

shaky, insecure, and agitated. 01-65% chance of going back to drinking/drugs if they are readily available.

Second Week: -10% on all skills, -2 on initiative and Perception Rolls; -1 to strike, parry, dodge, etc., reduce Spd by 20% and attacks per melee are -1. Still shaky, insecure, craves the drug of choice. 01-55% chance will fall back to drugs/drinking if the opportunity is there.

Third through Sixth Week: -1 on initiative and Perception Rolls, -5% on skill performance. Feeling strong and more secure, but also guilty for past deeds and angry at self. 01-55% chance will fall back to drugs/drinking if the opportunity is there.

The Next Six Months: Now is the ongoing battle to *stay* dry/clean of drugs and booze. It's a lot tougher than most people can ever imag-

ine. 01-40% chance will fall back to drugs/drinking if the opportunity is there; +15% if under extreme pressure or anxiety. Roll for each pressure situation, such as near death experience (of self or friend), major failure, crucial situation relying heavily or entirely on the addict, and so on.

After Those Six Months: 01-15% chance will fall back to drugs/drinking if the opportunity is there, but +15% if under extreme pressure, and +10% if the character has stopped going to at least monthly (if not weekly or bi-weekly) meetings or therapy sessions, and +20% if the addict "tries" even one hit of a drug or drinks one glass of booze. Modifiers are accumulative. This is the way it is for the rest of his life. Roll for each pressure situation. **Note:** A character can attempt to beat an addiction, regardless of numerous past failures.

Combat Rules



Hand to Hand Combat

The Palladium combat system is relatively simple, quick and realistic. It has been thoroughly play tested, tweaked, and improved for years with great success. It is designed to be fast-playing and is easy to understand. All combat moves (strikes, parries, dodges, etc.) are resolved by rolling a *twenty-sided die* (1D20).

STEP 1: Determine Initiative

Any time opponents square off for battle, the Game Master must determine who has the initiative. In other words, who will attack first. A successful *Sneak Attack* or *Long-Range Attack* will always have initiative for that melee round (15 seconds). Otherwise, whoever *rolls highest* on a twenty-sided die will attack first. In the case of a tie, re-roll. Initiative is rolled only once per melee round. That roll will determine the pace for the entire melee (15 seconds).

STEP 2: Attacker Rolls to Strike

The next step is for the first attacker to **roll a twenty-sided die**. If the result is a four or less (counting bonuses), the attacker misses. *Any roll above a four will hit the opponent*, unless the defender can parry or dodge the attack.

S.D.C. Body Armor

An Armor Rating (A.R.) only applies to S.D.C. armor and combat. Mega-Damage armor, robots, monsters and animals with M.D.C. hides don't get an A.R. (Armor Rating) and any damage inflicted by a successful strike (hit) inflicts damage to the M.D.C.

Against artificial S.D.C. armor, the attack roll – the roll to strike – must be higher than the A.R. to hit the actual character protected by the armor. Rolling under the A.R. strikes, but does damage only to the armor itself (subtract damage from the S.D.C. of the *armor*), not the person in the body armor. That is a good thing in that it is whittling down the armor protection, but the character inside remains uninjured, on his feet, able to strike back and do other things. **For example:** S.D.C. studied leather armor or a light bulletproof vest has an A.R. of 13, this means the attacker must roll 14 or higher to penetrate the armor and inflict damage directly to his foe's body (deduct damage first from the physical S.D.C. of the body, and when that is reduced to zero, deduct damage from Hit Points). In this case, a roll of 5-13 would strike, unless parried, but would only inflict damage to the *body armor* (reduce the S.D.C. of the armor accordingly). When all the S.D.C. of the armor is destroyed (reduced to zero), the armor is so tattered that it no longer provides any protection (no A.R. and no S.D.C.). After that point, any attacks that are five or higher will strike and do damage to the character's body, unless they are parried or dodged. A roll of 1-4 is always a miss; that's true in both hand to hand and long-range combat.

A roll of 1-4 to strike is always a *miss*.

A roll of a **Natural 20** is always a hit and a Critical Strike (double damage), unless the defender also rolls a Natural 20 to parry or dodge. Defender always wins ties.

Ultimately, combat continues back and forth until one side or the other surrenders (assuming his adversary will accept a surrender and take prisoners) or is slain.

Natural A.R. does not apply in Rifts.

M.D.C. Body Armor

Combat and Mega-Damage Capacity (M.D.C.) armor works even easier than S.D.C. combat. There is no Armor Rating to worry about and the attacker either hits or misses, or his opponent parries or dodges the attack.

As always, a roll of 1-4 misses.

A roll of 5 or higher on a D20 is a potential strike. The only way for the defending character to avoid getting hit and taking Mega-Damage (M.D.) is to parry or dodge. **For example:** Two opponents clad in body armor with 50 M.D.C. each are locked in combat. This means the attacker must roll 5 or higher to strike his opponent. A roll of 5-20 (or higher with combat bonuses) will strike, unless the defender parries or dodges. Deduct damage from the M.D.C. of the body armor (or force field, etc.), reducing the M.D.C. of the armor accordingly. When all the M.D.C. armor is gone (reduced to zero), the armor is so tattered that it no longer provides any protection. After that point, any attacks that are five or higher will strike and do damage to the character's body, unless they are parried or dodged.

Every time the M.D.C. armor or living Mega-Damage creature is struck by a Mega-Damage (M.D.) attack (Vibro-Blade, energy blast, magical energy, magic weapon, Supernatural P.S.) he takes damage.

A roll of 1-4 to strike is always a *miss*. Depending on how the G.M. wants to play it, an energy blast that misses might accidentally hit an innocent bystander, teammate, property, etc.

A roll of a **Natural 20** is always a hit and a Critical Strike (double damage), unless the defender also rolls a Natural 20 to parry or dodge (the defender always wins ties). Likewise, if the attacker was making an Aimed or Called Shot and he rolls a Natural 20, he hits the mark perfectly.

Ultimately, combat continues back and forth until one side or the other surrenders (assuming his adversary will accept a surrender and take prisoners) or is slain.

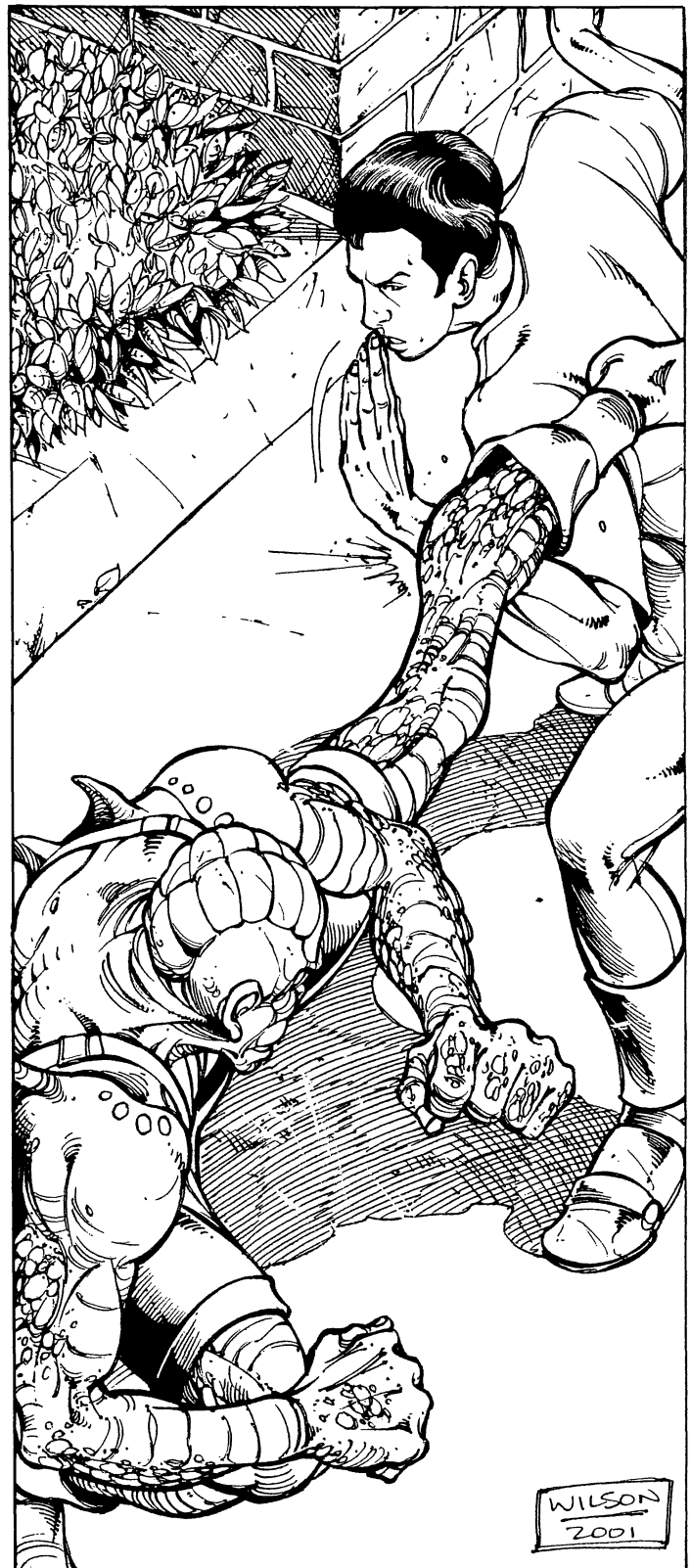
Note: See Surviving an M.D. Attack for greater understanding about Mega-Damage weapons and M.D.C. armor.

STEP 3: Defender May Parry, Dodge or Entangle

Any time an attacker rolls a successful strike to hit, the defender can choose to parry, dodge, or entangle.

Parrying can be done automatically (without using a melee attack/action) by anyone trained in any form of *hand to hand combat*. A parry *blocks* the attacker's strike, preventing damage from being inflicted. *For example*, a punch can be blocked by the character's hands or arms. A weapon attack (sword, axe, mace, etc.) can be parried/blocked by a shield, sword, or another object held in the defender's hand.

A physical Mega-Damage (M.D.) attack from a Supernatural punch or claw, or an attack with an M.D. melee weapon (magic sword, Vibro-Blade, etc.) can be parried/blocked by another M.D. object such as a Vibro-Blade, an M.D.C. rifle, a piece of M.D.C. metal, or a hand or arm that is clad in M.D.C. armor. A weapon should only be parried with another object. Trying to parry an M.D. weapon with one's bare hand or arm will result in a failed parry and the usual amount of dam-



age will be inflicted by the weapon. Parrying a weapon bare-handed is dangerous and all such attempts are *without* benefit of the character's parry bonuses. To succeed in a bare-handed parry, the defender must block his attacker by hitting his arm or hand, not the weapon itself.

A parry is performed by those with combat training without using up a melee attack/action. Characters with no hand to hand combat training lose their next melee attack every time they parry.

Defending by dodging or entangling means automatically giving up the next melee attack. **Entangle** means the character actually pins or snares an opponent's weapon(s) or arm. A **dodge** means the character

physically moves out of the path of the attack. Each dodge uses up one of the character's own attacks per melee round. So constantly dodging means the defender has no opportunity to attack. Only characters with the ability *automatic dodge* can attempt a dodge (roll to dodge like always) without using up one of their own attacks. An automatic dodge is like a parry in that regard – it can be performed without loss of a melee attack. Rare among humans (see Juicer and Crazy), it *may* be an ability of a creature or demon.

Note: The defender can only defend against attacks within his *line of vision*. Attacks from the rear or which are not seen coming cannot be parried, dodged or entangled. The defender always wins ties when parrying, entangling or dodging.

STEP 4: Attacker Rolls Damage

If the roll to strike is successful, it hits and does damage. Human fisticuffs will inflict the normal punch damage (typically 1D4 S.D.C./H.P. damage) plus any *damage bonuses* from a high P.S. attribute and/or Hand to Hand Combat and Physical skills like Boxing.

If a handheld weapon is used such as a knife, club, chair, etc., the attack inflicts the weapon damage *plus* damage bonuses from Hand to Hand Combat skills and high P.S. attribute. All bonuses are cumulative, so if the character has a P.S. of 20 he adds +5 S.D.C. to the damage he inflicts with his weapon, punches or kicks. If he is using a weapon that is also +2 to damage, the weapon's bonus is added to the damage total. And perhaps he also gains +2 from his Hand to Hand Combat skill. Thus the total amount of potential damage inflicted in this example is the weapon, say 2D6, +9 from cumulative bonuses (and then x2 if a Critical Strike).

M.D.C. Note: The same basic process applies to Mega-Damage level strength (P.S.) and M.D. weapons. If the character has ordinary P.S. his punches and kicks do NOT hurt Mega-Damage structures (armor, etc.) or beings. He will need a Mega-Damage weapon to inflict damage. In this case, none of his P.S. bonuses apply because they are all S.D.C. based and do not harm M.D.C., only the damage inflicted by the weapon will hurt his Mega-Damage opponent or target. If the character has a Vibro-Knife that does 1D6 M.D., and he rolls a 3 for damage, then he inflicts three points of Mega-Damage to his M.D.C. opponent (the armor or the actual creature if a demon or other M.D. being). The same applies to an M.D. blaster. If the weapon does 3D6 M.D. and a 10 is rolled, then 10 M.D. is inflicted.

Augmented and Robot P.S. *High Augmented P.S.* (Juicer, Crazy, Cyborgs and light power armor) and *Robot P.S.* (the most powerful Combat Cyborgs, heavy power armor and robot vehicles) may inflict Mega-Damage with their punches and kicks. See the Strength & Damage tables in the Attribute Section for specific levels of damage based on the P.S. The higher the P.S. attribute number, the greater the M.D. inflicted. Note that low Augmented and Robot P.S. requires the character to perform a *power punch* to inflict Mega-Damage, and a power punch *always* uses up TWO melee attacks/actions. This is because it is a haymaker punch in which the attacker winds up and summons all of his strength into one big punch.

Supernatural P.S. inflicts Mega-Damage with ordinary punches and kicks. See the Strength & Damage tables in the Attribute Section for specific levels of damage based on the P.S. The higher the P.S. attribute number, the greater the M.D. inflicted. Claws may inflict additional M.D. that is added to the Supernatural P.S. damage. When using a handheld weapon, such as a magic sword, damage is either that of the Supernatural P.S. or that of the weapon (typically whichever does most damage), NOT the two added together.

Critical Strikes do *double damage!* Combined Critical Strikes, like a Natural 20 and a Jump Kick Attack, do triple damage. Add the damage bonus to the roll before doubling or tripling damage. A Natural (unmodified) 20 is always a Critical Strike. **Note:** A normal human punch inflicts 1D4 damage; a normal kick 1D8. W.P.s will list weapon damage.

A **pulled punch**, whether with fist or weapon, inflicts as little damage as the attacker desires (down to one point), provided he was successful to strike and rolled an 11 or better on a D20 to *pull* his punch. A failed attempt to *pull* a punch means *full damage*, bonuses and all, has been inflicted.

STEP 5: Defender May Attempt to Roll with Impact

If the attack is a physical impact from things like a punch, kick, club, mace, hammer, staff, thrown rock, fall, explosion, and similar, the defender can attempt to *roll with the impact*. In order to roll with the impact, the defender must roll 1D20 and *match* or better the attacker's roll to strike. Successfully rolling with impact means the character takes *half* damage! Successfully rolling with a *knockout punch* means the character takes double damage, but is NOT knocked unconscious or stunned. Rolling with a *death blow punch* results in the loss of half of all remaining S.D.C., or Hit Points if S.D.C. is less than 12 (or M.D.C. if the creature is a Mega-Damage being or wearing M.D.C. armor). Failing to roll with impact means the character has used up one of his melee actions/attacks and still takes full damage from his attacker. **Note:** Rolling with impact counts as one melee action/attack.

Combat Sequence

The typical hand to hand combat sequence goes like this:

Step One: Everybody rolls for initiative. The character with the highest initiative roll strikes first, the ones next in line follow in descending order.

Step Two: The one with initiative rolls to strike a particular opponent and adds in any strike bonuses he may have.

Step Three: The character under attack can attempt to roll a parry or dodge. The high roll wins. Defender always wins ties.

Step Four: If the strike successfully hits, roll for damage and deduct it from the character's S.D.C. (or M.D.C. as the case may be), and when S.D.C. is gone, damage is deducted from Hit Points. **Note:** If an opponent is wearing S.D.C. body armor, determine if the strike penetrates the armor (A.R.) and roll damage dice. Deduct damage from the armor if the roll is less than or equal to the A.R. number, or the physical body if the roll to strike is higher than the A.R. number. If it is a Mega-Damage battle, with everyone clad in M.D.C. armor, then a successful strike inflicts M.D. that is subtracted from the armor (or creature).

Option to parry (or dodge) in hand to hand combat. If successfully parried, no damage is inflicted and the defender readies himself to *counter-strike*. If the parry fails and the character takes damage, he *may* opt to *roll with impact*, but to do so will count as one of his melee actions/attacks.

Step Five: Now it's the defender's time to return the attack: The character who was under attack follows Steps 2-4, striking back (roll to strike), and his opponent may try to parry or dodge, then determine whether or not damage is inflicted (and how much) and repeat the process.

One on one melee combat goes back and forward like this for the entire melee round; first one strikes and one parries, then the other strikes and so forth. The melee round ends when each character has used up all of his attacks.

Next melee round: Start again by having everybody roll for initiative (step one) and repeat steps 2-5. This continues until one set of combatants is triumphant over the other. This can be when one side or the other are all slain, surrender, are captured or flee.

Note: The description always seems to make combat *sound* more complicated than it really is. In game play it is a fast, back and forth,

the first guy (the one who won initiative) strikes, the defender parries or dodges, damage is rolled if struck, and then it is the defender's turn to strike. The opponent, in turn, can try to parry or dodge (or just take the damage) and then strikes back. The defender parries, dodges or stands and takes the damage, and then strikes back. Simple.

Oh, if one fighter has *more* attacks per melee than the other guy, this teeter-totter combat continues until the one with more attacks has the advantage. At that point the one who is out of attacks can only try to parry the incoming attacks from his opponent. He may opt to dodge, but each dodge will take away one of his attacks from the *next* melee round, leaving him in an even worse situation until soon, all he may be able to do is run and dodge, which can happen. Watch a boxing match, the boxer who is faster will throw more punches (attempts to strike) than a slower or less experienced opponent. When both combatants have used up all their attacks that melee round is over and the next one begins. A melee round lasts approximately 15 seconds in fictional game time, but can last several minutes in real, player time, especially if the player group is large.

Spreading out combat among several pairs of fighters

Most gaming groups have 3-6 players, all of whom are likely to be matched up against their own adversary at the same time. That's 3-6 pairs of fighters in the same melee round. Some Game Masters play out the entire melee combat between one set of fighters (i.e., one NPC villain vs one player character) and then move on to the next player. This can work out okay, especially since the initiative roll determines who goes first, second, third, and so on. However, I find this approach is often *anticlimactic*, dull and boring for the rest of the players waiting their turn.

Instead, I *hop* from one set of combatants to the other, trying to leave the most dramatic or decisive clash for last. This means I let the first villain and player character take a whack or two at each other (i.e., one or two melee attacks), and say something like, "okay, you guys are going at it hot and heavy," or, "you're holding your own for now." Then I turn to the next player to give him a turn, "The madman you're facing screams and charges, what do you do?" Inevitably he parries or strikes or dodges and his combat is engaged. I let two melee attacks unfold, put him on pause and turn to the next player and repeat.

This creates a sensation of *simultaneous action* for all the players. And psychologically, because each player is *waiting* for their next turn while watching the rest of the *team*, it creates a sense of anticipation, excitement and camaraderie. Likewise, if the character's teammates are doing well, it makes each individual player more anxious for his next turn to do just as well or better. If his teammates are doing poorly, it creates a sense of concern and immediacy that *he* must vanquish his foe *to help* his buddy(s). Wow, when done right, the action is pulse-pounding and even heart-stopping at pivotal intervals.

Use this pause, switch, return method along with *cliffhanger suspense* and try to build to a satisfying *climax*. For example, as one of the free player characters, having vanquished his adversary, looks on, he sees one of his teammates losing his fight. Things look bad.

The free character tells the Game Master that he is running over to help his buddy or taking aim at his buddy's opponent. The G.M. says, okay, but seems to otherwise ignore him, or says something like, "okay, you're charging over there (or taking aim), but in the meanwhile . . ."

The G.M. turns to the player whose character is under brutal attack and faring poorly. The G.M. allows another exchange between the villain/monster and the beleaguered player character; after all, one melee attack and counterattack takes only two or three seconds.

If played out right, the *free character* is shouting, "I leap at the villain," or "I strike with my sword," or "I shoot, I shoot!" But the G.M., still looking at the beleaguered character, says, "The villain, caught in a

blood fever, doesn't see or hear the free character. All he can think about is finishing you off. He raises his clawed hand (or takes aim, or whatever) and . . ."

And *that's when* the G.M. turns to the free character and says, "roll to strike." Cool, huh? Very dramatic.

