

Based on the work of Lynn Willis & Sandy Petersen

Call of Cthulhu®

Roleplaying Game

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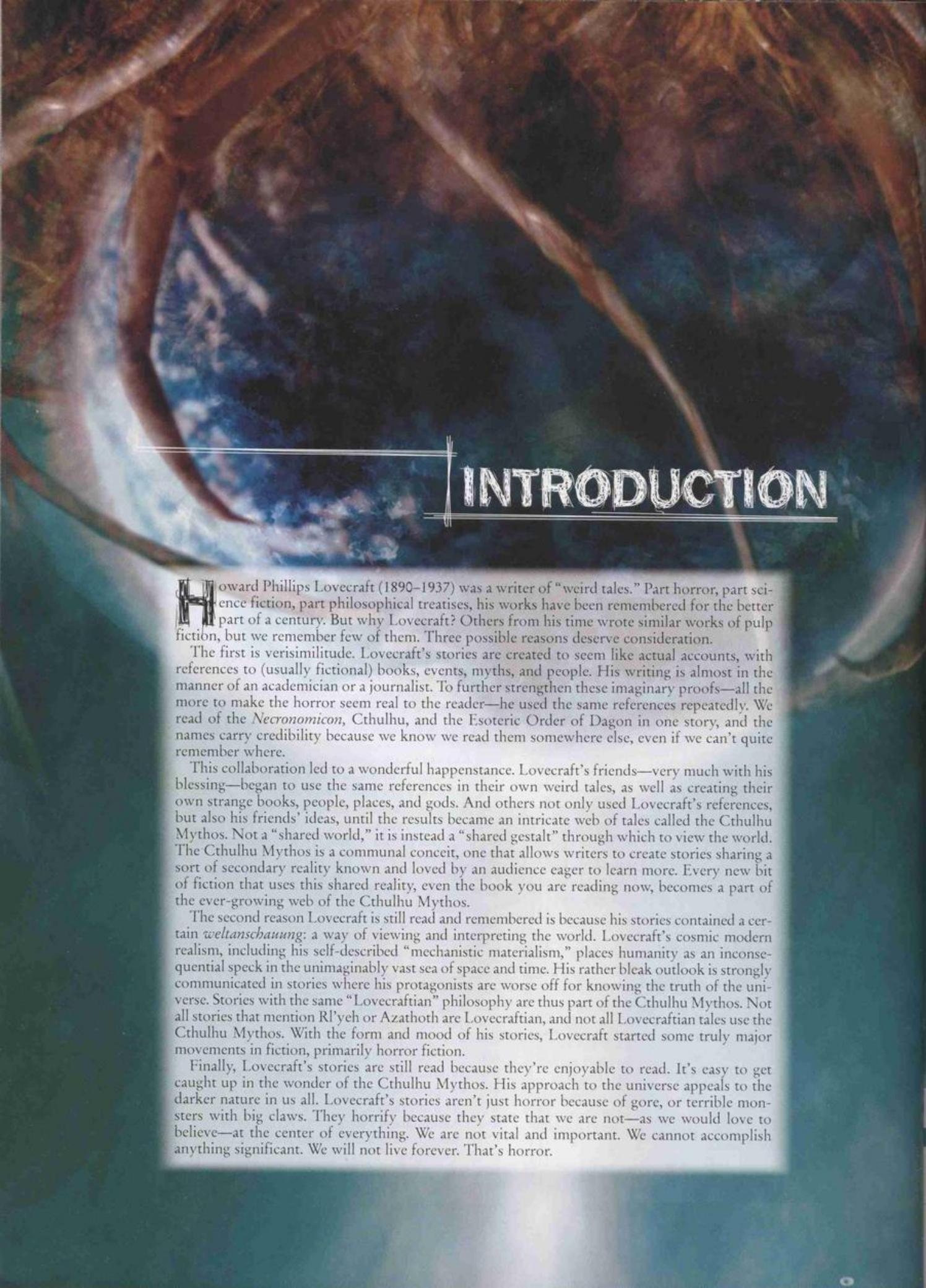
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INTRODUCTION

Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890–1937) was a writer of “weird tales.” Part horror, part science fiction, part philosophical treatises, his works have been remembered for the better part of a century. But why Lovecraft? Others from his time wrote similar works of pulp fiction, but we remember few of them. Three possible reasons deserve consideration.

The first is verisimilitude. Lovecraft’s stories are created to seem like actual accounts, with references to (usually fictional) books, events, myths, and people. His writing is almost in the manner of an academician or a journalist. To further strengthen these imaginary proofs—all the more to make the horror seem real to the reader—he used the same references repeatedly. We read of the *Necronomicon*, Cthulhu, and the Esoteric Order of Dagon in one story, and the names carry credibility because we know we read them somewhere else, even if we can’t quite remember where.

This collaboration led to a wonderful happenstance. Lovecraft’s friends—very much with his blessing—began to use the same references in their own weird tales, as well as creating their own strange books, people, places, and gods. And others not only used Lovecraft’s references, but also his friends’ ideas, until the results became an intricate web of tales called the Cthulhu Mythos. Not a “shared world,” it is instead a “shared gestalt” through which to view the world. The Cthulhu Mythos is a communal conceit, one that allows writers to create stories sharing a sort of secondary reality known and loved by an audience eager to learn more. Every new bit of fiction that uses this shared reality, even the book you are reading now, becomes a part of the ever-growing web of the Cthulhu Mythos.

The second reason Lovecraft is still read and remembered is because his stories contained a certain *weltanschauung*: a way of viewing and interpreting the world. Lovecraft’s cosmic modern realism, including his self-described “mechanistic materialism,” places humanity as an inconsequential speck in the unimaginably vast sea of space and time. His rather bleak outlook is strongly communicated in stories where his protagonists are worse off for knowing the truth of the universe. Stories with the same “Lovecraftian” philosophy are thus part of the Cthulhu Mythos. Not all stories that mention R’lyeh or Azathoth are Lovecraftian, and not all Lovecraftian tales use the Cthulhu Mythos. With the form and mood of his stories, Lovecraft started some truly major movements in fiction, primarily horror fiction.

Finally, Lovecraft’s stories are still read because they’re enjoyable to read. It’s easy to get caught up in the wonder of the Cthulhu Mythos. His approach to the universe appeals to the darker nature in us all. Lovecraft’s stories aren’t just horror because of gore, or terrible monsters with big claws. They horrify because they state that we are not—as we would love to believe—at the center of everything. We are not vital and important. We cannot accomplish anything significant. We will not live forever. That’s horror.

Mythos into a standard fantasy game. In this sort of game, the heroes eventually can attain the power to drive off or destroy the cosmic horrors presented to them. While this isn't truly Lovecraftian, it's fun nonetheless.

This book offers all these options. Do as thou wilt.

CALL OF CTHULHU AS A GAME

So how does this all make for a good role-playing game? Actually, that's for you to decide. *Call of Cthulhu* is a horror role-playing game, one where the protagonists of your story are normal people menaced by tentacled monsters, the living dead, dire cultists, and even cosmic entities. This is standard "sudden discovery" horror, as in "I have suddenly discovered that Old Man Murray is actually an Inhuman Thing!"

If you like, it can also be a more Lovecraftian game—one that's still clearly horrific, but doesn't stress tentacles and slimy goo as much as the true insignificance of the heroes (and in fact, of all humanity). With this approach, it becomes a horror game of slow realization, where normal people discover the truths of reality itself. Investigators of the unknown learn that the best that they can do is survive, if only for a little while longer, against forces so unimaginably vast that mankind has not even roused their interest.

As an alternative, you can use the material described in the appendix to introduce elements of the Cthulhu

MELTING TWO GAMES

This version of *Call of Cthulhu* is a synthesis of two great roleplaying games. The original *Call of Cthulhu* has been around for two decades, and has been loved by the gaming hobby since its inception. The DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game is even older, and its most recent edition has introduced the concept of the d20 rules system: a rule set simple and straightforward enough to be applied to genres beyond medieval fantasy.

For the most part, what you hold in your hands is the story, the places, the concepts, and the people from the *Call of Cthulhu* game as seen through the lens of the d20 rules. We have attempted to retain every aspect of play from the original *Call of Cthulhu* game while using the new rules.

Some aspects have been retained from the existing *Call of Cthulhu* game almost unchanged. Primarily, these include the rules for Sanity and the Cthulhu Mythos skill. Several reasons for this exist. First, they're great mechanics that simulate Lovecraft's fiction well. Second, they preserve the feel of a game that people have loved for years. Finally, by allowing them to work differently than other d20 mechanics, they feel all the more different, alien, and "wrong" during gameplay. Even experienced players familiar with the d20 system will be surprised and (hopefully) fascinated by the slow deterioration of their heroes' Sanity scores. Madness will have a strange effect on their characters and the game.

We have assiduously compiled the insane insights within this tome. Now it's your turn to peruse them, use them to create stories, and bring them to life.

WHAT IS A ROLEPLAYING GAME?

If you have never played one of these games before, you're in for a wild ride. In a roleplaying game, you take on the role a character in a story, interpreting her actions through the use of rules. Playing a roleplaying game involves sitting around a table or room telling a collaborative story with a group of players. The story can easily be like something from a film (even a horror film), except that all the action takes place in your imagination.

If a roleplaying game is like a film, then the players are the stars. In this type of movie, the characters they portray are all heroes investigating the supernatural—we call them investigators. They're often referred to as player characters or PCs. Because this game is based on Cthulhu Mythos stories, some characters die horribly; others live long enough to make it to a sequel.

Acting in this story involves a bit of improvisation, because there's no script, other than the notes or outlines used by the Gamemaster. The Gamemaster, or GM, is like the director of this film, but also plays other roles as well. The GM decides what the story is about, describes the locations the heroes see, and unleashes the occasional horrible monster. The Gamemaster also keeps track of the rules, interprets the outcome of actions, and describes what happens.

In addition to all these responsibilities, the GM also plays the roles of other characters the heroes encounter. These "extras" are commonly known as nonplayer characters or NPCs.

Unlike any movie or horror novel, roleplaying isn't passive entertainment. The Gamemaster and players tell a story collaboratively, and the events of the story are up to them.

What Do I Need to Play? To join a *Call of Cthulhu* d20 game, you'll need this book, a copy of the character sheet, and a pencil and scratch paper. You'll also need some dice, the kind that are usually available in bookstores or game stores that carry roleplaying games. A game that uses the d20 system (such as this one) typically requires a four-sided die (d4), several six-sided dice (d6), an eight-sided die (d8), a twelve-sided die (d12), a twenty-sided die (d20), and two ten-sided dice (d10). The ten-sided dice are also sometimes referred to as "d%." This means that you should roll both d10s, reading one as the tens digit and the other as the ones digit; this generates a number between 1 and 100 (00 on the dice). It is preferable to use dice of different colors when rolling d%, and designating which die represents the tens digit (before you roll) is important. Don't worry: If all you have is this book, you can probably borrow what you need from another player or the GM.

We also highly recommend reading at least one or two stories involving the Cthulhu Mythos before you begin, such as the original "Call of Cthulhu" short story by H.P. Lovecraft. Again, you can probably find an appropriate anthology at a bookstore or game store such as the one where you found this game.

CHARACTER CREATION

Searchers after horror haunt strange, far places. For them are the catacombs of Ptolemais, and the carven mausolea of the nightmare countries. They climb to the moonlit towers of ruined Rhine castles, and falter down black cobwebbed steps beneath the scattered stones of forgotten cities in Asia. The haunted wood and the desolate mountain are their shrines, and they linger around the sinister monoliths on uninhabited islands.

— H.P. Lovecraft,
“The Picture in the House”

Just about every die roll you'll make in this game will be modified based on your character's abilities. A tough character has a better chance of surviving an encounter with a deep one than a weak character. A perceptive character is more likely to notice drug-crazed assassins sneaking up from behind him than a witless buffoon. A stupid character is less likely to find the secret door behind the bureau than a brilliant academic. Your character's ability scores tell you what your modifiers are for rolls based on these sorts of situations.

Your character has six abilities: Strength (abbreviated Str), Dexterity (Dex), Constitution (Con), Intelligence (Int), Wisdom (Wis), and Charisma (Cha). Each of your character's above-average abilities grants a benefit on certain die rolls; each below-average ability imposes a disadvantage on other die rolls. At the start of the game, you'll roll six ability scores randomly and assign them to your character's abilities in the order you like. Later in the game, you'll have the chance to raise them as your character advances in experience.

YOUR ABILITY SCORES

To create an ability score for your character, roll four six-sided dice (4d6). Disregard the lowest die, and total the three highest dice.

This roll gives you a number between 3 (terrible) and 18 (excellent). The average ability score for the typical person is 10 or 11, but your character is not typical. Your investigator is above average, someone with the potential to excel. The most common ability scores for player characters (PCs) are 12 and 13.

Make this roll six times, recording the result each time on a piece of paper. Once you have all six scores, assign each score to one of your character's six abilities. You'll need to know what kind of person your character is going to be in order to know where best to place your character's ability scores.

ABILITY MODIFIERS

Each ability will have a modifier, ranging from -4 to +4 for starting characters. Table 1-1: Ability Modifiers shows the modifier for each ability based on its score.

TABLE 1-1:
Ability Modifiers

Score	Modifier
1	-5
2–3	-4
4–5	-3
6–7	-2
8–9	-1
10–11	0
12–13	+1
14–15	+2
16–17	+3
18–19	+4
20–21	+5
and so on	

The modifier is the number you add to a die roll when your character tries to do something related to that ability. For instance, you add your Strength modifier to your roll when you try to break down a door or hit someone with a chair. You also use these modifiers with some numbers that aren't die rolls, such as when you apply your Dexterity modifier to your Armor Class.

A modifier can be positive or negative. A positive modifier is called a bonus; a negative modifier is called a penalty.

REROLLING OPTION

If your scores are too low, you may scrap them and roll all six scores over. Your scores are considered too low if your total modifiers add up to 0 or less, or if your highest score is 13 or lower.

ABILITIES

Each ability partially describes your character and affects some of your character's actions.

The description of each ability includes a list of examples, along with their average scores in that ability. Not every creature has a score in every ability, as you'll see when you look at the lists that follow.

STRENGTH (STR)

Strength measures your character's muscle and physical power. It's most important to those intending to get into hand-to-hand combat.

You apply your character's Strength modifier to the following:

- Melee attack rolls.
- Damage rolls when using a melee weapon or a thrown weapon. (Exceptions: An off-hand attack or two-handed attack will change this modifier; see Damage, page 62, for more details.)
- Climb, Jump, and Swim checks. These are skills that have Strength as their key ability.
- Strength checks (for situations such as breaking down doors).

DEXTERITY (DEX)

Dexterity measures hand-eye coordination, agility, reflexes, and balance. If you want your character to be a marksman or good at avoiding damage, put a high score in Dexterity.

You apply your character's Dexterity modifier to the following:

- Ranged attack rolls, including attacks made with guns, bows, throwing knives, and other ranged weapons.
- Your Armor Class score, provided your character can react to the attack.
- Reflex saving throws, for avoiding explosions and other attacks that you can escape by moving quickly.
- Balance, Drive, Escape Artist, Hide, Move Silently, Open Lock, Operate Heavy Machinery, Pilot, Ride, Sleight of Hand, Tumble, and Use Rope checks. These are skills that have Dexterity as their key ability.

TABLE 1-3:
Average Dexterity Scores

Race or Creature	Average Dexterity	Average Modifier
Plant	—	—
Snail	1	-5
Shoggoth	2–3	-4
Klutz	4–5	-3
Clumsy person, Yithian	6–7	-2
Accident-prone person	8–9	-1
Average person	10–11	0
Graceful person	12–13	+1
Bat, Leng spider	14–15	+2
Circus acrobat, nightgaunt	16–17	+3
Rat-thing	18–19	+4
Formless spawn	20–21	+5
Shan (Insect from Shaggai)	22–23	+6

CONSTITUTION (CON)

Constitution represents your character's health and stamina. Since a good Constitution improves hit points, it's important to everyone.

You apply your Constitution modifier to the following:

- Each Hit Die (though a penalty can never drop a Hit Die roll below 1; that is, a character always gains at least 1 hit point each time she goes up a level).
- Fortitude saving throws, for resisting poison and similar threats.
- Concentration checks. This skill, important to investigators who use magic, has Constitution as its key ability.

Constitution also determines how long a character can hold her breath (for example, when trying to avoid drowning).

If a character's Constitution changes enough to alter his Constitution modifier, his hit points also increase or decrease accordingly. This applies even to Hit Dice gained from previous levels.

TABLE 1-4:
Average Constitution Scores

Race or Creature	Average Constitution	Average Modifier
Mummy	—	—
Bedridden or dying person	1	-5
Invalid	2–3	-4
Frail person	4–5	-3
Puny person	6–7	-2
Spectral hunter	8–9	-1
Average person	10–11	0
Healthy person	12–13	+1
Horse	14–15	+2
Elder thing	16–17	+3
Bear	18–19	+4
Chthonian	20–21	+5
Dhole	28–29	+9
Shoggoth	30–31	+10

INTELLIGENCE (INT)

Intelligence determines how well your character learns and reasons. If you want your character to have a lot of skills and be smart, put a high score in Intelligence.

TABLE 1-5:
Average Intelligence Scores

Race or Creature	Average Intelligence	Average Modifier
Animated corpse	—	—
Snake, spider, shark	1	-5
Cat, dog, most mammals	2	-4
Minimum human intelligence	3	-4
Shantak	4–5	-3
Shoggoth	6–7	-2
Dimensional shambler	8–9	-1
Average person	10–11	0
Sharp-witted person	12–13	+1
Clever person	14–15	+2
Mi-go	16–17	+3
Genius	18–19	+4
Star-spawn	20–21	+5
Yithian	36–37	+13

You apply your character's Intelligence modifier to the following:

- The number of languages your character knows at the start of the game.
- The number of skill points gained each level (your character always gets at least 1 skill point per level).

• Appraise, Computer Use, Craft, Demolitions, Disable Device, Forgery, Knowledge, Read Lips, Repair, Research, Search, and Spellcraft checks. These are skills that have Intelligence as their key ability.

Creatures of humanlike intelligence have scores of at least 3.

WISDOM (WIS)

Wisdom describes a character's willpower, common sense, perception, and intuition. While Intelligence represents one's ability to analyze information, Wisdom is more a case of being in tune with and aware of one's surroundings. An "absentminded professor" has low Wisdom and high Intelligence. A holy hermit might be unsophisticated (low Intelligence) yet still have great insight (high Wisdom). If you want your character to have keen senses or a sense of spirituality, put a high score in Wisdom.

Wisdom also determines a character's starting Sanity (see the Sanity chapter).

You apply your character's Wisdom modifier to the following:

TABLE 1-6:
Average Wisdom Scores

Race or Creature	Average Wisdom	Average Modifier
Foolhardy investigator	6–7	-2
Shoggoth	8–9	-1
Average investigator	10–11	0
Elder thing	12–13	+1
Serpent person	14–15	+2
Lloigor	16–17	+3
Shan, human guru	18–19	+4
Hound of Tindalos	20–21	+5
Yithian	28–29	+9

- Will saving throws (for negating mind-affecting spells).
- Heal, Innuendo, Listen, Psychic Focus, Psychoanalysis, Sense Motive, Spot, and Wilderness Lore checks. These are skills that have Wisdom as their key ability.

Every creature has a Wisdom score.

CHARISMA (CHA)

Charisma measures a character's force of personality, persuasiveness, personal magnetism, leadership ability, and physical attractiveness. It represents actual inner strength or strength of personality, not merely how one is perceived by others in a given social setting.

CHANGING ABILITY SCORES

Over time, the ability scores your character starts with can change. Ability scores can increase with no limit.

- Add 1 point to any one score at 4th level and every four levels your character attains thereafter (at 8th, 12th, 16th, and 20th level).
- Many spells and magical effects temporarily increase or decrease ability scores. For instance, the *voice of Ra* spell temporarily increases a character's Charisma, while the *curse of Chaugnar Faugn* reduces it. Sometimes a spell simply hampers a character, effectively reducing her ability score.
- Poisons, diseases, and other effects can harm an ability (temporary ability damage). Ability points lost to damage return on their own at a rate of 1 point per day for each damaged ability.
- Certain horrible creatures drain abilities, resulting in a permanent loss (permanent ability drain). In *Call of Cthulhu*, no spells can restore this loss.
- As a character ages, some ability scores go up and others go down. (See Table 1-11: Aging Effects, page 13.)

TABLE 1-7:
Average Charisma Scores

Race or Creature	Average Charisma	Average Modifier
Animated Corpse	1	-5
Crocodile	2-3	-4
Camel	4-5	-3
Dog, cat	6-7	-2
Shy or unassuming person	8-9	-1
Average person	10-11	0
Attractive person	12-13	+1
Take-charge type	14-15	+2
Lloigor	16-17	+3
Natural-born leader, nightgaunt	18-19	+4
Hunting horror	20-21	+5

You apply your Charisma modifier to the following:

- Animal Empathy, Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Handle Animal, Intimidate, and Performance checks. These are skills that have Charisma as their key ability.
- Checks that represent an attempt to influence others.

Every creature has a Charisma score.

EXAMPLE OF GENERATING AND ASSIGNING ABILITY SCORES

Jonathan wants to create a new character. He rolls four six-sided dice (4d6), getting a 5, 4, 4, and 1. Ignoring the lowest die, he adds up the rest and records the first result on scratch paper: 13. By doing this five more times, he gets these six scores: 13, 10, 15, 12, 8, and 14. Jonathan decides to play a smart college professor and begins assigning his rolls to abilities.

Intelligence gets the highest score, 15. His character has a +2 Intelligence bonus that will grant him extra skills.

Wisdom gets the next highest score, 14. This gives him a +2 bonus on important skills such as Spot and Listen, and better Will saving throws.

Jonathan decides to put his lowest score, 8, into Dexterity. He figures his character is a bookish sort that wants to stay out of a fight, one who doesn't have a natural affinity for firing guns or dodging blows. Jonathan would rather play an academic.

Jonathan has two bonus-range scores left (13 and 12), plus an average score (10). Constitution gets the 12 (+1 bonus). That gives him an extra hit point each level and a bonus on his Fortitude saving throws. Charisma gets the 13 (+1 bonus). That helps with intrapersonal skills, such as Diplomacy (see Table 2-1: Skills, page 18).

Strength gets the 10 (no bonus or penalty). Jonathan thinks his character may need to use a melee weapon, perhaps a knife, if all else fails. His average Strength won't hamper him, but it won't help much, either.

Jonathan records his character's ability scores and ability modifiers on his character sheet. Looking them over, he decides that his first character, Kristof, will be an assistant history professor at the local university.

When an ability score changes permanently, all attributes associated with that score change accordingly. For example, when Claire becomes a 4th-level character, she decides to increase her Intelligence to 16. That increases the number of skill points she gets per level from 10 to 11. As a new 4th-level character, she can get the skill points after raising her Intelligence, so she'll get 11 points for achieving 4th level. She does not retroactively get additional points for her previous levels (that is, skill points she would have gained if she possessed an Intelligence score of 16 starting at 1st level).

CHARACTERS AND LEVELS

An attack roll, saving throw, or skill check is a combination of three numbers, each representing a different factor: a random factor (the number you roll on 1d20), a number representing the character's innate abilities (the ability modifier), and a bonus representing the character's experience and training. This third factor depends on the character's level. The Base Save and Base Attack Bonuses tables on the next page summarize the figures for this third factor.

When you create a character, you either choose the Defense Option or the Offense Option. The Defense Option provides for better saving throws, but a poorer attack bonus. Conversely, the Offense Option offers a better attack bonus, but poorer saving throws.

Base Save Bonus Progressions: On each of the following tables, three columns apply to saving throws. You must assign each of these progressions to a saving throw category (Fortitude, Reflex, and Will) when you create your character.

Once these progressions are assigned, you keep the same progression for that category as you advance in level.

TABLE 1-8:
Base Save and Base Attack Bonuses: Defense Option

A Defense Option character begins play with two “good” saves (starting at +2) and one “bad” save (starting at +0). The three saving throw progressions are assigned (in any order) to Fortitude, Reflex, and Will during character creation. Base attack bonus begins at +0.

Level	Base Save Bonus Progression 1	Base Save Bonus Progression 2	Base Save Bonus Progression 3	Base Attack Bonus
1st	+0	+2	+2	+0
2nd	+0	+3	+3	+1
3rd	+1	+3	+3	+1
4th	+1	+4	+4	+2
5th	+1	+4	+4	+2
6th	+2	+5	+5	+3
7th	+2	+5	+5	+3
8th	+2	+6	+6	+4
9th	+3	+6	+6	+4
10th	+3	+7	+7	+5
11th	+3	+7	+7	+5
12th	+4	+8	+8	+6/+1
13th	+4	+8	+8	+6/+1
14th	+4	+9	+9	+7/+2
15th	+5	+9	+9	+7/+2
16th	+5	+10	+10	+8/+3
17th	+5	+10	+10	+8/+3
18th	+6	+11	+11	+9/+4
19th	+6	+11	+11	+9/+4
20th	+6	+12	+12	+10/+5

TABLE 1-9:
Base Save and Base Attack Bonuses: Offense Option

An Offense Option character begins play with one “good” save (starting at +2) and two “bad” saves (starting at +0). The three saving throw progressions are assigned (in any order) to Fortitude, Reflex, and Will during character creation. Base attack bonus begins at +1.

Level	Base Save Bonus Progression 1	Base Save Bonus Progression 2	Base Save Bonus Progression 3	Base Attack Bonus
1st	+0	+0	+2	+1
2nd	+0	+0	+3	+2
3rd	+1	+1	+3	+3
4th	+1	+1	+4	+3
5th	+1	+1	+4	+4
6th	+2	+2	+5	+5
7th	+2	+2	+5	+6/+1
8th	+2	+2	+6	+6/+1
9th	+3	+3	+6	+7/+2
10th	+3	+3	+7	+8/+3
11th	+3	+3	+7	+9/+4
12th	+4	+4	+8	+9/+4
13th	+4	+4	+8	+10/+5
14th	+4	+4	+9	+11/+6/+1
15th	+5	+5	+9	+12/+7/+2
16th	+5	+5	+10	+12/+7/+2
17th	+5	+5	+10	+13/+8/+3
18th	+6	+6	+11	+14/+9/+4
19th	+6	+6	+11	+15/+10/+5
20th	+6	+6	+12	+15/+10/+5

Base Attack Bonus: On an attack roll, apply the bonus from the appropriate column on the table appropriate to the option you have chosen. Numbers after a slash indicate additional attacks at reduced bonuses: “+12/+7/+2” means three attacks per round, with a base attack bonus of +12 for the first attack, +7 for the second, and +2 for the third. Ability modifiers apply to all these attacks normally, but bonuses from ability scores do not grant extra attacks.

Saving Throw Example: Jennifer is playing a combat-oriented character named Sam. During character creation, she chooses the Offense Option. This gives her character one “good” save (a +2 modifier) and two “bad” saves (each with +0 modifier). She assigns Sam’s +2 bonus on Fortitude saves, so both Reflex and Will have a base save of +0. When Sam reaches 2nd level, his Fortitude base save bonus becomes +3, but his Reflex and Will won’t increase to +1 until 3rd level.

Attack Bonus Example: When Sam is 5th level, he has a base attack bonus of +4. With a melee weapon, he adds his Strength bonus (+2) for a total of +6. Even though a +6 base attack bonus would grant an additional attack at +1 (and be listed as +6/+1 on the table), raising his total attack modifier from +4 to +6 via ability modifiers doesn’t grant Sam an additional attack.

LEVEL-DEPENDENT BENEFITS

In addition to attack and saving throw bonuses, all characters gain other benefits from advancing in level. Table 1-10: Experience and Level-Dependent Benefits summarizes these additional benefits.

XP: This column shows the experience point total needed to achieve a given character level.

Core Skill Max Ranks: The maximum number of ranks a character can have in a core skill is equal to her character level + 3. Core skills come from a character’s profession template (see page 12). Core skills cost one skill point per rank (see below).

Noncore Skill Max Ranks: The maximum rank for a noncore skills (skills not

associated with the character’s profession) is one-half the maximum for a core skill. The half ranks (1/2) indicated on Table 1-10 don’t improve skill checks; they simply represent partial purchase of the next skill rank—they indicate the character is training to improve that skill. Noncore skills cost two skill points per rank (see below).

points, add 1 to your character's hit point total anyway. It is not possible to lose hit points (or not receive any) when gaining a level, even for a character with a low Constitution.

Feats: Each character starts with two feats at 1st level and gains another feat at every level divisible by three (3rd, 6th, 9th, 12th, 15th, and 18th). The list of feats is on Table 3-1: General Feats on page 39.

Ability Increases: Upon gaining any level divisible by four (4th, 8th, 12th, 16th, and 20th), a character increases one of her ability scores by 1 point. The player chooses which ability score to improve. The ability improvement is permanent, and the character immediately gains all benefits of having the higher score.

Hit Points: Each character begins with 6 hit points, modified by her Constitution modifier. Each time a character gains a new level, that player rolls 1d6 (a Hit Die), adds or subtracts a Constitution modifier to the roll, then adds the result to her hit point total. A character has the same number of Hit Dice as levels.

For example, Sam starts out with 6 hit points and adds his +3 Con bonus, giving him 9 hit points. When he reaches 2nd level (and every level thereafter), Sam's player rolls 1d6, adds his Constitution bonus, and then adds the total to Sam's hit points.

If your character has a Constitution penalty and gets a result of 0 or less when rolling for additional hit

CHOOSING CORE SKILLS

Every character gets twelve skills from the skill list (Table 2-1: Skills, page 18) as core skills. These are the skills acquired most easily by that character—they have a cost of one skill point per rank. All other skills cost that character two skill points per rank. Each rank gives +1 to a skill check.

When you create a character, you can choose one of the profession templates on the following page. If the Gamemaster allows it, you have the option of creating a new profession, either by customizing one of the professions given in this chapter, or by listing 12 skills that profession would require.

Keep in mind that core skills should be thought of as those used in a character's profession, daily life, hobbies, and so forth. Since every character is different, even the profession templates below allow you to choose three skills to personify your specific character.

For example, Bruce wants to create a character who is an old man, well-studied in history and lore. He decides to choose a few skills that are important to his concept, starting with Knowledge (history) and Research. Then he notices that both the antiquarian and professor profession templates (listed below) might be a good match for his character concept. He decides he does not want his character to be in a university, so he chooses antiquarian. Keeping the two skills he has already picked (since they're part of the template), he gains Appraise, Forgery, Gather Information, and Speak Other Language as core skills (they come with the template). He decides his additional language will be Latin. He also has to select specializations for three Knowledge skills, so he chooses Knowledge (local), Knowledge (geography), and Knowledge (occult).

As his three additional skills of choice, he picks Hide and Move Silently (he used to be an avid hunter in his younger days) and Knowledge (philosophy). These make up his twelve core skills. Bruce asks the Gamemaster if he can trade Forgery for Wilderness Lore, and the GM approves. After all, the profession templates are provided as a guide only.

Designing a New Profession: You can use these templates as sources for ideas for other sorts of characters. For example, you could choose some of the skills on the criminal list and some from the technician list to get a computer hacker. The

TABLE 1-10:
Experience and Level-Dependent Benefits

Character Level	XP	Core		Noncore	
		Skill Max Ranks	Skill Max Ranks	Feats	Ability Increases
1st	0	4	2	1st, 2nd	—
2nd	1,000	5	2 1/2	—	—
3rd	3,000	6	3	3rd	—
4th	6,000	7	3 1/2	—	1st
5th	10,000	8	4	—	—
6th	15,000	9	4 1/2	4th	—
7th	21,000	10	5	—	—
8th	28,000	11	5 1/2	—	2nd
9th	36,000	12	6	5th	—
10th	45,000	13	6 1/2	—	—
11th	55,000	14	7	—	—
12th	66,000	15	7 1/2	6th	3rd
13th	78,000	16	8	—	—
14th	91,000	17	8 1/2	—	—
15th	105,000	18	9	7th	—
16th	120,000	19	9 1/2	—	4th
17th	136,000	20	10	—	—
18th	153,000	21	10 1/2	8th	—
19th	171,000	22	11	—	—
20th	190,000	23	11 1/2	—	5th

PROFESSION TEMPLATES

These are the core skills for each profession and the ability score to which each skill is keyed [in brackets].

AGENT

Bluff [Cha]
Computer Use [Cha]
Forgery [Int]
Gather Information [Cha]
Hide [Dex]
Innuendo [Wis]
Move Silently [Dex]
Open Lock [Dex]
Sense Motive [Wis]
+ three more of the player's choice

ANTIQUARIAN

Appraise [Int]
Forgery [Int]
Gather Information [Cha]
Knowledge (history) [Int]
Knowledge (any one) [Int]
Knowledge (any one) [Int]
Knowledge (any one) [Int]
Research [Int]
Speak Other Language [Int]
+ three more of the player's choice

ARCHAEOLOGIST

Appraise [Int]
Climb [Str]
Knowledge (archaeology) [Int]
Knowledge (history) [Int]

Knowledge (any one) [Int]
Research [Int]
Search [Int]
Speak Other Language [Int]
Spot [Wis]
+ three more of the player's choice

ARTIST/MUSICIAN

Bluff [Cha]
Craft (any one) [Int]
Diplomacy [Cha]
Innuendo [Wis]
Knowledge (art) [Int]
Listen [Wis]
Performance [Cha]
Sense Motive [Wis]
Spot [Wis]
+ three more of the player's choice

BLUE-COLLAR WORKER

Climb [Str]
Craft (any one) [Int]
Disable Device [Int]
Drive [Dex]
Gather Information [Cha]
Operate Heavy Machinery [Dex]
Repair [Int]
Spot [Wis]
Use Rope [Dex]
+ three more of the player's choice

CRIMINAL

Bluff [Cha]
Disable Device [Int]
Escape Artist [Dex]
Forgery [Int]

ter in a novel or a movie. For many players, the action lies here, in defining the character as a person to be roleplayed. It's also easier to become involved in the horror aspect of the game if you're aware enough of your character to become attached to her.

When you first play a character, it's fine to leave the details sketchy. As you play the character over time, you'll get a better sense of who you want her to be. You'll develop her details in much the way that an author develops a character over several drafts of a novel or over several novels in a series.

VITAL STATISTICS

This section offers advice as you determine your character's name, gender, age, height, and weight. Start with some idea of your character's background and personality, then use that idea to help you add the details that bring your character to life.

Hide [Dex]
Innuendo [Wis]
Move Silently [Dex]
Open Lock [Dex]
Sleight of Hand [Dex]
+ three more of the player's choice

DETECTIVE (POLICE OR PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR)

Gather Information [Cha]
Hide [Dex]
Intimidate [Cha]
Listen [Wis]
Move Silently [Dex]
Open Lock [Dex]
Search [Int]
Sense Motive [Wis]
Spot [Wis]
+ three more of the player's choice

DILETTANTE

Diplomacy [Cha]
Drive [Dex]
Gather Information [Cha]
Innuendo [Wis]
Knowledge (art) [Int]
Knowledge (local¹⁵) [Int]
Pilot [Dex]
Ride [Dex]
Speak Other Language [Int]
+ three more of the player's choice
¹⁵ Choose any one city

decrease and her mental ability scores (Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma) increase, as detailed on Table 1-11: Aging Effects. The effects of each aging step are cumulative.

