? The 'Burbs are notorious for being dangerous and home to thieves, smugglers, wanted criminals and agents of the Black Market. Maybe he should come back with a friend. However, just turning and leaving would be rude and may insult the three men, so your character should probably say something. Perhaps something like, "Oh gosh, I left my wallet in my APC." or "Um, you know what? I really should have my friend see this with me. Let me get him and come back later."

The Game Master will respond, playing the human, and might agree without further incident, or say, "No, no, my friend, come and see what we have for you." As he says that, the Devil Man puts down his pipe and the Larmac stands up, and begins to walk toward your character. Tension is building. Maybe his actions are innocent or maybe he's going to block the door. You need to decide your character's next action. And it doesn't hurt thinking ahead to how he's going to react if this turns out to be a trap or robbery.

These are just a few possible actions. The decision is *yours*. The Game Master will have the other characters *respond* to your character's actions. If these are honest adventurers or merchants, pulling a weapon or making a threat in the man's own house is likely to meet with swift

action. If it's a trap, your character had better act now and run out that door before the trap is completely sprung.

Like improvisational theater, you, your fellow players and the Game Master, are all building an adventure, a story. The G.M. may have been the one to concoct the basic story, villains and plot twists, but even he doesn't know exactly how it will all turn out, because the *players* are the key components to the story. Their characters' choices and actions will change everything and carry the story along.

When the game is over you'll have a complete chapter of a larger story forever locked in your memory. A story that *you* helped to create and your character was one of the main heroes.

In a role-playing game there are no simple answers. There are also almost no limits to what you can do. The only restrictions are that you cannot go beyond the physical, mental and emotional limits of your character or the parameters of the setting. And your character's words and deeds may have repercussions (makes a friend, makes an enemy, causes a situation to spiral to violence, innocent people are hurt and the character is chased out of town, or his quick thinking saves the day and the townspeople throw a party for him or give him a reward, and on and on). Use common sense and your imagination and have fun.

## What You Need to Play

Other than imagination, 2 or more players, and a Game Master, you will also need the following:

**Dice:** 2 four-sided (2D4), 4 six-sided (4D6), 2 eight-sided (2D8), 2 ten-sided (2D10), and 2 twenty-sided (2D20). The numbers in parentheses are examples of how dice terms are condensed and written throughout this text. The first number "2" indicates the number of dice, the letter "D" stands for dice, and the second number indicates the type of dice, four-sided, six-sided, etc. The unusual types of dice, four, eight, ten and twenty sided dice (there are also 12-sided dice), can be purchased at most game and hobby shops, and gaming conventions, as well as online, but they can also be purchased at most "chain" bookstores like Barnes & Noble, Books a Million, Borders, Media-Play, and many hobby and comic book shops. Just ask a clerk where you'd find "dice for role-playing games." To find an unimaginable array of dice, you'll have to check out a gaming convention. Going to Palladium's web site ([www.palladiumbooks.com](http://www.palladiumbooks.com)) will keep you abreast of conventions we are attending and how to find out more about them, and from there you will discover a larger world of gamers and gaming.

**Plenty of paper and a couple pencils.** For keeping track of character stats like Hit Points, M.D.C., and I.S.P. (Inner Strength Points), taking notes about non-player characters, sketching maps, jotting down clues, and so on.

**Character log sheets** which can be photocopied from books that contain them, or simply use a sheet of paper to jot down your character's stats (attributes, skills, powers, etc.).

Oh, and of course you'll need a place for you and your friends to play – bedroom, basement, family room, living room, kitchen, heck, just about any place.

## Notable Game & Rifts® Terms

**Adventure:** An adventure is the heroic and thrilling story that the player characters engage in. It is the responsibility of the Game Master to create and orchestrate each adventure.

**Alignment:** The moral fiber of a character. Alignment descriptions begin on page 289.

**Attributes:** These are numbers used to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your character. For example: P.P. means Physical Prowess, how smooth, agile and quick a character is in combat. A character with a P.P. of 1-6 would indicate that the character is pretty clumsy; a P.P. of 9 or 12 would be an average, well coordinated character. While

a P.P. of 16 or higher would belong only to characters with exceptional agility and reflexes. Attributes are also part of a character's overall *Statistics* or *Stats* and a vital part of his or her abilities. Attributes, potential bonuses and penalties are presented in the *Character Creation* section.

**Body Fixer:** Slang for a Medical Doctor and surgeon.

**Bonuses:** Many skills, Occupational Character Classes (O.C.C.s and R.C.C.s), magic spells, weapons and other things may provide the fictional character with one or more *bonuses*. Combat bonuses to strike, parry, dodge, etc., are one type, bonuses to *save* vs a particular type of attack (psionics, magic, poison, possession, etc.) are another. Then there are bonuses to Perception Rolls, skills, and even S.D.C. bonuses which are *added* to that particular character stat or combat or melee action. Always be sure to include your character's bonuses, they may make the difference between life and death.

**'Borg:** Slang for "cyborg."

**'Bot:** Slang for "robot."

**Campaign:** A word used to describe an ongoing game with the same characters. If you play the same characters with the same Game Master, in the same basic game world/setting, on a regular basis, then you are in a campaign. A campaign can be one long adventure or numerous adventures of varying length.

**Character:** Every player (except the G.M.) has a character that serves as an imaginary playing piece, also called the *Player Character*.

**Combat:** This is an "adventure" game, so there will be combat, from fisticuffs to gunplay, psychic zaps and magical energy blasts. Combat is determined by the roll of a D20 plus "modifiers" (bonuses or penalties). Also see the *Combat Section* in this book, page 339, for more terms, details and rules involving fighting.

**Creatures of Magic:** Basically any mortal creature that is born with magical abilities; a Magic R.C.C. if you will. Beings such as dragons, Faerie Folk, and the Sphinx are all creatures of magic. Beings within whom magic is a part of their very essence. Many are also able to learn and cast magic spells and use magic weapons. Dragons are among the greatest and most powerful creatures of magic.

All creatures of magic are *mortal*, meaning they have a finite life span. The life span of most creatures of magic is often greater than a human's and can range from decades or hundreds of years to thousands of years, but these mortal creatures are born, age, live in the world of humans, and eventually die. Though removed from humanity by their magical nature, creatures of magic think and feel like humans, and live in the same world. It is the creatures' innate magical nature and inherent magic powers that make them *more than human*.

The distinction between creatures of magic and the supernatural is lost on many people, because they both possess superhuman powers and/or the ability to cast spells. Many creatures of magic also possess Supernatural Strength and can use their magic or innate magic abilities to turn invisible, heal, etc., all abilities frequently shared by supernatural beings. The *main difference* is that creatures of magic are *mortals* who *use magic* to perform these abilities. If you'd ask a dragon with whom he has more in common, he'd say "humans" and snarl at the suggestion of anything else. Also see the definition of *Demons, Gods & Supernatural Beings*. **Note:** A creature of magic is always indicated as such.

**CS:** The initials used to indicate the Coalition States rather than writing or saying the whole word, just as US or USA stands for the United States of America.

**Cyber-Doc:** Slang for a doctor who specializes in surgically installing and removing bionics.

**Death:** Just as in real life, these fictional characters can die. The death of a hero in role-playing games, much like comic books and ongoing television shows, is usually a fairly uncommon event, and when it happens, it is usually pretty dramatic. (Hopefully a noble or heroic sacrifice.) The amount of death in a campaign usually depends on the

individual Game Master, his players, and the world setting. In **Rifts®**, the world is incredibly dangerous, violent, and unpredictable, so death *may* be commonplace, unless the player characters use their heads, work as a team, watch each other's backs and don't take silly risks.

Players should try to take a character's death calmly. Remember, it's **ONLY** a game. When one character dies, roll up a new one and try to get back into the game with the orientation and personality of the *new* character. It may be handy to have a backup character already rolled up and waiting in the wings, in case the current character should meet an untimely end.

Game Masters, you don't have to "pause" the game while the player rolls up a "NEW" character, keep playing with the rest of the group, but try to work him back into the plot as soon as he is ready to rejoin the game. It's no fun sitting out a game for long periods of time. However, characters should not be a dime a dozen, or killed on a whim or as the result of personal conflict between other player(s) or the Game Master. A good G.M. should also try to give the player characters *options*, i.e. a chance to surrender, a desperate chance at escape, etc. Then again, sometimes there's no way around it. I've killed plenty of characters as a G.M. Some of the deaths were spectacular and worthy of a heroic poem, and other times the character just played dumb or took a dangerous risk and paid the ultimate price. It happens, and often adds to the drama of the story.



**Dead Boy:** Slang for soldiers of the CS due to the fact that Coalition soldiers wear skeletal armor and use a "Death's Head" motif and insignias.

**D-Bee:** Slang for **Dimensional Being**. In general terms, a "D-Bee" is any bi-pedal humanoid with human-like intelligence but comes from another world or dimension. These alien *people* (not monsters) are mortal, like humans, and, with a few exceptions, are S.D.C. beings.

The vast majority of D-Bees were torn from their native world and reality and dropped into ours – flung to Rifts Earth by cosmic upheaval and strange dimensional anomalies on their planet. For many, that upheaval was part of the dimensional ripple effect that the Great Cataclysm and the Coming of the Rifts caused throughout the Megaverse. On alien worlds where the veil between dimensions was thinnest, dimensional Rifts and storms appeared and ripped tens of thousands of people (in some cases, hundreds of thousands) from their home world and deposited them on Rifts Earth. Most D-Bees were as much victims of the Coming of the Rifts as humans, and without any way to return home, D-Bees had no choice but to try to make a life for themselves on Earth. Millions of D-Bees unable to adapt or who fell to violence died during the Great Cataclysm and the Dark Age that followed. Like their human counterparts, D-Bees struggled for survival in a world gone mad and fell prey to demons, monsters, alien invaders, disease and weird forces. Sadly, because terrified humans often confused these people with alien invaders or monsters, humans slaughtered D-Bees by the

hundreds of thousands. Over the last 300 years, D-Bees have become a common part of the landscape on Rifts Earth. An estimated 35% of the world population is D-Bees, and that estimate may be low.

Today, many humans and D-Bees try to accept each other and live together in the same communities, although D-Bees in North America are often treated as second-class citizens or slave stock. Other communities, like the CS, still consider D-Bees to be dangerous rivals and competitors to human survival or invading aliens to be destroyed. For many current generations of D-Bees, *Rifts Earth* is the only home they have ever known, and they have no intention of leaving it even if they could. Some believe that being ripped from their planet of origin and brought to Earth must have been fate or divine intervention, and that their presence may actually serve some greater cosmic purpose.

**Demons, Gods & Supernatural Beings:** All supernatural beings, be they gods or demons, are inhuman and immortal. They are not creatures of our Earth or reality, but the denizens of an alien reality. As such, they are not even part of our plane of existence and must somehow link themselves to our human dimension. Thus, when they are slain on Rifts Earth or any mortal world, they disintegrate or vanish like a ghost as if they never existed. Only when slain in their native dimension or some similar supernatural realm is the creature truly killed. When struck down on Earth, the monster vanishes and reappears in its native environment. The ordeal of dying in the mortal plane prevents it from returning to that reality for decades, often 1D8x100 years.

One way for great supernatural beings to enter our plane of existence is by sending forth lesser servants and communing with mortals so that they may gather mortal worshipers. The more worshipers the supernatural being gathers, the stronger its link to the mortal plane. The stronger the creature's link to our world, the greater influence and power it has over humans and other mortals, and the more demonic minions it can send into our world. In most cases, beings on the level of a god (including Alien Intelligences) must have thousands or even hundreds of thousands of worshipers or believers before they can materialize in that plane of existence. Others can only appear for a brief period (minutes at a time) which is why they speak through their priests, servants and demonic hordes under their command.

To be at their most powerful, they must take physical form. This is easy for lesser and greater demons, Dyvalians and other similar supernatural beings, forming their bodies from ectoplasm and insects, vermin, dead bodies or a living human host. The Rifts make our Earth and their weird dimensions easy to bridge, enabling them to pop right out of a dimensional Rift whole and fully formed and ready for action.

All demons and most supernatural beings are inhuman by their very nature and have little in common with humans or any other mortal being even if they appear human. Demons, in particular, are evil incarnate and see themselves as superior to humans and D-Bees. Mortals are lesser beings, and are preyed upon as if they were animals, or are regarded as playthings, pawns, or worshipers to be deceived and used. The inhuman nature of the supernatural beings make them and humans (and D-Bees) *natural enemies*.

**Dog Boy:** Mutant humanoid soldier created through genetic engineering by the Coalition States.

**Dice:** As noted previously, dice are an essential. Track 'em down.

**Game Master (G.M.):** This is the person who controls the game "world," sets up and develops the adventures and pacing, and serves as the general referee and rules interpreter. All the *non-player characters* (NPCs), innocent bystanders, police, politicians, monsters, and even the weather are controlled by the Game Master. G.M.s should try to be fair and run a *fun* game.

**Game Session & Adventures:** Each time you play is considered a game or gaming session. A game session can last a couple hours or half the day. A typical game *runs* about 3-4 hours. A game session can be a complete story/adventure in itself, or one story in an ongoing series like a television show or comic book. A game session can also end without a final resolve, with part two (or three, or four, etc.) picking up the *next game* where the group left off.

**Great Cataclysm:** The apocalyptic transformation of the planet Earth that wiped out 80% of the human population, marked the return of magic and the Coming of the Rifts.

**I.S.P. or Inner Strength Points:** I.S.P. are spent or expended every time a character uses a psionic power. When all I.S.P. are used up, the character cannot use any more psychic powers until he gets some points back. I.S.P. are restored at a rate of one per hour of sleep. They can also be restored through *meditation* at a rate of two I.S.P. per 30 minutes (or 4 points per hour) of meditation. Only psionic/psychic characters and some supernatural creatures have I.S.P. points and psychic powers. See the O.C.C. Section (Occupational Character Classes) and Psionic Descriptions for complete details on psychics and their abilities.

**Magic:** *Rifts*® and most Palladium role-playing games include magic spells, powers, weapons and monsters. Although some of these things may be inspired by myths and legends, *NONE* of them are real! Magic is covered to some degree in this RPG, but the **Rifts® Book of Magic**, a giant, 352 page reference book, contains hundreds of different magic spells, as well as dozens of different types of magic, magic items, weapons, Techno-Wizard devices, herbs, and much more. It is highly recommended for Game Masters and players focusing on magic.

**M.D.C.:** Mega-Damage Capacity – the amount of damage Mega-Damage armor, vehicles, constructs or creatures can withstand. When an M.D.C. object is reduced to zero, it is destroyed. The M.D.C. of a living creature works basically the same as Hit Points. Reducing it to zero puts the creature in a coma and without medical treatment the creature will die. One M.D.C. point is roughly equal to 100 S.D.C. points of damage.

**Mega-Damage:** Damage inflicted by high-powered weapons and magic that can damage M.D.C. structures and beings. One M.D. point is roughly equal to 100 S.D.C. or Hit Points. Mega-Damage materials and weaponry were created during the Golden Age of Man before the Great Cataclysm.

**Megaverse®:** The trademark we use to identify the multi-genre, anything goes, infinite worlds and possibilities that Palladium's one game system has to offer. A complete, 32 page *catalog* of Palladium role-playing games and sourcebooks is available, free, upon request. Send catalog requests (and letters or comments) to Palladium Books Inc., Department P, 12455 Universal Drive, Taylor, MI 48180.

**Natural Twenty:** In all of Palladium's role-playing games (RPGs), the outcome of combat is determined by the roll of a twenty-sided die (1D20). The higher the roll, the better. Many combat "rolls" get bonuses to strike, parry, dodge, etc. These bonuses are added to the roll of the die. For example, if a 12 is rolled on a D20, but a character has cumulative bonuses of +4 to strike, then the roll is *modified* to 16.

A *Natural Twenty* is rolling the highest possible number (20) without adding any bonuses to the number rolled. A Natural 20 never misses unless one's opponent *also* rolls a Natural 20 (very uncommon, but I have seen it happen). Yes, a Natural 20 will hit even if an opponent's roll is higher than 20 after bonuses are added to it. A Natural 20 is also considered a Critical Strike and does *double damage*. Or if the player was trying to shoot or knock a weapon out of an opponent's hand, or grab an item before an opponent gets it, the action is an automatic success.

**Non-Player Character (NPC):** A character that is not played by any of the players, such as villains, monsters, bystanders, and other characters played by the Game Master (G.M.).

**O.C.C. or Occupational Character Class:** The term most Palladium games use to describe the character as a whole. It indicates the character's occupation, skills, skill selections, special abilities, bonuses, goals, orientation, equipment, and salary.

**R.C.C. (Racial Character Class)** is basically the same thing but refers to inhuman monsters, demons and aliens with abilities and skill equivalents that come natural to all creatures of that specific *race*, such as Climbing, Swimming, Seduction, etc. This category is sometimes con-

fusing when an alien being or monster has a range of instinctive skills and abilities, but is also intelligent and driven enough to *learn* additional skills, just like a human.

**P.C.C.** stands for Psychic Character Class and is a term reserved for "psychic" characters in *Beyond the Supernatural*™ 2, *Nightbane*® and *Mystic China*™. Even though **Rifts**® has *Psychic Character Classes*, we've found using the term, P.C.C., can be confusing, so we either refer to them as O.C.C.s or R.C.C.s; basically an O.C.C. with psychic abilities. **Note:** An R.C.C. or P.C.C. often has fewer skills and selections available because the character tends to rely on his psychic or natural (R.C.C./racial) abilities.

**Operator:** The mechanics, electricians and engineers of Rifts Earth. See O.C.C. description for details.

**P.A.:** The initials used to designate the "Post-Apocalyptic" calendar. A designation of 12 P.A. means the year 12 of the Post-Apocalyptic calendar. The **Rifts**® RPG time-line begins in the year 100 P.A., with recent events taking place in 109 P.A.

**Percentile Dice:** Percentile dice are typically a pair of ten-sided dice (2D10), each a different color. One ten-sided die represents "tens" and the other ten-sided die represents "ones." So if the red D10 is tens and the white D10 is ones, then a roll of 3 on red and a roll of 5 on the white would indicate the number 35. Get it?

Percentile dice are commonly rolled to determine the "random outcome" on a table or chart as well as for "skill checks."

**Perception Rolls:** A roll made to notice, see, hear or recognize a clue or concealment. It is described and explained in detail in the Combat Section.

**Player or Role-Player:** Probably *you*. A player is a person who assumes the role of a fictional character in a role-playing game.

**Player Character:** A fictional character that is played or "run" by one of the people playing in the game. An NPC (Non-Player Character) is a character, villain or monster played by the G.M.

**P.P.E.:** Potential Psychic Energy used to develop human potential and the energy used to fuel magic. Mages have their own storage of P.P.E. which they use to cast spells and create or power magic items. Ley lines are actually natural lines of magic energy which practitioners of magic can tap and use in their magic. See the section on Magic, page 185, for more information on how it works.

**Psionics or Psychic Abilities:** Like magic, the psionic powers and abilities described in this book are fictional, although they may be inspired by myths, legends and reports of psychic phenomena. A character must spend I.S.P. to use a psionic power. The *Mind Melter*, *Burster*, and *Mystic* are all psionic character classes. Additional psionic O.C.C.s are presented in other sourcebooks.

**Random Roll/Determination:** This will always refer to a chart or table in which a character can roll percentile dice for a random result as dictated by the roll of the dice. In many cases, the player or Game Master *may* choose to pick the desired result. However, at Palladium, we've found random rolls to be more fun and challenging than picking something that sounds comfortable, easy or desirable.

**Rift:** A tear in space and time that leads to another world or dimension.

**Role-Playing Game (RPG):** Sometimes called *fantasy role-playing (FRP)*, they are games, like this one, that build a story with imaginary characters in a fictional setting. Role-playing games cover every genre imaginable, including horror, fantasy, sword and sorcery, science fiction, cyberpunk, mecha/giant robots, superheroes, war, and just about everything else. The great thing about role-playing games is that the Game Master and players are limited only by their imaginations. Anything is possible. Some videogames also call themselves RPGs and draw upon the concepts and principles that started with "pen and paper" role-playing games.

**Roll a Twenty-Sided:** Simply roll a twenty-sided die (1D20) for a number. Typically, the higher the roll the better.

**Roll Percentile:** The roll of two different colored ten-sided dice (2D10), with one color representing tens and the other representing ones. There are also 10-sided dice (D10) available that are already marked in tens (10, 20, 30, etc.), but they are typically only available at game and hobby stores or gaming conventions.

**Roll to Strike:** The roll of a twenty-sided die (1D20) to determine whether or not the attacking character hits his opponent. See the Combat Section, starting on page 339, for details.

**Run:** Slang for playing a role-playing game. Example: "He runs an excellent campaign," or "I ran in Kevin's game last week," or "You should run a Rifts game."

**Saving Throw:** This is a roll (usually on a twenty-sided die) to avoid some unpleasant event. For example: A character might have to roll a saving throw to avoid being overcome by tear gas. The complete list appears under *Combat Terms* in the Combat section. See page 346.

**Scenario:** This is a specific adventure in which the player characters engage in adventure and building a story while role-playing. A scenario is usually a story with a beginning (hearing about the criminal), a middle (tracking down the criminal's hide-out), and an end (defeating the criminal). Most campaigns are developed around a number of scenarios.

**Skill Check/Roll Under Your Skill:** A *skill check* is rolled to determine if the character successfully performed a specific skill. The character must roll *under* his current skill ability (Base Skill, any applicable bonus, plus level advancement). For example: A character with the Surveillance skill gets the base skill of 30% but also a +20% bonus for his occupation and because he is third level, an additional +10% (+5% per level of experience starting at level two), for a total of 60%. Rolling a 01-60 on percentile dice means he has successfully performed that skill. **Note:** You don't have to do the math every time you use a skill. Make a photocopy of the character sheet or write the stats on a piece of paper and add everything up when you first create the character. Write the numbers in pencil so you can change them/increase them as the character grows and his skills improve with experience.

# Character Creation

Creating a character is simple and fun, though there will be a number of choices the player will have to consider, select, and make note of, which takes a bit of time.

As noted earlier in this book, the Palladium game system is built to maximize *characters* and *story* to create vivid, memorable characters with strong personalities and a range of skills, strengths and weaknesses, that go beyond simple two-dimensional cartoon characters. Thus, it may take you a while to build your character, but the end result will be a character that is uniquely *yours*. Designed to *your* specifications and unique to every other character in the group. A character that, with a little development and personality, will seem to take on a life of its own. It is a magical and fun experience you'll never forget.

Let's take it one step at a time.