Of course, it should be orchestrated so that the beleaguered character still has a parry or dodge option or a chance to strike should his teammate's attack miss or not finish the villain off. Likewise, give the down and out character other options. For example, "you hit," says the G.M. to the free character. "Surprised and enraged, the villain/monster turns to face *you*" – or swings to fire a quick shot at the free character. Maybe the villain is staggered and ready to go down, but is so crazed with battle-rage he is fighting to the death. Or now the free character, surprised by how quick and, perhaps, how devastating the villain's attack on him was, is the one in trouble. Ah, but here's the coup de grace, the beleaguered character has been forgotten, giving him a *free shot* at the bad guy! An attack that might be the last blast needed to finish the fiend off, or now facing both player characters, the two finish him off together, or the villain runs away (or tries to). However it turns out, there is a sense of *camaraderie*, *drama* and *triumph* that ends in a climactic and rousing way. I've actually had the rest of the group cheer when the down and out character delivers the final blow or the bad guy runs off with his tail between his legs. It's all about pacing and presenting the action in a dynamic way.

Remember, you, as the Game Master, are much more than a referee or the voice of a faceless bad guy, you *orchestrate* everything. It's your job to set up the action to deliver the most punch. Not manipulate and force the action, but to *arrange* and *orchestrate* how it all goes down.

– Kevin Siembieda

Two against one

More often than not, two or more player characters will gang up on one superhuman opponent. Whatever the case, the "one" will find himself dividing his attacks between his multiple attackers, perhaps first striking the closest or who is doing the most damage and then the other. However, use logic, if one of the multiple attackers is doing more damage than the others, or represents the greatest threat, then the "one" may repeatedly direct all or most of his attacks at that opponent while ignoring the others.

The "one" can try to *parry* incoming attacks from as many as *three adversaries*, but a fourth attacker gets a free shot (no parry for the "one" on that attack). However, the "one" can only return his next attack at one of his opponents, which is why his counterattacks must, ultimately, be divided. (I'll hit the ugly demon this time – parry, parry, parry – and hit the Gargoyle next time.) Depending on how the battle goes, the "one's" strategy and targets may change, and at some point he may need to call for help or abandon the fight and try to run away.

Combat Terms & Moves

Attacks per Melee: Characters with no hand to hand combat training get only *one* attack/action per melee at levels 1, 3, and 9. No automatic parry or dodge, and each attempt counts as one melee action. P.P. and W.P. bonuses apply to combat moves.

Characters with any kind of formal hand to hand combat training (Hand to Hand: Basic, Expert, etc.) usually start off with *four* attacks/actions per melee round. Each specific Hand to Hand Combat skill will indicate how many attacks the character starts with. This number grows with experience.

Automatic Dodge: Certain characters and creatures are able to *automatically* dodge an attack without using up a melee attack/action. It is purely a defensive move in which the dodger bobs, weaves, bends or twists his body out of harm's way. Roll for a dodge as normal (the automatic dodge is not an "automatic" success). An automatic dodge works just like a (automatic) parry in that the act of dodging does *not* use up any attacks to perform. Bonuses to auto-dodge come from the character's P.P. attribute and any special bonus specifically for it (the bonus, skill or enhancement will say "automatic dodge"). Unless it specifically says a character has an Automatic Dodge, he does NOT.

Attribute Bonuses: Combat and saving throw bonuses gained through physical or mental strengths that give a character an extra added degree of agility, strength, endurance, etc. (see the eight attributes).

Back Flip: The back flip involves throwing oneself backwards with the arms and shoulders, flipping the legs completely up, over, and back down on the ground into a standing position. The result is that one quickly moves backwards by a full body length. Doing a back flip counts as one melee attack/action and can be used as a dodge or for entertainment.

If used in place of a dodge, the character must roll higher than his opponent's strike roll using only the natural die roll (do not include any dodge bonuses). Failure to beat the strike means taking full damage *without a chance to Roll with Punch*. Success means avoiding the attack like a dodge.

Back Flip: Escape. If used in place of a strike (when it's the back-flipping character's turn to strike) this removes the character from combat and counts as one melee attack/action. To get within striking range, he or his opponent must close ranks (move closer) and whoever does so spends one melee action/attack doing so. A Back Flip Escape also gives the back-flipping character the initiative.

Back Flip: Attack. This is especially useful against someone attempting some kind of back strike. Once the opponent is detected in the rear, the back flip moves one back into combat range. A back flip can also be used as a combined strike against an opponent to the rear of the character; used with either a basic kick (1D8 damage), Karate kick (2D6 damage) or a backhand strike. If striking with a back flip use only the bonus to back flip (not strike). Cannot be used with death blow or knockout/stun. This combat maneuver uses up one melee attack/action.

Blind or Being Blinded: Here are the definitive penalties and conditions for humans being blinded or fighting in absolute darkness without optical systems to see.

Penalties: Ignore all of the character's normal combat bonuses (they don't count; natural rolls only, minus the penalties) and the blind character is -10 to strike, parry and dodge, disarm, pull punch and similar combat moves! Speed is reduced by 30-50% (or should be) only because the blind character is unsure of himself and running or moving quickly is likely to cause him to stumble or trip into something and fall down (lose initiative and one melee attack/action), slam into a wall (1D6 S.D.C. damage, triple that if running) or run right into the arms of his opponent or some other danger. Obviously, any skills requiring *vision* are impossible to perform.

Attacks per melee round and initiative are unchanged, but the character is lashing out wildly and guessing where his opponent is. This means the blind character has a good chance of accidentally striking a friend or innocent bystander by his wild flailing about or "blind shooting."

Body Block/Tackle: This is a combination of moves that involves a body block and a knockdown attack (counts as two melee attacks). A successful body block strike against a fellow human does 1D4 damage plus P.S. damage bonuses, and the opponent is likely to be knocked down. A successful strike always inflicts damage from a shoulder, elbow, or tucked head, unless his opponent dodges (no damage and no knockdown).

The victim who is hit can avoid being knocked down only by trying to maintain his balance and must roll percentile dice. A typical Body Block ram has a 01-50% chance of knocking an opponent down and characters with no special balancing ability must roll *above* that number or fall.

Knockdown Modifier: Add 5% to the roll the victim needs to exceed for every five points of P.S. above 20. So an attacker with a P.S. of 30 requires his opponent to roll 60% to save vs getting bowled over. Characters with a special balancing ability from a skill such as Acrobatics or Gymnastics must roll *under* their current skill level to keep their balance (if 45% they must roll under 45, if 80% they must roll under 80). A successful maintain balance means the victim is not knocked down but loses one melee attack, and takes full damage. **Note:** Characters and creatures with Supernatural P.S. and/or greater bulk/weight, or size or speed have an increased likelihood of knocking an opponent down and inflicting greater damage. These special instances are noted under each character description.

Knockdown Penalties: Being knocked down causes the character struck to lose initiative (if he had it) and one attack/action for that melee round, plus he is knocked 1D6 feet (0.3 to 1.8 m) away from where he was standing at the moment of the attack. A roll with impact can reduce damage by half, but counts as one melee action.

Body Flip/Throw: A Judo style throw or flip that uses an attacker's own momentum and leverage to "flip" or "throw" him off his feet and onto the ground. Damage is 1D6 points plus P.S. damage bonus (if any), and the victim also loses initiative (if he had it) and one melee attack. A body flip counts as one melee attack. A victim of a throw can try to *roll with impact/fall* to diminish the damage (half if successful), but other penalties are unchanged.

Combat Bonuses: All appropriate bonuses available to the character are added to the various fighting abilities such as strike, parry or dodge, as well as initiative and saving throws. High physical attributes, certain Physical skills, Weapon Proficiencies (W.P.), the occasional O.C.C. bonus, racial bonus, and genetic enhancement *may* provide one or more combat bonuses. All applicable bonuses are combined and added to the character's dice rolls. Do not combine the strike bonus with the parry bonus, and so on; each combat maneuver is considered a separate category, so only the various bonuses to strike are added to the strike roll, bonuses to parry added to the parry roll and so forth.

Critical Strike: A powerful, special or nerve shattering strike that inflicts double the usual amount of damage. Critical Strike damage can be inflicted with bare hands or with a weapon.

Damage: The following are some of the typical damage amounts inflicted by common types of physical combat attacks. Remember to add any applicable damage bonus for P.S. attributes 16 and higher. **Note:** Humans and other S.D.C. beings inflict S.D.C./Hit Point damage. Those with Robot P.S. may inflict Mega-Damage per their Robotic P.S. Likewise, characters with Supernatural P.S. inflict M.D. as per their Supernatural P.S. See Strength and Damage charts in the Attribute section of Character Creation.

Hand Strikes:

Backhand Strike (average): 1D4

Backhand Strike (martial arts): 1D6

Body Flip: 1D6

Human Fist/Punch: 1D4

Karate/Martial Arts Strike/Punch: 2D4

Elbow/Forearm: 1D6

Power Punch: Does double damage, plus any other damage bonuses, but counts as two melee attacks. Applicable to all hand strikes.

Foot Strikes:

Kick Attack (basic/average): 1D8 (or 2D4).

Karate Kick Attack: 2D6

Leap Kick: 3D8, but counts as two melee attacks/actions.

Knee: 1D6

Backward Sweep: No damage, but knocks down opponent if strike is successful (he loses one melee action and initiative).

Trip/Leg Hook: No damage, but knocks down opponent if the strike is successful (he loses one melee action and initiative).

Power Kick: Does double damage, but counts as two melee attacks and cannot be done with a Leap Kick.

Miscellaneous:

Thrown/Dropped Small Objects: 1D4 or 1D6.

Thrown/Dropped Large Objects: 3D6 per 100 lbs (45 kg) +10 per 40 feet (12.2 m).

Falling: 1D6 damage per 10 feet (3 m).

Collision: 2D4 per 10 mph (16 km).

Death Blow: A special attack designed to kill an opponent in one or two strikes! This attack is often limited in hand to hand combat to the roll of a “Natural” (no bonuses apply) high strike number; i.e. death blow on a Natural 18-20. Whenever the words “death blow” are presented without limitation, the character can use a death strike whenever he desires, however, such a devastating attack counts as two melee attacks/actions.

Human vs Human: Against humans and natural creatures, the death blow attack does double the normal damage, including P.S. bonuses, direct to Hit Points. This attack can be used with punches and kicks or handheld weapons such as swords, clubs, etc. It is *not* applicable to guns and does not work through armor; the armor must be removed or penetrated. **Note:** Does not work on ghosts, spirits, ethereal beings, energy beings or Astral Travelers/Beings, nor robots and other machines.

Human vs Supernatural Beings: Not applicable unless the character is a Mega-Damage being himself (dragon, demon, etc.) or a Demon Slayer (as found in various sourcebooks like *Rifts® China 2*) fighting another Mega-Damage being. Pretty much the same as above, only a successful “death blow” is so devastating to the creature’s body that it cannot bio-regenerate injury from a death blow for 1D4 hours!

Disarm: The act of disarming is simply getting rid of the opponent’s weapon; it does no damage. It can be used as a defensive move in place of a dodge or parry, or can be done as an attack/strike.

The disarm move is a strike, hold or grappling maneuver that causes an opponent to drop his weapon or whatever he’s holding. Counts as one melee attack/action. Disarm does not give the weapon to the character making the disarm move. True, the item is forced out of the victim’s grasp, but it is either knocked away or falls to the ground.

Typically an opponent is disarmed on a roll of a Natural 19 or 20 when used as a defensive move. Roll a disarming strike to attack as usual – high roll wins. A failed disarming attack does no damage and means one’s opponent remains armed, is probably mad, and ready to strike.

Dodge: A character dodges by *moving* out of the way of the attack. Dodging always takes up one attack/action per melee round. To dodge,

the defender must roll equal to or higher than the attacker’s strike roll on a twenty-sided die.

Entangle: A defender can attempt to trap the weapon or arm of an attacker. This is done instead of parrying or dodging, and takes up one attack per melee. An entangle is successful if the defender rolls above the attacker’s strike roll. It takes one attack and a roll to entangle to keep an opponent’s arm or weapon entangled every melee round. In order to get free, the entangled opponent must roll a dodge against the entangle roll.

Hand to Hand Combat: Fighting skills that provide the character with attacks per melee, bonuses, and techniques. Characters without combat training have only one attack per melee and have no automatic chance to parry. Specific combat moves and bonuses are all laid out in the Hand to Hand Combat skills that follow these Combat Terms.

Hit Points: This is the number of points of damage a character can take before dying. Characters don’t lose Hit Points until their S.D.C. is down to zero. A character’s base Hit Points is the P.E. attribute plus 1D6. Another 1D6 Hit Points are gained every time the character advances an experience level. Lost Hit Points are not recovered without medical attention and recuperation.

Holds: Using both hands, the attacker grabs on to some part of the opponent’s body and attempts to immobilize him. If the strike is successful, then the victim is helpless until released. Holds do no damage. Neither the attacker nor the victim can attack, parry or dodge while the hold is working. It’s easy for the attacker to hold the victim so that some third character can attack unopposed or attack from the rear.

Getting out of a hold requires agility. Both the victim and attacker roll twenty-sided dice and add in their P.P. attribute scores. The person doing the hold also gets to add in all his bonuses to hold and from the P.P. attribute (if any). High roll wins! If the attacker wins, then the hold continues. If the victim wins, then the hold is released and combat can continue.

Types of holds include:

Arm Hold: This involves twisting the arm around to the victim’s back. Any items in the hand of the arm being held can be easily removed.

Leg Hold: The victim is on the ground with his leg held up. There’s no way for him to get up until the hold is released.

Body Hold: Any number of wrestling holds. The victim can be held on the ground or in a standing position.

Neck Hold: The victim is held around the neck from behind. This leaves the victim totally vulnerable to attacks from any other character.

Horror Factor (HF): Some creatures are so alien, monstrous-looking and frightening, that they exude what is called a Horror Factor. See the Horror Factor description under *Psychic Combat* for a complete description.

Initiative: Whoever gets to attack first is considered to have the initiative and is the “attacker.” Initiative is automatic in sneak attacks and long-range attacks. In most other cases, each opponent rolls a twenty-sided, highest roll gets the initiative. Rolling for initiative takes place at the beginning of each melee round of combat.

Karate Kick Attack: A special move and type of kick attack that is designed to do more damage than an ordinary kick. A typical Karate Kick does 2D6 damage (+P.S. damage bonus if any), a knee attack 1D6. Counts as one melee attack. Anyone trained in hand to hand combat can do a basic kick or knee attack, but only characters with Hand to Hand: Commando, Expert or Martial Arts can perform a Karate Kick. Commando and Martial Arts can also perform the other Foot Strikes (see *Damage* earlier). Also see Leap Kick.

Karate Punch/Strike: A martial arts strike that does 2D4 damage.

Kick Attack: This is the simple act of using one’s legs and feet to kick an opponent. A typical Kick does 1D8 damage. Anyone can try to kick an opponent.

Leap Kick: A Leap Kick is performed by the character putting all of his energy into what is in effect a power kick by leaping completely off the ground and attempting to kick an opponent with everything he can muster. A typical Leap Kick does 3D8 damage (+P.S. damage bonus if any), but counts as two melee attacks/actions. Only characters with Hand to Hand: Commando or Martial Arts can perform a Leap Kick and other Foot Strikes (see *Damage* earlier).

Knockdown: Getting knocked down, falling or getting struck by a fast, heavy vehicle, or explosion, or falling or getting knocked back dozens of yards/meters (30 feet/9 m or more) will cause the character to take damage from the force of the impact. While most armors are padded, they only provide so much protection.

Damage: Inflicts 1D6 Hit Point/S.D.C. damage for every 20 feet (6 m) one falls or is knocked back. And figure 1D6 points of damage for every 20 S.D.C. in an explosion. Round down. If the fall/knock back is 100 feet (30.5 m) or more, there is a 01-65% chance of being temporarily knocked out for 1D6 melee rounds.

Penalties: In ALL cases, when a character is knocked down or off his feet he automatically loses initiative and one melee attack/action. If he is knocked several or dozens of yards/meters, the character loses two melee attacks. This is true even if the character is knocked down right where he was standing or only a few feet/meters.

Mega-Damage Knockdown: If a Mega-Damage vehicle or monster rams or body blocks into another M.D.C. vehicle or monster, the *victim* takes 1D6 M.D. +1D6 M.D. additional for every 30 mph (48 km) of speed at the time of impact. Furthermore, there is a base chance of 01-60% (or whatever the robot combat or a specific description of a knockdown/ram/body block attack might indicate for that creature) that the victim is knocked off its feet and loses initiative and two melee attacks/actions for that round. The attacker suffers the equivalent of 25% of the victim's damage, especially from high-speed ram attacks.

Knockout/Stun: Anyone hit by a knockout or stun attack will be temporarily incapacitated. The victim is not necessarily unconscious, just dazed – reduce attacks per melee to one and no combat bonuses for a stunned/dazed character for 1D4 melee rounds.

Long-Range Attack or Ranged Attack: An attack done at a distance using a long-range weapon, magic or power. Provided the attacker is not seen, the defender automatically loses initiative and may not dodge the first attack that melee round from a long-range attack.

M.D.C.: This stands for *Mega-Damage Capacity*, which is the amount of damage a Mega-Damage object can absorb before breaking. Living creatures such as demons, dragons and other inhuman beings may also have M.D.C.; it represents their physical resistance to Mega-Damage and makes them supremely powerful on Rifts Earth. All the M.D.C. of a living being must be reduced to zero before it falls into a coma and will die without regenerative powers or medical treatment.

Mega-Damage: One M.D. point is equal to 100 S.D.C. Most S.D.C. weapons and attacks do no damage to Mega-Damage creatures or structures unless they inflict 100 or more points of S.D.C. in a single attack (not multiple attacks).

Melee or Melee Round: Exactly 15 seconds. The segment of time combatants have to strike, counter and/or return strike. Generally, player characters have four or more attacks per melee.

Miss: A roll of 1-4 to strike (after bonuses) is always a *miss*.

A roll of one always misses regardless of bonuses.

Multiple Attackers: Takes place when an opponent is faced by more than one attacker. Characters with hand to hand combat skills can attempt to parry any attacks within their line of sight, from up to three attackers. The defender from multiple attackers can strike at only one target at a time (see Paired Weapons for a rare exception).

Natural Twenty: This is the result of 20 (before bonuses) when rolling a twenty-sided die (1D20). A strike with a Natural Twenty will always be a Critical Strike. If someone with a strike bonus of +2 rolls an 18, then they have an attack roll of 18 plus unnatural, bonus modifi-

cation; NOT a Natural Twenty, and it is *not* a Critical Strike. A Natural Twenty beats all other rolls and can only be parried or dodged by another Natural Twenty.

Paired Weapons: Certain kinds of weapons, such as sais, nunchaku, daisho, knives, clubs and swords, can be used as paired weapons. Users of paired weapons can strike and parry simultaneously, can do twin strikes against a single target or against a pair of targets, and can parry two different opponents at the same time. In other words, combatants skilled in Paired Weapons often can do two actions for every one of their melee attacks (i.e. strike and parry). However, a twin, simultaneous strike with both weapons means losing the automatic parry and leaves the character open to his opponent's next attack without benefit of a parry (dodge is optional but uses up a melee action/attack). Also see the *W.P. Paired Weapons* skill.

Parry: A defender can attempt to parry most physical attacks. This is done by blocking the attacker's blow with a weapon or hand. Characters trained in hand to hand combat can parry without losing melee attacks. Bullets and energy attacks cannot (as a rule) be parried!

Power Punch: A haymaker thrown with everything the character has, his every last ounce of strength. A power punch ALWAYS counts as two melee actions (the blow lands on the *second* action). A power kick can also be done. For characters with normal P.S., it does double damage in Hit Points and/or S.D.C. (normal punch damage of 1D4 times two plus any possible P.S. or Hand to Hand Combat damage bonus on top of that). Characters with extraordinary augmented P.S. or Supernatural Strength clearly indicate the damage inflicted in the listings presented at the beginning of this section.

Punch: A normal human punch does 1D4 damage. A Karate style punch or chop does 2D4 damage. A power punch does double damage. In all cases, include any P.S. attribute bonus (for P.S. 16 and higher) as well as any damage bonuses from a Hand to Hand Combat skill, or special powers.

Pull Punch: The ability to control the force of a hand to hand attack, whether it be a punch, kick or with a hand weapon. Usually used to reduce the blow to less than killing force. The character can choose to do half damage, quarter damage, a single point or no damage at all. A character must declare a pulled punch, and the player must roll 11 or better on a twenty-sided die (1D20) to successfully pull his punch. A failed roll to pull means full damage is accidentally inflicted.

Roll with Impact: Hand to hand combat fighters can reduce the damage from physical blows and falls by rolling with the force of the impact. If the defender is successful, then only *half damage* is taken from the attack. Roll with punch/fall does not work against energy blasts, bullets, fire, blade weapons, psionics, magic or radiation. Victims must roll higher than the attacker's roll. Falling characters must roll a 14 or higher, on a twenty-sided die, to roll with the fall.

Saving Throws: Occasionally, characters must roll to save against exotic attacks like poison, gas, disease, drugs, etc.

Curses: 15 or better.

Disease: 14 or better.

Lethal Poison: 14 or better.

Non-Lethal Poison: 16 or better.

Harmful Drugs: 15 or better.

Acids: No save possible – dodge!

Insanity: 12 or better (sometimes higher).

Magic: 12-16 depending on the power level of the spell caster. 16 or higher to save vs ritual magic.

