OQ3 SRD Combat

Social Combat

Starting Combat

For social combat to occur, two things have to happen first.

*The combatants must be in range.* Social combat can’t happen if the characters involved can’t hear each other. See Guidelines on the Range of Social Combat below.

*They must understand each other.* Social combat works best if the combatants involved are speaking the same language. It can occur if they have a basic level of understanding, through gestures or being able to understand some key phrases due to the languages being in the same language family. See Limits of Understanding below.

**Range of Social Combat**

This type of combat can only occur if combatants are in speaking distance. Usually, this is within close range (up to two metres) but can also happen at a ranged distance with opponents being up to 50 meters away,

At close range, the character can speak without penalty. Beyond that, apply a -20% penalty to the speaker’s Influence skill. A Master of the Influence skill has learnt to project their voice and does not suffer that penalty.

Beyond fifty metres, the character cannot use Influence to attack targets using social combat techniques, without the aid of magic. The spell Thunder’s Voice is an example of a magic spell that allows Intimidation attempts at up to 100m!

**Limits of Understanding**

Social combat can only occur if the combatants can understand each other. If the player can convincingly explain how they can communicate their argument using sign language and gestures, they can take -20% to their Influence in Intimidation conflicts. They cannot attempt Fast Talk or Oratory, which requires more elaborate conversational language.

Fast Talk

This method of Social Combat is where a character tries to quickly convince another that their point of view is valid or confuse them into accepting something that isn’t true. It’s a quick conversation that lasts a couple of minutes. Roll 1D6 to determine the exact length in minutes if the timing is important. It is also one character against another. Fast Talk also works against small groups of up to ten individuals, where the group has an established leader that the character can aim their attack at, and their subordinates will follow their lead. Fast Talk only works in situations where the target is within clear speaking distance.

The procedure for making a Fast Talk is as follows:

1. The player whose character is doing the Fast Talk roleplays what their character is saying and announces what they want the successful outcome to be.
2. The character doing Fast Talk makes an opposed skill test using Influence. The target may defend with one of three skills. Their Influence, if they are actively arguing back; their Persistence skill, if they are relying on sheer will power to resist the other character’s persuasion; or a Lore Skill if the character is trying to trick them in an area where they are knowledgeable.
3. If the Fast Talker succeeds, they convince the target. The target remains convinced for 1D20 minutes before they realise they’ve been bamboozled.
4. If the Fast Talker rolls a critical result the target never realises they’ve been conned and accepts what the character says as the truth.
5. If the Fast Talker making the fast talk fails the roll, the target does not fall for their deception. They may try again, using a different argument, and they suffer a cumulative -20% modifier to their Influence each time they try. Until the character’s modified Influence is 0 or below, they can keep on trying. At this point, the Fast Talker has lost all credibility with the target, who can simply ignore them and walk away.
6. If the Fast Talker fumbles their roll, the target immediately realises that they are the target of deception. Depending on the temperament of the target this may lead to them launching an attack (see moving to physical combat below), a loud denouncement of the Fast Talker or, at the very best, a loss of credibility (-20% with the Target on all Influence rolls until they succeed against them).

If timing is important, the whole exchange takes 1D6 minutes.

Note, the Fast Talker is usually the player character who is trying to convince a non-player character. There may be rare cases where the Fast Talker is a non-player character, run by the Referee, and the target is a character controlled by the player. Normally, this is someone who socially outranks the character in an organisation that they belong to and expects to be obeyed, such as high ranking Noble, Priest, Guild Master or Magus. The Referee should be careful when applying the outcome and should not corner the player character into a situation which the player is unhappy with. Even if the Fast Talker rolled a critical, the player character should be allowed to fail forward if they want to.

Oratory

This is a type of public speaking, where a skilled speaker tries to convince an audience of their argument. Unlike Fast Talk, this is the art of influencing large crowds. This procedure applies to both formal public speaking, such as political debates or trials, or informal public speaking such as an argument between the players’ adventuring group and a group of bandits.

The Orator puts forward their argument over a series of exchanges, which last ten minutes or more, to win over the audience. The Orator wins when all the audience comes over to their side or, if the combat has a time limit, if they have more members of the audience on their side.

**Setup**

Make a note of the size of the audience. As the Orator wins over the audience, members will come over to their side. Conversely, if there is a Defence Orator, they can win back the audience that the Orator is attempting to win over.

Determine how long the oratory will last. Public affairs either have a set time limit, based upon legal tradition, or can be big debates that last as long as it needs for one side to win.

The Referee determines if the audience has a Defending Orator. Normally, this is a non-player character. If you need to make up their stats on the spot, normally they will be a veteran in the Influence Skill (75%) and have a Persistence of about 50%.

**Procedure**

1. The Orator puts forward their argument, which the player controlling the Orator roleplays out.
2. They roll against their Influence, modified by the Referee (see Modifiers for Oratory below).
3. If the Orator succeeds, 1D10 members of the audience move over to their side of the argument.
4. If the Orator fails, the audience remains unconvinced, and the Orator is at -20% for their next attempt to sway the audience.
5. At this point, if there is a defending Orator (see ‘Who the Orator?’ below) in the audience, they get to respond. Repeat steps 3-5 for the defence.
6. Look at the state of the audience after the defence has spoken.
7. If all the audience is on the Orator’s side, then they accept the Orator’s argument and the Orator wins the combat.
8. If the combat is time-limited and the time limit is up, look at the numbers of the audience that have moved over to the Orator, and the number who remain unconvinced. If that number is in favour of the Orator, they win.
9. If at any point the Orator or the defence fumble their roll, they automatically lose ten audience members. If they have no audience members on their side, they lose the combat.
10. If at any point the Orator or the defence critical their roll, they automatically gain ten of the audience.
11. If neither side of the argument has won outright, and there is still time, the combat continues. Repeat the procedure.