## Step 1: The Eight Attributes

All characters have eight prime attributes, three mental and five physical. *Attribute numbers* are used to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your character. For example: "P.P." means Physical Prowess – how smooth and agile a character may be, especially in combat. A P.P. of 4 indicates that the character is pretty clumsy. A P.P. of

8-11 indicates a character that is fairly average. A P.P. of 16 or higher indicates a character with exceptional agility and reflexes. **Note:** Attributes are also called "Statistics" or "Stats."

The first step in creating a character is to roll up the eight attributes: **I.Q., M.E., M.A., P.S., P.P., P.E., P.B., and Spd.** These represent your character's natural mental and physical abilities. Some of the *Physical skills* and special abilities from an O.C.C. may provide bonuses to increase some of the character's attributes, so it is important to write the numbers down in *pencil* until all modifiers and bonuses are accounted for.

**Three six-sided dice (3D6)** are rolled to determine each attribute. The higher the number, the greater the ability. Start with I.Q. and work your way through the rest.

**Exceptional right off the bat:** If an initial attribute roll using three six-sided dice (3D6) adds up to a 16, 17, or 18, that attribute is considered *exceptional* and the player rolls *one additional six-sided die* (1D6), and the resulting number is added to the total for that attribute. If another six is rolled (a rarity), roll yet another 1D6 for that attribute! Stop there. No additional dice are rolled even if the second 1D6 bonus miraculously comes up a six. **Note:** This bonus 1D6 is only rolled during the *initial* attribute generation and does not apply to attributes raised to 16 or higher from skills, O.C.C.s, augmentation, magic or special abilities.

**Attribute Bonuses from Skills (Step 5):** Many of the *Physical skills* provide the character with *attribute bonuses* that help them in the performance of skills, combat and work. For example, Wrestling offers a +2 bonus to the P.S. and P.E. attributes, so if the player has already rolled a total of 15 for P.S., he adds another two points for a total of 17. If his P.E. was 8, the +2 would raise it to 10. All Physical skill point bonuses are cumulative.

**Note:** See the Attribute Bonus listings for high attributes and superhuman strengths, as well as the new, Penalties for Low Attributes.

## The Eight Attributes

**Intelligence Quotient (I.Q.):** Indicates the character's intelligence. The exact I.Q. is equal to the I.Q. attribute multiplied times ten. Characters with an I.Q. of 1-6 are, um, morons and should be played like the classic dumb lug. However, having a low I.Q. does not necessarily make the character a complete idiot. An I.Q. of 7-9 is slightly below average, but far from an imbecile. An I.Q. of 10-13 is average, 14-16 above average. An I.Q. of 17 or better is exceptional, the higher the number the more brilliant the character. An I.Q. of 16 or higher receives a one-time bonus (see Attribute Bonus Chart) to *all* skill percentages, including O.C.C. Skills, O.C.C. Related Skills and even Secondary Skills.

**Mental Endurance (M.E.):** Measures the amount of mental and emotional stress the character can withstand. M.E. 16 or better provides a bonus to save vs psionic attacks and insanity.

**Mental Affinity (M.A.):** Represents the character's likeability, personal charm and charisma. Natural leaders, with an M.A. of 16 or higher, have a bonus to invoke trust or intimidation in others. A person with a high M.A. may appear trustworthy to some, but intimidating to others. This may depend on the character himself or the circumstances of the situation. At the player's option, a character with a high M.A. may choose to be only especially trustworthy or only intimidating. This explains how your friendly neighborhood ice cream man and some knife-wielding thug might both have the same high M.A., but use it differently.

**Physical Strength (P.S.):** This is the raw physical power of a character. Any character with a P.S. of 16 or better receives a bonus to damage an opponent in hand to hand combat. This bonus is applied to punch and kick attacks, as well as handheld weapons such as a club, knife or sword. It does not apply to the bow and arrow or guns.

## ATTRIBUTE BONUS CHART

	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
I.Q. add to all skills. This is a one time bonus	+ 2%	+ 3%	+ 4%	+ 5%	+ 6%	+ 7%	+ 8%	+ 9%	+ 10%	+ 11%	+ 12%	+ 13%	+ 14%	+ 15%	+ 16%
M.E. save vs. psionic attack	+ 1	+ 1	+ 2	+ 2	+ 3	+ 3	+ 4	+ 4	+ 5	+ 5	+ 6	+ 6	+ 7	+ 7	+ 8
save vs. insanity	+ 1	+ 1	+ 2	+ 2	+ 3	+ 4	+ 5	+ 6	+ 7	+ 8	+ 9	+ 10	+ 11	+ 12	+ 13
M.A. trust/intimidate	40%	45%	50%	55%	60%	65%	70%	75%	80%	84%	88%	92%	94%	96%	97%
P.S. Hand to Hand combat: damage	+ 1	+ 2	+ 3	+ 4	+ 5	+ 6	+ 7	+ 8	+ 9	+ 10	+ 11	+ 12	+ 13	+ 14	+ 15
P.P. parry and dodge bonus	+ 1	+ 1	+ 2	+ 2	+ 3	+ 3	+ 4	+ 4	+ 5	+ 5	+ 6	+ 6	+ 7	+ 7	+ 8
bonus to strike	+ 1	+ 1	+ 2	+ 2	+ 3	+ 3	+ 4	+ 4	+ 5	+ 5	+ 6	+ 6	+ 7	+ 7	+ 8
P.E. save vs. coma/death	+ 4%	+ 5%	+ 6%	+ 8%	+ 10%	+ 12%	+ 14%	+ 16%	+ 18%	+ 20%	+ 22%	+ 24%	+ 26%	+ 28%	+ 30%
save vs. magic/poison	+ 1	+ 1	+ 2	+ 2	+ 3	+ 3	+ 4	+ 4	+ 5	+ 5	+ 6	+ 6	+ 7	+ 7	+ 8
P.B. charm/impress	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	55%	60%	65%	70%	75%	80%	83%	86%	90%	92%
Spd. No special bonuses other than the raw, natural ability to run.															

## SPEED CHART

The following is a simple conversion table of speed factors into *approximate* miles per hour (mph) and kilometer equivalents.

Speed Factor	Approx. MPH	Kilometers Per Hour
5	3½	5.6
11	7½	12
22	15	24
27	18½	29.7
33	22½	36
44	30	48
50	35	56
55	37½	60
58	40	64
66	45	72
77	53	85
88	60	96
110	75	120
132	90	144
220	150	241
293	200	321

*Superhuman Men at Arms* who have undergone some type of augmentation, like *Full Conversion Cyborgs* and *Headhunters* (bionics), *Crazies* (brain implants), *Juicers* (chemical augmentation), and *Light Power Armor*, all possess a level of strength that transcends even exceptional human P.S.; see the **Augmented Strength** listing. **Note:** Giant robots, robot vehicles, heavy power armor (Glitter Boy, Ulti-Max and SAMAS), Skelebots and other robots (no human inside) use the **Robot Strength** listing. **Supernatural Strength** applies to *dragons* and all demons, gods, demigods, godlings, and other supernatural beings. Supernatural P.S. may also apply to select O.C.C.s and R.C.C.s. If a character, monster or villain has any type of enhanced strength, it will be noted in the stats.

**Physical Prowess (P.P.):** Shows the degree of dexterity and agility of the character. A P.P. of 16 or higher is rewarded with bonuses to strike, parry and dodge.

**Physical Endurance (P.E.):** Demonstrates the character's stamina and durability. The amount of physical punishment and resistance to fatigue, disease, and poison (and magic too) are determined by P.E. Characters with a P.E. of 16 or higher receive a bonus to save vs coma/death, disease, poisons/toxins, and magic. But not Demonic Curses or possession, they are different and separate.

**Physical Beauty (P.B.):** An indication of the physical attractiveness of the character. A P.B. of 16 or better is rewarded with a bonus to charm or impress.

**Speed (Spd):** This is how fast the character can run. The character's Speed x20 is the number of yards or meters he can run in one minute. Speed x5 is the number of yards/meters covered in a melee round (15 seconds). Dividing the distance covered in a melee round by the character's number of attacks indicates how far he can move on each attack.

**Note: I.S.P.** (Inner Strength Points for psionic powers) and **P.P.E.** (Potential Psychic Energy for magic) are important aspects of the character, but they are not *attributes* per se, and are covered elsewhere. Also see **Perception Rolls** in the combat section.

**A Note About Bonuses:** Many skills and abilities provide characters with bonuses to strike, parry, dodge, save, etc. These bonuses are typically added to a particular combat or melee *attack/action*. Always be sure to include your character's bonuses, since they may make the difference between success and failure, life and death. Note that bonuses from psionics or magic are *temporary* bonuses, and only apply while that power or spell is in place.

## Attributes Below Average

The range of abilities:

**Attribute numbers that exceed 30 indicate superhuman ability** and bonuses. Even humans who undergo Juicer augmentation, M.O.M. (Crazies) enhancement, bionics or other extraordinary means of human augmentation seldom see their attributes exceed 30.

**Attribute numbers that range from 17-30 indicate exceptional ability.** This range of power and prowess is achievable by ordinary humans through physical training and/or the luck of the draw in the genetic lottery. Juicers, Crazies, Cyber-Knights and other humans and D-Bees who undergo some form of *human augmentation* often possess physical attributes in this range. Exceptional attributes always provide bonuses for the character.

**Attributes numbers that range from 14-16 are well above average** but don't, as a rule, enjoy special bonuses, unless 16. **A Note About #16:** If the initial attribute roll on 3D6 adds up to 16, the player gets to roll an extra 1D6 and add it to the total, as noted above. However, the character may start with a lower number and through skills or other bonuses build a physical attribute up to the number "16." Getting to 16 by this fashion does NOT get the extra 1D6 die roll, but a 16 does provide a small bonus.

**Average attributes range from 10-13.** There is nothing wrong with *average* and the character is strong and capable.

**Attributes in the 7-9 range are unimpressive**, and a bit below average. The character functions adequately, and is a productive member of society, especially if only one or two attributes are low.

**Attributes that are six and under** tumble into the category of feeble, puny and disadvantaged.

Human characters are created by rolling three six-sided dice (3D6) to determine attributes, so unless there has been physical damage from injury, torture, disease, magic, psionic attack or other extraordinary means, the lowest attribute number possible is *three*. 3-6 are pretty lame.

Players who roll several below average attribute numbers *may* want to scratch those attributes and re-roll them, or scrap the character entirely and try again. However, consider two things before you do that,



1) careful and clever skill selections can boost physical attributes, and 2) playing a character with an “Achilles’ Heel” – one or two severe weaknesses – can be fun, especially if the character also has one or two exceptional attributes.

**Game Designer Notes:** Characters with severe flaws or limitations are not for everyone, and I have heard more than one gamer exclaim, “Why would anyone want to play a character with an I.Q. of three!” Why? Because it’s a challenge. You have to think outside the box, dig deep into your imagination and do some serious *role-playing* – and that can be a tremendous amount of fun and create a memorable character.

I’ve had several players run wonderful characters with low I.Q.s (7-8) and complete ignoramuses (I.Q.s of 2, 3, 4 and 6) and each was a sheer delight. A couple were played as idiots with a lot of humor, a couple were played with great depth of emotion and child-like innocence that won the hearts of everyone playing (“I know I ain’t smart like you, but the bad man hasta be stopped, an’ I kin help. Really.”). A couple were played with sincerity and painful awkwardness that created wonderful moments of kindness, innocence and moments of ignorant bliss, silliness and accidents that got the character and his comrades into serious trouble. ALL were a joy to have in my campaigns.

Another time, there was a character with an M.E. (Mental Affinity) of 4 and the player ran him as a gullible hero who would believe the lamest stories and lies you’ve ever heard. He was also helpless against magic charms, psionic suggestions, and illusions, and fell like a ton of bricks for every two-bit seductress and con-artist who happened his way.

Another guy played a charming hero with a good I.Q., high M.A. (Mental Affinity), and great strength (P.S. 27), but had the P.E. (Physical Endurance) of a mouse. He would succumb to disease and drugs in two seconds flat, and in the middle of battle where he was wiping the floor with the bad guys, he would suddenly fall over and lay at death’s door because his opponent got in a lucky shot.

One of my own favorite characters was a dopey warrior with an I.Q. of 7, a nasty drug habit, and a P.P. of 6. He was absolutely convinced he was a great hero – a noble paladin, in fact – and he could prove it too, because he had purchased a (worthless fake, of course) document (that he couldn’t read) for a small fortune (stupid). This document looked very official, and decreed he was a paladin! He called himself *Fearless*, though sometimes he wasn’t, and he was a clumsy oaf who was always making mistakes, spoke loudly or asked dumb questions or made noise at times when stealth was vital. He got himself and his teammates into trouble more times than I can count. Thing was, he had a P.S. of 24, a P.E. of 22 and the heart of a *true hero*. Fearless never deserted a friend in need, never lied, never cheated, always tried to help people in need, never backed down from a fight (unless one of his trusted teammates told him to), and stood by his teammates even in the face of almost certain death. He ended up saving half the characters in the player group at one time or another, as well as countless civilians. When Fearless was slain through the most foul act of treachery and cowardice, the players shouted in outrage and their characters went berserk! They hunted down the villain responsible, brought him to justice and erected a statue of Fearless in the town where they were based. I was stunned at how much the other players had all come to care about this dumb, goofy clod. It was awesome. Even his death and the way the group reacted was great drama.

## Bonus to Compensate for a Low Attribute

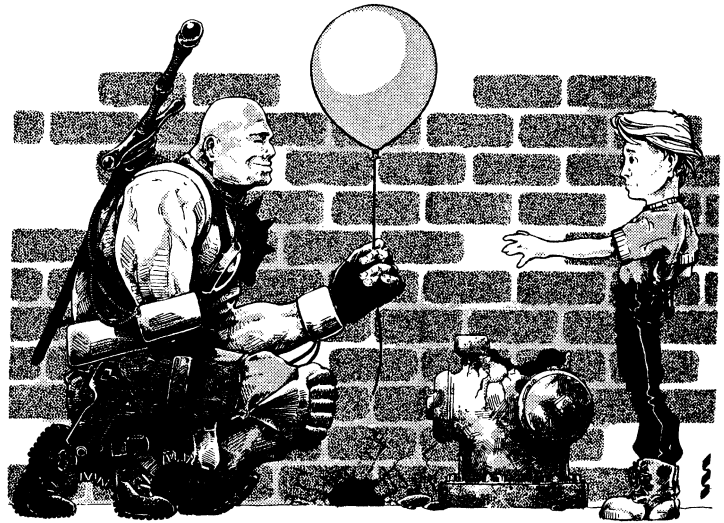
You know how it is said that people who lose one sense have another one improve? Well, that’s what we are doing here to make the character unique, interesting and fun.

If the character has *one* attribute below seven, add 1D4+3 to any *one* of his other attributes; player’s choice as to which attribute gets the bonus.

If the character has two or more attributes *below seven*, give *one* of his other attributes a bonus of +1D4+5 and another attribute a +3 bonus

or a +2 bonus to the character’s *Perception*. Which attribute gets the bonus(es) is left up to the player.

In addition, Game Masters should give players of such characters a nod for *excellent role-playing*, perhaps a 10% increase on experience points, but *only* if the player deserves it, stays in character and role-plays the Dickens out of his character.



## Penalties for Low Attributes

**The following are penalties for low attributes.** Note that a low attribute may also severely limit which O.C.C.s are available to the character, as most occupations have a minimum requirement for certain attributes. **Note:** Human characters can get an attribute in the 1-3 range as a result of physical injury or mental trauma, and some D-Bees and monsters may get fewer than three dice to roll to determine some of their attributes.

**Intelligence (I.Q.):** An I.Q. of 7 or 8 means the character is a little slow and has trouble learning. The level of comprehension is roughly equal to a 12-15 year old. **Skill Modifiers:** Reduce the number of O.C.C. *Related Skills* by half, but add 1D4 skills to his initial set of Secondary Skills. This character still gets full benefit of skill bonuses, but probably doesn’t care much for book learning or complex skills that require a lot of studying and details to remember. If that is the case, the character is likely to lean toward skills that rely on his hands and a strong back, including Domestic, Horsemanship, Mechanics, Physical, W.P.s, Wilderness and basic skills like Radio: Basic, Automotive Mechanics, Aircraft Mechanics, Basic Electronics, First Aid, General Repair, Pilot Truck, Pilot Hover Vehicle, Pick Pockets, Palming, etc. On the other hand, the character may choose to work hard to master one more complex and difficult skills in an effort to overcome his shortfalls. Natural talent is another explanation why this character may have one or more skills that would otherwise seem beyond his limited mental capabilities.

An I.Q. of 5 or 6 means the character is slow, dim-witted, and probably rather child-like. His level of comprehension is roughly equal to an 8-10 year old child. **Skill Modifiers:** Reduce the number of O.C.C. *Skills* by four and reduce the number of O.C.C. *Related Skills* by half. Also reduce *all skill bonuses* by half. However, add 1D4+2 *Secondary Skills* to start. If the character can read or write, it is at a second or third grade level and complex skills are impossible to learn (i.e., could learn Basic Mechanics or Automotive Mechanics, but cannot learn Locksmith or Mechanical Engineer or even Aircraft Mechanics). The character is likely to lean toward simple skills, including Domestic, Horsemanship, Physical, W.P.s, and Wilderness, and avoid skills that require a lot of practice, study and details. May be sensitive about people who make fun of him or may be totally oblivious to them.

An I.Q. of 3 or 4 indicates a feeble mind with a level of comprehension on par with a four or five year old child. **Skill Modifiers:** Reduce the



number of *O.C.C. Skills* by half(!) and the number of *O.C.C. Related Skills* to a total of 1D4 with no additional skills with level advancement. Only *O.C.C. Skills* get a bonus, reduced by half; *O.C.C. Related Skills* get no bonus. Add 1D4 *Secondary Skills* to start, +1 one new *Secondary Skill* at levels 3, 6, 10, and 15 (ignore whatever the *O.C.C.* description usually allows). The character cannot learn to read or write and it is impossible for him to learn anything but the most rudimentary of skills, mainly *W.P.s*, *Domestic*, *Physical* and *Wilderness* skills. May be sensitive about people who make fun of him or may be totally oblivious to it. Relates best to children.

**An I.Q. of 1 or 2** indicates a mind on par with a two year old child. **Skill Modifiers:** Can select only 1D4+1 *O.C.C. Skills*, no *O.C.C. Related Skills*, and only gets a total of 1D4 *Secondary Skills* with no additional skills gained through experience. None of the skills get any bonuses either, in fact, reduce the *Base Skill* proficiency and level advancement by half, and round down. That means if the *Base Skill* normally starts at 30% +5% per level of experience, this feeble character's skill starts at 15% +2% (rounded down) per level of experience. This character barely remembers his name, can only learn the simplest of skills (G.M.'s discretion) at a substandard level, and pretty much needs to be told what to do and led by the hand. Monster races and barbarians put such characters on a leash and treat them like animals.

**Mental Affinity:** This character has no charm or spark to his personality to make a favorable impression; not very memorable or any impression made is a negative one (loser, strange, jerk). Nobody is impressed by this character and any moment he might have in the lime-light passes quickly and is probably forgotten or overshadowed by something negative or someone else. He is always one of the last to be chosen for anything and is frequently snubbed.

**An M.A. of 7, 6 or 5:** The character is so ordinary that he is barely noticed or remembered, is usually ignored and picked last for everything. **Penalties:** -10% to *Barter*, *Find Contraband*, *Intelligence*, *Performance*, *Public Speaking*, *Seduction*, and *Sing*, and -20% on *Interrogation*. **Boonuses:** +5% on *Gambling*, *Prowl*, *Undercover Ops*, and *Surveillance* (tends not to be noticed or remembered).

**An M.A. of 4 or 3:** The character is treated like a loser and undesirable. The things he says and does are always taken the wrong way, he can't tell a joke and may be something of a grumpy complainer or curmudgeon. That makes the character more memorable, but not in a good way, and people try to avoid and ditch him. **Penalties:** -20% to *Barter*, *Disguise*, *Find Contraband*, *Intelligence*, *Performance*, *Public Speaking*, and *Sing*, -30% on *Interrogation* and *Seduction*.

**An M.A. of 2 or 1:** This character has the personality of a rock (bland, bland, bland) or a belligerent warthog. The things he says and does are always taken the wrong way, he can't tell a joke and is either snide to and critical of others, or a grouch who has nothing nice to say about anything or anyone. That makes the character more memorable, but not in a good way, and people try to avoid and ditch him, and/or target him for pranks and trouble. **Penalties:** In addition to the obvious, -20% to *Disguise* if he stays quiet and doesn't make a spectacle of himself (otherwise his unpleasant or odd personality leaks through), -50% to *Barter*, *Find Contraband*, *Intelligence*, *Interrogation*, *Performance*, *Public Speaking*, *Seduction*, and *Sing*.

**Mental Endurance (M.E.):** The character is weak willed, frightened, and possibly an outright coward. Easily intimidated and tricked by others, and is susceptible to mind control and possession.

**An M.E. of 7, 6, or 5:** -3 to save vs *Horror Factor*, -2 to save vs *illusions*, and -1 to save vs any battles of will, -1 to save vs *psionic* attacks and mind control (magical, *psionic* or drug induced) and -1 to save vs *insanity* and possession. -10% penalty on the skills *Barter*, *Interrogation*, *Performance*, *Public Speaking*, *Seduction*, and *Undercover Ops*.

**An M.E. of 4 or 3:** -6 to save vs *Horror Factor*, -4 to save vs *illusions*, -3 to save vs any battles of will, -3 to save *psionic* attacks and mind control (magical, *psionic* or drug induced), -2 to save vs *insanity*, and -3 to save vs possession. Also suffers from one *phobia* (random roll or

pick one; described in the *Insanity* section). The character spills his guts after 2D4 minutes of interrogation and is a terrible liar (must roll 01-15% on percentile dice to tell a convincing lie). Similarly, he is susceptible to seduction (the seducer gets a +20% bonus on this character) and intimidation (the intimidator gets a +20% bonuses on this character). -30% penalty on the skills *Barter*, *Interrogation*, *Performance*, *Public Speaking*, *Seduction*, and *Undercover Ops*.

**An M.E. of 2 or 1:** -8 to save vs *Horror Factor*, -6 to save vs *illusions*, -6 to save vs any battles of will, -6 to save vs *psionic* attacks and mind control (magical, *psionic* or drug induced), -5 to save vs *insanity*, and -6 to save vs possession. Also suffers from 1D4+1 *phobias* (random roll or pick them; described in the *Insanity* section). The character spills his guts after 1D4 minutes of interrogation and cannot tell a convincing lie (everyone can always tell when he's lying). Similarly, susceptible to seduction (the seducer gets a +40% bonus on this character) and intimidation (the intimidator gets a +30% bonus on this character). Cannot perform the skills *Barter*, *Interrogation*, *Performance*, *Public Speaking*, *Seduction*, and *Undercover Ops*.

