

ONLY HUMAN 0.3.0

A simple tabletop RPG framework, for when you don't want superhuman characters. It requires a game master (GM) to run the world / non-player characters (NPCs), and at least 1 player to run the player character(s) (PCs).

To play, everyone should have d20s and paper, pencils, and erases to record character details and notes. The GM should have a story, and details of relevant items, roles, and mechanics (see the Still Human section for examples).

CORE RULES

Character Creation

Before the game, the players each create a character. To do so, they allocate 12 points between four **stats**: Dexterity (DEX), Intelligence (INT), Strength (STR), and Will (WIL). Each **stat** may not be allocated more than 6 points.

Players also allocate 16 points to **skills**. The GM may provide the option to pick a **role**, which confers an additional 4 points that must be allocated within a particular set of **skills**. No skill can be allocated more than 4 points.

Each **skill** is associated with two **stats**. Below are some **skills**, but you can add other **skills** to the game, with the agreement of the GM and after associating the **skill** with a pair of **stats**.

DEX + DEX: <i>Agility, Sleight of hand</i>	INT + STR: <i>Melee attacking</i>
DEX + INT: <i>Ranged attacking</i>	INT + SPT: <i>Investigation, Insight</i>
DEX + STR: <i>Speed</i>	STR + STR: <i>Athletics</i>
DEX + SPT: <i>Stealth</i>	STR + SPT: <i>Toughness, Intimidation</i>
INT + INT: <i>Technology, Medicine</i>	SPT + SPT: <i>Persuasion</i>

Keep in mind that couple of numbers should not totally describe your character. Think about their personality, about what they want, what they need (but might not know they need), and how they know the other characters in the group. Have secrets for your character, but want them to be discovered.

Tests

When a character tries something with a chance of both failure and success, the GM may have them take a **test** in a **skill**: their controlling player (or the GM for NPCs) rolls a d20, adds the character's **modifier** in the **skill**, and the GM compares that to a **difficulty** they have set. If the **test** result is at least the **difficulty** then the **test** is a success, otherwise it is a failure.

To find the character's **skill modifier** add together their points in the associated **stats** and divide this by 2 rounding down (this is just the **stat's** points for **skills** associated with the same **stat** twice) then add their points in the **skill**. References to a **skill** in a numerical context refer to this **modifier**.

Contests

Contests are special kinds of **tests** for when two or more characters are simultaneously attempting tasks that come into conflict. Each character takes a **test** in the **skill** relevant to the task they are attempting. The character with the highest result succeeds, and the other character(s) fail (perhaps to varying degrees). The GM adjudicates the outcome of any ties.

Turns

When things get tense characters start taking turns. The turn order, and whether or not they overlap, is up to the GM. Everyone taking a turn represents about 10 seconds of time. During a turn, characters may move, and once per turn (possibly during that movement) they may take an **action**. Characters may also talk at any point during turns, but players shouldn't communicate in-character more than is reasonable for the elapsed time.

Attacking, running, readying, some object interactions, or trying to **stabilise** a character are all actions. As is anything else the GM deems to be.

Moving

When characters move, they can move in a path of up to $10 + (2 \times Speed)$ metres. If a character is climbing, swimming, sneaking, carrying something bulky, moving over difficult ground, or otherwise slowed, then they are **restricted**. The distance a character moves whilst **restricted** counts twice against their movement.

Actions

To **attack**, a character must be within their weapon's range of their target, and there must be nothing fully blocking the **attack**. The attacker then makes the relevant of either a *Ranged attacking* or a *Melee attacking* **test**, adding their weapon's modifier, and subtracting 2 for ranged attacks if the attacker is within 2 metres of the target. The **difficulty** for this **test** is $10 + target\ DEX + cover$, where **cover** is 4 if the attacker can only see less than half of the target, and 0 otherwise.

If the attacker fails, nothing happens. Otherwise, the attack has an **impact** of the amount the **test difficulty** was exceeded by, minus the absorption of any armour the target is wearing. The target then takes a **difficulty** $15 + impact\ Toughness\ test$. If they fail they get **injured** and become **unstable**. If they fail by 10 to 14 they get **injured** twice, if they fail by 15 or more they get **injured** three times.

If a character **runs** they double the distance they are permitted to move in the current turn. If a character **readies** their player must specify a condition and an **action**. If the condition occurs before their next turn, their character immediately takes the action.

Injury

Characters have a **health state** and are either **stable** or **unstable**. If a character gets **injured** they drop to the next **health state** down the table. If they are **unstable** in the same **health state** for more than 30 minutes, their player rolls d20. On an 11 or higher they become **stable**, on a 10 or lower they get **injured**. A successful **difficulty 11 Medicine test** will **stabilise** a character, but true recovery can require days or specialised equipment.

