FS3 Player’s Guide

Version 1.0

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# Welcome to FS3

FS3 is a generic roleplaying game skills system, specifically designed and optimized for online text-based RPGs (MUSHes). FS3 provides rules for:

* Character Creation
* Character Improvement (Experience)
* Generic Conflict Resolution (Ability Rolls)
* Combat
* Luck

## FS3 Principles

What makes FS3 different from other skill systems?

1. **A lean skill list.** Most skill systems offer a bewildering array of skills, making character creation a chore. FS3 focuses on the skills that are truly relevant to the “action” of the game, whether that’s flying fighter jets or riding horses.
2. **A custom dice system.** The FS3 dice system is designed for games where skills are rolled infrequently and deviations from the ‘expected’ results raise eyebrows. On the whole, characters succeed more often than they do in other systems.
3. **A roleplay-friendly combat system.** The FS3 combat system is designed to be fast and flexible, providing some colorful tactical options without bogging roleplay down in a lot of mechanics.

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## Customizing FS3

Like GURPS, FUDGE, and other similar systems, FS3 is a rules framework, not a complete game unto itself. FS3 can be used for anything from high fantasy to gritty historical drama. Skill lists, weapons, armor, etc. will need to be customized for the setting. More about customizing FS3 can be found in the FS3 Storyteller’s Guide.

## Definitions

Here are some of the common terms used in the FS3 system.

Player – A person playing the game.

Storyteller – The player who is driving the story of the game. (Called the Gamemaster/Administrator in some games.)

Player Character (PC) – A major character whose actions are controlled by a player. One can think of PCs as the heroes of a story.

Non-Player Character (NPC) – A secondary character, normally controlled by the Storyteller but sometimes by other players. One can think of NPCs as the villains or extras in a story.

You – The term “you” and “your” are used interchangeably to refer to you as a player (“roll your dice”), or as your character (“pick your skills”).

# FS3 Basics

This section describes the basic concepts of the FS3 conflict resolution system.

## Abilities

**Abilities** reflect things that your character is able to do. Running, shooting guns, flying spaceships, talking your way out of a tense situation – these are all things that could be covered by Abilities. There are two kinds of Abilities: Attributes and Skills.

Each game will define the list of available Abilities.

## Attributes

**Attributes** reflect a character’s natural talents. Attributes influence related skills, giving an advantage (or disadvantage) compared to someone with equivalent training. They also come into play when no particular skill applies to a given situation.

Barring disability or genetic mutation, Attributes never change; they are set in stone when you are born. For example, you may overcome an academic challenge through hard work and study, but you will not change your underlying academic aptitude.

Attributes are rated on a 1-12 scale. All characters will have a rating in every attribute.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Rating** | **Attribute Meaning** |
| 1-3 | Poor |
| 4-6 | Average |
| 7-9 | Good |
| 10-12 | Exceptional |

## Skills

**Skills** reflect a character’s knowledge and training. Skills are fluid, changing over time. You choose an initial set of skills during character creation, and may improve them or learn new skills during the course of the game.

Skills are further broken down into three categories:

* **Action Skills** are those relevant to the game’s central “action”.
* **Background Skills** flesh out your hobbies and interests.
* **Language Skills** allow you to read and write languages.

The Storyteller sets up the game’s Action and Language skill lists. There is no fixed list for Background Skills; you can have anything from *Underwater Basket Weaving* to *Soap Opera Trivia*.

Skills are rated on a 0-12 scale. Characters only have ratings in skills they have taken the time to learn and practice. All other skills are considered to be at rating 0.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Rating** | **Skill Meaning** |
| 0 | Untrained |
| 1-3 | Rookie |
| 4-6 | Professional |
| 7-9 | Veteran |
| 10-12 | Expert |

## Common Knowledge

It would be silly to expect your character to have a skill on his character sheet for every single thing he knows. Some things are just common knowledge, and it can be assumed your character knows them without requiring you to specify it.

Exactly what falls under “common knowledge” will vary by game. Basic computer knowledge would be assumed in a modern urban setting, but not so much in a WWII game.

When in doubt about whether something would be common knowledge, consult your Storyteller.

# Ability Rolls

Ability Rolls are used to determine the outcome of a character’s action, whether it’s shooting a gun or jumping a chasm.

## When to Roll

Ability Rolls should be used judiciously; it is unnecessary (and silly) to roll for every little thing. RPGs are about *role*play not *roll*play.

For example: If someone does a good job roleplaying their way through bluffing a guard, it probably ought to work. Likewise, if someone attempts to schmooze the princess with the worst pickup line ever, it probably shouldn’t work, no matter what you roll.

|  |
| --- |
| **The Golden Rule of Ability Rolls:**  As long as there are no objections from anyone involved in the scene, it is perfectly acceptable to just assume success or failure based on roleplay. |

Some situations where you should consider using an Ability Roll:

* The character is under stress.
* Characters are in conflict with one another.
* There are exceptional circumstances that might affect the outcome.

For example, Swimming is a skill that you probably wouldn’t roll under normal circumstances. But if you were trying to save someone from drowning or stay afloat in stormy seas with your clothes on, an Ability Roll would be appropriate.

## What to Roll

In nearly all cases, you will use a Skill for an Ability Roll. In unusual cases, you may substitute an Attribute. Sometimes there will be a Modifier applied to the skill (see Modifiers, page 6) as explained below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Ability** | **Modifier** | **Example** |
| A skill **directly** related to the task at hand. | 0 | Using Firearms to shoot a gun. |
| A skill **loosely** related to the task at hand. | -30 | Using Veterinary Medicine to treat a gunshot wound on a human. |
| An attribute related to the task at hand **if** the task is considered “common knowledge” (see Common Knowledge, page 4). | 0 | Using the Athletic attribute to run a footrace. |
| None of the above situations apply. Make an Untrained skill roll using a skill rating of 0. | n/a | Trying to perform abdominal surgery with no prior training. |

## Modifiers

Modifiers can be applied to Ability Rolls to increase or decrease your chance of success. A modifier is a simple percentage, so a +20 modifier gives you a 20% greater chance of success.