Psionics:

6 or better for Psi-Stalkers.

10 or better for Master Psychics, including Mind Melters, Dog Boys and Bursters.

12 for Major & Minor Psychics.

15 for ordinary people and animals.

S.D.C.: This stands for *Structural Damage Capacity*, which is the amount of damage an object can absorb before breaking. Living creatures also have S.D.C.; it represents their physical resistance to damage. All the S.D.C. of a living thing must be reduced to zero before the Hit Points can be affected by normal attacks.

Simultaneous Attack: Instead of defending with a parry, dodge or entangle, a character can choose to do a simultaneous attack. In this case, the character does not defend (“Go ahead, hit me; I can take it!”) and simply attacks in response. The advantage of a simultaneous attack is that neither opponent can parry, dodge or entangle. In all probability, both will take damage. Exception: An opponent skilled with Paired Weapons can engage in simultaneous attack (with one weapon) AND parry (with the other), OR, both the paired weapons can be used to strike with NO parry.

Sneak Attack: An attacker may lie in wait (ambush), attack from behind, or sneak up (Prowl) on an opponent. If the foe does not discover the attacker, then the sneak attack is successful. The sneak attacker always has initiative, and the defender is not able to parry or dodge the sneak attack.

Strike: Anyone attempting to hit an opponent must roll to strike. As with all combat rolls, a roll to strike is made with a twenty-sided die.

Throw: Simply, this means throwing a weapon or object. Rolling to throw is exactly the same as rolling to strike, except that there are different bonuses per weapon type. See *Weapon Proficiency*.

Using Weapons: A character may use *any* type of weapon from a gun to a knife or a rock, but gets no combat bonuses, such as strike or parry, unless he has a *Weapon Proficiency (W.P.)* in that particular weapon. This applies to modern and ancient weapons.

Hand to Hand Combat Skills

These are the standard level by level tables that present the *accumulative bonuses* offered by the common forms of hand to hand fighting in the *Rifts®* setting. When characters advance a level, the player can come to this section to see what new bonuses apply to the character.

Note: ALL bonuses are accumulative. That means each new level offers new bonuses and combat capabilities that are *added* to those previously acquired. Certain Hand to Hand fighting styles also impart bonuses to one’s physical attributes as well as perfection of the fighting form. Also see *Boxing* and *Wrestling* in the *Skills* section.

Number of attacks per melee: To simplify matters, each type of Hand to Hand Combat indicates the number of attacks the character starts with, typically four.

Characters with No Hand to Hand Combat Skill

Level 1: Starts with one hand to hand attack per melee round. This reflects the character’s pitiful fighting skills.

HOWEVER, the character gets *TWO non-combat melee actions* at first level. A *non-combat action* involves some activity other than fighting (operating a machine, driving, locking a door, running, hiding, helping others, etc.).

Level 3: +1 attack per melee round and +1 to dodge. +1 *non-combat melee action*.

Level 6: +2 *non-combat melee actions*.

Level 9: +1 attack per melee round, for a total of three “attacks” per round (each attack counts as two melee actions for this character). +1 *non-combat melee action* for a total of six melee “actions.” That’s it.

Hand to Hand: Basic

This is an elementary form of hand to hand combat training. Though it hardly stacks up against some of the more advanced forms of fighting, one who has trained in Hand to Hand: Basic still fights with combat skill compared to the simple, everyday folk without training.

Note: Basic combat training enables the character to use any basic/common attacks, including Punch, Elbow, Kick, Knee, Disarm, Dodge, Entangle, Body Block/Tackle, Roll with Impact, Power Punch (but not a Power Kick) and Pull Punch – but *no* special moves or martial art attacks such as Automatic Dodge, Back Flip, Holds, Karate Punches, Leap Kick or other moves.

Level 1: Starts with four attacks/actions per melee round; +2 to pull punch and +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact.

Level 2: +2 to parry and dodge.

Level 3: Kick attack does 1D8 points of damage.

Level 4: +1 additional attack/action per melee round.

Level 5: +1 to strike and disarm.

Level 6: Critical Strike on an unmodified roll of 19 or 20.

Level 7: +2 to damage.

Level 8: Judo-style body flip/throw; does 1D6 damage, and victim loses initiative and one attack.

Level 9: +1 additional attack/action per melee round.

Level 10: +2 to pull punch and +2 to roll with impact/punch/fall.

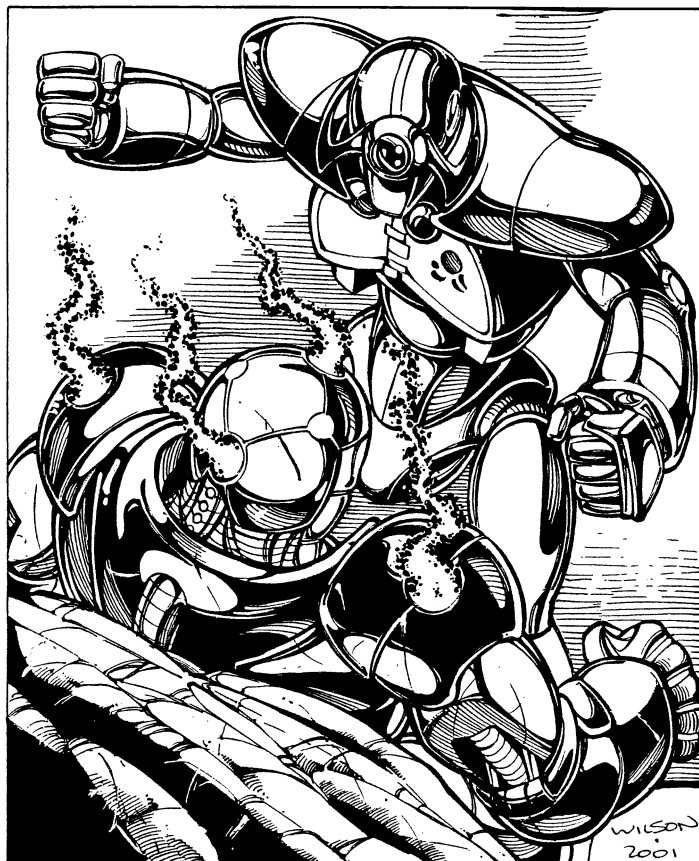
Level 11: +1 to parry and dodge.

Level 12: +1 to strike.

Level 13: Critical Strike or knockout from behind.

Level 14: +2 to damage.

Level 15: +1 additional attack/action per melee round.



Hand to Hand: Expert

This is the fighting style taught to police officers, soldiers, bodyguards, thieves, and anybody else who will be expected to live by violence. While it lacks the mastery of the Martial Arts, an Expert fighter knows how to scrap quickly and efficiently. At high levels, especially, those with this skill can often hold their own against dedicated masters of the martial arts.

Note: Expert combat training enables the character to use any basic/common attacks, including Punch, Elbow, Kick, Knee, Disarm, Dodge, Entangle, Body Block/Tackle, Body Flip/Throw, Roll with Impact, Power Punch, Power Kick, and Pull Punch and even some martial arts moves (as noted below) – but unless noted below, the character does *not* have special moves or martial art attacks such as Automatic Dodge, Back Flip, Holds, Karate Punches, Leap Kick or other moves.

Level 1: Starts with four attacks/actions per melee; kick attack 1D8 damage, +2 to pull punch, and +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact.

Level 2: +3 to parry and dodge, and +1 to pull punch.

Level 3: +2 to strike, +2 to disarm, and can perform a Karate Punch.

Level 4: +1 additional attack/action per melee round.

Level 5: Can perform a Karate Kick, does 2D6 damage.

Level 6: Critical Strike on an unmodified roll of 18, 19 or 20.

Level 7: W.P. Paired Weapons and backhand strike (average, does 1D4 damage).

Level 8: Body flip/throw; does 1D6 damage, and victim loses initiative and one attack.

Level 9: +1 additional attack/action per melee and +1 to disarm.

Level 10: +3 to damage.

Level 11: Knockout/stun on an unmodified roll of 18, 19 or 20.

Level 12: +2 to parry and dodge.

Level 13: Critical Strike or knockout from behind (triple damage).

Level 14: +1 additional attack/action per melee round.

Level 15: Death blow on a roll of Natural 20.

Hand to Hand: Martial Arts

A form of martial arts that takes and mixes techniques from many different sources.

Note: Martial arts combat training enables the character to use any basic/common attacks, including Punch, Elbow, Kick, Knee, Disarm, Dodge, Entangle, Body Block/Tackle, Body Flip/Throw, Roll with Impact, Power Punch, Power Kick, and Pull Punch as well as the martial arts moves noted below.

Level 1: Starts with four attacks/actions per melee; +3 to pull punch and +3 to roll with impact/punch/fall, and body flip/throw; does 1D6 damage, victim loses initiative and one attack.

Level 2: +3 to parry and dodge; +2 to strike, and may perform Karate and any *hand* strike/punch.

Level 3: +1 on initiative, and may perform a Karate-style kick (does 2D6 damage) and any foot strike except Leap Kick.

Level 4: +1 additional attack/action per melee round.

Level 5: Leap Kick (3D8 damage, but counts as two melee attacks), and +2 to entangle.

Level 6: Critical Strike on an unmodified roll of 18, 19 or 20.

Level 7: W.P. Paired Weapons, can perform Holds and is +2 to disarm.

Level 8: Back flip and back flip escape.

Level 9: +1 additional attack/action per melee round.

Level 10: Back flip attack and +2 to disarm.

Level 11: +4 to damage and +1 on initiative.

Level 12: +2 to parry and dodge.

Level 13: Knockout/stun on an unmodified roll of 18, 19 or 20.

Level 14: +1 additional attack/action per melee round.

Level 15: Death blow on a roll of a Natural 20.

Hand to Hand: Assassin

This style of fighting is a specialized science of killing generally taught by secret organizations such as organized crime cartels, secret government “wet working” bureaus, military black ops, and so on.

Note: Assassin combat training enables the character to use any basic/common attacks, including Punch, Elbow, Kick, Knee, Disarm, Dodge, Entangle, Body Block/Tackle, Body Flip/Throw, Roll with Impact, Power Punch, Power Kick, and Pull Punch and even many martial art moves (as noted below) – but unless noted below, the character does *not* have special martial art moves.

Level 1: Starts with three attacks/actions per melee round. +2 to strike. W.P. Paired Weapons.

Level 2: +1 on initiative and +2 additional attacks/actions per melee round.

Level 3: Karate Punch (2D4 damage), +3 to pull punch, and +2 to roll with impact/punch/fall.

Level 4: Karate Kick (2D6 damage), +4 to damage on all physical attacks, and +1 on initiative.

Level 5: +1 additional attack/action per melee round and +1 to strike with a thrown weapon.

Level 6: +3 to parry/dodge, +2 to entangle and backhand strike (martial arts 1D6).

Level 7: Knockout/stun on an unmodified roll of 17-20 and leap kick (3D8 damage, but counts as two melee attacks).

Level 8: +1 additional attack/action per melee round, +1 to strike with guns, and +1 on initiative.

Level 9: +1 on initiative and can perform back flip.

Level 10: Critical Strike on an unmodified roll of 19 or 20.

Level 11: +2 to strike in hand to hand, +1 to strike with a thrown weapon and with guns, and can perform back flip attack.

Level 12: +2 to pull punch and death blow on a roll of a Natural 19 or 20.

Level 13: +1 additional attack/action per melee round.

Level 14: +2 to damage and can perform Holds.

Level 15: +2 to strike in hand to hand and +1 to strike with guns.

Hand to Hand: Commando

This is the fighting style taught to police officers, soldiers, bodyguards, thieves, and anybody else who will be expected to live by violence. While it lacks the mastery of the Martial Arts, an Expert fighter knows how to scrap quickly and efficiently. At high levels, especially, those with this skill can often hold their own against dedicated masters of the martial arts.

Note: Expert combat training enables the character to use any basic/common attacks, including Punch, Elbow, Kick, Knee, Disarm, Dodge, Entangle, Body Block/Tackle, Roll with Impact, Power Punch, Power Kick, and Pull Punch and even some martial arts moves (as noted below) – but unless noted below, the character does *not* have special moves or martial art attacks such as Automatic Dodge, Back Flip, Holds, Karate Punches, Leap Kick or other moves.

Level 1: Starts with four attacks/actions per melee round, W.P. Paired Weapons, body flip/throw, body block/tackle and +2 to save vs Horror Factor.

Level 2: +1 on initiative, +1 to strike, +2 to parry and dodge, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, and +3 to pull punch. Backward sweep kick, used only against opponents coming up behind the character. Does no damage; it is purely a knockdown attack (same penalties as body flip) but cannot be parried (an opponent can try to dodge it but is -2 to do so).

Level 3: +1 on initiative, +1 to disarm, and Karate punch/strike (does 2D4 damage).

Level 4: +1 additional attack/action per melee and Karate kick (does 2D6). The karate-style kick starts with bringing the knee, folded, up to chest level, then the foot is completely extended.

Level 5: +2 to automatic dodge and all foot strikes.

Level 6: +2 on initiative, +1 to strike, parry and dodge, and +1 to body flip/throw.

Level 7: +2 to damage, +1 to save vs Horror Factor, +1 to disarm, +1 to automatic dodge and +2 to pull punch.

Level 8: +1 additional attack per melee, jump kick, +2 to body flip/throw, and +1 to roll with punch/fall/impact.

Level 9: Death blow on a Natural 18-20! +2 to pull punch.

Level 10: +2 to save vs Horror Factor, +1 on initiative and +1 to strike.

Level 11: +1 to disarm, +1 to pull punch and +2 to body flip/throw.

Level 12: +2 to damage, +1 to parry and dodge, +2 to automatic dodge.

Level 13: +1 additional attack/action per melee.

Level 14: Can perform holds and is +1 on initiative.

Level 15: Critical Strike on a Natural 17-20.

Dragon Hand to Hand Combat (optional)

By Carl Gleba & Kevin Siembieda

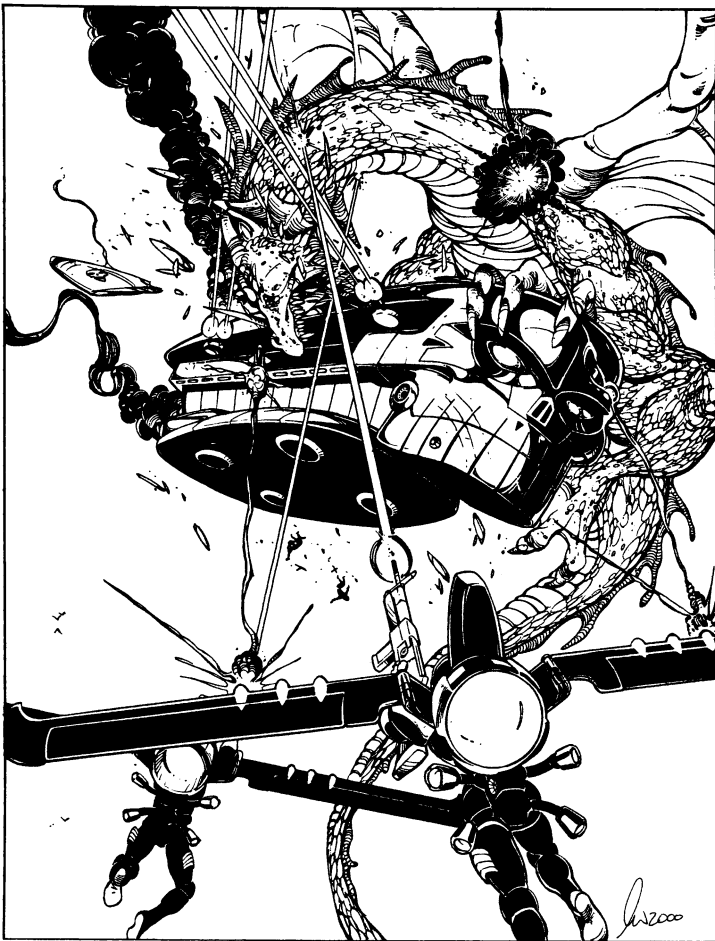
As a Dragon Hatchling grows and develops, so too does their combat ability. Like many of their skills, *Hand to Hand: Dragon Combat* is *instinctual*, but not immediately known at birth. As the young dragon grows and gets experience, these abilities come to them like epiphanies at each new level of experience. Thus while a very young hatchling is dangerous, they don't compare to their older siblings or even adult dragons who develop these combat abilities above and beyond what a Hatchling knows.

The dragons' unique shape and appearance, with tail and, in many cases, wings, provide them with several natural, built-in weapons and abilities which, when honed, can be used with deadly efficiency. The following are a variety of combat moves available when a dragon is in its *natural serpentine shape*. Exactly which combat moves and bonuses apply are indicated by level of experience.

It should also be noted that most dragons use guile and cunning over straightforward combat. Most prefer to rely on their magic and psionic potential rather than get their hands (or claws as the case may be) dirty in a rough and tumble brawl. Still, there are dragons who enjoy a good fight, and situations where a dragon has to get down and dirty. And make no mistake, dragons have an array of formidable weapons at their disposal.

Prior to the actual Hand to Hand: Dragon table is a list of fighting moves and techniques common to dragons. **Remember**, all of the special abilities and moves listed below are only available while the dragon is in its *natural* dragon form. When taking any other physical form, only their basic combat stats (initiative, strike, parry, dodge, dis-

arm, pull punch, etc.) apply, their special dragon moves do not. Likewise, a dragon who does not have wings cannot use wing-based attacks and maneuvers. **Optional:** We have left this Hand to Hand: Dragon Combat skill *optional*. If the Game Master does NOT like it or feels it is inappropriate, he or she may not allow it to be used. G.M. discretion. **Note:** Allowing instinctual Dragon Hand to Hand Combat supercedes all other combat skills, and no other Hand to Hand Combat (Basic, Expert, etc.) can be selected.



Dragon Combat Special Moves/Attacks

Bite Attack: One of the more basic and instinctual attacks is the bite. Damage is half of the dragon's Supernatural P.S. damage for a punch, or as indicated under the dragon's specific description. Bite damage varies greatly between the different species. Superior or lesser damage will be indicated in the dragon's R.C.C. description.

Bite & Grip: A more controlled move in which the young dragon can grasp something (even people), like a dog, and carry or hold it in a vice-like grip without damaging the item. This delicate bite requires a roll of eleven (11) or higher to strike, otherwise, the item/person takes half the normal bite Mega-Damage!

Breath Weapon Concentrated Beam: By taking a deeper breath and physically forcing their breath weapon harder than usual, the dragon can *triple the range* of their breath attack. Damage is the same, only the range is increased, however it uses up two attacks and can only be done once per melee round.

Breath Weapon Cone: The dragon is able to shape their breath attack like a cone and with a sweeping effort from their head they can cover a large area in front of them. Range is half, but the dragon can cover multiple targets, typically 2-12 (2D6) human size targets at their normal breath weapon damage.

Claw Swipe: The Dragon can punch or kick which does damage as per their Supernatural P.S., or swipe with a claw attack. Claw damage is typically +2D6 M.D. *added* to the usual punch damage as per Supernatural P.S. (or as indicated in individual dragon description).

Crush: This attack is primarily used with the Grappling Hold or as a bear hug type attack. In either case, the dragon must first grab and hold/hug its opponent, and then squeeze to inflict crushing damage. Crush damage is equal to punch M.D. and each crush/squeeze action counts as one of the dragon's melee attacks; double damage if the victim is half the dragon's size or smaller.

Dragon Metamorphosis: The standard shaping ability common to most dragons. With time and practice, the dragon can make the transition faster.

Grappling Hold: The grappling attack primarily used on large creatures like other dragons and vehicles or 'bots that are of similar size or larger than the dragon, such as Death's Head transports. When a dragon grapples the character uses all four claws/legs to hold onto his massive opponent, usually from the top or back. Make one roll to strike, and the opponent may attempt to dodge. If the strike is successful (counts as two melee attacks) the dragon is able to hold on tightly with its four limbs, but can continue to attack with bites, head butts, breath attacks, crush attacks, magic and tail swipes. **Note:** The Grapple Hold is usually on the back, preventing the opponent or vehicle from using its arms or forward weapons. The dragon's size and weight may also reduce the opponent's or vehicle's speed by 25%.

To break this hold, the opponent must *knock* (or have other giant allies pull) the beast off its back, usually by butting up against something (the side of a mountain, another vehicle/flyer, etc.), rolling on the ground, and similar tactics. If a vehicle, this will require special maneuvers and rolls on piloting skill with applicable penalties for trick and evasive maneuvers. The opponent's only other option is to dodge the attack when it is first launched – if he even knows it is coming (typically a pounce, diving or surprise attack). To have others pull the dragon off, they must have a combined Supernatural P.S. that is 50% greater than the dragon's. Or they can attack with ranged weapons from a distance, hoping to inflict so much damage that the dragon lets go or is slain.

The victim of this grappling hold can only physically attack the dragon with its arms and any weapon that can reach the beast on its back. That means attacks from front arms lack leverage and inflict half their damage, and are -3 to strike. Psionics and magic will have full effect and range (the victim certainly knows where the dragon is even if he doesn't have a clear line of sight).

Disadvantages for the Dragon: Grappling can only be done with all of the dragon's claws/legs and means the creature can NOT parry or dodge while grappling, and its attacks can only be directed at the subject to which it is grappling with and others who come within range of its breath, tail, bite or magic.