**Puny "Human" Physical Strength (P.S.):** The lower the number the scrawnier and more defenseless the individual. The P.S.x10 pounds (4.5 kg) formula applies and will severely limit how much the character can lift and carry. *Intelligence*, *cunning*, *treachery*, *magic* and *psionics* can compensate for a puny character, so will a powerful gun.

**Penalties for a P.S. of 7, 6, or 5:** No damage bonuses from *Hand to Hand Combat* skill, *O.C.C.*, or even the weapon itself apply to a character this physically weak, and reduce throwing range by 25%. It's like an adult wrestling with a ten or eleven year old. Guns do full damage.

**Penalties for a P.S. of 4 or 3:** Reduce physical damage by half, including damage inflicted by punches, kicks, and melee weapons (club, knife, sword, etc.). Reduce throwing range/distance by half. Guns do full damage.

**Penalties for a P.S. of 2 or 1:** The character only inflicts one point of damage from punches and 1D4 damage from kicks. Even melee weapons in the hands of this character inflict half their normal damage. No damage bonuses apply, and reduce throwing range/distance by 75%. Guns do full damage.

**Physical Prowess (P.P.):** A character with a very low P.P. has poor hand-eye coordination, is graceless, tends to handle things roughly, is a clumsy klutz, and walks like an elephant (heavy footsteps).

**Penalties for a P.P. of 7, 6 or 5:** -1 on initiative, -2 to strike, parry, dodge, disarm, entangle, pull punch, and roll with impact; -15% penalty on skills that require a *high level* of manual dexterity or grace (mechanics, electronics, *Gymnastics*, *Forgery*, *Pick Pockets*, *Palming*, *Prowl*, *Dance*, etc.) and -5% on all other skills requiring any manual dexterity. No penalty on mental skills like *Language*, *Literacy*, *Lore*, etc.

**Penalties for a P.P. of 4 or 3:** -3 on initiative, reduce all combat bonuses (strike, parry, dodge, disarm, etc.) by half; -25% penalty on skills that require a *high level* of manual dexterity (mechanics, electronics, *Gymnastics*, *Forgery*, *Prowl*, *Pick Pockets*, *Palming*, etc.) and -10% on all other skills requiring any manual dexterity. No penalty on mental skills like *Language*, *Literacy*, *Lore*, etc.

**Penalties for a P.P. of 2 or 1:** -5 on initiative, no combat bonuses (strike, parry, dodge, disarm, etc.); drops his weapon when a 1-4 is rolled to strike, drops whatever is in his hand when startled or fails to save vs *Horror Factor*, and trips and falls on a roll of 1-4 when trying to dodge (the fall causes the klutz to lose initiative and one melee attack).

Can NOT perform skills that require a *high level* of manual dexterity or grace (mechanics, electronics, *Dance*, *Forgery*, *Gymnastics*, *Prowl*, *Pick Pockets*, *Palming*, etc.); they are just plain impossible! -20% on any other skills that require any degree of manual dexterity, including riding a bicycle or horse, driving a car, *Climbing*, *Running* and *Swimming*. No penalty on mental skills like *Language*, *Literacy*, *Lore*, etc. This character is the ultimate klutz; a bull in a china shop.

**Physical Endurance (P.E.):** A character with a P.E. 7 or less has a weak constitution, making him more susceptible to fatigue, disease, poison, and magic than other characters.

Penalties for a P.E. of 7, 6 or 5: -2 to save vs disease, -3 to save vs drugs and poison, and -3 to save vs magic. The character is also -5% to save vs coma and death and fatigues 25% faster than the average person unless he can take frequent breaks.

Penalties for a P.E. of 4 or 3: -6 to save vs disease, -5 to save vs drugs and poison, and -4 to save vs magic. -10% to save vs coma and death, fatigues 50% faster than the average person unless he can take frequent breaks, and the duration of illness and the side effects from drugs and poisons last 25% longer. 01-60% chance the character is also a hypochondriac and has a phobia about disease and germs (roll for each).

Penalties for a P.E. of 2 or 1: -8 to save vs disease, -6 to save vs drugs and poison, and -5 to save vs magic. -20% to save vs coma and death, fatigues 75% faster than the average person unless he can take frequent rest breaks, suffers 50% more damage and double the penalties and duration from illness and the side effects from drugs, poisons, and magic.

**Physical Beauty (P.B.):** This character is a Plain Jane or pug-ugly.

Penalties for P.B. of 7, 6, or 5: -5% on skills like Gambling, Intelligence (gathering), Performance, Public Speaking, and Undercover Ops, and -20% to Seduction. **Note:** +5% to Interrogation skill.

Penalties for P.B. of 4 or 3: -10% on skills like Gambling, Intelligence (gathering), Performance, Public Speaking, and Undercover Ops, and -30% to Seduction. **Note:** +10% to Interrogation skill and ability to intimidate.

Penalties for P.B. of 2 or 1: -15% on skills like Intelligence (gathering), Performance, Public Speaking, and Undercover Ops, -10% to Prowl (all eyes are on the scary person), and -40% to Seduction. **Note:** +15% to Interrogation skill, +5% to Gambling and +20% to intimidate. Horror Factor: 1D6+9; this character's looks actually scare people, cause children (and women faint of heart) to scream and run away, and toddlers to wail and cry.

**Speed (Spd.):** Penalties for Spd of 6 or lower: Slow is this character's only level of speed. Penalties: -1 on initiative, -1 to dodge, and -10% to Dance skill (unless it's a slow dance). A casual stroll is running at full tilt for this character! Bonuses: +5% to Prowl, Palm and Track, and +1 on Perception Rolls (tends to be a bit more observant). A smart character will compensate whenever he can by riding in or driving a vehicle, use power armor, etc.

## Attributes Beyond 30

It's rare among human characters, but common among supernatural beings and other unnatural creatures, to have an attribute that goes off the standard chart. Here's how to figure out bonuses for Attributes Beyond Thirty.

**Intelligence (I.Q.):** Bonuses stop on the chart at 30, but the bonuses continue. I.Q. skill bonus beyond 30: +2% for every five additional I.Q. points, so an I.Q. 35 equals a skill bonus of +18%. I.Q. 40: +20%, I.Q. 45: +22%, I.Q. 50: +24%, I.Q. 55: +26% and I.Q. 60: +28% and so on.

Moreover, characters with an I.Q. greater than 30 points have sharp memories, tend to notice details and are more likely to see through illusions. This translates into the following: +1 to *Perception Rolls* for every 10 points above 30; *Save vs Illusion:* I.Q. 31-33: +1, I.Q. 34-36: +2, I.Q. 37-39: +3, I.Q. 40-42: +4, I.Q. 43-45: +5, I.Q. 46-48: +6 and 49 or higher +7.

**Mental Affinity:** Any number *beyond 30* means a dynamic, charismatic person with a commanding and/or delightful presence. When the character enters the room, most people take notice. The individual can be very persuasive in a charming or intimidating way.

Perception Roll penalty for others: The character is so impressive and charming that every 5 M.A. points he/she has above 30 count as a -1 penalty for everyone who is listening, looking at or dealing with the character. ("What? Oh, no I didn't notice anything unusual while I was with so and so.")

M.A. of more than 30 provides select skill bonuses: +5% to Find Contraband, Gambling, Intelligence (gathering), Seduction and Undercover Ops skills; +10% to Interrogation, Performance, Public Speaking and Sing.

**Mental Endurance (M.E.)** tops out at 30. Bonuses do not increase should the character have a number higher than thirty. The only exception might be an Ancient Evil. But for those rare individuals, demigods, godlings, gods, Demon Lords and Alien Intelligences who might hit M.E. 30 or beyond, they get a bonus to save vs possession of all kinds.

Save vs Possession: M.E. 30: +1, M.E. 40: +2, M.E. 50: +3, M.E. 60: +4.

**Ordinary "Human" Physical Strength (P.S.):** The higher the number, the stronger the character, and the more damage done with his punches and physical attacks (as indicated in the standard table). This strength applies to "ordinary" mortal men and women, so the damage is always Hit Point/S.D.C. damage even if it is a P.S. 30 or 40. **Note:** P.S. damage bonuses are always added to the physical damage done by *melee weapons* such as clubs, knives, swords, and spears, but do not apply to arrows and guns.

Damage Bonus Continues: +1 point of Hit Point/S.D.C. damage per digit beyond 30. Thus a character with a P.S. of 31 does +16, P.S. 32 does +17, a P.S. of 40 does +25, and so on.

Throwing Bonus: For every five points above 30 (round down), the character can hurl a rock, ball or throwing weapon (dagger, spear, sling, etc.) or shoot an arrow an extra 30 feet (9.1 m) without losing accuracy (no penalties for the greater distance).

Lifting and Carrying Bonus: For every five points above 30 (round down), the strong character can lift or carry 30% more than usual.

**Physical Prowess (P.P.):** The bonus to strike, parry and dodge stops at 30.

Initiative Bonus: However, for every three P.P. points beyond 30, the character gets a bonus on his *initiative roll*. P.P. 31-33: +1 on initiative, P.P. 34-36: +2, P.P. 37-39: +3, P.P. 40-42: +4, P.P. 43-45: +5, P.P. 46 and higher: +6.

**Physical Endurance (P.E.):** The bonus to save vs poison, disease, and magic stops at 30. However, the percentage to *save vs coma & death* continues.

Save vs Coma & Death: +1 point per each additional point beyond 30%. Thus, a P.E. of 31 provides a 31% chance to save vs coma, 32 is 32%, and so on. Additionally, a character with a P.E. of 30 or higher fatigues at half the normal rate.

Impervious to Disease: Any character with a P.E. of 30 or higher is effectively impervious to disease. Only the most virulent virus (or designer bug) has a chance of affecting this character.

**Physical Beauty (P.B.):** Any number beyond 30 is divine perfection. A beauty beyond compare, angelic.

P.B. of more than 30 provides select skill bonuses: +5% to Cardsharp, Concealment, Palming, Pick Pockets, Performance and Public Speaking skill (observers are so distracted by the beauty they don't notice any trickery or flaws in performance); +13% to Seduction. Penalty: -10% to Prowl (all eyes are on the beauty).

**Speed (Spd.):** Indicates the rate of speed at which a character can run and/or fly. Most ordinary humans seldom exceed 30, but supernatural beings, D-Bees, and alien life forms might. Running fast is its own reward and ability.

## Augmented Strength

### Bionics, Juicers, Crazies & Light Power Armor

Characters who possess an enhanced P.S. include Crazies, Partial Conversion & non-combat Full Conv. Cyborgs, Headhunters with bionic arms and hands, Juicers, and pilots of light power armor like the Triax Hopper or Flying Titan, and certain D-Bees may have Augmented Strength and can inflict Mega-Damage, but only when they use a *power punch*.

This type of enhanced strength is typically the result of mechanical augmentation. This table applies only when specific damage stats are *not* provided. **Note:** A power punch always counts as *two* melee attacks/actions whether the punch strikes or misses. It is a roundhouse punch in which the character winds up and punches with all of his might. The player must announce that he is trying a *power punch* or *power kick* before he rolls to strike. A power bite, head butt, elbow or knee strike cannot be used as a power punch by augmented characters unless the description says otherwise.

- **Augmented P.S. 24** inflicts one point of Mega-Damage when delivered as a power punch or power kick; counts as two melee attacks.
- **Augmented P.S. 25 to 27** inflicts 1D4 M.D. with a power punch or power kick; counts as two melee attacks.
- **Augmented P.S. 28 to 30** inflicts 1D6 M.D. with a power punch or power kick; counts as two melee attacks.
- **Augmented P.S. 31 to 40** inflicts 2D4 M.D. with a power punch or power kick; counts as two melee attacks.
- **Augmented P.S. 41 or 50** (not likely to exist) inflicts 3D6 S.D.C. + P.S. damage bonus on a restrained punch and 1D4 M.D. on a full strength punch, 3D4 M.D. with a power punch or power kick.
- **Augmented P.S. 51 or higher** (not likely to exist) inflicts 4D6 S.D.C. + P.S. damage bonus on a restrained punch and 1D8 M.D. on a full strength punch, 4D4 M.D. with a power punch or kick.

**Remember**, the S.D.C. damage bonus is considerable for Augmented P.S. (See *Attribute Bonus Chart* and *P.S. Beyond 30*) and applies to all full strength punches against S.D.C./Hit Point based opponents like ordinary humans and most D-Bees when not protected by M.D.C. body armor.

## Robot Strength & Damage

### Robots & Heavy Power Armor

Combat Cyborgs, M.D.C. robot drones like the Skelebots, robot vehicles and giant robot war machines (walking tanks), as well as heavy power armor (with 230 or more M.D.C.) such as the Samson, SAMAS, Ulti-Max and Glitter Boy, can deliver Mega-Damage attacks from their punches and kicks. The higher the Robot P.S., the more damage. A low Robot P.S. may only deliver an M.D. attack with a power punch.

Remember, 'Borgs are not as powerful as 'bots. Robot Strength will be indicated in the stats of the robot's description. Most man-sized units range from 18-28, giant robots may have a Robot P.S. of 28-55, sometimes higher.

- **Robot P.S. 15 or less:** Inflicts 1D6 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 2D6 S.D.C. on a full strength punch and 4D6 S.D.C. on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks). P.S. bonuses are added to S.D.C. attacks. Kicks do 2D6 S.D.C., leap kicks 3D6 S.D.C.; these robots are roughly equal to a human. Mega-Damage attacks are not possible.
- **Robot P.S. 16 to 20:** Inflicts 2D6 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, one M.D. point on a full strength punch, 1D6 M.D. on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks). P.S. bonuses are added to S.D.C. attacks. Kicks do 1D4 M.D. and leap kicks 2D4 M.D.
- **Robot P.S. 21 to 25:** Inflicts 6D6 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 1D4 M.D. on a full strength punch, 2D4 M.D. on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks). Kicks do 1D6 M.D. and leap kicks 2D6 M.D. (counts as two melee attacks).

- **Robot P.S. 26 to 30:** Inflicts 1D4 M.D. on a restrained punch, 1D6 on a full strength punch, 2D6 M.D. on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks). Kicks do 2D4 M.D. and leap kicks 2D8 M.D. (counts as two melee attacks).
- **Robot P.S. 31 to 35:** Inflicts 1D4 M.D. on a restrained punch, 2D4 M.D. on a full strength punch, 4D4 M.D. on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks). Kicks do 2D8 M.D. and leap kicks 4D8 M.D. (counts as two melee attacks).
- **Robot P.S. 36 to 40:** Inflicts 1D4 M.D. on a restrained punch, 2D6 M.D. on a full strength punch, 4D6 M.D. on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks). Kicks do 3D8 M.D. and leap kicks 5D8 M.D. (counts as two melee attacks).
- **Robot P.S. 41 to 50:** Inflicts 1D6 M.D. on a restrained punch, 3D6 M.D. on a full strength punch, or 1D6x10 M.D. on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks). Kicks do 5D8 M.D. and leap kicks 1D8x10 M.D. (counts as two melee attacks).
- **Robot P.S. 51 to 60:** Inflicts 2D6 M.D. on a restrained punch, 6D6 M.D. on a full strength punch, or 2D6x10 M.D. on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks). Kicks do 6D8 M.D. and leap kicks 2D6x10 M.D. (counts as two melee attacks).

#### Notes:

1. There are many different design and mechanical elements for every robot and suit of power armor, so there is a great deal of variation from one design to another. Some may have features that make a particular robot stronger or weaker than the above table suggests. The general rules, above, apply to robots and P.S. when a specific damage rating is not provided in its stats, and when adapting robots from other game books, settings and dimensions to the Mega-Damage world of **Rifts**.

2. Combat Moves: Body blocks and tackles typically inflict half the M.D. of a normal punch. Stomp attacks are applicable only to robots that are 18 feet (5.5 m) or larger and commonly inflict 1D4 or 1D6 M.D., seldom more. Tear or pry attacks are possible only if the mechanism is designed for that purpose. Such attacks usually deliver half the damage of a full strength punch.

3. Power Armor is generally smaller and lighter than a true, 100% robot. In many cases, power armor is little more than an armored exoskeleton. As a result, a suit of power armor with an equivalent P.S. will frequently inflict less damage than a robot, especially giant robots. Power armor seldom exceeds a P.S. of 40.

## Supernatural Strength & Damage

Demons and other supernatural creatures inflict Mega-Damage (M.D.) from their punches, kicks and bites. Each description of the creature will indicate the amount of damage it inflicts. Furthermore, supernatural beings do not show signs of fatigue even after hours of combat and great physical exertion.

Use the damage listings below to determine base hand to hand damage for characters with Supernatural P.S., some might do more damage if they have claws or some other special feature (horns, forearm blades, oversized fangs, etc.) that serves as a weapon. Any deviations from this list will be noted in the specific creature's description (e.g., "claw attack: 6D6 M.D."). **Note:** Supernatural beings do NOT add the P.S. attribute damage bonus to their M.D. attacks, but may add it to *pulled punches* that inflict S.D.C. damage instead of M.D.

Simply put, *supernatural beings* are NOT human. They are something else. Creatures that defy the laws of physics and draw upon arcane forces and energies (like magic) as part of their innate essence. Their supernatural aspect gives them Mega-Damage strength and endurance, and makes them natural M.D.C. creatures (i.e. flesh like Mega-Damage steel). Thus, in addition to their incredible Supernatural Strength, they have bodies with skin like the armor of a tank, are im-

pervious or resistant to ordinary cold, heat and fire, impervious to disease, and heal much more quickly (most regenerate and heal before one's eyes), because they are not human. **Note:** In an S.D.C. environment where magic energy is weak, these beings are turned into Hit Point/S.D.C. creatures, although they will still usually have plenty of Hit Points and S.D.C.

- **Supernatural P.S. 15 or less:** Only inflicts 1D6 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 4D6 S.D.C. on a full strength punch, or 1D4 M.D. on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks). P.S. bonuses are added to S.D.C. attacks only.
- **Supernatural P.S. 16 to 20:** Inflicts 3D6 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 1D6 M.D. on a full strength punch, or 2D6 M.D. on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks).
- **Supernatural P.S. 21 to 25:** Inflicts 4D6 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 2D6 M.D. on a full strength punch, or 4D6 M.D. on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks).
- **Supernatural P.S. 26 to 30:** Inflicts 5D6 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 3D6 M.D. on a full strength punch, or 6D6 M.D. on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks).
- **Supernatural P.S. 31 to 35:** Inflicts 5D6 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 4D6 M.D. on a full strength punch, or 1D4x10 M.D. on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks).
- **Supernatural P.S. 36 to 40:** Inflicts 6D6 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 5D6 M.D. on a full strength punch, or 1D6x10 M.D. on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks).
- **Supernatural P.S. 41 to 50:** Inflicts 1D6x10 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 6D6 M.D. on a full strength punch, or 2D4x10 M.D. on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks).
- **Supernatural P.S. 51 to 60:** Inflicts 1D6 M.D. on a restrained punch, 1D6x10 on a full strength punch, or 2D6x10 on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks).

**Note:** Some supernatural creatures will have a greater or weaker damage than the above table provides. These are exceptions to the rule and will be evident in the descriptions of the specific creature. Biting attacks, for example, typically inflict half the M.D. of a punch unless the maw is especially large or powerful, then a bite could inflict the same damage or more. Tails and tentacles frequently inflict half to the same amount of M.D. as a punch. Power punches are not usually possible with a tail, but are possible with a tentacle. Kicks usually inflict the same M.D. as a punch, but in some cases the kick may inflict 1D6 more Mega-Damage.

**Supernatural Damage and Hand Weapons:** When wielding a hand weapon, such as swords, clubs and knives, supernatural beings inflict either the weapon damage plus P.S. damage bonus (in S.D.C.), or their own P.S. damage as per Supernatural Strength, whichever is greater. **Optional Rule:** Normal weapons are in danger of breaking when wielded by somebody with Supernatural Strength. A good rule of thumb is to assume a weapon is in danger of breaking whenever total damage inflicted exceeds more than *three times* the weapon's maximum base damage – in the case of a 2D4 sword, more than 24 points of damage might break it. Every time that much damage is inflicted, there is a 01-30% chance that the weapon will break. Heavy, sturdy weapons, and very well-crafted blades (a master smith's katana, for example) can withstand more damage, do not roll unless damage exceeds *five times* the weapon's maximum damage. Magical weapons and artifacts are basically indestructible and are at no risk of breaking.

## Weight & Movement

Normal characters, with a P.S. of 3 to 16, can carry 10 times their P.S. in pounds (P.S.x10 = total in pounds). For Example: A character with a P.S. of 9 can carry 90 pounds (40.5 kg). A character with a P.S. of 15 can carry 150 pounds (67.5 kg).



Strong characters, with a P.S. of 17 or higher, can carry 20 times their P.S. in pounds. This means a character with a P.S. of 18 can carry 360 pounds (162 kg).

**Robots with a P.S. of 17 or higher** can lift and carry 25 times their P.S. attribute. Thus, a robot with a P.S. of 24 can lift and carry 600 lbs (270 kg) and a robot with a P.S. of 40 can lift and carry half a ton (1,000 lbs/450 kg). Robot P.S. below 17 is equivalent to normal human strength for purposes of lifting and carrying (P.S. x10 in lbs). **Note:** *Giant robots* with a Robotic P.S. of 40 or higher can lift and carry 100x their P.S. number (4000 lbs/1800 kg) and pull 200x their P.S. number (8000 lbs/3600 kg)!

**Supernatural creatures** with a Supernatural P.S. of 18 or higher can carry 50 times their P.S. Thus, a creature with a P.S. of 24 can actually carry over half a ton, 1200 pounds (540 kg). Creatures with a strength of 17 or less are equal to strong humans; P.S.x20 in pounds.

**Lifting weight** is a little different from carrying weight. You may have noticed, yourself, that you can usually lift up a heavier amount than you can carry. I'm not talking about weight-lifting in a body building sense, nor lifting a heavy weight above the chest. Simply the ability to bend over and lift something that weighs more than you can carry. The simple rule is that a character can lift *TWICE* as much as he can carry. This means that the character with a P.S. of 9 can carry 90 pounds (40.5), but can lift 180 pounds (81 kg) at least 1-3 feet (0.3 to 0.9 m) off the ground and hold it up for three seconds per P.E. attribute point. So if P.E. was also 9 that would be 27 seconds or about two melee rounds. Meanwhile, the supernaturally strong creature, with a P.S. of 24, can lift over one ton (2400 pounds/1080 kg) above its waist for *one minute* per P.E. point.

**Throwing Heavy or Awkward Objects:** A character cannot throw more than he can carry. See the skill description of **W.P. Targeting** for the complete lowdown.