Some general guidance for modifiers is given in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Situation** | **Modifier** |
| Task is easy. | +30 |
| Task is routine. | 0 |
| Task is hard. | -30 |
| Taking your time / no stress. | +20 |

Note: Easy/Routine/Hard is from the perspective of a typical professional. Even brain surgery is routine to a brain surgeon.

## Ruling Attribute

Every skill has a Ruling Attribute, which is the attribute most closely related to that skill. The Storyteller sets the Ruling Attribute for Action and Language skills as part of the skill list. You choose the Ruling Attribute for Background skills during character creation.

The Ruling Attribute applies an automatic Modifier to all Ability Rolls using that skill, as shown in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ruling Attribute**  **Rating** | **Modifier** |
| 1 | -8 |
| 2 | -6 |
| 3 | -4 |
| 4 | -2 |
| 5 | 0 |
| 6 | +2 |
| 7 | +4 |
| 8 | +6 |
| 9 | +8 |
| 10 | +10 |
| 11 | +12 |
| 12 | +14 |

There may be situations where the Ruling Attribute is actually not the most relevant one for a given situation. In such cases it is acceptable to substitute another Attribute and use its rating instead.

*Example: Joanna chose a Background Skill of Singing, with a Ruling Attribute of Creative. When trying to remember lyrics from an obscure song, she may want to use a Ruling Attribute of Academic instead.*

## How to Roll

FS3 uses a custom dice mechanic. The steps below describe how to determine the Roll Result, which tells you whether a roll was successful or not:

1. Roll percentile dice. Note: A roll of ‘00’ should be treated as 100.
2. Add/subtract the Ruling Attribute modifier to the die roll.
3. Add/subtract any other modifiers to the die roll.
4. Find the row in the result table corresponding to the ability rating.
5. Find the entry in the row that includes the modified die roll.
6. Look at the top of the column to determine the roll result.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Roll Result | | | | | |
| Ability  Rating | **-2**  **Terrible**  **Failure** | **-1**  **Bad**  **Failure** | **0**  **Failure** | **1**  **Success** | **2**  **Good**  **Success** | **3**  **Great**  **Success** |
| 0 | 1 – 15 | 16 – 35 | 36 – 65 | 66 – 99 | 100 | n/a |
| 1 | 1 – 20 | 21 – 32 | 33 – 40 | 41 – 88 | 89 – 100 | n/a |
| 2 | 1 – 14 | 15 – 24 | 25 – 35 | 36 – 74 | 75 – 94 | 95 – 100 |
| 3 | 1 – 12 | 13 – 21 | 22 – 30 | 31 – 72 | 73 – 93 | 94 – 100 |
| 4 | 1 – 7 | 8 – 15 | 16 – 25 | 26 – 55 | 56 – 85 | 86 – 100 |
| 5 | 1 – 6 | 7 – 12 | 13 – 20 | 21 – 52 | 53 – 84 | 85 – 100 |
| 6 | 1 – 4 | 5 – 9 | 10 – 15 | 16 – 49 | 50 – 83 | 84 – 100 |
| 7 | 1 – 2 | 3 – 4 | 5 – 10 | 11 – 28 | 29 – 73 | 74 – 100 |
| 8 | 1 | 2 – 3 | 4 – 8 | 9 – 26 | 27 – 63 | 64 – 100 |
| 9 | 1 | 2 – 3 | 4 – 7 | 8 – 25 | 26 – 53 | 54 – 100 |
| 10 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 – 13 | 14 – 42 | 43 – 100 |
| 11 | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 – 12 | 13 – 31 | 32 – 100 |
| 12 | n/a | n/a | 1 | 2 – 10 | 11 – 20 | 21 - 100 |

## Opposed Rolls

When two characters are directly in conflict, you can use an Opposed Roll to determine the outcome. In an Opposed Roll, each character makes an Ability Roll as normal. The two roll results are compared using the chart below to determine the overall winner.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Character “A” Roll Result | | | | | |
| Character “B” Roll Result | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| -2 | Both Fail | Both Fail | Both Fail | “A” Wins By A Lot | “A” Wins By A Lot | “A” Wins By A Lot |
| -1 | Both Fail | Both Fail | Both Fail | “A” Wins By A Little | “A” Wins By A Lot | “A” Wins By A Lot |
| 0 | Both Fail | Both Fail | Both Fail | “A” Wins By A Little | “A” Wins By A Little | “A” Wins By A Lot |
| 1 | “B” Wins By A Lot | “B” Wins By A Little | “B” Wins By A Little | DRAW | “A” Wins By A Little | “A” Wins By A Lot |
| 2 | “B” Wins By A Lot | “B” Wins By A Lot | “B” Wins By A Little | “B” Wins By A Little | DRAW | “A” Wins By A Little |
| 3 | “B” Wins By A Lot | “B” Wins By A Lot | “B” Wins By A Lot | “B” Wins By A Little | “B” Wins By A Little | DRAW |

### Opposed Rolls With Common Knowledge

If one character in an Opposed Roll has a relevant skill and the other is substituting an attribute under the Common Knowledge rule (see Common Knowledge, page 4), give the character with the skill a +20 modifier. This reflects the fact that the skilled character has an advantage because of his training.

### Opposed Rolls Involving More Than Two Characters

The Opposed Roll chart deals only with two characters, but it’s possible for multiple characters to be in conflict with one another simultaneously. In such cases, you can simply compare the raw Roll Results to determine the overall winner.

# Character Creation

This chapter describes the process of making up a Player Character (PC). NPCs are described in the Storyteller’s Guide.