Tail Slap: Rather than punch, claw or bite, the dragon can strike with its tail. The tail is a natural part of the dragon's combat style and is often used when foes attack from the rear or sides. The tail is not so prehensile that it can be used to grip, grab and carry items like a monkey, but it can slap and swat. Mega-Damage is equal to that of a punch as per Supernatural P.S.; M.D. bonuses may be applicable via Dragon Combat with experience.

Tail Slap Power Strike: Does damage equal to a power punch, but counts as two melee attacks.

Tail Sweep: The dragon's tail is agile enough to sweep the legs of an opponent (one or two if roughly the same size as the dragon, all within a 15 foot/4.6 m diameter if smaller and clustered together). Damage is a mere 1D6 M.D. plus victims knocked off their feet (roll to dodge) lose initiative and two melee attacks/actions. No physical damage if the dragon is only trying to knock them over.

Tail Parry: The dragon's tail is an appendage exploited to the fullest, and can be used to parry physical attacks the same as it might parry

with its claws. Being an M.D.C. creature, it can use its tail to swat and block M.D. weapons such as magic swords and Vibro-Blades.

Teleport Dodge: Teleporting is a very basic and instinctive ability of dragons. It's only natural that they would avail themselves of its use during combat. As the young dragon matures, they rely on this ability more and more often, thus becoming more efficient at its use. This gives the dragon bonuses to dodge and a small bonus to teleport for combat purposes only. Also, the teleport dodge is limited to no more than 100 feet (31 m). A dragon can still execute their normal teleport any time during combat as a single action. However, they do not benefit from the bonuses of the teleport dodge. It should also be noted that the dragon must perform a successful dodge roll and be able to see where it is teleporting in order to dodge. A failed dodge means the dragon was struck first, takes full damage and the pain of the attack prevented the teleportation from being completed. Uses 1 action.

Wing Attack: Basic: Wings are more than just extra appendages to a dragon. While most (not all) dragons can fly without their wings, they function as rudders and ailerons like on an airplane, adding to maneuverability. Wings can also make *formidable weapons* and can lash out to strike an opponent just like a *punch attack* (M.D. as per Supernatural P.S.).

Wing Attack: Advanced: Uses the wing like a body block/tackle or clothesline to knock one opponent off his feet. 01-70% likelihood of knocking opponents up to their own size off their feet. Victims lose initiative and one melee attack/action. May also use a Wing Attack: Advanced to cover and entangle victims or pin an adversary the same as the Wrestling move to "pin and incapacitate."

Wing Sweep: By extending the wings and turning their bodies low to the ground, the dragon can sweep two or more (multiple opponents if human size) with a single sweep of its wing, provided they are clustered in a 15 foot (4.6 m) diameter/area. The sweeping action counts as *two attacks* as it requires the dragon to prepare and turn his whole body. 01-80% likelihood of knocking all opponents off their feet. Multiple victims cannot be more than two if the opponent is the same size as the dragon, but can be several if smaller. Victims knocked off their feet lose initiative and two melee attacks/actions, and suffer 1D6 M.D. from the attack (no physical damage if the dragon is only trying to knock them over).

Wing Gliding Sweep Attack: Finally, one of the dragon's most devastating attacks requires a full melee round to perform and the dragon must be flying at maximum speed. The Gliding Sweep Attack does M.D. equal to the dragon's *Power Punch* and can affect multiple enemies clustered within a 15 foot (4.6 m) diameter/area. *Each* takes M.D., is bowled over, knocked 1D4x10 yards/meters off their feet and loses three melee attacks and initiative for that round. The disadvantage of this attack is that the dragon can *not* dodge any incoming attacks while in its sweeping run, and the attack uses all the dragon's attacks that melee round. This tactic is usually used as a first strike surprise attack when a dragon first engages multiple enemies.

Ancient Dragon

13	380,001 - 470,000
14	470,001 - 600,000
15	600,001 - 800,000
16	800,001 - 1,000,000
17	1,000,001 - 1,250,000
18	1,250,001 - 1,500,000
19	1,500,001 - 2,000,000
20	2,000,001 - 2,500,000
21	2,500,001 - 3,000,000
22	3,000,001 - 3,500,000
23	3,500,001 - 4,000,000
24	4,000,001 - 5,000,000
25	5,000,001 - 6,000,000
26	6,000,001 - 7,000,000



Robot (and Power Armor)

Combat: Basic

Characters with this skill are taught the *fundamentals* of operating all types of power armor suits such as the Flying Titan, SAMAS, Glitter Boy, and others, as well as basic types of robot vehicles. Power armor is a robot exoskeleton that is worn like a suit of armor. Power armor is usually much smaller, lighter and faster than a robot vehicle like the UAR-1 Enforcer. Any vehicle bigger than 12 feet (3.6 m) and which requires the pilot to sit down or has a “crew compartment” or can accommodate passengers is a *robot vehicle*, not power armor.

The emphasis of training is on *piloting*, not combat, hence the low bonuses, but the individual is able to operate all types of robots and power armor on a basic level. **Requires the Pilot: Robots & Power Armor** skill (the ability to pilot power armor and ‘bots without benefit of any bonuses). **Note:** To get superior combat bonuses, one needs to take the skill, *Robot (and Power Armor) Combat: Elite*.

All bonuses are in addition to the pilot’s own hand to hand combat training and attribute bonuses. They do *not* apply to the pilot’s physical abilities outside the power armor.

Basic Combat Bonuses: Applies to all types of power armor and robot vehicles. See Elite for specific types.

+1 extra attack/action per melee round, *plus* those of the pilot.

+1 to strike in hand to hand combat.

+1 to parry in hand to hand combat.

+1 to dodge.

+1 to roll with impact.

Critical Strike is the same as the pilot’s hand to hand skill.

Strike bonuses for built-in weapons are limited to bonuses the pilot may have from the skills Weapon Systems and/or W.P. Heavy Mega-Damage Weapons (applies to rail guns and missile launchers, as well).

Damage: As per Robot P.S. Each power armor description will list the damage under the “Elite” hand to hand stat block. The basic skill, however, only lets the pilot do a *restrained and full strength punch* and an ordinary *kick*, no leap kick, stomp or special attacks.

Power Armor Body Block/Tackle/Ram: 1D4 M.D. plus a 01-50% chance of knocking an opponent down, causing him to lose initiative and one melee attack/action. Counts as two of the power armor’s melee attacks.

Robot Body Block/Tackle/Ram: M.D. equal to Robot Punch M.D. plus a 01-60% chance of knocking down an opponent that is approximately the same size or larger. Increase the odds of knocking down an opponent that is half the size or smaller than the robot to 01-80%. The victim suffers M.D. and loses initiative and two melee attacks/actions. Counts as two of the robot’s melee attacks.

Robot (and Power Armor)

Combat: Elite

Superior combat training in various types of power armor and giant robot vehicles. The emphasis of training is on combat. When “Elite” combat is taken for a specific type of robot or power armor, the bonuses from “Elite” combat training supercede those the character might have from Basic Combat training. (Use Elite bonuses only, do *not* add Elite and Basic together. The bonuses from *Basic* training apply only to robot vehicles with which the character has no special Elite training.)

All bonuses are in addition to the pilot’s own hand to hand combat training and attribute bonuses. They do *not* apply to the pilot’s physical abilities outside the robot vehicle.

Level 1: Starts with three attacks per melee (plus any R.C.C. bonus). Instinctively knows the following attack types: Bite, punch, kick, *Claw Swipe*, and standard use of breath weapon (counts as one melee attack); +2 to roll with impact, and +1 to pull punch. Dragon metamorphosis takes one full melee (15 seconds).

Level 2: +2 to parry and dodge, and gains the *Tail Slap*, *Wing Attack: Basic*, and *Crush*.

Level 3: Dragon metamorphosis takes half a melee round (7 seconds), inflicts +2 M.D. in physical combat, and *Tail Slap Power Strike*.

Level 4: +1 additional attack per melee round, gains *Bite & Grip*, and *Tail Sweep*.

Level 5: +1 to strike and parry, +2 to dodge in flight, and gains *Tail Parry*.

Level 6: +1 to Spell Strength, gains the *Wing Sweep* and *Grappling Hold*.

Level 7: Gains *Wing Attack: Advanced*, is +2 to disarm, +2 to entangle, and +2 to pull punch.

Level 8: +1 attack per melee round, +1 to strike and parry, +1 to dodge in flight, gains the *Wing Gliding Sweep Attack*.

Level 9: Gains *Breath Weapon Concentrated Beam*, +1 to roll with impact and pull punch, and an additional +5% to Dimensional Teleport (a natural ability).

Level 10: Gains *Teleport Dodge*, +1 on initiative, and Critical Strike on an unmodified 19-20.

Level 11: Inflicts +2 M.D. from physical attacks, +2 to dodge in flight, and +1 to Spell strength.

Level 12: +1 attack per melee, +1 to strike, and +1 to Teleport Dodge.

Level 13: Gains *Breath Weapon Cone*, and +1 on initiative.

Level 14: +1 to Teleport Dodge and +1 to pull punch.

Level 15: +1 to Spell Strength and +1D4x10 to M.D.C.

Level 16: +1 additional attack per melee and inflicts +2 M.D. from physical attacks.

Level 17: +1 to Teleport Dodge and +1 to dodge in flight.

Level 18: +1 to strike and parry, and +1 to Spell Strength.

Level 19: +1 to Teleport Dodge, +1 to disarm, +2 to roll with impact and +1D4x10 to physical M.D.C.

Level 20: +1 additional attack per melee round.

Flying Power Armor

Types: Comparatively small power like armor the Coalition SAMAS (all types), Flying Titan, Triax Predator, NG Samson, NG Red Hawk, Chipwell Sky power armor and other small, humanoid-shaped power armor that are under 11 feet (3.3 m) tall and have flight capabilities.

Power Armor Combat Elite Bonuses: Or as listed under the individual robot descriptions.

+1 extra attack/action per melee round, *plus* those of the pilot at level one, +1 additional attack at levels 3, 6, 9 and 12.

Critical Strike is the same as the pilot's.

+2 on initiative.

+2 to strike with energy and long-range weapons.

+2 to strike in hand to hand combat.

+3 to parry.

+2 to dodge on the ground.

+5 to dodge when flying or leaping.

+2 to disarm.

+3 to pull punch.

+4 to roll with impact.

Punch Damage: As per Robot (or Augmented) P.S.

Power Punch: Double damage, but counts as two melee attacks.

Tear or Pry with Hands: 1D4 M.D.

Kick Damage: As per Robot (or Augmented) P.S.

Body Block/Ram: Equal to the Robot P.S. punch damage.

Full Speed Running Ram: Double Robot P.S. punch damage, plus 01-60% likelihood of knocking an opponent off his feet if the opponent is the same size or smaller (reduce by half if twice as big). Victim takes M.D. and is knocked off his feet, losing initiative and two melee attacks/actions.

Ground-Based Power Armor

Types: Comparatively small power armor like the Coalition Mauler, Terror Trooper, Glitter Boy Killer, Triax Flanker and Terrain Hopper, and other small, humanoid-shaped power armor that are under 14 feet tall (4.3 m; most are under 10 feet/3 m) and do not have flight capabilities.

Power Armor Combat Elite Bonuses: Or as listed under the individual robot descriptions.

+1 extra attack/action per melee round, *plus* those of the pilot at level one, +1 additional attack at levels 3, 5, 10 and 15.

Critical Strike is the same as the pilot's.

+1 on initiative.

+2 to strike with energy and long-range weapons.

+3 to strike in hand to hand combat.

+2 to parry.

+2 to dodge on the ground.

+3 to disarm.

+3 to pull punch.

+2 to roll with impact.

Punch Damage: As per Robot (or Augmented) P.S.

Power Punch: Double damage, but counts as two melee attacks.

Tear or Pry with Hands: 1D4 M.D.

Kick Damage: As per Robot (or Augmented) P.S.

Body Block/Ram: Equal to the Robot P.S. punch damage.

Full Speed Running Ram: Double Robot P.S. punch damage, plus 01-50% likelihood of knocking an opponent off his feet if the opponent is the same size or smaller (reduce by half if twice as big). Victim takes M.D. and is knocked off his feet, losing initiative and two melee attacks/actions.

Heavy Vehicular Style Robots

Types: Large, heavy ground robots that either have multiple legs, nonhuman shape and/or vehicular appearance or locomotion, like the Coalition Spider-Skull Walker, Scorpion-Skull Walker, the Triax Bug and Crab, and other big or bulky robots that do not have a humanoid shape; most are large to huge, and don't have flight capabilities.

Robot Combat Elite Bonuses:

+1 extra attack/action per melee round, *plus* those of the pilot at level one, +1 additional attack at levels 4, 8, and 12.

Critical Strike is the same as the pilot's.

+1 on initiative.

+3 to strike with energy weapons and long-range weapons (in addition to W.P. skills of the gunner or pilot; typically Weapon Systems and W.P. Heavy Mega-Damage Weapons are the only two that apply to robots and armored vehicles.

+1 to strike and parry in hand to hand combat.

+1 to dodge standing stationary.

+2 to dodge when already in motion.

+1 to roll with impact.

Punch/Kick Damage: As per Robot P.S.

Power Punch/Kick: Double damage, but counts as two melee attacks.

Kick Damage: As per Robot P.S.

Body Block/Ram: Equal to the Robot P.S. punch damage.

Full Speed Running Ram: Triple the Robot P.S. punch damage, plus 01-80% likelihood of knocking opponent off his feet if the opponent is the same size or smaller. Victim takes M.D. and is knocked off his feet, losing initiative and two melee attacks/actions.

Stomp: 1D6 M.D.; effective only against objects smaller than one third the robot's total height.

Heavy Ground Robots

Types: Large, heavy ground robots like the Coalition UAR-1 Enforcer, IAR-2 Abolisher, and IAR-3 Skull Smasher, Titan series robot vehicles (including the Titan Combat and Exploration 'bots), the Triax Forager, NG-Hunter Mobile Gun, NG-V10 Super Robot, and other big, humanoid-shaped 'bots that tower 20 feet (6.1 m) or larger and don't have flight capabilities.

Robot Combat Elite Bonuses:

+1 extra attack/action per melee round, *plus* those of the pilot at level one, +1 additional attack at levels 3, 6, 10 and 15.

Critical Strike is the same as the pilot's.

+1 on initiative.

+1 to strike with energy weapons, in addition to W.P. skills (typically Weapon Systems and W.P. Heavy Mega-Damage Weapons are the only two that apply to robots and armored vehicles).

+2 to strike in hand to hand combat.

+3 to parry.

+1 to dodge standing stationary.

+2 to dodge when already in motion, running or leaping.

+1 to disarm a giant-sized opponent.

+2 to pull punch.

+3 to roll with impact.

Punch Damage: As per Robot P.S.

Power Punch: Double damage, but counts as two melee attacks.

Tear or Pry with Hands: 1D6 M.D.

Kick Damage: As per Robot P.S.

Body Block/Ram: Equal to the Robot P.S. punch damage.

Full Speed Running Ram: Double the Robot P.S. punch damage,

plus 01-85% likelihood of knocking and opponent off his feet if the opponent is the same size or smaller. Victim takes M.D. and is knocked off his feet, losing initiative and two melee attacks/actions.

Stomp: 1D6 M.D.; effective only against objects smaller than one third the robot's total height.

Light Ground Robots

Types: Comparatively small, light ground robots like the Coalition IAR-4 Hellraiser and IAR-5 Hellfire, Triax Hunter (Jager) and Super Hunter, and other small, humanoid shaped 'bots that are under 20 feet (6.1 m) tall and don't have flight capabilities.

Robot Combat Elite Bonuses: Or as listed under individual robot descriptions.

+1 extra attack/action per melee round, *plus* those of the pilot at level one, +1 additional attack at levels 3, 5, 8, 11 and 15.

Critical Strike is the same as the pilot's.

+2 on initiative.

+1 to strike with energy weapons, in addition to W.P. skills (typically Weapon Systems and W.P. Heavy Mega-Damage Weapons are the only two that apply to robots and armored vehicles).

+3 to strike in hand to hand combat.

+3 to parry (if applicable).

+2 to dodge standing stationary.

+3 to dodge when already in motion, running or leaping.

+2 to disarm a giant-sized opponent.

+4 to pull punch.

+4 to roll with impact.

Punch Damage: As per Robot P.S.

Power Punch: Double damage, but counts as two melee attacks.

Tear or Pry with Hands: 1D4 M.D.

Kick Damage: As per Robot P.S.

Body Block/Ram: Equal to the Robot P.S. punch damage.

Full Speed Running Ram: Double the Robot P.S. punch damage, plus 01-70% likelihood of knocking an opponent off his feet if the opponent is the same size or smaller. Victim takes M.D. and is knocked off his feet, losing initiative and two melee attacks/actions.

Stomp: 1D4 M.D.; effective only against objects smaller than one third the robot's total height.

Robot Note: A selection of *Power Armor* and *Robot Vehicles* appear in **Rifts® Sourcebook One**, **Rifts® Mercenaries**, **Rifts® Merc Ops**, **Triax & The NGR** and other World Books and supplements.

Optional Robot Combat Damage Tables

Here are some optional, random hit location and damage tables for 'bots, robot vehicles and power armor. Obviously, if a robot's hand is blown off he loses the use of that hand.

Side Effects by Location

The following optional tables can be rolled on when a specific hit location has suffered major damage (a loss of 60% of the M.D.C. in that location/limb).

Hands

01-30%: Paralysis! Cannot flex fingers or pick up and carry or hold an object. The hand is in an opened position, the fingers spread slightly apart. Cannot make a fist, punch does half damage.

31-50%: Frozen in one position. The hand and fingers are locked in the configuration it was in when the damaging blast struck. This may mean locked in a fist, or clutching a weapon, etc. Punch does half damage unless in a clenched fist or karate style open fist.

51-75%: Structurally weakened. Cannot lift, carry or hold more than 200 pounds (90 kg). Punch does half damage.

76-00%: Joints lock at random times without warning. Roll every time the hand is used. 01-50% chance that the hand will suddenly lock-up/freeze and cannot perform the desired function (pick up, hold, etc.). Stays frozen for 1D4 melees.

Arms

01-20%: Paralysis! Cannot move. Just dangles uselessly at the side of the robot. Cannot strike or parry with that arm.

21-30%: Frozen in one position. The arm is locked in the configuration it was in when the damaging blast struck. This may mean locked in a raised, outstretched or other position. Cannot make a strike or parry with that arm unless the robot moves its entire upper body to do so. Damage is half.

31-50%: Sluggish response. Penalty: -1 hand to hand attack per melee and -1 to parry.

51-60%: Structurally weakened. Cannot lift, carry or hold more than 300 pounds (135 kg). Punch does half damage.

61-80%: Joints lock at random times without warning. Roll every time the arm is used. 01-50% chance that the arm will suddenly lock-up/freeze and cannot perform the desired function (punch, move, etc.). Stays frozen for 1D4 melees.

81-00%: Any special weapon or sensor features built into the hand, arm, and shoulder do NOT respond. Special systems are completely inoperable; requires 1D6 hours of repairs.

Legs

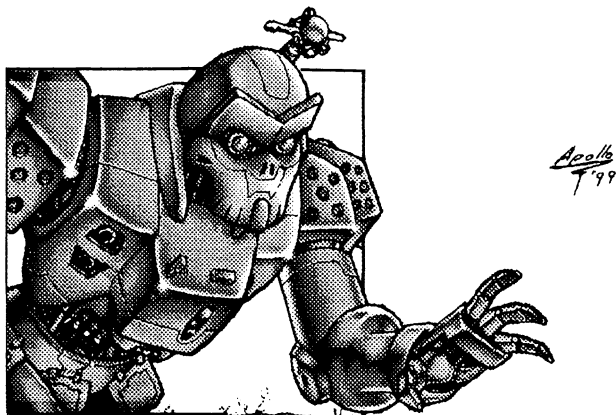
01-20%: Frozen in one position. The leg is stiff and unmoving. Cannot bend, reducing speed by 50%, and making leaps impossible. Climbing ability is also reduced by 25% and the robot is -1 to dodge.

21-40%: Sluggish response. Penalty: -1 to dodge and reduce speed and length of leaps by 25%.

41-60%: Structurally weakened. Kick attacks do half damage. 1-50% chance that the leg will buckle each time the robot is hit by more than 20 M.D.C. (anywhere on its body), dropping to one knee and losing one melee attack.

61-80%: Joints lock at random times without warning. Roll every time the leg is used to make a kick or leap, or is running at 45 mph (72 km) or higher (roll once for every five minutes of sustained running). 01-65% chance that the leg will suddenly lock-up/freeze and cannot perform the desired function. Same penalties as frozen in one position, number 01-20. Stays locked up for 1D6 melees.

81-00%: Any special weapon or sensor features built into the foot, leg, and hip do NOT respond. Special systems are completely inoperable; requires 1D6 hours of repairs.



Battle Injuries & Recovery

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, or by trained medical personnel, 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 (or one M.D.C. point if a Mega-Damage being) per minute (see below).

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.