However, a character's ability score cannot be reduced below 1 in this way.

For example, if Kristof survives until he is 50 (middle-aged), his Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores each drop 1 point, while his Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores each increase 1 point. When he becomes 65 (old), his physical ability scores all drop an additional 2 points, while his mental ability scores increase by 1 again. So far he would have lost a total of 3 points each from his Strength, Constitution, and Dexterity scores and gained a total of 2 points to each of his Wisdom, Intelligence, and Charisma scores because of the effects of aging. Should he live to reach 80, his physical ability scores will each drop by another 3 points (for a total loss of 6 points each from his youthful prime) and his mental ability scores each increase by another 1 point (for a total of 3 points each).

When a character becomes venerable, the Gamemaster secretly rolls 3d10, adds it to the number from the Venerable column on Table 1-11 (80 years) to determine her maximum age, and records the result, which the player does not know. This represents the limit of the character's natural lifespan, the point

NAME

Invent or choose a name that fits your character. A name is a great way for you to start thinking about your character's background. For instance, a character named Cindy Landowski might come from a Polish background, while Nathan Running Fox is probably Native American. Ethnicity is often more important to characters in the early part of the 20th century than later on, but it sometimes plays a major role in a character's family life, no matter what the era is.

GENDER

Your character can be either male or female.

AGE

As your character ages, her physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution)

**TABLE 1-11:
Aging Effects**

Middle	Maximum		
Age*	Old**	Venerable†	Age
50 years	65 years	80 years	+3d10 years
*-1 to Str, Con, and Dex; +1 to Int, Wis, and Cha.			
**-2 to Str, Con, and Dex; +1 to Int, Wis, and Cha.			
†-3 to Str, Con, and Dex, +1 to Int, Wis, and Cha.			

DOCTOR/NURSE

Computer Use [Int]
Diplomacy [Cha]
Heal [Wis]
Knowledge (biology) [Int]
Knowledge (medicine) [Int]
Knowledge (any one) [Int]
Listen [Wis]
Research [Int]
Spot [Wis]
+ three more of the player's choice

PARAPSYCHOLOGIST

Bluff [Cha]
Gather Information [Cha]
Knowledge (history) [Int]
Knowledge (occult) [Int]
Knowledge (religion) [Int]
Listen [Wis]
Search [Int]
Sense Motive [Wis]
Spot [Wis]
+ three more of the player's choice

PRIEST/CLERGYMAN

Concentration [Con]
Diplomacy [Cha]
Knowledge (religion) [Int]
Knowledge (any one) [Int]
Knowledge (any one) [Int]
Listen [Wis]
Sense Motive [Wis]
Speak Other Language [Int]
Spot [Wis]
+ three more of the player's choice

PROFESSOR

Concentration [Con]
Diplomacy [Cha]
Gather Information [Cha]
Knowledge (any one) [Int]
Knowledge (any one) [Int]
Knowledge (any one) [Int]
Research [Int]
Speak Other Language [Int]
Spot [Wis]
+ three more of the player's choice

PSYCHOLOGIST

Bluff [Cha]
Diplomacy [Cha]
Gather Information [Cha]
Heal [Wis]
Knowledge (medicine) [Int]
Knowledge (psychology) [Int]
Psychoanalysis [Wis]
Research [Int]
Sense Motive [Wis]
+ three more of the player's choice

SOLDIER

Climb [Str]
Hide [Dex]
Jump [Str]
Listen [Wis]
Move Silently [Dex]
Spot [Wis]
Swim [Str]
Use Rope [Dex]
Wilderness Lore [Wis]
+ three more of the player's choice

TECHNICIAN

Computer Use [Int]
Craft (any one) [Int]
Disable Device [Int]
Knowledge (any one) [Int]
Open Lock [Dex]
Operate Heavy Machinery [Dex]
Repair [Int]
Research [Int]
Search [Int]
+ three more of the player's choice

WHITE-COLLAR WORKER/ BUSINESSMAN

Bluff [Cha]
Computer Use [Int]
Diplomacy [Cha]
Forgery [Int]
Intimidate [Cha]
Knowledge (any one) [Int]
Listen [Wis]
Sense Motive [Wis]
Spot [Wis]
+ three more of the player's choice

WRITER/REPORTER

Craft (photography) [Int]
Craft (writing) [Int]
Diplomacy [Cha]
Gather Information [Cha]
Innuendo [Wis]
Knowledge (any one) [Int]
Knowledge (any one) [Int]
Research [Int]
Sense Motive [Wis]
+ three more of the player's choice

at which her body simply wears out, and she dies of natural causes. A character, especially a *Call of Cthulhu* investigator, may die of violence, accident, or disease before reaching her personal maximum age. Once a character reaches that maximum, she dies of old age at some time during the following year, as determined by the Gamemaster.

HEIGHT AND WEIGHT

Choose your character's height and weight. Think about what your character's abilities might say about these traits. If she is weak (low Str) but agile (high Dex), she might be thin. If she is strong and tough (high Str and Con), she might be tall, or just heavy.

TABLE 1-12:

Random Height and Weight

Gender	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Male	4 ft. 10 in.	+2d10 in.	120 lb.	×2d4 lb.
Female	4 ft. 5 in.	+2d10 in.	85 lb.	×2d4 lb.

Alternatively, roll randomly on Table 1-12: Random Height and Weight. The dice roll given in the Height Modifier column determines the character's extra height beyond the base height. That same number multiplied by the result of the dice roll given in the Weight Modifier column determines the character's extra weight beyond the base weight.

For example, Sam stands 4 feet 10 inches tall plus 2d10 inches. Jennifer rolls 2d10 and gets 12, so Sam stands 5 feet 10 inches tall. Then Jennifer uses that same roll (12) and multiplies it by the weight modifier. His 2d4 roll is 5, so Sam weighs an extra 72 pounds (12×6) on top of his base 120 pounds, for a total of 192 pounds.

OTHER DETAILS

You can detail your character to any degree you like. As you play the character, you will probably come up with more details you will want to add.



APPEARANCE

Decide what your character looks like. Characters with high Charisma scores tend to be better-looking than those with low Charisma scores, though a character with a high Charisma score could have strange looks, giving her a sort of exotic beauty.

Your character can be right- or left-handed (the Ambidexterity feat allows her to use both hands equally well; see Ambidexterity, page 39).

You can use your character's looks to tell something about her personality and background. For example:

- Derrick has a long scar on his cheek that is the result of the violent life he led among the street gangs he knew growing up.
- Monica has an ankh tattooed on the inside of her forearm to show her devotion to her pagan faith.
- Barry wears bright, flamboyant clothes to attract attention. He is always very interested in his appearance.

PERSONALITY

Decide how your character acts, what she likes, what she wants out of life, what scares her, and what makes her angry. Stereotypes (the absent-minded professor, the brash young street punk, the intrepid reporter, and so on) are fine starting points, but move on from there. Every person is a little bit of a stereotype, but no one can truly be summed up so easily.

A handy trick for making an interesting personality for your character is including some sort of conflict in her nature. For example, Kristof is quiet and sedate, but he is also very interested in arcane research. His interests force him into strange situations that his sedate nature finds uncomfortable.

Perhaps one of the most important choices you can make about your character's personality is how she'll react to the horror she'll confront throughout the game. Will she attempt to rationalize it all as having some reasonable explanation, or will she embrace the idea that science is wrong and magic really works, or that ghosts really exist and monstrosities move within the shadows? Will she be terrified of the dark knowledge of the Mythos, or will she be intrigued?

Your character's personality can change over time. Just because you decide some basic facts about your character's personality when you create the character doesn't mean you need to abide by those facts as if they were holy writ. Let your character grow and evolve the way real people do.

Example: Dave is playing a private eye in a 1930s campaign. He rolls 1d6 and gets a 5. Applying the modifier from Table 1–13 for his profession (−1), this gives him a result of 4. According to the appropriate line on Table 1–14, this gives him a yearly income of \$4,000 ($4 \times \$1,000$) and \$8,000 in savings ($4 \times \$2,000$). By contrast, the same character in a modern-day campaign would make about \$40,000 a year and have \$24,000 in savings.

BACKGROUND

Decide what your character's life has been like up until now. Here are a few questions to get you thinking:

- How did she decide to take up her profession?
- What is her family like? Does she stay in contact with them? What do they think of her?
- What sort of education does she have? (See below for more on this.)
- Do any of her personal items have special significance to her?
- What's the worst thing that's ever happened to her?
- What's the best thing that's ever happened to her?

EDUCATION

Education is important to your character, because what you know is vital to your survival against the mysterious horrors of the Mythos. Education is something for you to determine, although your character's skills and occupation may suggest or even

d dictate some standards. For example, a professor has certainly gone to college, and in the modern era almost certainly has a Ph.D. A character with a lot of Knowledge skills probably went to a fair bit of school but could be self-taught. Some people are "book-smart," having gone to school for many years, while other people are "street-smart," receiving an education based on experience—the school of hard knocks.

Did you finish high school and go on to college

TABLE 1–13:
Profession Modifiers
to Income

Profession	1d6 Roll
Template	Modifier
Agent	-1
Antiquarian	-1
Archaeologist	0
Artist	-2
Blue-collar worker	-1
Criminal	-1
Detective	-1
Dilettante	+1
Doctor	+2
Technician	+2
Parapsychologist	-2
Priest	-1
Professor	0
Psychologist	0
Soldier	-2
White-collar worker	+1
Writer	-1

and then complete graduate school, or did you drop out to support your family? Were you good in school, or did you learn what you know on your own?

STARTING MONEY AND INCOME

You start out with a salary and savings based on your chosen profession. This can be modified by the Wealth feat (see page 42). Roll 1d6 and modify the result based on profession (see Table 1–13); the minimum result is 1. (If you're not using one of the templates, pick one that most closely resembles your character and apply its modifier). Multiply that result by the amount of money on Table 1–14, based on the era of the campaign.

TABLE 1–14:
Starting Money and Income

Era	Starting Money (savings)	Yearly Income
1901 to 1920	\$1,000	\$500
1921 to 1940	\$2,000	\$1,000
1941 to 1960	\$4,000	\$4,000
1961 to 1980	\$4,000	\$8,000
1981 to 2000+	\$6,000	\$10,000

VARIANT: DEFENSE BONUS

In Lovecraft's stories, investigators are often ordinary people, and powerful creatures can dispatch them quite readily. If your Gamemaster prefers a campaign that feels a little more like "pulp adventure," particularly one that features human opponents more than creatures, this variant rule may take down the body count a little bit.

In this variant, each character has a "defense bonus" that can be added to her Armor Class. (Only investigators get this bonus; ordinary people do not.) A character's defense bonus increases every five levels. While this modifier may not be enough to save an investigator from a rampaging shoggoth, it does make high-level characters tougher than the average cultist.

To balance the two options, an Offense Option character also receives an extra Weapon Proficiency feat at 1st level.

TABLE 1–15:
Defense Bonuses
by Level

Level	Defense Option	Offense Option
1st	+2	+0
2nd	+2	+0
3rd	+2	+0
4th	+2	+0
5th	+3	+1
6th	+3	+1
7th	+3	+1
8th	+3	+1
9th	+3	+1
10th	+4	+2
11th	+4	+2
12th	+4	+2
13th	+4	+2
14th	+4	+2
15th	+5	+3
16th	+5	+3
17th	+5	+3
18th	+5	+3
19th	+5	+3
20th	+6	+4



SKILLS

When Dr. Trask, the anthropologist, stooped to classify the skulls, he found a degraded mixture which utterly baffled him. They were mostly lower than the Piltdown man in the scale of evolution, but in every case definitely human. Many were of higher grade, and a very few were the skulls of supremely and sensitively developed types. All the bones were gnawed, mostly by rats, but somewhere others of the half-human drove.

—H.P. Lovecraft,
“Rats in the Walls”

Marie can quietly walk up to a door, put her ear to it, and hear a cultist on the other side casting a spell. If Kristof were to try the same thing, he would make so much noise that the cultist would hear him. He might, however, identify the spell the insane priest is casting. Actions such as these rely on the skills that characters have (in this case, Move Silently, Listen, and Spellcraft).

SKILLS SUMMARY

Your skills represent a variety of abilities, and you get better at them as you go up in level.

Getting Skills: At each level, you get 8 skill points you can use to buy skills (your Intelligence modifier adds to this number). A 1st-level character gets four times this amount. If you buy a core skill—one of the twelve listed as part of your profession—you get 1 rank (1 rank equals a +1 bonus on your skill checks) for each skill point spent. If you buy noncore skills—any skill outside your twelve professional skills—you get a half-rank per skill point spent.

Your maximum rank in a core skill is your level +3; your maximum rank in a noncore skill is half of this number (do not round up or down). For instance, a 1st-level character can have up to 4 ranks in each core skill and up to 2 ranks in each noncore skill.

Using Skills: To make a skill check, roll

1d20 + skill modifier

(Skill modifier = skill ranks + ability modifier + miscellaneous modifiers).

The higher the roll, the better you do.

Skill checks fall into two categories: opposed and unopposed. Unopposed checks are those where you're trying to accomplish a certain task and succeed by rolling higher than the Difficulty Class (DC) the Game-master assigns to that task. As a rule of thumb, easy tasks are DC 10, average tasks are DC 15, difficult tasks are DC 20, extremely difficult tasks are DC 25 or higher.

Opposed checks are ones where you're trying to beat another character's check. For instance, to sneak quietly past a cultist, Marie needs to beat the cultist's Listen check with her own Move Silently check.

Most skills can be used even if the character has no ranks in the skill (see Table 2-1); this is known as using an untrained skill or making an untrained skill check. A few skills can only be used if you have ranks in them—these are called trained skills (again, see Table 2-1).

The ability modifier used in the skill check is the modifier for the skill's key ability (the ability most associated with the skill's use). The key ability of a skill is noted in its description and on Table 2-1: Skills. All skills (except Cthulhu Mythos) have an associated key ability.

Miscellaneous modifiers for a skill check can include a creature's racial bonus, an investigator's armor check penalty (for those who insist on wearing modern armor), or a circumstance modifier.

modifier of +3. With Innuendo, although his single rank and ability penalty seem to cancel each other out, this simply means William gets a straight d20 roll when using this skill. Innuendo is a trained skill, so he could otherwise not use it at all without having purchased that single rank.

The remaining skills—Gather Information, Intimidate, and his three Performance skills—are all based on Charisma, so he gets his +2 Charisma bonus for each. For Gather Information, Intimidate, and Performance (guitar), the 4 ranks in each and the Charisma bonus give him an overall skill modifier of +6. For Performance (singing), the 2 ranks and +2 Charisma bonus give him a +4 modifier. For Performance (piano), his 1 rank and Charisma bonus give him a +3 modifier.

Skill Check: When William makes a skill check, he rolls 1d20 and adds his skill modifier (ranks plus ability modifier plus any miscellaneous modifiers). The higher the result, the better William does. On average, a 1d20 roll will result in a 10 or 11, so on the things William is best at—Performance (guitar), Intimidate, and Gather Information, each with an overall +6 modifier—he'll regularly get a check result of 16 or 17.

It's this total check result that matters, not the original roll. A result of 17 on a Hide roll by a character with no ranks or ability bonus (that is, a character who just rolls a 17 on her d20 when making the skill check) is just as good as a roll of 10 bumped up to 17 through ranks and ability modifiers. It's the final number, not how you got it, that counts.

Opposed Check: William is jamming with an NPC named Ozzy Orne in a recording studio. They set up an impromptu contest to see who's a better guitarist. William's player rolls 1d20+6 for his Performance (guitar) check and gets a 22. The Gamemaster secretly makes a Performance check for the NPC, and the result is a 19. The GM tells William's player that the other musician was pretty good, but most of the people listening in the control room preferred William's performance.

Check against a Difficulty Class (DC): Later, William gets the chance to play his guitar for a big-time producer. He suspects her record label and cult of groupies are actually fronts for something more sinister, so William desperately wants to impress her and infiltrate the cult.

The GM has secretly decided that this gruff producer is actually a minion of Y'golonac who has become jaded after years of decadence and debauchery. This makes her hard to impress, so the Gamemaster sets the DC at 20. William's player rolls a 9 on 1d20, for a result of 15 (9+6). This result would be enough to impress most people, but it's not enough to intrigue the degenerate cultist. The GM tells the player that the producer watches William's performance with disinterest.

Skill	Ranks	Ability Modifier	Skill Modifier
Craft (songwriting)	4	+1 =	+5
Gather Information	4	+2 =	+6
Innuendo	1	-1 =	+0
Intimidate	4	+2 =	+6
Knowledge (art)	4	+1 =	+5
Listen	4	-1 =	+3
Performance (guitar)	4	+2 =	+6
Performance (singing)	2	+2 =	+4
Performance (piano)	1	+2 =	+3
Sense Motive	4	-1 =	+3
Spot	4	-1 =	+3

HOW SKILLS WORK

This extended example shows how skills work. Detailed rules follow the example.

Character Creation: William Duprey, a professional musician, gets 8 skill points per level. Since his Intelligence score is 12, he gets +1 point per level, for a total of 9 skill points. As a 1st-level character, William gets four times this number, or 36 skill points.

At 1st level, his maximum rank in a core skill is his level +3, or 4 ranks; his maximum rank in all other skills is half that, or 2 ranks. With 36 points, he can "max out" nine core skills—that is, put 4 ranks in each one—or he can spread out his ranks and pick up some useful noncore skills as well.

William starts out with nine skills: Bluff, Craft, Innuendo, Intimidate, Knowledge (art), Listen, Performance, Sense Motive, and Spot. For Craft and Performance, he must also choose a specialty; each specialty is a separate skill. For his three remaining core skills, he chooses Gather Information and two more Performance skills. He decides to max out eight core skills at 4 ranks each and scatter the remaining 4 points among three other skills. Once he has taken the relevant ability modifiers for each skill into account, the skill section on his character sheet looks like this:

Craft (songwriting) and Knowledge (art) are Intelligence skills, so when William makes a check for any of these skills, he adds 4 for his rank and +1 for his Intelligence bonus, for a total skill modifier of +5.

Listen, Sense Motive, and Spot are Wisdom skills, so when he makes a check with one of these skills, he adds his 4 ranks and his -1 Wisdom penalty for a skill

Untrained Checks: Unsuccessful at winning the producer's favor with music, William tries to sway her with words. He explains that he always plays better with his band, and that if they were here, she would be very impressed. He asks her for another audition.

William tries to use the Diplomacy skill, which he doesn't have (he has 0 ranks in Diplomacy). He doesn't get to add any ranks to his skill check, but he does get to add his +2 Charisma modifier. (Diplomacy is an untrained Charisma-based skill.) The GM secretly sets the DC at 20, and William's player rolls 19 on the d20 for a result of 21. The producer smiles and agrees to listen to William and his band. She even invites him up to her estate for a "personal performance." William doesn't realize that the producer has already marked him as a potential sacrifice to her god.

Before William disappears, he leaves a message on a friend's answering machine. Marie gets the message, and calls her associates to help her find him before it's too late.

ACQUIRING SKILL RANKS

Ranks indicate how much training or experience your character has with a given skill. Each of your skills has a rank, from 0 (for a skill in which your character has no training at all) to 23 (for the 20th-level character who has increased a skill to its maximum rank). When making a skill check, you add your skill ranks to the roll as part of the skill modifier, so the more ranks you have, the higher your skill check will be.

ACQUIRING SKILLS AT 1ST LEVEL

Pick skills for your 1st-level character as follows:

1) Determine the number of skill points you get. This number is 8 plus your Intelligence modifier, multiplied by 4. For example, Marie is a beginning character with an Intelligence score of 14 (+2 Intelligence bonus). At the start of play, she has 40 skill points to spend (8+2=10, $10 \times 4 = 40$).

2) Spend the skill points. Each skill point you spend on a core skill gets you 1 rank in that skill. Core skills are the skills found in your character's profession template in the Character Creation chapter (plus three other skills you designate as core skills for your character). Each skill point you spend on a noncore skill gets your character a half-rank in that skill. Noncore skills are all skills not found on your character's core skill list. Half-ranks do not improve your skill check, but two half-ranks equal 1 rank. At 1st level, your maximum rank in a core skill is 4; in a noncore skill, it's 2.

- Table 2-1: Skills lists all the skills available during character creation (and one skill that is available only after the game begins).
- Spend all your skill points. You can't save them to spend later.

Cthulhu Mythos is the only skill a character cannot buy during character creation; it's also the only skill with no maximum rank (see Cthulhu Mythos, page 27).

**TABLE 2-1:
Skills**

Skill	Untrained?	Key Ability
Animal Empathy	No	Cha
Appraise	Yes	Int
Balance	Yes	Dex††
Bluff	Yes	Cha
Climb	Yes	Str††
Computer Use	Yes	Int
Concentration	Yes	Con
Craft*	No**	Int
Cthulhu Mythos†	No	—
Demolitions	No	Int
Diplomacy	Yes	Cha
Disable Device	No	Int
Disguise	Yes	Cha
Drive	Yes	Dex
Escape Artist	Yes	Dex††
Forgery	Yes	Int
Gather Information	Yes	Cha
Handle Animal	No	Cha
Heal	Yes	Wis
Hide	Yes	Dex††
Innuendo	Yes	Wis
Intimidate	Yes	Cha
Jump	Yes	Str††
Knowledge*	No	Int
Listen	Yes	Wis
Move Silently	Yes	Dex††
Open Lock	No	Dex
Operate Heavy Machinery	No	Dex
Performance*	No**	Cha
Pilot	No	Dex
Psychic Focus	No	Wis
Psychoanalysis	No	Wis
Read Lips	No	Int
Repair	No	Int
Research	Yes	Int
Ride	Yes	Dex
Search	Yes	Int
Sense Motive	Yes	Wis
Sleight of Hand	No	Dex
Speak Other Language*	No	Int
Spellcraft	No	Int
Spot	Yes	Wis
Swim	Yes	Str††
Tumble	No	Dex††
Use Rope	Yes	Dex
Wilderness Lore	Yes	Wis

* This skill requires a specialization; see the skill's listing for details.

** At the Gamemaster's discretion, some specializations of this skill may be usable untrained.

† This skill cannot be taken during character creation.

†† Armor check penalties apply.

SKILLS AT HIGHER LEVELS

When your character reaches a new experience level, follow these steps to gain new skills and improve those you already have:

- 1) Determine the number of skill points you get. This number is 8 plus your Intelligence modifier. A character gets at least 1 skill point even if she has an Intelligence penalty.

TABLE 2-2:
Difficulty Class Examples

Difficulty	DC	Example	Skill
Very Easy	0	Notice something in plain sight	Spot (Wis)
Easy	5	Climb a knotted rope	Climb (Str)
Average	10	Hear a security guard approaching	Listen (Wis)
Tough	15	Disarm an explosive device	Demolitions (Int)
Challenging	20	Track an escaped madman on a rainy night	Wilderness Lore (Wis) (and the Track feat)
Formidable	25	Break into a secure computer system	Computer Use (Int)
Heroic	30	Leap across a 30-foot chasm	Jump (Str)

2) Now that you have gone up a level, you can improve any core skill that you have previously maxed out by 1 rank, or any noncore skill that you have previously maxed out by a half-rank (see Table 1-10).

3) If you have not previously maxed out a skill, you can spend extra skill points on it and increase its rank further. First, find out what your maximum rank in the skill is. If it's a core skill, your maximum rank is your new level +3. If it's a noncore skill, your maximum rank is half of that number (do not round up or down). You may spend up to the number of skill points it takes to max out the skill (provided that you have that many skill points to spend).

4) If you want to pick up a new skill, you can spend up to your level +3 skill points on it (provided you have that many skill points available to spend). These skill points buy 1 rank each if the new skill is a core skill you didn't put points in earlier, or a half-rank each if it's a noncore skill.

USING SKILLS

When you use a skill, you make a skill check to see how well you do. The higher the result on your skill check, the better you do. Based on the circumstances, your result must match or beat a particular number to use the skill successfully. The harder the task, the higher the number you need to roll.

A number of circumstances can affect your check. If you're free to work without distractions, you can make a careful attempt and avoid simple mistakes. If you have lots of time, you can try over and over again, assuring that you do your best. If others help you, you may succeed where otherwise you would fail. The rules for these situations are described below.

SKILL CHECKS

A skill check takes into account your training (skill ranks), natural talent (ability modifier), and luck (the die roll). It may also take into account other factors (see Favorable and Unfavorable Conditions below).

To make a skill check, roll 1d20 and add your skill modifier for that skill. The skill modifier incorporates your ranks with that skill, your ability modifier for that skill's key ability, and any miscellaneous modifiers you may have. The higher the result, the better you do. A natural 20 is not an automatic success, and a natural 1 is not an automatic failure.

DIFFICULTY CLASS

Some checks are made against a Difficulty Class (DC). The DC is a number set by the Gamemaster that you must match or beat on your skill check to succeed. For example, climbing the wall of a Mayan temple might have a DC of 15. To climb that wall, you must get a result of 15 or better on a Climb check. A Climb check is

1d20 plus Climb ranks (if any) plus your Strength modifier, plus any other modifiers (for example, having the proper equipment might make the climb easier).

OPPOSED CHECKS

Some skill checks are opposed checks. They are made against a number, usually another character's skill check result. For example, to sneak up on a guard dog, you need to beat the guard dog's Listen check result with your Move Silently check result. You make a Move Silently check, and the Gamemaster makes a Listen check for the guard dog. Whoever gets the higher result wins the contest. If your result is higher than the Gamemaster's, you successfully sneak up on the guard dog. If the Gamemaster's result is higher than yours, the guard dog hears your PCs approach and reacts accordingly.

For ties on opposed checks, the character with the higher key ability score wins. For instance, if a Move Silently check used against a Listen check results in a tie, the skulker's Dexterity would be compared to the listener's Wisdom. If these scores are the same, flip a coin.

TABLE 2-3:
Examples of Opposed Checks

Task	Skill (Key Ability)	Opposing Skill (Key Ability)
Sneak up behind someone	Move Silently (Dex)	Listen (Wis)
Con someone	Bluff (Cha)	Sense Motive (Wis)
Hide from someone	Hide (Dex)	Spot (Wis)
Tie a prisoner securely	Use Rope (Dex)	Escape Artist (Dex)
Win a horserace	Ride (Dex)	Ride (Dex)
Pass as someone else	Disguise (Cha)	Spot (Wis)
Steal a wallet	Sleight of Hand (Dex)	Spot (Wis)
Create a false ID	forgery (Int)	forgery (Int)

RETRIES

In general, you can try a skill check again if you fail, and can keep trying indefinitely. Some skills, however, have consequences of failure that must be taken into account. Some skills are virtually useless once a check has failed on an attempt to accomplish a particular task. For most skills, when a character has succeeded once at a given task, additional successes are meaningless.

For example, if Marie misses an Open Lock check, she can try again. If, however, a computerized alarm

system tied to the lock goes off if she misses an Open Lock check by 5 or more, then failing has its own penalties.

Similarly, if Claire misses a Climb check, she can keep trying, but if she fails by 5 or more, she falls (after which she can get up and try again, assuming she survives).

If Sam is at negative hit points and dying, Kristof can attempt an untrained Heal check to stabilize him. If the check fails, Sam probably loses another hit point, but Kristof can try again in the next round.

If a skill carries no penalties for failure, you can assume that if you go at it long enough, you'll succeed eventually (see Checks without Rolls, page 21).

UNTRAINED SKILL CHECKS

Generally, if you attempt to use a skill you don't possess, you can make a skill check as normal. You don't have any ranks to add to the 1d20 roll, but you do get your ability modifier and any miscellaneous modifiers that might apply.

However, some skills can be used only if you are trained in the skill. If you haven't put points in Knowledge (geology), for example, you just don't know enough about rocks to identify that unusual specimen Professor Danforth brought back from Antarctica, regardless of your ability scores and experience level. Skills that cannot be used untrained are marked No in the Untrained column on Table 2-1: Skills.

For example, Sam's 4 ranks in Climb make his Climb check results 4 points higher than they otherwise would be, but even Claire, with no Climb ranks, can attempt a Climb check. Claire has a skill modifier of +0 (she has no ranks and no Strength modifier), but she can give it a try. However, Claire's ranks in Tumble let her do something that she otherwise couldn't do at all. Sam, with no ranks in the skill, can't make a Tumble check, even at a penalty.

ACCESS TO SKILLS

These rules assume that a character eventually can find a way to learn any skill while gaining a level. For instance, if Kristof wants to learn Swim, nothing in the rules exists to stop him. However, the Gamemaster is in charge of the game, including decisions about where one can and can't learn certain skills. While Kristof is working on an archaeological dig in the Sahara Desert, for example, the Gamemaster can decide that Kristof has no way of learning how to swim. It's up to the Gamemaster to say whether a character can learn a given skill in a given setting.

Cthulhu Mythos is (as usual) the exception. This skill can only be acquired through reading Mythos tomes and encounters with Mythos entities, limiting the circumstances under which a character can deliberately set out to gain extra ranks.

FAVORABLE AND UNFAVORABLE CONDITIONS

Some situations may make a skill easier or harder to use. This might add a bonus or penalty to a skill check or change the DC. It's one thing for Kristof, with his Wilderness Lore skill, to hunt for food while he is camping for the day in the middle of a forest, but foraging for food while traveling across a barren desert is an entirely different matter.

The Gamemaster can alter the odds of success to take into account exceptional circumstances:

1) Give the skill user a +2 circumstance bonus to represent circumstances that improve performance, such as having the perfect tool for the job, getting help from another character (see Combining Skill Attempts, page 22), or possessing unusually accurate information.

2) Give the skill user a -2 circumstance penalty to represent conditions that hamper performance, such as being forced to use improvised tools or having misleading information.

3) Reduce the DC by 2 to represent circumstances that make the task easier, such as having a friendly audience or doing work that might be subpar, but will do on a temporary basis.

4) Increase the DC by 2 to represent circumstances that make the task harder, such as having a hostile audience or doing work that must be flawless.

Conditions that affect your ability to perform the skill change your skill modifier. Conditions that modify how well you have to perform the skill to succeed change the DC. A bonus to your skill modifier and a reduction in the check's DC have the same result: they create a better chance that you will succeed. But they represent different circumstances, and sometimes that difference is important.

For example, Marie wants to ask the regulars at a sleazy nightclub a few questions. She has heard rumors about a musician named William who's gone missing in the area. She'll need to use the Gather Information skill; the GM sets the DC for the check at 15.

Before she starts asking around, Marie watches the crowd for a while. She could just confront a random stranger and demand to know where William is, but instead she tries to be subtle. A local band is playing, so she decides to hang out by the bar and ask a few questions about the music. Then she'll mention a friend of hers who was going to meet her here, casually say that he hasn't shown up yet, and ask if anyone has seen him around.

The GM decides that this approach improves her chances, giving her a +2 circumstance modifier to the skill check. She rolls a 6 and adds +8 for her skill modifier (4 ranks, +2 Charisma modifier, and a +2 circumstance modifier.) Her result is 14.

The locals are in a good mood because the performance is going well—the GM reduces the DC to 13. However, the most attractive guy in the group, a pale young man in black leather, has heard that some outsiders have been snooping around town. He has a reason to be suspicious of Marie's motives. The DC to question him is higher than normal: 17 instead of 15.

Marie's skill check (14) is high enough to get the locals talking (DC 13), but not the suspicious young man (DC 17). The locals offer to let her sit down at their table, but the man in black watches her carefully.

TIME AND SKILL CHECKS

When time is a factor, the time it takes to use a skill is measured in rounds; each round is about 6 seconds in length. A skill check might require part of a round, several rounds, or no time at all.

Some skills require a specific type of action: a move action, an attack action, or a full-round action. (These terms are defined in the Action Types sidebar.) The

take 10. Instead of rolling 1d20 for the skill check, calculate your result as if you had rolled a 10, then add your skill modifier to get your result. For many routine tasks, taking 10 makes them automatically successful. Distractions or threats make it impossible for a character to take 10.

For example, Sam has a Climb skill modifier of +6 (4 ranks, +2 Strength modifier). The steep, rocky slope he is climbing has a DC of 10. With a little care, he can take 10 and succeed automatically. But partway up the slope, a cultist begins shooting at him. Sam needs to make a Climb check to reach the cultist, and this time he can't take 10, due to the distraction of being shot at. If he rolls 4 or higher on 1d20, though, he succeeds.

Taking 20: Taking 20 takes twenty times as long as making a single check would take. When you have plenty of time (generally 2 minutes for a skill that can normally be used in 1 round), and when the skill being attempted carries no penalties for failure, you can take 20. In other words, eventually you will get a 20 if you roll long enough. Instead of rolling 1d20 repeatedly for the skill check, calculate your result as if you had rolled a 20. Taking 20 means you are trying until you get it right.

For example, Sam and Claire are trying to climb a rocky cliff near an old family mansion. Sam attempts to take 10 on his Climb check, for a result of 16 (10 plus his +6 skill modifier). But the DC is 20, and the Gamemaster tells him that he fails to make progress up the cliff. (His check is at least high enough that he won't fall; see Climb, page 25.) Sam cannot take 20 because there is a penalty associated with failure (falling, in this case). He can try over and over, and eventually he may succeed, but he might fall one or more times in the process.

Claire has better luck. She not only climbs halfway up the cliff, but also finds a cave while she is climbing. She decides to use her Search skill. The Gamemaster sees in the Search skill description that each 5-foot-square area takes a full-round action to search. She secretly assigns a DC of 15 to the

CHECKS WITHOUT ROLLS

A skill check represents an attempt to accomplish some goal, usually with some sort of time pressure or distraction. Sometimes, though, you can use a skill under more favorable conditions and eliminate the luck factor.

Taking 10: When you are not in a rush and not being threatened or distracted, you may choose to

ACTION TYPES

The following types of actions define the time frame for how long certain activities take to complete. In a typical round, you can perform a move action and an attack action (see below).

REACTION

Some skill checks are instantaneous. They are reactions to an event, such as making a Drive check to swerve and avoid a tree that's just fallen in front of your car. Some are tests of what a character might notice or recognize, such as a Listen check to notice the madman with an axe sneaking up on you from behind. You can make as many of these checks in a round as the situation requires. (However, you still only get one check on a particular skill to respond to a given event; for instance, you can't make multiple Listen rolls to hear the same footprint.) In game terms, these checks take no time and are not considered actions.

FREE ACTION

Free actions consume so little time, and have so minor an impact over the span of a round, that they are considered to take no time. You can perform one or more free actions while taking another action, although the Gamemaster puts reasonable limits on what you can do for free. Calling out to your friends for help, for example, is a free action; reading aloud several pages from *The Necronomicon* is not.

ATTACK ACTION

An attack action allows you to do something: make an attack, cast a spell, or use a skill or feat (unless the skill or feat requires a full-round action to perform; see below). During a round, you can perform an attack action and move your speed (a move action; see below). You can perform only one attack action a round, so if you use an attack

action to do something other than attacking, you cannot attack someone in that same round.

MOVE ACTION

A move action allows you to move your speed in a round or perform a similar action used in place of movement. For instance, you could draw a weapon, pick up a book, or move a heavy object as a move action.