The general steps in Character Creation are:

1. Describe your concept.
2. Choose your abilities.
3. Choose your quirks.

## Concept

The most important part of a character is the concept. The concept is a short (2-3 sentence) blurb to address the character’s occupation, personality and recent backstory. For example:

*Lieutenant Nikos is a Viper pilot just transferred to the squadron. She lives hard and fast, and with a reverent appreciation for the way of life she has spent her life defending.*

Some games may require you to come up with a more detailed backstory beyond the concept. Some things to consider:

* Family
* Education
* Employment
* Geography (where you’ve lived and visited)
* Interests
* Beliefs

By touching on some or all of the above points, you can turn a character into a three-dimensional, believable person.

## Abilities

The next step in character creation is to choose abilities, including Attributes and Skills. Each character receives a pool of Ability Points to spend on abilities. The Storyteller will determine the size of the pool based on the desired power level and number of abilities.

* Attributes cost 1 point per rating.
  + Remember that you must have at least 1 rating point in every Attribute.
* Skills cost 1 point per rating.
  + Choose skills appropriate to your character, as explained below.
  + Games may impose a minimum number of Background Skills required.

### Ability Lists

Each game will have a specific list of Attributes, Action Skills and Language Skills. There is no list for Background Skills; they are free-form so you can choose whatever you want.

### Ability Limits

Storytellers may impose limits on how many high abilities you can have, and how many points in Attributes and Action Skills you can have. This is intended to prevent unbalanced characters.

### What Skills Should I Pick?

Your character sheet is not meant to be an exhaustive list of everything your character knows. That would be silly. Here is some guidance for what skills to choose:

* Choose any Action or Language Skills that your character would know. They are likely to come up during the course of the game, so take them if they apply.
* Choose Background Skills that are **important** to your character. Just because you played “catch” as a child doesn’t mean you need to take the Baseball skill. Take Background Skills to reflect hobbies, interests, education (college major, perhaps), or professional skills not reflected by Action Skills.
* Remember that some things may be considered “common knowledge” based on the game, and you don’t need to take skills for those. See Common Knowledge, page 4 for more information.

### Choosing Appropriate Levels

Even rating 1 in FS3 represents a fair amount of training and practice in a skill. Ratings 4 and higher indicate professional level of competence, meaning you could conceivably do it for a living. It would be rare for someone to have a hobby at higher than rating 3 unless he is a really serious hobbyist!

## Quirks

Quirks are little things that make your character unique. They can be physical, social, virtues, vices, or other noteworthy traits. Quirks have no specific game effect. They could provide modifiers to rolls at the Storyteller’s discretion, but mostly they are just there to spur roleplay. Be creative!

* You must have at least 1 quirk.
* The Storyteller may impose a maximum number of quirks allowed.
* There is no list of quirks; you can choose whatever you want.

### Choosing Quirks

Quirks are not for power gaming. “Perfect Memory” and “God’s Gift To Women” are too powerful to be quirks, but “Never Forgets a Face” and “Girl In Every Port” are legitimate alternatives.

Quirks just reflect **notable** qualities of your character. What's notable for one character may not be notable for another. Just because someone picks 'Honest' as a quirk does not mean you have to have that quirk to be honest.

Why would you want to pick "negative" quirks? Well, first of all - it's fun to play flawed characters. You can get a lot of roleplay mileage out of them. Also keep in mind that many quirks are two-edged swords, and can work for you or against you depending on the situation.

# Experience

At times, the Storyteller may award Experience Points (XP) that can be used to learn new Skills or improve new ones.

Attributes cannot be changed using XP. They reflect aptitudes your character was born with and will only change due to drastic plot developments (disability, genetic manipulation, etc.) at the discretion of the Storyteller.

Quirks are also not affected by XP. Quirks can only be changed through roleplay, at the discretion of the Storyteller.

The following chart shows the cost for improving or learning a skill, based on the current level. The Storyteller may impose additional limitations on how many skills can be raised at once, to prevent someone from saving up a ton of XP and becoming an expert in something overnight.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Current**  **Skill Level** | **XP Cost For**  **Next Level** |
| 0 | 1 |
| 1 | 2 |
| 2 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 |
| 4 | 4 |
| 5 | 4 |
| 6 | 8 |
| 7 | 8 |
| 8 | 8 |
| 9 | 12 |
| 10 | 12 |
| 11 | 12 |

# Luck

Luck Points are a way of giving player characters an edge against fate. Every character begins the game with 1 Luck Point, and the Storyteller may award more at his discretion.

## Ability Rolls

You may spend a single Luck Point to affect Ability Rolls:

* *Before* your own roll, spend a point to receive a +50 modifier.
* *Before*someone else’s roll (friend or enemy), spend a point to apply a +50 or -50 modifier to *their* roll.
* *After* your own roll, spend a point to get a re-roll and choose the better of the two rolls.
* Spend a point to cancel a luck point used against you (for example: if someone gave you a -50 modifier you can spend a luck point to avoid it).

Only one Luck Point can apply to a given roll, so you can’t give yourself a bonus *and* someone else a penalty in the same Opposed Roll. Also, you can’t have multiple people all spending luck to help someone.

## Combat

You can spend Luck Points on Ability Rolls made during combat, but luck can also have certain special effects in combat situations. You can spend a Luck Point to:

* Modify attack, defense or initiative Ability Rolls (see Ability Rolls page 14).  
  Note: You may only modify one roll per combat turn.
* Recover from a Knockout (see Knockout, page 19).
* Move an injury from one hit location to another.   
  Note: This must be done immediately after the injury, and does not affect the damage done; it is purely for cosmetic/roleplay reasons.

## Plot Points

You can also spend luck points to affect the outcome of plot points. For example: you might spend a point to have the prosecutor lose key evidence in a trial, or to get a lucky break finding a missing witness. This is entirely at the Storyteller’s discretion, and the number of points required will vary based on how much you’re pushing your luck.