**Who is the Orator?**

Normally the Orator will be the attacking player character, and the defence will be a named non-player character who acts as the leader for the audience.

Occasionally the Orator will be a non-player character. Still, it can be the other way round with the Orator being an NPC who outranks the character in much the same conditions as Fast Talk.

**Modifiers for Oratory**

The following conditions give a +20% bonus to the Orator’s Influence. Apply only one.

* If the player gives a resoundingly good roleplaying performance when presenting the Orator’s argument.
* If the Orator has another skill which will back up the argument they are putting forward.
* If the Orator has a motive that reinforces the argument they are making.
* If the audience the Orator is facing is sympathetic to the Orator’s argument.
* The following conditions give a -20% penalty to the Orator’s influence.
* The audience is actively hostile to the Orator’s argument.
* The physical conditions are adverse, for example its raining heavily.

Pick one modifier to apply, no stacking.

Intimidation

Where the character trying to persuade another non-player character, or group of characters, using the threat of physical force. This often happens as an action during physical combat, where the character tries to get the other side to surrender or flee. Intimidation may be directed at a single enemy or a group of enemies. It also can occur at the beginning of combat, where the Intimidator challenges their opponents to either surrender immediately or leave the field peacefully.

Procedure.

1. The Intimidator’s player roleplays out the what the Intimidator is saying and announces what they want the successful outcome to be.
2. They make a skill test using Influence.
3. If the Intimidator succeeds, they convince the target(s).
4. If the Intimidator rolls a critical result, the target caves immediately, surrendering or fleeing (player’s choice).
5. If the Intimidator making the Intimidation fails the roll, the target is not intimidated.
6. If the Intimidator fumbles their roll, the target immediately digs in and cannot be intimidated by the character for the rest of the Quest.

Modifiers for Intimidation.

* If the character’s motive has a bearing on the Intimidation attempt, give the character a +20% bonus to their Intimidation attempt.
* If the target(s) have a higher Influence or Persistence than the Intimidator’s Influence, apply a -20% penalty to the Intimidator’s Influence.
* If the target(s) is more powerful than the Intimidator or is at full strength if the target is a group, then apply a -50% penalty.

Pick one modifier to apply, no stacking.

As in a Fast Talk contest, the Intimidator is usually a player character. Occasionally the Intimidator will be a non-player character, under much the same conditions as in a Fast Talk contest

Intimidation uses the Basic Skill Test rather than Opposed Skill Test for speed, because it is often used as part of physical combat, which is already heavy with dice rolls.

Prolonged Social Combats

The above procedures, as written, assume that you are resolving small scale conflicts that are of the moment between two combatants put on the spot.

Longer involved social combats, such as political campaign or even the courtship phase of a romance, can be run using one of two methods, that is decided by the Referee after discussion with the players involved, depending on whether the situation is stressed or unstressed.

If the combat is a leisurely unstressed affair, where the opposition isn’t putting up an active resistance, simply use the skill level of the ‘attacker’ to determine the level of a win after a duration determined, using common sense, by both the player and the Referee.

Procedure

1. Between them, the Referee and the player(s) involved agree on a timescale for the combat - the length of time that it will take place over and the number of exchanges that occur.
2. Within the combat, each exchange is a sub-combat, which could be any one of the social combat types. Resolve using the rules given above.
3. Some exchanges can be magical attacks or physical combats, or even mini-Quests, made up of magical, physical and social exchanges that occur as full adventures. But the number of these must not exceed half of the total of exchanges.
4. Critical successes score two points for the character, while fumbles take two points off the character’s score.

At the end of the series of exchanges, the winner is the side who has won the most skill tests.

Magic and Social Combat

Certain magic spells increase the character’s Influence skill, such as the Personal Magic spells, Enhance (Influence) and Thunder’s Voice (which positively modifies Influence in Intimidation tests, as well as boosting the range at which social combat can occur considerably). These spells must be in effect before the character engages in social combat.

Moving onto Physical Combat if Things go Wrong

Targets who win the social combat against the player character may, if the Referee decides it makes sense given the situation and the personality of the target, explode into violence. Failed Intimidation attempts are more likely to result in violence than Fast Talk or Oratory. If they do, the incensed target has a +20% bonus to their first action, which is usually a Close Combat or Unarmed attack.

Physical Combat

How A Combat Plays Out

This section gives an overview of how combat works overall. The next section *The Combat Round* gives a detailed explanation of specific combat actions and how combat works as an exchange of attacks.

Combat procedure:

1. *Work out who is involved in the combat.* The Referee works out who is on the player characters’ side and who is involved in the hostile group attacking them.
2. *Work out encounter distance.* The Referee chooses how far away the hostile group is to the player characters, either at range or close.
3. *Surprise attacks.* Surprise may be a factor in the combat. Either the characters or the hostiles may ambush the other side, one side may sneak up on the other, or the characters may simply come upon their opponents suddenly.
4. *Can combat be avoided*? Can the characters run away, intimidate their opponents into giving up, or fast-talk their way out of fighting?
5. *FIGHT! Drop into combat rounds*.A single round has a duration of five seconds, giving 12 rounds in every minute. During a round, every character can perform one action. Combat rounds cycle through a set of steps outlined below.
6. *Take damage.* As a result of combat the character may take damage in the form of hit point loss.
7. *End the combat.* If the characters or their opponents all have 0 hit points or less, or have surrendered or have run away, the combat ends.