In a combat round, you can perform an attack action and move your speed as your move action, or you can move first and then perform an attack action. If you prefer, you can perform two move actions in a round without attacking, using the second move action in place of an attack action. If the actions you take during a round result in you moving no actual distance, you can also take a 5-foot step (you can move up to 5 feet).

FULL-ROUND ACTION

A full-round action consumes all your effort during the round. The only movement you can take during a full-round action is a 5-foot-step before, during, or after the action. Attacking more than once per round (if you have multiple attacks, or if you're firing a multishot weapon) is a full-round action. So is using a skill that requires a full round to accomplish, such as using Search to examine a 5-foot-by-5-foot area.

LONGER THAN A ROUND

Some skills take more than a round to perform. When this is the case, the skill description specifies how long the skill takes to use. Such activities as crafting a sculpture of an ancient demon, riding a camel across the desert, or spending an evening flirting with an attractive occultist can be handled by skill checks, but the times involved are beyond the scope of round-by-round or even minute-by-minute timing.

attempt. She estimates that the floors, walls, and ceiling of the cave make up about twenty 5-foot squares, so she tells Claire's player that it takes 2 minutes (20 rounds) to search the whole cave. Claire's player rolls a 12 on 1d20, adds no skill ranks because Claire doesn't have the Search skill, and adds +0 because that's Claire's Intelligence modifier. Her Search check fails.

She then decides that she is going to search the cavern high and low, for "as long as it takes." Since it took 1 round to quickly search each 5-foot section of the cave, taking 20 means it takes 20 rounds to exhaustively check every section. Therefore, the Gamemaster takes the original time of 2 minutes and multiplies it by 20, for 40 minutes. That's how long it takes for Claire to search the whole cave in exacting detail. Claire's player treats her roll as if it were 20, for a result of 20, since she has no ranks and no Intelligence modifier. That's good enough to beat the DC of 15. Claire finds an old, mysterious carving on one of the walls, covered in grime and dirt.

Ability Checks and Caster Level Checks: The normal take 10 rules apply for ability checks when these are routine untrained skill checks or when there is no skill associated with the check, such as breaking down a door (see Checks without Rolls, page 21). The normal take 20 rules apply to all ability checks. Neither rule applies to caster level checks involved in certain spells.

COMBINING SKILL ATTEMPTS

When more than one character tries the same skill at the same time and for the same purpose, their efforts may overlap.

INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

Often, several characters attempt an action, and each succeeds or fails on her own. For example, Sam and each of his friends need to climb a cliff if they're all to get to the top. Regardless of Sam's roll, the other characters need successful checks, too. Each character must make a separate skill check.

COOPERATION

Sometimes individual PCs are essentially reacting to the same situation, but they can work together and help each other out. In this case, one character is considered the leader of the effort and makes a skill check; each helper makes a skill check against DC 10. (You can't take 10 on this check.) This is known as a cooperation check. For each helper who succeeds, the leader gets a +2 circumstance bonus. In many cases a character's help won't be beneficial, or only a limited number of characters can help at once. The Gamemaster should limit cooperation as she sees fit for the given conditions.

For instance, if Sam has been badly wounded and is dying, Kristof can try a Heal check to keep him from losing more hit points. One other character (in this case, Claire) can help Kristof. If Claire makes a Heal check against DC 10, then Kristof gets a +2 circumstance bonus on the Heal check he makes to help Sam. The Gamemaster rules that more than two charac-

BONUS TYPES

A modifier is a bonus or penalty that applies to a die roll. A positive modifier is a bonus; a negative modifier is a penalty.

Modifiers with specific designators (such as an armor bonus) generally do not stack with others of the same type—only the best bonus or worst penalty of that type applies. For example, if one item provides a +1 deflection bonus and another a +2 deflection bonus, using both items at the same time would only grant a +2 deflection

bonus. Exceptions to this rule are that dodge bonuses stack with each other, and circumstance bonuses stack with each other.

As a variant rule, a character who's trying to help with a skill check may not need to use the same skill. This is allowable with the permission of the GM, but increases the DC for the cooperation check by 5. For instance, if Kristof is trying to use his Heal skill to treat someone with a disease, someone else could make a Knowledge (medicine) check to advise him. A successful check against DC 15 would add a +2 circumstance bonus to Kristof's Heal check.

SKILL SYNERGY

It's possible for a character to have two skills that always work well together, such as when someone with Handle Animal also has Animal Empathy. In general, having 5 or more ranks in one such skill gives you a +2 synergy bonus on skill checks with its related skill(s), as noted in the individual skill descriptions and Table 2-4: Synergy Bonuses.

**TABLE 2-4:
Synergy Bonuses**

Five ranks in:	Grants a +2 Synergy Bonus to:
Animal Empathy	Handle Animal
Bluff	Intimidate
Handle Animal	Sleight of Hand
Knowledge (medicine)	Ride
Knowledge (psychology)	Heal
Sense Motive	Psychoanalysis
Tumble	Diplomacy
	Balance
	Jump

As a variant rule, the GM can allow a character to make a skill check with one skill (DC 15) to add a +2 synergy bonus on a second skill check. (It's like a cooperation check, but both rolls are made by the same player.) This should work only in a situation where the first skill might help with the second skill. For instance, the GM might decide your character can attempt a Computer Use check (DC 15) to add a +2 synergy bonus on your Demolitions check to defuse a bomb, but only if it has computerized components. This is known as a synergy check.

As another example, suppose Marie is writing a magazine article on the occult. She really wants to impress her publisher, so she wants to use

modifiers. Exceptions to this rule are that dodge bonuses stack with each other, and circumstance bonuses stack with each other.

Modifiers without specific designators can be added together. A modifier without a specific designator can stack with a modifier that has one.

Examples of typical designators are: aptitude, armor, circumstance, competence, deflection, dodge, enhancement, insight, luck, morale, natural armor, and synergy.

her Knowledge (occult) skill to get a +2 synergy bonus on her Craft (writing) check for the article. The GM approves the idea that Knowledge (occult) can give a +2 synergy bonus on Craft (writing), but only when the character writes about the occult, and only if she makes the skill check against DC 15. This variant rule can slow down game play, so use discretion.

PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE TASKS

Sometimes you want to do something that seems practically impossible. In general, to do something that's practically impossible requires that you have at least 10 ranks in the necessary skill. The attempt also entails a penalty of -20 on your roll or +20 on the DC (which amounts to the same thing).

Practically impossible tasks are hard to delineate ahead of time. They're the accomplishments that represent incredible, almost logic-defying skill and luck. Picking a lock by giving it a swift kick, swimming up a waterfall, or convincing a byakhee to stop attacking by speaking nicely to it are potential examples of practically impossible tasks.

The Gamemaster decides what is actually impossible and what is merely practically impossible. Characters with very high skill modifiers are capable on occasion of accomplishing incredible, almost unbelievable tasks.

EXTRAORDINARY SUCCESS

If you have at least 10 ranks in a skill and beat your DC by 20 or more on a normal skill check, you have completed the task extraordinarily well. For example, Claire has reached 10th level and has 13 ranks in Performance. She has increased her Charisma score by 2 points (once at 4th level and again at 8th level), so she now has an ability modifier of +3, giving her a total skill modifier of +16.

Claire has been invited to perform at a private gathering. She doesn't know that most of the people in attendance are actually

cultists in the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign. As she begins to portray the role of Cassilda, the Gamemaster decides the audience is very receptive. She assigns a DC of 15 to the skill check. Claire's player rolls a 19 on 1d20 and adds her +16 skill modifier for a result of 35!

The audience likes the performance so much that they experience an epiphany and decide she is actually a manifestation of one of the characters from *The King in Yellow*. The Gamemaster decides that from now on, the cultists will periodically beseech Claire to give return performances, refusing to accept no for an answer. They may, from time to time, track her down individually and implore "Cassilda" for guidance.

ABILITY CHECKS

Sometimes you try to do something to which no specific skill applies. In these cases, you can make an ability check. Making an ability check involves rolling 1d20 and adding an appropriate ability modifier. Essentially, you're making an untrained skill check. The Gamemaster assigns a Difficulty Class or sets up an opposed check when two characters are engaged in a contest using a specific ability score. An initiative check in combat, for example, is essentially a Dexterity check (the character who rolls highest goes first).

In some cases, an action is a straight test of a character's ability, with no luck involved. Just as you wouldn't make a check to see who is taller, you don't always make a Strength check to see who is stronger.

When two characters arm wrestle, for example, the stronger character simply wins. In the case of identical scores, flip a coin.

TABLE 2-5:
Examples of Ability Checks

Task	Key Ability
Breaking open a jammed or locked door	Strength
Threading a needle	Dexterity
Holding your breath	Constitution
Navigating a maze	Intelligence
Remembering to lock a door	Wisdom
Getting yourself singled out in a crowd	Charisma

SKILL DESCRIPTIONS

This section describes each skill, including common uses and typical modifiers. Characters can sometimes use skills for purposes other than those given here. For example, you might be able to impress a group of occultists by making a Knowledge (occult) check.

Here's the format for skill descriptions:

SKILL NAME (KEY ABILITY; TRAINED ONLY; ARMOR CHECK PENALTY)

Headings that do not apply to a particular skill are omitted in that skill's description. The skill name line includes the following information.

Key Ability: The abbreviation of the ability whose modifier applies to the skill check.

Trained Only: If "Trained Only" is included in the skill name line, you must have at least 1 rank in the skill to use it. If this header is omitted, the



skill can be used untrained. If any special notes apply to trained or untrained use, they are covered in the Special section (see below).

Armor Check Penalty: Apply any armor check penalty to skill checks for this skill.

Description: The skill name line is followed by a general description of what using the skill represents. After the description are three other types of information:

Check: This section discusses what you can do with a successful skill check and typical check DCs. This section may also describe how long it takes to make a skill check (see the Action Types sidebar).

Retry: Any conditions that apply to successive attempts to use the skill are listed here. If this paragraph is omitted, the skill can be retried without any inherent penalty other than consuming additional time.

Synergy: If this skill grants a synergy bonus, this section gives the other skill that receives it.

Special: Any extra facts that apply to the skill, such as rules regarding untrained use or notes regarding different eras or settings are given here.

ANIMAL EMPATHY (CHA; TRAINED ONLY)

Use this skill to keep a guard dog from barking at you, get a wild bird to land on your outstretched hand, or keep a bear calm while you back off.

Check: You can improve the attitude of an animal with a successful check (see the Attitude Adjustment table, page 226, for more details). To use the skill, you and the animal must be able to study each other, noting each other's body language, vocalizations, and general demeanor. This means that you must be within 30 feet under normal conditions.

Generally, influencing an animal in this way takes 1 minute (ten full-round actions). As with influencing people (via Diplomacy or Intimidate), it might take more or less time.

This skill only works only on animals (that is, creatures with the "animal" subtype), not people or monsters.

Retry: As with attempts to influence people, retries on the same animal generally don't work (or don't work any better), whether you have succeeded or not.

Synergy: A character with 5 or more ranks in Animal Empathy receives a +2 synergy bonus on Handle Animal checks.

APPRAISE (INT)

Use this skill to tell an antique from old junk and high-quality jewelry from cheap stuff made to look good.

Check: You can appraise common or well-known objects within 10% of their value (DC 12). Failure means you estimate the value at 50%–150% of the actual value. To derive the false value, the Gamemaster secretly rolls 2d6+3, multiplies that by 10%, multiplies the actual value by that percentage, and tells you that value for the item.

Rare or exotic items require a successful check against DC 15, 20, or higher. If successful, you estimate the value at 70%–130% of its actual value. The GM secretly rolls 2d4+5, multiplies by 10%, multiplies the actual value by that percentage, and tells you that value for the item. Failure means you cannot estimate the item's value.

A magnifying glass or similar tool

gives a +2 circumstance bonus on Appraise checks involving any item that is small or highly detailed, such as a gem. A scale gives a +2 circumstance bonus on Appraise checks involving any items that are valued by weight, including anything made of precious metals. (Since these are circumstance bonuses, they stack.)

Appraising an item takes 1 minute.

Retry: Not on the same object, regardless of success.

Special: If you are making the check untrained, for common items, failure means no estimate (you have no idea what the item is worth). For rare items, an untrained success means an estimate of 50%–150% (2d6+3 times 10%).

BALANCE (DEX)

(DEX; ARMOR CHECK PENALTY)

You can keep your balance while walking on an uneven floor, a ledge, a narrow beam, or even a tightrope.

Check: You can walk on a precarious surface as a move action. A successful check lets you move at half your normal speed along the surface for 1 round. A failure means that you can't move for 1 round. A failure by 5 or more means that you slip and fall. The difficulty varies with the surface, as shown on the table below.

Accelerated Movement: You can try to walk a precarious surface more quickly than normal. If you accept a -5 penalty on your Balance check, you can move your full speed as a move action. Moving any faster than this in a round requires an additional check for each doubling of your speed.

Attacked while Walking a Tightrope: Attacks against you on a tightrope are made as if you were off-balance. Attackers gain a +2 bonus on their attack rolls, and you lose your Dexterity bonus to Armor Class (if any). If you have 5 or more ranks in Balance, then you can retain your Dexterity bonus to Armor Class (if any) in the face of attacks. If you take damage, you must make a check again to stay on the tightrope.

Surface	DC	Surface	DC
6+ to 12 inches wide	10	Uneven floor	10
2 to 6 inches wide	15	Surface angled	+5*
Less than 2 inches wide	20	Surface slippery	+5*

*Cumulative; if both apply, use both.

BLUFF (CHA)

You can make outrageous or untrue claims seem plausible. The skill encompasses acting, con-artistry, fast-talk, misdirection, prevarication, and misleading body language. Use a bluff to sow temporary confusion, get someone to turn his head to look where you point, or simply to look innocuous.

Check: A Bluff check is opposed by the target's Sense Motive check. Favorable and unfavorable circumstances weigh heavily on the outcome of a bluff. Two circumstances can weigh against you: if the bluff is hard to believe, or if the action the target must take goes against her self-interest, nature, personality, orders, or the like. If it's important, the Gamemaster can distinguish between a bluff that fails because the target doesn't believe it and one that fails because it just asks too much of the target.

CLIMB (STR; ARMOR CHECK PENALTY)

Use this skill to scale a cliff, get to the window on the second story of a house, or climb out of an old basement after falling through a rickety floor.

Check: With each successful Climb check, you can advance up, down, or across a slope or a wall or other steep incline (or even a ceiling, if there are handholds), moving at one-half your normal speed. This is a full-round action. You can move half that distance (one-fourth your normal speed) as a move action. A slope is considered to be any incline of less than 60 degrees, while a wall has a 60-degree or steeper incline.

Example Circumstance

The target wants to believe you.

"This old book hasn't been stolen. I just need some quick cash, so I'm offering it to you cheap."

The bluff is believable and doesn't affect the target much.

"Dead body? I don't know what you're talking about. I'm just here to watch the play."

The bluff is a little hard to believe or puts the target at some risk.

"You guys wanna fight? I'll take you all on!"

The bluff is hard to believe or entails a large risk for the target.

"Of course that's not a real human head in my trunk, officer. It's just a stage prop. Realistic, isn't it?"

The bluff is way out there; it's almost too incredible to consider.

"You might find this hard to believe, but I'm actually an alien from another world. Can you please lend me some of your local currency so I may travel in one of your ground transports?"

Modifier to Sense Motive

-5

+0

+10

+20

For instance, if the target gets a +10 bonus because the bluff demands something risky on her part, and the Sense Motive check succeeds by 10 or less, then the target didn't see through the bluff as prove reluctant to go along with it. If the target succeeds by 11 or more, she has seen through the bluff (and would have done so even if it had not entailed any demand on her).

A successful Bluff check indicates that the target reacts as you wish, at least for a short time (usually 1 round or less), or believes something that you want him to believe. Bluff, however, is not a skill that gives you control over someone's action. For example, you could use a bluff to put someone off-guard by telling him his shoes are untied. At best, such a bluff would make the target glance down at his shoes. It would not cause the target to ignore you and fiddle with his shoes while you picked the lock of a door the target is guarding.

A bluff requires interaction between the character and the target. Creatures unaware of the character cannot be bluffed. A bluff always takes at least 1 round (and is at least a full-round action) but can take much longer if you try something elaborate.

Feinting in Combat: You can also use Bluff to mislead an opponent in combat so that he can't dodge your attack effectively. Doing so is an attack action. If you are successful, the next attack you make against the target does not allow her to use her Dexterity bonus to her Armor Class (if any). This attack must be made on or before your next turn.

Feinting in this way against something inhuman is difficult because it's harder to read a strange creature's body language; you suffer a -4 penalty to the skill check. Against a creature of animal Intelligence (1 or 2) it's even harder; you suffer a -8 penalty. Against a nonintelligent creature, it's impossible.

Creating a Diversion to Hide: You can use Bluff to help you hide. A successful Bluff check can give you the momentary diversion you need to attempt a Hide check while people are aware of you. See the Hide skill for more details.

Retry: Generally, a failed Bluff check makes the target too suspicious for you to try another bluff in the same circumstances.

Synergy: A character with 5 or more ranks in Bluff receives a +2 synergy bonus on Intimidate and Sleight of Hand checks.

you fall from your current height and sustain the appropriate falling damage (1d6 points of damage for every 10 feet you fall).

Appropriate climbing gear (see *Outdoor and Travel Gear*, page 116) gives a +2 circumstance bonus on Climb checks.

The DC of the check depends on the conditions of the climb, as outlined on the table below.

Accelerated Climbing: You try to climb more quickly than normal. As a full-round action, you can attempt to cover your full speed in climbing distance, but you suffer a -5 penalty on Climb checks and must make two checks each round. Each successful check allows you to climb a distance equal to one-half your speed. By accepting the -5 penalty, you can move half your speed as a move action rather than a full-round action.

Attacked while Climbing: Since you can't move to avoid a blow while climbing, each attacker targeting you gets a +2 bonus, and you lose your Dexterity bonus to Armor Class.

Making Your Own Handholds and Footholds: You can make your own handholds and footholds by

DC Example Wall or Surface

- | | |
|------|--|
| 0 | A knotted rope with a wall to brace against. |
| 5 | A rope with a wall to brace against, or a knotted rope without a wall. |
| 10 | A surface with ledges to hold on to and stand on, such as a very rough wall or a ship's rigging. |
| 15 | Any surface with adequate handholds and footholds (natural or artificial), such as a very rough natural rock surface or a tree. An unknotted rope. |
| 20 | An uneven surface with some narrow handholds and footholds, such as a typical wall in a ruined castle. |
| 25 | A rough surface, such as a natural rock wall or a brick wall. |
| 25 | Overhang or ceiling with handholds, but no footholds. |
| — | A perfectly smooth, flat, vertical surface cannot be climbed. |
| -10* | Climbing a chimney (artificial or natural) or other location where you can brace against two opposite walls (reduces DC by 10). |
| -5* | Climbing a corner where you can brace against perpendicular walls (reduces DC by 5). |
| +5* | Surface is slippery (increases DC by 5). |

*These modifiers are cumulative; use any that apply.

pounding pitons into a wall. Doing so takes 1 minute per piton, and one piton is needed every 3 feet. As with any surface with handholds and footholds, a wall with pitons in it has a DC of 15. In the same way, a climber with a handaxe or similar implement can cut holds in an ice wall.

Catching Yourself When Falling: It's practically impossible to catch yourself on a wall while falling. Make a Climb check (DC equals the wall's DC + 20) to do so. A slope is a lot easier to catch yourself on (DC equals the slope's DC + 10).

COMPUTER USE (INT)

Use this skill to operate computer systems and write or modify computer programs. Computer Use enables you to access computer programs and files, networked computer systems, or the Internet.

Check: Most simple tasks, such as checking your e-mail, don't require a skill check. However, when creating or modifying programs, breaking into secure systems, or when time is of the essence, a skill check is required, against a DC related to the task (see table).

DC	Task
15	Modify existing program
20-30	Create new program
25	Break into secured system

does exist. If the program to be modified is protected within a secure system, you must first break into the system (see below).

Create New Program: Creating an entirely new program is more difficult than modifying an existing one. Common programs that a character might want to create include task-related programs for computer systems, defensive programs to protect computer systems, and viruses to disable cultists' computers.

Break into a Secured System: Extracting guarded information from a system is perhaps the computer expert's most valued ability. Defeating security measures to gain access to restricted data or vital programs can be extremely difficult.

Particularly complex programs or well-designed security systems can modify the DC of a task by +5 or more. You may need to beat an opposing computer programmer's Computer Use check result.

Computer Use requires at least a full-round action. The Gamemaster may determine that some tasks require several rounds, several minutes, or even longer to accomplish, depending on complexity and the quality of available equipment.

General Tech: This skill can also be used to operate or program electronic devices, such as programming a cell phone, accessing data from a palm pilot, finding your position with a GPS system, or even programming your new VCR. Keep in mind that an untrained Computer Use check is essentially an Intelligence check to figure out high-tech devices.

Research: An investigator accessing information on the Internet can substitute Computer Use for Research. However, some information just can't be found on the Web. For this

Modify Existing Program:

Modifying an existing computer program can change its purpose, add information that didn't exist, or delete information that

reason (and others), this skill cannot be substituted for a Research check against a DC above 15. Your Gamemaster may decide that a particular piece of information isn't available over the Web.

CONCENTRATION (CON)

You are particularly good at focusing your mind.

Check: You can make a Concentration check to cast a spell despite distractions such as taking damage, getting hit by an unfriendly spell, and so on. You can also use this skill to maintain concentration in the face of other distractions or on other things besides spells, such as eavesdropping on a conversation despite distractions from other people, keeping awake, or focusing completely on your studies.

The table below summarizes various types of distractions that cause you to make a Concentration check. See the Magic chapter for more information on spells and spellcasting.

Retry: Yes, although a success doesn't cancel the effects of a previous failure. In the case of spellcasting, a failure almost always results in the loss of the spell being cast or the disruption of a spell you concentrated on.

Special: Concentration can be taken as a starting skill, but since no player character begins the game knowing spells, the skill initially represents your ability to focus your mind on mundane tasks.

DC	Distraction
10	Vigorous motion (on a moving mount, bouncy car ride, small boat in rough water, belowdecks in a storm-tossed ship)
15	Violent motion (galloping horse, very rough plane ride, small boat in rapids, on deck of storm-tossed ship)
15 + damage dealt	Casting on the defensive (see page 74 in the Combat chapter, and page 128 in the Magic chapter)
15 + damage dealt	Taking damage or failing a saving throw during the casting of a spell (for spells with a casting time of a full round or more)
15 + half of continuous	Taking damage from a readied attack (for spells with a casting time of one action)
25	Suffering continuous damage (for example, casting spells when you are on fire) Grappling or pinned during spellcasting*

*The only spells that could be cast under such conditions are those without somatic components whose material components are in hand.

CRAFT (INT)

You are trained in an art, trade, or craft. Craft is actually a number of separate skills, each with its own specialization. You can have several Craft skills, each with its own ranks. Each one is purchased as a separate skill.

The Gamemaster can create additional Craft skills for her campaign. The most common specialties are listed here, along with some examples of when you might use them.

- Carpentry (woodwork)
- Chemistry (analysis, forensics, mortuary science)
- Clockwork (gears, watches, timers)
- Electronics (computers, surveillance “bugs”)
- Gunsmith (repairing and modifying firearms)
- Photography (digital, video)
- Sculpting (pottery, ceramics)
- Songwriting (melody, lyrics, ballads)
- Writing (fiction, nonfiction, journalism, poetry)

Item	DC
Very simple item (ashtray)	5
Typical item (iron pot)	10
High-quality item (crystal vase)	15
Complex or superior item (timepiece)	20
Very complex item (clockwork orrery)	25

Check: You know how to use the tools of your trade, how to perform the craft’s daily tasks, and how to handle common problems. These uses do not require checks.

The basic function of the Craft skill allows you to make an item of the appropriate type. The DC depends on the difficulty of the item created. The time required varies greatly depending on the task and is determined by the Gamemaster.

In addition, you can recognize skilled work from shoddy work in your own field. On a successful skill check (DC 10), you can guess the approximate ranks of the person who created the item: 0–5 (amateur), 6–10 (journeyman), 11–15 (skilled), 16–20 (masterful), 21+ (brilliant).

Most crafts require appropriate tools to give the best chance of success. If improvised tools must be used instead, the check is made with a –2 circumstance penalty.

Retry: Yes. However, if multiple rolls are necessary, and the character misses a Craft check by more than 5, the raw materials are ruined, and he must start work all over again.

Special: Craft (chemistry) can be substituted for Knowledge (chemistry). Craft (electronics) can be substituted for Knowledge (electronics).

At the Gamemaster’s discretion, some specializations of this skill may be usable untrained. For instance, the GM may decide that anyone can write a poem, craft a melody, or take a photograph. With these specialties, an untrained Craft skill is an Intelligence check; artists and craftsmen add their Craft bonus for that specialty because of years of experience.

If a character isn’t completely building something from scratch, the Gamemaster may allow a general Repair check instead of a specific Craft check.

CTHULHU MYTHOS (NONE)

You know things that Should Not Be Known. You have had horrible supernatural experiences and read forbidden tomes, learning truly dark secrets that have challenged everything you thought you knew. Since these revelations defy logic or commonly accepted fact, it does not matter how intelligent or wise you are when using this skill—only how much exposure to the Cthulhu Mythos itself you have experienced.

Check: You can recall or access knowledge pertaining to the Cthulhu Mythos, particularly details about monsters, deities, spells, or rites pertaining

directly to them or the effects they have had on history. You may have insights or speculations about phenomena you are experiencing for the first time.

Special: You cannot gain ranks in this skill through spending skill points. You may only gain ranks through reading Mythos tomes or through experiences with the Mythos itself. Each rank you add to this skill permanently reduces your maximum Sanity by 1 point. The more you know about the horrible truths underlying reality, the less capable you are of leading a normal life.

You cannot take Cthulhu Mythos during character creation, nor can you declare it as a core skill. However, there is no maximum rank; your level does not limit the number of ranks in Cthulhu Mythos you can acquire.

DEMOLITIONS (INT; TRAINED ONLY)

Sometimes an adventure requires the efficacious application of dynamite. Use this skill to create, set, and disarm explosive devices.

Check: Lighting a stick of dynamite does not require a check, but almost every more complicated task involving the use of explosives does.

Set Explosive Device: While just about anyone can push a detonator, it takes skill to put an explosive in the optimum location for maximum blast efficiency. A failed skill check indicates that the explosion was poorly placed; targets gain a +4 circumstance bonus on their Reflex saving throws to avoid damage.

Disarm Explosive: Disarming a manufactured explosive is a dangerous task. If the character has the explosive’s schematics available, add a +5 bonus to the skill check. If the character is rushed, add +5 to the DC. Failure usually indicates the explosive detonates immediately.

Build Explosive from Scratch: Creating a scratch-built explosive device is usually the work of terrorists, violent anarchists, or desperate investigators. The given DC assumes that useful materials are readily available; if not, add +5 (or more) to the DC. On a failed check, the device is ruined and the materials are wasted. A check that fails by 10 or more means the explosive detonates during construction, dealing 20% to 50% ($[1d4+1] \times 10\%$) of its intended damage to the person building it.

Disarm Scratch-Built Explosive: Disarming an explosive device built from scratch is an opposed skill check. The disarming character’s skill check is opposed by the Demolitions check result achieved during the device’s construction. If the disarming character equals or exceeds the builder’s check result, the device is disarmed. Otherwise, it detonates immediately.

DIPLOMACY (CHA)

Use this skill to persuade the county clerk to let you see the property records of that strange old house, negotiate a deal between corporations, or convince the evil cultists who have captured you that they should ransom you back to your family instead of sacrificing you to Tsathoggua.

Diplomacy includes etiquette, social grace, tact, subtlety, and a way with words. A skilled character knows formal and informal rules of conduct, social expectations, proper forms of address, and so on. This skill represents the ability to give others the right impression, negotiate effectively, and influence others.

Check: You can change others' attitudes with a successful check (see NPC Attitudes, page 225). In negotiations, participants roll opposed Diplomacy checks to see who gains the advantage. Opposed checks also resolve cases when two advocates or diplomats plead opposite cases in a hearing before a third party.

Diplomacy only works when someone is willing to listen to you and can understand the language you're speaking. To make a more immediate impression, try Intimidate.

Retry: Generally, retries do not work. Even if the initial check succeeds, the other character can be persuaded only so far, and a retry may do more harm than good. If the initial check fails, the other character has probably become more firmly committed to her position, making a retry futile.

Special: Charisma checks to influence NPCs are generally untrained Diplomacy checks.

DISABLE DEVICE (INT; TRAINED ONLY)

Use this skill to disarm a trap, jam a lock (open or closed), or rig a car's brakes to give out. You can examine a fairly simple or fairly small mechanical device and disable it. The effort requires at least a simple tool of the appropriate sort (a pick, crowbar, saw, file, and so on). Attempting a Disable Device check with makeshift tools carries a -2 circumstance penalty.

Check: The Gamemaster makes the Disable Device check so that you don't necessarily know whether you have succeeded. The amount of time needed to make a check and the DC for the check depend on how tricky the device or task is (see the table). Disabling a simple device takes 1 round (and is a full-round action). Intricate or complex devices require 2d4 rounds. You also can rig fairly simple devices such as car brakes or a steering wheel to work normally for a while and then fail or fall off some time later (usually after 1d4 rounds or minutes of use).

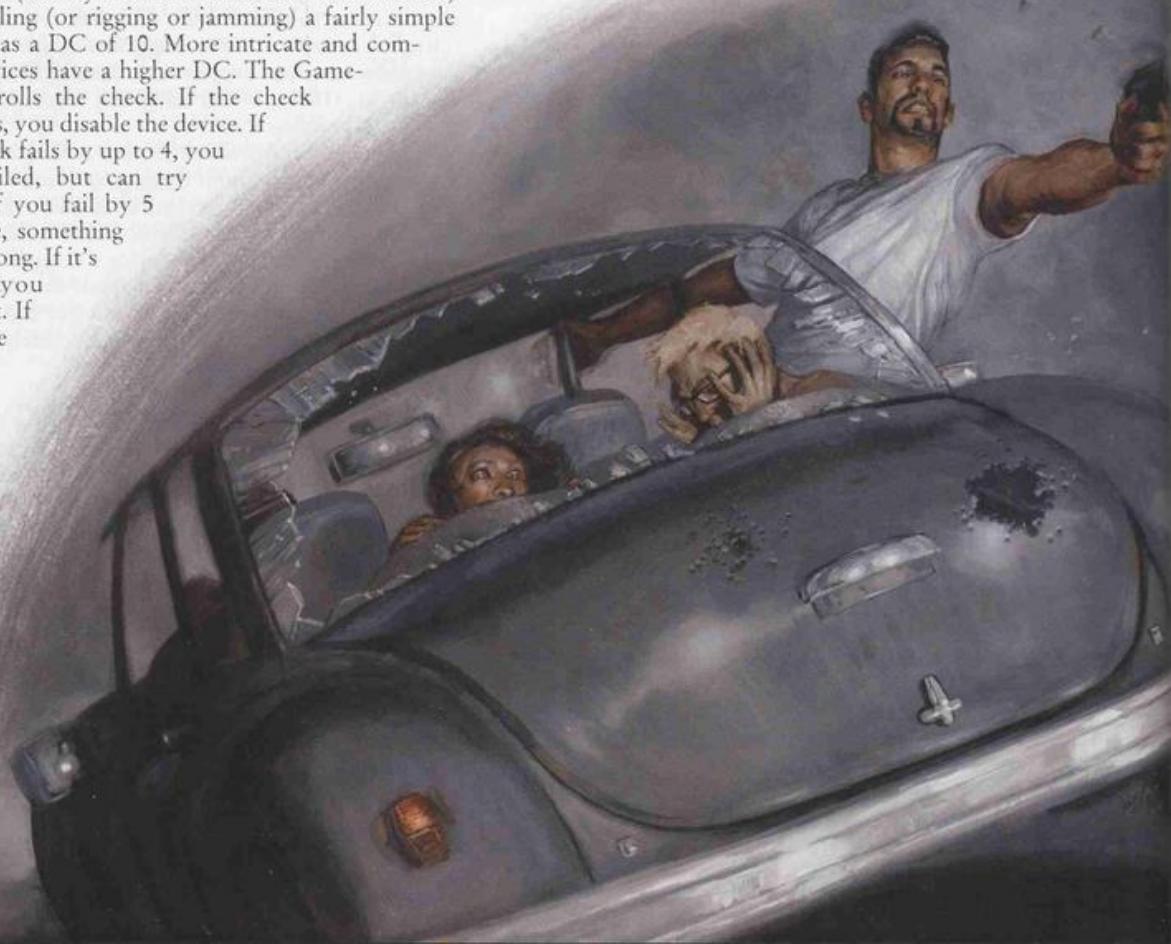
Disabling (or rigging or jamming) a fairly simple device has a DC of 10. More intricate and complex devices have a higher DC. The Game-master rolls the check. If the check succeeds, you disable the device. If the check fails by up to 4, you have failed, but can try again. If you fail by 5 or more, something goes wrong. If it's a trap, you spring it. If it's some

Device	Time	DC*	Example
Simple	1 full round	10	Jam a lock
Tricky	1d4 rounds	15	Sabotage a car wheel
Difficult	2d4 rounds	20	Disarm or reset a trap
Wicked	2d4 rounds	25	Disarm a complex trap or cleverly sabotage a mechanical device (such as a car)

*If the character attempts to leave behind no trace of the tampering, add +5 to the DC.

DISGUISE (CHA)

Use this skill to change your appearance or someone else's. The effort requires at least a few props, some makeup, and 1d3+10 minutes of work. The use of a disguise kit provides a +2 circumstance bonus on the Disguise check. A disguise can include an apparent change of height or weight of no more than one-tenth from the original. Besides just changing how you look, you can also impersonate specific people or types of people.



sort of sabotage, you think the device is disabled, but it still works normally.

Retry: Yes, assuming the device was not a trap that you have already inadvertently set off. You must be aware that you have failed before you can try again.

Disguise	Modifier
Minor details only	+5
Disguised as different sex	-2
Disguised as different race	-2
Disguised as different age category	-2*
*This modifier applies per step of difference between your actual age category and the disguised age category (adult, middle-aged, old, and venerable).	

If you are impersonating a particular individual, those who know what that person looks like are automatically considered to be suspicious of you, so opposed checks are always invoked, and such people get a bonus on their Spot checks.

Familiarity	Bonus
Recognizes on sight	+4
Friend or associate	+6
Close friend	+8
Intimate	+10

Check: Your Disguise check result determines how good the disguise is. The Gamemaster makes your Disguise check secretly so that you're not sure how good it is. It's opposed by others' Spot checks. You can only make one Disguise check, even if several observers make individual Spot checks.

If you don't draw any attention to yourself, however, others do not get to make Spot checks. If you come to the attention of people who are suspicious (such as an alert security guard who's watching people entering and exiting an office building), the Gamemaster can assume that those observers are taking 10 on their Spot checks.

The effectiveness of your disguise depends in part on how much you're attempting to change your appearance.

Usually, an individual makes a check for detection immediately upon meeting you and each hour thereafter you remain in contact. If you casually meet many different people, each for a short time, check once per hour using an average Spot bonus for the group. For example, if a character is trying to pass as a clerk in a store, the Gamemaster can make one Spot check per hour

for the people she encounters, with a +1 bonus on the check to represent the average of the customers (that is, most people with no Spot ranks and a few with good Spot skills).