# Combat

Any combat situation could be resolved either through consent or a set of simple Ability Rolls. The only trouble with either of these solutions is that they require a great deal of interpretation. If Harvey shoots Bob, what does he roll? If he gets a good success, what does it mean? If Jane also shoots Bob, how do you fairly determine whether Bob is taken out by the combination of the two wounds?

If combat scenes are a regular occurrence, or if you have combat scenes involving large numbers of players, it helps to have a system to quickly, fairly, and consistently determine the outcome of the combat. The FS3 combat system is intended to fill that need.

Always remember that the purpose of a MUSH is to roleplay. The combat system is designed to support roleplay, not replace it.

## Combat Turns

Combat is organized into turns. Turns are not a specific length of time, but generally represent a few seconds. Each turn, a character gets a single action. Available actions are listed below, and described in more detail in Actions, page 16.

* Attack – Use a weapon.
* Aim – Take careful aim to help with a later shot.
* Suppress – Keep a target’s head down with suppressive fire.
* Reload – Put in a new clip.
* Subdue – Subdue someone in melee.
* Escape – Escape when you are subdued.
* Rally – Get a knocked out character back in the fight.
* Treat – Tend to wounds to make wounded characters more effective.

Additionally, there are “free” actions, which can be done in conjunction with the character’s main action. These include:

* Speaking
* Moving
* Drawing or picking up a weapon
* Changing stance (see Stance, page 16)

## Order of Actions (Initiative)

Actions within a turn are resolved in order based on an Ability Roll for initiative. The Storyteller will determine which ability is used for initiative, be it an attribute or a skill. The Roll Result (-2 to +3) determines the order of actions, with higher results going first. In case of ties, choose who goes first at random.

It is important to note that Knockout rolls (see Knockout, page 19) are made **after** all actions have been resolved. This means that a character still gets a chance for a dying gasp even as he’s being taken out.

*For example: Kid and Jesse are involved in a gunfight. Kid rolls higher on initiative, so he goes first and shoots Jesse. Jesse gets to shoot back, but suffers damage modifiers from Kid’s wound. After all the actions are done, Knockout rolls are made and Jesse is taken out.*

## Attack Resolution

Many combat actions result in an “attack” of some sort. The basic steps for resolving an attack are outlined below and described further in subsequent sections:

1. Determine whether the attack hit, missed, or was dodged.
2. Determine hit location.
3. Determine the effect of cover and armor.
4. Determine damage.

## Attack and Defense Rolls

In general, all attacks are resolved using simple ability rolls. The attacker rolls his weapon’s attack skill. The defender rolls the *attacker’s weapon’s* defense skill.

*Example: Kelly is stabbing Michael. Even though Michael has a pistol drawn, he defends using the melee combat skill because Kelly’s weapon has “melee combat” as its defense skill.*

There may be modifiers to either roll based on wounds, the weapon itself, the attacker and defender’s stance, or other special situations. See Modifiers, page 18.

Use the table below to determine the outcome of the attack based on the Roll Result of both the attack and defense rolls.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Roll Result** | **Outcome** |
| Attack roll fails (result less than 1). | Attacker misses completely. |
| Attack roll succeeds, but result is **less than** defender’s roll result. | Defender manages to block, dodge, duck, etc. Attack misses. |
| Attack roll succeeds and is **greater than or equal to** the defender’s roll result.  Note: Ties go to the attacker. | Attack hits. Proceed to the next step. |

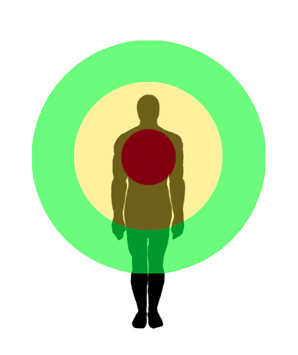
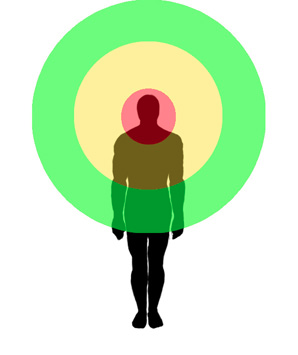
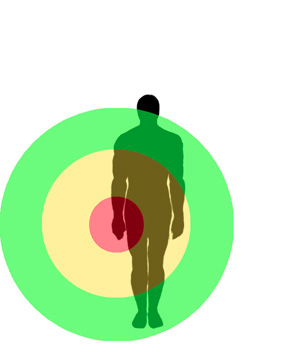
*Example: Back to Kelly stabbing Michael. Kelly rolls melee and gets a result of +1 (Success). Michael rolls melee and gets a result of -1 (Failure). Since Kelly’s result is greater than Michael’s, she hits.*

## Hit Location

Where the attack hit affects damage, determines whether armor applies, and is generally useful for roleplay. FS3 uses a custom hit location system.

The first step is to figure out where you’re aiming. The default assumption is that you’re aiming for center of mass. For a human, this is the chest. There is no modifier for taking a “called shot” in FS3; you just declare that you’re aiming for a different body part.

Now imagine a dartboard superimposed over the target, with the bullseye centered at the point you’re aiming for. This is illustrated in the pictures below, showing the effects of aiming at the chest, head, and hand.

If you roll well enough, you’re going to hit the bullseye. The worse you roll, the further from the bullseye you’re going to hit. You might still hit the target – albeit in a different spot than you intended – or you might miss completely.

To determine hit location:

1. Roll 2d8 and add the difference between the attacker’s roll result and the defender’s roll result.
2. Find the row in the table below corresponding to the targeted hit location.
3. Find the column corresponding to the modified die roll. This tells you the hit location. A result of ‘--' means that you missed.

