

Strain and Drain

This is a change to how Traits and Secrets are used. When you “Tap” a Trait or Secret, you do not cross it out, instead increase a group score “Strain” or “Drain”, which act as buffers for heroic action. The main benefit is your Traits and Secrets are always available and you don’t need to mark up your character sheet every time you want to do something. This new format is more transparent and promotes player teamwork since the group scores are shared with all players, similar to Hazard.

Summary

Strain and Drain are new scores the GM tracks for your group of players, similar to Hazard. These scores start at one (1) just like Hazard and increase whenever you or another player “Tap” a Trait or Secret. Strain represents physical endurance and Drain is mental or other non-physical reserves, such as magic. So if you roll EFFORT and Tap a Trait like “runner” then Strain increases by 1 point.

- **When you roll EFFORT** and have a relevant Trait, upgrade your result and **Raise Strain**. (Your GM may waive this if you have a specialized endurance Trait for your activity.)
- **When you Soak Damage**, Raise Strain for each point of Damage Soaked. Use Drain instead of Strain for mental, psychic, or other non-physical Damage. This now requires a **Soak Roll**, see below.
- **When you use a Secret, Raise Drain**. The GM may require more Drain and/or a roll for powerful usage of Secrets. Purely roleplaying usage of Secrets does not Raise Drain.

Again, do not cross out Traits and Secrets when you Tap them, just Raise Strain OR Drain, whichever is most appropriate.

Effects of Strain and Drain

Whenever **Strain or Drain exceeds Hazard** then the GM will **Raise Hazard** to match. You still just use Hazard when rolling dice, but if left unchecked Strain and Drain can eventually bump Hazard up. Strain

and Drain are essentially buffers so you can push yourself for a time before seeing any negative effect. Since these buffers increase with Hazard, you can push harder in dramatic scenes.

Raising Hazard

Whenever the GM **Raises Hazard**, this should be applied to **Strain or Drain instead of Hazard** if more appropriate. For example, after describing a long march through a swamp, the GM might Raise Strain by describing all the bug bites and leeches. It's possible that this will also bump up Hazard.

Cutting Hazard

When you use an Action to **Cut Hazard**, you can choose to apply that to Strain or Drain instead of Hazard (and you should do this any time those scores are as high as Hazard).

- **Cut Strain** - You must take an action which restores the physical body, such as eating, drinking water, resting, mending bruises and cuts, cleaning yourself, etc.
- **Cut Drain** - You must take an action which restores the non-physical or spiritual self, such as dreaming, praying, meditation, music, dancing, carousing, etc.

Soak Rolls

When you take Damage, make a **Soak Roll**. If you roll **1d20 higher than Strain** then you Soak 1 Damage and **Raise Strain**. Use Drain instead of Strain for mental, psychic, or other non-physical Damage.

If you roll a **natural 20** then you get to roll again! However, if you roll a **natural 1** then you take 1 extra Damage. Thus, you always have a tiny chance of blind luck and freak mishaps.

Extra Soak Rolls - You may also qualify for extra Soak Rolls for the situations described below. If you get to make multiple rolls then wait to Raise Strain until they are all done, Raising Strain by the total Damage Soaked.

- **Defensive Trait** - Roll again if you have a relevant defensive trait. You can lobby for two rolls if it's extremely specific.

- **Doomed** - Roll again if at least half your party is doomed.

Examples:

- Floki is hit by an arrow. He rolls a 8 and Strain is 2 so he Soaks 1 Damage.
- Hrolf is hit by an ax. He is a burly man in full armor, so he gets 3 Soak Rolls, however he rolls a 1 on the first roll and can thus Soak no Damage at all.

Rationale - Some kind of change like this is necessary since Traits are no longer a resource that becomes depleted, so a Trait like "ironskin" will remain available and allow for unlimited soak.

Armor - The above does not change how Damage works with regard to Armor Class and Weapon Class. However, that could be modified to use a Soak Roll for the benefits of armor. If your armor is superior then you get an extra Soak Roll, instead of the current -1 Damage modifier.