Retry: A character may try to redo a failed disguise, but once others know that a disguise was attempted they'll be more suspicious, gaining a +2 circumstance bonus on opposed checks against further attempts for the remainder of that day.

DRIVE (DEX)

Use this skill to drive a car, avoid collisions, or lose someone chasing or tailing you while you're in a car.

Check: Driving a car is a move action. Simple tasks, such as driving to the library, do not necessitate a check. Make a check only when some unusual circumstance exists (such as an icy road, someone chasing or shooting at you, or a byakhee on the roof). Some sample DCs are listed below.

Retry: You can make another attempt after a failed check to lose a tail. Otherwise, most driving checks have consequences that suggest a retry is impossible (such as a spinout or crash).

Special: Drive is a rare skill in the 1890s, but common by the 1920s, having largely replaced Ride as a means of transport.

Maneuver	DC
Forty-five degree turn	10
Ninety degree turn	12
Bootlegger reverse (180 degree turn)	25
Keeping to a narrow track	15
Avoiding a moving obstacle	20
Modifiers to DC:	
Dirt or gravel road	+2
Wet surface	+4
Oily surface	+6
Icy surface	+8
Recovering from a collision	+10
Vision reduced (rain or snow)	+2 to +4
Vision obscured (fog, duststorm, downpour)	up to +10
Moving between 20 and 30 mph	+2*
Moving between 31 and 40 mph	+4*
Moving between 41 and 50 mph	+6*
Moving between 51 and 60 mph	+8*
Moving over 60 mph	+2

for each 10 mph*

*The loss of a windshield doubles these penalties.

CARS AND OTHER VEHICLES

People in cars have three-quarters cover (one-half cover for convertibles). A typical modern car body has 10 hit points and a hardness of 6 (fiberglass). An older (steel-bodied) car has 20 hit points and a hardness of 10. The car as a whole has 60 hit points and an Armor Class of 14. A large truck (a semi tractor and trailer) has 200 hit points and an Armor Class of 16.

A car has a move of 10 for every mph of speed it is traveling. For every 10 mph over 20 mph, add +1 to its Armor Class (+1 at 30 mph, +2 at 40 mph, +3 at 50 mph, and so forth).

Tires are the most vulnerable part of the machine. A modern car or motorcycle tire has 2 hit points, an Armor Class of 12, and a hardness of 2 (for every 10 mph over 20 mph the vehicle moves, add +1 to its Armor Class). Older rubber tires have 1 hit point and a hardness of 0.

If a car strikes anything, it deals 1d6 points of damage

per 10 mph it was traveling over 10 (1d6 at 20 mph, 2d6 at 30 mph, 3d6 at 40 mph, and so forth). The car itself (and any occupants) takes half damage.

Reverse this effect if the object the car strikes is significantly larger than the car itself (for example, a car running into a brick wall would take full damage itself and deal half damage to the wall). If the two objects are roughly the same size, both take full damage. If two objects of roughly the same weight or mass run into each other head-on, the speeds should be added together. By contrast, if one car rams another going in the same direction, the speed of the slower car should be subtracted from that of the faster car.

Thus, a car going 100 mph that runs down a deep one deals 9d6 points of damage on the unfortunate deep one and 4d6 upon itself. If the same car rammed a Dark Young, the car and its occupants would take the 9d6 points of damage and the Dark Young 4d6.

ESCAPE ARTIST (DEX; ARMOR CHECK PENALTY)

Use this skill to slip bonds or manacles, wriggle through tight spaces, or escape the grip of a monster holding you.

Restraint	DC
Ropes	Opponent's Use Rope check +10
Net	20
Handcuffs	30
Tight space	30
Grappler	Opponent's grapple check

tight space takes at least 1 minute, maybe longer, depending on how long the space is.

Ropes: Your Escape Artist check is opposed by the binder's Use Rope check. Since it's easier to tie someone up than to escape from being tied up, the binder gets a +10 circumstance bonus on that check.

Net: Escaping from a net is a full-round action.

Handcuffs: Handcuffs, shackles, and other manacles have a DC set by their construction.

Tight Space: This is the DC for getting through a space where one's head fits but one's shoulders don't. If the space is long, as in a chimney, the GM may call for multiple checks. You can't fit through a space that your head does not fit through.

Grappler: You can make an Escape Artist check opposed by your enemy's grapple check to get out of a grapple or out of being pinned (so that you're just being grappled). Doing so is a move action, so if you escape the grapple, you can take another action in the same round (see Wriggle Free, page 80).

Retry: Given time, you can make another check after a failed check, even if you're squeezing your way through a tight space. If the situation permits, you can make additional checks or even take 20 as long as you're not being actively opposed.

FORGERY (INT)

Use this skill to fake an ID, sign someone else's signature on a check, try to produce a duplicate of a rare tome, or detect forgeries that others try to pass off.

Check: Forgery requires writing materials (paper, parchment, vellum, inks, nibs, and so on) appropriate to the document being forged, enough light to write by, wax for seals (if appropriate), and time. Forging a very short and simple document takes about 1 minute. Longer or more complex documents take 1d4 minutes per page. To forge a document on which the handwriting is not specific to a person (military orders, a business ledger, or the like), the character needs only to have seen a similar document before and gains a +8 bonus on the roll. To forge a signature, an autograph of that person to copy is needed, and the character gains a +4 bonus on the roll. To forge a longer document written in the hand of a particular person, a large sample of that person's handwriting is needed.

As with Disguise, you don't even need to make a check until someone examines the work. Your Forgery check is opposed by the Forgery check of the

Condition	Check Modifier
Type of document unknown to reader	-2
Type of document somewhat known to reader	+0
Type of document well known to reader	+2
Handwriting not known to reader	-2
Handwriting somewhat known to reader	+0
Handwriting intimately known to reader	+2
Reader only casually reviews the document	-2

Check: Making a check to escape from being bound up by ropes, manacles, or other restraints (other than a grappler) requires 1 minute of work.

Squeezing through a

person who examines the document to check its authenticity. The reader gains bonuses or penalties to her check as described in the table below.

As with Bluff, a document that requires risk on the part of the person checking the document, or one that contradicts standard procedure, existing orders, or previous knowledge can increase that character's suspicion (and thus create favorable circumstances for an opposed Forgery check).

Retry: Usually, no. A retry is never possible after a particular reader detects a particular forgery, but the document created by the forger might still fool someone else. No reader can attempt to detect a particular forgery more than once—if that one opposed check goes in favor of the forger, then the reader can't try using her own skill again, even if she's suspicious about the document. However, every time a new reader examines the document, he gets to make a Forgery check.

Special: To forge documents and detect forgeries, one must be able to read and write the language in question. Hence, this skill is language-dependent.

GATHER INFORMATION (CHA)

Use this skill for making contacts in an area, finding out local gossip, rumormongering, and collecting general information.

Check: By succeeding at a skill check, taking a few hours, and spending a little money (on drinks and such), you can get a general idea of local events. This assumes there are no obvious reasons why the information would be withheld. The higher the check result, the better the information.

If you want to find out about a specific rumor ("Which way to the Esoteric Order of Dagon?"), ask about specific item ("What can you tell me about *Unnamed Cults*?"), obtain a map, or something else along those lines, the DC varies from 15 to 25 or higher. If the information you're seeking is simply not known to the people you're asking, even a successful check elicits only negative information ("Never heard of the place.").

Retry: Yes, but it takes a few hours for each check, and characters may draw attention to themselves if they repeatedly pursue a certain type of information.

HANDLE ANIMAL (CHA; TRAINED ONLY)

Use this skill to drive a team of horses pulling a carriage through the streets of Victorian London, teach a dog to stand guard, or even raise a wolf as a devoted pet.

Check: The time required to get an effect and the DC depend on what you are trying to do. See the table on the following page.

Time: For a task with a specific time frame, you must spend half this time (at the rate of 3 hours per day per animal being handled) working toward completion of the task before you make the skill check. If the check fails, you can't teach, rear, or train that animal. If the check succeeds, you must invest the remainder of the time before the teaching, rearing, or training is complete. If the time is interrupted or the task is not followed through to completion, any further attempts to teach, rear, or train that same animal automatically fail.

does stop losing them. Attempting first aid is a move action (see Injury and Death, page 68).

Immediate Psychological Aid:

When someone suffers a temporary episode of insanity, you can attempt a Heal check to bring her out of it—calming her terror, snapping her out of her stupor, or whatever else is needed to restore the person to the state she was in before the temporary insanity. This is a full-round action; attempting this untrained is a Wisdom check.

Long-Term Physical Care: Providing long-term care allows you to treat a wounded person for a day or more. If successful, you let the patient recover hit points or ability score points (lost to temporary damage) at twice the normal rate. If the patient is performing only light activity, long-term care recovers 2 hit points per level and 1 ability score point per day. If the patient is getting complete rest (see Healing, page 69), he recovers 4 hit points per level and 2 ability score points for each day. You can tend up to six patients at a time. You need a few supplies (bandages, antiseptics, and so on) that are easy to come by in civilized regions but may be hard to come by in remote or isolated spots.

Giving long-term care counts as light activity for the healer. You cannot give long-term care to yourself.

A first aid kit (see the Equipment chapter) gives a +2 circumstance bonus on Heal checks.

Treat Poison: By treating poison, you can tend a single character who has been poisoned and who is going to take more damage from the poison (or suffer some other effect). Every time the poisoned character makes a saving throw against the poison, you make a Heal check. The poisoned character uses your result in place of her saving throw if your Heal result is higher.

Treat Disease: Treating a disease involves tending to a diseased character. Every time the diseased character makes a saving throw against disease effects, you can make a Heal check. The diseased character uses your result in place of his saving throw if your Heal check is higher.

HIDE (DEX; ARMOR CHECK PENALTY)

Use this skill to sink into the shadows and proceed unseen, approach a cove filled with deep ones under the cover of brush, or follow someone through a busy street without being noticed.

Check: Your Hide check is opposed by the Spot check of anyone who might see you. You can move up to one-half your normal speed and hide at no penalty. Moving more than one-half your full speed incurs a -5 penalty. It's practically impossible (a -20 penalty) to hide while running or charging.

For example, Marie has a speed of 30 feet. If she doesn't want to take a penalty on her Hide check, she can move only 15 feet as a move action (and thus 30 feet in a round on a double move).

Bigger and smaller creatures get size bonuses and penalties on Hide checks: Fine +16, Diminutive +12, Tiny +8, Small +4, Large -4, Huge -8, Gargantuan -12, Colossal -16.

If people are observing you, even casually, you can't hide. You can run around a corner or something so that you're out of sight and then hide,

Handle a Domestic Animal: A character with this skill can command a trained dog, drive beasts of burden, tend to tired horses, and so forth.

"Push" a Domestic Animal: An animal handler who "pushes" a domestic animal can get more work out of it than it usually gives, such as commanding a poorly trained dog or driving draft animals for extra effort.

Teach an Animal Tasks: This is similar to teaching a domestic animal some tricks. Each time you acquire a rank in this skill, you choose one type of animal you can train to obey commands and perform simple tricks. Animals commonly trained include dogs, horses, mules, oxen, falcons, and pigeons. You can work with up to three animals at one time, and you can teach them general tasks, such as guarding, attacking, carrying riders, carrying packets, hunting and tracking, and performing heavy labor. An animal can only be trained for one general purpose.

Teach an Animal Unusual Tasks: You can use this aspect of Handle Animal to train an animal to perform specialized tricks, such as teaching a horse to rear on command or come when you whistled for it, or teaching a falcon to pluck objects from someone's grasp.

Rear a Wild Animal: An animal handler might specialize in rearing wild or deadly animals. This involves raising the wild creature from infancy so that it is domesticated. A handler can rear up to three creatures of the same type at once. A successfully domesticated wild animal can be taught tricks at the same time that it's being raised, or it can be trained later. In either case it responds to the trainer's commands and no one else's. The creature is still wild, though usually controllable.

Task	Time	DC
Handle a domestic animal	Varies	10
"Push" a domestic animal	Varies	15
Teach an animal tasks	2 months	15
Teach an animal unusual tasks	2 months	20
Rear a wild animal	1 year	15 + HD of animal
Train a wild animal	2 months	20 + HD of animal

Retry: For handling and pushing domestic animals, yes. For training and rearing, no.

Synergy: A character with 5 or more ranks in Handle Animal receives a +2 synergy bonus on Ride checks.

Special: An untrained character can use a Charisma check to handle and push animals.

HEAL (WIS)

Use this skill to keep a badly wounded friend from dying, help her recover faster from her wounds, keep her from succumbing to snakebite, snap her out of a temporary episode of insanity, or treat a disease.

Check: The DC and effect depend on the task you attempt.

First Aid: First aid usually means saving a dying character. If a character has negative hit points and is losing hit points (1 per round, 1 per hour, 1 per day, or whatever), you can stabilize her. The character regains no hit points, but she

Task	DC
First aid	15
Immediate psychological aid	15
Long-term physical care	15
Treat poison	Poison's DC
Treat disease	Disease's DC

but others then know at least where you went. If your observers are momentarily distracted, you can attempt to hide.

Creating a Diversion to Hide: You can use the Bluff skill to help you hide. A successful Bluff check gives you the momentary diversion you need to attempt a Hide check while people are aware of you. When the others briefly turn their attention from you, you can attempt a Hide check if you can get to a hiding place of some kind (as a general guideline, the hiding place has to be within 1 foot of you per rank you have in Hide). This check, however, is at -10 because you have to move quickly.

INNUENDO (WIS)

You know how to send and understand secret messages while appearing to be speaking about other things. Two investigators, for example, might seem to be talking about a trip to the supermarket when they're really planning how to break into the library's restricted holdings.

Check: You can get a message across to another character or understand one someone is trying to send you. The DC for a basic message is 10. The DC is 15 or 20 for complex messages, especially those that rely on getting across new information. You can also try to discern the hidden message in an overheard conversation between two other characters who are using this skill. In this case, the DC is the skill check result of the character sending the message, but you gain no circumstance bonuses from the sender's ranks. For each piece of information that the eavesdropper is missing, that character suffers a -2 penalty on the check. For example, if your character eavesdrops on people planning to assassinate a visiting politician, you suffer a -2 penalty if you don't know about the politician. Whether trying to send or intercept a message, a failure by 5 or more points means that some false information has been implied or inferred.

Retry: Generally, retries are allowed when trying to send a message, but not when receiving or intercepting one. Each retry carries the chance of miscommunication.

INTIMIDATE (CHA)

Use this skill to force a hostile person to back down, threaten someone to reveal information, or extract a confession. Intimidation includes verbal threats and body language.

Check: You can change one person's behavior with a successful check against a DC of (15 + the character's level). This only works on NPCs, however, not player characters or creatures. Unlike Diplomacy, Intimidate can work even if the person you're trying to affect is unwilling to listen to you.

Circumstance modifiers apply as the Game-master sees fit. The situational nature of Intimidate is its chief advantage over Diplomacy—it's hard to become more diplomatic by sticking a gun in someone's face.

Retry: Generally, retries do not work. Even if the initial check succeeds, the target can only be intimidated so far, and a retry doesn't help. If the initial check fails, the target becomes more firmly resolved to resist the intimidator, and a retry is futile.

Synergy: A character with 5 or more ranks in Bluff, receives a +2 synergy bonus on Intimidate checks.

JUMP

(STR; ARMOR CHECK PENALTY)

Use this skill to vault low fences, leap over sacrificial pits, or reach a tree's lowest branches.

Check: You can jump a minimum distance (based on the type of jump) plus an additional distance depending on the amount by which your Jump check result exceeds 10. The maximum distance of any jump is a function of your height.

The distances given on the table below are for characters with a base speed of 30 feet. If you have a lower speed (from weight carried, for instance), reduce the distance jumped proportionally. If you have a higher speed, increase the distance jumped proportionally, but not the maximum distance.

For example, Claire has a Jump skill modifier of +12 at 7th level (10 ranks, +2 Strength bonus) and a base speed of 30 feet. While chasing a shadowy figure, she recklessly attempts a running jump from one rooftop to another. She needs to leap over a 10-foot-wide alleyway to keep going. Her player rolls a 6, for a result of 18. That's 8 over 10, so she clears 8 feet more than the minimum distance, or 13 feet. However, Claire is only 5 feet 8 inches (round down to 5 feet), so she can't jump farther than 11 feet (the maximum distance is her height + 6 feet). She clears the 10-foot alleyway, lands on the other side, and keeps running.

Distance moved by jumping is counted against maximum movement in a round normally. For example, Claire could run 20 feet toward the chasm, leap 10 feet over it, and land next to a cultist. She could then attack, since she can normally move 30 feet and make an attack in the same round.

If you intentionally jump down from a height, you might take less damage than if you just fell. If you succeed at a Jump check (DC 15), you take damage as if you had fallen 10 feet less than you actually did.

Type of Jump	Minimum Distance	Additional Distance	Maximum Distance
Running jump*	5 ft.	+1 ft./1 point above 10	Height + 6 ft.
Standing jump	3 ft.	+1 ft./2 points above 10	Height + 2 ft.
Running high jump*	2 ft.	+1 ft./4 points above 10	Height + 1 1/2 ft.
Standing high jump	2 ft.	+1 ft./8 points above 10	Height
Jump back	1 ft.	+1 ft./8 points above 10	Height

*You must move 20 feet before jumping.

KNOWLEDGE (INT; TRAINED ONLY)

Like the Craft skill, Knowledge actually encompasses a number of specialties; each specialty is a separate skill. Knowledge represents a study of some body of lore, possibly an academic or even scientific discipline. The twenty-three standard fields of study for *Call of Cthulhu* are listed below.

Special: When several characters are listening to the same sound, the Game-master can make a single 1d20 roll and use it for all the listeners' skill checks.

- Accounting
- Anthropology
- Archaeology
- Architecture
- Art (painting, literature, music)
- Astronomy
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Electronics
- Engineering (buildings, bridges)
- Geography (lands, terrain, climate, people, customs)
- Geology (earth science, seismology, volcanism)
- History (royalty, wars, migrations, founding of cities)
- Law (criminal, civil, contract)
- Local* (legends, personalities, inhabitants, laws, traditions)
- Mathematics (theory, geometry)
- Medicine (performing diagnosis, prescribing medication)
- Meteorology (seasons and cycles, weather)
- Occult (ancient mysteries, magic traditions, arcane symbols, cryptozoology)
- Philosophy (philosophers, philosophies)
- Physics
- Psychology (human nature, psychoses, dreams)
- Religion (dogma, ecclesiastic tradition, holy symbols)
- Streetwise (basic criminology, street life)
- * Choose any one city for Knowledge (local).

With your Gamemaster's approval, you can invent new areas of knowledge; however, most situations that come up during a game are variations on the specialties listed here.

Check: Answering a question within your field of study has a DC of 10 (for easy questions), 15 (for standard questions), or 20 to 30 (for really tough questions).

Retry: No. The check represents what you know, and thinking about a topic a second time doesn't let you know something you never learned in the first place.

Synergy: A character with 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (medicine) receives a +2 synergy bonus on Heal checks.

A character with 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (psychology) receives a +2 synergy bonus on Psychoanalysis checks.

Special: Knowledge (chemistry) can be substituted for Craft (chemistry). Knowledge (electronics) can substitute for Craft (electronics).

LISSEN (WIS)

Use this skill to hear approaching enemies, detect someone sneaking up on you from behind, or eavesdrop on someone else's conversation.

Check: Make a Listen check against a DC that reflects how quiet the noise is that you might hear (see the table). The Gamemaster may choose to make the Listen check secretly so you don't know whether you failed to hear something or there was nothing to hear.

In the case of beings trying to be quiet, the listed DCs could be replaced by Move Silently checks, in which case the listed DC would be the average result (or close to it). For instance, the 19 listed for a cat stalking means that an average cat has Move Silently +9. (Assuming an average roll of 10 on 1d20, the skill check result would be 19.)

Retry: You can make a Listen check as a free action every time you have a chance to hear something in a reactive manner. As a full-round action, you may try to hear something you failed to hear previously (assuming the noise is continuous).

DC	Sound
0	People talking
10	A person walking at a slow pace (15 ft./round) trying to be quiet
19	A cat stalking; An owl gliding in for a kill
+1	Per 10 ft. from the listener
+5	Through a door
+15	Through a stone wall

MOVE SILENTLY (DEX; ARMOR CHECK PENALTY)

You can use this skill to sneak up behind an enemy or slink away without being noticed.

Check: Your Move Silently check is opposed by the Listen check of anyone who might hear you. You can move up to one-half your normal speed at no penalty. At more than one-half speed, you suffer a -5 penalty. It's practically impossible (a -20 penalty) to move silently while running or charging.

Special: Following someone on foot without being noticed uses the Hide skill. Tailing someone in a car without being noticed uses the Drive skill. Sneaking up on someone without being heard uses the Move Silently skill.

OPEN LOCK (DEX; TRAINED ONLY)

You can pick padlocks, finesse combination locks, and disarm electronic locks. The effort requires at least a simple tool of the appropriate sort (a pick, pry-bar, skeleton key, wire, and so on). Attempting an Open Lock check without the proper tool carries a -2 circumstance penalty and is impossible without at least an impromptu tool.

Lock	DC
Very simple lock	20
Average lock	25
Good lock	30
Amazing lock	40

Check: Opening a lock entails 1 round of work and a successful check; this is a full-round action.

Retry: Yes.

Special: Untrained characters cannot pick locks, but they might successfully force them open (see Breaking Items, page 77).

OPERATE HEAVY MACHINERY (DEX, TRAINED ONLY)

Use this skill to operate a crane, a forklift, a bulldozer, a tractor, an industrial sheet-cutter, or similar large machine.

Check: Make a check when there is some unusual circumstance, such as moving a very delicate crate full of ancient artifacts or operating a machine while people are shooting at you.

PERFORMANCE (CHA; TRAINED ONLY)

You are skilled in some form of artistic expression, and you know how to put on a show. Like the Craft and Knowledge skills, Performance actu-

Check

Result	Performance
10	Routine performance
15	Enjoyable performance
20	Great performance
25	Memorable performance
30	Extraordinary performance

skill (piano, guitar, saxophone, and so on). Gamemasters may allow additional specializations.

Check: You can impress audiences with your talent and skill.

Retry: Retries are allowed, but they don't negate previous failures, and an audience that has been unimpressed in the past is going to be prejudiced against future performances. Increase the DC by 2 for each previous failure.

Special: At the Gamemaster's discretion, some specializations of this skill may be usable untrained. For instance, the GM may decide that anyone can sing a song or tell a story. In such cases, an untrained Performance skill is a Charisma check; professional performers add their Performance modifier for that specialty because of years of experience.

At the GM's discretion, if you have skill with a particular musical instrument (for instance, piano), you might be able to play a similar instrument (a harpsichord) at a -2 penalty, or a more complex or different instrument (a full pipe organ) at a -5 penalty.

PILOT (DEX; TRAINED ONLY)

Like the Craft skill, Pilot actually encompasses a number of related but distinct skills. Use this skill to pilot a plane, a hot air balloon, a sailing ship, or a space shuttle. Vehicles available to pilots vary according to era. Possible types of the pilot skill are listed below.

- Small aircraft
- Hot air balloon
- Hang glider
- Helicopter
- Motorboat
- Large/jet aircraft
- Dirigible
- Cable car
- Sailboat/sailing ship

Check: Simply taxiing on a runaway does not require a check. Make a check only when there is some unusual circumstance (such as when there's a powerful storm, someone is shooting at you, something is chasing you, or there's a hunting horror tearing at the aircraft's fuselage).

Special: It's not possible to pilot a complicated machine without at least basic instruction (1 rank). In desperate situations, or with very simple vehicles (for example, motorboats), a generous Gamemaster may allow an untrained Pilot check to avoid immediate disaster for easy tasks.

PSYCHIC FOCUS

(WIS; TRAINED ONLY)

Use this skill to focus your willpower to perform amazing psychic feats. This skill is only useful to characters with specific psychic feats (see Psychic Feats, page 43). If a power is sensory (or extrasensory), the GM may roll for you

ally encompasses a number of specialties; each specialty is a separate skill.

Possible specializations for Performance include singing, dancing, acting, stage magic, storytelling, and performance art. Performance is also used for musical instruments, but each instrument must be bought as a separate

secretly so that you don't know whether you succeeded.

Retry: Yes, but each try has a cost involved that depends on the feat.

Special: You can only take this skill if your Gamemaster is using psychic feats as part of the campaign.

PSYCHOANALYSIS

(WIS; TRAINED ONLY)

Use this skill to help another person after a bad fright or a terrible shock.

Check: The DC and effect depend on the task you attempt.

Immediate Care: When someone suffers an episode of temporary insanity, you can bring him out of it—calming his terror, snapping him out of his stupor, or whatever else is needed to restore the person to the state he was in before the temporary insanity. This is a full-round action.

Long-Term Care: Providing long-term care means treating a mentally disturbed person for a day or more. This requires you to spend 1d4 hours per day doing nothing but talking to the patient. If successful, the patient recovers Sanity points at a rate of

Task	DC
Immediate care	15
Long-term care	20

1 point per week. You can tend up to six patients at a time; each extra patient beyond the first adds 1 hour to the total time devoted to therapy. You need a place to talk quietly, away from stress and distractions. The check must be made each day for each patient. A roll of 1 on the Psychoanalysis check indicates that the patient loses a point of Sanity that day, as she regresses mentally due to horrors suddenly remembered.

You cannot give long-term care to yourself.

Untrained Use: A character may substitute the Heal skill for Psychoanalysis when attempting immediate care; if he does not have the Heal skill, he can attempt it as an untrained Wisdom check. It is not possible to give effective long-term care untrained, but it is possible to calm a panic attack, help someone "snap out of it" during an episode, or help a person briefly repress a phobia.

Special: As a variant rule, a roll of 1 on an untrained Psychoanalysis check means you have blundered, doubling the Sanity loss for the unfortunate patient. If increasing the Sanity loss is inappropriate, the Gamemaster should increase the severity of the temporary insanity in whatever way she thinks appropriate—the acquisition of a permanent phobia, the deepening of a condition that already exists, and so on. See the Sanity chapter for possibilities.

READ LIPS (INT; TRAINED ONLY)

You can understand what others are saying by watching their lips.

Check: You must be within 30 feet of the speaker and be able to see her speak. You must be able to understand the speaker's language. The base DC is 15; it's higher for complex speech or a heavily bearded or inarticulate speaker. You have to concentrate on reading lips for a full minute before making the skill check, and you can't perform another action during this time. You can move at one-half your speed but no faster, and you must maintain a line of sight to the lips being read. If the check succeeds, you can understand the general content of a minute's worth of speaking, but you usually still miss certain details.

RIDE (DEX)

You can ride a particular type of mount, usually a horse. When you select this skill, choose the type of mount with which you are familiar. If you use the skill with a different mount, such as a camel, your modifier is reduced by 2 (but not below 0). If you use this skill with a very different mount, such as trying to ride a shantak when you're used to riding horses, your modifier is reduced by 5 (but not below 0). For purposes of the skill, if you choose horses, that includes mules and donkeys.

Check: Typical riding actions don't require checks. You can saddle, mount, ride, and dismount without a problem. Mounting or dismounting is a move action. Some tasks require checks, as given on the table below.

Guide with Knees: You can react instantly to guide your mount with your knees so that you can use both hands in combat. Make the check at the start of your round. If you fail, you can only use one hand this round because you need to use the other to control your mount.

Stay in Saddle: You can react instantly to avoid falling when your mount rears or bolts unexpectedly or when you take damage.

Cover: You can react instantly to drop down and hang alongside your mount, using it as one-half cover (see Cover, page 72). You can't attack or cast spells while using your mount as cover. If you fail, you don't get the cover benefit.

Leap: You can get your mount to leap obstacles as part of its movement. Use your Ride skill modifier or the mount's Jump skill modifier, whichever is lower, to see how far your mount can jump. A successful Ride check (DC 15) indicates that you stay on the mount when it leaps.

Soft Fall: You react instantly to try to take no damage when you fall off a mount, such as when it throws you or is killed itself. If you fail the Ride check, you take 1d6 points of falling damage.

Control Mount in Battle: As a move action, you can attempt to control a horse (or similar mount) while in combat. If you fail, you can do nothing else that round.

Fast Mount or Dismount: You can mount or dismount as a free action. If you fail the check, mounting or dismounting is a move action. You can't attempt a fast mount or dismount unless you can perform the mount or dismount as a move action this round.

SEARCH (INT)

You can find simple traps, hidden compartments, secret passageways, and other details not readily apparent. The Spot skill lets you passively notice something nearby, such as a lurking thug. The Search skill lets you discern a small detail or irregularity through active effort.

Check: You generally must be within 10 feet of the object or surface to be searched. It takes 1 round to search a 5-foot-by-5-foot area or a similar volume of goods; doing so is a full-round action.

Special: A character who does not have the Track feat can use the Search skill to find tracks, but can only follow tracks if the DC is 10 or less (see Track, page 42).

Task	DC
Ransack a drawer full of junk to find a certain item	10
Notice a typical secret door or a trap	20
Notice a well-hidden secret door	30

If the check fails, you can't read the speaker's lips. If the check fails by 5 or more, you draw some incorrect conclusion about the speech. Typically, the Gamemaster rolls your check for you so you don't know whether you succeeded or missed by 5.

Retry: The skill can be used once per minute.

Special: Use of this skill can be extended beyond the normal 30 feet by use of binoculars, hidden cameras, or other devices that extend vision with precision.

REPAIR (INT, TRAINED ONLY)

You can repair damaged machinery or electronic devices.

Check: Most Repair checks are made to fix complex electronic or mechanical devices, such as radios, cars, or computers. The DC is set by the Gamemaster. In general, simple repairs have a DC of 10–15 and require no more than a few minutes to accomplish. More complex repair work has a DC of 20 or higher and can require an hour or more to complete.

If you don't have the proper tools for a Repair check, you suffer a -5 penalty. Also, working with alien or unfamiliar technology increases the DC by +5.

You can choose to attempt temporary or jury-rigged repairs. This reduces the DC by 5 and cuts the required time in half, but each time the equipment is used, there is a cumulative 10% chance it will break again.

Retry: No restrictions against repeated Repair checks exist. In some specific cases, the Gamemaster may decide that a failed Repair check has negative ramifications that prevent repeated checks (for example, if it shorted out some irreplaceable part of the machine).

Special: At the Gamemaster's discretion, Repair can be substituted for Disable Device, but with a +5 to the DC of the check.

RESEARCH (INT)

Use this skill for learning information from books, the Internet, or other standard sources. Research allows you to navigate a library, an office filing system, a newspaper morgue, or the World Wide Web. It does not include talking to people and asking questions—that's Gather Information.

Check: Given enough time (usually 1d4 hours) and a successful skill check, you get a general idea on just about any topic, such as the latest news in an area, the public history of a particular old building, or a few facts about a well-known individual. This assumes no obvious reasons exist why the information is unavailable (such as if it's been kept out of the papers by influential parties). The higher the check result, the better the information.

If you want to discover a specific fact ("Where has Stephen Alzis been investing his money?"), date ("When did the silver mine outside the city collapse?"), obtain a map of a specific locale, or something else along those lines, the DC is 15–25 or higher.

Retry: Yes, but it usually takes at least 1d4 hours for each check.

Special: An investigator accessing information on the Internet can use either Computer Use or Research for some checks; however, specific information may either be absent or misleading. Computer Use can't be substituted for a Research check against DC 15 or higher.

SENSE MOTIVE (WIS)

Use this skill to tell when someone is trying to mislead you. This skill represents sensitivity to body language, speech habits, and mannerisms of others.

Check: A successful opposed check allows you to counteract the Bluff skill (page 24), letting you sense that the story you're hearing may not be true. You can also use the skill to tell when something is up (something odd is going on that you were unaware of) or assess someone's trustworthiness. Trying to gain information with this skill takes at least 1 minute. You could spend a whole evening trying to get a sense of the people around you.

Task	DC
Hunch	20
Sense enchantment	25

Hunch: This use of the skill essentially means making a gut assessment of a social situation. You can get the feeling from another's behavior that something is wrong, such as when you're talking to an impostor. Alternatively, you can ascertain that someone is trustworthy. (Of course, a hunch is not usable as legal evidence.)

Sense Enchantment: You can tell that someone's behavior is being influenced by a mind-influencing effect, such as *dominate person*, even if that person isn't aware of it herself.

Retry: No, though you may make a Sense Motive check for each Bluff attempt made on you.

Synergy: A character with 5 or more ranks in Sense Motive receives a +2 synergy bonus on Diplomacy checks.

ly. Having even a single rank in a language gives the character the ability to both speak and write that language; additional ranks improve her mastery of it (greater vocabulary, lessened accent, better grasp of idiom, and so on). Common spoken languages in published scenarios have included French, German, Arabic, Spanish, and Chinese.

In general, a literate character can read and write any language she speaks and vice versa. Exceptions include certain ancient languages for which the pronunciations have been lost and modern languages that are spoken, but not written. Knowledge of the language includes knowledge of the writing system as well, whether that's Chinese kanji or Egyptian hieroglyphics.

Check: In general, Speak Other Language comes into play in three ways: reading Mythos tomes, attempting to communicate with characters who do not speak your native language, and understanding overheard conversations in another language. Unless another DC is provided, deciphering a Mythos tome requires a Speak Other Language check against DC 15.

Retry: Generally, yes. This represents asking someone to repeat a phrase more slowly and clearly, rephrasing a question, or making an educated guess at a word's meaning from context. In some cases, the task is simply beyond your grasp until you improve your knowledge of the language (for example, trying to read a DC 25 tome when you only have a single rank in that language and no Intelligence bonus).

Special: If a character attempting a Speak Other Language check is assisted by a native speaker or has access to dictionaries, phrase books, and the like, she gains a +2 circumstance bonus on her roll.

SPELLCRAFT (INT; TRAINED ONLY)

Use this skill to identify spells as they are cast or spells already in place.

Check: You can identify spells and magic effects, as long as you know how to cast them already or have deciphered them in a tome (see the table below). Because Mythos magic is unpredictable, variant versions of spells may exist; this skill helps you identify these variations. Speculating about spells you have never seen before and haven't deciphered requires the Cthulhu Mythos skill.

Retry: See the table below.

Special: Starting characters may take this skill, but until they begin learning spells and deciphering tomes, their knowledge of magic is purely academic.

DC	Task
15	Identify a spell being cast. You must be able to see or hear the spell's verbal or somatic components, and you must know the spell. No retry.
20	Identify a spell that's already in place and in effect. You must be able to see or detect its effects, and you must know the spell. No retry.
25	Decipher a written spell from a book without learning it first (figuring what it might do, and what its cost might be). Each attempt takes one day of study, and you may only make one attempt each day.
30+	Understand a strange or unique magical effect. No retry.

SPEAK OTHER LANGUAGE (INT; TRAINED ONLY)

Like Craft, the Speak Other Language skill is a group of related skills. You buy ranks in each language separately.

DC Task

- 15 Treat a fall as if it were 10 feet shorter when determining damage.
 15 Tumble up to 20 feet (as part of normal movement), even through areas adjacent to enemies.
 25 Tumble up to 20 feet (as part of normal movement), even through areas occupied by enemies (over, under, or around them).