Blood Loss Damage (Optional)

To keep the game fast and simple, we assume even Hit Point damage (unless severe) is not necessarily an immediate life and death situation. Most characters can take one to ten Hit Points of damage like falling off a log. They'll need some painkillers and to get bandaged up, but they'll be just fine with a little rest and medicine.

HOWEVER, when a character loses half or more of his Hit Point number, he is badly hurt. This is when Blood Loss rules kick in. Not only has the character taken a physical pounding, but he is also bleeding from one or more wounds or suffering from internal bleeding. This bleeding causes an additional *one Hit Point* of damage per minute (every four melee rounds), and can result in death!

Immediate and dramatic medical attention (blood transfusion, surgery, suturing of wounds, etc.) can rescue and revive a character who has fallen into a coma resulting from blood loss (and other injuries). A character lapses into a coma when his Hit Points are reduced to zero or fall below zero. **Warning!** Unless given at least First Aid treatment and bandaged to stop the worst of the bleeding, the comatose character will continue to lose one Hit Point per minute and could "bleed out" – fall below the P.E. margin for resuscitation and coma recovery. **Designer's Note:** Using the Blood Loss rule can add a tremendous amount of tension and urgency in getting a fallen comrade to a hospital, as well as make players handle their characters more carefully so they don't die. Try it, it may add a new dimension and level of fear to the game. ("Stop arguing and give the damn thing what it wants! We have to get Fred to a doctor or he's gonna die!") It also makes the psychic healer a more significant character.

Surviving Coma and Death

When a character's Hit Points are reduced to zero (or less), he collapses and falls into a coma. How much damage below zero a character can withstand is determined by the Physical Endurance (P.E.) attribute. A character can take one point of damage below zero (to negative one, -2, -3, etc.) for each P.E. point. **Example:** A character with a P.E. of 9 will lapse into a coma at zero Hit Points, but still lives up to a negative 9. However, if the character receives more damage (which is very possible) than the P.E., he is dead with no hope of recovery. Thus, if a character with a P.E. of 9 takes 10 points or more below zero, exceed-

Main Body

The damage to the main body can be accumulative. Roll once when the main body has had 60% of its M.D.C. depleted. Roll again for every additional 40 M.D.C. points of damage.

01-10%: Dual images on radar screen showing twice as many radar blips as really exist; impossible to distinguish between real target and ghost image. Penalty: -8 to strike without visual confirmation.

11-15%: Radar and sonar are lost; requires 1D6 hours of repairs. Pilot must rely on visual contact.

16-20%: Spotlights/headlights lost; must be replaced.

21-30%: Laser targeting system lost. Penalty: -2 to strike; requires 1D6 hours to repair.

31-40%: Communications damaged; reduce range by half, requires 1D4 hours to repair.

41-50%: Communications and audio system lost; effectively deaf. Requires 2D6 hours to repair.

51-60%: Electrical system damage. Secondary control panels catch on fire, knocking out personal computer(s); emergency back-up system engages, but not before the pilot's compartment is filled with smoke. Penalty: Lose two attacks that one melee round, -4 to strike, parry and dodge until the smoke clears in 2D6 melees.

61-70%: Severe internal damage. Reduce speed by half, -1 attack per melee, -2 on initiative, -2 to dodge.

71-80%: Computer memory damage! Cannot remember how to perform one of the following (roll or G.M.'s choice):

01-20%: Flight if robot vehicle, one skill program if a fully automated robot.

21-40%: Life Control: Includes temperature control and air recycling and circulation. About six hours of breathable air in a very hot and stuffy compartment. Penalty: -1 on initiative, strike and parry (pilot is distracted). If a fully automated robot, the unit smells of burning rubber and rotten eggs.

41-60%: Weapon Systems: One weapon system is completely forgotten and therefore, unusable.

61-80%: Target identification is lost. Cannot distinguish between friend and foe, weapon systems must be manually operated and are -1 to strike and -1 on initiative. If a fully automated 'bot it cannot decide who is friend or foe and suffers a -3 initiative roll and usually will not attack until attacked first.

81-00%: Voice actuated access system does not recognize any voices or spoken codes. Access hatches, locks, and command functions must be handled manually. Furthermore, it cannot remember how to turn the self-destruct system on or off. If a fully automated robot it does not recognize, acknowledge or obey its master (if any) and suffers a -10% skill penalty to all skills.

81-90%: Engine damage! Cannot engage any jet thrusters, fly or perform jet thrust leaps, and there is a minor radiation leak if nuclear powered (not yet life threatening).

91-00%: Sensor system is down (88% dead) and all combat bonuses are lost. Requires 3D6 hours to repair.

ing his P.E., he is beyond medical help and dies. Note that some special abilities may extend the amount of damage below zero a character can endure, and in some cases, continue to function.

The length of time a character in a coma will survive without treatment is again indicated by the P.E. Add one hour for each P.E. point.

Example: P.E. 9 = 9 hours, P.E. 10 = 10 hours, and so on.

Whether a character survives the coma and is stabilized (brought back to at least one Hit Point above zero), is determined by the roll of percentile dice. If the player rolls two successful recovery rolls out of three, the character breaks out of the coma and is no longer in danger of dying. This also means that he is brought up to one Hit Point above zero. Recovery of Hit Points from that time on is standard; see *Recovery of Hit Points*, above. **Note:** This can be attempted every hour until the character dies.

Recovery Ratio (roll 2 out of 3)

Treatment from unprofessional individuals with medical skills: 01-18%

Treatment from an intern or nurse (R.N.): 01-32%

Treatment from a doctor without proper facilities: 01-46%

Treatment from a doctor at a clinic (fair facilities): 01-56%

Treatment from a hospital: 01-66%

Treatment from a major, large hospital: 01-70%

Mega-Damage & M.D.C.

The Basics

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. "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 inflict 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 man-portable, heavy artillery cannon.

Mega-Damage Capacity (M.D.C.) armor is impervious to S.D.C./Hit Point damage! Only S.D.C. weapons that inflict 100 or more S.D.C. points of damage can hurt M.D.C. armor. All other S.D.C. attacks (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. And Armor Rating (A.R.) does not apply to M.D.C. structures or armor unless the armor does not cover the entire body. Even then, however, the attacker has to take careful aim and make a *Called Shot* to hit an unprotected part of the body.

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 roll seven or less 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 under 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.

A character can't live inside a suit of M.D.C. body armor either, sooner or later, a person 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.

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.

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 are not logical, but can save a human's life. Consequently, weapons and bullets made of *silver* may inflict Mega-Damage to the demon even they do 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. material 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., and this is always indicated in the description of the creature. Typically only Mega-Damage weapons hurt such monsters.

Hit Point/S.D.C. Damage While Inside M.D.C. Armor (optional)

There are a couple instances where a character can suffer physical S.D.C. and/or Hit Point damage while inside a Mega-Damage structure. Psionic and magical attacks directed at the mind will penetrate most M.D.C. body armor and human-size power armor to affect the person inside (can not penetrate SAMAS or Glitter Boys, nor most large vehicle style robots).

A character in body armor or human-size power armor can also suffer **impact damage** from falls at great height, or high speed crashes, or explosions. Most body armor and power armor are carefully designed and padded so that the armor absorbs the majority of impact damage, however, the body inside is still rattled and slammed around. In most cases, the physical damage one suffers is minimal and leads to nothing more than a few bruises.

Impact Damage Rules Applicable to Body & Power Armor:

Fall: One point of S.D.C. or Hit Point damage for every 20 feet (6.1 m) height from a fall.

High speed crash: 1D4 points of S.D.C. or Hit Point damage for every 20 mph (32 km) of speed above 50 mph (80 km).

Impact from an Explosion: One point of S.D.C. or Hit Point for every 20 M.D. points from an explosion.

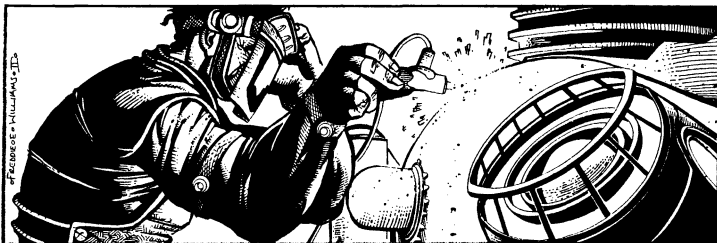
Chance of being stunned: In each case there is a chance of being stunned.

Fall: 1-40% chance of being momentarily stunned (no attacks, -9 to strike, parry, and dodge) for 1D4 melees from any fall above 100 feet (30.5 m). 1-79% chance of being stunned if the fall is 200 feet (61 m) or higher for 1D6 melees.

Crash: 1-30% chance of being stunned for 1D4 melees if impact is more than 50 mph (80 km), add +5% for every additional 10 miles (16 km) above 50 mph.

Explosion impact: There is a 1-60% chance of being stunned for 1D4 melees whenever hit by more than 40 M.D.C. at once.

Also, the force of an attack, especially from missiles and rail guns, may knock a character off his feet. Generally, this only happens when the individual is struck by 50 M.D. or more; Game Masters should use common sense in deciding when to use this element in combat. Characters who are knocked off their feet lose initiative and one attack/action that melee.



Mega-Damage Technology

The Golden Age of Man saw the creation of Mega-Damage Capacity materials and Mega-Damage weapons. Advancements in bionics, robotics and nano-technology meant combat vehicles, giant robots (with a human pilot inside), power armor, bionic limbs and armor, and even human-sized body armor could be made of M.D.C. material. It was all part of their mad quest for human augmentation, and M.D.C. armor and M.D. weaponry could turn a human clad in M.D.C. body armor and equipped with an M.D. rifle into the rough equivalent of a light APC with legs. M.D.C. Power Armor was the equivalent of a tank, and a giant robot vehicle or armor vehicle made of M.D.C. became the equivalent of a tank company.

You can now see how conventional S.D.C. weapons and armor became useless and obsolete against such advanced weapon technology. This is why nations in the pre-Rifts world before the Great Cataclysm, felt helpless, vulnerable and frightened if they did not possess M.D.C. materials for armor, war machines, building construction and fortifications, and M.D. weapons for defense.

During the Great Cataclysm and throughout the Dark Age, a single warrior clad in M.D.C. armor (let alone a rare power armor or giant robot) was as powerful as a demon against survivors and D-Bees armed with only common S.D.C. weapons and defenses. Many of these M.D.C. empowered survivors would use their Mega-Damage superiority to conquer communities and name themselves king. This was especially true of small bands of 3-12 who could watch each other's back, especially when they were outside their M.D.C. armor. Unless overpowered by sheer weight of numbers, tricked and trapped, or caught outside their armor, these warriors were the lords of the land. Their

only real threats, the Mega-Damage demons and monsters from the Rifts, and people learning to use magic and psionics (both with M.D. powers). This is also why the fabled *Glitter Boys* became so feared and respected. They were one of the most powerful M.D.C. armors on the planet and armed with one of the most powerful M.D. weapons. One Glitter Boy could challenge and destroy a less well armored tyrant or band of lightly equipped M.D.C. brigands. A pair, trio or small squad of (4-8) Glitter Boys could take on a dragon, Demon Lord or terrible monster and have a good chance of coming out the winners. The fact that most Glitter Boys were passed on from generation to generation and followed the path of the hero, made the G.B. a legendary figure.

Before the Great Cataclysm, Mega-Damage weapons and M.D.C. materials were restricted mainly to military use and even that was limited as the people of the world questioned the wisdom and morality of such weaponry.

After the Great Cataclysm and during the Two Hundred Years Dark Age, the secrets of creating M.D. weapons and M.D.C. armor was lost along with most pre-Rifts technology. Human and D-Bee survivors began to turn toward magic and psionics as means to counter Mega-Damage monsters and used what few M.D. weapons and M.D.C. armor they could find in the ruins. Over the centuries, however, humans (and D-Bees) climbed out of barbarism and began to rediscover the old technology. It was the luck of the draw, really, as to who found M.D.C. technology, were able to figure it out, and who had the means to reproduce it (the most difficult task of all). In every case, it was a matter of finding not just the technology, but a military or industrial factory with pre-Rifts machines (some M.D.C. themselves) that could be cleaned, restarted and operated to create Mega-Damage items. After that, studying the manuals and computer files of the past, and relearning what had been forgotten, gave select groups the ability to create Mega-Damage weapons, armor and war machines. Reverse engineering of other pre-Rifts weapons, vehicles and devices excavated from ancient ruins enabled these same people to expand on that knowledge and create their own designs.

At first, there were only four groups to possess this knowledge in North America: *Chi-Town* (CS), *Ishpeming* (Northern Gun), *Free Quebec* (now ex-CS in Canada) and *Wilk's* (specializing in laser technology). There was a fifth and Sixth, Archie-3 and the Republicans, but both stayed hidden and kept to themselves. A few others, like the *Manistique Imperium*, *Iron Heart*, *Kingsdale* and *Lazlo*, possessed some advanced technology, but not Mega-Damage technology. Mega-Damage technological superiority is what gave these places a tremendous advantage over everyone else.

At first, *all* hoarded the technology for themselves. This allowed **Chi-Town** to become the greatest power in North America and use its influence and unrivaled military power to establish the *Coalition States*, unifying like-minded allies. The CS used its superior power to build a new nation, and it was only its short-sighted isolationist attitude, lack of human resources, and fear of magic and the inhuman, that stopped them from taking over half the continent. Of course, most of the continent was (and still is) a *savage wilderness*, as Erin Tarn is fond of saying.

Like Chi-Town, **Free Quebec** kept most of its M.D.C. technology a secret for itself. Even after becoming a member of the Coalition States, its leaders would keep some of its secrets (namely the mass manufacturing of Glitter Boys) a secret from Chi-Town and the nations of the world. A plan that would help save it in later years when Quebec and Chi-Town would finally clash. (See World Books #11: *Coalition War Campaign* and #22: *Free Quebec* for details.)

Wilk's was the first to offer Mega-Damage weapons for sale. The technology of the past it had discovered did not include armor, robots or vehicles, but laser systems, including laser weapons, and advanced electronics and optic systems. Thus, it would focus on communications systems, lasers weapons, laser related items and electronics (sensors, cameras, bugging devices, radios, laser targeting, etc.); a specialization that has served it well.

Ishpeming, struggling to survive, followed their lead and went the extra step of offering light M.D.C. vehicles, manned robots, and M.D.C. body armor as well as weapons. Its manufacturing arm was called **Northern Gun**, a name that would soon become synonymous with the industrial city-state and budding, young nation.

For decades, Mega-Damage weapons and technology were relatively rare, expensive, hard to get, and often heavy and clumsy to use. However, around 70 P.A. that all began to change. The ever increasing amount of Mega-Damage technology manufactured and sold, and the improving level of technology of numerous communities, thanks to the stability brought about by places like Chi-Town and Free Quebec, enabled *others* to catch up and *steal* Mega-Damage technology, and begin manufacturing their own.

The Black Market, a criminal underworld organization with a network that spans most of the civilized areas of the US and Canada, was the worst offender and most aggressive opportunist. The Black Market had already cornered the bionics and cybernetics market and possessed some Mega-Damage technology as it applied to bionics, but it saw a huge market waiting to be plumbed in the areas of M.D. weapons and M.D.C. everything else! Black Market agents “acquired” (stole, bribed, and bought) many of the tech secrets of Northern Gun and Iron Heart, built their own secret factories (or shared technology and protection with communities like Manistique to get them to make M.D. items themselves), and began *copying* and *selling* “knock-offs” at discount prices. Being crooks, they would also hijack M.D. weapons, armor and gear from other kingdoms, including the CS, and sell them as their own. Today, the Black Market represents a big part of the overall weapons market in North America, and owns 80% of the secondary market (cheap knock-offs, stolen goods and used equipment).

The Manistique Imperium had the factories and resources to use Mega-Damage technology, and were making light M.D.C. vehicles, but lacked the complete know-how to make military grade M.D. weapons and vehicles. Hungry to get into the weapons business and out of Northern Gun’s shadow, the kingdom cut a deal with the Black Market, becoming a secret supplier of the underworld organization in trade for the secrets of Mega-Damage. Manistique, under its **Wellington** label is still second-rate compared to Northern Gun, Wilk’s and the CS, but is catching up. So is the Black Market who, up until recently, made the lion’s share of its money in volume knock-offs and discount bionics.

Others who discovered lost technology, like **Golden Age Weaponsmiths** and **Bandito Arms** (a branch of the Black Market in the New West) in the last decade or so, are new players on the North American scene, as are *foreign influences* such as Triax, Atlantis and Naruni Enterprises (the latter being a weird, alien arms dealer). **Techno-Wizard** weapons and devices that use magic and technology have also entered the Mega-Damage market, though the inherent limitations of such devices prevent mass market appeal and they represent a tiny (1-2%) portion of the M.D. market. (TW Limitations: Weapons and devices can only be used by characters with high P.P.E. or I.S.P., and they must be handmade.)

All of this has led to something of a technological, industrial and cultural revolution that has put Mega-Damage weapons into the hands of thousands who could never get them before. The weapons business is booming, turning those who specialize in it into wealthy, advanced nations. The increased availability of M.D. equipment has given budding, new communities that would never have made it in the past, a better chance of survival, provided they can afford M.D.C. items and M.D. weapons they need, and survive the many hazards that will inevitably come their way (most start-up towns perish within 1D6 years).

Mega-Damage weapons are still uncommon. It may not seem like it to the player characters, because getting and using such items and battling M.D.C. opponents are all part of their job description. However, to the average person, Mega-Damage items are rare and valuable. The typical S.D.C. town will be 90-98% S.D.C. in its construction. Members of its militia, lawmen and/or some of its citizens may be the

only ones who have one or two M.D. energy weapons and M.D.C. armor each, plus one or two M.D.C. combat vehicles or a giant robot to defend the entire town; if that. Many communities hire mercs on an as-needed basis, or invite a band of mercenaries and adventurers with Mega-Damage capabilities to retire in their home town and serve as the community’s champions and defenders. Some will even pay them for the service. This way the townspeople can go about the everyday necessities of living and their champions can deal with Mega-Damage threats.

Designer’s Note on M.D.C.: Some critics have complained that the Mega-Damage system is too uneven. That a human without armor going up against an M.D.C. opponent is dead meat. Um, yeah. Just like you or I would be dead meat going up against a tank or assault helicopter. The player needs to use his head and hide until he can get the gear to take on an M.D.C. opponent (i.e., get his own tank or assault helicopter or a nice big bazooka, only in this case, it would be his own Mega-Damage weapons and equipment). Life, and especially war, is not fair. Rifts Earth is violent, deadly, alien, and seething with magic energy. Humans are at a great disadvantage and have been for a very long time. Mega-Damage technology, along with magic and psionics, are the *great equalizers*.

Is this fair? Yes. Fair and realistic, and it works. More than a million people have enjoyed playing **Rifts®** and the M.D.C. system has worked for them.

Perhaps one should think of two modes of life, M.D.C. and S.D.C. The M.D.C. life is wandering through the wilderness, exploring the world and taking on Mega-Damage threats. It’s what helps set your character apart – he or she is out of the ordinary. One of the crazy adventurers, explorers or warriors who risks his life to explore the world, tackle other high-powered opponents and battle monsters. If he wanted to play it safe, he wouldn’t be who and what he is, he’d be safe and snug in a city working 9-5 as a sales clerk or computer operator. Accept the risks and move forward.

The second life is S.D.C. It too is dangerous, especially for an adventurer or man at arms who has made his share of enemies. This is when the character comes out of his M.D.C. armor or vehicle and relaxes as an ordinary Joe. It also means he has to take precautions. There had better be an M.D.C. armor clad teammate or two on guard when the rest of the team makes camp and goes to bed. They’d better be ready to jump for cover and pull out their concealed M.D. energy pistols if they are ambushed or cornered by an old enemy or a psychic or mage with Mega-Damage powers. Or be ready to do some dancing and fast talking to get themselves out of trouble. Obviously, it’s best to get out of M.D.C. armor in S.D.C. environments where M.D. weapons are not allowed, but that can be difficult, especially when so many beings, including cyborgs, practitioners of magic and psychics possess M.D. level attacks. Still, the risk is dramatically reduced at a location where Mega-Damage gear is banned. That’s the time to be human again and walk free of one’s armor. And that’s when S.D.C. and Hit Points factor into combat.

Game Masters, be cool. Don’t kill a character with a cheap shot from a hidden assailant brandishing an M.D. blaster or rifle from across the street. That sucks. A character should always have a chance to face an opponent and escape death. As the G.M. you’re the one who is in control of when a character faces an opponent and what weapons the enemy has available. Make it as fair a fight (within the context of the game) as possible. If the player character without M.D.C. protection is getting ambushed by a brigand with Mega-Damage weapons or powers, have the first shot miss or let our hero catch a glimpse of his attacker, giving him time to dive for cover, step back indoors (behind an M.D.C. door, perhaps), turn invisible, pull an enemy in front of him to take the blast meant for him, or a chance to surrender (to escape later) or talk his way out of trouble, and so on.

Of course, if an S.D.C. character runs up to a Coalition UAR-1 riot robot with a sharp stick in hand, let the ‘bot stomp him, he deserves it.