**Work Out Who is Involved in the Combat**

The characters will be on one side, with the other side being the hostile group they are fighting. The Referee manages the hostile non-player characters, so needs to be clear on who is in that group. Writing down the names and hit point totals of the hostile group is a good idea. Also, the players need to determine who is involved in the combat on their side. Some players might not want their characters to be involved in the combat. They might rule that their characters are not in the immediate area where the combat is occurring and are standing away in an adjacent area which is safe from even magical or ranged attacks. The Referee should rule whether this is the case or if they are involved in the combat because they cannot avoid it.

**Encounter Distance and Engaging in Combat**

Not all combats start with the two sides, the players, and their opponents, directly facing each other within a sword’s reach. At the beginning of a combat, or potential combat, the Referee must determine which of the two distances is relevant.

* *Close distance* is a range of two metres or less and is the distance at which a character can engage in either Close or Unarmed combat.
* *Ranged distance* is a rangebeyond two metres up to double the range of the missile weapon a character is holding. It is the distance at which the character can engage in ranged combat. Ranged combat typically happens out in the open countryside, where groups of combatants can see each other coming over the horizon or emerging in the distance from old ruined buildings.

If the opponents are hidden, either though sneaking up on the characters or setting an ambush for them, move onto the Surprise Attacks section below.

**Scouting Ahead**

In a typical encounter, where the characters are moving through the wilderness or ruins, roll a basic Perception skill test for any characters who are ahead of the main party scouting. Modify the Perception skill, for the amount of cover that the opponents have, using the following table.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Modifier | Opponents cover |
| +50% | All the opponents are in clear sight. |
| +20% | Some opponents are visible, such as perimeter guards. |
| -20% | The opponents are hiding in the undergrowth. |
| -50% | The opponents are hiding in very good cover such as ruins or woods. |

If any of the scouts succeed, they can spot the opposition and choose the encounter distance. If they roll a critical they know the exact numbers and positions of opponents that they can reasonably see. They can, if needed, take extra time to scout out the rest of the opponents and they may make another Perception test with a +20% modifier, ignoring any modifiers for cover.

If any of the scouts fail, they are spotted approaching at ranged distance by the opposition. If any of the scouts fumble, they are split off from the rest of the party and may be at close range at the Referee’s discretion.

**Surprise Attacks**

There are three types of surprise attacks, all of which can happen at close or ranged range.

* *Ambushes*, where one side is hiding in cover awaiting their opponents.
* *Sneak Attacks* where one side uses Deception to stealthily creep up on their opponents, catching them unaware.
* *Rush Attacks* where one side charges from range looking to overwhelm their opponents before they realise what is going on. In the procedure below use Athletics if on foot, or Ride or Drive if mounted or in some sort of vehicle (such as a chariot), instead of Deception as the skill for the attackers.

**Surprise Attack Procedure**

1. Note that there can only be a surprise attack if the conditions for it exist, e.g. decent cover, such as undergrowth, for the ambushers to hide in for an ambush; or an unaware opponent undergoing a sneak or rush attack.
2. If it is the characters who are the unaware side, each player makes an opposed skill test using their character’s Perception vs the highest Deception in the opposing side.
3. If the characters are performing the attack, each player makes an opposed skill test using the character’s Deception vs the highest Perception in the opposing side.
4. When being attacked, if the character fails their Perception skill test, they are surprised for one combat round and are unable to do any combat actions except Parry or Dodge. If they fumble, they cannot even defend themselves. The encounter distance is determined by the attackers as a group and will usually be at Ranged distance.
5. If attacking, an opponent is unable to make any attacks and may only Dodge or Parry as defensive reactions. If the opponent fumbles the Perception test, they cannot even defend themselves. The encounter distance (Close or Ranged) is determined by the players individually for their characters.

Note, if the characters or their opponents are successful in their surprise attack, both sides are now engaged in combat.

**Avoiding a Fight**

If the characters are not a victim of a surprise attack (see above) they can do one of the following to avoid a fight completely:

* *Run away*. The characters can turn tail and flee as quickly as possible. If the opposition chooses not to, or cannot for any reason, give chase (they are guards on a castle wall, for whom it would take a good minute or so to climb down and are under orders not to desert their post, for example), the characters can get away without any further problems.
* If the characters move faster, because they are on a mount that moves quicker than a standard human or they are using magic which gives them superhuman speed, they can run away without any more problems. If they are chased by an opponent who has a comparable speed, then they make an opposed Athletics skill test. If they win, they escape. If they fail, their opponents have caught them and get +20% on their next action. If they fumble, not only do their opponents catch them but those caught suffer the effects of surprise and are only able to defend themselves in the first combat round.
* *Intimidation.* The characters can try to intimidate the opposition to surrender or leave the battleground. One character, usually the one with the greatest Influence, leads the attempt, with the rest of the group assisting them. See Social Combat above.
* *Fast Talking.* The characters can try to fast talk their way out of a confrontation. See Fast Talk in Social Combat above.

**FIGHT! Drop into Combat Rounds**

The combat round is a measure of game time equalling five seconds, during which a character can normally do one thing, such as swing a sword.

Each combat round follows the following procedure:

1. *Statement of intent.* Each player declares what their character is doing. The Referee declares what the non-player characters are doing if they are visible to the characters. Otherwise, they keep it secret until the non-player character(s) act.
2. *Choose skills and apply modifiers.* The players work out which skill the characters will use to complete their combat action, normally one of the three combat skills (Close, Ranged and Unarmed Combat). The Referee then determines if there are any situational modifiers. If the characters have any modifiers due to active magic, add these to the situational modifiers (see bellow ). Finally, each player should know what their modified skill value is. Likewise, the Referee should work out for the opposition what skills they are using and what modifiers apply.
3. *Determine order.* The Referee counts down from 100%, and characters and non-player characters act in highest skill order.
4. *Take action.* When it’s the player’s turn, they state what their character’s action is. Then they make any skill tests to try and make the stated course of action successfully. If called for, opponents make dice rolls for defensive reactions (Parry or Dodge). If a combat action is successful, apply its effects right there and then.
5. *End of combat round.* Once all eligible characters have acted in the combat round, it is over. If there are characters still engaged in combat with enemies, another combat round begins.