SPOT (WIS)

Use this skill to notice a mugger lurking in the alley, a clue amid a morass of papers on a desk, or a Formless Spawn at the bottom of a dark pit.

Check: The Spot skill is primarily used to notice objects that are somehow out of place. It can also be used to detect characters or creatures that are hiding, or noticing someone in disguise. Spot can be opposed by the Hide check of a character or creature trying not to be seen or the Disguise skill of someone who doesn't want to be identified.

A Spot check is usually a reaction (see the Action Types sidebar). The Gamemaster may roll it secretly so you don't know whether you succeed at it.

Retry: You can make a Spot check every time you have the opportunity to notice something in a reactive manner. The Gamemaster may call for

Condition	Penalty	Spot checks to determine the distance at which an encounter begins. As a full-round action, you may attempt to spot something that you failed to spot previously.
Per 10 feet of distance	-1	
Spotter distracted	-5	

SWIM (STR; ARMOR CHECK PENALTY)

Using this skill, a land-based creature can swim, dive, navigate underwater obstacles, and so on.

Water	DC
Calm water	10
Rough water/moderate current	15
Stormy water/strong current	20
Each hour that you swim, make a Swim check against DC 20 or take 1d6 points of subdual damage from fatigue.	

round. If you fail, you make no progress through the water. If you fail by 5 or more, you go underwater and start to drown (see The Drowning Rule, page 85).

If you are underwater (whether drowning or swimming underwater intentionally), you suffer a cumulative -1 penalty to your Swim check for each consecutive round you have been underwater.

The DC for the Swim check depends on the water.

Special: You suffer a penalty of -1 for every 5 pounds of gear you are carrying or wearing.

TUMBLE (DEX; TRAINED ONLY; ARMOR CHECK PENALTY)

You can dive, roll, somersault, flip, and so on.

Check: You can land softly when you fall or tumble past opponents. You can also tumble to entertain an audience (as with the Performance skill).

Retry: You can try to reduce damage from a fall as an instant reaction only once per fall. You can attempt to tumble as part of movement once per round.

Synergy: A character with 5 or more ranks in Tumble receives a +2 synergy bonus on Balance and Jump checks.

Special: A character with 5 or more ranks in Tumble gains a +3 dodge bonus to Armor Class when fighting defensively (instead of a +2 dodge bonus to Armor Class; see Fight Defensively, page 66).

A character with 5 or more ranks in Tumble gains a +6 dodge bonus to Armor Class when using total defense (instead of a +4 dodge bonus to Armor Class; see Total Defense, page 68).

USE ROPE (DEX)

With this skill, you can make firm knots, undo tricky knots, and bind prisoners with ropes.

Check: Most tasks with a rope are relatively simple.

When you bind another character with a rope, any Escape Artist check that the bound character makes is opposed by your Use Rope check. You get a special +10 circumstance bonus on the check because it is easier to bind someone than to escape from being tied up. The Gamemaster determines whether your Use Rope check succeeds when you tie someone up or when someone tries to escape your knots.

DC Task

- 10 Tie a firm knot (for example, to secure a climbing rope)
 15 Tie a special knot, such as one that slips, slides slowly, or loosens with a tug
 15 Tie a rope around yourself one-handed
 15 Splice two ropes together to make a single longer rope (takes 5 minutes)

WILDERNESS LORE (WIS)

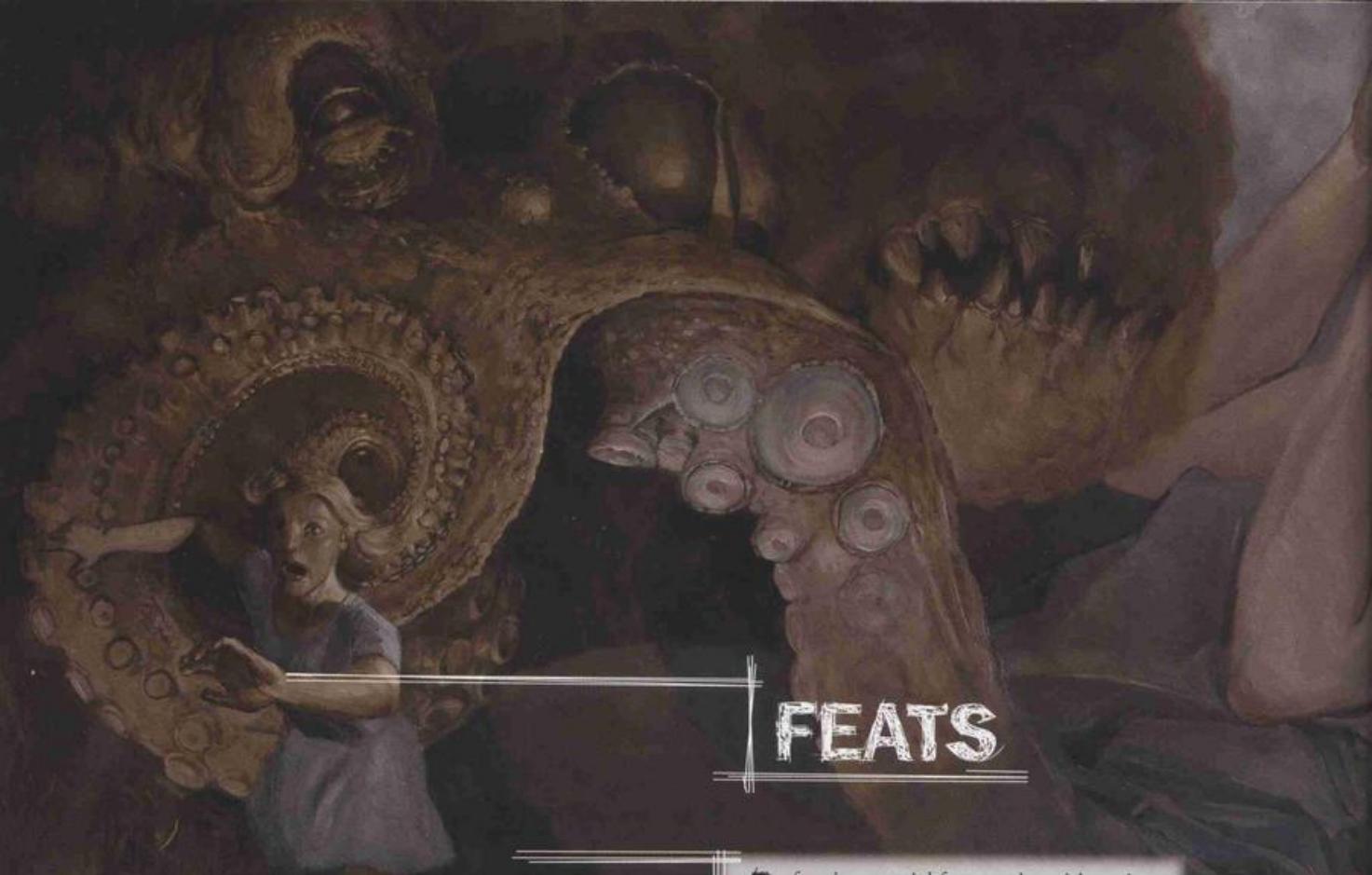
Use this skill when hunting wild game, guiding a party safely through frozen wastelands, identifying signs that bears live nearby, avoiding natural hazards, or demonstrating other survival skills.

Check: You can keep yourself and others safe and fed in the wild.

Retry: For getting along in the wild or gaining the Fortitude save bonus, you make a check once every 24 hours. The result of that check applies until the next check is made. To avoid getting lost or to avoid natural hazards, you make a check whenever the situation calls for one. Retries to avoid getting lost in a specific situation or avoid a specific natural hazard are not allowed.

DC Task

- 10 Get along in the wild. Move up to one-half your overland speed while hunting and foraging (no food or water supplies needed). You can provide food and water for one other person for every 2 points by which your check result exceeds 10.
 15 Gain a +2 circumstance bonus on all Fortitude saves against severe weather while moving up to one-half your overland speed, or gain a +4 circumstance bonus if stationary. You may grant the same bonus to one other character for every 1 point by which the check result exceeds 15. Avoiding getting lost or avoiding natural hazards, such as quicksand.



FEATS

To me there was nothing grotesque in the bones and skeletons that strewed some of the stone crypts deep down among the foundations. I fantastically associated these things with everyday events, and thought them more natural than the coloured pictures of living beings which I found in many of the mouldy books. From such books I learned all that I know. No teacher urged or guided me, and I do not recall hearing any human voice in all those years. . . .

—H.P. Lovecraft,
“The Outsider”

A feat is a special feature that either gives your character a new capability or improves one he already has. For example, Sam chooses to start his investigative career with the Improved Initiative and Toughness feats. These feats add a +4 bonus on his initiative checks and +3 hit points, respectively. At 3rd level, he gains a new feat and chooses Dodge. This allows Sam a better chance to avoid the attacks of a single opponent in combat, improving his Armor Class against that opponent. Unlike a skill, a feat doesn’t have ranks. A character either has the feat or he doesn’t.

ACQUIRING FEATS

Unlike skills, feats are not bought with points. You simply choose them for your character. Each character gets two feats when the character is created. At 3rd level and every three levels thereafter (6th, 9th, 12th, 15th, and 18th), he gains another feat.

PREREQUISITES

Some feats have prerequisites. A character must have the listed ability score, feat, skill, or base attack bonus in order to select or use that feat. For example, you cannot take Mobility unless you already have Dodge, so Dodge is listed under Mobility as a prerequisite. A character can gain a feat at the same level at which he gains the prerequisite.

TYPES OF FEATS

Most feats are general, meaning that no special rules govern them. If your Game-master allows psychic feats, they'll give characters access to powers beyond those normally understood by science. Psychic feats are described after general feats.

You can't use a feat if you have lost a prerequisite. For example, if your Strength drops below 13 because you have taken temporary ability damage, you can't use the Power Attack feat until your Strength returns to 13 or higher.

TABLE 3-1:
General Feats

Feat	Prerequisite
Acrobatic	—
Alertness	—
Ambidexterity	Dex 15+
Animal Affinity	—
Athletic	—
Blind-Fight	—
Cautious	—
Combat Casting	—
Dodge	Dex 13+
Mobility	Dex 13+, Dodge
Spring Attack	Dex 13+, Dodge, Mobility, base attack bonus +4 or higher
Drive-By Attack	—
Endurance	—
Expertise	Int 13+
Gearhead	—
Great Fortitude	—
Improved Critical*	Proficient with weapon, base attack bonus +8 or higher
Improved Initiative	—
Iron Will	—
Lightning Reflexes	—
Martial Artist	—
Nimble	—
Persuasive	—
Point Blank Shot	—
Far Shot	Point Blank Shot
Precise Shot	Point Blank Shot
Rapid Shot	Dex 13+, Point Blank Shot
Multishot	Dex 13+, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot
Shot on the Run	Dex 13+, Point Blank Shot, Dodge, Mobility
Rolling Shot	Dex 13+, Point Blank Shot, Shot on the Run, Dodge, Mobility
Power Attack	Str 13+
Cleave	Str 13+, Power Attack
Quick Draw	Base attack bonus +1 or higher
Run	—
Sharp-Eyed	—
Skill Emphasis*	—
Stealthy	—
Toughness†	—
Track	—
Trustworthy	—
Two-Weapon Fighting	—
Wealth†	—
Weapon Finesse*	Weapon Proficiency (for that weapon), base attack bonus +1 or higher
Weapon Focus*	Weapon Proficiency (for that weapon), base attack bonus +1 or higher
Weapon Proficiency*	—

*You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new skill or weapon.

†You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects stack.

GENERAL FEAT DESCRIPTIONS

Here is the format for feat descriptions:

FEAT NAME

Description of what the feat does or represents in plain language, with no game mechanics.

Prerequisite: A minimum ability score, another feat or feats, a minimum base attack bonus, a skill, or a level that a character must have in order to acquire this feat. This entry is absent if a feat has no prerequisite. A feat may have more than one prerequisite.

Benefit: What the feat enables you (the character) to do.

Normal: What a character who does not have this feat is limited to or restricted from doing. If not having the feat causes no particular drawback, this entry is absent.

Special: Additional facts about the feat that may be helpful when you are deciding whether to choose the feat.

ACROBATIC

You are very agile.

Benefit: You get a +2 aptitude bonus on all Jump checks and Tumble checks.

ALERTNESS

You are keenly aware of your surroundings.

Benefit: You get a +2 aptitude bonus on all Listen checks and Spot checks.

AMBIDEXTERITY

You are equally adept at using either hand.

Prerequisite: Dex 15+.

Benefit: You ignore all penalties for using an off hand. You are neither left-handed nor right-handed.

Normal: Without this feat, a character who uses her off hand suffers a -4 penalty to attack rolls, ability checks, and skill checks. For example, if a right-handed character wields a weapon with her left hand, she suffers a -4 penalty to attack rolls with that weapon.

Special: This feat helps offset the penalty for fighting with two weapons. (See the Two-Weapon Fighting feat, below, and Table 5-1: Two-Weapon Fighting Penalties, page 67.)

ANIMAL AFFINITY

You are good with animals.

Benefit: You get a +2 aptitude bonus on all Handle Animal checks and Ride checks.

ATHLETIC

You have a knack for athletic endeavors.

Benefit: You get a +2 aptitude bonus on all Climb checks and Swim checks.

BLIND-FIGHT

You know how to fight in melee without being able to see your foes.

Benefit: In melee combat, every time you miss because of concealment (see Table 5-6, page 73), you can reroll your miss chance percentile roll once to see if you actually hit.

You take only half the usual penalty to speed for being unable to see. Darkness and poor visibility in general reduce your speed to three-quarters normal, instead of one-half (see Cover, page 72).

CAUTIOUS

You are especially careful with tasks that may yield catastrophic results.

Benefit: You get a +2 aptitude bonus on all Demolitions checks and Disable Device checks.

CLEAVE

You can follow through with a powerful melee attack.

Prerequisite: Str 13+, Power Attack.

Benefit: If you deal an opponent enough damage to reduce its hit points to 0, you get an immediate extra melee attack against another opponent within your reach. You cannot take a 5-foot step before making this extra attack. The extra attack is with the same weapon and at the same bonus as the attack that dropped the previous opponent. You can use this ability once per round.

COMBAT CASTING

You are adept at casting spells in combat.

Benefit: You get a +4 bonus on Concentration checks made to cast a spell defensively (see Casting on the Defensive, page 74).

DODGE

You are adept at dodging attacks.

Prerequisite: Dex 13+.

Benefit: During your action, you designate an opponent and receive a +1 dodge bonus to your Armor Class against attacks from that opponent. You can designate a new opponent on your next initiative count (see The Combat Round, page 65).

Special: A condition that makes you lose your Dexterity bonus to Armor Class (if any) also makes you lose dodge bonuses. Also, dodge bonuses stack with each other, unlike most other types of bonuses (see the Bonus Types sidebar, page 22).

DRIVE-BY ATTACK

You are especially skilled at attacking from a moving vehicle.

Benefit: You suffer no penalty when firing a gun from a moving car.

Normal: When in a moving vehicle, characters suffer a -2 circumstance penalty when attacking a target not in the car.

Special: A vehicle moves on the driver's initiative count; if you ready an attack action, you can attack at any time during that move.

ENDURANCE

You are capable of amazing feats of stamina.

Benefit: Whenever you make a check for performing a physical action that extends over a period of time (such as running, swimming, holding your breath, and so on), you get a +4 competence bonus on the check.

EXPERTISE

You are trained at using your combat skill for defense as well as offense.

Prerequisite: Int 13+.

Benefit: When you use an attack or a full attack action as a full-round action (see Full Attack, page 66) in melee, you can take a penalty of up to -5 on your attack and add the same number (up to +5) to your Armor Class. This number cannot exceed your base attack bonus. The changes to attack rolls and Armor Class last until your next initiative count. The bonus to your Armor Class is a dodge bonus. You can use this feat with either a melee attack or a ranged attack.

Normal: A character without the Expertise feat can fight defensively while making a melee attack to take a -4 penalty on attacks and gain a +2 dodge bonus to Armor Class (see Fight Defensively, page 66).

FAR SHOT

You can get greater distance out of a ranged weapon.

Prerequisite: Point Blank Shot.

Benefit: When you use a projectile weapon, its range increment increases by one-half (multiply by 1.5). When you use a thrown weapon (such as a throwing knife or grenade), its range increment is doubled.

GEARHEAD

You have a way with machines.

Benefit: You get a +2 aptitude bonus on all Computer Use checks and Repair checks.

GREAT FORTITUDE

You are tougher than normal.

Benefit: You get a +2 inherent bonus on all Fortitude saving throws.

IMPROVED CRITICAL

Choose one specific weapon, such as a baseball bat or an M-16. With a melee weapon, you know how to hit where it hurts; with a ranged weapon, you have deadly accuracy.

Prerequisite: Proficient with weapon category, base attack bonus +8 or higher

Benefit: When using the weapon you selected, your threat range is doubled. For example, a commando knife usually threatens a critical on a 19 or 20 (two numbers). If the character using the commando knife has Improved Critical, the threat range becomes 17 through 20 (four numbers).

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. The effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon.

IMPROVED INITIATIVE

You can react more quickly than normal in a fight.

Benefit: You get a +4 inherent bonus on initiative checks.

IRON WILL

You have a stronger will than normal.

Benefit: You get a +2 inherent bonus on all Will saving throws.

to all melee damage rolls. This number may not exceed your base attack bonus. The penalty on attacks and bonus on damage applies until your next action.

PRECISE SHOT

You are skilled at timing and aiming ranged attacks.

Prerequisite: Point Blank Shot.

Benefit: You can shoot or throw weapons at an opponent engaged in melee without suffering the standard -4 penalty.

Normal: Without this feat, you suffer a -4 penalty when shooting at an opponent engaged in melee with an ally. This represents the difficulty of trying to shoot your foe without hitting your friend. (See Shooting or Throwing into a Melee under Attack Actions, page 66.)

LIGHTNING REFLEXES

You have faster than normal reflexes.

Benefit: You get a +2 inherent bonus on all Reflex saving throws.

MARTIAL ARTIST

You are skilled at fighting while unarmed and deal more damage with unarmed strikes. You are also capable of dealing normal damage with unarmed attacks at no penalty (as opposed to subdual damage).

Benefit: Your unarmed attack deals 1d4 points of normal damage (as opposed to subdual damage).

Normal: Without this feat, a character normally deals 1d3 points of subdual damage. If he wants to deal normal damage, he must attack with a -4 penalty (see Subdual Damage, page 75).

MOBILITY

You are skilled at dodging past opponents and avoiding attacks they make against you.

Prerequisite: Dex 13+, Dodge.

Benefit: You don't have to stop moving when you move adjacent to an opponent. Also, when adjacent to an opponent, you can move normally.

Normal: Without this feat, you must stop moving when you move adjacent to an opponent, and may not move more than a 5-foot step when adjacent to an opponent.

MULTISHOT

You can use the autofire or multifire option on guns with exceptional accuracy.

Prerequisite: Dex 13+, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot.

Benefit: When using the autofire or multifire option on a firearm, reduce the penalty for each attack to -4 (for autofire) or -2 (for multifire).

Normal: The normal autofire penalty is -6 for each attack. The normal multifire penalty is -4 for each attack. (See Firearm Attacks, page 80.)

NIMBLE

You have exceptional flexibility and manual dexterity.

Benefit: You get a +2 aptitude bonus on all Escape Artist checks and Sleight of Hand checks.

PERSUASIVE

You have a way with words and body language.

Benefit: You get a +2 aptitude bonus on all Bluff checks and Intimidate checks.

POINT BLANK SHOT

You are skilled at making well-placed shots with ranged weapons at close range.

Benefit: You get a +1 competence bonus on attack and damage rolls with ranged weapons against opponents up to 30 feet from your position.

POWER ATTACK

You can make exceptionally powerful melee attacks.

Prerequisite: Str 13+.

Benefit: On your action, before making attack rolls for the round, you may choose to subtract a number from all melee attack rolls and add the same number

You can draw weapons with startling speed.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +1 or higher.

Benefit: You can draw or holster a weapon as a free action instead of as a move action.

QUICK DRAW

You can use ranged weapons with exceptional speed.

Prerequisite: Dex 13+, Point Blank Shot.

Benefit: You can get one extra attack per round with a ranged weapon. The attack is at your highest base attack bonus, but each attack (the extra one and the normal ones) suffers a -2 penalty. You must use a full-round action to use this feat.

RAPID SHOT

You are highly trained in acrobatic, defensive ranged weapon tactics.

Prerequisite: Dex 13+, Point Blank Shot, Shot on the Run, Dodge, Mobility.

Benefit: When using the attack action with a ranged weapon in the same round in which you use a move action to move at least 20 feet, you gain a +2 dodge bonus to your Armor Class against ranged attacks.

ROLLING SHOT

You are fleet of foot.

Benefit: When running, your top speed is five times your normal speed (150 feet per round for most characters). You must still move more or less in a straight line. If you make a running jump, increase the distance or height you clear by one-fourth, but not past the maximum (see Jump, page 32).

Normal: Without this feat, your top speed is four times your normal speed (120 feet per round for most characters).

RUN

You have an eye for detail.

Benefit: You get a +2 aptitude bonus on all Search checks and Sense Motive checks.

SHARP-EYED

You are highly trained in ranged weapon tactics.

Prerequisite: Dex 13+, Point Blank Shot, Dodge, Mobility.

Benefit: When using the attack action with a ranged weapon, you can move both before and after the

SHOT ON THE RUN

attack, provided that your total distance is not greater than your speed. In essence, this feat splits your move action into two parts.

Normal: Without this feat, you can move either before your attack or after.

SKILL EMPHASIS

Choose a skill, such as Spot. You have a special knack with that skill.

Benefit: You get a +3 competence bonus on all skill checks with that skill.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a different skill.

SPRING ATTACK

You are trained in fast melee attacks and fancy footwork.

Prerequisite: Dex 13+, Dodge, Mobility, base attack bonus +4 or higher.

Benefit: When using the attack action with a melee weapon, you can move both before and after the attack, provided that your total distance is not greater than your speed. In essence, this feat splits your move action into two parts.

Normal: Without this feat, you can move either before your attack or after.

STEALTHY

You are particularly good at avoiding notice.

Benefit: You get a +2 aptitude bonus on all Hide checks and Move Silently checks.

TOUGHNESS

You are tougher than normal.

Benefit: You gain +3 hit points. This is a permanent addition to your hit point total.

Special: A character may gain this feat multiple times. Its effects stack.

TRACK

You can follow the trails of creatures and characters across most types of terrain.

Surface	DC	Benefit:
Very soft	5	To find tracks or to follow them for one mile requires a Wilderness Lore check. You must make another Wilderness Lore check every time the tracks become difficult to follow, such as when other tracks cross them or when the tracks backtrack and diverge.
Soft	10	
Firm	15	
Hard	25	

You move at half your normal speed (or at your normal speed with a -5 penalty on the check) when tracking. The DC for the Wilderness Lore check depends on the surface and the prevailing conditions (see the tables).

Very Soft Ground: Any surface (fresh snow, thick dust, wet mud) that holds deep, clear impressions of footprints.

Soft Ground: Any surface soft enough to yield to pressure in which the quarry leaves frequent but shallow footprints.

Firm Ground: Most normal outdoor surfaces (such as lawns, fields, woods, and the like) or exceptionally soft or dirty indoor surfaces (thick rugs,

Condition

Condition	DC Modifier
Every 3 targets in the group being tracked	-1
Size of targets being tracked: [*]	*
Fine	+8
Diminutive	+4
Tiny	+2
Small	+1
Medium-size	+0
Large	-1
Huge	-2
Gargantuan	-4
Colossal	-8

Every 24 hours since the trail was made +1
Every hour of rain since the trail was made +1

Fresh snow cover since the trail was made +10

Poor visibility ↑

Overcast or moonless night +6

Moonlight +3

Fog or precipitation +3

Tracked target hides trail (moves at half speed) +5

*For a group of mixed sizes, apply only the modifier for the largest size category represented.

†Apply only the largest modifier from this category.

very dusty floors). The quarry might leave some traces (broken branches, tufts of hair) but only occasional or partial footprints.

Hard Ground: Any surface that doesn't hold footprints at all, such as bare rock or indoor floors. Most streambeds fall into this category, since any footprints left behind are obscured or washed away quickly. The quarry leaves only traces (scuff marks, displaced pebbles).

If you fail a Wilderness Lore check, you can retry after 1 hour (outdoors) or 10 minutes (indoors) of searching.

Normal: A character without this feat can use the Search skill to find tracks, but can only follow tracks if the DC is 10 or less (see Search, page 35).

TRUSTWORTHY

You have a friendly demeanor.

Benefit: You get a +2 aptitude bonus on all Diplomacy checks and Gather Information checks.

TWO-WEAPON FIGHTING

You can fight with a weapon in each hand, making one extra attack each round with the second weapon.

Benefit: Your penalties for fighting with two weapons are reduced by 2.

Normal: Without this feat, all attacks with your primary hand suffer a -6 penalty and attacks with your off hand suffer a -10 penalty. (See Attacking with Two Weapons, page 67, and Table 5-1: Two-Weapon Fighting Penalties.)

Special: The Ambidexterity feat lessens the attack penalty for the second weapon by 4.

WEALTH

You have more money than others, either due to inheritance, a trust fund, stock options, smart investments, salary bonuses, or other means.

Benefit: You gain an additional amount of money equal to your starting savings (see Starting Money and Income, page 15) as a windfall. You also increase your income modifier by +2 (see Table 1-13: Profession Modifiers to Income).

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects stack. Each time you take the feat, you gain the same additional amount of money.

WEAPON FINESSE

You are especially skilled at using a certain melee weapon, one that can benefit as much from Dexterity as from Strength. Investigators can choose one weapon

PSYCHIC FEAT DESCRIPTIONS

Psychic feats use the same format as general feats, with two additions.

Action: This is the type of action (move action, full-round action, and so on) required to use the psychic feat.

Cost: This gives the number of Sanity points (if any) and any other costs (such as temporary Wisdom damage) to the character for using the psychic feat.

BIOFEEDBACK TRANCE

You can access your inner psychic strength, using it to better use the powers of your own body.

Prerequisite: Cha 15+, Sensitive.

Benefit: You may enter a trance that slows your metabolism, allowing you to survive for extended periods of time with very little air, water, or food. You may enter a trance at will as a full-round action. Awakening from the trance takes a full-round action.

While in a trance, your heartbeat slows, your breathing all but ceases, and you appear to be dead. A character in a trance uses only 10% as much air as a sleeping person and needs no food or water for an extended period of time. For purposes of natural healing, a trance is the equivalent of assisted healing, doubling the normal rate of healing (see Heal, page 31).

When entering the trance, the character must declare the circumstances under which the trance will end. Examples include a time limit (10 minutes, 24 hours, a week) or certain stimuli (such as hearing a loud noise, feeling a sudden drop in temperature, hearing your name spoken, or being touched). A character in a trance is not conscious of his surroundings and may not use any skills or abilities other than the Remote Viewing psychic feat.

A character can remain in a trance for up to one week in a dry climate or up to one month in a wet climate before succumbing to thirst. If water were somehow supplied (via an intravenous drip, for example), a character could remain in a trance for up to three months.

While in the trance, you may use your Psychic Focus skill to resist the effects of diseases or poisons; the DC is the same as for using a Heal check to help someone else resist these effects (see Treat Poison and Treat Disease, page 31).

Action: Full-round action to enter the trance, a full-round action to leave it.

Cost: None.

DOWSING

You can sense energy patterns invisible to others.

Prerequisite: Cha 15+, Sensitive.

Benefit: You can follow a psychic or magical energy pattern, such as a ley line or the invisible trail left by a supernatural creature. If the Gamemaster tells you that you feel something unknown with your Sensitive feat, you can attempt a Psychic Focus check (DC 15) to follow a pattern or trail involved. You can track incorporeal, invisible, or insub-

from this list: knife (any), rapier/foil, hatchet, brass knuckles, or unarmed strike.

Prerequisite: Proficient with weapon, base attack bonus +1 or higher. (Unarmed strike doesn't require Weapon Proficiency.)

Benefit: With the selected weapon, you may use your Dexterity modifier instead of your Strength modifier on attack rolls.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon.

WEAPON FOCUS

Choose a specific weapon (a single entry in the Equipment list), such as a straight razor or a Colt New Service Revolver. You are especially good at using this weapon. You can choose unarmed strike or grapple for your specific weapon for purposes of this feat.

Prerequisite: Proficient with appropriate weapon category, base attack bonus +1 or higher. (Unarmed strike and grapple don't require Weapon Proficiency.)

Benefit: You add +1 to all attack rolls you make using the selected weapon.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a different weapon.

WEAPON PROFICIENCY

You understand how to use a particular type of weapon in combat. Each time you take this feat, you may choose one of the following weapon categories: melee weapon, thrown weapon, pistol, rifle (includes automatic rifles), shotgun, or submachine gun.

Melee weapons include weapons such as clubs, nightsticks, baseball bats, and even shovels. Thrown weapons include throwing knives and grenades.

Benefit: You can make attack rolls with a weapon without suffering a nonproficiency penalty.

Normal: A character who uses a weapon without proficiency with it suffers a -4 penalty on attack rolls.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon.

If your campaign includes bows and slings, they have their own category: Weapon Proficiency (primitive ranged). Unarmed strikes and grapples don't require Weapon Proficiency.

PSYCHIC FEATS

Refer to these descriptions when selecting psychic feats. The Sensitive feat is a prerequisite for all other Psychic Feats. The Psychic Focus skill enhances these feats. Unlike other feats, most psychic feats have a Sanity point cost to use.

Not all *Call of Cthulhu* campaigns involve psychic feats. Check with your Gamemaster before choosing them during character creation.

TABLE 3-2: Psychic Feats

Feat	Prerequisite
Sensitive	Cha 15+
Biofeedback Trance	Cha 15+, Sensitive
Remote Viewing	Cha 15+, Sensitive, Biofeedback Trance
Dowsing	Cha 15+, Sensitive
Mind Reading	Cha 15+, Sensitive
Mind Probe	Cha 15+, Sensitive, Mind Reading
Psychokinesis	Cha 15+, Sensitive
Psychometry	Cha 15+, Sensitive
Second Sight	Cha 15+, Sensitive
Telepathy	Cha 15+, Sensitive

stantial creatures, but not coexistent creatures. If the creature leaves your plane of existence, you lose the trail.

Action: This power can be activated as a free action.

Cost: 1 Sanity point and 1 point of temporary Wisdom damage for each successful use; 1 Sanity point for each failed attempt.

MIND PROBE

You can delve into someone's mind to learn information stored there.

Prerequisite: Cha 15+, Sensitive, Mind Reading.

Benefit: You can learn the answer to some question if the answer is within the mind of your target. You must be within sight and within 30 feet of your target. The probe requires a Psychic Focus check, with the DC determined by the circumstances. All modifiers to the DC are cumulative.

Action: This power requires a full-round action to use.

Cost: 1d4 Sanity points and 1 point of temporary Wisdom damage for each successful use; 1 Sanity point for each failed attempt.

Circumstances	DC
Target touching you	20
Target within 30 feet	25
Target well-known to you	-2
Target acquainted with you	+0
Target unknown to you	+2

Circumstances	DC
Target is unwilling	+5
Target has the Mind Reading feat	+5
Target has the Mind Probe feat	+5
Answer is a guarded, personal secret	+10

MIND READING

You can read someone else's current thoughts. Characters with this ability are sometimes called "receivers."

Prerequisite: Cha 15+, Sensitive.

Benefit: You can learn what someone else is thinking at that moment. Only surface thoughts are received ("I need a drink"), not deep, dark secrets ("Only three more days until I betray them all to my master, Nyarlathotep!"). Successfully using the feat requires the Psychic Focus skill, with a DC determined by the circumstances.

All modifiers to the DC are cumulative. Thus, the DC to read the mind of an stranger in an elevator is 22 (17 if you manage to bump into him). The DC for reading the thoughts of a cultist leader you have never met who happens to be halfway around the world at the time might be as high as 50.

Action: This power requires a full-round action to use.

Cost: 1d3 Sanity points and 1 point of temporary Wisdom damage for each successful use; 1 Sanity point for each failed attempt.

Circumstances	DC
Target touching you	15
Target within 30 feet	20
Target between 30 feet and 1 mile away	25
Target between 1 and 25 miles away	30
Target between 25 and 1,000 miles away	35
Target more than 1,000 miles away	40

Circumstances	DC
Target well-known to you	-2
Target acquainted with you	+0
Target unknown to you	+2
Target is unwilling	+5
Target has the Sensitive feat	-5
Target has the Telepathy feat	-5

PSYCHOKINESIS

With a talent of mind over matter, you can manipulate physical objects by thought alone. This ability does not work on living creatures.

Prerequisite: Cha 15+, Sensitive.

Benefit: You can exert up to 5 pounds of pressure with the force of your mind at a range of 30 feet. This means that you can move an object of up to 5 pounds, as



SECOND SIGHT

You can see things that others cannot. Sometimes ghosts or horrible alien monsters can render themselves invisible, but not to you.

Prerequisite: Cha 15+, Sensitive.

Benefit: You can see invisible creatures, objects, or energies, as long as they are of a supernatural nature. You cannot see natural objects that are invisible (such as X-rays) but you can see supernaturally invisible creatures, such as star vampires. You do not need to activate this power; the Gamemaster tells you when you witness something others cannot see (probably by asking for a Sanity check right away).

If a supernatural creature is using Hide or Move Silently, your character can oppose that roll with a Psychic Focus check instead of Spot or Listen; the GM may make this roll secretly so that you don't know whether you succeeded.

Action: None. The GM announces when you see something.

Cost: None, other than the standard Sanity point cost for seeing the disturbing images and revelations you'll inevitably discover.

SENSITIVE

You are aware that there is more than meets the eye—an almost imperceptible world of psychic phenomena.

Prerequisite: Cha 15+.

Benefit: You can learn other psychic feats. Furthermore, the Gamemaster may provide you with special information, such as a strange feeling in a certain spot in the house, disturbing dreams, or other inexplicable occurrences. You have no control over these sensations and revelations; thus, this power doesn't require an action to activate. If a Psychic Focus check is required (say, for very faint extrasensory sensations), the GM may roll it secretly so that you won't know whether you succeeded.

Action: None. The GM announces when you see something.

Cost: None.

TELEPATHY

You can communicate with someone by sending mental messages. Characters with this ability are sometimes called "senders."

Prerequisite: Cha 15+, Sensitive.

Benefit: You can send a mental message to one person. This message can be of up to ten words or of a single visual image (without sound). Successfully sending the message requires a Psychic Focus check, the DC determined by the circumstances. All modifiers to the DC are cumulative.

Action: This power requires a full-round action to use.

Cost: 1d4 Sanity points and 1 point of temporary Wisdom damage for each successful use; 1 Sanity point for each failed attempt.

PSYCHOMETRY

You can handle an object and gain a vision, either of the person who created it or someone who has touched it in the past.

Prerequisite: Cha 15+, Sensitive.

Benefit: When you touch an inanimate object and concentrate for 1 minute, you may attempt a Psychic Focus check (DC 15). If you succeed, you gain a brief vision of someone associated with the object in the past.