*Example: Kelly successfully stabbed Michael. Kelly rolls a 5 on hit location, modified to a 7 because of the difference between the attack roll (+1) and the defense roll (-1). Kelly didn’t specify a hit location in particular, so it is assumed he was aiming for the chest. Consulting the “chest” row of the hit location table shows that Kelly hit the abdomen instead.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Hit Location Roll** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Targeted Hit Location** | **1 or less** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **9** | **10** | **11** | **12** | **13** | **14** | **15+** |
| Abdomen  (AB)  *\* Vital \** | HD | NK | LH | RH | LA | RA | LL | RL | CH | CH | AB | AB | AB | AB | AB |
| Chest  (CH)  *\* Vital \** | LL | RL | LH | RH | LA | RA | AB | HD | NK | AB | CH | CH | CH | CH | CH |
| Head  (HD)  *\* Critical \** | -- | -- | -- | -- | RA | LA | AB | CH | CH | NK | HD | HD | HD | HD | HD |
| Left Arm  (LA) | -- | -- | HD | LL | CH | NK | LL | CH | LH | CH | LA | LA | LA | LA | LA |
| Left Foot  (LF) | -- | -- | -- | -- | RH | LH | RL | RF | LL | LL | LF | LF | LF | LF | LF |
| Left Hand  (LH) | -- | -- | -- | RA | RH | CH | AB | CH | LA | LA | LH | LH | LH | LH | LH |
| Left Leg  (LL) | -- | CH | LA | RH | LH | AB | RF | AB | RL | LF | LL | LL | LL | LL | LL |
| Neck  (NK)  *\* Critical \** | -- | -- | -- | -- | RA | LA | AB | CH | CH | HD | NK | NK | NK | NK | NK |
| Right Arm  (RA) | -- | -- | HD | RL | CH | NK | RL | CH | CH | RH | RA | RA | RA | RA | RA |
| Right Foot  (RF) | -- | -- | -- | -- | LH | RH | LL | LF | RL | RL | RF | RF | RF | RF | RF |
| Right Hand  (RH) | -- | -- | -- | LA | LH | CH | AB | CH | RA | RA | RH | RH | RH | RH | RH |
| Right Leg  (RL) | -- | CH | RA | LH | RH | AB | LF | LL | RF | AB | RL | RL | RL | RL | RL |

Certain hit locations are designated as “Vital” or “Critical”. Hits to these locations will apply a modifier to the damage result according to the table below. See Damage Done, page 20.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Hit Location Type** | **Damage Modifier** |
| Critical | +30 |
| Vital | +15 |
| Neither | 0 |

## Armor

Some characters may wear body armor to protect them from damage. Most armor will only protect certain body parts, so the first step is using the hit location to determine whether the armor even comes into play.

The effect of armor is based on the weapon’s Penetration statistic and the armor’s Protection stat, specified in the weapons and armor lists.

To determine the effect of armor:

1. Determine the Penetration and Protection values of the weapon and armor.
2. Consult the table below to determine the Stop Chance, which is the chance of the armor stopping the attack.
3. Roll percentile dice.
4. A roll of 100 means that the hit bypasses the armor completely.
5. A roll less than or equal to the Stop Chance means that the armor stops the attack completely.
6. Otherwise roll percentile dice again. The maximum result is equal to the Stop Chance. This is the damage modifier.
7. Apply the damage modifier to the damage roll. See Damage Done, page 19.

|  |
| --- |
| Stop Chance = ((((Penetration/Protection) \* 2) - 1) \* 25) + 10  *Yes, you’ll need a calculator. Sorry.* |

*Example: Bob got shot in the chest (armor protection 4) with a rifle (pen 4). Stop Chance is 35, so there's a 35% chance that the armor will stop the bullet completely, and if it doesn't - lethality will be reduced anywhere from 0 to 35%.*

## Cover

If someone is behind cover, there is a chance that the attack will hit the cover instead of the intended target. To determine the effect of cover:

1. If the attacker got a Roll Result of +3 on his attack roll, he has hit an exposed body part. Cover does not apply.
2. If it is clear what body parts are covered, you can use the hit location to determine whether cover applies. For example: Someone is crouched behind a crate and the hit location is the leg.
3. Otherwise roll percentile dice. There is a 75% chance that cover will apply.
4. If cover applies, treat it like armor. Determine the damage modifier based on the Protection value of the cover and the Penetration value of the weapon.
5. Apply the damage modifier to the damage roll. See Damage Done, page 20.

Note: If the character is wearing body armor, the effects of armor and cover are cumulative.

## Determining Damage

The damage system is described fully in Damage, page 31. In general, wounds are tracked individually, contributing to an overall wound modifier based on how hurt you are.

The damage severity of a wound is based on a percentile dice roll modified by:

* The weapon’s lethality statistic.
* Any damage modifiers resulting from hit location. See Hit Location, page 17.
* Any damage modifiers resulting from armor. See Armor, page 18.
* Any damage modifiers resulting from cover. See Cover, page 19.

All modifiers are cumulative, and are added to the percentile roll to give a final result.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Modified**  **Damage Roll** | **Severity** |
| 40 or less | Light |
| 41 – 80 | Moderate |
| 81 – 105 | Serious |
| 106 or higher | Critical |

### 

## Suppression

Firearms combat is disconcerting, which is reflected by Suppression. Every time a character is fired upon, he receives a single Suppression Point.

If you deliberately try to keep someone’s head down using the Suppress action, you can apply addition Suppression Points. See Suppress, page 22. Note that melee attacks do not inherently suppress someone, but you can deliberately suppress someone using the Suppress action, even with melee combat.

All attacks suffer a modifier of -5 for every suppression point. Thus, someone with 3 suppression points suffers a -15 modifier to attack. Suppression does not apply to defense rolls.

A character may have at most 5 Suppression Points at any given time. At the end of every turn, all characters subtract 2 Suppression Points from their total.