## Step 2:

### Understanding Damage Ratings

#### S.D.C., Hit Points and M.D.C./Mega-Damage

Humans and most D-Bees are creatures of flesh and bone and have two damage values, *Hit Points* and *S.D.C.*, but they need to understand a third, *M.D.C.*

## Physical S.D.C.

**Determining Physical S.D.C.:** Most humans and D-Bees get a certain amount of S.D.C. points to start. Each O.C.C. should indicate how many S.D.C. points a character gets. In the event that it does not, the character starts out with 2D6+12 S.D.C., plus any O.C.C. or R.C.C. bonuses. Many Physical skills provide additional S.D.C. All S.D.C. bonuses are accumulative, add them up to get the total S.D.C. of a given character.

S.D.C. applies to *non-Mega-Damage combat* and indicates damage to the physical body that hurts, but is *not* life threatening. This is the classic movie device of the “flesh wound” and “barroom brawl” where the hero gets shot, stabbed or takes a beating, but, except for a trickle of blood and some bruises, is basically *okay*. This is actually realistic when you think about professional athletes, especially boxers, hockey and football players. Football players, for example, are “grid iron warriors” who get hit, knocked down, tackled, crunched and battered without (for the most part) life threatening injury. They hurt and ache, but they are far from seriously injured and can, with some pain, continue to “play” with negligible impairment or apparent discomfort. That’s S.D.C. in a nutshell.

**Taking S.D.C. damage.** S.D.C./Hit Point damage inflicted on a character comes off his S.D.C. first. S.D.C. damage has little or no bleeding and no internal injury or serious physical damage. Any bleeding there may be is minimal, does not count toward blood loss and stops within 1D4 melee rounds (15-60 seconds). “Don’t worry, it’s only a scratch.” Game Masters, please use common sense with S.D.C. and Hit Points. Some situations – like diving on top of a grenade, getting shot in the head at point-blank range, falling from a great height such as 1,000 feet/305 m – will do damage “directly to Hit Points,” skipping S.D.C. entirely.

**When a character is hurt in S.D.C. combat,** the damage is *first* subtracted from his or her S.D.C. points. When all S.D.C. is gone, then start subtracting additional/future damage from Hit Points.

## A Different Kind of S.D.C.

**S.D.C./Structural Damage Capacity.** There are two types of S.D.C. The first is Physical S.D.C. that applies to all living creatures, and is a sort of supplement to Hit Points. The second type of S.D.C. applies to inanimate, non-living structures.

**S.D.C. for objects.** Not everything on Rifts Earth is made of Mega-Damage materials (M.D.C.; described a bit further on in this section). Most common items, from hairbrushes and clothes to furniture and the walls of buildings, have S.D.C. In this case, the S.D.C. indicates the total amount of damage that the object can withstand. These S.D.C. points function exactly like Hit Points, except that they apply to non-living things. Any damage sustained by, say, a door someone is trying to kick in, is subtracted from the S.D.C. of that item, in this case a door. When the S.D.C. is reduced to zero, it is broken, shattered or smashed beyond repair.

## S.D.C. Armor

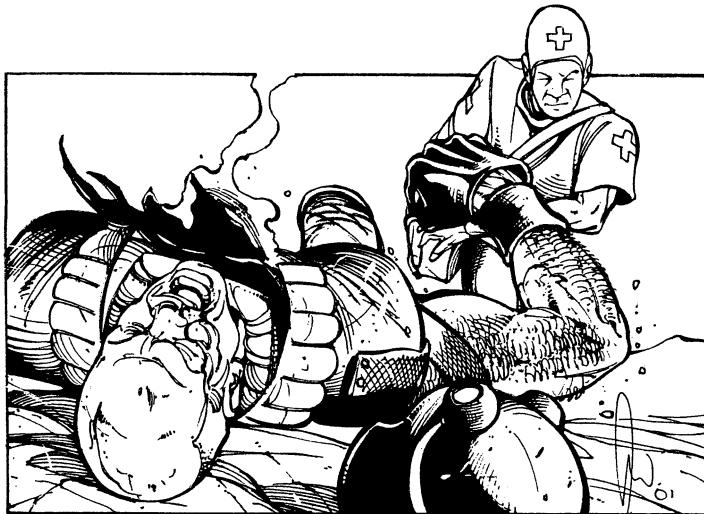
S.D.C. armor may be available, and in situations where it is applicable, let’s take a look at how it works.

S.D.C. armor has an *Armor Rating (A.R.)* as well as S.D.C. The Armor Rating indicates exactly how much protection is afforded by the armor (or object) and how easy it is to penetrate the armored protection. The higher the A.R., the better.

If an attack roll to strike with all bonuses is *less than* the A.R., the armor *absorbs* the attack – subtract the damage from the armor’s S.D.C. When the armor’s S.D.C. is depleted, it no longer affords protection and is useless. Any future attacks will hit the character’s body and inflict Physical S.D.C. and then Hit Point damage.

If an attacker’s roll to strike, including all bonuses, is *higher than* the A.R., the attack penetrates the armor and inflicts damage directly to the character’s physical S.D.C. (not the armor’s) and/or Hit Points.

The defender always wins ties, so if the roll to strike is 16 against somebody with body armor that has an A.R. 16, the attack hits the character, but only damages the body armor, because it didn’t *surpass* the A.R. protection. However, if that strike roll had been 17 or higher, the attack would have struck an area not covered by the armor or punched right through it, doing damage to the character underneath it.



## Hit Points

**Determining Base Hit Points:** Having rolled up your eight attributes, you will recall that one of them is *Physical Endurance (P.E.)*. The Physical Endurance score indicates your character’s base (starting) amount of Hit Points. A P.E. of 8 means eight Hit Points, a P.E. of 14 means fourteen Hit Points. Then roll 1D6 and *add it* to the Hit Point total. This is a first level character’s *starting Hit Points*. Some rare O.C.C.s and R.C.C.s may offer additional Hit Points or S.D.C. as a bonus.

**Building Hit Points:** Add another 1D6 Hit Points for each new experience level of advancement starting at level two. The more experienced and hardened the character becomes, the more damage he can endure. And don’t forget about Physical S.D.C.

Hit Points might best be thought of as *life points* because they indicate how much physical damage (cuts, bruises, etc.) a character can withstand before he or she dies. Damage is subtracted from *Hit Points* when all *Physical S.D.C.* points are gone or when an attack states “damage is direct to Hit Points.”

**Hit Point damage** is serious and potentially life threatening damage. In most cases, however, even Hit Point damage requires multiple injuries or sustained damage to become truly life threatening. The lower a character’s Hit Points drop, the closer to death he is getting!

Each time a character is struck by a non-Mega-Damage punch, kick, weapon, bullet or energy blast, he takes physical damage. Each individual player keeps score of how many S.D.C. and Hit Points his character has by subtracting the damage from his character’s Hit Points each time that character is hit and injured/takes damage (and remember, that’s typically after all S.D.C. are gone). The G.M. does the same thing, keeping score of how much damage the player characters have inflicted upon monsters, opponents and NPCs.

When a character has *zero* Hit Points, he collapses and falls into a coma and will soon die without extensive medical help or Psychic Healing. When a character’s Hit Points have been knocked far below zero, he is dead and beyond saving. Most characters can survive a number equal to the P.E. attribute number below zero (i.e., P.E. 8, the character is comatose and may be saved as long as he is not more than -8 below zero).

## Recovery of Hit Points and S.D.C.

After a battle, characters who have sustained physical damage must tend to their wounds. Medical treatment can be administered by fellow characters with First Aid, Paramedic and other medical skills, trained medical personnel, psychics with healing powers, practitioners of magic wielding healing spells, or by oneself provided the character has the appropriate medical skill and is not so injured as to be physically impaired. This is fine for minor wounds, but serious injuries, like internal injury, gunshot wounds, and broken bones, will require professional treatment (or magical or psionic healing). **Note:** Unless a character stops the bleeding of cuts and stab wounds, he will continue to lose blood and suffer damage at the rate of one Hit Point per minute.

When all Hit Points are reduced to zero, the character falls into a coma and hovers near death.

**Rate of Recovery: Non-Professional Treatment.** This is basic, first aid-type treatment by oneself, or non-medically trained people. Two Hit Points and four S.D.C. per day (24 hours).

**Rate of Recovery: Professional Treatment.** This is medical treatment from a doctor, clinic or hospital. Two Hit Points per day for the first two days and four per each following day, until the character has regained all of his/her original Hit Points. S.D.C. points are restored at a rate of six per day.

**Note:** See *Battle Injuries & Recovery* in the Combat Rules section for more on recovering from *Blood Loss*, *Coma* and even *Surviving M.D.C. Attacks*.

## Step 3: Understanding Mega-Damage & M.D.C.

*Mega-Damage* has added a new wrinkle and danger to human life on Rifts Earth, because Mega-Damage is the equivalent of superhuman damage and a single M.D. point can squish a human like a bug or vaporize him as if he was never there. Mega-Damage body armor, power armor, robot vehicles and M.D. weapons help even the playing field for humans, but they (and most D-Bees) remain mortal, Hit Point/S.D.C. creatures. No matter how comfortable a suit of armor may be, a person has to come out of his M.D.C. shell sometimes. Consequently, Hit Points and S.D.C. apply when a character is out of his protective armor or brawling among fellow humans. Of course, in the story context, this makes the supernatural and magical threat that much more dangerous for humans. In the Rifts setting, Mega-Damage and Mega-Damage Capacity (M.D.C.) will come into play more often than Hit Points and S.D.C.

**Mega-Damage Capacity (M.D.C.)** works the same as S.D.C., only it represents a level of technology so advanced that M.D.C. materials are better than the heavy armor of a 21st Century tank. Nano-technology has even allowed for the creation of M.D.C. material light enough to be used as body armor by ordinary humans. Such “super” armor with M.D.C. was created before the Great Cataclysm, during the Golden Age of Man, as a countermeasure to new weapons that inflicted Mega-Damage.

**One Mega-Damage (M.D.) point inflicts the equivalent of 100 S.D.C.,** so a Mega-Damage weapon that does 1D6 M.D. inflicts the equivalent of 100-600 S.D.C./Hit Point damage! This incredible advancement in technology turned an M.D. pistol or rifle into the equivalent of a man-portable, heavy artillery weapon.

**Mega-Damage Capacity (M.D.C.) armor is impervious to S.D.C./Hit Point damage!** S.D.C. attacks that inflict 1-99 points of damage bounce off the armor like bullets bouncing off Superman. The attack might leave scratches, scuffs, little ding marks, and pit the paint job, but that’s it. The character inside M.D.C. armor is safe and sound.

Only S.D.C. weapons that inflict 100 or more S.D.C. points of damage can hurt M.D.C. armor. Always round down S.D.C. damage, so a missile that inflicts 450 or 496 points of S.D.C. damage equals 4 M.D.

In the context of this game, M.D.C. applies to:

- All high-tech military vehicles, including tanks, APCs, robots, aircraft, and all Coalition war machines.
- All high-tech body armor and power armor.
- All bionic body components and bionic body armor (Cybernetic items are generally S.D.C. structures).
- Most force fields.
- Supernatural beings.
- Dragons and other creatures of magic (not quite the same thing as the supernatural).

**M.D.C.** is the Mega-Damage Capacity and indicates how much Mega-Damage an object or creature can withstand before being destroyed.

**Mega-Damage** is the amount of damage inflicted by a weapon; e.g. the laser does 3D6 M.D. or the plasma bolt does 5D6 M.D. Weapons and magic attacks do Mega-Damage (M.D.), armor offers M.D.C. protection. Advanced energy weapons, rail guns, mini-missiles, explosives, offensive magic spells and most psionics that inflict physical damage all do Mega-Damage. **Note:** Typically, only a Mega-Damage weapon can harm an M.D.C. structure. Weapons and other attacks will always indicate if the damage inflicted is M.D.

**To survive Mega-Damage combat,** the character needs to don M.D.C. body armor, power armor, use an M.D.C. force field (rare), or a psionic or magic defense. Mega-Damage protection for humans always comes from an outside source, be it armor or magic, a robot or combat vehicle, power armor, etc. **Note:** Each O.C.C. indicates the M.D.C. armor and M.D. weapons the character starts with.

However, even M.D.C. body armor only provides so much protection and once its M.D.C. is reduced to zero, it is reduced to little more than scrap metal. A giant robot or combat vehicle is wrecked and stops working, power armor becomes a giant paperweight (the character inside can climb out but the armor is useless), and body armor is so battered and full of holes that it is only effective against S.D.C. weapons, and barely that, only stopping attacks that are 1-7 to strike. An attacker’s roll to strike that is 8 or higher hits the body inside the armor.

When environmental M.D.C. armor is reduced to 15 M.D.C. (or roughly down to about 10% or 20% of its original M.D.C.), it is so damaged that environmental systems begin to fail. Furthermore, M.D.C. body armor can still get stuck in mud, dropped into a pit, pinned between debris, get tied up, and so on. Body armor is not *power armor*, and does not (as a rule) provide augmented P.S., Spd or other attributes, it just affords protection to the body. Even power armor with its exoskeleton and enhanced strength, speed and built-in weapons can be trapped and incapacitated by a clever enemy. EVERYTHING has its strengths and weakness.

**The last bit of armor protection.** The last M.D.C. of any armor, be it a body suit, power armor or a vehicle, absorbs all the damage from the final blast that reduces it to zero or below, saving the person inside. That means a suit of environmental body armor that has only 3 M.D.C. left and is hit by a plasma bolt that does 21 M.D. is destroyed, but the person inside lives. He may be scared and a little singed but takes no damage, even though the blast well exceeded his armor’s M.D.C. Of course, any subsequent M.D. attacks will hit his unprotected body, evasive action is suggested.

**Gotta come out sometime.** A character can’t live inside a suit of M.D.C. body armor either. Sooner or later, the character needs to come out of his artificial M.D.C. shell to eat, sleep, etc. When he does, he’ll need to take precautions to avoid Mega-Damage confrontations while so vulnerable. Use extreme caution when outside M.D.C. armor.

**No A.R. for Mega-Damage Capacity (M.D.C.) machines or living beings.** Either the attack hits or misses. Attackers roll to strike and

monstrous, M.D.C. opponents roll to dodge or parry as usual. If the M.D.C. object or Mega-Damage creature is struck, it takes damage.

**Demons and supernatural beings inflict Mega-Damage (M.D.)** and also have M.D.C. instead of Hit Points and S.D.C. That means ordinary S.D.C. guns and weapons do not hurt these inhuman monstrosities. *However*, there are a few exceptions. Supernatural beings have weird vulnerabilities and weaknesses that defy logic but can save a human's life. Consequently, weapons and bullets made of *silver* may inflict Mega-Damage to the demon even if it does S.D.C. damage to mortals. Likewise, *magic, magic weapons, fire*, and sometimes, *animal bone, wood, stone*, and *sunlight* (among other things) may inflict Mega-Damage. Similar vulnerabilities sometimes apply to creatures of magic. The description of the creature will indicate any weakness to ordinary S.D.C. materials and may indicate the M.D. inflicted by weapons made from them. If it does not indicate specific damage, the rule of thumb is that the weapon inflicts its S.D.C. damage as Mega-Damage. **Example:** A silver plated short sword that normally inflicts 2D6 S.D.C. damage does 2D6 M.D. to beings vulnerable to silver. It does no damage to demons with no vulnerability to silver. Otherwise, only M.D. weapons, magic and psionics can hurt these living M.D.C. killing machines. **Note:** Such vulnerabilities are part of the knowledge one gains from the skill Lore: Demons & Monsters.

**Creatures of magic**, such as dragons and Faerie Folk, are also Mega-Damage creatures with M.D.C. instead of S.D.C. and Hit Points. Consequently, S.D.C. weapons don't hurt them. Some, however, also have weird vulnerabilities to magic, silver, salt, etc., the same as demons. As usual, any vulnerability to S.D.C. weapons will be noted in the creature's description. S.D.C. damage converts to M.D. the same as for supernatural beings, above.

**Other monsters may be M.D.C. beings and inflict M.D.**, this is always indicated in the description of the creature. Typically only Mega-Damage weapons hurt such monsters.

**More on Mega-Damage.** See more about *Mega-Damage, its history, combat and recovery from M.D. attacks* in the **Combat Section** of this book.

## Step 4: Determine Psionics

Psionics is another term for psychic powers, E.S.P., powers of the mind. On Rifts Earth, with the strong presence of magic and the supernatural, a good percentage of people develop some range of psychic abilities. **Note:** A player may skip Step Four entirely if he or she has no interest in psionic powers for the character.

There are three ways of getting a character who has psionic powers. The first, and simplest way, is to select one of the *Psychic R.C.C.s* described in this book. They are **Master Psychics** and the most powerful psychic characters available. You might also take a peek at a copy of *Rifts® World Book 12: Psyscape* for several other Master Psychic R.C.C.s, provided your G.M. allows them.

The second way is to select an O.C.C. that has some psionic abilities like the *Operator*, *Crazies*, and *Cyber-Knight*, but the power level of these characters is very limited.

The third way is to roll percentile dice on the following random table. If psionics are rolled, the character has some psychic ability in addition to his usual O.C.C./R.C.C. skills and abilities.

**Random Psionics Table** – roll percentile dice.

**01-10% Major Psionics.** Select a total of eight powers from any *one* category (*Sensitive, Physical* or *Healer*) or a total of six powers with selections made from two or three of those categories. Base Inner Strength Points (I.S.P.) are the character's M.E. +4D6, +1D6+1 per level of experience.

**11-25% Minor Psionics.** Select two powers from any *one* of the following psionic categories: *Sensitive, Physical* or *Healer*. In the grand scheme of things, power of this level is considered inconsequential, though it may have a profound impact on the individual character's life. Base Inner Strength Points (I.S.P.) are the character's M.E. +2D6. At each level of experience, add +1D6 I.S.P.

**26-00%:** Not psychic. Sorry.

## Step 5: Pick an O.C.C. & Skills

A character's Occupational Character Class (O.C.C.) determines what he is right now. Most characters in the North American setting will be Men at Arms, Adventurers, Scholars, Psychics, Practitioners of Magic or a Dragon. All seek adventure or knowledge and dare to go out into the world to find that which they desire most.

Players should skim over the O.C.C. descriptions and range of available skills, equipment and purpose, and *select* the one they find most interesting, challenging or appealing. I have tried to make them all unique and fun, each with its own distinctive background, goals and flavor. Rifts® is one of the few games that has always allowed players to play inhuman characters (D-Bees, dragons, mutants, etc.), but space restrictions have prevented me from including even a handful. Nonhuman R.C.C.s can be found in **Rifts® Sourcebook One, Conversion Book One** and a number of **Rifts® World Books**, including *New West, Lone Star, Atlantis* and *Rifts® Canada*. Even the human characters are far from typical. Enjoy.

## Step 6: Picking an Alignment

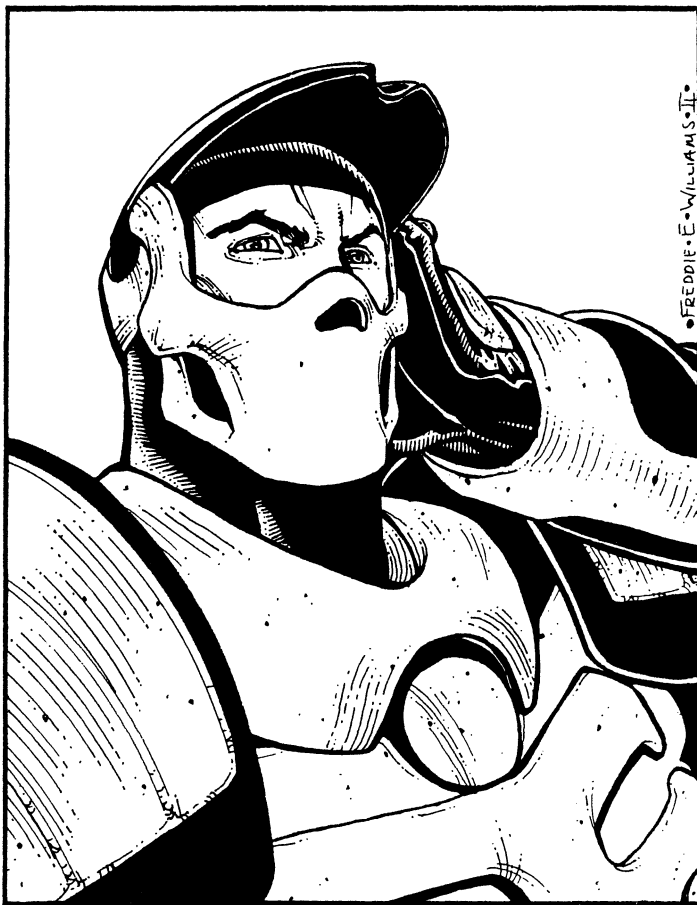
All players *must* choose an alignment for their character. This defines a character's attitudes and provides a moral center. There are three basic alignment categories: *Good, Selfish* and *Evil*.

Alignments play a vital role in developing a character's personality and are a key element of "role" playing. Whether we are consciously aware of it or not, every person has his or her own moral compass to guide him. Whether one calls it a code of ethics and morals, or justice and honor, or religious values, alignments define what the character sees as right and wrong, good and evil, acceptable behavior and what is not acceptable. It is this sense of right and wrong that helps build moral fiber, mold one's behavior, and dictate how a character treats others and how he should react when faced with a moral choice.

Alignments should be seen as a *guideline* for each character that indicates how he or she is likely to react to any given situation. Try to have your character stay true to his alignment and act accordingly, even if it goes against the grain. In fact, battling to stay true to one's alignment replicates the conscience and realistic moral dilemmas, i.e., being emotionally torn to do the right thing, or what feels good at the moment. An act of cruelty out of revenge or hate, for example, might sound good in the heat of the moment, but is not the good or right thing to do. A player struggling with such a decision for his character emulates that emotional gut process.

When a player finds himself slipping (or slipped) out of character, the Game Master (G.M.) should stop the game for a moment and, as the referee/director of the story, point out that the player's intended actions *go against his alignment*. The G.M. should then warn that moving forward with that choice may cause the character to *change alignment*. **For example:** A Principled good character that acts out of hatred and deliberately tortures another being is likely to drop to the *Anarchist* or even *Miscreant evil* alignment depending on how cruel and vicious the act





was, or how much the character enjoyed it. Similarly, a Principled character who decides to steal or “bend” the law is likely to drop to a *Scrupulous* or *Unprincipled* alignment, and to *Anarchist* if he keeps stealing or breaking the law. Everyone makes a mistake from time to time, but repeated drops from alignment and/or no remorse for a wrongdoing will definitely cause a quick change. Likewise, a *Miscreant* evil character who has learned the value of friendship and begins to act kind, noble and compassionate, or forsakes his villainous ways, may go up to *Anarchist* or *Unprincipled*, and eventually, even higher if he keeps it up. However, achieving a better, higher moral alignment should be much, much more difficult to achieve than the quick plummet into a bad or self-serving alignment.