Health State	Effect on Character
Normal	They're fine. Characters start in this state, stable .
Wounded	They're hurt, they suffer a -2 penalty to all tests .
Seriously Wounded	They're <i>really</i> hurt, they suffer a -4 penalty to all tests and are restricted .
Incapacitated	They're (effectively) unconscious. They cannot voluntarily do anything. You do not add their DEX to the difficulty of tests to attack them.
Dead	They're dead, Jim.

STILL HUMAN

Still Human is a sci-fi implementation of the ONLY HUMAN framework, that is, it provides **roles**, statistics for items, and a hint of a setting. Other implementations should be possible, but they are up to you to create.

Still Human is designed to run games for teams of highly trained or experienced characters that are sent on, or somehow end up entangled in, various space-related missions in reasonably hard sci-fi near-ish future settings.

Equipment

Armour (Absorption)	Description / Effects	
Normal Clothes (0)	Stylish and practical.	
Space Suit (2)	A surprisingly compact vacuum rated environmental suit. Two hot-swappable tanks (that passively re-fill in atmosphere) provide one hour of oxygen each. If the suit absorbs any damage it is torn, and must be repaired before it will be vacuum worthy. A character wearing a space suit is restricted .	
Reinforced Space Suit (3)	A military grade space suit. The same as a space suit, except it is only torn if its wearer is hit with an attack that results in an impact greater than 0.	
Combat Armour (3)	Tactical body armour.	
Combat Carapace (4)	Heavy duty body armour. A character wearing combat carapace is restricted .	
Weapon (Type)	Range	Modifier
Combat Knife (Melee)	2m	+1
Improvised Weapon (Melee)	2m	-1
Shock Rod (Melee)	2m	+2
Assault Rifle (Ranged)	400m	+3
Auto Pistol (Ranged)	50m	+1
Combat Knife (Ranged)	10m	+0
Improvised Weapon (Ranged)	10m	-4

Other Items	Description / Effects
Short Range Communicator	A small radio device. Provides encrypted communication with selected short range communicators configured to receive it within 20km.
Long Range Communicator	A backpack sized radio device that provides encrypted communication to selected equipment configured to receive it within 40,000km.
Pad	A smartphone sized, portable, touch screen computer.
Navigator	A small attachment to a pad that uses known maps, available satellite data, and computer vision to attempt to inform the user of their position at all times.
Scanner	A small attachment to a pad that allows various kinds of scanning. Where relevant, a scanner gives a +2 modifier to <i>Investigation tests</i> . A medical kit contains 5 stim-shots, that can be used to rouse an unconscious character to the seriously wounded health state , and a defibrillator that can be used to revive a dead character to the seriously wounded health state if they died in the last minute from causes that would be resolved by restarting their heart. The defibrillator has 5 uses per charge. Use of both the stim-shots and the defibrillator require a successful stabilisation action , if the test failed they are still used, but have no effect.
Medical Kit	A brief-case sized box containing various medical supplies. Where relevant, a medical kit gives a +2 modifier to <i>Medicine tests</i> . Additionally, the medical kit contains 5 stim-shots, that can be used to rouse an unconscious character to the seriously wounded health state , and a defibrillator that can be used to revive a dead character to the seriously wounded health state if they died in the last minute from causes that would be resolved by restarting their heart. The defibrillator has 5 uses per charge. Use of both the stim-shots and the defibrillator require a successful stabilisation action , if the test failed they are still used, but have no effect.
Engineering Kit	A vacuum rated toolbox full of various equipment for dealing with the tech a space-faring engineer might expect to encounter. Where relevant, an engineering kit gives a +2 modifier to <i>Technology tests</i> . Additionally, the engineering kit contains 5 patches that can, as an action , be used to repair tears in space suits.

Roles

In addition to the benefits of **roles** outlined in the character creation section of the basic rules, with the agreement of the GM a character that selects one of the following roles may also take the corresponding piece(s) of equipment, and all characters may take Normal Clothes, a Space Suit, a Short Range Communicator, a Pad, and their choice of either a combat knife or an Auto Pistol.

Still Human also adds the *Piloting skill* to a game. It is a DEX + INT skill, and is used in one of the following roles.