## Weapon Stats

The Storyteller will define a list of weapons and their statistics. Obviously the weapons list for a medieval or historical game will vary wildly from the list for a sci-fi game, but all weapons share a number of basic characteristics:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Weapon Stat** | **Description** |
| Weapon Type | Whether the weapon is a melee weapon (for close in combat), ranged weapon (for distance combat), or explosive weapon. |
| Class | Whether the weapon should be used against people or vehicles. See Weapons and Armor, page 28. |
| Attack Skill | The skill used for attack rolls. |
| Defense Skill | The skill that the defender uses for defense rolls when attacked by this weapon. |
| Lethality | A modifier to damage based on how lethal the weapon is.  See Damage Done, page 21. |
| Penetration | How effective the weapon is at penetrating armor.  See Armor, page 20. |
| Damage Type | Whether the weapon does stun or physical damage. See Damage Types, page 31. |
| Ammunition | How many times a weapon can fire before it has to be reloaded. Typically applies to ranged weapons, but certain melee weapons may have ammo as well. |
| *Additional Stats for Ranged Weapons Only* | |
| Automatic Fire | Whether the weapon is capable of automatic fire. See Automatic Fire, page 26. |
| Recoil | The modifier applies to subsequent bullets in a burst. See Automatic Fire, page 26. |
| Effective Range | The weapon’s effective range, in meters. Short range is usually ½ this value and long range is twice this value. |
| *Additional Stats for Explosive Weapons Only* | |
| Blast Radius | The immediate blast radius of the explosion, in meters. See Explosives, page 29. |
| Shrapnel | Whether the weapon does shrapnel damage. |

## Modifiers

Countless modifiers may impact either the attack roll or defense roll, at the discretion of the players or Storyteller. The following table outlines some common modifiers, and indicates whether they apply to attack rolls, defense rolls, or both.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Situation** | **Modifier** | **Applies To**  **Attack or**  **Defense Roll** |
| Stance | See Stance, page 21 | Both |
| Wound Modifiers | See Damage Levels, page 30 | Both |
| Luck | See Combat, page 15 | Both |
| Suppression | See Suppression, page 21 | Attack |
| Attacking with a melee weapon\* | +30 | Attack |
| Weapon accuracy | See | Attack |
| Recoil | See Automatic Fire, page 26 | Attack |
| Range | 0 for short range  -15 for medium range  -30 for long range  Range is one of the weapon statistics. | Attack |
| Defending against a melee weapon\* | +30 | Defense |

\* - The melee weapon modifier is there to prevent slugfests where everyone keeps missing, which is frustrating and unrealistic.

## Actions

This section details the available combat actions and how to resolve them.

### Attack

A basic attack. See Attack Resolution, page 16.

### Aim

Take careful aim at a target to increase your chance to hit. Aiming with a melee weapon is allowed; it represents sizing up your opponent and waiting for your opening.

*Resolution:*

Aiming is automatically successful, and will give a bonus of +30 to attack that same target next turn. Spending more than one turn aiming does not increase the modifier, and the modifier is lost if you switch targets.

### Suppress

Fire at a target to “keep their head down”. Suppression does no damage, but reduces the target’s overall effectiveness in combat. Suppression with a melee weapon is allowed; it represents feints or other distracting moves to keep someone occupied.

*Resolution:*

Suppression is resolved by making an attack roll as normal (see Attack Resolution, page 16). If the attack “hits”, no damage is done but it applies a number of Suppression Points equal to twice the difference between the attacker and defender’s roll results. See Suppression, page 19 for more details.

*For example: Bruno fires his pistol to suppress Tom. Bruno rolls a +1 and Tom rolls a -1, giving a difference of +2. This inflicts 4 Suppression Points on Tom.*

*Notes:*

A fully automatic firearm can suppress up to 5 targets in a single turn, expending 1 bullet per target. Each target requires a separate attack and defense roll.

### Reload

Certain weapons have a limited number of attacks before they must be reloaded. Reloading takes a full action.

### Subdue

You can attempt to subdue another using melee combat. Subduing someone does no damage, but prevents them from taking any action until they execute a successful “Escape” action.

*Resolution:*

A subdue attempt is resolved by making an attack roll as normal (see Attack Resolution, page 16). If the attack “hits”, the target is subdued. No damage is done.

*Notes:*

The attacker cannot take any other action (other than “free” actions) while subduing another character; if he does, the other character automatically escapes.

### Escape

If you have been subdued, you can attempt to escape during your action.

*Resolution:*

An escape attempt is resolved by making an attack roll as normal (see Attack Resolution, page 16). If the attack “hits”, you escape and may take a normal action next turn.

### Rally

You can attempt to rally a knocked out character, giving them a chance at getting back into the fight. This can reflect anything from slapping a lightly-wounded soldier on the face and yelling at him to “snap out of it” to giving a big morale boosting speech to encourage a badly wounded comrade to keep fighting. It does *not* reflect first aid, which is handled by the Treat action.

*Resolution:*

Rally requires no special roll, but immediately allows the rallied character to make another Knockout Roll (see Knockout, page 20). If the Knockout Roll succeeds, the character is no longer knocked out.

### Treat

Healers can use first aid in combat to tend wounds. If successful, this reduces wound modifiers and may revive a knocked out character.

*Resolution:*

The healer makes a first aid ability roll. If successful, it applies 1 Healing Point to the wound (see Healing, page 21). This cuts the wound modifiers from that wound in half, and also allows a knocked out character to immediately make another Knockout Roll (see Knockout, page 20). If the Knockout Roll succeeds, the character is no longer knocked out.

*Notes:*

First aid can only be used within an hour of the initial injury, and can only be attempted once per wound, regardless of whether the roll is successful or not. The Storyteller will determine the specific ability to use for first aid rolls.