Playing in character (i.e., in alignment) can be a challenge, but it is always fun and worth doing.

## No Neutral Alignments

There is no such thing as an absolute neutral alignment. A character with an absolute, true neutral position could not make a decision, fight tyranny, hurt others, go adventuring, or take any action of any kind without leaning toward good, evil, or self-gratification. It is humanly impossible, and therefore is eliminated in the context of this game.

There are some philosophers out there who might disagree with this, but that’s a topic for another forum and not a factor of this game. Sorry, this is one of the very few definitive, unbending rules.

## Good Alignments

Good aligned characters (*Principled* and *Scrupulous*) are the straight-up heroes of this world. They generally place a high value on life and liberty, as well as law and order. Just because a character is of a good alignment, however, does not mean he’s a saint or without bad habits. Good characters can be irritating, obnoxious and arrogant, even

prejudiced and full of annoying quirks. Likewise, they may find themselves stepping outside the boundaries of the law in their quest to combat evil and injustice, but when push comes to shove, these characters can *always* be trusted to do the right thing, especially in a life and death situation.

### Principled (Good)

Principled characters are upright “boy scout” or “do-gooder” types who put others before themselves. This is the knight in shining armor, with the highest regard for the lives and well-being of others, freedom, truth, honor and justice. Principled characters will always *attempt* to work with and within the law, and have a high regard for (and trust of) authority, as well as for life and freedom. They are usually compassionate, merciful, cooperative and sincere.

#### A Principled character will . . .

1. Always keep his word.
2. Avoid lies.
3. Never kill or attack an unarmed foe.
4. Never harm an innocent.
5. Never torture for any reason.
6. Never kill for pleasure.
7. Always help others.
8. Always work within the law whenever possible.
9. Never break the law unless conditions are desperate. This means no breaking and entering, theft, torture, unprovoked assaults, etc.
10. Respect authority, law, self-discipline and honor.
11. Work well in a group.
12. Never take “dirty” money, or ill-gotten valuables or goods. This means any property that belongs to criminals or villains. It matters not how the bad guys got that property themselves; the hero will not touch it even if destitute.
13. Never betray a friend.

### Scrupulous (Good)

Scrupulous characters value life and freedom above all else and despise those who would deprive others of them. This type of hero is typically portrayed in many movies as the cop who plays by his own rules, forced to work beyond the law for justice (or retribution) and the greater good of the people. They are not vicious or vindictive characters, but are individuals driven by their sense of justice to right a wrong or take a (bloody) stand. These characters will always attempt to work with or within the law whenever possible.

#### A Scrupulous character will . . .

1. Keep his word to any other good person.
2. Lie only to people of selfish or evil alignments.
3. Never attack or kill an unarmed foe.
4. Never harm an innocent.
5. Never torture for pleasure, but may use muscle to extract information from criminals or evil characters.
6. Never kill for pleasure, will always attempt to bring the villain to justice alive, no matter how vile he may find him.
7. Always try to help others.
8. Attempt to work within the law whenever possible.
9. Bend and, occasionally, break the law when deemed necessary. This means he may use strong-arm techniques, harass, break and enter, steal, and so on (but only against the bad guys).
10. Distrust authority; fears the law and government may not be an effective weapon against injustice and crime. However, he will try not to flagrantly disregard the law.
11. Work with groups, but dislike confining laws and bureaucracy (red tape).

12. Never take “dirty” money or items.
13. Never betray a friend.

## Selfish Alignments

Selfish characters (*Unprincipled* and *Anarchist*) are not necessarily evil, but they always have their own best interests at heart and their opinions in mind above all others. These are the mercenaries, rogues, vigilantes and anti-heroes of the world.

### Unprincipled (Selfish)

This basically good person tends to be selfish, greedy, and holds his personal freedom and welfare above almost everything else. He dislikes confining laws and self-discipline and distrusts authority. He views the law and government as well-intentioned, but clumsy and ineffective. Keeping his best interests in mind, the character will always look out for himself.

This character is also likely to take “dirty” money and items, with the concept that it will help him in his crusade against evil. He may also destroy the property of known criminals. He will not deal in illegal wares, drugs, or take money from innocent or good people. The Unprincipled character may associate with both good and evil characters, and often has paid informants, spies and stoolies.

This is the noble scoundrel, the guy who is always looking for the best deal, associates with good and evil characters, is continually tempted to lie and cheat, and hates himself for being loyal, helping others and ultimately doing the “right thing.”

**An Unprincipled character will . . .**

1. Keep his word of honor.
2. Lie and cheat if necessary (especially to those of Anarchist and evil alignments).
3. Not kill an unarmed foe (but will take advantage of one).
4. Never harm an innocent.
5. Not use torture unless absolutely necessary.
6. Never kill for pleasure; will *attempt* to bring the villain to justice alive and ruin him rather than simply kill him.
7. Usually help those in need.
8. Rarely attempt to work within the law.
9. Blatantly break the law to achieve his (usually good-intentioned) goals.
10. Dislike and distrust authority, the law and bureaucracy. Feels they have been corrupted and abused.
11. Work with groups, especially if it serves his needs, is profitable, and/or he is in the limelight.
12. Take “dirty” money.
13. Never betray a friend.
14. Have a high regard for life and freedom.

### Anarchist (Selfish)

This type of character likes to indulge himself in everything. He is the insurgent, con-artist, gambler and uncommitted freebooter who adventures because he enjoys the thrill, fame and fortune it brings, rather than for any cause (like defending humanity). This character will at least *consider* doing anything if the price is right or the challenge is alluring enough.

Laws and rules infringe on personal freedom and were meant to be broken. He will not hesitate at using strong-arm techniques, breaking and entering, theft, harassment, destruction of private property, and so on. This can also include acting as judge, jury, and executioner. These characters are usually the daring anti-heroes who feel the end justifies the means. The Anarchist-aligned person is always looking for the best

deal and self-gratification. He will work with good, selfish and evil characters to attain his goals. The Anarchist is continually teetering between good and evil, rebelling against and bending the law to fit *his* needs. Mercenaries and thieves often fall into this category.

**An Anarchist character will . . .**

1. Keep his word, but only if it suits or pleases him.
2. Lie and cheat if he feels it necessary.
3. Not be likely to kill an unarmed foe, but certainly will knock out, attack or beat up one.
4. Never kill an innocent, although his rash or self-serving actions may injure or kill bystanders by accident.
5. Use torture to extract information, but is not likely to do so for pleasure.
6. Seldom kill for pleasure.
7. Not be likely to help someone without some ulterior motive (even if it's only to show off).
8. Rarely work within the law unless it serves his purpose.
9. Constantly break the law to achieve his goals.
10. Have little respect for authority, the law, or self-discipline.
11. Not work well within groups; tends to do as he pleases, despite orders to the contrary.
12. Take “dirty” money without hesitation.
13. Possibly betray a friend. Sorry, pal.

## Evil Alignments

All evil characters (*Aberrant*, *Miscreant* and *Diabolic*) are not necessarily bent on universal genocide or dominating all other living creatures. Nor are all evil characters sadistic, cruel, ugly or untrustworthy. Many evil characters may actually seem kind or likeable.

Evil alignments are a step beyond the self-gratification of the selfish alignments. Evil characters are ruthless individuals who are willing to say or do anything to achieve their goals. Most commonly, evil characters have goals that either entail making people suffer or cause suffering as a side effect (a side effect the evil character knowingly and callously disregards). Human life has little meaning to them, and friends tend to be (but not always) people to use and discard when they are no longer of value. Evil-aligned characters do not automatically slay any good-aligned person because of different ethics and philosophy. All the better to use good to achieve their own goals, for the end always justifies the means.

**Note:** There is nothing wrong with *playing* a fictional, evil character, although he may not survive too long if he betrays or harms too many people, nor is the character likely to be trusted or liked by his “good” teammates. However, this is role-playing, not reality, so you can play any type of character you might desire, just continue to play “in character.”

### Aberrant (Evil)

The cliché that there is “no honor among thieves” is false when dealing with the Aberrant character. This is an individual who is driven to attain his goals through force, power, and intimidation. Yet the Aberrant character stands apart from the norm with his own personal (and twisted) code of ethics. He expects loyalty from his minions, punishing disloyalty and treachery with a swift, merciful death or banishment. An Aberrant character will always keep his word of honor and uphold any bargains. He will define his terms and live by them, whether anyone else likes them or not.

If an anti-hero, he will completely disregard the law and deal out justice as he deems fit. He will never be cruel or vindictive, and will always be absolutely positive that the person is guilty before he deals out his brand of justice. However, once he condemns a character, he will see to it that he is destroyed.

Whether a villain or a corrupt or extreme anti-hero, the Aberrant character looks upon people without honor or a sense of loyalty as worthless and disgusting lowlifes.

Do not think of the Aberrant character as a misguided good guy. He or she will break all laws with impunity, harass victims, destroy property, assault, blackmail, torture and murder. Only their methods and degree of violence may vary.

**An Aberrant character will . . .**

1. Always keep his word of honor (at least to those he deems worthy of it).
2. Lie and cheat to those not worthy of his respect; good, selfish or evil.
3. May or may not kill an unarmed foe.
4. Never kill an innocent, particularly a child, but may harm, harass or kidnap.
5. Never torture for pleasure, but will use it to extract information and intimidate others.
6. Never kill for pleasure, will always have a reason.
7. May or may not help someone in need.
8. Rarely attempt to work within the law.
9. Break the law without hesitation.
10. Have no use for the law or bureaucracy, but respects honor, self-discipline and the "concept" of laws and order.
11. Work with others to attain his goals.
12. Usually take "dirty" money, although his twisted code of ethics may prevent him from doing so in some instances.
13. Never betray a friend. Never.

## Miscreant (Evil)

This self-serving, unscrupulous character is out only for himself. Power, glory, wealth, position, and anything that will make his life more comfortable or pleasurable is his goal. It doesn't matter who gets caught in the middle, as long as he comes out smelling like a rose. The character will lie, cheat, hurt, and kill anyone to attain his personal goals.

If a Miscreant character becomes a vigilante, mercenary, or bounty hunter, it will be for some personal reason, a vendetta, money, glory or a love for danger and challenge. This character is a savage misanthrope out for himself.

**A Miscreant character will . . .**

1. Not necessarily keep his word to anyone.
2. Lie and cheat indiscriminately (good, evil, selfish).
3. Kill an unarmed foe as readily as he would a potential threat or competition.
4. Use or harm an innocent.
5. Use torture for extracting information and pleasure.
6. May kill for sheer pleasure.
7. Feel no compulsion to help without some sort of tangible reward for him.
8. Have no deference to the law, but will work within the law if he must.
9. Blatantly break the law for his own goals and pleasure.
10. Dislike and distrust authority and the law.
11. Work with others if it will help him attain his personal goals.
12. Take "dirty" money, stolen goods, and illegal items (as well as steal valuables for himself whenever the opportunity arises).
13. Betray a friend if it serves his needs.
14. Have no respect or concern for the lives or welfare of others.

## Diabolic (Evil)

This is the category that most megalomaniacs, psychopaths, and violent and despicable characters fall into. This is the cruel, brutal killer who trusts no one and has no value for any life other than his own. A Diabolic character will crush anyone who gets in his way. The lowlife will lie, cheat, con, abuse and kill anyone less powerful than he is. Aberrant characters find these dishonorable people more revolting than a good-aligned character.

**A Diabolic character will . . .**

1. Rarely keep his word, and has no honor.
2. Lie to and cheat anyone.
3. Most certainly attack and kill an unarmed foe.
4. Hurt and kill an innocent without a second thought and for pleasure.
5. Use torture for pleasure and information, regularly.
6. Kill for sheer pleasure.
7. Be likely to help someone only on a whim (or to set them up for some evil deed later).
8. Rarely attempt to work within the law.
9. Blatantly break the law and mock authority.
10. Despise honor, authority and self-discipline. Views them as weaknesses.
11. Not work well within a group; constantly disregarding orders and vying for power/command.
12. Always take "dirty" money, drugs, stolen goods, etc., as well as steal from others.
13. Betray a friend without hesitation; after all, you can always find new friends.
14. Associate mostly with other evil alignments.

# Step 7: Character Advancement

## The Experience Level System

**Game Designer Notes:** As mentioned earlier in this book, every component of the Palladium game system has been carefully thought out, play tested and fine tuned for years and years. The choice of a level-based method for character advancement is no exception. Behind the scenes, we've discussed, experimented with, and considered other approaches. Longtime friend and game designer, Erick Wujcik, tends to like point based systems and *diceless* rules. As of late, Wayne Breau Jr. has been fiddling with a point based character creation system, and we *may* even try one in the future for a new game. I've also been playing with new and different approaches for my experimental game in development, **Void Runners™**. The point is, as a game designer I look at, consider and fool around with every possibility.

The Palladium Megaversal Game System uses *Experience Levels* as a means of character growth and advancement because I feel it is best suited for games that focus on *characters* and *story*. It feels right, plays out nicely, simulates real life, and develops the characters in such a way that they become more vivid and three-dimensional.

**The Experience Level approach** is intended for a long-term campaign (an anticipation of playing on a regular basis for months or even years), and on the premise that ALL characters *start* at level one. This is not an absolute (very little about role-playing is written in stone), but starting at level one means the characters all start out on par with one another and *grow* in experience, knowledge and ability as they experience life and survive adventures.

I'd like to use a comic book analogy if I may. Using a level system and starting at First Level is the difference between playing the comic book and film character, **Batman**, as he is today with years of experience, the Batcave, Batmobile, and other gadgets at his disposal, Robin, Nightwing and a host of agents, contacts and friends, seasoned ability and years of experience and confidence under his utility belt; and playing **Batman: Year One**. Staying with this analogy, **Batman: Year One** is the Dark Knight at First Level. He is done with all his training and preparations, and is just launching his career as a crime fighting vigilante. There is no Batcave or Robin, and the great Batman isn't so grand. His skills and abilities are not yet fully developed and he lacks the experience of a polished veteran. He's flying by the seat of his pants, figuring things out and making things up as he goes along. He has goals, dreams and desires, but doesn't know exactly what he's doing, how to handle every situation, or even if he's going about everything the right way. It's a strange, new world for the character in year one. He's the *new kid* on the block.

Not only is this *learning curve* fun to play, but starting at level one and growing a character through experience (i.e., watching your character grow by trial and tribulation through real experience) makes the character that much richer with a background, skills, abilities and experience that have been *earned*. There is real continuity ("Hey, guys, wait a minute. Remember when we battled X?") and a sense of accomplishment. The character (and the player) is more mature, knowledgeable and has a greater sense of purpose and confidence rooted in experience. That, my dear readers, is a superior, vivid character, and that's what the Experience Level approach establishes and promotes, in my opinion, better than any other.

I also like it because I believe an *Experience Level System* of character advancement simulates real life. I don't care how much schooling and education a person gets, or how much time a person logs on a computer or playing through controlled simulations, *none of it* is a substitute for real life experience. (Or in this case, real fictional adventuring and game play.) Furthermore, a person just gets better in many things with age and experience. Look at sports and almost any skilled profession. Those dedicated to learning and improving do get better. I know art and writing best, so I'll use my personal experiences as an example. As of the year 2005, I'm 49 years old and I've been writing and designing games professionally for 25 years. I started Palladium at the age of 24 armed with a dream, determination, a gazillion ideas, unbridled enthusiasm and raw talent. If you had asked me then, I would have told you I was a good writer and concept man, and a Jack of Many Trades who was writing at his best. All true. However, looking back at much of my early work makes me cringe. It *was* the best I could do – at the time. I was proud of it then, and I created one good selling role-playing game world after another, even a few mega-hits. However, looking back at my work with a critical eye, I can tell you that a lot of it was weak, rough, unpolished, and sometimes limited by my experience. My writing ability and business acumen are superior today than they were 20 years ago, or even five years ago.

In a game context, you might ask, how can that be? After all, I was dedicated, driven and gave my work everything I had to give. I strove to be the best and hungered to create the best. So why wasn't that work the best I would ever create? The simple answer is *experience*. I was a *first level* writer and game designer back then. Today, because I never stopped dreaming up new ideas, new approaches and ways to improve, I'm a much *higher level* character. My years of experience and practice at my craft have made me a superior writer, designer and businessman to what I was 24 years ago, or even five years ago. All the desire and raw talent in the world means squat without determined persistence and growth through experience. More than anything, just doing it – the practice and experience – helps a creator grow and improve at his craft. Today, I believe my writing and design work is better than ever, heck, the best it has ever been, but with a little more work I'll continue to grow and improve.

I can also report that there have been quantum leaps in my development. Sudden and noticeable breakthroughs and improvements as if I had reached a new plateau or *Level of Experience*. That may sound corny, but it's true. Every artist, writer, and creative person out there is shaking their head in agreement as they read this, because they have experienced it themselves. For whatever reason, one day something just clicks. Yesterday, you struggled drawing hands and feet, or couldn't get shadowing and shading the way you wanted it. Heck, you've been working on them for freakin' years, and then, one day, you wake up, sit down at the drawing table, and it flows out of you like magic. It's a wonderful (and mildly strange) experience. Likewise, as much as we are loath to admit it when we are young, age plays a factor. I've seen it a hundred times in artists, where something happens around age 30-34 and the artist goes from good to great as if he has achieved a new level of expertise and his stats just went up. I don't know why, I've just seen it enough times to know it's true.

This type of *level advancement* where the individual reaches a new plateau is very dramatic and apparent in the world of sports, too. A young NFL quarterback shows flashes of talent and ability, but like most before him, is wild, unfocused, and gets hammered his first few years in the big league. Over and over, the coaches and management talk about how the quarterback's skills and abilities *will* improve "with experience, maturity, and time." And that's not practice time either, but "real" experience on the field in real games on a professional level. Sure enough, a few years later the promising young quarterback is a top professional. Holy cow, look at Peyton Manning's first year or two in the NFL compared to today! The same is true in professional boxing. The typical heavyweight boxer does not usually reach his "prime" until around age 27 or 28, and nobody expects him to reach it sooner. Once the heavyweight boxer hits his prime, he's usually in top form till about age 32-35. Iron Mike Tyson was an anomaly, reaching his prime in his early and mid-twenties, but he also burned out early. Sure some of this has to do with physical development, but come on, most boxers, and athletes in general, have been working at their craft for years, usually starting in their early teens, sometimes younger. **Note:** That's also why the *Palladium Experience Level System* has the characters advance in experience quickly at first – fueled by the enthusiasm and raw talent of youth combined with the thrill of learning something new – and then slows down, requiring the character to accumulate much more experience to reach the next, higher plateau.

**Brains and learning equal knowledge, experience and advancement.** You will also notice that the characters get the most experience from using their heads and role-playing interaction rather than killing things. Killing monsters is a good thing and fun to play, but ultimately it breaks down to little more than *target practice*, not growth as a human being or a deep *character*. Consequently, *experience* is gained from using the right skill at a critical moment, or using skill knowledge to win or survive a situation, or taking an action that rescues others.

Since the characters are, presumably, good guys, self-sacrifice, acts of kindness, mercy, compassion, and heroics all earn experience. Not little things or common actions ("Hey, my character drives to the Body-Chop-Shop, do I get experience points for using my Pilot Automobile skill?" Um, the answer, by the way, is *no!*), but using a skill to make a difference, helping somebody, saving a life (or lives), figuring out an important clue, thwarting the villains, rescuing villagers, destroying evil, and so on. Likewise, I always award experience points (25-100) for players using their heads to figure out clue or puzzles, and making realizations or formulating plans that are clever, imaginative, brilliant or critical to the story or plan of action. Heck, sometimes I award experience points if the character's idea or plan is dead wrong or fruitless, but at the same time is very clever or imaginative.

I may also award points for pure guts and courage, but *not* false bravado, foolish refusal to back down out of pride, spite or stupidity, or showing off.

Negative and foolish actions get no experience points.

Positive, helpful, noble and heroic measures as well as character interaction, playing in character, figuring things out, planning intelligent strategies and tactics, helping other characters, being heroes, and good ideas, all earn experience. So does playing a rogue or villain, if it is done in character and with style and intelligence.

Playing in character and building the story is what *role-playing* is all about, and the Palladium Game System is designed to encourage it.

**Tweaking the rules.** Having said all that, the role-playing experience is deeply personal and a little different for every group of gamers. That's why there really is *not* any right or wrong way to play, or any one game system or approach that is truly superior to another. A good game is a good game, and a bad game can be fixed by a good Game Master. Ultimately, it comes down to what *you* and your fellow players enjoy and want out of a game. Me, I want role-playing, memorable characters, adventure and epic stories, so that's how I designed the Palladium rules. That doesn't mean *you* can't take and tweak or modify the rules to satisfy *your* tastes. I have found that at least a third of the Game Masters tweak and modify some aspect of the rules of any game they play. These changes and tweaks are called "house rules" and as long as the majority of the players agree with and accept the changes, and the game is fun, then there's nothing wrong with it. Rules lawyers need to grow up.

**Style of play.** Likewise, everyone's style of play, from Game Master to player, is going to be different. Alex focuses on technology and science. Erick likes to play up aspects of puzzles, finding clues, and uncovering mysteries and new technology. Julius likes to focus on the adventure and heroics. Carmen likes guts and glory combat, carnage and cataclysmic finales (he may be a Crazy or a Juicer in a parallel dimension). Roger likes cunning, trickery, subtlety and deception; nothing is ever quite what it seems. Me, I like sprawling, epic yarns with lots of subplots, twists, and turns driven by strong characters and conflicts with dynamic villains (and I mean villainous scum you'll love to hate). Another popular gaming approach is what many gaming elitists call "power gamers" or "hack 'n slash" gamers – guys and gals who thrive on shoot 'em up action and play maxed-out, powerhouse characters. Hey, while that's not my style of play there is nothing wrong with it.

**Never forget this is a game!** Entertainment. The whole idea is having *fun* with friends. If you and your pals are having fun, you're playing just fine.

– Kevin Siembieda

## Experience Points are their own reward

In a game context, one of the tangible accomplishments and rewards the *player* receives is Experience Points for his or her fictional alter ego. Yes, the character or the player group as a whole may make money, get booty, find a powerful magic item or artifact, and/or win the adoration of those they've rescued. That's all cool, but the growth of the character via Experience Points for heroism, playing in character, and using your smarts is the real achievement for the individual player.

I have run many a game where the player characters got the snot kicked out them, lost valuable equipment and got no or little financial reward, but the players were tickled pink because they saved the day (even if that was saving one orphan child), because they worked as a team, had fun doing it, defeated the bad guys, won, and had the Experience Points (and self-satisfaction) to prove it. Somehow those things, with Experience Points (E.P.) punctuating it all, made all their effort worth doing. That is the other beautiful aspect of the Experience Point system, you are rewarded for your character's accomplishments.