Yet, even with this goofy example, there is a chance for role-playing, action, luck and survival. The geek with the sharp stick should have the option to dodge the giant robot's stomp attack. Maybe he gets squished and maybe he dodges. The robot stomps again, and the character tries to dodge out of its way, again. This is another example of the G.M.'s discretion, because the robot could just as easily fire a volley of missiles or one of its guns at the character and probably have a better chance of hitting him. However, since the robot's attacker represents little real danger to it, it seems likely that the robot's pilot would react by stomping or kicking at the man rather than blasting away. Just like it makes sense that the UAR-1 will ignore this non-threat when a real one appears, like a cyborg, mage or armored warrior (giving the crazy person a chance to escape and hide or get his M.D. gear and rejoin the fight).

Game Masters, you are the ones who have the burden of maintaining game balance, responding reasonably to the player characters' antics and keeping the action moving and fun. This isn't as difficult as it may sound once you get the hang of role-playing. Just try to imagine all your options, pick the ones that seem to make the most sense or offer the best options, and go with the flow.

– Kevin Siembieda



Surviving Mega-Damage Attacks

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 magical 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., but sometimes even that's not enough.

The following *guidelines* are provided to give player characters a chance, however slight, to survive a Mega-Damage (M.D.) energy blast that would normally kill or vaporize the character. If the G.M. agrees, the character can survive a Mega-Damage intensity wound as long as a

trained medic, doctor or psychic healer makes a successful Field Surgery or Medical skill roll.

How M.D. Weapons Work

WARNING: This information is not for the squeamish and is included due to popular demand from Rifts® players asking how energy weapons work and their effects on victims.

Lasers, ion, and particle beam weapons fire a thin beam or pulse of energy with Mega-Damage capabilities. When the beam or pulse hits, it either vaporizes part of the body (what soldiers euphemistically call “mist” or “misting” an enemy), or slices through a body like a hot knife through butter, sheering off a limb/body part or punching a hole through the body. Note that most blasts and beams stop upon hitting their target, and if a beam goes all the way through an S.D.C. structure, it stops upon hitting whatever is behind the first target. The same is true of M.D. projectiles such as **rail gun rounds**.

Lasers burn and cauterize the flesh as they cut through S.D.C. bodies. That's good if it sheers off a limb, because there is no bleeding, however, the shock to the body is so great that a single M.D. point does massive damage and kills its victim 99 out of 100 times. Cauterization is *bad*, because it makes reattaching a severed limb impossible (all the nerves and blood vessels are closed), and if the laser cuts into the body – the cauterization literally leaves a hole through the victim! This damages internal organs and requires extensive surgery to cut away the burned flesh and remove the damaged organs. Internal organs will have to be replaced with artificial Bio-Systems or cybernetic alternatives. Note, laser weapons have no kick and are silent. However, most humanoids are used to their weapons making noise and found silent laser weapons to be unnerving. As a result, manufacturers have built sound generators into their laser weapons to produce a sound with every blast or pulse.

An **ion beam** works similar to a laser only it does more severe damage, burning and irradiating the entire severed limb, effectively turning it into a piece of cooked meat, as well as a portion of the body around the wound.

Particle beams are the most destructive, “misting” – completely vaporizing – the limb/body part it hits.

Plasma Blasts are, in some ways, worse, consuming the limb cut off the body, liquefying the flesh and bone, and severely burning 25-35% of the rest of the victim's body (third degree burns). Skin grafts will be necessary and additional muscle and internal organs could be so badly damaged they need to be replaced with Bio-Systems or bionics, all requiring massive amounts of surgery and money.

Mega-Damage Explosives can work in a similar way, vaporizing an S.D.C. character or structure at *point-blank range* (the center of the blast), but hitting those in the rest of the blast radius with shrapnel or destroying one or more body parts rather than instantly killing their victims. Even in our own real world, we see examples of technology – i.e., body armor, advanced medicine and surgical procedures – saving lives, but at a terrible cost. More soldiers than any time in history are surviving grievous battlefield injuries, including the loss of one to all limbs. Mercifully, in the scientifically advanced setting of Rifts Earth, limbs, internal organs, eyes, skin and even the entire face can be rebuilt and replaced.

Beating the Odds

Optional guidelines for treatment of a near-fatal M.D. injury

The trick to surviving massive M.D. trauma is *immediate medical* attention (within 2D4 minutes) to stabilize the injured warrior. If only a hand, arm, or leg is struck, all the M.D. of the blast is spent on that body part, destroying or cutting off the limb. The resulting shock to the body wipes out almost all the Hit Points and S.D.C. and puts the victim into a coma. This type of attack, however, offers a chance for survival, although the victim will be maimed for life.

A failed Medical skill roll means the injured character was beyond saving and dies a few minutes later. However, if the medical skill roll (Paramedic, Field Surgery, Medical Doctor, etc.) is successful, the patient is stabilized and ready for serious treatment and a chance to survive.

First, Determine the Mega-Damage

Unless the *attacker* made a Called Shot at the character's head, the victim has the chance to live. The basic idea is that the M.D. blast was partially absorbed by nearby cover, body armor or merely sheared off a limb. Game Masters, roll on the following Hit Location table or come up with your own explanation and damage.

Hit Location & Damage from a Mega-Damage Blast

- 01-10% Lost a foot.
- 11-20% Lost a hand.
- 21-30% Lost an entire arm.
- 31-40% Lost the entire leg.
- 41-50% Lost both arms.
- 51-60% Severe external body and skin damage and loss of one limb (arm or leg; player's choice).
- 61-70% Shot clean through. Severe shock and internal injury; 1D4 internal organs will have to be replaced.
- 71-80% Shot clean through. Severe shock and internal injury; lost one lung and damage to heart or 1D4 internal organs. Cybernetic or Bio-Systems required.
- 81-90% Lost half of the face plus 20% of the upper body (skin and muscle) is damaged. Cybernetic reconstruction and skin grafts required.
- 91-95% Lost entire lower body from the waist down; bionics will be required for complete restoration.
- 96-00% Lost all four limbs (arms and legs) or one entire side of the body (an arm and a leg on the same side). Bionics will be required to make a complete recovery and function unimpaired.

Second, Immediate Medical Attention Required!

As noted earlier, for the character to survive, he needs to get medical attention within 2D4 minutes after the traumatic injury from an M.D. blast. Treatment must come from someone with one of the following skills: *Paramedic*, *Field Surgery* or superior medical skill, *Holistic* or *Medical Doctor* (or *Psychic Surgery*, *psychic healing* or *magical healing*).

If the medical personnel (Paramedic, Field Surgeon, or Holistic or Medical Doctor) makes a **successful skill roll**, the character is in shock, hovers at death's door, and falls into a coma; reduce S.D.C. to zero and only 1D6+2 Hit Points remain. However, the critically injured character is *stabilized* enough to be transported to a hospital or operated upon at a field clinic.

A **successful second roll** under the Field Surgery or Holistic or Medical Doctor skill and 4D6x10 minutes of surgical work on the in-

jured character means the character will live! However, the wounded character is in great pain and likely to require bionic reconstruction and additional surgeries or remain crippled (missing a limb) and horribly scarred. Fortunately, cybernetics and bionic reconstruction (and sometimes magic or psionic healing) can restore the character to appear and function as good as new. The problem may be finding the money to pay for everything. Friends or family might pitch in to cover the cost, so might a grateful community. Mercenary companies usually have a medical fund to get at least the basics done (i.e., no augmentation, just basic bionics at the normal human range), and many governments, armies, the Black Market and even wealthy private business people may be willing to subsidize the bionic reconstruction on the condition that the character *serves* them for 2-5 years (roll 1D4+1 for random determination). Otherwise, the character is on his own.

Insanity Due to Near Death Trauma: Insanity resulting from the ordeal is also likely. Roll on the following table. Insanity tables start on page 331.

01-33% No mental trauma. The character doesn't remember how he got shot, who did it or the initial surgery that saved his life.

34-50% Roll once on the Phobia Table.

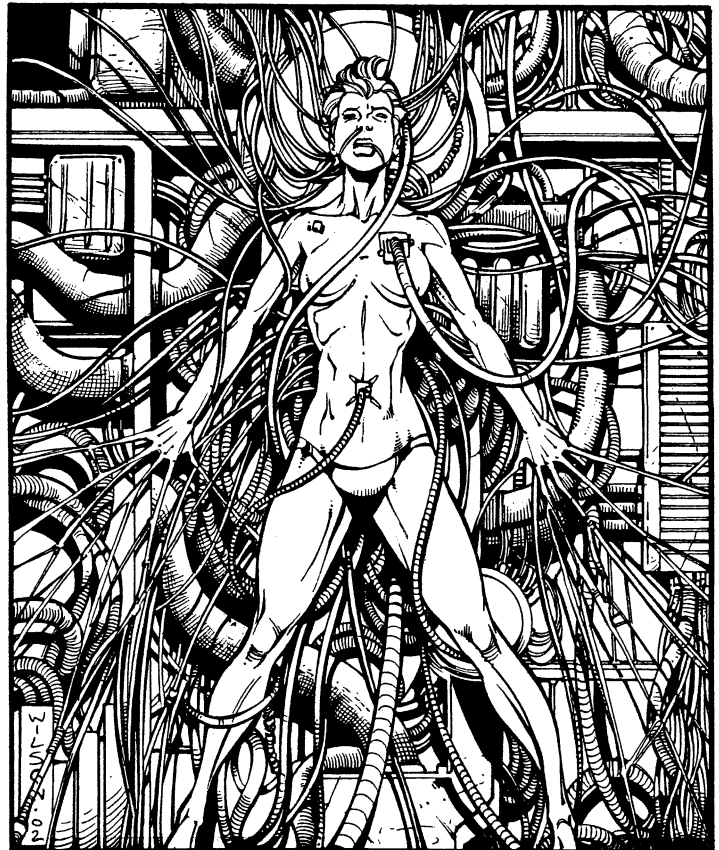
51-60% Roll once on the Obsession Table.

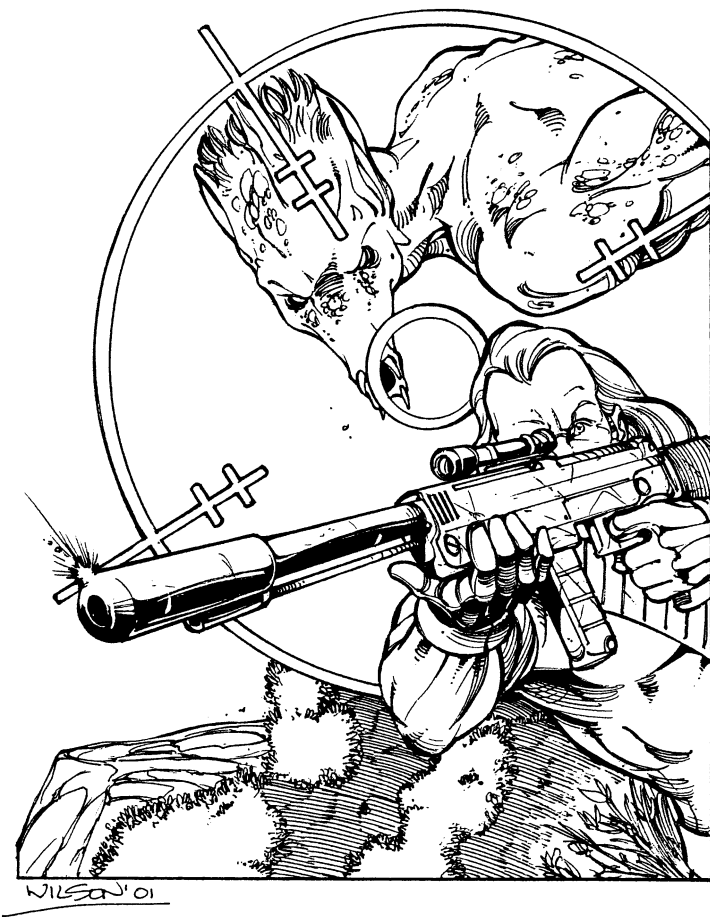
61-70% Roll twice on the Phobia Table.

71-80% Roll once on the Random Insanity Table.

81-90% Roll once on the Affective Disorder Table.

91-00% Roll once on the Psychosis Table.





Ranged Combat

The following are new, simplified rules involving *guns* and other *modern weapons*. Though a version of these rules first appeared in the sci-fi RPG, *Splicers™*, they were developed for *BTS-2*. These rules are fun, fast and easy to use while reasonably simulating gun play.

Modern Weapon Proficiency (W.P.)

There is more to shooting a revolver, pistol, rifle, energy weapon and other weapons, than pointing and squeezing the trigger. Even taking careful aim requires practice with the weapon, and different categories of weapons have different applications, quirks and considerations one needs to know to get the optimum performance out of them. A Modern Weapon Proficiency in a particular type of weapon gives the character a good understanding of all of these things, at least in that particular type of weapon. The character will know how to handle the weapon safely and how to use and reload it, disassemble, unjam, clean and otherwise maintain the weapon. He also knows the basic specifications/capabilities of the weapon, such as the type of ammunition it takes, maximum effective range, approximate damage, special accessories for the weapon (gun sights, silencers, etc.), and the weapon's quirks, strengths and weaknesses.

The character has also had hours (perhaps years) of training with the weapon and continues to work out with the weapon on a regular basis. This means target practice and practical experience with it in the field and, as a result, he has a good *feel* for the weapon; its weight, its kick when fired, the sound of gunfire, and performance/exactly what it can do. A character with a Modern W.P. can make Aimed and "Called Shots" (aimed at a specific location within a larger target, such as

shooting a gun out of an opponent's hands, shooting the hand, shooting an antenna, or tire, or whatever). His penalties are also *less* when shooting *bursts* or *wild*.

No Weapon Proficiency (W.P.)

Anybody who does not have a W.P. in a particular weapon type *CAN* pick up a gun (including energy weapons) 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 recharge the weapon, clean it nor anything about ammunition, the gun's kick, how to use a gun sight to aim accurately, where to put an E-Clip, 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 or other heavy weapon, and -6 when shooting wild.

Traditional Guns & Energy Weapons

Any character in *Rifts®* can use guns, but some may not have the desire, interest or training to use them. Remember, although any character may use a gun, without a W.P. the character has *no* bonus to strike and may have no idea how to reload the weapon once its ammunition payload is spent.

Physical oriented O.C.C.s and combat oriented occupations may provide one or more W.P.s in modern weapons, otherwise the character must select a weapon skill (W.P.) as one of his *O.C.C. Related* or *Secondary* skills.

Note: See *Skill Descriptions: W.P. Modern Weapons* for complete descriptions, damage, range and details.

W.P. Handguns: A familiarity with all types of handguns, including revolvers and pistols. 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. 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. 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. 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, and mini-guns. 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. W.P. Bonuses: +1 to strike at levels 2, 5, 10 and 15.

W.P. Energy Pistol: A familiarity with pistol and submachine-gun style energy weapons that fire Mega-Damage energy beams, blasts, pulses or M.D. rounds/ammunition. Includes lasers, ion beams, particle beams, pulse weapons and similar in the classic handgun shape, size and weight. W.P. Bonuses: +1 to strike at levels 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 and 15.

W.P. Energy Rifle: A familiarity with rifle style energy weapons that fire Mega-Damage energy beams, blasts, pulses or M.D. rounds/ammunition. W.P. Bonuses: +1 to strike at levels 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, and 14.

W.P. Heavy Mega-Damage Weapons (aka Heavy Energy Weapons): A familiarity with military class weapons, including grenade launchers, rocket launchers, rail guns, mini-missile launchers, and turrets and weapons built into combat vehicles and giant robots. W.P. Bonuses: +1 to strike at levels 2, 4, 7, 10 and 13.

Weapon Modifiers

Bonuses & Penalties Depending on Circumstance

To shoot something the attacker must roll 1D20 and needs an 8 or higher to strike. HOWEVER, the shooter may also have *bonuses* to hit from Weapon Proficiency skills and *penalties* from conditions and circumstances.

Bonuses: The only bonuses that apply to using guns and other ranged weapons are the specific *Weapon Proficiency*, *Sniping skill bonus* if the character has that skill, any applicable bonus from the weapon itself, and the ones that follow . . .

Aimed Shot Bonus: Only a single shot can be accurately “Aimed” (no bursts or shooting wild). The skilled shooter is +2 to strike, but the attack counts as two melee attacks. This applies to a single shot fired from a revolver, pistol, bolt-action rifle, semi-automatic rifle, shotgun or grenade launcher. **Note:** An “Aimed shot” can only be tried with a single “sniper-style” shot, not a burst or when shooting wild.

A “Called Shot” target specification. This is a shot that homes in on a specific part of a larger target, such as a bull’s-eye, an opponent’s head, hand, gun, radio, radio antenna, sensor cluster, spotlight, tires, etc., but counts as two melee attacks.

To make a “Called Shot,” the player must “call” or “announce” his character’s intention; i.e. “I’m going to shoot the gun from his hand,” aim and shoot. A carefully *Aimed and Called Shot* also gets the benefit of the +2 bonus to Aim but counts as *three melee attacks/actions*. On the other hand, a quickly aimed Called Shot only counts as two melee attacks, but does not count as a true Aimed shot and does NOT get the +2 bonus to strike.

Penalties on a Called Shot: Furthermore, a bull’s-eye or any small target is difficult to shoot, and even with an Aimed and/or Called Shot, the shooter suffers a penalty of -3 or -4 to strike (sometimes more depending on the target). **Note:** A “Called Shot” can only be tried with a single “sniper-style” shot, not a burst or when shooting wild.

Rapid-Fire Pulse. Some modern lasers and other energy weapons fire 3-4 instantaneous energy pulses at the same target. This happens so fast it is not even considered to be a burst, but a single, heavy blast. It counts as one melee attack and suffers no penalty to strike except on an Aimed or Called Shot, in which case any strike bonus is reduced by half (round down).

Rolling a Natural Twenty to Strike *always* hits its target and does double damage (Critical Strike). The only way it can miss is if the defender rolls a Natural Twenty to dodge!

Single Shot: The standard, non-Aimed, non-burst, single firing of a ranged weapon counts as one melee attack. No additional bonuses or penalties apply, beyond those gained from W.P. skills and situational modifiers below.

Simultaneous Dual (Double or Twin) Blasts count as one melee attack and usually are the result of firing a double-barreled weapon from a suit of power armor, robot or combat vehicle (e.g., a double-barreled laser turret).

Penalties

Penalties are *accumulative*, so if a character with W.P. Submachine-Gun was firing a burst weapon and shooting wild, he’d be firing the burst weapon at half his usual bonuses as well as suffering a penalty of -6 to strike for shooting wild!

Shooting Blind: -10 to strike what you cannot see, including shooting into ground cover without actually seeing a specific target, and firing around corners without looking.

Shooting Bursts: Automatic firing, or bursts, are not intended for accuracy: reduce the shooter’s normal W.P. bonuses to strike by half. If the character does not have a W.P. for the weapon he is -3 to strike.

Shooting Wild: Has a penalty of -6 to strike and applies even to trained weapons experts when the character is terrified, angry/enraged, panicked, off balance, drunk, shooting from a moving vehicle/platform/horseback, spraying an area, shooting while under heavy fire himself, and while running, leaping, dodging, falling or hanging upside down.

Shooting at a Moving Target: -1 to strike someone running (under 20 mph/32 km), -1 to strike for each additional 50 mph (80 km) of speed the target is traveling, and an additional -1 to strike if the target is taking evasive action (zig-zag, leaping behind cover, etc.).

Shooting at Someone Behind Cover: If the target is completely covered/concealed there is no hope of hitting him from a distance, and the shooter will need to find a different vantage point where he can see the character or move in on the place of protection and concealment. If the target is hiding but part of him/it can be seen or if the target periodically pops its head or arm out to shoot back, curse or peek out, the shooter must make a *Called Shot* to shoot him/it and either shoot what little is seen or wait until he pops into the open for a couple of seconds.

Shooting Beyond the Effective Range: One may attempt a shot that is as much as 30% farther than the Maximum Effective Range of any given weapon, but the shooter suffers a penalty of -5 to strike.

A Character’s P.P. Bonuses do *NOT* count when shooting a gun.

Dodging Bullets & Energy Blasts

A character may try to dodge gunfire and energy beams on the condition he *knows they are coming* and he *can see his attacker*.

The only applicable bonuses for dodging gunfire or energy beams (from energy weapons, monsters, psionics or magic) are the character’s P.P. attribute bonus and any O.C.C. bonus to dodge. The defender trying to dodge must match or better the shooter’s roll to strike to make a successful dodge.

Dodging Penalties:

-10 to dodge at point-blank range; within 10 feet (3 m) of the shooter.

-5 to dodge at close range, within 50 feet (15.2 m) of the shooter.

Quick Reference – Bonuses & Penalties

All Ranged Attacks: Requires a roll of 8 to strike (including W.P. & Sniping bonuses).

Aimed Shot: +2 to strike (takes 2 attacks).

Called Shot: No bonus, but enables the character to get a bead on very small or difficult specific targets; counts as two melee attacks (possible penalties for small targets).

“Aimed” Called Shot: +2 to strike, but can target very small, specific items and areas (takes *three* attacks; possible penalties for small targets).

Shooting Blind: -10 to strike.

Shooting Bursts: Strike bonuses reduced by ½ (-3 to strike without W.P.).

Shooting Wild: -6 to strike.

Shooting 30% Beyond Normal Range: -5 to strike.

Target is Moving: -1 to strike, -1 additional per 50 mph (80 km) beyond 20 mph (32 km), and -1 for evasive action.