**Taking Damage**

When a character successfully scores damage against a target, remove it from the target’s hit points. Every weapon has a damage rating, listed in its entry on the character sheet. This rating is the amount of dice rolled when the weapon successfully hits a target. Add the attacker’s Damage Modifier to all Close Combat weapons and Ranged weapons, except those that rely on a mechanism to provide the force to throw the missile (such as Crossbows).

Reduce damage by the armour point (AP) value, if any, of any armour the target wears, and then subtract the damage from their hit points.

There are two types of wounds.

*Minor wounds*, where the hit point total is still positive.

*Mortal wounds*, which are the result of injuries that reduce the character’s hit points to zero or less.

**Minor Wounds**

As long as hit points are above zero, any damage taken is considered minor wounds, meaning superficial cuts, bruises, and exhaustion.

**Mortal Wounds**

When hit points are zero or below, any damage is life-threatening; for what happens then see Zero Hit Points below. Such wounds are considered mortal.

**Healing Wounds**

If the character is only suffering minor wounds, some magical spells, such as Heal (personal magic) instantly heal damage to hit points. The Healing skill, as described in Skills, also helps. Over time, minor wounds heal naturally.

A character who is mortally wounded will need to either be treated by another character with the Healing skill or by strong healing magic, before natural healing starts.

If using the Healing skill, the wounded character must first be stabilised by a successful skill test, and then undergo Surgery to treat the wound, which is another successful skill test using the right tools and conditions (see Healing in Skills)

Healing magic that is strong enough to heal mortal wounds is Heal at magnitude 6 (Personal Magic), Divine Heal (Divine Magic), or Treat Wounds (Sorcery).

A character with a mortal wound needs to be healed or stabilised immediately within the same combat round or by the end of the next combat round at the very latest. If healed the character will also regain consciousness on a successful Resilience skill test.

Combat Actions

The actions a character may take when it is their turn to act are detailed here. A character can only choose one of the options below each round.

***Summary of Combat Actions***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Action | Description |
| All-Out Attack | Two attacks at -20%. Gives up the ability to defend for the round. |
| Athletic Attack | Roll once. Must pass versus both Athletics (which represents the move) and the combat skill which you are using to attack with. If you succeed, you automatically score a critical hit. If you fail, you automatically score a fumble. |
| Cast Spell | The spell takes effect when the character’s turn comes up in the order of combat (as determined by Magic Casting skill).  The spell is not cast if casting is interrupted and concentration lost. |
| Change Stance | May move from prone to standing and vice versa. |
| Charge | The character moves at a running pace from Ranged to Close distance, followed by a close combat attack with a +1D6 to damage. The character loses their defensive reaction in the round. |
| Close Combat Attack | Character attacks opponent with a weapon, testing vs Close Combat skill. If they are successful, then they inflict weapon damage plus damage modifier. |
| Delay | The character either waits until after another character’s action or tries to interrupt it. |
| Disarming Attack | Attacking to disarm an opponent, which does no physical damage. |
| Fighting Retreat | The character disengages from combat. If opposed, either fight another round successfully or use Deception to escape the battle. |
| Great Attack | The character makes one attack at +20% and deals their maximum damage bonus if they hit. Weapon damage is rolled normally. The character gives up all defensive reactions for the round. |
| Intimidation | The character uses their Influence skill, to persuade foes to flee or surrender. |
| Ranged Combat Attack | Character attacks opponent with a weapon, tests vs Ranged Combat skill. If successful, then does weapon damage plus damage modifier. |
| Ready/Change Weapon | The character draws or loads a weapon, making it ready for combat. |
| Set Weapon | If the weapon can be set in advance of a charge, the user gains +20% to attack, before the charging character. |
| Shield Defence | The character does nothing except defend against attacks using a medium or large shield. Parries with the shield are +20%. The defender does not suffer the usual penalty for defending against multiple attacks. |
| Skill Use | The character uses a non-combat skill. |
| Escaping Sprint | The character moves at running speed out of close combat. May not attack and may only Dodge as a reaction. This action allows the character to move from Close to Ranged distance. |
| Unarmed Attack | The character can attack using a natural weapon, such a fist or claw, or grapple. |
| Whirling Dervish | While using a small shield the character does not suffer the usual penalty for defending against multiple attacks. |

Close Combat Actions

*Close Combat Attack:* This is the standard Close Combat attack. The character can make a single close combat attack. See below for details.

**Making Close Combat Attacks**

1. *Making the attack:* To attack, the player simply rolls 1D100 and compares it to the character’s Close Combat skill. This roll may have modifiers for a specific situation or special attack, such as a Great Attack.
2. If a character rolls equal to or lower than their Close Combat skill, they have hit their target if the target fails to defend.
3. If a character rolls greater than their Close Combat skill, they have missed their target.
4. *Target reaction:* If the enemy chooses not to or cannot react against the attack, then this attack is unopposed. Move straight on to damage resolution below.
5. If the attack is opposed, the defender makes a Dodge or Parry (see Defensive Reactions).
6. *Damage resolution:* If the attack is successful, roll damage. Each weapon has a damage score; add the attacker’s damage modifier to determine the total damage.
7. *Armour reduces Damage:* If the defender is armoured, then the armour will absorb some of this damage. Reduce the attack’s damage by the armour points (AP) of the defender’s armour.
8. *Damage application:* Apply any remaining damage to the defender’s hit points.