For example, if you pick up a hunting knife, you might glimpse someone who carried it for years, the last person to use the knife, or a scene of a woman being murdered with the knife. Long association and strong emotion tend to leave behind the strongest impressions. The specific details of what the character sees are up to the Gamemaster.

Action: This power requires a full-round action to use.

Cost: 1d4 Sanity points and 1 point of temporary Wisdom damage for each successful use; 1 Sanity point for each failed attempt. In addition, the vision may itself cause Sanity loss if horrific enough (see the Sanity Loss Examples table, page 48).

REMOTE VIEWING

You can see events occurring far away from you.

Location	DC
Less than 100 feet away	15
Between 100 feet and 1 mile away	20
Between 1 and 25 miles away	25
Between 25 and 1,000 miles away	30
More than 1,000 miles away	35

Location well known to you	+0
Location one you have seen once	+2
Location never seen but described	+4
Location never seen or described	+6
Location practically unimaginable (such as an alien world)	+8

successful use; 1 Sanity point for each failed attempt.

Prerequisite: Cha 15+, Sensitive, Biofeedback Trance.

Benefit: While in a trance, you can observe a place far away. This requires a Psychic Focus check, and the DC depends on the location.

Action: This power requires a full-round action to activate.

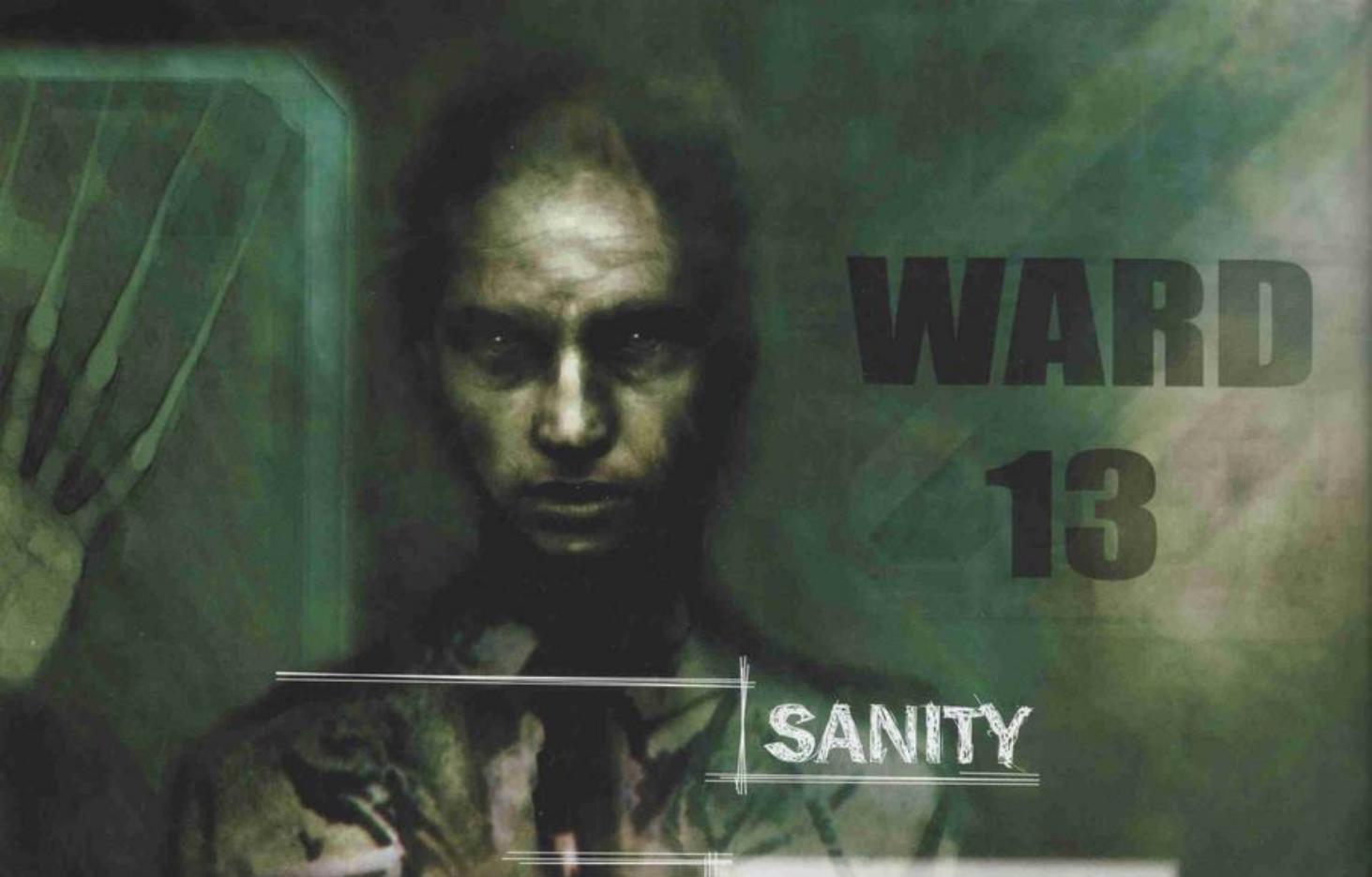
Cost: 1d4 Sanity points and 1 point of temporary Wisdom damage for each

CIRCUMSTANCES

DC

Target touching you	15
Target within 30 feet	20
Target between 30 feet and 1 mile away	25
Target between 1 and 25 miles away	30
Target between 25 and 1,000 miles away	35
Target more than 1,000 miles away	40

Target well-known to you	-2
Target acquainted with you	+0
Target unknown to you	+2
Target is sleeping	-5
Target has the Sensitive feat	-5
Target has the Mind Reading feat	-5



WARD

13

SANITY

A few steps more, and our breaths were literally snatched from us by what we saw; so literally that Thornton, the psychic investigator, actually fainted in the arms of the dazed man who stood behind him. Norrys, his plump face utterly white and flabby, simply cried out inarticulately; whilst I think that what I did was to gasp or hiss, and cover my eyes. The man behind me—the only one of the party older than I—croaked the bane-eyed "My God!" in the most cracked voice I ever heard. Of seven cultivated men, only Sir William Brinton retained his composure; a thing the more to his credit because he led the party and must have seen the sight first.

—H.P. Lovecraft,
"Rats in the Walls"

Sanity is the natural mental state of ordinary life. Normal mental balance is endangered when characters confront the horrors of the Cthulhu Mythos—their entities and activities are shocking, unnatural, and bewildering. Such encounters cause characters to lose Sanity points, which in turn risks temporary, indefinite, or permanent insanity. Mental stability and lost Sanity points may be restored, up to a point, but mental scars may remain.

Insanity occurs if too many Sanity points are lost in too short a time. Insanity does not necessarily occur if Sanity points are low, but a lower Sanity point total makes some forms of insanity more likely to occur after an emotional shock occurs. The character's Sanity may be regained after a few minutes, recovered after a few months, or lost forever.

A character may regain Sanity points, and even increase her Sanity-point maximum. However, an increase in a character's Cthulhu Mythos skill always lowers her potential maximum Sanity points by an equal amount.

LOSS OF SANITY

Conflict, abuse, or any other strong personal experience inflicts emotional scars. To emphasize certain ideas he had concerning fear, the unknown, and humanity's lowly place in the scheme of things, Lovecraft

STARTING SANITY

Starting Sanity equals a character's Wisdom score multiplied by 5. This score represents a starting character's current Sanity points, as well as the upper limit of Sanity that can be restored by the Psychoanalysis skill (page 34). After creation, a character's current Sanity score often fluctuates considerably and might never again match starting Sanity. A change in a character's Wisdom score changes the starting Sanity score in regard to what Psychoanalysis can restore. Current Sanity, however, does not change if Wisdom rises or falls.

posed brand new terrors for us. He suggested that the laws of space and time that we believe to be universal and immutable are only locally valid, and only partly true.

Beyond our ken lie infinities where greater realities hold sway. Outside our perception, alien powers and races wait with hostility, or at best, cosmic indifference. Some encroach on our world. The true universe is one with no joy or comfort. It is driven by mind-bending forces to which our existence holds no significance, and titanic struggles in which our desires and needs matter not at all. Human insanity confirms these terrible realizations, and is often caused by them. Through madness, we glimpse the dark and bloody truths at the heart of the universe.

Sanity is ordinarily lost in a few specific ways.

Learning the Truth. Knowledge is dangerous, and none more dangerous than knowledge of the Mythos—the true face of reality in the universe. No amount of psychotherapy or rest can remove the danger of self-transformation from such knowledge.

Using Spells. Mythos magic relies on the physics of the true universe. By learning and casting spells, investigators visualize the unimaginable, warping their minds to follow alien ways of thought. These wound the mind. Such traumas are ones for which the casters volunteer, it is true, but they are shocks all the same.

Reading Forbidden Tomes. Mythos tomes add ranks to an investigator's Cthulhu Mythos skill and teach Mythos spells. Studying and comprehending Mythos books causes all that we know to become like shadows. The burning power of a greater reality seizes the soul. Whether we try to retreat from the experience or hunger greedily for more, it destroys our confidence in what we once believed, opening us up to the all-encompassing truths of the Cthulhu Mythos.

Encountering the Unimaginable. When people perceive the creatures and entities of the Mythos, it costs them some portion of their minds, as such creatures are intrinsically discomforting and repellent. We never lose awareness of their slimy, fetid alien nature, which Lovecraft often characterizes as "obscene" or "blasphemous." This instinctive reaction is part and parcel of every human being. In this category, we can include supernatural events or agents not always recognized as specifically attached to the Mythos, such as hauntings, zombies, vampires, curses, and so on.

Severe Shocks. Non-Mythos shocks can also cost Sanity points. This includes witnessing untimely or violent death, experiencing personal mutilation, loss of social position, treachery, the failure of love, or whatever else the Gamemaster decides is sufficiently extreme.

SANITY POINTS

Sanity points measure the stability of a character's mind. This trait provides a way to display the sanity inherent in a character, the most stability a character can ever have, and the current level of sane rationality that a character still preserves, even after numerous shocks and horrid revelations.

Sanity is measured in three ways: starting Sanity (5 times the character's Wisdom score), maximum Sanity (99 minus Cthulhu Mythos modifier), and current Sanity points.

MAXIMUM SANITY

The Cthulhu Mythos skill simulates character comprehension of aspects of the Mythos. Once gained, this horrible knowledge is never forgotten, and the character consequently surrenders mental equilibrium. An investigator's Sanity weakens as his comprehension of the Mythos increases. Such is the way of the universe.

An investigator's current Sanity points can never be higher than 99 minus the modifier the character has in the Cthulhu Mythos skill. This number (99 minus Cthulhu Mythos ranks and any bonuses) is the character's maximum Sanity.

CURRENT SANITY

A character's current Sanity points fluctuate almost as often (and sometimes much more often) than hit points.

Making a Sanity Check: When an investigator encounters a gruesome, unnatural, or supernatural situation, the GM may require a player to make a Sanity check with percentile dice (d%). The check succeeds if the result is equal to or less than the character's current Sanity.

On a successful check, the character either loses no Sanity points or only loses a minimal amount. Potential Sanity loss is usually shown as two numbers or dice rolls separated by a slash, such as 0/1d4. The number before the slash indicates the number of Sanity points lost if the Sanity check succeeds (in this case, none); the number after the slash indicates the number of Sanity points lost if the Sanity check fails (in this case, between 1 and 4 points). See the nearby Sanity Loss Examples sidebar, the monster descriptions in the Creatures chapter, and the descriptions of various Great Old Ones and others in the appendix for typical Sanity losses.

An investigator's current Sanity is also at risk when the character reads certain books, learns the spells contained within, and attempts to cast them. These losses are usually automatic (no Sanity check is involved)—the character who chooses to undertake that activity forfeits the required Sanity points. See the Magic chapter for details.

For the most part, a new Sanity-shaking confrontation requires a new Sanity check. However, the GM always gets to decide when characters make Sanity checks. Confronting several horribly mangled corpses at one time or in rapid succession may call for just one Sanity check, while the same encounters at intervals of several game hours may require separate checks.

Going Insane: Losing more than a few Sanity points may also cause the character to go insane, as described below. If a character's Sanity points drop to 0, she begins the quick slide into permanent insanity. Each round, the character loses another point of Sanity. Once a character reaches -10 Sanity points, she is hopelessly, incurably insane. See the Psychoanalysis skill (page 34) for information on stabilizing a character on the threshold of permanent insanity.

A GM's description of a Sanity-shaking situation should always justify the threat to an investigator's well-being. Thus, a horde of frothing rats is horrifying, while a single ordinary rat usually is not (unless the character has an appropriate phobia, of course).

Sanity Loss Examples

Sanity Lost*	Unnerving or Horrifying Situation
0/1d2	Surprised to find mangled animal carcass
0/1d3	Surprised to find human corpse
0/1d3	Surprised to find human body part
0/1d4	Finding a stream flowing with blood
1/1d4+1	Finding a mangled human corpse
0/1d6	Awakening trapped in a coffin
0/1d6	Witnessing a friend's violent death
0/1d6	Seeing a ghoul
1/1d6+1	Meeting someone you know to be dead
0/1d10	Undergoing severe torture
1/d10	Seeing a corpse rise from its grave
2/2d10+1	Seeing a gigantic severed head fall from the sky
1d10/d%	Seeing Great Cthulhu

* Successful check cost/failed check cost

GETTING USED TO AWFULNESS

Never underestimate the ability of the human mind to adapt, even to the most horrific experiences. Reading and rereading the same bit of disturbing text or seeing the same horrible image over and over eventually provokes no further loss. Within a reasonable interval of play, usually a single session of the game, characters should not lose more Sanity points for seeing monsters of a particular sort than the maximum possible points a character could lose for seeing one such monster. For instance, the Sanity loss for seeing a single deep one is 0/1d6. Thus, in the same game day or in the same play session, no character should lose more than 6 Sanity points total for seeing any number of deep ones. Keep in mind that the interpretation of "reasonable interval" must vary by GM and situation. When it feels right, the GM should rule that the horror is renewed and points must be lost again.

Learning or casting spells never becomes a normal thing to do. No matter how many times a character casts a spell, no matter what the time interval between castings may be, the Sanity loss is always the same. This is true of anything that a character does willingly. For example, if brutally murdering a friend costs 2/1d10 Sanity, this loss is incurred each time, even if the character loses the maximum possible points after the first or even the second murder.

INSANITY

Character insanity is induced by a swift succession of shocking experiences or ghastly revelations, events usually connected with the Cthulhu Mythos. The type of insanity incurred depends on the proportion of Sanity points lost. The duration of insanity varies as well.

Horrifying encounters can result in three states of mental unbalance. Two of them, temporary insanity and indefinite insanity, can be cured. The third, permanent insanity, results when a character's Sanity points are reduced to -10 or below and cannot be cured (see Permanent Insanity, page 50).

TEMPORARY INSANITY

Whenever a character loses Sanity points equal to one-half her Wisdom score from a single roll, she has suffered enough shock that the GM must ask for a Sanity check. If the check fails, then the character realizes the full significance of what she saw or experienced and goes temporarily insane. If the check succeeds, the character does not go mad, but in consequence, she may not clearly remember what she experienced—a trick the mind plays to protect itself.

Temporary insanity might last for a few minutes or a few days. Perhaps the character acquires a phobia or fetish befitting the situation, faints, becomes hysterical, or suffers nervous twitches, but she can still respond well enough to run away or hide.

**TABLE 4-1:
Duration of Temporary Insanity**

d10 roll	Insanity Type	Duration
1-7	Short temporary insanity	1d10+4 rounds
8-10	Longer temporary insanity	1d10×10 hours

The character remains in this state for the length of time rolled on Table 4-1: Duration of Temporary Insanity. The GM must describe the insanity so that the player can roleplay it accordingly. Ideas for phobias and episodes of insanity are described later in this chapter. Anyone can create new ones as appropriate—though for the shortest extents, simple characterizing will do, such as "lies on the ground and twitches," "runs shrieking into the night," or "drools and squeaks like a baby." The character is overwhelmed by fear or horror, incapacitated, and then recovers quickly.

Successful application of the Psychoanalysis skill (page 34) or Heal skill (page 31) may alleviate or erase temporary insanity.

Temporary insanity concludes when the duration of game time rolled has elapsed, or when the GM feels the end to be appropriate.

The intent of temporary insanity is forcing a character's behavior to noticeably change for a limited time. Whether this means that the character is babbling in some corner, running away in a panic, or attacking Great Cthulhu with a can-opener is up to the creativity and inspiration of the player and the GM.

After the temporary insanity ends, traces or even profound evidence of the experience should remain. No reason exists that a phobia, for instance, should depart from someone's mind as quickly as a train pulls out of a station. What

remains behind after the brief episode of insanity should exert a pervasive influence on the character. The character may still be a bit batty, but her conscious mind once again runs the show.

If the GM prefers, the exact nature of the breakdown can be determined randomly. To choose a temporary insanity, roll 1d10 on Table 4-1 (for duration) and d% on Table 4-2 or 4-3 (for effect). To speed up play, make the d10 and d% rolls at the same time.

As a variant rule, if the amount of Sanity lost exceeds the investigator's Wisdom score, go directly to Table 4-3: Long-Term Temporary Insanity Effects.

TABLE 4-2:
Short-Term Temporary Insanity Effects (lasts 1d10+4 rounds)

d%	Effect on Character
01-20	Character faints (can be awakened by vigorous action taking one round)
21-30	Character has a screaming fit
31-40	Character flees in panic
41-50	Character shows physical hysterics or emotional outburst (laughing, crying, and so on)
51-55	Character babbles in incoherent rapid speech or in logorrhea (a torrent of coherent speech)
56-60	Character gripped by intense phobia, perhaps rooting her to the spot
61-65	Character becomes homicidal, dealing harm on nearest person as efficiently as possible
66-70	Character has hallucinations or delusions (details at the discretion of the GM)
71-75	Character gripped with echopraxia or echolalia (saying or doing whatever those around him say or do)
76-80	Character gripped with strange or deviant eating desire (dirt, slime, cannibalism, and so on)
81-90	Character falls into a stupor (assumes fetal position, oblivious to events around her)
91-99	Character becomes catatonic (can stand but has no will or interest; may be led or forced to simple actions but takes no independent action)
00	Roll on Table 4-3: Long-Term Temporary Insanity Effects

TABLE 4-3:
Long-Term Temporary Insanity Effects (lasts 1d10×10 hours)

d%	Effect on Character
01-10	Character performs compulsive rituals (washing hands constantly, praying, walking in a particular rhythm, never stepping on cracks, constantly checking to see if gun is loaded, and so on)
11-20	Character has hallucinations or delusions (details at the discretion of the GM)
21-30	Character becomes paranoid
31-40	Character gripped with severe phobia (refuses to approach object of phobia except on successful Will save, DC 20)
41-45	Character has strange sexual desires (exhibitionism, nymphomania or satyriasis, teratophilia, necrophilia, and so on)
46-55	Character develops an attachment to a "lucky charm" (embraces object, type of object, or person as a safety blanket) and cannot function without it
56-65	Character develops psychosomatic blindness, deafness, or the loss of the use of a limb or limbs
66-75	Character has uncontrollable tics or tremors (-4 penalty to all attack rolls, checks, and saves except those purely mental in nature)
76-85	Character has amnesia (memories of intimates usually lost first; Knowledge skills useless)
86-90	Character has bouts of reactive psychosis (incoherence, delusions, aberrant behavior, and/or hallucinations)
91-95	Character loses ability to communicate via speech or writing
96-00	Character becomes catatonic (can stand but has no will or interest; may be led or forced into simple actions but takes no independent action)

VARIANT: INSANE INSIGHT

At the GM's option, a character who has just gone insane may have an insight into the situation or entity that provoked the insanity. The player needs to make a Wisdom check (DC 15) to gain the insight. Information provided by this sudden burst of awareness is up to the GM, but

may include something about a creature's origin or a fact about its nature (feeding habits, natural habitat, weakness), a clue to the identity of a murderer at a murder scene, some hint at the location of great importance, and so forth.

INDEFINITE INSANITY

If a character loses 20% (one-fifth) or more of her current Sanity points in 1 hour, she goes indefinitely insane. The GM judges when the impact of events calls for such a measure. Some GMs never apply the concept to more than the result of a single roll, since this state can remove characters from play for extended periods. Beginning immediately, indefinite insanity lasts 1d6 game months (or as the GM indicates). Symptoms of indefinite insanity may not be immediately apparent. This may give the GM additional time to decide what the effects of the bout of insanity might be.

Table 4-4: Random Indefinite Insanity has been provided as an aid to selecting what form the character's indefinite insanity takes. Many *Call of Cthulhu* Gamemasters prefer to choose an appropriate way for the insanity to manifest, based on the circumstances that provoked it. It's also a good idea to consult with the player of the afflicted character to see what sort of mental malady the player wishes to roleplay.

The state of indefinite insanity is encompassing and incapacitating. For instance, a schizophrenic may be able to walk the streets babbling and gesticulating, find rudimentary shelter, and be able to beg for enough food to survive, but most of the business of the mind has departed into itself: She cannot fully interact with friends,

family, and acquaintances. Conversation, cooperation, and personal regard have vanished.

It is possible for characters with indefinite insanity to continue to be played as active investigators, depending on the form their madness takes. The character may still attempt to stumble madly through the rest of the adventure. However, with her weakened grasp on reality, she is a danger to herself and others.

For the most part, indefinitely insane characters should be removed from active play until they recover. At the GM's discretion, that player might be allowed to use a temporary character until the end of the story. Whether this "stand-in" character is an incidental NPC in the adventure, the same level as the rest of the group, one or two levels below the rest of the investigators, or even a 1st level character is up to the GM. Different Game-masters have different policies for handling this transition.

TABLE 4-4: Random Indefinite Insanity

d%	Mental Disorder Type
01–15	Anxiety Disorders (includes severe phobias)
16–25	Dissociative Disorders (amnesia, multiple personalities)
26–30	Eating Disorders (anorexia, bulimia)
31–35	Impulse Control Disorders (compulsions)
36–45	Mood Disorders (manic/depressive)
46–50	Personality Disorders (various neuroses)
51–55	Psychosexual Disorders (sadism, nymphomania)
56–70	Schizophrenia/Psychotic Disorders (delusions, hallucinations, paranoia, catatonia)
71–80	Sleep Disorders (night terrors, sleepwalking)
81–85	Somatoform Disorders (psychosomatic conditions)
86–95	Substance Abuse Disorder (alcoholic, drug addict)
96–00	Other Disorders (megalomania, quixotism, panzaism)

If an investigator goes mad near the end of an adventure, the GM may decide to set the beginning of the next adventure after the insane investigator has recovered.

The indefinitely insane are in limbo, unable to help themselves or others. The Psychoanalysis skill can be used to restore Sanity points during this period, but the underlying insanity remains.

After recovery, the victim retains definite traces of madness. For example, he might hesitate to step out onto a bridge for fear that "gravity will get him," even though he knows rationally that the bridge will not collapse. The character is in control, but the experience has changed him, perhaps forever.

GAINING THE CTHULHU MYTHOS SKILL

An investigator's first instance of Mythos-related insanity bestows 2 ranks of the Cthulhu Mythos skill, thereby lowering maximum Sanity by 2 points. Each time a character fails a Sanity check and endures another Mythos-related episode of insanity (that is, temporary or indefinite insanity), he gains an additional rank in Cthulhu Mythos. No maximum rank exists for a character's Cthulhu Mythos skill.

For example, Claire has 1 rank of Cthulhu Mythos after reading a strange manuscript. She then steps outside, sees a byakhee fly overhead, and goes indefinitely insane, her raving mind failing to understand the unearthly manifestation. Since she has never gone mad before, her player adds two ranks of Cthulhu Mythos to Claire's character sheet. Now Claire's maximum Sanity is 96 (99 minus 3 ranks of Cthulhu Mythos).

PERMANENT INSANITY

Characters who reach -10 Sanity points go permanently insane. The character becomes an NPC under the control of the Game-master.

A character with -10 Sanity points may be reduced to a raving lunatic or may be outwardly indistinguishable from a normal person, but inwardly corrupted by the pursuit of knowledge and power. Some of the most dangerous cultists in the world are investigators who have gone completely insane, been corrupted by the Mythos, and "gone over to the other side."

Characters might be driven permanently mad by forces other than the Cthulhu Mythos. In those cases, moral corruption need not necessarily occur. The GM might decide to look at different sorts of permanent insanity, rolling randomly or choosing from among the types on Table 4-4: Random Indefinite Insanity.

A character who has gone permanently insane can never be normal again. She is forever lost in her own world. This need not mean a lifetime in a padded cell, merely that the character has retreated so far from reality that sanity can never be restored. She might be able to lead, within restricted bounds, a more or less normal life if kept away from the things that trigger strong responses in her individual case. Yet a relapse may come quickly. Her calm façade can be destroyed in seconds if her fragile equilibrum is disturbed by even the smallest reminder of whatever it was that drove her mad.

Such eventual fates are matters for individual Gamemasters and players to decide. In keeping with the spirit of the game, permanent insanity should have about it a dark air of defeat and agony. Future developments concerning it should be cloudy, unpredictable, and dangerous.

RECOVERING SANITY

An investigator's Sanity score can increase during the events of a campaign. Although a character's Sanity points can never exceed 99 minus her Cthulhu Mythos skill modifier, her current Sanity and maximum Sanity can exceed starting Sanity.

Raising a character's current Sanity points above starting Sanity is generally a result of gained levels. Some GMs may feel such self-improvement to be antithetical to Lovecraft's dark vision, and thus may not allow it. Others may allow it if the player can roll over her character's current Sanity points after the character gains a level. Most Gamemasters should find the question to be of no consequence, since characters continue to go insane regardless of how many Sanity points they gain. This is a point for players to be aware of, but not to worry about.

MENTAL THERAPY

To give useful therapy, the therapist must have the Psychoanalysis skill. Intensive psychoanalysis can return Sanity points to a troubled character. However, Sanity points restored in this manner can never exceed the patient's starting Sanity. Psychoanalysis can restore but never improve the character. A character can have only one psychoanalyst at a time. See the description of the Psychoanalysis skill (page 34) for an exact description of how the skill works.

Psychoanalysis can also be used to help a character snap out of temporary insanity (for example, from an acute panic attack). It does not speed recovery from indefinite insanity, but it can strengthen the character by adding Sanity points. (The Heal skill can be used in the same way; see Heal, page 31.)

Recovery from indefinite insanity only comes with time (typically 1d6 months). It is not dependent upon the investigator's total Sanity points and is not connected with them. A character can be sane with 24 Sanity points and insane while possessing 77 Sanity points.

PSYCHIATRIC MEDICATIONS

Although psychiatric drugs were administered to patients in the early part of the century, only in the 1940s and beyond were they broadly and consistently effective in treating the symptoms of emotional trauma. As long as a character can afford a psychiatric medication and is able to take it, the symptoms of indefinite insanity can be ignored. Taking such drugs does not make a character immune or even particularly resistant to further Sanity losses. A Knowledge (medicine) check against DC 15 is needed to accurately prescribe the correct medications and dosage.

A 50% chance (01-50 on a d%) exists that a given drug will have either physical or mental side effects. If the side effects are physical, the patient suffers a -1 penalty to attack rolls, Fortitude and Reflex saves, and Strength-, Constitution-, and Dexterity-based skill checks. If the side effects are mental, the patient suffers a -1 penalty to Will saves and to Intelligence-, Wisdom-, and Charisma-based skill checks. If more than one type of medication is taken due to multiple symptoms, the character will automatically have side effects and has a 50% chance for both mental and physical side effects. Side effects last for as long as the medication is taken. The die roll is made one time, upon the first instance of a particular character's taking a particular drug.

Long-term drug therapy can restore lost Sanity points, just as use of the Psychoanalysis skill can. For each month the character takes an accurately prescribed psychiatric medication, she regains 1d3 Sanity points. As with Psychoanalysis, long-term drug therapy can never raise an investigator's current Sanity above starting Sanity.

A character cannot regain Sanity from both Psychoanalysis and drug therapy in the same month.

LEVEL GAINS

When a character gains a level, she gains current Sanity points. This gain comes from the satisfaction of improving yourself and gaining experience. Since levels

are gained as a result of experience points, and experience points are earned by overcoming threats and challenges, a character who gains levels realizes that while fantastic horrors assail our world, they can be bested—or at least driven off for a time.

Each time a character rises to a new level, roll 1d6 and add the result to the character's current Sanity. Points gained from advancing in level are not subject to the restriction of starting Sanity. They can raise current Sanity to any total equal to or less than maximum Sanity.

TREATMENT OF INSANITY

Temporary insanity ends quickly enough that schedules of treatment are essentially pointless. It concludes soon enough that one merely need protect the deranged investigator from further upset or harm. On the other hand, treatment of permanent insanity has no real meaning. By definition, the character will never recover, no matter how good the facility. Only indefinite insanity offers any hope for intervention and treatment.

After 1d6 months, if undisturbed by further trauma and with the agreement of the Gamemaster, an indefinitely insane character finds enough mental balance to reenter the world. Three sorts of care may help the investigator regain Sanity points during this time. When choosing among them, the GM and player should consider the character's resources, her friends and relatives, and how wisely she has behaved in the past.

PRIVATE CARE

The best care available is at home or in some friendly place (perhaps a small private sanitarium) where nursing can be tender, considerate, and undistracted by the needs of competing patients.

If Psychoanalysis or psychiatric medications are available, roll d% for each game month that one or the other is used. A result of 01-95 is a success: add 1d3 Sanity points for Psychoanalysis or psychiatric medications, whichever is used (a character cannot benefit from both in the same game month). On a result of 96-00, the analyst fumbles the diagnosis or the character rebels against taking the drugs. She loses 1d6 Sanity points, and no progress is made that month.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION

The next best alternative to private care is commitment to a good insane asylum. Asylums may be said to have an advantage over home care in that they are relatively cheap or even a free service provided by the state. These institutions are of uneven quality, however, and some may be potentially harmful. Some are creative places of experiment and advanced therapy, while others offer mere confinement. Presently, in the United States, most institutions are full or accessible only to the criminally insane. In any era, concentrated and nourishing treatment by strangers is rare.

Supervised activity, manual therapy, psychiatric medications, and hydrotherapy are frequent, as is electroconvulsive treatment. Psychoanaly-

sis is generally unavailable, and sometimes an institution can convey an uncaring sense that undermines the useful effects of psychiatric medications, leaving the character with a sense of anger and loss. He is likely to be distrustful of outpatient support once he has left the institution.

Roll d% for each game month the character is institutionalized. A result of 01–95 is a success; add 1d3 Sanity points for psychiatric medications. On a result of 96–00, the character rebels against taking drugs. He loses 1d6 Sanity points, and no progress can be made that month.

WANDERING AND HOMELESS

If no care is available, the character may become a wandering derelict struggling for survival. The wanderer gains no Sanity points unless he is able to join a group of the homeless and find at least one friend among them. To find a friend, make a Charisma check (DC 15) each month. If a friend appears, add 1 Sanity point per game month.

Each game month the character lives on the street, roll d% for survival. On a result of 01–95, the character survives. On a result of 96–00, the character dies of disease, exposure, or violence (perhaps murder, or worse).

MENTAL DISORDERS

Terminology changes rapidly. A psychiatrist of the 1920s would recognize some of these terms, but others would be baffling to her. Most strikingly, phrases of a hundred years ago such as “demented” or “lunatic” are avoided by modern psychiatrists because of their modern, negative connotations. Below, you will find descriptions of many mental disorders, from schizophrenia to various personality disorders. Where appropriate, suggested modifiers to characters’ attacks, saves, checks, and abilities are also given. Keep in mind that as psychological science progresses, some of these conditions may undergo redefinition or be found to have other causes, such as chemical imbalances or genetic disorders.

ANXIETY DISORDERS

Generalized Anxiety Disorder: The character suffers from a variety of physical and emotional symptoms that can be grouped into certain categories.

DANGEROUSNESS CRITERIA

When a person seems at risk to harm himself or others, and apparently cannot care for himself, a medical doctor can certify that the individual should undergo psychiatric assessment or become an involuntary patient. With this affirmation, often of a comprehensive nature, the state can hold an individual for observation and potentially for treatment.

The duration of institutionalization varies by state, but the term is rarely less than 60 game days if for a legal assessment, and frequently up to 180 days. This fate is most likely for a character who attempts bodily assault or murder without apparent motive, or who intelligently shams mental disturbance to avoid serious criminal charges. The doctor also can revoke the capacity to manage personal finances, the right to drive an automobile, the right to make treatment decisions, and so on.

DOCTOR SHINY IS IN: AN EXAMPLE

Arrested after breaking into a construction site and attempting to steal dynamite, Harvey Walters keeps babbling about saving the world from a “cult of Cthulhu” and the forces of the Mythos, especially the “evil wizard” Carl Stanford. The court decides to have Harvey assessed by Dr. Shiny, a local psychiatrist.

Motor Tension: Jitteriness, aches, twitches, restlessness, easily startled, easily fatigued, and so on. All attack rolls, Fortitude and Reflex saves, and all checks involving Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution suffer a -2 competence penalty.

Autonomic Hyperactivity: Sweating, racing heart, dizziness, clammy hands, flushed or pallid face, rapid pulse and respiration even when at rest, and so on. All attack rolls, saves, and checks suffer a -2 competence penalty.

Expectations of Doom: Anxieties, worries, fears, and especially anticipations of misfortune. All attack rolls, saves, and checks suffer a -2 morale penalty.

Vigilance: Distractible, inability to focus, insomnia, irritability, impatience. All Will saves and checks dealing with Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma suffer a -4 morale penalty.

Panic Disorder (Panic Attack): This illness is marked by a discrete period of fear in which symptoms develop rapidly. Within minutes palpitation, sweating, trembling, difficulty in breathing, and so on appear, strong enough that the person fears immediate death or insanity. Burdened with the recurrence of these episodes, she fears their return. This often leads to a developing agoraphobia (see below).

Agoraphobia (Fear of Open Places): The character becomes very nervous outside familiar surroundings and needs a successful Will save (DC 15) in order to leave home or engage socially. May be linked to panic disorder (see above) or to a related phobia (see below), such as uranophobia (fear of the sky), barophobia (fear of loss of gravity), or xenophobia (fear of strangers).

Dr. Shiny listens carefully during an interview, then decides to make Harvey an involuntary patient for three reasons:

- Harvey poses a risk to others, in the person of Carl Stanford;
- Harvey poses a danger to himself, in stealing the dynamite and blasting caps; and
- Harvey has a psychiatric disorder, manifesting in delusions concerning a “cult of Cthulhu.”

During his research, Dr. Shiny learns that Harvey has been in five car accidents involving chases recently, as well as one hit-and-run. Of the last, Harvey explains that he had to run over an evil cultist. Tsk-tsk! Dr. Shiny therefore also declares Harvey unfit to drive. He finds that Harvey is financially competent, able to explain all his assets and how he earns money, so Harvey retains the right to continue to manage his own financial affairs. Nonetheless, Harvey Walters is committed to the institute for further assessment and eventual treatment.

A few nights later, Harvey escapes from the institute and heads toward Arkham. Naturally, Dr. Shiny wants to protect all involved, so he notifies the police. He also calls Carl Stanford regarding the escape.

“Yes, Mr. Stanford, Harvey may be dangerous. . . .”