Target is Behind Cover: Requires Called Shot, impossible if complete cover.

Dodging Gunfire, within 10 feet (3 m): -10 to dodge.

Dodging Gunfire, within 50 feet (15.2 m): -5 to dodge.

Gun Terms

Attacks per Melee: Each individual shot/bullet fired counts as one melee attack. Firing a short burst or pulse also counts as one melee attack, but is less accurate. Long bursts and bursts from certain weapons will be indicated in the W.P. description and may count as two (sometimes more) attacks. Thus, if the character has five attacks per melee round, he can shoot five single bullets or short bursts, or two long bursts and one single shot or short burst. If firing a machine-gun, only two short bursts and one attack with a different weapon or one other type of action is possible. (**Note:** For energy weapons a “pulse” is typically the equivalent of a short burst and counts as one melee attack, but suffers the usual burst penalty; reduce the bonus to strike by half.)

Damage: The amount of S.D.C./Hit Point damage or M.D. (Mega-Damage) the weapon inflicts from a single round/bullet and/or short burst.

Damage to Weapons: Weapons only take damage when an attacker is deliberately trying to damage or destroy it. A *Called Shot* is required when trying to hit a weapon in a character's hand or a small or moving target. Unless stated otherwise, the attacker suffers a penalty of -3 to strike.

Range: This is the effective range the weapon can be fired with any measure of accuracy.

Main Body: The “main body” of vehicles and giant creatures is typically the largest area of body mass offered by the target. On people/humanoid creatures that is the upper torso (chest and waist). The main body of an automobile is the large body mass that covers the frame. Parts not considered to be part of the main body include the tires/wheels, legs, arms, hands, sensor cluster, headlights, etc. To strike something other than the main body, the attacker must make a “Called Shot,” or roll a *Natural Twenty*. (A Natural 20 always hits its mark, unless an opponent attempting to dodge also rolls a Natural 20.)

Payload: This is how many shots the weapon can fire calculated by how much ammunition the weapon holds before the ammo clip is empty and must be reloaded. “Unlimited” means the weapon draws from an unconventional source such as magic (or a renewable power source or nuclear battery, etc.). Conventional weapons have a finite payload and once all available ammunition is fired, the weapon is useless until more ammo can be acquired.

Missile Combat

The descriptions of war machines in *Rifts*® and its many supplements will specifically state if they can launch missiles. It will also denote the type of missile as short-, medium-, or long-range, or mini-missiles, and some can fire two or more different types of missiles. Under each of the above range categories is a selection of specific types of warheads, such as high explosive, fragmentation, plasma and so on (see missile table in the section on *Coalition Weapons*, page 256). Not all missile warheads are of a destructive nature and some can be smoke, tear gas or chemical (i.e. fire retardant, and knockout gas).

Damage from Missile Strike

Direct hits are when the missiles impact directly on the player character (or his robot, power armor, vehicle, etc.). A direct hit does full damage. A volley of missiles inflicts full damage for *each* missile in the volley.

Blast radius or near misses. Getting caught in a blast radius does half damage. Your companion standing 10 feet (3 m) away is hit by a high explosive missile with a 30 foot (9.1 m) blast radius. He takes full damage from a direct hit, but your character is also caught in the blast radius. Fortunately, distance buys your character some luck and he takes half the M.D. since he was not caught directly in the blast. Dam-

age can be reduced by half again if the player makes a successful *roll with impact*.

Roll with impact to reduce damage. Whenever a character is struck by an explosive force or impact (ram attack, fall, etc.), he can attempt to roll with the force to minimize the damage. This is where *roll with impact* comes into play. A successful roll means half damage. The number that must be matched or overcome is the attacker's roll to strike – or – if a strike number is not available (say from a booby trap, mine or automated system), a 14 or higher must be made to successfully *roll with impact*. A successful roll, whether from a direct hit or blast radius, means the character suffers half the normal damage. A failed roll means full damage (whatever that may be).

Note: All missiles always strike the main body.

Missile Damage Notes

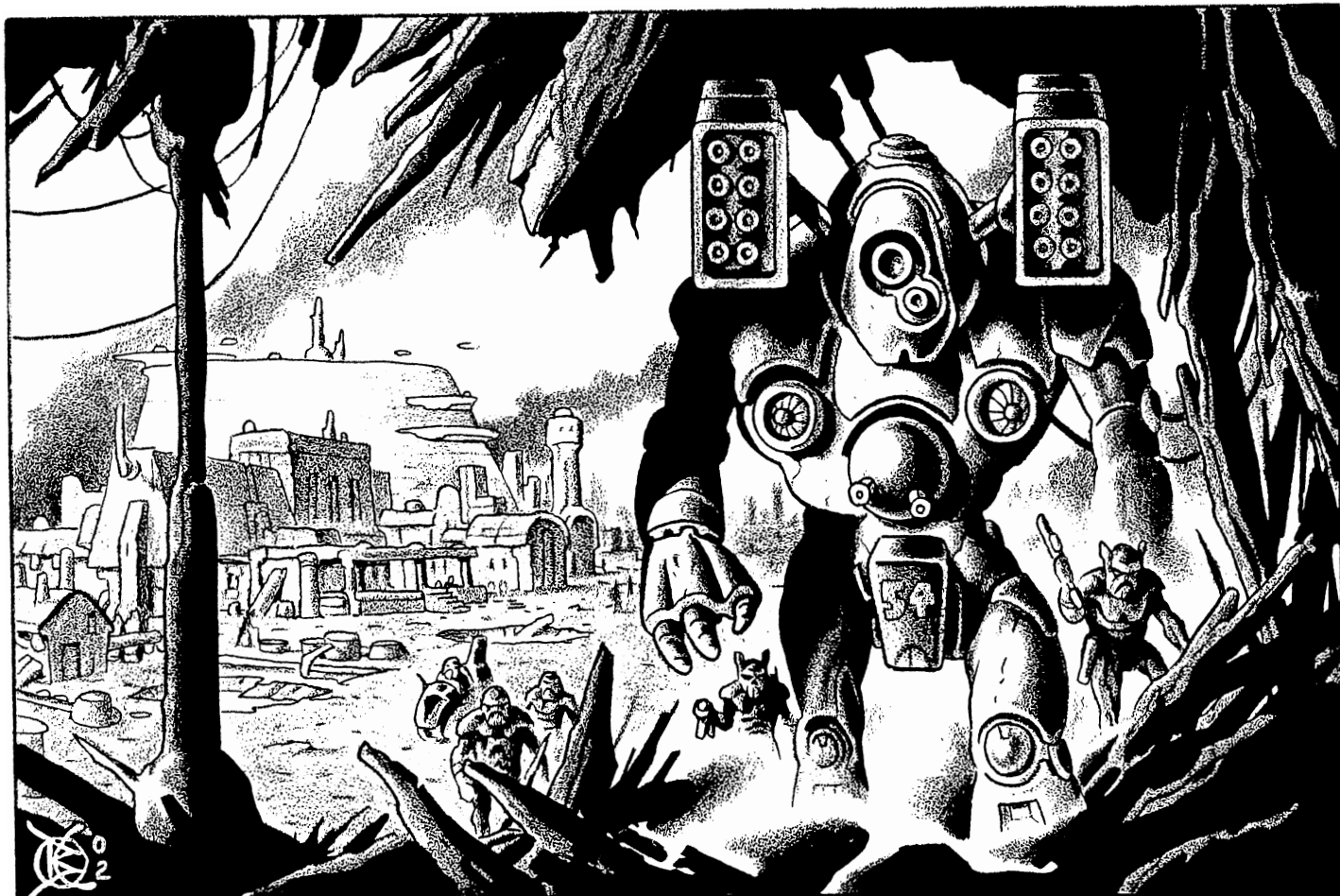
Armor Piercing explosives produce the most narrowly focused and directed blasts. They are designed for surgical strikes against armored opponents (tanks, robots, etc.) and inflict minimal collateral damage (i.e., has a comparatively tiny blast radius of 3-10 feet/0.9 to 3 m even from large missiles), funneling most of the explosive energy and damage into the specific target. **Note:** Armor Piercing missiles inflict *double damage* when the roll to strike is 18, 19 or 20 (bull's-eye), including applicable bonuses to strike. Triple damage on a *Natural Twenty*. In all cases, the extra damage is applied only to the specific target that is struck, do NOT increase the damage done within the outer blast radius; it is unchanged.

Fire Retardant missiles explode, releasing a chemical foam that puts out fires; typical blast radius is 20-100 feet (6.1 to 30.5 m). Rare.

Fragmentation explosives usually do less damage than high explosives, armor piercing, and plasma, but they are designed to have a large blast radius doing damage to a larger “delivery area.” More people and structures within the fragmentation explosive's large blast radius suffer damage. Fragmentation explosives are designed to be anti-personnel, which means collateral damage is likely to leave plenty of trace evidence, salvageable gear and resources, and even enemies who are incapacitated, wounded and maimed, but alive for interrogation and capture.

High explosive missiles and grenades are general, all-purpose explosives designed to inflict good to excellent damage with a decent blast radius. Ideal for blasting through fortifications, bridges, and other hard targets, as well as general use against any type of enemy. The smaller blast radius reduces incidents of “friendly fire” (injury induced by one's own teammates upon fellow soldiers fighting on the same side) and makes the weapon suitable for a wide range of operations.

Plasma and M.D. fire-based explosives will blast everything with destructive Mega-Damage intensity, *flash-burning* grass, trees, and everything in its blast radius. Any S.D.C. materials (including Hit Point and S.D.C. living beings) caught in the *blast radius* of M.D. plasma or M.D. fire are incinerated without a hope for survival, barring magical or other type of intervention. The blast radius of plasma explosives is usually a little larger than high explosives, not bad, but smaller than fragmentation. **Note:** The intense M.D. heat of a plasma explosive lasts for 3-5 seconds, leaving a scorched radius. It may surprise some people, but the intensity of the heat is so great and incinerates S.D.C. materials so fast, that it does not start collateral fires. Hence the term, “flash-burn.” Some of the disadvantages of this weapon are that there is usually no salvageable evidence or supplies after this attack, making any positive I.D. of its victims impossible, and there can be no mistaking what did the damage. Also note that creatures *resistant or impervious to fire and heat* are unharmed by plasma weapons, while other M.D. explosives will hurt virtually all living beings with the exception of ghosts and ethereal beings (including most Entities).



Smoke is typically used for cover; obscure the battlefield and cover a tactical retreat, repositioning, or to confuse the enemy. It may also be used to mark a general target zone.

Smoke missiles release large, billowing clouds of smoke, filling the blast radius. They are used to provide cover or to mark an area.

A **Natural Twenty** to strike with explosives and missiles. A Natural 20 is a roll of 20 to strike on 1D20 that has *not been modified* by any bonuses. It *always* hits its mark, including Called Shots, and inflicts *double damage* (triple for Armor Piercing).

Mini-Missiles are NOT guided missiles. That's why they require a roll to strike and why an entire volley either hits or misses the mark. "Smart missiles" and guided missiles are a rarity on Rifts Earth and typically reserved only for the largest (and again, rarest) of long-range missiles.

Direct Hit. The actual target struck by a grenade or missile is at the *epicenter* of the explosion and takes *full* damage from a *direct hit*.

Radius Damage. As noted previously, everyone and everything else in the *blast radius* suffers *half damage*. So a grenade or mini-missile that does 5D6 M.D. inflicts the full 5D6 M.D. to the target it strikes (or lands at the feet of), and *everything else* within the rest of the blast area suffers *half* the Mega-Damage rolled for the explosion.

Note that the concussive force of an explosive blast *may* not damage or seriously hurt grass, tiny items and other flexible or resilient S.D.C. materials. However, people, animals, buildings, etc., all suffer the blast radius damage.

Short Range Missiles

Warhead	Mega-Damage	Speed	Maximum Range	Blast Radius	M.D.C.
High Explosive (light)	2D4x10	500mph (804kmph)	5 miles (8km)	10ft (3m)	5
High Explosive (medium)	2D6x10	500mph (804kmph)	5 miles (8km)	15ft (4.6m)	5
Fragmentation (light)	2D4x10	450mph (724kmph)	3 miles (4.8km)	20ft (6.1m)	5
Armor Piercing (medium)	2D6x10	650mph (1045kmph)	5 miles (8km)	5ft (1.5m)	5
Plasma/Napalm (medium)	2D6x10	500mph (804kmph)	3 miles (4.8km)	15ft (4.6m)	5
Tear Gas	None	200mph (321kmph)	1/2 mile (.8km)	10ft (3m)	5
Knock-Out Gas	None	200mph (321kmph)	1/2 mile (.8km)	10ft (3m)	5
Smoke (colors available)	None	300mph (482.7kmph)	1 mile (1.6km)	20ft (6.1m)	5
Fire Retardant	None	200mph (321kmph)	1/2 mile (.8km)	20ft (6.1m)	5

Medium Range Missiles

Warhead	Mega-Damage	Speed	Maximum Range	Blast Radius	M.D.C.
High Explosive (light)	2D4x10	1200mph (1929kmph)	50 miles (80.4km)	20ft (6.1m)	10
High Explosive (medium)	2D6x10	1200mph (1929kmph)	40 miles (64.3km)	20ft (6.1m)	10
High Explosive (heavy)	3D6x10	1200mph (1929kmph)	40 miles (64.3km)	30ft (9.1m)	10
Fragmentation (light)	2D6x10	1000mph (1608kmph)	40 miles (64.3km)	40ft (12.2m)	10
Armor Piercing (medium)	3D6x10	1600mph (2571kmph)	60 miles (96.5km)	20ft (6.1m)	10
Plasma/Napalm (medium)	4D6x10	1400mph (2251kmph)	40 miles (64.3km)	40ft (12.2m)	10
Multi-Warhead*	5D6x10	1200mph (1929kmph)	80 miles (128.7km)	20ft (6.1m)	10
Smoke (colors available)	None	1000mph (1608kmph)	40 miles (64.3km)	40ft (12.2m)	10

Long Range Missiles

Warhead	Mega-Damage	Speed	Maximum Range	Blast Radius	M.D.C.
High Explosive (medium)	3D6x10	2010mph (Mach 3)	500 miles (804km)	30ft (9.1m)	20
High Explosive (heavy)	4D6x10	2010mph (Mach 3)	500 miles (804km)	40ft (12.2m)	20
Fragmentation (light)	2D6x10	1400mph (2251kmph)	400 miles (643km)	80ft (24.4m)	20
Armor Piercing (medium)	3D6x10	2010mph (Mach 3)	800 miles (1286km)	30ft (9.1m)	20
Plasma/Heat (medium)	4D6x10	1400mph (2251kmph)	500 miles (804km)	40ft (12.2m)	20
Proton Torpedo (heavy)*	5D6x10	1400mph (2251kmph)	500 miles (804km)	50ft (15.2m)	20
Nuclear (medium)*	6D6x10	2010mph (Mach 3)	1200 miles (1928km)	50ft (15.2m)	25
Nuclear (heavy)*	1D4x100	2010mph (Mach3)	1000 miles (1608km)	40ft (12.2m)	20
Nuclear Multi-warhead*	1D6x100	2010mph (Mach 3)	1000 miles (1608km)	50ft (15.2m)	20
	2D4x100	2010mph (Mach3)	1800 miles (2893km)	50ft (15.2m)	25

Mini Missiles and Special Armaments

Warhead	Mega-Damage	Speed	Maximum Range	Blast Radius	M.D.C.
High Explosive	5D6	500mph (804kmph)	1 mile (1.6km)	5ft (1.5m)	1
Fragmentation	5D6	500mph (804kmph)	1/2 mile (.8km)	20ft (6.1m)	1
Armor Piercing	1D4x10	1400mph (2251kmph)	1 mile (1.6km)	3ft (0.9m)	2
Plasma/Napalm (medium)	1D6x10	1200mph (1929kmph)	1 mile (1.6km)	15ft (1.5m)	1
Smoke (colors available)	None	500mph (804kmph)	1/2 mile (.8km)	20ft (6.1m)	1

*Available as smart bombs. +5 to strike.

Missile Terms

Missile Blast Radius: The full area damaged by the missile impact. The specific target of the missile takes FULL DAMAGE, while all else in the blast radius takes half damage.

Missile Payload: Indicates the finite number of missiles contained by the launcher, robot or vehicle.

Missile Range: The maximum effective range or distance a missile can travel before running out of fuel and crashing to the ground. There is only a 01-33% chance that a crashing missile that ran out of fuel will explode on impact, which means it can be salvaged and reused. However, less than 5% fail to hit a target and detonate before running out of fuel.

Missile Volley: Two or more missiles fired simultaneously at the same target clustered together in a volley. A *missile volley* counts as one melee attack and gets one roll attempt to strike. Either the entire volley hits or it misses, though if a near miss its intended target may still suffer collateral damage (half) for being caught in the *blast radius*.

Rate of Fire: This indicates how many missiles can be fired at a time. Note that most launch systems can fire multiple missiles in a volley or elect to fire one missile at a time.

The speed is provided to give players an idea of how fast the missiles travel.

The maximum range is the maximum distance and effective range of the missile.

Missiles have a low M.D.C., depletion of the M.D.C. from attack will detonate the missile. A missile seldom has more than 25 M.D.C.

Multi-warhead missiles are usually a cluster of medium-range missiles housed inside the casing of a large, long-range missile. When the body casing runs out of fuel or reaches its target, it fires the four medium-range missiles.

Smart missiles are self-guided smart bombs which can be programmed to seek out and attack a specific target, but they are rare and never found in a mini-missile.

Missile Strikes

As usual, a D20 is rolled to determine whether a missile hits or misses. Any roll above a four (5-20) hits unless the defender/target can dodge or shoot the missile down before it hits.

No Missile Bonus to Strike: Unless indicated otherwise in a specific weapon, robot, vehicle or launcher description, mini-missiles and most types of missiles are *NOT* guided and do not get a bonus to strike. Some launch systems or additional targeting system *may* provide a +1 to +3 bonus to strike, but even that is rather uncommon. The *W.P. Heavy Mega-Damage Weapon skill* provides a bonus when firing mini-missiles. **Note:** Except for multi-warhead and long-range missiles (*both rare*), most missiles on Rifts Earth are *NOT* guided. The rare guided missiles are +3 to strike, and smart bombs are +5 to strike and +4 to dodge. Generally, most self-guided missiles are preprogrammed to respond to specific images (video camera/sensor mounted in the nose of the warhead), or specific heat or radiation levels which clearly identify the enemy. Smart Bombs are missiles that can identify an enemy target and *chase* it down. The missile will give pursuit and keep going until it finds a target, is itself destroyed or it runs out of fuel. Smart missiles can actually dodge attacks directed at them, swerve, and turn around to follow or hit a target, turning around and giving it another go if it misses the first time or if the target dodges the first attack.

Missile Volleys

Contrary to what one might think, a character can dodge one, two and even three guided missiles. The dodge rules are the same as always. However, it is impossible to dodge a volley of *four or more* missiles launched simultaneously.

A **volley of four or more** missiles will strike every time (as long as the attack was successful), with each and every missile in the volley hitting its target and inflicting damage.

Roll to strike only one time for the *entire* volley. It doesn't matter if there are two missiles or 62 missiles in the volley, either they *all* hit, or they *all* miss. This speeds up combat and makes sense, since most missiles are not guided.

Dodging Missiles

Dodging a missile or a missile volley is basically the same as a hand to hand combat dodge, basically the character needs move to get out of the missile's way and/or dive behind or under protective cover. Roll a 20-sided die (D20) to dodge. The high roll wins. A successful missile dodge will get the character out of the missile's direct line of impact (maximum damage). HOWEVER, the character must run or dive out of the missile's *blast radius* to completely escape taking any M.D. whatsoever. That may require flying, running, or diving some distance (anywhere from 3 to 80 feet/0.9 to 24.3 m depending on the missile) to get completely out of the blast radius. The Game Master should use discretion as to whether that may require a second dodge roll or count as one roll but two melee actions. A small blast radius under 12 feet (3.6 m) can be escaped with a single dodge action.

Shooting Missiles

The character has three options to minimize the damage of a *massive missile volley*: try to *roll* with the impact (taking half damage), use part of his robot or armored body to *block* and take most of the blast, or *shoot* the missiles down before they strike.

Roll with impact has already been covered. A successful roll reduces damage by half.

Block Sacrifice. If a missile cannot be dodged and the defender is piloting a robot vehicle or is a cyborg with bionic arms, the character can sacrifice his robot's arms by covering the main body with them, thus allowing the arms to take the damage instead of the body. The advantage of this tactic is that the arms are likely to be blown to smithereens, but the main body and remaining weapon systems and locomotion are left intact. If the arms are not destroyed, I strongly suggest the G.M., or player, roll on the Optional Critical Damage Tables under "arms," to determine specific damage and side effects.