Role	Proficiencies	Equipment
Pilot	<i>Piloting and Investigation</i>	Navigator
Communications	<i>Technology, Insight and Persuasion</i>	Long Range Communicator
Security	<i>Ranged attacking, Melee attacking, and Toughness</i>	Reinforced Space Suit, Assault Rifle, and Shock Rod
Engineering	<i>Slight of hand, Piloting and Technology</i>	Engineering Kit
Medical	<i>Slight of hand and Medicine</i>	Medical Kit
Science	<i>Technology and Investigation</i>	Scanner

Requirements and Requisitioning

An alternative to roles is to come up with a list of required proficiencies for the group, e.g. "We need people experienced in piloting and investigation, and someone trained in both technology and slight of hand", and let the group work out how they will fill those niches together. Similarly, a pool of equipment can be provided, for the group to share out. This could lead to relations forming between the characters whilst they are being created.

GM TIPS

ONLY HUMAN is rather rules light. This is quite intentional, and is based on the idea that the fundamental core of an RPG is incredibly simple, and can benefit from being more exposed for GMs to tinker with. However, this power does also come with responsibility. Hence, this section exists to provide various tips to try to help GMs out.

Setting DCs

When setting DCs, generally keep in mind these difficulty levels:

Difficulty	DC
Very Easy	5
Easy	10
Moderately Complicated	15
Difficult	20
Very Difficult	25
Practically Impossible	30

Unless you are intentionally trying to hide the difficulty of a task, if a character attempts a task that is impossible to fail, or impossible to successfully complete, there is no need for a **test**, simply narrate the outcome to the players.

Turns

ONLY HUMAN does not prescribe a method for determining the order of turns, whether there even is an order to turns, and whether or not turns can overlap. This should generally be decided on a case by cases basis, as there is no one system that is good for every situation. The order could be determined by *Speed contests*, it could just evolve from the scene, characters could be divided into teams that alternate, or perhaps everyone could go at once. The characters can be sequenced through any method you like.

Adding to the Game

You should feel totally free to add items or rules to the game, it is intentionally simple for that reason. Keep in mind that it is expected for specific rules to override general rules, so don't be afraid of that. Perhaps you want a gun that fires so fast its wielder effectively shoots twice, or an enemy that can take a lot more hits than a usual character. Don't worry if these things go against the general stuff in the core rules, GMing would be much less fun if the players knew how everything worked. This section details some example additions.

Adding equipment and roles (to effectively create your own implementation of ONLY HUMAN) is another great way to extend the game. Consider adding items or features that vary in more ways than the basic rules allow, such as a shotgun that can hit everything in a cone up to 10 metres with a +4 or one target with a +1 out to 30 metres.

Antagonists and Enemies

When creating antagonists or enemies do not feel you need to stick to the options available to the player. You may want grunt alien enemies that drop dead on a single *Toughness test* failure, or a villain antagonist so drugged up on stimulants that they are much harder to take down. You may want characters that have better or worse stats than the standard player character creation allows. Go for it.

Character Equipment

Whilst there is no strict limit on how much equipment a character can carry, it is best to be realistic. If you think a PC is carrying too much, perhaps get the player to label where everything is on their character's body. You could also apply strict carry weight limits, such as $40 + 10 \times \text{Athletics}$ kilograms of equipment. If you wanted to be even more granular you could specify that a character carrying more than $40 + 5 \times \text{Athletics}$ is restricted.

Adjudicating Complex Tasks

ONLY HUMAN does not provide specific rules for adjudicating everything a player may wish to try. So, when dealing with non-standard tasks, attempt to find a way to distil them down into one or more core difficulties (parts of the task with a risk of failure and a chance of success) that can be related to **skills** (whether on the given **skills** table or not).

Once you know what **skills** are involved, try to gauge the difficulty of these components of the task, work out if they happen in an order or at the same time, and work out what success or failure for individual parts or combinations of individual parts looks like. Finally, with these ideas in mind, have the character take **tests** based on the established skills and difficulties, in the established order, and provide the established outcomes.

In practice, this does not need to be dealt with remotely as formally every time, but that structure forms guidelines for one way to react to players attempting complicated tasks.

Contests

Be creative with your use of **contests**, they are not just for arm wrestles. Perhaps one character searching for another could be represented by a *Investigation/Stealth contest*, or one character trying to stop another from twisting out of their grip could be an *Athletics/Agility contest*.

Progression

It is possible to implement a rudimentary progression system in ONLY HUMAN. The simplest way would be to give players more points to allocate to **stats** and **skills**, and perhaps raising the cap on the maximum allocatable to each. If you plan on doing this, consider starting the characters initially with fewer points than the character creation section suggests, as increasing the available points too far beyond this point could leave min-maxed characters with very large **modifiers**.

Another simple progression mechanism, that is perhaps more inline with the ethos of ONLY HUMAN, would be to provide players with better equipment, and better connections in the setting of the game.