***Close Combat Situational Modifiers***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Situation | Skill Modifier |
| Target is helpless | Automatic Critical |
| Target is prone or attacked from behind | +20% |
| Attacking or defending while on higher ground or while riding an animal | +20% |
| Attacking or defending while prone | –20% |
| Attacking or defending while on unstable ground | –20% |
| Attacking or defending while underwater | –50% |
| Defending while on the lower ground or against a mounted foe | –20% |
| Fighting in partial darkness | –20% |
| Fighting in darkness | –50% |

**Close Combat Options and Variations**

These are non-standard close combat attack actions. A character may only make one of these types of attack in a combat round.

*All-out Attack:*  The attacker gives up all their defensive reactions for the round but gains a second Close Combat attack, which happens straight after the first attack. Both attacks are at -20% due to the loss of skill during this frenzied attack.

*Athletic Attack*: This combat action is where the character performs some sort of movement above and beyond the usual free move and then attacks at the end of it. A flying kick or swinging off a chandelier into combat, are examples of this form of attack. To make the attack, you roll the dice as normal. With this dice roll, you must pass a skill test versus both Athletics (which represents the move) and the combat skill which you are using to attack with. If you succeed at both, you automatically score a critical hit. If you fail at either, you automatically score a fumble. There is no middle ground since this attack is an especially risky manoeuvre.

*Disarming Attack:* Resolve as the standard Close Combat Attack above, but if successful the attacker disarms the target, knocking either their weapon or shield out of their grip and sending it 1D6 metres away from them. The target may defend against this attack using any of the standard defensive reactions; Dodge represents them moving physically away from the attack’s reach and Parry represents the target moving the weapon/shield out of the attacker’s reach.

*Great Attack:* An attack for those attackers using swords, axes or maces, where the attacker has enough room to wind up the weapon for a forceful blow. The character makes one attack at +20% and deals their maximum damage bonus if they hit. Weapon damage is rolled normally. The character gives up all defensive reactions for the round.

*Natural Weapon Attack:* Natural weapons, such as the teeth and claws of monsters, count as close combat weapons and not Unarmed Attacks. The damage they deal is in the monster’s description.

*Set Weapon:* A character can spend their action fixing the shaft of a weapon, such as a spear or a polearm, in the ground, in anticipation of a charge from an opponent. When the charge comes, the character automatically gets an attack at +20% before the charging character gets their attack. If the character makes any other action or reaction before the charge, the weapon becomes ‘unset’.

Unarmed Combat Actions

The character can make a single Unarmed Combat Attack with the express intent of either Striking, Holding or Throwing their opponent.

**Making Unarmed Combat Attacks**

1. *Making the attack:* The attacker declares their intent to either strike, hold or throw before making the attack. Roll against their Unarmed Combat skill to determine if the attack is successful.
2. *Target reaction:*  If successful, the opponent may use their Dodge or Close Combat parry as a reaction to avoid the attack or use Unarmed Combat as their Reaction.
3. *Resisting using Unarmed Combat:* If they successfully use Unarmed Combat as a reaction, the opponent can either decide to avoid the attack OR if they haven’t used their action this round, they may counter attack and immediately apply the effects of a strike, hold or throw on the Attacker.
4. *Damage resolution:* If the opponent’s reaction fails then the attacker may inflict one of the following effects on their opponent:

* *Strike:* The attacker inflicts their Unarmed Damage (usually Fist/Kick of 1D4 + damage modifier) minus any armour that their opponent is wearing.
* *Hold:* The held opponent may attempt to break free once per round as their action. Make an opposed Unarmed Combat roll to see if they escape. At the end of each round that the opponent is held, including the first, the attacker may inflict damage of 1D4 + damage modifier. Armour does not help
* *Throw:* The opponent is thrown 2 metres and suffers damage equal to the attacker’s damage modifier. The grapple ends in this case.

Ranged Combat Actions

*Ranged combat attack:*  The character can make a single ranged combat attack. As well as a normal attack, there are the following special attacks.

*Aim:* Every round spent aiming adds a +20% bonus to the character’s Ranged Combat skill, up to a maximum modified skill of 100%. This bonus only applies to the first attack the character makes with the weapon at the aimed target. A character can take no other action or reaction while aiming without losing the aim bonus. This action can overcome the reduction in Ranged Skill due to the weapon being used at double its range.

**Throwing Close Combat Weapons**

If a close combat weapon does not have a dual design as a thrown weapon, and is hurled at an enemy, then it has a range of 8m and suffers a penalty to the attack of -20%. Use the character’s Ranged Combat skill to make the attack.

**Using Ranged Weapons**

All ranged attacks are handled in the same manner as close combat attacks, with the following exceptions:

*Charging:* Ranged attacks may not be used by a character during a Charge (see Movement Combat Actions )

*Loading ranged weapons:* Most ranged weapons only take single combat round to ready. Others take more than one combat round to reload. Consult the weapon’s Rate of Fire on the character sheet.

*Range:* Within the weapon’s range the Attacker shoots without penalty. If the target is within double the weapon’s range, the attacker’s weapon skill is modified by -20%. Attacks cannot be made at a distance beyond twice/double the weapon’s range.

*Dodging and parrying:* The target may attempt to Parry or Dodge a hand-thrown ranged attack but may not normally Dodge or parry ranged missile weapons (such as Bow and Crossbow fire). Shield-carrying characters may attempt to parry hand-thrown missile weapons if the target is aware of the attack.

**Cover**

Cover affects both ranged and close combat attacks. For missile attacks, the defender benefits from the best of the shield modifiers in the table above and the cover modifiers below.