## Experience Points & Their Application

The ultimate purpose of Experience Points and Experience Levels is to provide a means by which the player's character can grow and develop. The Palladium game system promotes a subjective method of using observation and logic to determine Experience Point rewards. In

the past, some other games with experience systems have focused on the "kill factor," but what about the thought process? What about the decisions, plans and motives behind a particular action? Doesn't cleverness and a cool head count? Shouldn't the brilliant medical student playing a character with an I.Q. of 4 (and staying firmly in character, saying and doing things as the dull-witted character would, even though he realizes the stupidity as a player) get experience for playing in character? Absolutely! Considering how flexible and subjective most of the other role-playing conditions and rules are, there isn't much logic in having a strict, limited Experience Point system.

Each player's character involved in a given situation or confrontation should receive the appropriate Experience Points for that event. As G.M., I have found jotting down experience points in the moment when the character earned it is the best way to keep track. Not unlike scoring a boxing match round by round. Of course, in role-playing the character doesn't do something worth experience every single *round*, but when that pivotal deed or idea happens I make note of it. I simply make a list of my players and each character's name on a sheet of paper at the beginning of the game and jot down Experience Points throughout the game (totaling them up as I go along so I don't have a big math project or need a calculator at the end of the game). At the end of the gaming session, I, as the G.M., give *each* player the total E.P. amount along with a couple comments on what I thought were key moments for their character or just great role-playing. ("Man, I couldn't believe it when your character jumped up and . . . it was great.") Once the G.M. hands out Experience Points it's the player's responsibility to keep track of when the character hits next level. (By the way, I have never stopped in the middle of a game and said, "Hey, your character has just gone up in level, adjust your stats right here and now." Nope. The player will have to wait till the next time we play to boost his character's stats. I don't care if the character made next level with a thousand points to spare in the first ten minutes of the game, it's not appropriate to "level up" during an adventure.)

The difficulty with this method of determining experience is its subjectivity. The G.M. must utilize the experience outline with some thought. **For Example:** A gang of eight, third level psychics armed to the teeth attack and subdue a lone fourth level villain. The eight players should receive Experience Points for subduing a minor menace. After all, the poor bad guy was outnumbered eight to one, had no genuine chance of defeating the player group, and presented no real threat to the characters. However, if one or two first, second or third level characters subdued or killed the same villain, they should receive experience for subduing a major, or possibly a great menace, because the odds were stacked against them, the danger was considerable, and the character(s) had to use ingenuity and teamwork to defeat a villain much more powerful than they. The greater the risk and challenge, the greater the reward.

This approach promotes imaginative and creative playing and role-playing instead of mere hacking and slashing. Game Masters, don't feel that you have to shower your players with tons of Experience Points either. Be fair and tolerant. Let your players truly *earn* their Experience Points. That way if you have a group of players with characters rising rapidly in Experience Levels, you will know it's because they are bold, clever and imaginative.

## Experience & Hit Points

Each time a character reaches a new level of experience, the player gets to roll one six-sided die (1D6) and adds the number rolled to the character's Hit Points. This indicates the physical development and maturity of the character.

## Per Level of Experience

“Per level of experience” or similar phrases indicate that the character can perform a skill, power or ability at his personal, highest level of experience. This often indicates the amount of damage that can be inflicted or a duration of an effect from a psychic ability or magic spell.

## Experience Points Award Table

### A guide to awarding Experience Points.

#### Combat

**Zero** points for fighting that’s just to show off, too proud to stand down, gets the rest of the group in trouble, or any stupid or selfish reasoning.

**25-50** points for killing or subduing a *minor menace*.

**75-100** points for killing or subduing a *major menace*.

**150-400** points for killing or subduing a *great menace*. Additional Experience Points are likely.

#### Other Actions, Reasoning & Role-Playing

**10-25** points for performing the right skill (successful or not), at the right time, for the right reason. For mid to high level characters (4th level and up), this might apply only to skills performed when they are absolutely critical or done under stressful conditions.

**25-50** points for a clever, but futile idea.

**25-50** points for using good judgment or one’s power or skill well.

**25-50** points for playing in character when it would have been easier not to.

**25-100** points for a clever, useful/helpful idea or action.

**50-100** points for avoiding unnecessary violence; self-restraint or talking, bluffing or intimidating oneself (and associates) out of trouble or danger.

**50-100** points for a small act of self-sacrifice, or an act of kindness, mercy, or compassion.

**50-100** points for insightful and helpful deductive reasoning or keen observation.

**50-100** points for a successful daring or heroic action (whether it was clever or not).

**75-150** points for playing in character/playing one’s alignment when circumstance or powerful temptation begged otherwise.

**100** points for a quick thinking idea or action that was helpful.

**100-200** points for insight or deductive reasoning that plays a huge role in a critical plan or saving lives.

**200** points for a critical plan or action that saves the character’s own life and/or a few comrades.

**400-1000** points for a critical plan or action that saves the entire group and/or many innocent people.

**100-300** points for endangering the character’s own life (self-sacrifice) to help or save others.

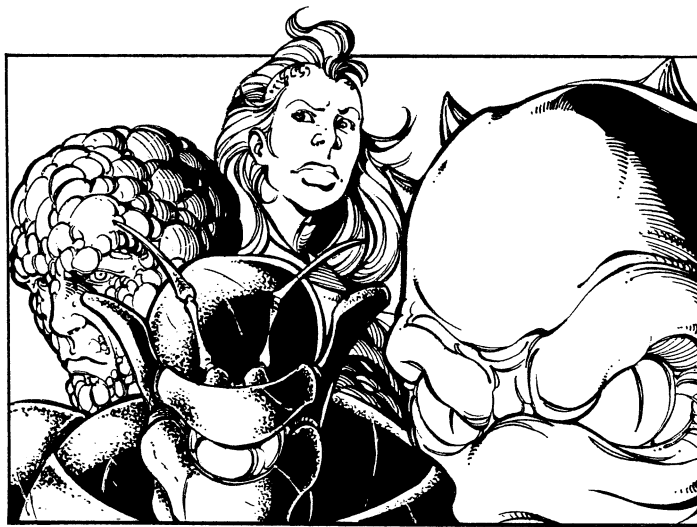
**500-700** points for a genuine life and death self-sacrifice in a situation where the character’s heroism seemed likely (or almost certain) to cost him his life. Leaping in front of an energy blast meant for someone else to save that person, even though the blast is *likely* to kill the hero, or offering his/her own life to save the group or an innocent person (and the exchange truly seems to be a death sentence with no apparent chance for escape). Odds are that the character *will* really die!

## Character Experience Levels

An experience table is provided for each O.C.C. (Occupational Character Class) and R.C.C. (Racial Character Class). A character involved in an adventure gains Experience Points for his thoughts, actions and deeds. As these Experience Points accumulate, the character

will reach new plateaus indicating his continuing growth, development, and mastery over his abilities and skills. Each time a player’s character gets enough Experience Points to reach the next “level,” his skills and Hit Points (and P.P.E. for practitioners of magic and I.S.P. for psychics) increase accordingly.

The maximum level a player character can reach is 15. We have found characters any higher than that tend to be difficult both to play and to G.M. Plus, given the typical scale of Experience Points used for this game, a player should have to run his character for years to get beyond even 10th level.



Wilson - 2001

## Step 8:

### Rounding Out the Character

The following tables and charts are entirely *optional*. Use them or not. Use some, not others. They are provided for the convenience of those who might want them. To make random determinations, roll percentile dice. **Game Master Note:** These tables are also handy for whipping up Non-Player Characters.

#### Equipment

A character’s starting equipment is presented under each O.C.C. or R.C.C. Additional equipment may be acquired as a reward or pay, booty from an adventure, the spoils of war (i.e., taken from those they’ve defeated), purchased or found, stolen, the sale of ancient artifacts recovered during an adventure, and so on. Characters will find themselves buying new gear and upgrading all the time. Just remember, specialized weapons, augmentation, magic and equipment may only be available at certain places. For example, one town may offer high-tech weapons and vehicles, the next one does not. Magic items and authentic pre-Rifts relics, pre-Rifts books and videos, are especially hard to come by. Places like MercTown, Tolkeen, Kingsdale, Ishpeming, Lazlo and a few others who cater to mercenaries and adventurers are the exception, not the rule. And while the Chi-Town ‘Burbs offer a little bit of almost everything, one needs to know where to find the item, and always needs to be on the lookout for Coalition Soldiers, CS undercover cops, CS stoolies, and sting operations.

#### Birth Order

**01-25%** First Born.

**26-35%** Second Born.

**36-45%** Third Born.

**46-55%** Fourth Born.

**56-75%** Last Born.

**76-85%** First Born of Twins.

**86-95%** Second Born of Twins.

**96-00%** Illegitimate.

## Weight

<b>01-10%</b> Skinny; underweight.	<b>61-75%</b> Husky.
<b>11-30%</b> Thin.	<b>76-89%</b> Potbelly.
<b>31-60%</b> Average.	<b>90-00%</b> Obese; seriously overweight.

## Height

- 01-30%** Short.
- 31-70%** Average.
- 71-00%** Tall.

**Note:** Average height for a human male is six feet, two inches (1.88 m). Female: Five feet, nine inches (1.75 m).

## Age

I think it best to generally assume the characters are young (15-32), especially if starting at first level, and let the player pick the age he'd like for the character.

## Disposition

**01-10% Mean or bitter.** The glass is half empty, he doesn't get his fair share, and tends to be suspicious, spiteful and vindictive.

**11-15% Shy.** Quiet and timid, tends to be a loner, but fairly sure of oneself.

**16-23% Gung-ho.** Guts and glory type who sees himself as a hero, and enjoys tackling obstacles, challenges and participating in combat.

**24-29% Worry wart.** Nervous and cautious about everything.

**30-35% Hothead.** Bold, and quick-tempered or emotional. Feels things deeply because he or she cares. May be a good, nice person or a hotheaded jerk.

**36-43% Gambler.** Likes to take chances for himself and is always looking for a way to even the odds and make a big score.

**44-48% Blabber-mouth.** Nice guy, but talks too much and may say the wrong thing to the wrong person.

**49-54% Wild man.** May mean well, but tends to be bullheaded, overconfident, takes unnecessary risks and tends to rush into situations without thinking it all through.

**55-61% All around good person.** Kind, generous, compassionate, and positive. The glass is usually half full.

**62-67% Arrogant.** Confident and self-assured to the point that he feels he is the best at what he does. Likes to take charge and direct others whether they appreciate it or not. May underestimate others.

**68-75% Tough guy.** Cocky and self-reliant. May be a lone wolf or the strong, silent type.

**76-81% Braggart.** May be a nice person, but likes to brag about his or her abilities, accomplishments and exploits.

**82-86% Paternal.** Tends to be overprotective of others, especially friends, and is especially overbearing toward young characters and children.

**87-91% Easy going.** Unflappable and calm most of the time; laid back and accepting of others. Trusts almost anyone until they are proven unworthy of that trust.

**92-95% Complainer.** Constantly aggravated about something.

**96-98% Peacemaker.** Hates discord between friends, family, and co-workers and likes to help others mend fences.

**99-00% Schemer/Dreamer.** Always looking ahead, never in the present, and dislikes the past. Thinking ahead and plotting for the future is a good trait sometimes, but a bad one other times, because he tends to miss the obvious ("what if . . .") and forgets the reality of the here and now.

## Environment Growing Up

**01-20%** Agricultural; farm or ranch.

**21-40%** Country community, small town or village.

**41-50%** Old Town 'Burbs, a prosperous, upper-middle class city or town. Minimal hardship or ethnic diversity.

**51-60%** New Town 'Burb, a slum with plenty of hardship, poverty and racial diversity.

**61-70%** Small town magic community where magic, creatures of magic, D-Bees and ethnic diversity were commonplace.

**71-80%** Wilderness town where hunting, trapping, raising crops and livestock, and respecting nature was the way of life. Little racial diversity and basic technology.

**81-90%** Wilderness tribe (Psi-Stalker, Simvan, Native American, Barbarian). A nomadic people who hunted, gathered food, grew some crops and lived off the land. Great respect for nature and elemental forces. Little racial diversity and minimal technology.

**91-00%** Population Center, grew up in a big city like Chi-Town or an Old Town 'Burb, Whykin, Kingsdale, Tolkeen, Lazlo, MercTown, and so on.

## Family Origin

**01-50%** Earth native. Character is human.

**51-75%** D-Bee. Parents came through a Rift from another world or dimension 2D6x10 years ago.

**76-85% Psychic.** A character with a history of psionic powers in the family. Player character may or may not have psionic abilities. May be a Psi-Stalker or other psychic.

**86-90%** Nonhuman mutant (Dog Boy?). The product of genetic experimentation, probably at the hand of the Coalition or the mysterious Gene Splicers, but may also be the result of weird magic or dimensional energies from a Rift. See *Rifts® World Book 13: Lone Star* for info on CS genetic experiments and mutants.

**91-95%** An orphan raised by a different race or culture. Always felt different and out of place, even if loved and treated well.

**96-00%** Tribal. Native American, Psi-Stalker, Simvan, or barbarian, or other wilderness people. May have been raised by a different race or culture.

## Sentiments toward the Coalition

**01-10%** Likes the Coalition States; has mostly seen and heard good things about them and believes they are humankind's salvation.

**11-20%** Every nation has good and bad people. This character refuses to condemn a nation for the actions of its government. By the same token, the character is suspicious and fearful of the CS.

**21-30%** Believes the CS are heroes and humankind's salvation until proven otherwise.

**31-40%** Respectful but wary. Knows the CS is capable of greatness and ruthless savagery. Has heard a great many things about the Coalition, but doesn't have any strong feelings about them one way or the other.

**41-50%** Distrusts and fears the CS; has seen many injustices, atrocities and acts of ruthlessness at the hands of the CS military, especially against nonhumans, practitioners of magic, and those of different beliefs.

**51-60%** Hates the Coalition, because the character has lost numerous friends, family members and/or acquaintances to them.

**61-70%** Suspicious and fearful of the CS. Sees them as a nation of misguided zealots who hate, fear and destroy what they fear and don't understand. Wishes that would change.

**71-80%** Indifferent, never personally had any experience with them.



**81-90%** Dislikes and distrusts the Coalition, the character is well informed and knows a lot about the CS's philosophies, laws, and activity, and they seem to be pretty unjust, if not outright evil.

**91-00%** Sad about the CS. The character has seen soldiers defy orders to do the right thing, and recognizes the CS has done many good things for many humans. Its potential for good is tremendous, but believes Emperor Prosek and the government that serves him are evil. They are the ones responsible for the crimes the Coalition has committed against others. Suspicious and caution about the CS.

## Sentiments toward Non-Humans

**01-10%** Hates and distrusts all nonhumans! The only good one is a dead one!

**11-15%** Hates all demons, monsters and supernatural creatures, does not like or trust D-Bees, or mutants in general, fears and hates those with demonic features and mind control powers.

**16-20%** Hates dragons and distrusts all creatures of magic and D-Bees with reptilian features.

**21-25%** Sees D-Bees and all nonhumans as people to be exploited (cheap labor, slaves, cannon fodder, sex toys, etc.). They're all worthless, lazy and liars any way.

**26-30%** D-Bees are okay, except for the Larmac (hates 'em). Despite his claims of equality, the character tends to treat nonhumans as second class citizens beneath humans (or whatever the character's own race is; could be a particular D-Bee himself).

**31-35%** Tries to treat all of God's creatures as equals, but fears and hates shape-changers, and distrusts truly inhuman/alien looking D-Bees.

**36-40%** Accepts all attractive and human-looking D-Bees and treats them as equals. Has trouble accepting inhuman/alien looking D-Bees and tends to avoid and ignore them.

**41-45%** Dislikes all D-Bees, but loathes the attractive ones who worm their way into human society as if they were one of us. Believes they should be dumped into a Rift (to anywhere) or destroyed. The character takes pleasure in cheating handsome D-Bees, getting them in trouble, turning them in to the law (or bounty hunters, CS extermination squads, slavers and their enemies) and treats them with blatant contempt.

**46-55%** Honestly tries to accept D-Bees as equals and gives them the benefit of the doubt, but still tends to be wary and suspicious of nonhumans.

**56-60%** Suspicious of everybody, human and non-human alike! Tends to be a bit paranoid, because "in these times you never really know who's human and who's not."

**61-65%** Has had mostly good experiences with D-Bees and accepts them as equals without doubt or suspicion. Suspicious of creatures of magic and supernatural beings.

**66-70%** Doesn't like 'em, doesn't trust 'em and tends to blame them for everything that goes wrong in his life and in society. However, the character doesn't try to hurt, use or abuse them, he just wishes they'd go someplace else. If a good alignment, the character will even help a D-Bee in need, but knows he'll live to regret it.

**71-75%** Hates and fears demons and supernatural beings, but believes that all mortal races need to live and work in harmony to hold the demons and monsters at bay.

**76-80%** Conditional tolerance. D-Bees don't belong here, but it ain't their fault. Treats 'em reasonably well, distrusts those he doesn't know, but may consider a D-Bee he knows and likes as a trusted friend.

**81-85%** Treats all sentient beings with the utmost respect and courtesy until they prove undeserving of it. Has a high regard for life and personal freedom.

**86-90%** Prefers the company of D-Bees over his own race (never fit in), suspicious of creatures of magic and supernatural beings.

**91-95%** Kind and friendly to D-Bees and all nonhumans, except demons of course. Very sensitive to the injustice and plight of D-Bees to the point of always going above and beyond the call of duty and gives D-Bees favorable trade deals, discounts, a shoulder to cry on, a place to hide, and always the benefit of the doubt (even when he probably shouldn't).

**96-00%** Has found that D-Bees are just people too, and treats them the same as anybody else. Suspicious of dragons, creatures of magic and supernatural beings.

## Initial Reason for Adventuring

**01-10%** Tradition; a matter of destiny.

**11-20%** Outlaw/wanted and on the run.

**21-30%** Wanderlust; wants to see the world.

**31-40%** Seeks fame and fortune.

**41-50%** Seeks intrigue and/or knowledge.

**51-60%** Refugee, lost home and family, decided to explore.

**61-65%** Wants to travel the Megaverse; see alien worlds.

**66-75%** Self-discovery or seeks a purpose or an answer.

**76-85%** Quest for power.

**86-90%** Seeks revenge.

**91-95%** Quest for magic.

**96-00%** Sense of duty.

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# Skill Rules

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Every **Rifts® character** is something of a maverick. Someone who bucks the status quo, questions authority and even reality, and dares to take a stand.

These characters have thrown off the shackles of a mundane existence and the relative safety of city life in favor of exploration and adventure. They are individuals driven by more than wanderlust and curiosity, but a sense of purpose and destiny. They are men and women who have the courage to brave the chaos and horrors of Rifts Earth so they may experience its many wonders and beauty. For many, the unknown becomes a thrill ride; for some it is an opportunity for heroics, fame or fortune; for many others, their life becomes a matter of honor and duty, a responsibility they cannot shake. The heroes among them (though some may not think of themselves as such) simply find they cannot idly stand by and accept injustice, cruelty or tyranny. They oppose the many faces of evil, seek to right injustice and try to help those in need. Along the way, they may get paid for their efforts, accumulate fame or fortune, or discover themselves, but in the end they are the masters of their own fate and experience more than the average person would in a hundred lifetimes.

As a result, these individuals adopt unconventional occupations that may brand them as heroes, rogues, criminals, eccentrics, avant-garde, strange or insane. For most, the character's *occupation* is his life's purpose or a dream realized. It is what the character wants to do and who he is. Consequently, the majority of **skills** are *occupation related* and a direct reflection of the character's interests, goals and who he is.

What follows is how players select skills for their characters. In the **Rifts®** game, a character's skills are determined by his occupation (O.C.C.) or race (R.C.C.).

There are three basic types of skill categories: **O.C.C. Skills** (required for that occupation), **O.C.C. Related Skills** (elective skills learned through formal education or on the job training), and **Secondary Skills** (additional interests and hobbies). Since formal education is

lost in most kingdoms and lands of North America, skills we take for granted, such as mathematics, reading and writing, are NOT automatically known to the common man (or D-Bee) and must be selected from one of the available skill categories. Read on, think about the kind of character you want to play, and build him or her accordingly.

All characters have skills that range from some area of speciality (healing, mechanics, piloting, fighting, etc.) to exploration and combat; all part and parcel for any character who takes to a life of adventure or combat.

## Selecting Skills

**Step One** is rolling up the character's eight attributes. This is important, because certain skills may compensate for a low attribute. For example, many Physical skills offer bonuses that boost low physical attributes (P.S., P.P., P.E., Spd, as well as S.D.C.).

**Step Two** is choosing an O.C.C. (Occupational Character Class) or R.C.C. (Racial Character Class). You can NOT select skills without knowing your O.C.C. (or R.C.C.), and you are probably going to want to tailor the skills to the orientation, powers, strengths and weaknesses of your character.

Each O.C.C. (Occupational Character Class) offers some background, history and motivation behind each occupation. Use this information as a guide to selecting a character that sounds fun and then as an outline of how to play him.

Pick the O.C.C. that seems most fun and appealing to you as a player. You'll notice we use the word "fun" quite a bit. That's because role-playing games are entertainment, and the whole idea is to have fun. So pick a character that you think will be fun to play.

**Step Three, Skill Selection.** Characters have a broad range of skills, with a focus on those that make sense for life as a wandering adventurer, explorer or warrior.

Characters also are likely to pick up two or more **Physical Skills**. It is important to note that Physical skill bonuses are *accumulative*. It is perfectly acceptable within the confines of this game for players to pick numerous Physical skills in order to beef up their character, many providing some kind of combat bonus (to strike, parry, dodge, etc.), extra S.D.C., or a bonus to add to a physical attribute.

**Note:** *Acrobatics* and *Gymnastics* provide similar abilities and bonuses. If both are selected, add the bonuses and pluses to your overall character as explained. However, abilities such as back flip, climb rope, etc., are not added together, nor is the educational bonus added twice. The "best" proficiency of a duplicated skill ability is taken, and the normal educational bonus is applied. Also, the *Prowl* and *Climb* abilities given under *Acrobatics* and *Gymnastics* are a part of these skills and do *not* increase with level unless they are selected as separate, additional areas of training (i.e., *Prowl* and/or *Climbing* are also selected as *skills*). Likewise, a character with a skill as a *natural ability* (i.e. *Climb* or *Prowl*), who also gets that skill in an O.C.C. would use the higher percentage. If the natural score is higher, add the O.C.C. bonus to it as a one-time bonus, but the overall skill would not improve until the character's learned (O.C.C.) skill surpassed their natural ability score.