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder: This illness manifests in one of two main forms, obsessive thoughts or compulsive actions; some characters exhibit both.

Obsessions: The character cannot help thinking about an idea, image, or impulse incessantly, often involving violence and self-doubt. These ideas are frequently repugnant to the character, but they are so strong that during times of stress she may be unable to concentrate on anything else, even if doing so is necessary for her survival. Obsessive impulses can be very dangerous when combined with auditory hallucinations, as the "voices" may urge the character to take some dangerous or hostile course of action.

Compulsions: Ritual actions performed by the character, such as touching a doorway at left, right, and top before passing through it. Though he may agree that the actions are senseless, the need to perform them is overpowering and may last for 1d10 rounds. Even in times of great stress, the character may ignore his survival in order to perform the ritual(s).

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: After a traumatic event, perhaps even years later, the character begins to relive the trauma through persistent thoughts, dreams, and flash-

backs. Correspondingly, the character loses interest in daily activities. She may return to normal once the memories have been thoroughly explored and understood, but that process may take years. Today, quicker clinical treatments exist, such as eye movement desensitization and refocusing, or EMDR. Known as "shell shock" during and in the years following World War I.

Phobia or Mania: The individual persistently fears a particular object or situation. He realizes that the fear is excessive and irrational, but the fear is disturbing enough that he avoids the stimulus. A Will check (DC 15) is required for a character to be able to force himself into (or remain within) the presence of the object of his phobia, and even then all his rolls and checks will be at a -2 morale penalty for as long as the object of fear remains. In severe cases, the object of the phobia is imagined to be omnipresent, perhaps hidden—thus, someone with severe acrophobia (fear of heights) might be frightened when in an enclosed room on the upper story of a building, even if there were no window or way to see how high up the room was. As many phobias exist as one cares to notice or name—the listing in the nearby sidebar are merely some of the more common for *Call of Cthulhu* characters.



Manias are rarer. In a mania, the character is inordinately fond of a particular stimulus and takes great pains to be with it or near it. When the character's sexuality is involved, the mania may be termed a fetish. Thus teratophobia would be an inordinate fear of monsters, while teratophilia would be an unhealthy (possibly sexual) attraction to them. See the nearby phobia listing for ideas.

PHOBIAS

Acrophobia: fear of heights (formerly known as vertigo)

Aerophobia: fear of wind

Agoraphobia: fear of open places (see above)

Ailurophobia: fear of cats

Androphobia: fear of men (males)

Astrophobia: fear of stars

Autophobia: fear of being alone

Bacteriophobia: fear of bacteria ("germs")

Ballistophobia: fear of bullets

Barophobia: fear of loss of gravity

Bathophobia: fear of deep places

Bibliophobia: fear of books

Blennophobia: fear of slime

Brontophobia: fear of thunder

Cenophobia: fear of empty rooms

Chionophobia: fear of snow

Claustrophobia: fear of enclosed spaces.

Demophobia: fear of crowds

Dendrophobia: fear of trees

Entomophobia: fear of insects

Gephyrophobia: fear of crossing bridges

Gynephobia: fear of women (females)

Hamartophobia: fear of sin or of making an error

Haphephobia: fear of being touched

Heliotherapy: fear of sunlight or the sun

Hematophobia: fear of blood or of bleeding

Hydrophobia: fear of water

Hypnophobia: fear of sleep

Iatrophobia: fear of doctors

Ichthyophobia: fear of fish

Maniaphobia: fear of going insane

Monophobia: fear of being alone

Musophobia: fear of mice (and rats)

Necrophobia: fear of dead things

Nyctophobia: fear of night or nightfall

Odontophobia: fear of teeth

Onomatophobia: fear of a certain name, word, or phrase

Ophidiophobia: fear of snakes

Ornithophobia: fear of birds

Pediphobia: fear of children

Phagophobia: fear of eating

Phonophobia: fear of noise, including your own voice

Pyrophobia: fear of fire

Scotophobia: fear of darkness

Spectrophobia: fear of mirrors

Taphephobia: fear of being buried alive

Teratophobia: fear of monsters

Thalassophobia: fear of the sea

Tomophobia: fear of surgery

Uranophobia: fear of the heavens ("the horrible gaping sky!")

Vermiphobia: fear of worms

Xenophobia: fear of foreigners or strangers

Zoophobia: fear of animals

DISSOCIATIVE DISORDERS

Dissociative Amnesia (Psychogenic Amnesia): This is the inability to recall important personal information, brought on by a desire to avoid unpleasant memories. The character must make a Will save (DC 20) to recall such details or the cause of the amnesia. Since the horror of the Mythos is the probable cause of this amnesia, as an optional rule the GM may choose to reset the character's Cthulhu Mythos modifier to zero and her maximum Sanity to 99 while this disorder holds sway: the horror returns when the character's memories do.

Dissociative Fugue: The character flees from home or work and cannot recall her past. Once the flight halts, the character may assume an entirely new identity.

Dissociative Identity Disorder (Multiple Personality Disorder, or MPD): The character appears to harbor more than one personality, each of which is dominant at times and has its own distinct behavior, name, and even gender. The player needs to keep track of the character's different personalities. (Each one has the same ability scores and game stats, but different goals, outlooks, and attitudes.)

EATING DISORDERS

Since nearly all such cases are diagnosed in the United States and Canada, anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa might be classified as cultural syndromes. They are conditions that may continue for many years, sometimes to the considerable danger of the patient.

Anorexia Nervosa: The character has an overpowering fear of becoming fat and consequently loses weight, as well as Constitution (at a rate of 1d3 points per week). Even when skin and bones, the character continues to see herself as "too fat." Without intervention, she may literally starve herself to death.

Bulimia Nervosa: The character frequently eats high caloric food during secret binges. An eating episode may continue until abdominal cramping or self-induced vomiting occurs. Feelings of depression and guilt frequently follow such episodes.

IMPULSE CONTROL DISORDERS

These include compulsive gambling, pathological lying, kleptomania (compulsive thieving), and pyromania (the compulsion to set fires).

Intermittent Explosive Disorder: The character is recognizably impulsive and aggressive, and at times gives way to uncontrollable rages that result in assault or destruction of property.

MOOD DISORDERS

Depression: Symptoms of this illness include changes in appetite, weight gain or loss, too much or too little sleep, persistent feeling of tiredness or sluggishness, and feelings of worthlessness or guilt, leading in severe cases to hallucinations, delusions, stupor, or thoughts of suicide. All attack rolls, saves, and checks suffer a -4 morale penalty. A predisposition to use alcohol or other substances in an attempt at self-medication exists. A character suffering from severe chronic depression may give up virtually all effort from feelings of hopelessness—for

example, deciding not to get out of bed for two years. Characters suffering from deep, acute depression may need to be put on suicide watch.

Mania: The character has a fairly constant euphoric or possibly irritable mood. Symptoms include a general increase in activity, garrulousness, increased self-esteem to the point of delusion, decreased need for sleep, being easily distracted, willingness for dangerous or imprudent activities such as reckless driving, delusions, hallucinations, and bizarre behavior. All attack rolls, saves, and checks suffer a -4 morale penalty. A predisposition exists to use alcohol or other substances in an attempt at self-medication.

Bipolar Mood Disorder: The character oscillates between mood states for up to weeks at a time, sometimes rapidly switching from one to another. Formerly known as manic-depressive.

PERSONALITY DISORDERS

These long-term disorders have almost constant effects on a character's behavior, making it difficult for him to interact with others and often making him unpleasant to be around as well. This is an important point to keep in mind when roleplaying—few players want to spend time with another player character suffering from a personality disorder.

In game terms, the character has a -4 penalty to all Charisma-based skill checks. In addition, NPC attitudes are shifted on Table 10-1: Attitude Adjustment (page 226). When the table is used, the player must make a Charisma check for the character. With a successful check, NPCs become more hostile by one category; on a failed check, NPCs become more hostile by two categories.

Personality disorders may fall into any of the following categories.

Antisocial: Short-sighted and reckless behavior, habitual liar, confrontational, fails to meet obligations (job, bills, relationships), disregards rights and feelings of others.

Avoidant: Oversensitive to rejection, low self-esteem, socially withdrawn.

Borderline: Rapid mood shifts, impulsive, unable to control temper, chronic boredom.

Compulsive: Perfectionist, authoritarian, indecisive through fear of making mistakes, difficulty expressing emotions.

Dependent: Lacks self-confidence; seeks another to look up to, follow, and subordinate herself to ("codependent").

Histrionic: Overly dramatic, craves attention and excitement, overacts, displays temper tantrums, may threaten suicide if thwarted.

Narcissistic: Exaggerated sense of self-importance, craves attention and admiration, considers others' rights and feelings as of less importance than his own.

Passive-aggressive: Procrastinator, stubborn, intentionally forgetful, deliberately inefficient. Sabotages own performance on a regular basis.

Paranoid: Jealous, easily offended, suspicious, humorless, secretive, vigilant; exaggerates magnitude of offenses, refuses to accept blame.

Schizoid: Emotionally cold, aloof, has few friends; indifferent to praise or criticism.

Gamemasters should know, while these traits may make for an interesting NPC from whom the players must extract information or a favor, their antisocial

SLEEP DISORDERS

These include insomnia (character has difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep) and narcolepsy (character frequently falls asleep, almost anywhere and at inappropriate times). Characters performing demanding tasks such as driving a car or flying a plane may, when stressed, need Concentration checks (DC 15) to stay awake and not put themselves in a dangerous situation.

Night Terrors: A sleeping character wakes after several hours of sleep, usually screaming in terror. Pulse and breathing are rapid, pupils are dilated, and his hair stands on end. The character is confused and hard to calm down. Night terrors are similar to normal nightmares, but much more intense and disruptive.

Somnambulism: Sleepwalking. As with night terrors, this behavior occurs in the first few hours of sleep. An episode may last up to 30 minutes. During the episode, the character's face is blank and staring, and she can be roused only with difficulty. Once awake, she recalls nothing of the activity.

SOMATOFORM DISORDERS

Somatization Disorder: The character suffers a psychosomatic condition, with possible symptoms ranging from dizziness and impotence to blindness or intense pain. Medicine cannot identify any physical cause for the symptoms, but the character does not believe they represent a specific disease. All attack rolls, saves, and checks suffer a -2 competence penalty.

Conversion Disorder: The character reports physical dysfunctions suggesting a physical disorder but, though involuntary, the symptoms provide a way to avoid something undesirable or to garner attention and caring (Munchausenism). Symptoms range from painful headaches to paralysis or blindness. In Reverse Munchausenism, the character projects ill health onto others and may even arrange injuries or illnesses for them so that she may take care of them. All attack rolls, saves, and checks suffer a -2 competence penalty.

Hypochondriasis: Character believes she suffers from a serious disease. No physical cause for reported symptoms can be found, but the character continues to believe the disease or condition exists, often with serious consequences to her normal life.

Body Dysmorphic Disorder: Character suffers from perceived flaws in appearance, usually of the face, or of the hips or legs. Behavior may alter in unexpected ways to cover up the flaws or to calm anxieties.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE DISORDERS

The character finds solace in using a drug, becomes physically addicted, and spends much time maintaining, concealing, and indulging the habit. Drugs include alcohol, amphetamines, cocaine, hallucinogens, marijuana, nicotine, opium (especially morphine and heroin), sedatives, the Plutonian drug, space mead, thag weed, and so on.

A character under the sway of such a substance should feel the personal struggle daily. Will saving throws might be used to resist or succumb symbolically to cravings, especially just before periods of stress (for

cial nature makes them ill-suited for party members.

PSYCHOSEXUAL DISORDERS

This is an exceedingly diverse group, constantly undergoing redefinition. (Up until the 1960s, homosexuality was believed to be a mental disease.) Recognizable disorders include transsexualism (a belief that one is actually a member of the opposite sex), impaired sexual desire or function, nymphomania and satyriasis (inordinate and uncontrollable sexual appetite in women and men, respectively), and paraphilia (requirement of an abnormal sexual stimulus, such as sadism, masochism, necrophilia, pedophilia, exhibitionism, voyeurism, fetishism, or bestiality).

Most of these disorders could make players of the afflicted characters uncomfortable and thus are not appropriate for most roleplaying groups, although they can make for striking (if unpleasant) NPCs.

SCHIZOPHRENIA AND OTHER PSYCHOTIC DISORDERS

A psychotic character experiences a break with reality. Symptoms can include delusions, hallucinations, and cognitive impairment. In general, psychiatric medications may be of high value in treating such disorders. Note, however, that many psychotic characters suffer from the delusion that nothing is wrong with them and hence feel no need to take their medication. Beyond exhibiting the symptomatic behaviors, those who lack appropriate medications should also suffer skill reductions while the effect is strong.

Schizophrenia (schizophreniform disorder, dementia praecox): Mental concentration greatly diminishes; halve all modifiers for skills requiring concentration. Symptoms include bizarre delusions, paranoia, auditory hallucinations ("hearing voices"), incoherent speech, emotional detachment, social withdrawal, bizarre behavior, and a lack of the sense of self.

A schizophrenic character may belong to one of the following categories.

Undifferentiated: Impaired cognitive function, emotional detachment.

Disorganized: Inappropriate behavior, shallow emotional responses, hallucinations.

Catatonic: Mutism (loss of ability to talk), extreme compliance, absence of all voluntary movements, complete immobility ("statism").

Paranoid: Delusions of persecution, illogical thinking, hallucinations.

Symptoms from more than one type can occur in the same individual, along with mood disorders (see above). For example, catatonic schizophrenics sometimes have manic episodes of extreme activity alternating with periods of complete withdrawal. Schizophrenia brought on by sudden stress is called acute schizophrenia; player characters who go insane and babble of vast global conspiracies will usually be diagnosed as suffering from "acute paranoid schizophrenia."

example, just before a confrontation or likely battle with evil cultists). All attack rolls, saves, and checks suffer a -2 morale penalty because of withdrawal symptoms. Sanity losses could occur from binges or bad trips. Some characters might find that drugs promote communication with alien entities and gods, and that dreams about them become ever more vivid and horrifying. Conversely, such substances might function as medications, deadening a character's fears and offering temporary defenses against Sanity loss.

See the nearby sidebar for abused substances that often lead to substance-related disorders.

OTHER DISORDERS

Other disorders exist in common parlance, but most of these are actually symptoms or specific instances of disorders already mentioned above. These include quixotism (seeing the supernatural everywhere, even in the most mundane surroundings), panzaism (seeing the most extraordinary events as ordinary and rational), and megalomania (delusions of power, wealth, fame, and ability). Use or ignore these as suits your own campaign, or invent new categories of madness to reflect the chaos that lies just below the brittle surface of Lovecraft's world.

A PSYCHIATRIC GLOSSARY

Affect—the external expression of a patient's mood (sadness, anger, joy, fear). May be inconsistent with patient's mood, depending on the disorder.

Anorexia—loss or decrease of appetite.

Catatonia—various strong motor anomalies, for instance catatonic stupor (slowed activity to the point of immobilization); cereflexibilitas (the person can be molded into strange postures that are maintained), and catatonic excitement (agitated, purposeless movements).

ADDICTIONS (SUBSTANCE-RELATED DISORDERS)

Substance abuse occurs in all segments of all societies. By definition, abuse indicates decreased work or school performance, accidents, intoxication while working or driving, absenteeism, violent crime, or theft. Urine and blood tests can confirm suspected abuse. Substance use may worsen or mimic other psychiatric disorders relating to depression, anxiety, mania, or psychosis.

Many people successfully use substances recreationally, without substantial or even observable changes to their lives. A sizable fraction of users are not so fortunate. Their lives change, as they increasingly come to depend on one or more such substances.

Alcohol, amphetamines, cocaine, and the opiates are addictive substances most frequently resorted to in earlier game eras. They and more are abused in the present day.

Abuse often leads to dependence, which is characterized by developing tolerance (thus requiring a larger dose), withdrawal symptoms, and a pattern of increasing procurement of the substance. Dependence may be emotional and social in context.

Therapy includes making sure someone hasn't overdosed, ruling out other substances possibly present in the blood, and medical support. Long-term treatment ("drying out") lasts six months to a year, with the goal of creating longer and longer periods of abstinence.

Alcohol: Symptoms include poor judgment, talkativeness, mood changes, aggression, impaired attention, and blackouts (amnesialike states). Use can also cause a flushed face, impaired coordination, and slurred speech. Withdrawal can cause mild shakiness, hangovers, and other symptoms. Delirium tremens can include seizures and delirium requiring active medical intervention.

Compulsion—the need to perform an act repetitively, including various personal rituals, dipsomania, kleptomania, nymphomania, satyriasis, trichotillomania (pulling out hair), and so on.

Delirium—a reversible syndrome of bewilderment, restlessness, confusion, and disorientation, associated with fear and hallucinations, all caused by some underlying medical condition.

Delusion—a firmly fixed false belief, one not based in reality. It can be bizarre, as in schizophrenia, or systematized as in delusional disorders.

Dementia—a loss of cognitive function, often first manifesting in memory loss.

Depersonalization—subjective feeling of being unreal, or unfamiliar to self.

Derealization—a subjective feeling that the environment is strange or unreal; for instance, feeling the world to be a stage or a two-dimensional painting.

Dissociation—confusion in the sense of self and identity.

Formication—the feeling that insects are crawling all over one's body, a tactile hallucination caused by

LSD, Mushrooms, Peyote: Duration 8–12 hours of high with flashbacks after abstinence, visual hallucinations, paranoid thoughts, false sense of achievement and strength, suicidal or homicidal tendencies, depersonalization, derealization. Treatment requires talking down; for severe agitation, sedatives or antipsychotics plus restraints may be needed. Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) was first synthesized in 1943 and thus is not present in earlier eras.

Amphetamines and Cocaine: User may be alert, talkative, euphoric, hyperactive, irritable, aggressive, agitated, sometimes paranoid. There may be visual and tactile hallucinations such as formication (the feeling that insects are crawling across your skin). Cocaine use may be quickly followed by a crash phase. Craving for these drugs can last for years.

Opiates (Opium, Morphine, Heroin): Symptoms include euphoria, drowsiness, anorexia, lessened sex drive, hyperactivity, and passivity; physically, nausea and slow heart rate. In the 1890s, most addicts smoked opium in pipes, or drank it in solutions (laudanum, cola-wine), or injected it subcutaneously (under the skin, not into a vein); in the modern day, most addicts inject it into a vein for a quicker, more drastic high. In themselves, needle tracks in arms and legs can develop into a medical problem. Treatment is a weaning-off process using methadone, itself highly addictive.

Phencyclidine (PCP, Ketamine, "Special K"): Duration 8–12 hours of high, hallucinations, paranoid thoughts, catatonic state, violent behavior, convulsions, anesthesia (can punch a hand through a windshield and shatter every bone in the arm, but not feel it until the drug wears off). If attempting to talk down such a user, the talker may get his face punched, or more. Isolate until the behavior calms; use antipsychotics if the person is on a rampage. These and similar drugs are new, and exist only in the present era.

sis is less severe than a psychosis. A neurotic character may still be able to function; a psychotic one generally cannot.

Obsession—an idea or thought that constantly intrudes into consciousness.

Paranoia—persistent, consistent, plausible, and ingenious delusions of persecution or jealousy. New information always seems to support the increasing threat of some great conspiracy. Paranoia is more a symptom than a disorder, as it can appear in schizophrenia, mania, and so on.

Psychosis—severe mental illness in which the character suffers thoughts and perceptions that are out of touch with reality. A psychosis is more severe than a neurosis.

Somnambulism—sleepwalking.

Somnolence—abnormal drowsiness.

Synesthesia—sensation caused by another sensation; for instance, seeing sound.

Tic—involuntary spasmodic motor movement.

Trailing Phenomenon—perceptual abnormality associated with hallucinogens in which moving objects are seen in a series of discrete discontinuous images.

Trance—focused attention and altered consciousness, usually seen in hypnosis, dissociative disorders, and ecstatic religious experiences.

cocaine and delirium tremens.

Hallucination—a perception of a sensory stimulus in the absence of sensory stimulus; for instance, seeing or hearing someone who isn't there.

Illusion—the misperception of a sensory stimulus; for instance, seeing the rustling branches of a tree as tentacles.

Logorrhea—copious, coherent, logical speech.

Mania—a mood characterized by elation and increased activity.

Mood—a pervasive feeling that is experienced internally.

Neurosis—symptoms of depression, anxiety, or the like arising from stress. A neuro-

MEDICATIONS AND TREATMENTS

Medications

Antipsychotics: A variety of drugs used for the treatment of schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders. Drugs include chlorpromazine, thioridazine, haloperidol, and newer or specialized ones such as risperidone and clozapine. These drugs are also called neuroleptics, and they can have motor abnormality side effects such as restlessness and erratic body movements. They take a few weeks to begin to reverse the psychosis, but any sedation effects are dose-dependent from the beginning. Stopping the drug in a chronic psychotic condition results in the patient reentering the psychotic state.

Antidepressants: Used to treat depressive symptoms, usually in major depressive episodes. These include Elavil and other tricyclic drugs, Pamate and other monoamine oxidase inhibitors, and Prozac and other selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors. It often takes a month or six weeks to begin to treat a major depressive episode. If the drug is stopped before the episode is over (six months to a year), the patient reexperiences the symptoms.

Mood Stabilizers: Used in bipolar disorders, especially in manic phases, these drugs act as an umbrella to prevent the moods of a person with this illness from swinging too high or low. The classic drug is lithium, followed by various anticonvulsants such as carbamazepine, valproic acid, and gabapentin. Lithium can be very toxic, and if taken as an overdose (or if a person becomes dehydrated, and so on), the patient can enter into seizures and coma.

Anxiolytics: Sedatives used to treat anxiety symptoms. The first ones used were barbiturates such as secobarbital, but they were highly addictive. They were abandoned for benzodiazepines (Valium, and so on), which are addictive as well, but to a lesser degree, and without so many side effects. These drugs are often sold as street drugs, under many names ("Red Devils" is a street term for secobarbital).

Many Others: For movement disorders, beta-blockers, anticholinergics; for dementia, Aracept; for eating disorders, mood stabilizers and antidepressants; for opiate addiction, methadone weaning; and so forth.

Treatments

Electroconvulsive Therapy: Seizure inducements have been used to treat psychosis since the 16th century. Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) was introduced in 1934, first

with injections of camphor to produce seizures and then with electrically induced seizures in 1938. Alternating currents of electricity are passed through the patient's head between two electrodes placed over the temples. This causes unconsciousness and seizures. Though ECT produced good results, it also produced such violent seizures as to routinely fracture patients' bones! With the advent of anesthesia and paralysis drugs in the modern era, patients avoid this problem. In the United States, ECT treats depressive disorders, manic episodes, and other serious disorders in 50,000 to 100,000 patients annually. The main side effect is that patients suffer from short-term memory loss, and often they entirely lose the memories of the hours or days connected with ECT.

Light Therapy (Phototherapy): Used to treat mood symptoms coinciding with seasonal changes. A bright artificial light bathes the patient every day as long as the symptoms last. Response occurs in a few days, the only side effects being occasional headaches, eye strain, or nervousness.

Psychosurgery: Surgical modification of the brain, including lobotomies and cingulotomies. This extreme procedure was widespread in the 1940s and 1950s, then nearly abandoned when antipsychotic drugs were introduced. It is resorted to now only when all else fails.

Biological Therapies, 1936 to Present

1936: Frontal lobotomies (Moniz).

1938: Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) begun (Cerletti and Bini).

1940: Phenytoin introduced as an anticonvulsant (Putnam).

1943: Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) synthesized (Hofmann).

1949: Lithium introduced as mood stabilizer.

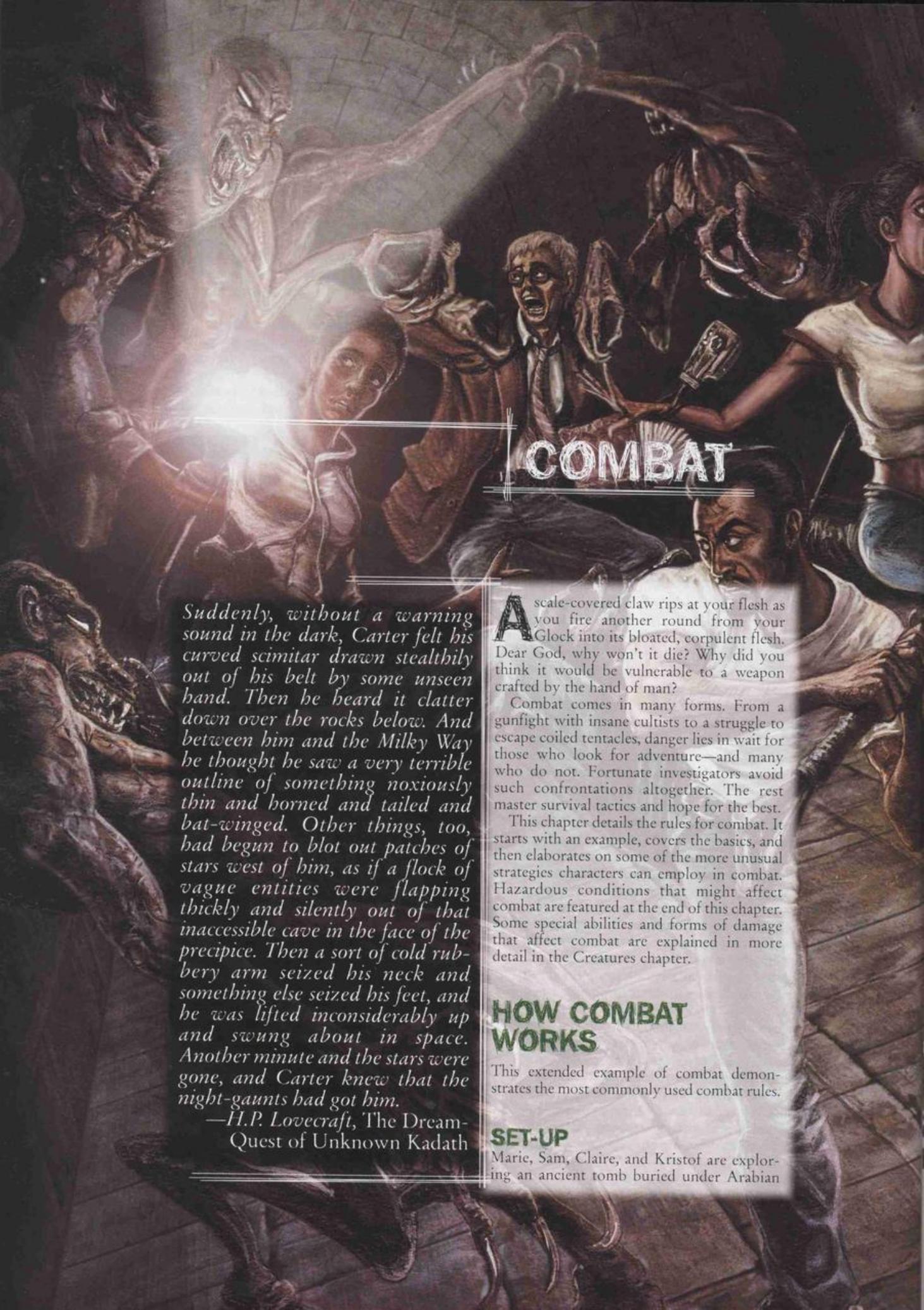
1952: Chlorpromazine introduced as antipsychotic.

1955–1958: Tricyclics and monoamine oxidase inhibitors introduced as antidepressants.

1960: Chlordiazepoxide introduced (minor tranquilizers, benzodiazepines).

1960–present: Introduction of newer and target anxiolytics, antipsychotics, antidepressants, light therapy, and a plethora of other therapies.

Today: New drugs are constantly being moved through the R&D, testing, and approval process. These new therapies are big business.



COMBAT

Suddenly, without a warning sound in the dark, Carter felt his curved scimitar drawn stealthily out of his belt by some unseen hand. Then he heard it clatter down over the rocks below. And between him and the Milky Way he thought he saw a very terrible outline of something noxiously thin and horned and tailed and bat-winged. Other things, too, had begun to blot out patches of stars west of him, as if a flock of vague entities were flapping thickly and silently out of that inaccessible cave in the face of the precipice. Then a sort of cold rubbery arm seized his neck and something else seized his feet, and he was lifted inconsiderably up and swung about in space. Another minute and the stars were gone, and Carter knew that the night-gaunts had got him.

—H.P. Lovecraft, The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath

A scale-covered claw rips at your flesh as you fire another round from your Glock into its bloated, corpulent flesh. Dear God, why won't it die? Why did you think it would be vulnerable to a weapon crafted by the hand of man?

Combat comes in many forms. From a gunfight with insane cultists to a struggle to escape coiled tentacles, danger lies in wait for those who look for adventure—and many who do not. Fortunate investigators avoid such confrontations altogether. The rest master survival tactics and hope for the best.

This chapter details the rules for combat. It starts with an example, covers the basics, and then elaborates on some of the more unusual strategies characters can employ in combat. Hazardous conditions that might affect combat are featured at the end of this chapter. Some special abilities and forms of damage that affect combat are explained in more detail in the Creatures chapter.

HOW COMBAT WORKS

This extended example of combat demonstrates the most commonly used combat rules.

SET-UP

Marie, Sam, Claire, and Kristof are exploring an ancient tomb buried under Arabian

sands. They have unearthed a series of passageways and now stand within a narrow corridor. Fifty feet behind them, there's an intersection of passageways. In front of them, a stone slab at their feet blocks the entrance to an ancient crypt. Sam has been making Strength checks to pry it up with his shovel, and the stone is finally starting to give. The scraping sounds, however, are audible all the way down the passageway.

The GM asks the players to tell him where their characters are, explaining that the corridor is wide enough for them to stand two abreast, if need be. Sam is in front of the entrance to the crypt, Marie and Kristof are to either side of it, and Claire is behind Kristof.

The GM looks at his notes, rolls some dice, and determines that three ghouls have heard Sam opening the crypt. The ghouls shamble around a corner of the intersection. They're 50 feet away from the stone slab on the ground, so they're 40 feet away from Claire, 45 feet away from Kristof, 50 feet away from Sam, and 55 feet away from Marie. The GM starts sketching a rough map of where everyone is standing.

The ghouls know that the investigators are there. The GM needs to know which player characters are aware of the ghouls. Those who are caught unaware will be surprised. The GM asks each player to make a Listen check (DC 9). Kristof and Marie succeed and hear footsteps scraping along the rocks. Sam and Claire fail.

SURPRISE ROUND

During the surprise round, only characters or creatures aware of their enemies can act. Each one can take a move action or an attack action. The ghouls, Kristof, and Marie can all act during the surprise round.

As soon as the characters are aware of the ghouls, they must make Sanity checks. Both Kristof and Marie make their checks before attempting anything else. Kristof rolls a 21 and succeeds. Marie rolls a 92 and fails. Ghouls have a 0/1d6 Sanity point loss, so Kristof loses 0 Sanity points, and the GM rolls a 2 for Marie. Marie is disturbed by the sight of the inhuman creatures, but she also has a few bullets left.

Even though the other investigators cannot act during the surprise round, the GM asks Sam's player and Claire's player to each make a Sanity check. Claire fails. She loses a full 6 points of Sanity at once, enough to render her temporarily insane. Rolling on Table 4-1 in the Sanity chapter, the GM determines that she has fainted.

Then the GM asks Kristof's and Marie's players to make initiative checks. Kristof's initiative modifier is -1 (the same as his Dexterity penalty). Marie's is +6 (she has a +2 Dexterity modifier and the Improved Initiative feat). They get 7 and 19 as their initiative results, respectively. The GM rolls once for all four ghouls (adding their +1 initiative modifier) and gets a result of 12. The order of battle during the surprise round is Marie first, followed by the ghouls, followed by Kristof. Each of the acting investigators can take one attack action or move action during this round.

The GM calls on Marie's player. Marie recognizes the ghouls by their horrid appearance and fetid stench. She's holding Sam's 9mm Glock, but unfortunately, it's only got two bullets left. Marie steps to one side to get a clear line of sight past her friends. Her attack bonus with a pistol is +2 (+0 base attack bonus plus a +2 Dexterity bonus; she has the Weapon Proficiency feat for pistols), so there isn't a nonpro-

ficiency penalty). The ghoul is 55 feet away, or two range increments for the Glock. Marie therefore suffers a range penalty of -4. Because the ghoul has not acted yet, it's flat-footed, and doesn't get to add its Dexterity bonus to its Armor Class.

Marie's player rolls a 17, for an attack result of 15 (17+2-4), well over the ghoul's flat-footed Armor Class of 13. She rolls 1d10 for damage and gets a 9. The ghouls have 13 hit points each, so the wounded ghoul has 4 hit points left. "It staggers and hisses," says the GM, "but it doesn't fall."

Then it's the ghouls' turn. They use this time to close with their victims, moving 30 feet each.

Kristof isn't much good in combat, and his shotgun is out of shells. He steps up to Claire's unconscious body, grabs it as a move action, and then uses a second move action to drag her 15 feet away.

With that, the surprise round ends.

FIRST REGULAR ROUND

Sam must make an initiative check. He gets a 14, so he goes after Marie and before the ghouls. The order of battle is: Marie, Sam, ghouls, Kristof. Claire is unconscious and can't take an action. The GM secretly rolls to see how long Claire will be passed out.

Marie fires again, but misses. She's out of ammo, so she drops the gun and switches to her hunting knife.

Sam moves 10 feet forward to cover Kristof's retreat and guard Claire's unconscious body. Bravely, he hopes that they will attack him rather than her. He hefts his shovel as a weapon and readies an attack against any ghoul that comes close.

On their action, the ghouls are 10 feet away from Sam. Two ghouls charge and attack him. In the 10-foot-wide corridor, only two can fight side by side. The one in the back waits for a chance to join them. The ghouls have a +6 attack bonus on their claw attack rolls (+1 base attack bonus, +3 bonus for Strength, +2 charge bonus for charging). Since they're charging, they can only make one attack each.

Before they can attack, Sam uses his readied action, swinging the edge of his shovel at one of the ghouls directly in front of him. His attack modifier is +3 (+1 base attack bonus, +2 bonus for Strength, and he has the Weapon Proficiency feat for melee weapons). He rolls a 1 and misses.

The ghouls continue with their attacks. Sam's Armor Class is only 11 (+1 Dexterity bonus), but neither charging ghoul hits him. "Their stained claws tear at your clothes," says the GM, "and you can feel the strength behind their blows, but somehow you avoid being hurt."

Kristof attempts to shake Claire to awaken her. He rolls a Heal check (DC 15), but fails. His attempt is a full-round action, so he can't act again until next round.

SECOND REGULAR ROUND

Marie steps in next to Sam and thrusts with her hunting knife at the ghoul she wounded with her pistol. Her attack modifier is -5 (-1 Strength, but since she doesn't have the Weapon Proficiency feat for melee weapons, she gets a -4 for using a knife). The ghoul's Armor Class is penalized by -2 because he charged in the previous round, but Marie still misses. She steps back 5 feet after her attack.

Sam makes another attack with his shovel. He hits the ghoul (whose Armor Class is still penalized from charging) and deals 1d6+2 points of damage. His total is 7, which is enough to seriously wound the ghoul, but not take it out.