*Partial cover -20%.* For example, a low wall that leaves only head and torso exposed.

*Excellent cover -50%*. For example, defender on a castle wall, firing from protected battlements.

*Virtually total cover -75%.* For example, behind a castle wall with arrow slits for defenders to shot through.

***Ranged Attack Situational Modifiers***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Situation | Skill Modifier |
| Wind 1 | |
| High wind | –20% |
| Fierce wind | –50% |
| Hurricane | Attack automatically fails |
| Target Movement 1 | |
| Target has moved 10m or more since the attacker’s last Combat Action | –20% |
| Target has moved 30m or more since last Combat Round | –50% |
| Target Visibility 1 | |
| Target obscured by smoke, mist or is in partial darkness | –20% |
| Target obscured by thick smoke, fog or is in darkness | –50% |
| Target is above SIZ 20 | +20% |
| Target Condition1 | |
| Target is helpless | +20% |
| Target prone | –20% |
| Attacker Condition2 | |
| Attacker is prone | –50% |
| Attacker is underwater3 | –20% |
| The attacker is on unstable ground | –20% |
| Attacker is blinded | –50% |

1. Modifiers within these sections are not cumulative. However, modifiers from different sections are cumulative. Therefore, shooting at a target within a mist that has moved more than 10m since the attacker’s last Combat Action imparts a –50% penalty.

2. Attacker condition modifiers are cumulative.

3. Only thrown weapons may be used underwater. Bows and other projectile weapons will automatically miss if fired underwater.

**Firing into a Crowd**

When firing into a crowd, the Referee will determine how much cover the target has from the ranged attack. The Attacker then makes a ranged attack modified by the target’s cover.

If the attack fails to hit the target and succeeds against an unmodified attack skill, the attacker has hit one of the individuals adjacent to the target (chosen by the Referee). The accidental target may Dodge against this attack as usual.

Movement Combat Actions

In any combat round, a character may move a distance up to their movement rate without it counting as a separate combat action, which allows them to move about and change opponents quite freely.

All movement combat actions use Athletics Skill to determine combat order.

The following types of movement are combat actions.

*Change Stance:*  The character may stand up from prone, or vice versa.

*Charge:* When the character closes in combat, from ranged to close distance at a sprint. The charge must be in a straight line and the Attacker must end up adjacent to an enemy. When the move is complete, make a Close Combat attack. If the attack is successful, the Attacker gains a bonus of +1D6 damage. Characters may not charge uphill and gain the damage bonus.

*Fighting Retreat:* A character may move their full movement directly away from an enemy they are fighting. They may only defend, but at +20% to their close combat or unarmed combat. The modifier increases to +50% if the character is using a Large shield.

At the end of the round, if they have successfully defended themselves, they may disengage from combat. Otherwise, their opponent has moved with them and has successfully held them in combat.

*Escaping Sprint:* The character runs out of combat range (from either close distance or ranged distance), forsaking their attack and only being able to Dodge as a defensive reaction. If running away from combat, if they successfully Dodge any incoming attack, at the end of the combat round they have disengaged from combat. Otherwise, their opponent has moved with them and has successfully held them in combat.

Other Actions

*Cast Spell:* Spells take effect in an order determined by the caster’s Magic Casting skill.

*Delay:*  A character may pause to assess the tactical situation around them.

If a delaying character merely wishes to act after a specific character has acted, they wait until that character has finished their combat action.

If a delaying character wishes to interrupt a specific character’s action as it occurs, the character must make an opposed test appropriate to their interrupting action (a weapon skill test if the character wishes to attack, for instance). Whoever wins the test acts first.

*Intimidate:* The character tries to get the other side to surrender or flee, directed at a single enemy or a group. The rules are covered above in the section on Social Combat.

*Ready/Change Weapons:* If the character has their weapon ready at the start of the combat they can use it straight away. If the character changes weapons, e.g. from a bow to a sword, it takes one combat round. If parrying a Close Combat attack while changing weapons, the character may do so at -20%. They may Dodge without this penalty.

*Skill Use:* The character performs one action which requires the use of a skill, such as opening a locked door with the Mechanisms skill.

Defensive Reactions

Reactions happen after a successful attack has occurred, but before its effects are applied.

There are two types of reaction, Dodge and Parry.

*Parries* can be made against Close Combat attacks using Close Combat skill or Unarmed Combat Skill.

Shields can also parry missile attacks, as outlined in ‘Using Shields Against Ranged Attacks’ in Special Combat Rules.

*Dodges* can be made against close combat attacks and thrown missile weapons, providing the target is aware of the attack. Dodge can also be used as a reaction, if still available, to avoid the damage of spells, such as Lightning Strike, projected at the Defender. See the appropriate spell descriptions in the Magic chapter for more detail.

**Dodge**

When an attacker successfully hits, the defender may choose to Dodge as their reaction, to avoid damage.

Procedure.

1. The defender rolls against their Dodge skill.
2. If the defender succeeds, then they have successfully avoided the attack.
3. If they fail, they take damage as normal.
4. If they fumble, they take maximum damage from the attack.
5. If dodging against a critical hit, then if the defender rolls a critical on their Dodge, they reduce the attacker’s critical to a normal success. If the defender fails their Dodge against a critical hit, the attacker does maximum damage and ignores defender’s armour.

**Parry**

When an attacker successfully hits, the defender may choose to parry with a weapon or shield as their reaction to avoid damage.

Procedure.

1. The defender rolls against their Close Combat skill.
2. If the defender succeeds, then they block all rolled damage
3. A critical parry against a normal success deflects all the damage and causes the attacker to suffer a fumble. If when parrying against a critical hit, the defender rolls a critical on their Close Combat skill roll, then they reduce the attacker’s critical success to a normal success.