**A Note on Combat Skills:** Throughout a character's history, he will probably train in some form of Hand to Hand Combat. Note that only *one* type of Hand to Hand Combat may be selected. In cases where more than one choice is available for selection, the player must select one of them and disregard the others. Hand to Hand Combat is always part of an occupation that involves *combat* and *adventuring*, but other characters like the Body Fixer, Cyber-Doc, Rogue Scholar, and Rogue Scientist can select Hand to Hand Combat as an *O.C.C. Related Skill* or *Secondary Skill*.

Although it can be crucial to have a character with at least basic combat and weapon skills, not every character needs to be a fighter or have powerhouse abilities. Some characters may be highly educated and have few to no fighting skills. Such characters will need to use

their heads in combat situations and may have to rely on their comrades for protection when things get rough. Otherwise, if these men of science and intellect intend to go out in the world, they should be able to protect themselves on at least a basic level.

Weapon Proficiencies (W.P.s), Piloting and most other skills can NOT be selected more than once to improve the quality of the skill or to get extra bonuses. Not every skill may be taken more than once (in fact, most of them may only be taken one time). Only the Domestic and Technical skill categories (and the occasional other skill that states as such) can be taken twice. Taking the skill a second time does not increase the Base Skill proficiency/skill percentage unless otherwise noted, but raises the overall quality to a slick, professional level of presentation. **Note:** In general, when there is a discrepancy between two separate bonuses, take the better of the two.

**If an O.C.C. or R.C.C. starts off with a skill that normally has a prerequisite skill(s), assume that the character has the pre-requisite skill as part of their training.**

Although some skills fall under more than one category, it is the specific skill itself (NOT the category) that often determines whether or not a certain O.C.C. can learn it.

**O.C.C. Attribute Requirements:** Most O.C.C.s have one or more attribute requirements such as an average to high I.Q., P.P. (Physical Prowess) and/or other attributes. The character must meet or exceed these attribute requirements or he can *NOT* select that occupation. **Note:** G.M.s may allow a player who is close to meeting the minimum physical attribute requirements (one or two points off) to take the O.C.C. on the condition that the character selects a Physical skill that will boost his attribute to meet or exceed the minimum requirement.

Don't worry if a character doesn't meet the requirement, there are plenty of other O.C.C.s to choose from. In fact, the requirements are designed to help focus and encourage particular selections where the high (or low) attributes are put to best use.

## O.C.C. Skills

An Occupational Character Class (O.C.C.) provides a set of skills required to do the job. These are **O.C.C. Skills**. Everyone who takes that O.C.C. automatically gets these skills. The bonus indicated in parentheses applies to that one particular skill. The skills that are, generally, important, valuable or crucial to one's occupation have the highest bonuses. Add the O.C.C. bonus (the number in parentheses) to the *Base Skill* percentage of that specific skill to determine the level of proficiency the character starts off with. As the character grows in experience, his level of expertise in that skill also increases. Each skill description indicates the amount of improvement with each level of advancement as: +5% (or 4% or 2% percent or whatever the case may be) *per level of experience*.

Occupational skills represent training that come with one's chosen occupation and are *required* to do the job. Even in our own, modern world, the majority of our primary skills, the ones we use every day, are usually related to our work.

**MOS skills** are sometimes listed under an O.C.C., typically a military O.C.C. The term "MOS" stands for Military Occupational Specialty – an area of *specialization* giving the soldier a set of unique O.C.C. skills in, say, Medicine, Communications, EOD/Demolitions, Engineering, and so on, in addition to his training as a soldier, setting the character apart from the down and dirty grunts, as a medic, or radio operator, or mechanic, and so on. I use the MOS concept for certain military and other O.C.C.s to give certain Occupational Character Classes areas of specialty within a particular occupation.

An O.C.C. will also indicate the number of **O.C.C. Related Skills** and **Secondary Skill** selections the character can make. The more skilled the occupation, the greater the number of *Occupational* and *Related Skills*. The less skilled the occupation, the fewer *Occupational* and *Related Skills* and the greater the number of *Secondary* (informally learned) *Skills*.

## O.C.C. Related Skills

These *elective skills* can only be learned as part of O.C.C. training. They are acquired through *on the job training* and automatically occur with the advancement, development and mastery of the character's chosen occupation. The more one works at his job, the more skilled he becomes at his initial skill set, and the more he can apply that knowledge to other things. The cool thing about O.C.C. Related Skills is that the player selects the ones that he thinks are most useful and fun for his character. They may be skills that complement existing ones, or new, but related areas of knowledge. O.C.C. Related Skills either have a direct or indirect impact on the character's ability to do his job and expand his area of expertise.

**New O.C.C. Related Skills** become available to the character at predesignated intervals as the character grows in experience (e.g., Levels 3, 6, 9 and 12). These skills developed later in life are presumed to be something the character has been studying, learning and practicing on the side.

Whenever a *new* O.C.C. Related Skill becomes available at later levels of experience, the character starts using that skill at *first level* proficiency. That means if a 3rd level character learned a new O.C.C. Related Skill, he performs it at *first level proficiency* (the Base Skill number listed in the skill description plus any applicable bonus). The skill is new and the character is just not as proficient in its execution as his earlier skills. When that character reaches 4th level, the new skill will then increase to *2nd level proficiency*, and so on. Is that fair? Yes, because the skill is new, it is probably not used as frequently, and it is not as pivotal to the O.C.C. as the earlier skills. It may also indicate a new interest or offshoot of the O.C.C. As such, the skill is developed later than those the character starts with and is not as directly important to the O.C.C., taking the character longer to master it.

The exact number of *O.C.C. Related Skills* is indicated under each O.C.C. description. Many of the skill *categories* that are available will indicate specific *restrictions* (if any) and possible *skill bonuses* as applicable to that occupation. The skill bonuses are indicated in parentheses. The skills that best relate to one's O.C.C. have the highest bonuses. Skills without a bonus indicated are available for consideration, but have the least to do with the work.

The list by skill category is a guide as to what skills someone in that O.C.C. is likely to consider picking. At first level, the character gets the Base Skill percentage plus any O.C.C. bonus (the number in parentheses, if any) and any possible I.Q. bonus. The skill increase per level of experience starts at second level.

## Secondary Skills

Secondary Skills are areas of knowledge that the character has picked up on his own through learned experience, observation and personal studies. They may be related to the character's occupation or reflect completely different interests and hobbies. Secondary Skills usually are self-taught and do not command the same degree of expertise as Occupational and O.C.C. Related Skills. For Example: If a character took the *Art* skill as an *O.C.C. Related Skill*, he would have the ability of a professional artist. If that same character takes *Art* as a *Secondary Skill*, however, his ability is that of a talented amateur. Even if a Secondary Skill artist had a higher chance of success than an O.C.C. Related Skill artist, the O.C.C. based artist's work always looks better. That is the essential difference between O.C.C. Related Skills and Secondary Skills, other than the fact that not all skills are available as Secondary Skills (i.e. the average person cannot self-teach Espionage or Military skills).

**Secondary Skills to Start:** The number of Secondary Skills available at first level is indicated under the O.C.C. description. It is presumed that the character has already learned them and they start at first level proficiency. Unless stated otherwise, all characters *start* level one with a few Secondary Skills under their belts.

**Additional Secondary Skills** can be selected at subsequent levels of experience as indicated for their O.C.C. (e.g. +1 Secondary Skill at levels 3, 6, 9, and 12).

**Available Secondary Skills by Category:** Below is a list of skills, by category, that can be selected as Secondary Skills. No skill bonuses apply, because these skills are self-taught and do not include intensive or professional training. Certain skills (namely Mechanical, Medical, Military, Electronics, Science and especially Cowboy, Espionage and Pilot Related skills) can *NOT* be learned as Secondary Skills. All Secondary Skills start out at the base skill level.

**Communications:** Any, except Cryptography, Laser, Surveillance Systems, and TV/Video.

**Cowboy:** None.

**Domestic:** Any.

**Electrical:** Basic Electronics and Computer Repair only.

**Espionage:** None.

**Horsemanship:** General and Exotic Animals only.

**Mechanical:** Automotive Mechanics and Basic Mechanics only.

**Medical:** Animal Husbandry and First Aid only.

**Military:** Camouflage and Recognize Weapon Quality only.

**Physical:** Hand to Hand: Basic, Aerobic Athletics, Athletics (General), Body Building & Weightlifting, Climbing, Running, and Swimming only.

**Pilot:** Automobile, Motorcycles, Hovercycle, Hover Craft, Motor and Sail Boats and recreational vehicles like Bicycles and Kayaks only.

**Pilot Related:** None.

**Rogue:** Gambling only.

**Science:** Astronomy & Navigation, and Basic and Advanced Mathematics only.

**Technical:** Any (excluding outer space skills available in some Dimension Books).

**W.P.s Ancient (Melee Weapons):** Any, except W.P. Deadball, W.P. Lance, W.P. Paired Weapons, and W.P. Siege Weapons (some of the exceptions are offered in other Rifts® titles).

**W.P.s Modern (Guns & Tech Weapons):** W.P. Handguns, W.P. Rifles, W.P. Energy Pistol and W.P. Energy Rifle.

**Wilderness:** Any, except Blend, Boat Building, Spelunking, Use Songlines and Underwater Navigation (some of which are described in other Rifts® titles).

**Note:** For G.M.s and players using any of the O.C.C.s/R.C.C.s presented in the wide line of **Rifts® titles** already in print, simply use this new system for your *Secondary Skill* selections, above, with the appropriate number of Secondary Skills as given in those O.C.C./R.C.C. descriptions.

## Skill Bonuses

The Base Skill level is denoted in each skill description. Bonuses received by one's O.C.C. are added to that base skill. This is a one time skill bonus. Characters *may* also have an I.Q. attribute bonus (or penalty) or other skill bonuses that are added to the base skill level as a one time bonus.

As the character advances in level of experience, his chances of performing skills successfully (his success ratio) will increase. This is not so much a bonus as a designation of increased mastery of one's abilities with time and experience. The amount that the skill level increases is also noted in each skill description. For example: The Physical skill of Swimming reads: **Base Skill:** 50% +5% per level of experience. This means that a first level character without an O.C.C. bonus has a base skill proficiency of 50%. At second level +5% is added to increase the skill to 55%, at third level it increases to 60%, and so on. If a +10% O.C.C. bonus was applicable, the base skill starts at 60% +5% per level (i.e., 65% at second level, 70% at third, and so on).

**New Skills.** As the character advances in experience, he will also learn additional skills along the way. All new skills begin with a first level success ratio. Thus, if a 5th level character learns a new skill, that new skill is performed at first level proficiency while all his other skills are performed at 5th level proficiency. When the character reaches 6th level, his new skill will be at 2nd level while all of his others will be at 6th level. **Note:** The maximum success ratio for any skill is 98%, regardless of how far the character advances or what modifiers he may enjoy. Humans are not perfect, so there is always a margin for error.

## Skill Penalties

Ordinarily, a character's chance of performing a skill successfully is determined by his success ratio for that skill. However, when advanced (or alien) technology or pressure situations are involved, one's success ratio for a given skill is lowered. Likewise, psionic attacks, debilitating magic, illness and injury may also impose a skill penalty on the character. Whether these penalties are accumulative (we suggest they are) is left to the discretion of the Game Master.

**Advanced, Unknown, or Alien Machines and Technologies:** A good rule of thumb is a skill penalty of -30% or -40% when trying to figure out, operate, repair, or use such mechanisms and technologies beyond the normal range of familiar technology. This would include experimental military devices, *Techno-Wizard devices*, *Bio-Wizard* creations, *strange magic items*, devices from an alien world and things that fall into the category of *weird science*. In some cases (G.M.'s discretion), the technology may be so different (or so reliant on magic) that the character will be unable to use the simplest of devices (-80% to -95% penalty). Likewise, depending on what the item is, a penalty of only -10% to -20% might apply, but the -30% to -40% penalty is typical. The G.M. should always use his/her discretion when dealing with experimental, weird, or alien sciences.

**Bionics & Cybernetics:** Although bionics (military hardware) and cybernetics (commercial mechanisms) are machines, they are very different from commercial machines, vehicles, electronics, and hardware. That means an Operator may be able to figure out what a bionic device is supposed to do (-10% or -20% penalty), and may even be able to work on the machine and electronic aspects (-20% to -40%), but he cannot install, replace or remove bionics or cybernetic implants.

**Military Technology:** Military technology is often (though not always) more advanced and even cutting-edge. Thus, a -15% or -25% skill penalty applies to civilian engineers and Operators trying to work on or with military hardware.

**Pressure Situations:** Executing a skill when calm, cool and collected is one thing. Doing it under the gun (or with a snarling monster breathing down your neck) is something else. For the following pressure situations, negative modifiers apply to characters trying to execute any skill, excluding W.P. and Hand to Hand Combat skills.

**Booby-trap:** The item the character is working on is rigged to set off an alarm, explosive, trap, purge data, etc., unless the defense mechanism/trigger can be circumvented or deactivated first. Depending on the complexity and risk: -10% to -40%.

**Cheap, faulty and/or unfamiliar tools:** -5% to -15%.

**Confused/uncertain or distracted:** -10% to -20%.

**Countermeasures, traps and alarms are in place:** -10% to -15%, depending on their level of complexity and sophistication.

**Difficult, complex or unfamiliar task:** -10% to -15%.

**Disturbed by outside forces:** -10% to -20%, depending upon the source of the distraction and how invasive it may be.

**Encrypted data or firewall:** -20% to -40%.

**Frightened, nervous or jumpy:** -5% to -10%.

**Lack of sleep/exhausted:** -10% if the character has gone 24-36 hours without sleep and the skill takes 50% longer to perform; -15% having gone 48-72 hours without sleep and takes twice as long to perform, and

-30-50% having gone 80 hours or longer without sleep, plus the skill takes three times as long as normal to perform.

**Panic situation:** If the character panics and gets hysterical the penalty is -50% on skill performance, combat bonuses are reduced by half, Perception Roll bonuses are reduced to zero, and shooting a gun is "wild." Bystanders and allies may get injured accidentally from the character's wild and irrational response.

**Pressure situation, low:** -5%; may include being nervous when working in front of a superior, critic, or pretty girl, as well as when showing off.

**Pressure situation, moderate:** -10%; it is important to get the job done quickly and done right the first time.

**Pressure situation, serious:** -15% to -20% when failure means there will be serious consequences or trouble (capture, torture, loss of critical supplies, etc.), or the character himself or several people (perhaps hundreds) will suffer for his mistake.

**Pressure situation, deadly:** -25% to -30%. Time is running out, with dire consequences. If the character fails, he, an ally(s) or innocent people will die! Always a -30% penalty if a loved one or several dozen, hundreds or thousands of lives hang in the balance.

**Scared:** -30% to -50%. The character is so scared he just cannot think straight, plus the skill takes twice as long to accomplish. Increase the penalty to -75% when the subject of the terror is related to a Phobia insanity. Note that although the character is wracked with fear, he is trying to deal with it and has not run off in a blind panic.

**Seriously wounded or ill:** When a character's Hit Points are down by 50% or more, concentration is difficult (feels weak, tired, in pain, etc.) and the pain and fatigue are distracting, which impairs skill performance: -20% penalty. The penalty worsens to -30% when the character has less than 25% of his Hit Points.

Illness, especially fever, can cause similar penalties. Debilitating illness will usually indicate skill penalties ranging from -10% to -50%.

Drugs, magical charms and psionic attack may also stun, confuse or debilitate the character similar to injury and illness. The specific spell, power or drug will indicate the penalties to apply.

**Time sensitive:** Skill must be performed in a few minutes (even seconds) or by X time; countdown. -10% to -30%.

**Trying to do something while moving:** -5% to -40%, depending on the situation, speed and the bumpiness of the ride.

**Note:** The G.M. may also impose a *reasonable penalty* to any situation where the character faces an unusual or difficult task. A reasonable penalty will range from -5% to -30%, but, at times, a dramatically higher penalty may be appropriate. G.M.s, use your discretion and be fair.

Also see penalties for low I.Q. and other low attributes in the Character Creation section.

## Skills

One of the nice features about most Palladium role-playing games is the many different ways in which players can customize their characters. Skills play a big part in that, because they let each player tailor his character to his desires and make characters of the same O.C.C. different and unique.

A broad range of characters can be created for **Rifts®**, and the skills reflect this. Additional skills can be found in some of the other **Rifts®** books, but usually reflect areas of specialization unique to that part of the world.

This section contains two presentations for skills:

**1. Skill List.** A comprehensive list of the names of every skill by category, followed by the skill's *base percentage* and the *additional percentage per level of experience*. The list is a quick and easy visual reference for picking skills and determining their percentage.

**2. Skill Descriptions.** Every skill is described in full.

ence. Characters bound/tied by this character are -10% to escape/slip knots.

**Salvage.** This skill allows characters to find, identify, pick up, strip down, evaluate and possibly sell, any debris, wreckage and junk that they can locate. They can also strip a piece of wrecked machinery for spare parts and may even be able to make something work again, given time, enough parts and the right skills. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience.

**Ventriloquism.** The practiced ability to throw one's voice. This can be used to create the illusion of not speaking while making a voice or verbal noise appear to be coming from someone or something else, such as a puppet, a tree, box, chair, etc. Maximum range is 10 feet (3 m) away. A failed roll means the voice is not well thrown or the ventriloquist's mouth is seen moving, so the trick does not work. **Base Skill:** 16% +4% per level of experience.

**Whittling & Sculpting.** The art of carving and shaping wood, bone and horn into three dimensional figures/statues/toys, designs, and simple objects like wooden stakes, arrows, fishing hooks, walking sticks, staves, bowls, a simple flute or whistle, and similar. Many characters with this skill simply use it to pass time and don't necessarily make anything from their whittling. The percentile number indicates the quality of technique and the quality of the work/appearance. Taking the skill twice indicates a professional quality and gets a bonus of +10%. Selecting it once indicates a talented amateur. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.



## Weapon Proficiencies

**Note:** Each W.P. provides combat training with a particular type of weapon. All bonuses are cumulative. Each W.P. counts as one skill. The character may select several W.P.s or a few. Characters can use any weapon without a W.P., but without benefit of the W.P. bonuses.

There are two categories of Weapon Proficiencies, *Ancient* and *Modern*. These are somewhat misleading, since what they really refer to is unpowered melee type weapons (swords, spears, etc.) and modern, powered weapons (guns of every stripe).

### W.P. Ancient Weapons

**A note about Ancient Weapon Proficiencies (W.P.):** Each W.P. provides combat training with a particular type of weapon. The result is hand to hand combat bonuses to strike and parry whenever that particular type of weapon is used. Bonuses that increase for that particular weapon are accumulative and are combined with the character's P.P. attribute, O.C.C., and Hand to Hand Combat skill bonuses. The *Damage* stat indicates the number of damage dice rolled to inflict the appro-

priate amount of damage for that type of weapon. Damage starts as S.D.C. and when S.D.C. are gone, damage comes off the Hit Points (H.P.). As a rule, the larger or better quality the weapon, the greater the damage.

Melee weapons that inflict *Mega-Damage* include *Vibro-Blades* (Vibro-Knives: 1D6 M.D., Bayonet: 1D6+1 M.D., Saber: 2D4 M.D., Swords, large: 2D6 M.D., Forearm Claws: 2D6 M.D. and Vibro-Axe: 2D6 M.D.), as well as select alien weapons (Xiticix and Kittani), Techno-Wizard swords and weapons, rune weapons and other types of magic weapons (Indian Fetishes, etc.). **Damage Note:** The damage listed with each ancient weapon is *S.D.C./Hit Point damage*. However, high-tech or magical Mega-Damage equivalent weapons inflict the same number of damage dice only it is M.D., not S.D.C. (e.g., a sword that inflicts 2D6 damage does 2D6 Hit Point/S.D.C. damage if an S.D.C. weapon or 2D6 M.D. if a Mega-Damage weapon.)

**W.P. Archery.** An expertise with bow weapons of all kinds. The character can use all manner of bows and arrows, including short bows, long bows, all types of modern compound bows, harpoon guns and crossbow pistols, and repeating, light and heavy crossbows. **Bonuses:** +1 to strike at levels 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14. +1 to parry with a bow weapon (effective at level one), and +1 to disarm at levels 2, 5, 10 and 15. **Rate of Fire:** Two shots per melee round at level one and an extra shot per melee round is added at levels 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12 and 14. **Range:** See list below, and a trained archer may try a shot at 50% greater distance but does so without benefit of any bonus to strike or disarm. **Note:** The character loses all bonuses and reduce the rate of fire by half when running and shooting, flying, riding on horseback or when shooting from a moving vehicle or while otherwise unbalanced.

#### Average Ranges & S.D.C. Damage per Arrow:

Short Bow – 340 feet (104 m) – 1D6 damage.

Long Bow – 640 feet (195 m) – 2D6 damage.

Compound Bow – 700 feet (213 m) – 2D6+1 damage.

Harpoon Gun – 120 feet (36.5 m) – 1D10 damage.

Light Crossbow – 340 feet (104 m) – 2D4 damage.

Heavy Crossbow (large) – 600 feet (182 m) – 2D8 damage.

Pistol Crossbow (small) – 120 feet (36.5 m) – 1D6 damage.

**W.P. Axe.** Training with all types of large axe weapons, including single blade and double-headed axes, battle axe and picks. **Damage:** 2D6 or 2D8 damage depending on the size and style of the battle axe (small axes and hatchets do 1D6 damage). **Bonuses:** +1 to strike and parry at levels 2, 5, 8, 12, and 15. +1 to strike when thrown or to parry at levels 5, 8, and 12; not designed for throwing.

**W.P. Blunt.** Training with all types of blunt weapons, including maces, hammers, cudgels, steel or lead pipes, staves, and clubs. **Damage:** Typically 1D6 and 2D4, with only the largest and spiked weapons doing 2D6 damage. **Bonuses:** +1 to strike and parry at levels 1, 3, 6, 9, and 12. +1 to strike when thrown at levels 5, 10, and 15; not designed for throwing.

**W.P. Chain.** Training with all types of chain weapons, including ordinary lengths of chain, the flail, ball or mace and chain, nunchaku, and similar. While chain weapons can be used one-handed, it's only possible to parry while the weapon is being wielded in two hands. **Damage:** Typically 2D6 damage, though the largest and Goupillon Flails (three spiked balls) do 3D6 damage. **Bonuses:** +1 to strike at levels 1, 3, 7, 10, and 13. +1 to parry at levels 4, 8, and 12. This weapon cannot be used to entangle and cannot be thrown with any accuracy; -3 to strike when thrown.