### Stance

As a free action, a character may change their Stance. Stance reflects your general attitude and behavior in the combat. Most stances offer modifiers to attack and defense rolls. See Attack Resolution, page 16 for details.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Stance** | **Description** | **Effects** |
| Normal | The default stance. | None |
| Banzai | An overly offensive, almost reckless stance. | +30 to attack rolls  -50 to defense rolls |
| Evade | Dodging and weaving. | -50 to attack rolls  +30 to defense rolls |
| Cautious | Taking it slow and careful. | -15 to attack rolls  +15 to defense rolls |
| Cover | You are partially behind cover, such as a wall or tree. | Attacks aimed at you have a chance of hitting the cover instead. See Cover, page 20. |

## Special Attacks

This section details how to handle some common special attacks.

### Automatic Fire

Some ranged weapons are capable of burst fire (3-round, or “short” bursts) or fully automatic fire (treated as a 10-round burst). Short bursts may only be directed at a single target.

Automatic fire is resolved just like a regular attack, but with one attack and defense roll *per bullet*. All bullets after the first one receive a negative modifier based on the recoil statistic of the weapon multiplied by the number of bullets so far (excluding the first).

*Example: Bob is firing full-auto. His weapon has a recoil modifier of 5. He makes 10 attack rolls total, the first with a -0 modifier, the second with -5, the third with -10, etc. Defense rolls, damage, armor, etc. must be determined separately for each of the bullets.*

Full-auto fire can be directed at up to 5 targets in a single turn, with the bullets distributed as equally as possible among the targets. One bullet is “lost” between each target. Resolve all bullets against a single target before switching to the next one.

*Example: This time Bob is firing full-auto at Jane, Harry and Marcus. It is a 10-round burst, but he loses 1 bullet every time he switches targets. That leaves him with 8 bullets, divided among 3 people. Jane gets 3, Harry gets 3, and Marcus gets 2.*

Note: If a character doesn’t have enough bullets in their clip for a complete burst, they can empty the clip and do a partial burst, as long as there are enough bullets for all the targets. The only change is that you’ll make fewer attack rolls.

### Explosions

Explosives do two types of damage - concussion and possibly shrapnel. Concussion is an automatic wound to the head representing the force of the explosion. Shrapnel is a number of separate wounds, each to a different hit location. Some explosive weapons don’t do shrapnel damage; this usually means they are armor-piercing anti-vehicle rounds rather than anti-personnel rounds.

Explosion damage is determined using a “zone” system. The table below shows the number of shrapnel wounds and the damage modifier for the five different explosive zones.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Zone** | **Shrapnel** | **Damage Modifier** |
| 0 | 4d4 | +50 |
| 1 | 1d6 | 0 |
| 2 | 1d4 | -25 |
| 3 | 1d4 / 2 | -50 |
| 4 | No Shrapnel | -100 |

You can determine the people affected by the explosion using the intended target point and the weapon’s blast radius statistic:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Distance from**  **Intended Target** | **Zone** |
| Within the blast radius | 0 |
| Within double the blast radius | 1 |
| Further away | n/a – safe from explosion |

Zones 2-4 come into play after the attack and defense rolls. They represent situations where either the attacker didn’t get the explosive quite where he wanted it, or the defender managed to dive away, get behind something sturdy, etc. before the blast.

If an attack roll fails (success level less than 1), it doesn’t necessarily mean they missed completely. The roll result is subtracted from defender’s zone. “Close” counts in hand grenades, after all.

*Example: Jesse throws a grenade at Mike, intending it to land right next to him. This would have put Mike in Zone 0, but Jesse rolled poorly and got a -1 roll result. This puts Mike in Zone 1 instead (0 – (-1) = 1).*

If the defender rolls better than the attacker, the zone is further modified by the difference between the attack and defense rolls.

*Example: Not only did Jesse roll poorly, Mike rolled a +1 on his defense roll. The difference between the attack and defense roll is +2, so this puts Mike all the way out in Zone 3.*

Once you’ve determined which Zone everyone ends up in, resolving damage is straightforward:

1. Apply a single concussion wound to the character’s head.
2. If the weapon’s shrapnel statistic says that it does shrapnel damage, roll the dice indicated in the explosive Zone table to determine how many pieces of shrapnel hit the person. Apply that many individual shrapnel wounds to the character.

Resolve each wound like a normal attack, only you don’t have to make attack and defense rolls – the attack automatically hits.

* Shrapnel has a damage modifier based on the Zone and a penetration value of 3.
* Concussion has a damage modifier based on the Zone plus the weapon’s damage modifier, and a penetration based on the weapon.

## Vehicle Combat

Vehicles in combat are treated similarly to people. There are, however, a few notable differences, described below.

The Storyteller will define the vehicle list and statistics for the game.

### Weapons and Armor

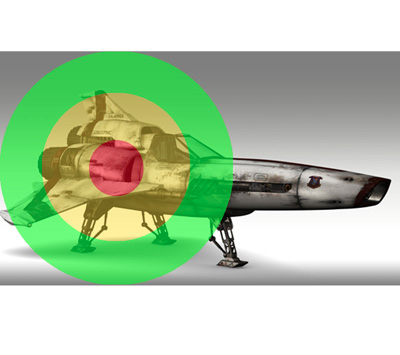
Weapons are classified as either Personal weapons or Vehicle weapons. Although you can shoot a Personal weapon at a vehicle, chances are it’s not going to do very much. A bullet may be able to pierce a car door, but unless it hits something critical in the engine, the car will run just fine.

Likewise, a main tank gun may have a damage modifier of 0, but that’s against tanks. If that hits a person, you’re going to have to find and assemble the body parts. Of course, aiming a tank gun at a person presents another set of challenges.

No special rules are provided for firing vehicle weapons against people or vice-versa; this is left up to the Storyteller’s discretion.