**Multiple Defences in a Single Combat Round**

You can defend as many times as you want, but you get a cumulative -20% modifier for every defence after the first.

Special Results

**Critical Hits**

Critical hits represent a lucky and effective hit in an unprotected area of an opponent.

If the skill test is a success and both dice (units and tens) are the same value, it is a critical hit.

A critical hit automatically causes maximum damage for the weapon and maximum damage modifier. Critical hits also ignore armour.

A critical hit is made a normal hit by a critical parry or critical Dodge. Then damage is rolled by the attacker as normal and the defender’s armour counts.

**Fumbles**

Conversely, if an attacker or defender fumbles, the character has been put at a severe disadvantage. It is up to the Referee to determine how, dependent on the situation. Here are some examples.

* Grievously hurt self or a nearby friend with a weapon. Roll damage and ignore armour.
* Trip over and fall prone.
* The character becomes confused and misses one combat round.
* Armour or shield strap breaks; lose armour protection.

Summary of Combat Results

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Attacker’s Combat Action | Defender’s Reaction | Result |
| Fumble | No need to roll | Attacker fumbles. |
| Failure | No need to roll | Attacker fails to hit the defender. |
| Success | Fumble | Attacker hits, then the defender takes damage rolled minus armour points and fumbles. |
| Success | Failure | Attacker hits, the defender takes damage rolled minus armour points. Note, this is the standard result if the defender decides not to or cannot defend themself. |
| Success | Success | If the Defender is dodging, they avoid the attack. If parrying, they parry the attack. |
| Success | Critical | Defender avoids the attack and takes no damage. |
| Critical | Fumble | The Attacker does maximum damage and ignores the Defender’s armour. The Defender fumbles. |
| Critical | Failure | The Attacker does maximum damage and ignores the Defender’s armour. |
| Critical | Success | The Attacker does maximum damage and ignores the Defender’s armour. |
| Critical | Critical | Attacker hits, the defender takes damage rolled minus armour points. |

Special Combat Rules

**Mounted Combat**

A mounted warrior has a +20% bonus to their attacks and parries against adjacent opponents on foot; a character on foot defending against a mounted attacker suffers a –20% penalty to their Reaction skill. These modifiers do not apply if the target on foot is as tall as the mounted character is while mounted.

A mounted character uses their mount’s Movement Rate when moving rather than their own.

A mounted adventurer can use no weapon at a skill level greater than their Riding skill score.

*Untrained Mounts*

The rider of a mount which is unused to combat must make a Riding Skill test at the start of each Combat Round.

Failing this test will cause the mount to automatically use the Flee Combat Action at the first opportunity for the remainder of the Combat Round.

Succeeding this test allows the mount to act as if battle trained for the remainder of the Combat Round.

**Two-Weapon Use**

A character wielding two weapons or a weapon and a shield may use the off-hand item to either:

Parry one additional attack per Combat Round without any penalty (after this extra parry the cumulative -20% penalty per additional attack parried applies).

OR

Gain a single bonus Close Combat Attack action. This bonus attack is at -20% Close Combat skill. The second attack occurs at half the character’s skill in order of combat. Also, this may only be a normal Close Combat Attack, not an All-Out Attack, Disarming Attack or a Great Attack.

For example, a warrior armed with sword and shield, can attack with the sword normally and then follow this up immediately with a shield bash at -20% to the shield attack.

**Shield Use**

Shields are a special type of combat equipment, whose obvious use is as a moveable piece of armour to parry close combat attacks, but which can also be used to make attacks and block ranged attacks. This section explains their many uses.

**Using Shields to Parry Close Combat Attacks**

This is the most common use of shields.

**Using Shields to Perform an Attack**

Shields can also be used to attack, either on their own as a standard attack to do what is called a shield bash, or with a one-handed weapon to perform a multiple weapon attack .

**Using Shields Against Ranged Attacks**

Shields can defend against Ranged Attacks, if their users are aware of the attack, in two ways.

*Parrying Thrown Missiles.* Medium and large shields can parry incoming thrown ranged weapons, such as spears.

*As Cover against Missiles.* Medium and large shields provide cover against missile attacks when set against them. The defender sets their shield against the onslaught of missile fire, delaying their action until the missiles have stopped firing. Medium shields give a -20% penalty to incoming Ranged Attacks, while large shields give a -50% penalty due to cover.

**Using Large Shields during a Fighting Retreat**

Large Shields give a +50% modifier to the Close Combat skill of character using this Movement Action

**Shield Combat Actions**

*Whirling Dervish (Small).* You can attack with a 1-Handed weapon and defend with your small sized shield, without the normal cumulative -20% penalty for multiple defences, since the combination of weapon and shield is light and maneuverable.

*Shield Defence (Medium/Large).* Your combat action is to use your shield in defence for the entire combat round. As a result, you get a +20% modifier to all parries using your shield. On a critical success, you get an automatic counterstrike against your opponent doing your weapons for normal damage. You also do not suffer the cumulative -20% penalty for defending against multiple attacks.

***Using Shields, a Summary***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Size of Shield | Damage | Missile Cover | Combat Actions |
| Small (Buckler) | 1D4 | None | Parry Close Combat attacks, Close Combat attack, Whirling Dervish |
| Medium (Target) | 1D6 | -20% | Parry Close Combat attacks, Close Combat attack, Parry Thrown Missiles, Cover against missile attacks, Shield Defence. |
| Large (Kite, Viking Round) | 1D8 | -50% | Parry Close Combat attacks, Close Combat attack, Parry Thrown Missiles, Cover against missile attacks, +50% during Fighting Retreat, Shield Defence. |

Ending the Combat

There are three common ways combat can end.