**W.P. Forked.** Includes small weapons such as the sai and tiger fork, to large weapons such as the pitchfork, military fork and trident, as well as other weapons with tines. When wielded two-handed (large weapons) or with one in each hand (small weapons, with W.P. Paired Weapons), it's possible to catch enemy swords with a successful entangle. **Damage:** Small forked weapons (like the sai or tiger fork) do 1D8

damage, while most large forked (spear-like) weapons do 2D6 damage, but the trident does 2D8. **Bonuses:** Starts with +1 to strike or entangle at levels 1, 3, 5, 8, 11, and 13. +1 to parry at levels 1, 3, 6, 10, and 13. +1 to strike when thrown at levels 4, 10, and 15; not really designed for throwing.

**W.P. Grappling Hook.** Trained use of a grappling hook for climbing (adds +5% to that skill when a grappling hook is used), scaling walls, boarding vessels, or snagging objects. Tripping an opponent is done by hooking the foot, ankle or leg. It does little damage, but successfully knocking an opponent to the ground causes the victim to lose their initiative and one melee attack. **Damage:** When used in hand to hand the most damage a Grappling Hook does is 1D4 damage, but when swung and then pulled back into a victim, the impaling damage is 1D6. **Bonuses:** +1 to strike or entangle when thrown/swung at levels 3, 6, 9 and 12. This weapon *cannot* be used to parry!

**W.P. Knife.** Training with all types of daggers and knives. **Damage:** Very small 1D4 damage, and typical 1D6. **Bonuses:** +1 to strike at levels 2, 4, 7, 10, and 13. +1 to parry at levels 1, 3, 6, 9 and 12. +1 to strike when thrown, at levels 1, 3, 6, 8, 10, and 13.

**W.P. Paired Weapons (Exclusive to Men at Arms O.C.C.s).** A tactic in which a one-handed weapon is held in each hand to be used in any combination of combat moves simultaneously. For example, two short swords, or a short sword and broadsword, sword and knife, mace and shield, and so on. Two-handed weapons cannot be used as a Paired Weapon. Users of Paired Weapons can:

1. *Strike and parry simultaneously.* In other words, those skilled in W.P. Paired Weapons can often perform two actions for every one melee action/attack.

2. *Twin, simultaneous strikes* against the same target. Both weapons hit the same opponent or target at once, making it ONE melee attack/action (roll only once to strike with both weapons). The defender under attack can only try to parry one of the two weapons coming at him for his defensive parry. The other will strike unless he too has the W.P. Paired Weapons skill and is using two weapons, or a weapon and a shield, to try and block both simultaneous attacks; needs to roll one parry.

3. *Strike two different targets* (or strike one and parry another incoming attack), simultaneously; both must be within reach.

4. Parry two different attackers, one with each hand.

**Note:** A character with W.P. Paired Weapons needs to make two separate rolls if he is: a) Striking two different opponents; b) parrying attacks from two separate opponents; or c) strike once and parrying once against the same opponent or strike one opponent and parrying a second attacker. The only time that just one roll to strike with paired weapons is necessary is when the character is either striking the same opponent twice or parrying two attacks from the same opponent.

Characters with the W.P. Paired Weapons skill may use any weapons that can be effectively used with one hand (i.e., one suitable weapon in each hand). A character who gains the W.P. Paired Weapons skill from level advancement may use it with any one-handed melee weapons they are currently proficient with (has a W.P. in). However, any weapons being used which the wielder does not have a Weapon Proficiency in or which is too large or heavy effectively negates the Paired Weapons skill, making it impossible to use both hands and weapons simultaneously; can only attack one opponent and each swipe of the weapon counts as one melee attack.

Characters with W.P. Paired Weapons can EITHER parry multiple attackers or parry an incoming attack and then get a counter-attack, but cannot do both.

Of course, a character with W.P. Paired Weapons can parry an attack and strike simultaneously only if he still has attacks left. A character who has already used up his attacks can NOT counterstrike (hit back) until the next melee round begins, but he can parry until then.

A character with W.P. Paired Weapons using both of his attacks simultaneously on someone is vulnerable to attack from a second oppo-

nent. When fighting three (or more) attackers, the character would be able to try to parry two of the attackers, but any other attacks would be unopposed.

Four-armed characters only need to take W.P. Paired Weapons once, not once for each pair of arms. A character who already has W.P. Paired Weapons would not gain any additional bonuses or benefits by taking the skill a second time. Only weapons in which the character has a Weapon Proficiency (W.P.) can be used with W.P. Paired Weapons. W.P. Paired Weapons is designed for melee weapons like knives, swords, clubs, etc., not guns. When shooting two guns at once there is a penalty of -2 to strike with the regular hand and -6 to strike with the off-hand.

**W.P. Pole Arm.** Training with all types of large, bladed spear-like weapons, including the glaive, saber halberd, runka, scythe and voulge, among others. **Damage:** Typically 2D8, with the largest doing 3D6; only the Voulge does 4D6 damage. **Bonuses:** +2 damage at levels 2 and 8. +1 to strike and parry at levels 1, 3, 6, 9 and 12. +1 to strike when thrown at levels 3, 8, and 12; not designed for throwing.

**W.P. Quick Draw.** A practiced move in which the character gets an initiative bonus to draw and fire or throw his weapons much faster at the first sign of danger. Note that characters with a high P.P. benefit most from this skill. **Bonuses:** +1 on initiative for characters with a P.P. of 17 or less, +2 on initiative for those with a P.P. of 18 to 23, +3 on initiative for those with a P.P. of 24 to 30 and +4 to initiative for characters with a P.P. of 31 or above.

**W.P. Rope:** Usually exclusive to the Cowboy O.C.C.; see Cowboy skills for description.

**W.P. Shield.** Combat skills with large and small shields used primarily for parrying and self defense. **Damage:** 1D6 as a blunt weapon. **Bonuses:** +1 to parry at levels 1, 3, 7, 10 and 13. A shield can be used in one hand and a weapon in the other. +1 to strike with a shield (1D4 damage) at levels 4, 8, and 12. No bonus to strike when thrown. A shield cannot be used to block bullets or energy blasts, at least not easily. Any such attempt is done without any bonuses (straight die roll), with a penalty of -8 to parry! Blocking thrown knives, spears, arrows and other weapons is basically the same but is only -3 to parry on an unmodified die roll. The shield has limited S.D.C. and only really takes damage when used to block energy blasts or explosions, or is specifically targeted by an opponent with the intention of destroying or chopping through the shield.

**Damage to shields (optional):** Subtract 10% of the damage that would normally be inflicted by a weapon when blocked/parried by a shield. When all S.D.C. is gone, the shield has too many holes, cracks and weaknesses to offer protection. The next strike will punch right through or shatter it and hit the user at full force and full damage.

**W.P. Sling Shot.** See W.P. Targeting.

**W.P. Spear.** Combat skill with large and small spears and javelins (the use of a rifle equipped with a bayonet also falls into this category). **Damage:** Short spear or javelin 1D6 damage. Long Spear 2D6 damage. **Bonuses:** +1 to strike and parry at levels 1, 3, 6, 9, and 12. +1 to strike when thrown at levels 3, 6, 10 and 14. Maximum Throwing Range: 150 feet (45.7 m).

**W.P. Staff.** Combat skill with large and small staves. **Damage:** Short Staff 1D6, Long Staff 2D4, and Bo Staff or Quarter Staff 2D6 damage. Typically made of wood. **Bonuses:** +1 to strike at levels 1, 3, 7, 10 and 13. +1 to parry at 2, 5, 8, 11 and 14. +1 to strike when thrown at levels 5, 10, and 15; not designed for throwing.

**W.P. Sword.** Combat skills with large and small swords, including fencing type training, includes rapiers, sabers, broadswords, large swords and short swords. **Damage:** Short Sword or Saber: 2D4, Falchion or Scimitar: 2D6, Broadsword: 1D8+1, Long Sword and other large swords: 2D6, Claymore, Flamberge and other extremely large swords: 3D6 damage. **Bonuses:** +1 to strike at levels 1, 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15. +1 to parry at levels 2, 4, 7, 10 and 13. +1 to strike when thrown at levels 4, 8, and 12; swords are not designed for being thrown.

**W.P. Targeting.** Expertise with thrown and projectile weapons (but not bows and arrows, crossbows, or guns), such as the sling, slingshot, boomerangs, shurikens, throwing knives, throwing sticks, axes (small) and spears, even siege weapons. **Bonuses:** +1 to strike at levels 1, 3, 7 and 10. Characters who select both W.P. Targeting and another W.P. for a missile weapon (but not thrown swords, large axes, staves, etc.) get the usual bonuses for that W.P., plus the bonus from W.P. Targeting. Can also throw two small items, like knives, shurikens or throwing sticks, simultaneously at the same target. **Requires:** Any one W.P. for a missile weapon such as a spear. **Note:** The character loses all bonuses and the rate of fire is half, when running and shooting or throwing, flying, when riding on horseback or from a moving vehicle, or otherwise unbalanced.

#### Typical Effective Range & Damage per Weapon Type:

Bolas: 30 feet (9 m) – 2D4 damage.  
 Blowgun: 30 feet (9 m) – 1D4 damage.  
 Boomerangs: 60 feet (18 m) – 1D6 damage.  
 Brick or Stone, thrown: 50 feet (15.2 m) – 1D6 damage.  
 Dart: 30 feet (9 m) – 1D4 damage.  
 Hand Grenade: 100 feet (30.5 m) – damage varies.  
 Javelin: 300 feet (91.5 m) – 1D6 damage.  
 Net: 30 feet (9 m) – No damage.  
 Sling or Slingshot: 80 feet (24 m) – 1D6 damage.  
 Spear, thrown: 100 feet (30.5 m) – 1D6 or 2D6 damage.  
 Throwing Knives & Shurikens – 60 feet (18.3 m) – 1D6 damage.  
 Throwing Sticks: 40 feet (12.2 m) – 1D6 damage.  
 Throwing Axes: 40 feet (12.2 m) – 2D4 damage.  
 Trident: 50 feet (15.2 m) – 2D8 damage.

**Note:** Increase the *effective* throwing range by 30% for characters with Augmented (Bionic/Juicer/Crazy) P.S., 50% for Robotic P.S. and triple the range for Supernatural Strength (quadruple range if Supernatural P.S. is 31 or greater).

Spears, javelins, shurikens, throwing knives/irons, throwing sticks, and throwing axes can be thrown by anybody without penalty at the typical effective range listed above.

**Throwing Awkward Items:** Swords, large axes, hammers, clubs, maces, pole arms and most other handheld weapons as well as articles like frying pans, shovels, toasters, large bricks, furniture, etc., are *not* designed to be thrown. Consequently, the average throwing range is a mere 20 feet (6 m) and the character is -1 to strike. An attacker can try to throw such weapons farther, but is -3 to strike for every additional 10 feet (3 m) beyond 20 (6 m). **Note:** Characters with Augmented/Bionic, Robotic or Supernatural P.S. can throw their weight limit (below) the distance their P.S. allows, but they too are -1 to strike tossing the ungainly object at one third the maximum possible distance, -3 to strike at half that distance, and -6 to strike farther than half.

**Heavy Items and Distances:** Half the character's maximum carrying weight could be thrown one foot (0.3 m) per every point of *human* P.S. For example, a character with a P.S. 9 could throw 45 pounds (20 kg) nine feet (2.7 m), a P.S. of 15 could throw 75 lbs (34 kg) 15 feet (4.6 m), or a P.S. 32 could throw 320 pounds (144 kg) a distance of 32 feet (9.7 m). The penalties above apply.

Double the range (2 feet/0.6 m per P.S. point) for *Augmented/Bionic* P.S., and triple the range (3 feet/0.9 m per P.S. point) for *Robotic* P.S.; the penalties above apply (see Note).

*Supernatural* P.S. of 17 or higher can throw half their maximum carrying weight (P.S. number x25) five feet (1.5 m) per P.S. point, so a Supernatural P.S. of 24 can carry 1200 lbs (540 kg) and throw half as much 120 feet (36.6 m, but only 40 feet/12.2 m with a minimal penalty of -1 to strike). Supernatural P.S. of 16 or less is the same as Robotic P.S. The penalties noted above apply.

**No P.S. Damage Bonus:** The damage bonus for Strength does NOT apply to arrows fired from a bow, or from a thrown weapon unless the

O.C.C. description specifically says that it does. There are a few very special O.C.C.s that get the damage bonus for arrows and thrown weapons, but normally the damage bonus is only for melee combat.

**Aimed Attack/Called Shot:** A thrown weapon is considered a ranged attack, however, the P.P. attribute bonus *to strike* does apply, and you can do an *Aimed* or *Called Shot* (aimed at a specific target, weapon, hand, rope, etc.) with thrown weapons. A thrown weapon can also be used to *disarm* via an Aimed or Called Shot/toss; bonuses to disarm via Hand to Hand Combat apply.

**A Natural 19 or 20 Does Double Damage:** An unmodified die roll to strike before bonuses are added is a Critical Strike with a thrown weapon when a Natural 19 or 20 is rolled, and does *double damage*. If the attack was an Aimed/Called Shot to disarm, the attack is an automatic success. The only way for this attack to be parried or dodged by an opponent is for the defender to match or better the roll with his own Natural, unmodified, die roll.

**Attacks per Melee Round:** Unless stated otherwise, each thrown item counts as one melee attack/action. Thus, if a character normally has four hand to hand attacks per melee, they can throw four knives or darts per melee round. Some exotic weapons may require a spinning action or time to throw that takes up two or more melee attacks.

**W.P. Whip.** Skill at "whipping" or snapping with long, lightweight, flexible weapons, typically made of leather or reeds. **Damage:** Light Whip 1D6, or Heavy Whip, Bull Whip or Cat-O-Nine-Tails 2D6. **Bonuses:** +1 to strike, disarm or entangle at levels 2, 4, 7, 10, and 13. +1 to damage at levels 2, 4, 8, and 12. This weapon cannot be used to parry and cannot be thrown.

## W.P. Modern Weapons

**No Weapon Proficiency (W.P.).** Anybody who does not have a W.P. in a particular weapon type *CAN* pick up a gun and use it, but does so without benefit of any bonuses. The bonuses that follow do not apply to this unskilled character, but a weapon can still be deadly in his hands. P.P. attribute bonuses and Hand to Hand Combat bonuses do *NOT* apply to modern weapons. Furthermore, the untrained shooter does *not* know how to reload or clean the weapon or anything about ammunition, the gun's kick, how to use a gun sight to aim accurately, or anything about guns or gun safety – all he can do is pick it up, aim as best he can and pull the trigger. **Note:** A character with no gun proficiency rolls 1D20 with *no* bonuses to strike, can *NOT* make an *Aimed Shot* or a *Called Shot* and suffers a penalty of -3 to strike with burst attacks, -5 to strike when shooting a machine-gun, rail gun, mortar, missile launcher, or other heavy weapon, and -6 when shooting wild.

**W.P. Handguns:** A familiarity with all types of projectile firing handguns, including revolvers and pistols. Revolvers are the classic cylinder-based "six shooter." Pistols are "automatic" weapons which means the gun keeps firing while the trigger is depressed and doesn't stop until the trigger is released or the ammunition is spent.

**Damage:** Light caliber guns: 2D6 to 3D6 S.D.C. Medium caliber guns: 3D6 to 4D6 S.D.C. Heavy/large caliber handguns: 4D6 (.45 automatic) to 6D6 S.D.C. (Magnum revolvers). *Double damage* for a standard *short burst* (three rounds/bullets fired), but only pistols (not revolvers) can fire in bursts.

**Average Range:** 140 feet (42.7 m).

**Typical Payload:** Revolver: Six bullets. Automatic Pistol: 8-16 rounds.

**W.P. Bonuses:** +1 to strike at levels 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, and 14.

**W.P. Rifles:** A familiarity with the very accurate, single shot, bolt-action style of rifles used for hunting and sniping, and automatic and semi-automatic, military assault rifles like the M-16 and AK-47.

**Damage:** Light caliber rifles: 5D6 per single round. Medium caliber rifles: 6D6 S.D.C. per single bullet. Heavy/large caliber rifles: 7D6 to 1D6x10+3 S.D.C. per single round. *Double damage* for a standard *short burst* (three rounds/bullets fired). *Triple damage* for a *long burst*



(six rounds/bullets fired) but counts as two melee attacks. **Note:** Only semi-automatic and automatic rifles can fire a three round burst. Only bolt-action and semi-automatic rifles can be used for sniping and firing a single bullet.

Average Range: 1300 feet (396 m), +500 feet (152 m; that's 1800 feet/548.6 m total) for precision bolt-action rifles.

Typical Payload: Bolt-Action Rifles, Semi-Automatic, and Light to Heavy Caliber Rifles: 5-20 rounds loaded by hand or by one box magazine/ammo clip. Automatic Assault Rifles: 20-50 round magazines, with some capable of taking a 100 round drum.

W.P. Bonuses: +1 to strike at levels 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 and 13.

**W.P. Shotgun:** A familiarity with the classic double-barrel shotgun and police and military versions of shotguns with ammo drums.

Damage: Buckshot: 2D6 S.D.C. (half damage for rock salt) to a 10 foot (3 m) radius; two S.D.C. (stings like the dickens) for riot control rubber bullets. Light Shot: 3D6 S.D.C. Medium Shot: 4D6 to 5D6, Heavy Shot/Large Bore: 6D6 S.D.C. **Note:** In all examples listed above, damage is for a single round, double the damage if both barrels are fired simultaneously.

Average Range: Sawed-Off: 60 feet (18.3 m), Hunting: 200 feet (61 m), and Police/Military Shotgun: 300 feet (91.5 m).

Typical Payload: 2-6 in common shotguns, 20, 50 and 100 round ammo drums for police and military style (each single blast counts as one melee attack; can't fire two simultaneous blasts but has rapid-fire and larger payload).

W.P. Bonuses: +1 to strike at levels 1, 3, 6, 10, and 14.

**W.P. Submachine-Gun:** A familiarity with small arms automatic weapons like the Uzi.

Damage: 4D6 S.D.C. per single round or 1D4x10 S.D.C. per three round burst, 1D6x10+4 for a *long burst* (six rounds/bullets fired) but counts as two melee attacks.

Average Range: 500-600 feet (152 to 183 m; an Uzi is the latter range).

Typical Payload: Fires pistol rounds.

W.P. Bonuses: +1 to strike at levels 1, 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15.

**W.P. Heavy Military Weapons:** Familiarity with military hardware, including grenade launchers, mortars, machine-guns, mini-guns and S.D.C. and equivalent light M.D. weapon turrets.

Damage: *Light or Medium Caliber Machine-Gun:* 5D6 S.D.C. per single round or 1D6x10 per short burst (12 rounds/bullets fired; counts as one melee attack) or 2D6x10+20 S.D.C. per long burst (36 rounds fired), but counts as three melee attacks. **Note:** Can only fire bursts.

*Heavy Caliber Machine-Guns and Mini-Guns:* 7D6 S.D.C. per single bullet, or 1D8x10 S.D.C. per short burst (10 rounds/bullets fired; counts as one melee attack) or 2D8x10+20 S.D.C. per long burst (30 rounds fired), but counts as three melee attacks. **Note:** Can only fire bursts and is so large, bulky and heavy that it must be mounted on a tripod, vehicle or supported on a stone or other strong support to use.

*Grenade Launcher Rifle:* 1D6x10 S.D.C. per grenade to everything in a 10 foot (3 m) radius. Can only fire one at time, each shot counts as one melee attack/action. A grenade launcher may also be mounted on an assault rifle, but has a reduced range and ammo capacity; pump action.

*Portable Mortar/Rocket Launcher:* 2D4x10 S.D.C. per explosive round to everything in a 15 foot (4.6 m) radius, but each shot counts as two melee attacks.

Average Range: Light Machine-Guns: 3000 feet (914 m) and Heavy Machine-Guns: 5000 feet (1524 m). Grenade Launcher: 1200 feet (366 m), only 800 (244 m) when part of an over and under assault rifle. Mortar or Rocket Launcher: 4000 feet (1219 m).

Typical Payload: Machine-Guns: 100 short bursts (3000-3600 round belts). Grenade Launcher Rifles: 2 hand loaded or 24 grenade drum or six shot, pump-action on a rifle. Mortar: One hand-loaded round at a time.

W.P. Bonuses: +1 to strike at levels 1, 3, 6, 10, and 14.

**W.P. Military Flamethrowers:** Familiarity with different types of flame-casting weapons used by the military and mercenaries.

Damage: 5D6 S.D.C. per burst of flame (counts as one melee attack) with a 01-75% likelihood of anything flammable catching fire.

Average Range: 60 feet (18.3 m).

Typical Payload: 20 fire blasts per single canister of fuel, 40 per double canisters.

W.P. Bonuses: +1 to strike at levels 2, 5, 10 and 15.

**W.P. Harpoon & Spear Gun:** Proficiency with the harpoon gun. The weapon can be used either with a plain pointed end (2D6 S.D.C. damage) or with an explosive head (4D6 M.D.). **Bonuses:** +1 to strike at levels 2, 4, 7, 10, and 15.

**W.P. Energy Pistol:** Includes lasers, ion blasters, and all types of energy firing small arms. Mega-Damage varies. (See page 360.)

**W.P. Energy Rifle:** Includes all long-range energy firing rifles. Mega-Damage varies. (See page 360.)

**W.P. Heavy Mega-Damage Weapons:** Includes plasma ejectors, M.D. rail guns, rocket launchers, mini-missile launchers, and weapon turrets and cannons *built into* or which are a key part of giant robots, tanks, aircraft and other *combat vehicles*. A common skill of designated *gunners*. Damage varies with the type of weapon and manufacturer.



## Wilderness Skills

**Boat Building:** This skill enables the character to build a variety of rafts, small rowboats, large flatbed boats, and canoes. A small raft (two man) can be made within 1D6+1 hours if the lumber or other suitable materials and tools are readily available. A large raft will take about 4D6 hours, a canoe, 2D6 days, rowboat, 4D4 days, large flatbed, 1D4x10 days. Time is doubled or tripled if trees must be cut down and wood prepared. Of course, the time can be reduced if several knowledgeable people are working on the construction. A failed skill roll means the boat has leaks. Trying to patch it will require 4D4 hours.

**Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience.

**Carpentry.** A fundamental knowledge of working with wood. The character knows how to prepare, treat, preserve and cut wood, recognize quality craftsmanship, repair damaged wood and wood items, and build furniture and articles (chests, boxes, chairs, tables, cabinets, houses, fences, frames, staves, utensils, etc.). **Bonus:** Adds +5% bonus to Trap Construction and +10% to Boat Building. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience.

**Dowsing.** The ability to locate fresh water whether it be with a divining rod or by more scientific and logical means. This is done through deductive analysis and knowledge of nature. The percentage number indicates the success ratio of locating fresh water. A person can roll once every melee to sense water, but must roll two consecutive successful rolls to locate the water. **Base Skill:** 20% +5% per level of experience.