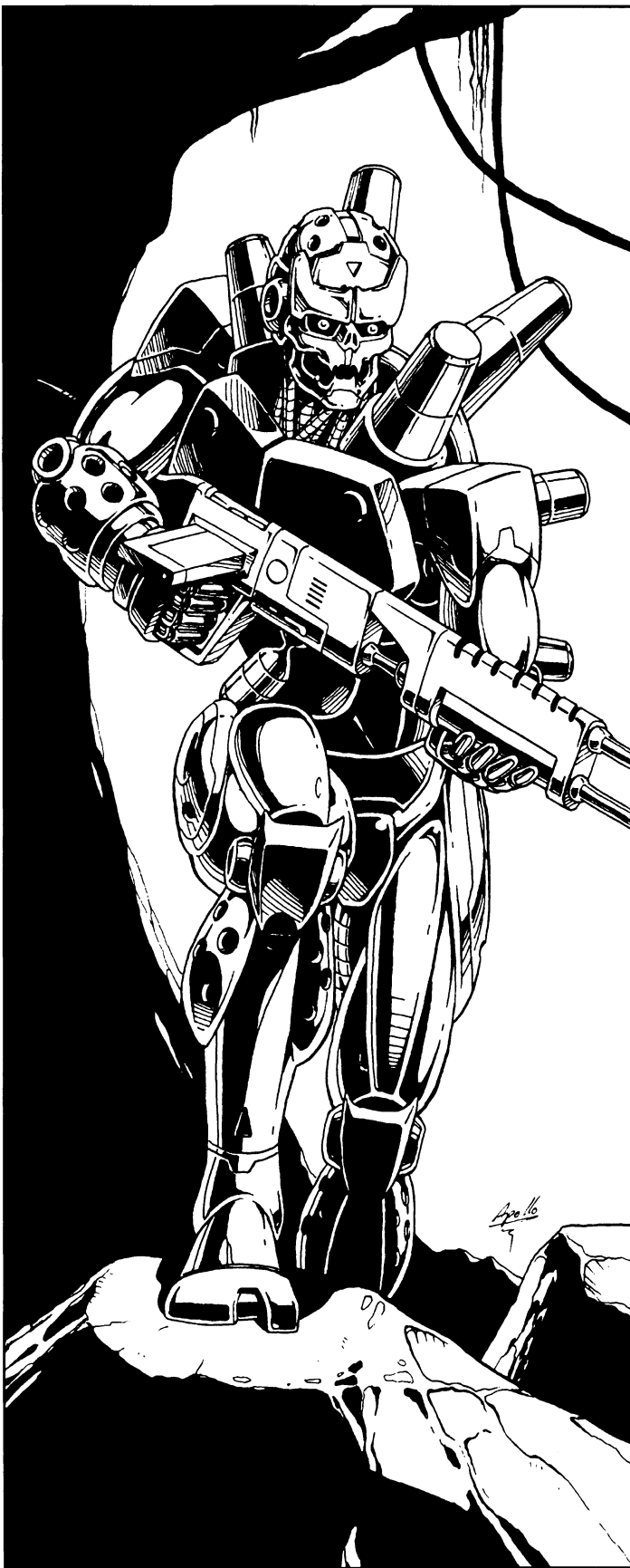
Shooting Missiles. Shooting and depleting the M.D.C. of a missile can detonate and destroy it. However, there are restrictions.

1. The character must have an attack available to him in that melee to fire at the missile. If all the attacks for that melee round have already been used up, the character is out of luck and can't shoot at the incoming missile(s).

2. The character can only shoot at *one* missile within a volley, at a time. A volley of six missiles would require six separate attacks, which is impossible at the speed missiles travel. This means the character has only one or two melee attacks (G.M.'s discretion) to shoot at one or two missiles within the volley. However, even if only *one* missile in a volley is detonated, roll to determine the extent of the damage to the rest of them (roll percentile dice): **01-30%** Only one other missile is destroyed, all the rest hit and do damage. **31-60%** half the missiles in the volley were destroyed (if only two missiles, both are destroyed), the rest impact for their full damage. **61-00%** *ALL* the missiles in the *entire* volley explode before impact! No Damage!!

The character can also use his own missiles, if available, to shoot down a missile volley. Under this circumstance, there is a 01-75% likelihood of detonating the entire volley of missiles (100% if the character fires an equal number of missiles to match those incoming).

3. If the M.D.C. of a missile is not completely depleted, it is damaged, but does not detonate and *will* still strike its target, inflicting full



damage. When the M.D.C. of a missile cannot be found, assume it has 25 M.D.C.

4. Attacks on a missile count as a normal melee attack/action.

Mini-Missiles

Many of the smaller robots, power armor suits, and combat vehicles (even a few hand-held weapons) fire *mini-missiles*; small, powerful bazooka type rockets that inflict Mega-Damage. Range is generally one mile (1.6 km) and damage considerable for such a small rocket. Unlike its larger predecessors, the mini-missile is not self-guided and has no special bonuses to strike unless the character has the *W.P. Heavy Mega-Damage Weapons* skill, those bonuses apply.

Surviving an Aircraft Crash-Landing

The pilot must roll under his Piloting skill with a penalty that can range from -30 to -50%; typically -40% unless a vehicle description states otherwise.

A **successful roll under the Piloting skill number** means the pilot manages to make a “good” crash-landing. Meaning the vehicle is reduced to scrap metal, but crashes in such a way that the pilot, crew and passengers walk away from it alive. Those in a reinforced pilot’s compartment don’t suffer a scratch, although the compartment will be shattered and reduced to fewer than 20 M.D.C. Likewise, a successful crash-landing means troops and/or cargo inside the aircraft suffer only 1D4x10 M.D. each (it is rare to have a reinforced cargo area or passenger’s compartment which is why they still take a significant amount of damage). Those inside M.D.C. body armor, power armor, giant robot or vehicle being transported as cargo or passengers see the M.D. applied to their armor, ‘bot or vehicle, and suffer 3D6 S.D.C. damage from the crash even from inside their armor from being tossed around and battered by other cargo and debris.

An **unsuccessful crash-landing** means everything and everyone inside the doomed aircraft takes 3D4x10+30 M.D. from the crash! They also suffer 1D6 worth of S.D.C. damage for every 20 M.D. sustained. When S.D.C. is gone, start subtracting Hit Points.

The only exception are those in a *reinforced pilot’s/crew compartment*. In this case, the reinforced compartment takes the brunt of the damage. If the damage amount, above, does *not* exceed the total M.D.C. of the compartment, those inside suffer only 3D6 S.D.C. damage. However, if the crash damage exceeds the M.D.C. of the compartment, the amount leftover is applied to *each* person and item in the compartment. For example: A reinforced pilot’s/crew compartment with 100 M.D.C. suffers 120 M.D.C. The first 100 points is absorbed by the compartment, but the remaining 20 M.D. is sustained by every person, weapon and item inside the compartment. Only those in M.D.C. body armor have a chance of surviving.

Psychic Combat

Psychic combat works very similar to all other types of combat. Each psionic attack or action counts as one melee attack or melee action, and requires a certain amount of I.S.P. for the character to use it. Insufficient I.S.P. means the psionic power cannot be used. Attacks such as a fiery blast, Telekinetic Punch, and similar, count as one of the psychic's melee attacks. The back and forth combat sequence is also the same, only the psychic may use a psionic ability to strike at an opponent rather than his fists or a weapon.

The following data is provided to help players of psychic characters understand and use their special abilities.

1. Mind control powers are abilities to control another character's *mind* and force or induce that individual to do something against his will and to the specifications of the psychic controlling him. Psionic mind control powers include *Hypnotic Suggestion*, *Mentally Possess Others*, *Psionic Invisibility*, *Mind Wipe*, and *Psychosomatic Disease*. Some of these powers are available to humans, others used by supernatural beings. All are dangerous. **Note:** Unless a character is already seriously considering suicide, Mind Control can *not* be used to force a character to kill himself. Nor can Mind Control be used to make the character do anything that he or she normally finds abhorrent (i.e. rape, torture, murder, self-mutilation, etc.) or self-destructive. On the other hand, the mind controlled character will obey simple innocuous commands like "give me the gun," "open the safe," "call Tina and tell her to come over," "hand me your car keys," "tell me where I can find so and so," and similar, without hesitation. Likewise, the character will follow, help and protect whomever (or whatever) has control of his mind if told to do so (unless that act is truly abhorrent as well).

Possession is different than mind control, because the possessing being is invading a character's body and taking control of it. Successful possession means the person may look and sound the same, but his mind is not in control of his body, the possessing being is in control of it. And like a person inside a suit of armor, the possessing creature can do whatever it wants to do and the character can do little or nothing about it. In many cases, the mortal's mind is pushed back and basically falls asleep, unaware of what the thing possessing him is doing with his body, or the victim remembers only vague bits and pieces like a dream.

Telepathy, Empathy and other types of psychic communication, scans and probes are NOT mind control. They do not make the victim do anything. The psychic only hears, sees or feels the thoughts and emotions of the character being scanned or probed. The psychic may gather information he can use on or against his opponents, but the psychic scans do not control or make the victim do anything he or she doesn't want to do. Unwanted Telepathic communication may play inside a character's head like a radio in the background, and while it may be annoying, and the voice inside one's head may make suggestions, egg on or cajole, it does NOT *control* or force the victim into taking any action against his will.

Empathic Transmission, Horror Factor and similar psionic powers possessed by supernatural beings do not control the mind, but influence emotions which may cause a character to act a certain way. They do not control a person like a puppet, but induce *emotions* such as hate, fear, despair, etc., that cause a knee-jerk, emotional reaction. The victim is not controlled, but rather he is *affected* by his own emotions brought out by the psionic attack.

2. Psionics that affect the mind and emotions can affect people inside a locked room or car, but only if the attacker knows his desired victim is inside or he can see him through a window or keyhole or some kind of opening (or via Astral Projection). They cannot affect someone in a fast moving vehicle, because they are going too fast to make a connection and since most psionic powers have a short range, the intended victim in a moving vehicle is typically carried out of range in a matter of seconds. Nor can it affect someone in a sealed, environmental M.D.C. vehicle like a tank, APC, giant robot or heavy power ar-

mor (250 M.D.C. or more for the main body). Psionic abilities that require "line of sight" will usually indicate as much. Otherwise, area effect powers or being within range and knowing the victim's general location will suffice. This is especially true of many of the psychic abilities possessed by the supernatural.

Empathy can be used to sense the general emotions emanating from inside a room, but only the most powerful one or two of the strongest, most overwhelming emotions or shared emotions can be detected (e.g., most everyone is laughing and having fun or angry and arguing, so that's what is felt by the psychic). Furthermore, even if one strong emotion stood out, the psychic will not know who is feeling that way, only that it's one of the people inside the room.

3. Physical psionic manifestations, including all types of *Telekinesis*, *Hydrokinesis*, *Electrokinesis*, *Pyrokinesis*, *Mind Bolt*, and any physical attack created by a psionic power, usually require "line of sight" – the intended target must be seen, and a physical force will be stopped by a locked door or physical barrier unless the attacker can see his victim/target through an opening or window. Of course, physical psionic attacks can be directed at the door, a vehicle or a barrier.

Note that other limitations may apply, such as the victim must hear the psychic's voice or make eye contact or can only be affected by touch or within a particular range. All psychic abilities will note limitations, restrictions and requirements. Remember, in most cases, a psionic power/attack can only be directed at one specific target/subject at a time.

Note: Psi-Powers requiring *physical contact/touch* can not be used on any character sealed inside a vehicle, nor environmental armor for that matter, unless it is the mechanical armor that is being attacked or targeted.

Psionic powers requiring sound (i.e. the victim must hear the psychic's words, like Hypnotic Suggestion) do not work unless the psychic can be heard and is within range. Many military and other vehicles can "turn off" their external audio system and/or radio. If the psychic can not be heard, he can not use that power against anybody. Of course, there are only a few psionic abilities that require verbal suggestions and cues.

Radiate Horror Factor affects anybody who sees and comes within 90 feet (27.4 m) of the psychic.

4. Psionic attacks per melee: Most psionic abilities are activated and performed at the speed of thought, so each psionic attack counts as one melee attack/action. Some psionic abilities require time and concentration, using up several melee actions or even minutes to perform. This will be indicated in the description of the power. Some psionic abilities can be used in conjunction with others, but in most cases, one psionic ability must end before another can be used.

5. I.S.P. boost at ley lines: Psychics cannot draw I.S.P. from living beings or other people, but they can draw upon the ambient P.P.E. at ley lines and convert it into 1D6+1 I.S.P. once every melee round (15 seconds). However, the bonus I.S.P. cannot be stored or held inside the psychic and must be spent that round or it is gone; fades away. A ley line may also increase the potency of a psychic power, increasing **range** and **duration** by 50% when near a ley line (within one mile/1.6 km), and double when actually on the ley line or at a ley line nexus, or as noted in the specific description of the psionic abilities (*some* see range or duration doubled, tripled and even quadrupled). **Damage** from a psionic attack is also increased by one additional die when *on* a ley line and increased by two extra damage dice when at a nexus point.

6. I.S.P. Recovery. Two I.S.P. per hour of sleep, or six per hour of standard meditation, twelve or more for some psychic O.C.C.s.

7. Psionic Saving Throws:

Non-Psychic – Ordinary Person & Animals: Need to roll a 15 or higher on a D20 to save vs psionic attack. Penalties to save may apply against some of the psionics and powers of the supernatural.

Major & Minor Psychics: Need to roll a 12 or higher on a D20. Penalties to save may apply against some of the psionics and powers of the supernatural.

Master Psychic (Mind Melter, Burster, & Others): Need only roll a 10 or higher to save vs psionic attack. Penalties to save may apply against some of the psionics and powers of the supernatural.



Horror Factor

All monsters and supernatural creatures have a *Horror Factor (H.F.)*. The Horror Factor represents either the hideous appearance or its overwhelming aura of evil and power, or a combination of the two. Whenever a human/mortal encounters one of these terrors, the character must roll a 20-sided die (1D20) to see whether or not he or she is momentarily stunned by the sheer horror of the thing. This Horror Factor roll might be thought of as a *saving throw* or mental parry. Fortunately, the character only needs to roll for the first melee round of each encounter, *not every* melee of combat.

To save vs Horror Factor (H.F.): Just like a parry, the roll must be equal to or higher than the creature's Horror Factor. **For example:** A Supernatural Predator with a Horror Factor of 13, emerges from an alley. All characters who see it must roll to save against *horror*. In this case, a successful save is 13 or higher. Everybody but poor Thom rolls above a 13 and saves. Thom rolls a nine, so his character is *momentarily* stunned with horror.

A failed roll means the character is so overwhelmed that he is temporarily stunned. In game terms this means the character loses initiative (don't even roll for it), loses one attack/melee action, and cannot defend himself (no parry or dodge) against the creature's *first* attack of that melee round. Fortunately, the character snaps out of the shocked stupor quickly and can join in the combat that same melee. By the second melee round, the character has completely recovered his senses and is functioning as normal; roll for initiative and continue combat as usual.

G.M. Note: If you think it is appropriate, you may also assign a Horror Factor to a *situation* (gathering of cultists engaged in ritual sacrifice, a scene of torture, a brutal murder, etc.) or an *environment* (an especially spooky, creepy, or alien environment).

Psionic Abilities in Animals

Most large mammals seem to have innate, natural psychic senses that warn them about the presence of supernatural forces. This includes cattle, horses, sheep, and predatory mammals (lions, wolves, coyotes,

etc.). Ravens, crows, parrots, and birds of prey can also sense the supernatural.

As odd as it may seem, animals associated closely with humans on a friend or helper/worker level have the most pronounced psi-abilities. Thus, dogs, cats, horses, mules and donkeys (as well as ravens/crows) exhibit the greatest extrasensory perception. Each of these animals has the abilities of *See the Invisible*, *Sense Evil*, *Sense Magic*, *Sixth Sense* and *Empathy* (receives only). Sensing range is a 600 foot (183 m) radius and is an automatic instinct that helps the animals *avoid* the supernatural. The animal's reactions will always be the same; intense nervousness, jumpiness, whimpering, hissing, growling, howling and alertness when psionic and magic energies are sensed nearby. If possible, the animals will try to leave the area and will flee if they get the opportunity. Only a loyal canine companion may stay with his human friend and master and attack when the supernatural horror enters the backyard or home.

When cornered face to face with supernatural evil, the animal will attack and attempt to flee. A dog or cat will have the hairs on its back rise, bare fangs and growl or hiss in a menacing warning. A horse will whinny, stomp and rear. If the supernatural creature does not back off, the animal will attack. The cat and horse will attack only to make a path of escape and to let the unnatural being know that they recognize what it is even if disguised. 01-60% of the time, a canine will attack to kill! 61-00% the animal will flee. **Note:** Dogs, cats, and other animals *cannot* be trained to sniff out magic or supernatural creatures. Their natural instinct is to flee from it, so the animals will NOT seek out these forces for anyone or any reason. The animals' use of psychic abilities is automatic and natural. Consequently, they do not get or spend I.S.P., the psionic abilities just snap on as a defensive reflex.

Animal Saving Throws: Animals, like humans, get an automatic roll to save vs psychic and magic attacks.

Save vs Psionic Attack: 15 or higher to save.

Save vs Magic: -4 to save.

Perception Rolls

This type of roll uses the same mechanics as combat, Horror Factor, and saving throws. **Perception Rolls** are used to simulate the character's five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch) in situations where noticing something might be important or relevant. Searching a room, standing watch, listening through a door, peering into night-shrouded underbrush to see what might be lurking there; these are all situations where a Perception Roll might be called for.

To determine whether the character's Perception finds something, the player must roll a 20-sided die (D20). Add Perception Roll bonuses one might have from *O.C.C.* or *R.C.C.* (if any), and then match the roll to the situation.

Perception Table by Difficulty

The table below indicates the number a character has to roll to correctly *perceive* or notice whatever it is he's looking for or is alert to notice.

4 or Better: An Easy Situation/Circumstance. Hearing a loud noise, finding a bright-colored object against a white background, finding something hastily and/or poorly hidden; and similar.

8 or Better: Moderate. Looking for something or somebody in a well-lit area; hearing a slight noise; finding something hidden without great thought; and similar.

14 or Better: Challenging. Looking for something in poor light, fog, in murky water, or under desperate circumstances (it's an emergency or the seeker is impaired); hearing something over a noisy background or moving or speaking quietly; finding something carefully concealed, camouflaged or masked; and so on.

17 or Better. Difficult: Finding something in the dark or masterfully hidden/concealed, hearing something over a loud din or moving silent as the wind (like a snake sliding over a carpet); noticing an enemy (or friend) or something or somebody that doesn't belong amongst great confusion, debris, a large crowd or much activity.

Perceiving Supernatural Involvement

Many psychics, Dog Boys, Psi-Stalkers and practitioners of magic are versed in the methods and habits of supernatural menaces and can tell if such dark forces are at work by examining the evidence (bite marks, footprints, claw marks, feces, how a victim was murdered, what body parts might have been eaten, the time or circumstance of the killing, incident or situation, etc.). After examining the evidence the character just *feels* the imprint/involvement of the supernatural; feels it in the pit of his stomach or in goose bumps crawling across his body.

8 or better if the evidence is plentiful and obvious.

14 or better if the evidence is sparse or “scientifically” inconclusive; a gut feeling.

Of course, truly insufficient and inconclusive evidence means the character has no idea if the supernatural is involved and no number of Perception Rolls will tell him otherwise.

Perception that you are being followed or watched by supernatural evil

15 or better to sense Supernatural Predators and Lesser Demons.

17 or better to sense Demonic Servants and Greater Demons.

19 or better to sense Ancient Evil, a Dark God or Alien Intelligence.

For this perception of the supernatural evil to work, the evil being must really be following/tailing/observing the character, stalking him, or be planning to strike. It must also be within 200 feet (61 m) and within line of sight – that is to say it is looking at the character at that very moment. Even with the Perception Roll and sensation of being watched or followed, the character does NOT know where the creature is, and looking all around will NOT reveal it (unless the thing wants to be seen). **Note:** Psychic sensitives like Psi-Stalkers and Dog Boys can sense the evil at whatever the character's normal range is for sensing supernatural evil, and senses if they are being watched with a Perception Roll of 15 or better regardless of the nature of the supernatural being (e.g., senses an Alien Intelligence, Lesser or Greater Demon at 15 or higher). It is also important to note that the character can only get this sensation when he, specifically, is being observed, not the group as a whole or a teammate within the group.

Perception Rolls vs Stealth & Concealment Skills: A number of skills, among them Prowl, Detect Ambush, Detect Concealment, Camouflage, and Concealment, have an impact on Perception Rolls. When a Perception Roll is attempted against another character (player or NPC) who is using a Stealth or Concealment skill, treat it as a combat type “roll off.” Both characters (the person using the *skill* and the one using a *Perception Roll*) roll 1D20 and the *high roll* wins.

The character using the skill gets a bonus of +1 for every 10 points in his skill percentage (round down). The character using Perception gets to add in his usual Perception Roll bonuses. **Example:** Alex's character is sneaking up on a psychic guarding a door. His Prowl skill is 65%, giving the character a +6 bonus in the “roll off” of *Skill vs Perception*. The psychic has a Perception bonus of +3.

Each character rolls a twenty-sided die (1D20).

Alex rolls an 11 on the D20 and adds his +6 skill bonus for a total of 17.

Wayne, playing the psychic on guard, rolls a 16 on the D20 and adds his Perception Roll bonus of +3 for a total of 19. He wins. The

psychic hears something (or maybe it's a *feeling*), he turns towards Alex's character, begins to draw his gun and calls out to his teammates that there is an intruder. Alex's character bares his fangs . . . he is more than he seems.

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