### Hit Location

Each vehicle will have its own custom hit location table, but the basic principles are the same as people. You choose which part of the vehicle to aim at, and determine where you actually hit based on the success of the roll. Certain hit locations that are dubbed Critical or Vital, like an engine or cockpit. Each vehicle has a default hit location representing its center of mass.



### Explosives

Concussion damage from an explosive is not applied to the “Head”, obviously, but to the center of mass. Many explosive vehicle weapons will not have shrapnel; they are usually armor piercing rounds not anti-personnel rounds.

### Knockout

Vehicles have their own toughness ability rating. This is what you roll for Knockout at the end of a turn in which the vehicle is damaged.

### Passenger Hits

When a vehicle is damaged, there is a chance the passengers inside will be injured. Roll percentile dice for each passenger, and consult the table below. If the die roll is less than the chance to be injured, the passenger is hurt.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Damage**  **Severity** | **Chance for**  **Passenger Hit** | **Number**  **of Hits** |
| Light | 2% | 1 |
| Moderate | 10% | 1 |
| Serious | 25% | 1d4 / 2 |
| Critical | 50% | 1d4 |

If a passenger is hurt, consult the number of hits column to determine how many wounds they suffer. Resolve each wound like a normal attack, only you don’t have to make attack and defense rolls – the attack automatically hits. Shrapnel from vehicle damage has a damage modifier of 0 and a penetration value of 3.

### Healing

Vehicle repair works like healing, with Healing Points accumulated to reduce wound severity. However, there are a few differences:

* Instead of medicine / first aid, wounds are treated using a repair skill specified by the Storyteller.
* Vehicle wounds require 1/5th the total number of Healing Points, because machines are a lot easier to fix than people.
* Vehicles don’t heal by themselves; they only get better if someone is fixing them.

First aid on vehicles represents quick-fix jury-rigging, and can be done in the midst of combat using the Treat action.

# Damage

There are no hit points in FS3. Wounds are tracked individually, but there is an overall Wound Modifier based on all the wounds a character has suffered. This modifier is applied to all skill rolls while wounded, so the more seriously hurt you are, the less effective you become until finally you are knocked out of the fight.

## Damage Levels

There are five severity levels of damage, described below along with examples of what the levels mean for firearms and unarmed damage

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Severity** | **Wound Modifier** | **Firearms Example** | **Unarmed Example** |
| Light | -5 | Just a scratch. | Slight bruise. |
| Moderate | -20 | Missed everything important but hurts a lot. | Nice shiner / bloody lip. |
| Serious | -50 | Bleeding badly, possibly nicked a bone or something important. | Broken nose / loose teeth. |
| Critical | -80 | Potentially life-threatening. Organ/artery damage. | Concussion or busted rib. |

Wound Modifiers are applied to all ability rolls, and are cumulative. Thus if you have two Moderate wounds you would suffer a -40 modifier to all rolls.

Wounds that have begun healing or been treated with first aid give only ½ the listed wound modifier (see Healing, page 20).

## Damage Types

There are two types of damage: Wound and Stun. Wound damage is from things like bullets, knives, car crashes, etc. Stun damage is from fists, tazers, fatigue and other generally non-lethal damage. Stun damage is just as effective as wound damage, but heals much faster (see Healing, page 20).

## Knockout

There is no death in FS3, except at the Storyteller or player’s discretion. The worst result of combat is a knockout, which means you have been taken out of the fight.

At the end of any turn *in which you took damage*, you must make a Knockout Roll. This is a simple percentage roll, with a modifier based on how tough your character is. If you roll lower than your total Wound Modifier, you are knocked out. You can interpret that as being knocked unconscious, killed, writhing in pain, panicked, subdued, or any other appropriate result – as long as you’re no longer fighting.

The Storyteller will determine which ability is used for toughness. The modifier is determined from the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Toughness**  **Rating** | **Knockout Roll Modifier** |
| 1 | -20 |
| 2 | -15 |
| 3 | -10 |
| 4 | -5 |
| 5 | 0 |
| 6 | +5 |
| 7 | +10 |
| 8 | +15 |
| 9 | +20 |
| 10 | +25 |
| 11 | +30 |
| 12 | +35 |

## Healing

Wounds heal slowly in FS3. For a wound to heal down to the next lower severity level, the character must accumulate a number of Healing Points shown in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Wound Level** | **Healing Points Required** |
| Light | 4 |
| Moderate | 6 |
| Serious | 8 |
| Critical | 12 |

Note: Stun damage wounds require 1/5th the listed number of Healing Points, so they heal very quickly.

As soon as the wound has enough points, it automatically becomes one severity level lower. In other words, a Critical wound becomes Serious, a Serious wound becomes Moderate, etc.

### Acquiring Healing Points – Simple System

In the simple system, a character gets 1 Healing Point per day, plus a bonus point if under a doctor’s care. If a character has multiple wounds, the same number of Healing Points is applied to every wound.

### Acquiring Healing Points – Advanced System

Storytellers may optionally use a more advanced system for determining Healing Points, which allows for more variable healing time and takes into account character toughness (tougher characters will heal faster) and doctor skill (poor care can slow healing).

Every 24 hours, both the injured character and his doctor (if applicable) may make ability rolls. The injured character rolls his toughness ability and the doctor rolls his medicine ability. The Storyteller will determine the specific ability to use for toughness and medicine.

Notes:

* A doctor can make only one medicine roll per patient per day, and can tend to a maximum number of patients equal to ½ their medicine ability rating.
* Only one doctor can make a medicine roll for a single patient.
* Even if a character has multiple wounds, there is only one set of rolls per day. The same number of Healing Points is applied to every wound.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Daily Situation** | **Healing Points** |
| Successful daily toughness roll. | 1 point |
| Failed daily toughness roll. | 0.5 points |
| Successful daily medicine roll. | 2 points |
| Failed daily medicine roll. | *Lose* 1 point |
| Character is in a hospital. | 0.5 points |