1. Disengaging from Combat
2. Zero Hit Points
3. Surrendering

**Disengaging from Combat**

If a player announces that they want to escape combat, the attempt might be Unopposed or Opposed, depending on the situation.

*Unopposed escape.* If the character is unopposed, usually because no one is watching them and they are not fighting someone, then they can just up and leave, using a standard move or sprint to do so. Of course, the character can’t do anything to bring attention to themselves during the retreat, such as cast a spell or make an attack.

*Escape is opposed.* If the character is still in combat or has someone ready within range to engage them in combat, it is less easy to get away. The Referee should work out what sort of skill test is required to get the character out of harm’s way. If stealth or deception is involved, a Deception test is the order of the day, and a good description from the player is required. If the character is attempting to fight their way out of combat, use the Fighting Retreat action (see Movement Combat Actions below), where the character fights one more round of combat and, if successful, escapes the combat. Or the character can use an Escaping Sprint action to move out of combat and Dodge any attacks that come their way (see ‘Escaping Sprint’ in Movement Combat Actions below).

**Zero Hit Points**

When a character is at zero or fewer hit points, they are dead.

Unless one of the following happens.

* The player or Referee controlling the character who inflicted the killing blow says that their last blow was non-lethal, which allows them to take their opponent prisoner.
* The player spends a fortune point to have their character avoid death and awake 1D6 hours later with one hit point.
* Another character heals the wounded character using magic, or stablises them using the Healing skill, by the end of the next round after the one which they reach zero hit points.

**Surrendering**

The character may simply give up and try to surrender to their opponents.

It is up to the Referee to determine whether the opponents allow the character to surrender. Most intelligent opponents will capture wealthy-seeming characters and extract a significant ransom that leaves the character significantly poorer. If using the Wealth optional rules, the ransom reduces a character’s Wealth skill by 1d20. However, if the character has brutally murdered members of their group, the survivors may be less willing to let the character surrender.

Opponents that are psychotic or are currently under the influence of a Berserk spell will not accept a surrender and will continue to attack.

Opponents who hate the character’s culture will accept the character’s surrender only on a successful Influence skill test OR if the opponent has been told by a superior to capture the character.

Magical Combat

Unless both sides in combat are using magic exclusively, magical combat usually happens within physical or social combat. The precise effects of magical spells are in the magic chapters, but you should be aware of the types of magic that are available that play a role in combat.

*Offensive* magic can take the form of spells that add to the chances of success and damage that the character does in combat, such as the weapon enhancing spell Weapon Enhance, or that perform a direct magical attack on the target upon success, such as the spells Fear, Disruption or Sky Bolt.

*Defensive* magic either increases the character’s armour or chance to avoid harm, such as Protection which increases the characters armour points, or gives the character the ability to resist or ignore both physical and magical attacks, such as Countermagic.

There is a special type of magical combat, known as *Spirit Combat* which is detailed below.

Resisting Spells

Most offensive spells have the Resist trait, followed by the Resistance skill in brackets (which is used in a Skill Test to fully or partially avoid the effects of the spell). See the particular spell description for full details.

Spirit Combat

Not all spirits in the spirit world are friendly to the player characters. Some are guardian spirits placed over treasures and locations to guard them against intruders who they will attack when they enter their area.

Others are hostile spirits, unleashed in combat by enemy shamans. And some are malignant entities that a shaman encounters in their travels in the spirit world looking for beneficial spirits.

In such cases, spirit combat occurs. This takes the form of a clash of spiritual energies, each trying to overcome and dominate the other.

**Procedure**

1. Resolve spirit combat using an opposed skill test.
2. If also part of physical combat, then spirit combat occurs instantaneously in real-time. Resolve the spirit combat in its entirety before continuing with the rest of the combat round.
3. Use the spirit’s Spirit Combat skill as given in its description.
4. Player characters use either Persistence, if they are untrained in the ways of Shamans, or the Shamanism skill, which is available to characters who have qualified as Shamans (see Personal Magic, Shamanism)
5. The combatant who loses the spirit combat test loses 1D6 magic points, minus the magnitude of any Spirit Shield or similar protective magic they may have cast upon them.
6. The more powerful a spirit is, the more damage it does. For every ten points of POW above 20 a spirit combatant gains an extra +1D6 to the damage they do in spirit combat.
7. If a combatant’s magic points are 0 or less, it loses the combat. If the opponent was using Persistence, the spirit is banished and flees into the depths of the Spirit World. If the victor was using a Shamanism skill and knows the appropriate Call spell for the spirit, then they may bind the spirit to their service for one action right there and then, or spend one improvement point either then or at the end of the gaming session to bind it into more permanent service. If the loser is a mortal with a body, and the winner is a spirit capable of possession, the loser becomes possessed by the spirit.

**Spirit Possession**

Possession is when a spirit steals or inhabits a physical body for its ends. All forms of possessing spirits can be driven out by the divine magic spell Exorcism, the Personal Magic spell Drive Out Spirits, or similar magic. There are two types of possession:

**Covert**

This type of possession has the spirit hiding in the victim’s body. It only assumes partial control of the victim when it needs to do something to the victim’s body. A form of possession typically used by most Spirits.

**Dominant**

The spirit takes full control of the victim’s body and, in turn, the victim’s spirit is imprisoned in the body, unable to do anything until the hostile spirit is exorcised or leaves. A most dangerous form of possession, as the spirit often cares nothing for the body it inhabits, for once the body dies the spirit returns to its old existence, in most cases, and possession by a suicidal ghost or homicidal demon is never good for the body in question.