The ghoul claws at Sam. Since it did not move, it makes a full attack as a full-round action, allowing it to use both of its claws and its bite attack. It hits with one claw with a roll of a natural 20 on its attack roll. That's a "threat" (a possible critical hit). The GM makes a critical roll (1d20 + its total attack bonus), and the result is 17. Since that would hit Sam, the ghoul's hit is a critical hit.

A ghoul claw normally deals 1d6+3 points of damage and does double damage on critical hits, so the GM rolls 2d6 and adds +6. He gets a result of 10 points of damage, and Sam's hit points drop to 1. That's enough to be considered massive damage. Sam must make a Fort save with a DC of 15 to survive the blow. He makes the save, but with 1 hit point left, he is hurt badly enough that one more hit will easily drop him.

The ghoul that Marie tried to stab curses her, steps forward 5 feet, claws at her, then attempts to bite her. It gnaws on her for 3 points of damage. Marie has 3 hit points left, and the ghoul's special attack requires that they make opposed grapple rolls to see if it hangs on with its bite. The ghoul rolls a 12, but Marie rolls a 15. She avoids its grip and is only grazed.

The rear ghoul is able to step forward now, and does so, lashing out at Sam with all its attacks. Miraculously, they all miss.

Kristof, worried that his companion's bodies might become a warm feast for these creatures, thinks back to his copy of the *R'lyeh Text*. He chants the intonations of an ancient healing ritual while tracing a mystical sigil with his left hand. This normally beneficial spell harms undead. Kristof loses 1 point of Sanity immediately and takes 2 points of temporary Wisdom damage. Since Marie stepped back, there's room for him to get into the thick of things by moving next to her, right behind Sam. He moves 5 feet to reach out with his left hand and make a touch attack against the ghoul fighting Marie. He hits, placing his palm against undead flesh. The spell forces the ghoul to make a Fortitude saving throw. The GM rolls a 15, and it's a failure—Kristof's spell has a DC of 17. The undead ghoul takes 1d8+1 points of damage. Kristof rolls a 8, deals 9 points of damage, and seriously wounds it. The ghoul has 4 hit points left.

THIRD REGULAR ROUND

The GM announces that Claire is now conscious and able to act. Claire rolls for initiative. She'll go right after Marie.

Marie uses a full-round action to withdraw from melee, backing 10 feet away from the ghoul Kristof wounded. Her knuckles are white around the hilt of her knife.

Claire then rushes forward to take Marie's place. She uses her Martial Arts feat to strike for 5 points of damage. The ghoul's rubbery body collapses to the ground.

Sam hits the ghoul he injured previously. He gets a result of 7 points of damage again, which is more than enough to put the second ghoul down. With a sickening crunch, Sam's shovel bashes in the ghoul's head, and it drops.

When you make an attack roll, you roll 1d20 and add your attack bonus. If your result equals the target's Armor Class or better, you hit and deal damage. Different modifiers can affect the attack roll, such as a +1 bonus if you have Weapon Focus with that weapon, a +1 bonus if you're standing above your opponent, a +2 bonus if your opponent is stunned, and so forth. (See Table 5-4: Attack Roll Modifiers, page 72.)

The last ghoul attacks Sam. It makes all its attacks, but misses.

Kristof steps in next to Sam with a crowbar, swings and misses.

FOURTH REGULAR ROUND

Marie gathers her courage and decides to throw her knife from 10 feet away. There's no range penalty, and despite her lack of any proficiency, the blade penetrates the graverobber's cold flesh for 4 points of damage. Marie gets ready to step on its neck and pull her knife out of its rubbery flesh.

Kristof is still disturbed by his loss of Sanity from the spell. Claire is still quite shaken up. Both Sam and Marie are badly hurt. "If there are any more ghouls in this place," Kristof says shakily, "let's run."

COMBAT SEQUENCE

As seen in the example, combat is cyclical. Each character acts in turn in a regular cycle. Generally, combat runs in the following way:

- 1) Each combatant starts the battle flat-footed. Once a combatant acts, he is no longer flat-footed. A flat-footed combatant loses his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class.

- 2) The GM determines which characters are aware of their opponents at the start of the battle. If some, but not all, of the combatants are aware of their opponents, a surprise round occurs before regular rounds begin. Combatants who are aware of their opponents can act in the surprise round, so they roll for initiative. In initiative order (highest to lowest), combatants who started the battle aware of their opponents each take one move action or attack action during the surprise round. Combatants who were unaware do not get to act in the surprise round. If no one or everyone starts the battle aware, there is no surprise round.

- 3) Combatants who have not yet rolled initiative do so. All combatants are now ready to begin their first regular round.

- 4) Combatants act in initiative order.

- 5) When everyone has had a turn, the combatant with the highest initiative acts again. Repeat this process until combat ends.

COMBAT STATISTICS

Several fundamental statistics determine how well you do in combat. This section summarizes these statistics, and the following sections detail how to use them.

ATTACK ROLL

COMBAT BASICS

This one page summarizes the basics of combat. If you're unfamiliar with the d20 rules, this is enough detail to get you started in a fight scene. For now, don't worry about the details.

ROUNDS

Combat is broken up into rounds. Every round, each combatant gets to do something. A round represents 6 seconds in the game world.

INITIATIVE

Before the first round of combat, each player makes an initiative check for her character. The GM makes initiative checks for the monsters or foes. An initiative check is a Dexterity check (1d20+Dexterity modifier). Characters act in order from highest initiative result to lowest, with the check applying to all rounds of the combat (unless a combatant takes an action that changes her initiative).

ATTACKS

You can move and make a single attack in one round. A melee attack is one using a weapon you physically strike an opponent with, such as lunging with a knife or swinging a baseball bat. (A monster's claw attack is also a melee attack.) A ranged attack is one that you use at a distance, such as throwing a rock or firing a pistol.

ATTACK ROLL

To score a hit that deals damage on your attack roll, you must roll the target's Armor Class (AC) or better.

Melee Attack Roll: 1d20 + base attack bonus + Strength modifier + size modifier

Ranged Attack Roll: 1d20 + base attack bonus + Dexterity modifier + size modifier + range penalty

DAMAGE

If you score a hit, roll damage and deduct it from the target's current hit points. Add your Strength modifier to damage from melee and thrown weapons.

WEAPON PROFICIENCY

If a character is not proficient with the type of weapon he's attempting to use, he suffers a -4 penalty on attack rolls with that weapon. All melee weapons (including knives, clubs, baseball bats, and even shovels) require the Weapon Proficiency (melee weapon) feat. The different categories of firearms (such as pistols, rifles, shotguns,

if you're using a melee weapon in your off hand, you add half your Strength bonus instead. If you're wielding a melee weapon with both hands, add one and one-half times your Strength bonus to the damage.

ARMOR CLASS

A character's Armor Class is the result you need to get on your attack roll to hit that character in combat.

Armor Class = 10 + Dexterity modifier + size modifier (+ armor bonus, if any)

HIT POINTS

Hit points represent how much damage a character can take before falling unconscious or dying.

ATTACK OPTIONS

When attacking, you have several basic options:

Attack: You can move up to your speed and make a single attack, or attack and then move.

Charge: When making a charge, you move in a straight line for up to double your speed and then make one attack with a +2 charge bonus on the attack roll. You suffer a -2 penalty to your Armor Class until your next action.

Full Attack: Some characters can strike more than once each melee round, but only when making a full attack. Other than taking a 5-foot step, you can't move or do anything else when you make a full attack. (See Full Attack, page 66.)

MOVEMENT

Each character has a speed measured in feet. In one round, you can move that distance and attack. You can move before or after attacking.

In one round, you can make a double move instead—this lets you move double your speed.

If you move adjacent to an opponent—that is, if you move within 5 feet of where he's standing—you must stop moving. While you are adjacent to an opponent, you cannot move more than 5 feet unless you're moving directly away from him.

If all Hell breaks loose, run. Run-

ning lets you move quadruple your speed as a full-round action. When running, you must move or less travel in a straight line.

OTHER ACTIONS

During a round of combat, you can take:

- a move action and an attack action;
- an attack action and a move action;
- two move actions (a “double move”);
- or, a full-round action.

These terms are defined in the Action Types sidebar, page 21.

SPELLS

In one round, you can move and cast a single 1-action spell. You cannot cast a spell while adjacent to an opponent without a Concentration check (DC 20).

DEATH, DYING, AND HEALING

Your hit points represent how much damage you can take before being disabled, knocked unconscious, or killed.

0 Hit Points: If your hit points drop to 0, you are disabled. You can only take one attack action or move action on your next turn. If you attempt any strenuous activity, you take 1 point of damage after completing that action.

-1 to -9 Hit Points: If your hit points drop to from -1 to -9 hit points, you're unconscious and dying. You lose 1 hit point per round. Each round, before losing that hit point, you have a 10% chance to stabilize. While stabilized, you're still unconscious. Each hour, you have a 10% chance to regain consciousness; if you don't, you lose 1 hit point instead.

-10 Hit Points: If your hit points fall to -10 or below, you're dead.

Healing: You can stop a dying character's loss of hit points with a successful Heal check (DC 15).

MINIATURES

If you use miniatures to keep track of where the characters and monsters are, use a scale of 1 inch = 5 feet.

and submachine guns) have separate Weapon Proficiency feats. Unarmed strikes don't require a Weapon Proficiency feat, although some feats, such as Martial Artist, can make them more effective. Thrown weapons, such as throwing knives and grenades, require Weapon Proficiency (thrown weapons). For more details, see the Weapon Proficiency feat, page 43.

ATTACK BONUS

Your attack bonus with a melee weapon is:

Base attack bonus + Strength modifier + size modifier

With a ranged weapon, your attack bonus is:

Base attack bonus + Dexterity modifier + size modifier + range penalty

Strength Modifier: Strength helps you swing a weapon harder and faster, so your Strength modifier applies to melee attack rolls.

Dexterity Modifier: Since Dexterity measures coordination and steadiness, your Dexterity modifier applies to attacks with ranged weapons.

Size Modifier: The smaller you are, the bigger other creatures are relative to you. A human is a big target to a dog, just as an elder thing is a big target to a human. Since this same size modifier applies to Armor Class, two creatures of the same size strike each other normally, regardless of what size they actually are. Size modifiers are as follows: Colossal -8, Gargantuan -4, Huge -2, Large -1, Medium-size +0, Small +1, Tiny +2, Diminutive +4, Fine +8.

Range Penalty: The range penalty with a ranged weapon depends on what weapon you're using and how far away the target is. All ranged weapons have a range increment, such as 10 feet for a thrown dagger or 20 feet for a simple handgun (see the Equipment chapter). Any attack from a distance of less than one range increment is not penalized for range, so a bullet from a .30-06 rifle (range increment 200 feet) can strike at enemies up to 199 feet away with no penalty. However, each full range increment adds a cumulative -2 penalty to the attack roll. A character firing that rifle at a target 620 feet away suffers a -6 attack penalty (because 620 feet is at least three range increments, but not four increments).

Thrown weapons, such as throwing axes, have a maximum range of five range increments. Projectile weapons, such as rifles, can shoot up to ten increments.

DAMAGE

When you hit with a weapon, you deal damage according to the type of weapon (see the Equipment chapter). Unarmed strikes and the natural physical attack forms of creatures are considered to deal weapon damage for the purposes of effects that give you a bonus to weapon damage.

Minimum Weapon Damage: If penalties to damage bring the damage result below 1, a hit still deals 1 point of damage.

Strength Bonus: When you hit with a weapon, you add your Strength modifier to damage with melee and thrown weapons. Apply neither a Strength bonus nor a Strength penalty to damage from a firearm. (If your campaign includes primitive ranged weapons, such as bows and slings, you can't apply a Strength bonus, but you can apply a Strength penalty.)

If you have a Strength bonus (not a penalty), you sometimes add more than or less than the bonus:

Off-Hand Weapon: When you deal damage with a melee weapon in your off hand, you add only one-half of your Strength bonus.

Wielding a Weapon Two-Handed:

When you deal damage with a melee weapon that you are wielding two-handed, you add one and one-half times your Strength bonus.

Multiplying Damage: Sometimes you multiply damage by some factor, such as when you score a critical hit. Roll the damage (with all modifiers) multiple times and total the results. When you multiply damage more than once, each multiplier works off the original, unmultiplied damage.

Ability Score Damage: Certain creatures and magical effects, as well as the use of magical spells, can cause temporary ability damage (a reduction to an ability score) or permanent ability drain. Points lost to temporary damage return at the rate of 1 point per day (or double that if the character gets "complete rest," doing nothing for the entire day) for each damaged ability.

While any loss is debilitating, losing all points in an ability score can be devastating.

- Strength 0 means that the character cannot move at all. He lies helpless on the ground.
- Dexterity 0 means that the character cannot move at all. He stands motionless, rigid, and helpless.
- Constitution 0 means that the character is dead.
- Intelligence 0 means that the character cannot think. He is helpless and unconscious in a comalike stupor.
- Wisdom 0 means that the character is helpless and withdrawn into a deep sleep filled with nightmares.
- Charisma 0 means that the character is helpless and withdrawn into a catatonic, comalike stupor.

Keeping track of negative ability score points is never necessary. A character's ability score can't drop below 0.

Having a 0 score in an ability is different from having no ability score whatsoever. For instance, a ghost has no Strength score, not a Strength score of 0. The ghost can move, but it can't act physically against other objects.

Constitution Loss and Hit Points: If a character's Constitution score drops, either from temporary damage or permanent drain, he loses 1 hit point per Hit Die for every point by which his Constitution modifier drops.

For example, when Sam is a 7th level character, he is hit by poison, and his Constitution temporarily drops from 16 to 13. His bonus drops from +3 to +1, so he loses 14 hit points. A minute later, the poison deals another 8 points of temporary Constitution damage, dropping his score to 5 and his modifier from +1 to -3. He loses another 28 hit points (a total of 42 hit points lost for an overall 6 point drop in his Con modifier).

A full hit point score can't drop below 1 per Hit Die. As a 7th-level character, Claire has 22 hit points. Even if her Constitution falls to 1, she'll still have at least 7 hit points (less any damage she has taken).

Intelligence Loss and Skill Points: If a character's Intelligence score drops enough to lower his Intelligence modifier (such as when he's casting certain spells), his ability modifier to Int-based skills drops as well. However, temporary Intelligence loss does not reduce his total skill points. Permanent Intelligence drain does.

Wisdom Loss and Sanity: Wisdom loss, whether permanent or temporary, does not decrease a character's Sanity score. However, if Wisdom drops enough to lower a character's Wisdom modifier, her ability modifier to Wisdom-based skills drops as well.

ARMOR CLASS

Your Armor Class trait represents how hard it is for opponents to land a solid, damaging blow on you. It's the attack roll result that an opponent needs to achieve to hit you. The average, unarmored person has a Armor Class of 10. Your Armor Class is equal to the following:

$$10 + \text{Dexterity modifier} + \text{size modifier}$$

Armor Bonuses: Some kinds of armor provide an armor bonus to your Armor Class. This bonus represents their ability to protect you from blows. If you're using a shield (whether it was requisitioned for crowd control or salvaged from a medieval armory), the shield gives a separate shield bonus.

Dexterity Modifier: If your Dexterity is high, you are particularly adept at dodging blows. If your Dexterity is low, you are particularly inept at it. That's why you apply your Dexterity modifier to your Armor Class.

Sometimes you can't use your Dexterity bonus (if you have one). The bonus you get for a high Dexterity represents your ability to dodge incoming attacks. If you can't react to a blow, you can't use your Dexterity bonus to Armor Class. For example, you can lose your Dexterity bonus when an invisible fire vampire attacks you, you're hanging on for dear life to the face of a crumbling cliff, or you're caught flat-footed at the beginning of a combat.

Size Modifier: The bigger a creature is, the easier it is to hit in combat. The smaller it is, the harder it is to hit. Since this same modifier applies to attack rolls, a dog, for example, doesn't have a hard time hitting another dog. Size modifiers are as follows: Colossal -8, Gargantuan -4, Huge -2, Large -1, Medium-size +0, Small +1, Tiny +2, Diminutive +4, Fine +8.

Dodge Feat: The Dodge feat (page 40) improves your Armor Class by +1 against a single opponent.

Natural Armor: Natural armor improves your Armor Class. People don't have natural armor, which usually consists of scales, fur, or layers of huge muscles. However, an investigator might get natural armor from a spell that transforms his flesh such as *skin of sedeskar*, or an alien artifact such as a mi-go's living armor.

Touch Attacks: Some attacks disregard armor, including shields and natural armor. In these cases, the attacker makes a touch attack roll (either a ranged touch attack roll or a melee touch attack roll). The attacker makes her attack roll as normal, but your Armor Class does

not include any armor bonus, shield bonus, or natural armor bonus. Your size modifier and Dexterity modifier apply normally.

HIT POINTS

Your hit points tell you how much punishment you can take before dropping. Your hit points are based on your level and are modified by your Constitution modifier.

When your hit point total reaches 0, you're disabled. When it reaches -1, you're dying. When it gets to -10, your problems are over—you're dead (see Injury and Death, page 68).

SPEED

Your speed tells you how far you can move in a round and still do something, such as attacking or casting a spell.

Human characters move 30 feet in a round. If you take a double move action in a round, you can move up to double your normal speed. If you run, you can move up to quadruple your normal speed as a full-round action.

SAVING THROWS

As an investigator of the unknown, you have more to worry about than taking damage. You may also have to face the magical power of a *shriveling* spell, the freezing winds of the gnoph-keh, or the poison of a Leng spider.

Generally, when you are subjected to an unusual or magical attack, you get a saving throw to avoid or reduce the effect. Like an attack roll, a saving throw is 1d20 roll plus a bonus based on your level and an ability score. Your saving throw bonus is:

$$\text{Saving Throw} = \text{base save bonus} + \text{ability modifier}$$

Three types of saving throws exist: Fortitude saves, Reflex saves, and Will saves.

Fortitude: These saves measure your ability to stand up to massive physical punishment or attacks against your vitality and health, such as poison, paralysis, and magic that causes instant death. You can apply your Constitution modifier to your Fortitude saving throws. Fortitude saves can be made against attacks or effects such as poison, disease, and paralysis.

$$\text{Fortitude Saving Throw: } 1d20 + \text{base save bonus} + \text{Constitution modifier}$$

Reflex: These saves test your ability to dodge massive attacks, such as the goo spewed forth by a dhole. You can apply your Dexterity modifier to your Reflex saving throws. Reflex saves can be made against attacks or effects such as pit traps, catching on fire, and explosions.

GM ADVICE: SAVE OR CHECK?

A character slips and falls from the roof of Waite Mansion. He tries to catch himself on the edge, while another investigator reaches forward, attempting to catch him. Are these Reflex saves or Dexterity checks?

The answer is "both." The character attempting to save himself makes a Reflex save. The character trying to grab him makes a Dexterity check.

Concept #1: Ability checks are used to accomplish something, while saves are used to avoid something.

Concept #2: Ability checks don't always reflect level. Saves always do. This is a subtle but important point. If something seems like the task should be the same for everyone, just based on ability, use a check. For example, forcing open a door is merely a reflection of the Strength score.

Concept #3: The middle ground between a save and an ability check is a skill check, such as a Climb check to get back up from the edge of a roof. A Climb check reflects level only if the character has ranks in the skill.

Reflex Saving Throw: 1d20 + base save bonus + Dexterity modifier

Will: These saves reflect your resistance to mental influence and domination, as well as many magical effects. Apply your Wisdom modifier to your Will saving throws. Will saves can be made against attacks or effects such as the *dominate person* spell or the mind attacks of an Insect from Shaggai.

Will Saving Throw: 1d20 + base save bonus + Wisdom modifier

Saving Throw Difficulty Class: The DC for a save is determined by the attack itself. For example, a Leng spider's poison allows a Fortitude save against DC 22, while Cthuga's flame burst allows a Reflex save against DC 31.

INITIATIVE

Each round, each combatant gets to do something. The combatants' initiative checks determine the order in which they act, from highest to lowest.

Initiative Checks: At the start of a battle, each combatant makes a single initiative check. An initiative check is a Dexterity check. The GM finds out what order characters are acting in, counting down from highest result to lowest. Each character acts in turn, with the check applying to all rounds of the combat (unless a character takes an action that results in her initiative changing; see Special Initiative Actions, page 75). Usually, the GM writes the names of the characters down in initiative order so that on subsequent rounds, he can move quickly from one character to the next. If two or more combatants have the same initiative check result, the combatants who are tied go in order of Dexterity (highest first). If there is still a tie, flip a coin.

Creature Initiative: Typically, the GM makes a single initiative check for groups of creatures or NPCs. At the GM's option, however, he can make separate initiative checks for individual creatures. For instance, the GM may make one initiative check for an evil cultist and another check for the three nightguards she has summoned.

Flat-Footed: At the start of a battle, before you have had a chance to act (specifically, before your first regular turn in the initiative order), you are flat-footed. You can't use your Dexterity bonus to Armor Class (if any) while flat-footed.

SURPRISE

When a combat starts, if you were not aware of your enemies and they were aware of you, you're surprised.

HOW SURPRISE WORKS

Sam is scouting 40 feet ahead of his companions as they make their way through some thick woods on the trail of a murderer. Sam hears something coming toward him from a thick copse of trees ahead; his companions don't. Before he can raise a hand to signal his companions, an axe-wielding lunatic runs out of the woods. Fortunately, Sam has his shotgun ready.

The lunatic and Sam's friends are

surprised, but Sam is not. He can take a move action or an attack action before anyone else can do anything. Because the murderer is known to be hopelessly insane, Sam fires his shotgun. Since the man is surprised, he does not get his +2 Dexterity bonus to Armor Class. Sam's blast hits, but does not drop the madman. With that, the surprise round ends and the first regular round begins. If Sam's initiative result is better than the murderer's, Sam can act again before the lunatic does (and the axe-toting fiend will still be flat-footed).

AWARENESS AND SURPRISE

Sometimes all the combatants on a side are aware of the enemies, sometimes none are, and sometimes only some of them are.

Determining Awareness: The GM determines who is aware of whom at the start of a battle. She may call for Listen checks, Spot checks, or other checks to see how aware the PCs are of the enemy. Some example situations:

- The group comes to a door in an old, abandoned factory. The GM knows that the shoggoth on the other side of the door can sense the party. Claire listens at the door, hears gurgling and whistling, and then tries to describe it to the rest of the group. Kristof grips his elder sign tightly while Sam breaks the door open. Both sides are aware; neither is surprised. The characters and shoggoth make initiative checks, and the battle begins.
- The group is exploring a mine that's recently been evacuated because of some mysterious accidents. Servants of Glaaki are lurking in hiding places, waiting for the right time to strike. After Marie spots one of the servants, the shambling undead creatures let out a shriek and charge. The Servants and Marie each get a move action or an attack action during the surprise round. The Servants that are close enough can attack the characters. Others can move to try to put themselves in advantageous positions or throw rocks at the flat-footed characters. Marie can run, attack, or take some other action. After the surprise round, the first regular round begins.
- Kristof is advancing down a dark alley, using a flashlight to light the way. At the end of the alley, a pair of thugs look for an easy victim, and decide to pick on the pale scholar. They leap out with knives drawn and demand that he give them his money. That's the surprise round. After their appearance, the first regular round begins. Kristof will be in a tough spot until he starts chanting spells.

The Surprise Round: If some but not all the combatants are aware of their opponents, a surprise round happens before regular rounds begin. The combatants who are aware of the opponents can act in the surprise round, so they roll for initiative. In initiative order (highest to lowest), combatants who started the battle aware of their opponents each take a move action or an attack action during the surprise round. If no one or everyone is surprised, a surprise round does not occur.

Unaware Combatants: Combatants who are unaware at the start of battle do not get to act in the surprise round. Unaware combatants are still flat-footed because they have not acted yet. Because of this, they lose any Dexterity bonus to Armor Class.

ACTIONS IN COMBAT

The fundamental actions of moving, attacking, and casting spells cover most of what you want to do in a battle. They're all described here. Other, more specialized options are touched on in Table 5-2: Other Actions (page 68), explained later in Special Initiative Actions (page 75), and clarified in Special Attacks and Damage (page 75).

THE COMBAT ROUND

Each round represents about 6 seconds in the game world. In the real world, a round is an opportunity for each character involved in a combat to act. Anything a person could reasonably do in 6 seconds, your character can do in 1 round. The most common combat actions that can be performed in 1 round—attacking, casting a spell, moving, charging, and others—are described in detail on the following pages.

Each round begins with the character with the highest initiative result and then proceeds, in initiative order, from there. Each round uses the same initiative order. When a character's turn comes up in the initiative sequence, that character performs his action for that round. (For exceptions, see Special Initiative Actions, page 75.)

For almost all purposes, there is no relevance to the end of a round or the beginning of a round. The term "round" works like the word "month." A month can mean either a calendar month or a span of time from a day in one month to the same day the next month. In the same way, a round can be a segment of game time starting with the first character to act and ending with the last, but it usually means a span of time from 1 round to the same initiative number (or "initiative count") in the next round. Effects that last a certain number of rounds end just before the same initiative count that they began on.

ACTION TYPES

An action's type essentially tells you how long it takes to perform within the framework of a 6-second round. *Call of Cthulhu* has four types of actions: free actions, move actions, attack actions, and full-round actions.

During a round, you can attempt:

- a move action and an attack action;
- an attack action and a move action;
- two move actions;
- or, a full-round action.

You can also perform free actions as the GM allows.

Free Action: Free actions consume a very small amount of time and effort. Over the span of the round, their impact is so minor that they are considered free. You can perform one or more free actions while taking another action normally. However, the GM puts reasonable limits on what you can do for free. For instance, calling out to your friends for help is a free action. Shouting out several pages of text from the *Necronomicon* takes longer.

Move Action: Move actions either involve moving or take the place of movement. As a move action, you can move up to your speed. Other move actions

include (but aren't limited to) drawing a weapon, standing up from a prone position, and picking up an item (see Table 5-2: Other Actions for more details).

As an example, Sam can normally move 30 feet and attack once in a round. If he's knocked down, he could: stand up from being prone and attack once; stand up from prone and move 15 feet; or stand up from prone and pick up an item.

If you move no actual distance in a round (that is, you use your actions to do something other than moving actual distance), you can take one 5-foot step before, during, or after the action.

For example, if Sam has been knocked down, he can stand up from prone (a move action), move up to 5 feet (as a 5-foot step), and attack (as an attack action).

Attack Action: During a combat round, you can take an attack action and a move action in the same round. Making a single attack is an attack action; so is anything you might do instead of attacking that doesn't involve movement. Examples include dismissing a spell, drawing a weapon, and using the Heal skill to stabilize a dying character.

For instance, during a round Kristof could: move and attack, move and dismiss a spell, or move and use the Heal skill to help a dying friend. You can also perform as many free actions (see above) as the GM allows.

Full-Round Action: A full-round action consumes all your effort during a round. Examples include casting a 1-round spell, reloading a gun, and running up to quadruple your speed (likely fleeing for your life). If you can attack more than once in a round, doing so is a full-round action.

The only movement you can take with a full-round action is a 5-foot step before, during, or after the action. Some full-round actions do not allow you to take a 5-foot step, including those that involve moving (such as running).

ATTACKING

This section details the most common, straightforward attacks a character or creature might attempt in combat. More specialized attack actions are mentioned in Other Actions, page 68, and explained in Special Attacks and Damage, page 75.

MAKING THE ATTACK

Each round, you can take one attack action. You can move and then make a single attack, or attack and then move. Attacking more than once in a round is a full-round action.

Melee Attacks: With a normal melee weapon, you can strike any enemy within 5 feet. Enemies within 5 feet are considered adjacent to you.

Some archaic weapons have "reach," allowing you to make an attack from farther away. (For instance, a typical polearm has a reach of 10 feet; so do the poisonous snakes wielded by the *hands of Colubra*.) You can use a reach weapon to strike opponents up to the limit of your reach, but you cannot strike foes that are adjacent to you. Many creatures have natural reach, such as monsters with long, writhing tentacles.

Ranged Attacks: With a ranged weapon, you can shoot or throw at any target that is within the ranged weapon's maximum range and in line of sight. A target is in line of sight if no obstructions are between you and the target. The maximum range for a

thrown weapon is five range increments. For projectile weapons, it is ten range increments. Some ranged weapons have shorter maximum ranges, as specified in their descriptions.

Unarmed Attacks: Unarmed attacks are covered in Unarmed Attacks, page 82, and Subdual Damage, page 75.

Attack Rolls: An attack roll represents your attempts to strike your opponent. Your attack roll is $1d20 +$ your attack bonus with the weapon you're using. If the result is at least as high as the target's Armor Class, you hit and deal damage.

Automatic Misses and Hits: A natural 1 (the $1d20$ shows 1) on the attack roll is always a miss. A natural 20 (the $1d20$ shows 20) is always a hit. A natural 20 is also a "threat": a possible critical hit (see Critical Hits, below).

Damage Rolls: If the attack result equals or exceeds the target's Armor Class, the attack is successful, and you deal damage. Roll the appropriate damage for your weapon (see Chapter 6). Damage is deducted from the target's current hit points. If the opponent's hit points drop to 0 or below, he is in bad shape (see Injury and Death, page 68).

Critical Hits: When you make an attack roll and get a natural 20 (that is, the $1d20$ shows 20), you hit regardless of your target's Armor Class, and you have scored a "threat." The hit might be a critical hit (or "crit"). To find out if it's a critical hit, you immediately make a critical roll—another attack roll with all the same modifiers as the attack roll you just made. If the critical roll also results in a hit against the target's Armor Class, your original hit is a critical hit. (The critical roll just needs to hit to give you a crit. It doesn't need to show 20 again.) If the critical roll is a miss, then your hit is just a regular hit.

A critical hit means that you roll your damage more than once, with all your usual bonuses, and add the rolls together to get total damage. Unless otherwise specified, the threat range for a critical hit on an attack roll is 20, and the multiplier is $\times 2$. (See Increased Threat Range and Increased Critical Multiplier, below.)

Increased Threat Range: Sometimes your threat range is greater than 20; you can score a threat on a lower number. Most knives, for instance, give you a threat on a natural attack roll of 19 or 20. In such cases, a roll below 20 is not an automatic hit. Any attack roll that doesn't result in a hit is not a threat.



Increased Critical Multiplier:

Some weapons, such as the hatchet, deal better than double damage with a critical hit. See the Equipment chapter for more details.

Spells and Critical Hits: A spell that requires an attack roll, such as *spectral razor*, can score a critical hit. A spell attack that requires no attack roll, such as *grasp of Cthulhu*, cannot score a critical hit.

Multiple Attacks: A character with more than one attack per round must attempt a full attack to get more than one attack. (See the Full Attack section below.) A full attack is a full-round action.

Threatened: Any character or opponent who is not flat-footed "threatens" an area around himself up to 5 feet in each direction. If you're using miniatures on a map with a square grid, each square should represent 5 feet—a character in a given square threatens each adjacent square. A character who enters a threatened area has engaged in melee combat.

Shooting or Throwing into a Melee: If you shoot or throw a ranged weapon at a target that is engaged in melee with an ally, you

suffer a -4 penalty on your attack roll because you have to aim carefully to avoid hitting your ally. Two characters are engaged in melee if they are enemies of each other and either one threatens the other. An unconscious or otherwise immobilized character is not considered engaged unless he is actually being attacked.

If your target (or the part of your target you're aiming at, if it's a big target) is more than 5 feet away from the nearest ally, you can avoid this -4 penalty, even if the creature you're aiming at is engaged in melee with an ally.

Fight Defensively: You can choose to fight defensively when attacking. If you do so, you take a -4 penalty on all attacks in a round to gain a $+2$ dodge bonus to Armor Class for the same round. This bonus lasts until your next initiative count.

FULL ATTACK

If you get more than one attack per action because your base attack bonus is high enough, because you fight with two weapons, or for some special reason (such as a feat), you must attempt a full attack to get your additional attacks. You do not need to specify the targets of your attacks ahead of time. You can see how the earlier attacks turn out before assigning the later ones.

A full attack is a full-round action. Because of this, the only movement you can take during a full attack is a 5-foot step. You may take the step before, after, or between your attacks.

TABLE 5-1:**Two-Weapon Fighting Penalties**

Circumstances	Primary Hand	Off Hand
Normal penalties	-6	-10
Off-hand weapon is light	-4	-8
Ambidexterity feat	-6	-6
Two-Weapon Fighting feat	-4	-8
Off-hand weapon is light and Ambidexterity feat	-4	-4
Off-hand weapon is light and Two-Weapon Fighting feat	-2	-6
Ambidexterity feat and Two-Weapon Fighting feat	-4	-4
Off-hand weapon is light and Ambidexterity feat and Two-Weapon Fighting feat	-2	-2

If you get multiple attacks based on your base attack bonus, you must make the attacks in order from highest bonus to lowest. If you are using two weapons, you can strike with either weapon first.

Deciding between an Attack or a Full Attack: After your first attack, if you have not yet taken a 5-foot step, you can decide to move instead of making your remaining attacks. Essentially, you can decide whether to make a full attack depending on how the first attack turns out.

Attacking with Two Weapons: If you wield a second weapon in your off hand, you can get one extra attack per round with that weapon. Fighting in this way is very hard, however. You suffer a -6 penalty with your regular attack (or attacks with your primary hand) and a -10 penalty to the attack with your off hand. You can reduce these stiff penalties in three ways:

- If your off-hand weapon is light, the penalties are reduced by 2 each. A light weapon is one that has a size category smaller than yours. (An unarmed strike is always considered light.)
- The Ambidexterity feat reduces the off-hand penalty by 4.
- The Two-Weapon Fighting feat reduces both penalties by 2.

Table 5-1: Two-Weapon Fighting Penalties summarizes the interaction of all these factors.

CHARGE

Charging allows you to move up to twice your speed and attack during the action. However, it carries tight restrictions on how you can move. When you make a charge, you move at least 10 feet and make a melee attack. Charging is a full-round action.

SPEEDING UP COMBAT

A couple of tricks make combat run faster.

Attack and Damage: Roll your attack die and damage die (or dice) at the same time. If you miss, you can ignore the damage, but if you hit, your friends don't have to wait for you to make a second roll for damage.

Multiple Attacks: Use dice of different colors so you can make your attack rolls all at once instead of one at a time. Designate which attack is which color before you roll.

Roll Ahead of Time: Once you know who you are attacking and how, make your attack rolls before it is your turn so you have the results ready when your turn comes around. Get your GM's permission before you roll ahead of time. Some GMs like to watch their players' attack rolls.

Dice as Counters: Use dice to keep track of how many

Movement during a Charge: You must move before your attack, not after. You must move at least 10 feet and may move up to double your speed. All movement must be in a straight line, with no backing up allowed. You must stop as soon as you are within striking range of your target. You can't run past him and attack from another direction. If you have ranks in the Tumble skill, you can tumble while charging.

Attacking during a Charge: After moving, you may make a single melee attack. Since you can use the momentum of the charge in your favor, you get a +2 charge bonus on the attack roll. Since a charge is impossible without a bit of recklessness, you also suffer a -2 penalty to your Armor Class for 1 round.

Even if you have extra attacks, such as from having a high enough base attack bonus or from using multiple weapons, you only get to make one attack during a charge.

MOVEMENT

Sometimes you just want to cover ground as quickly as possible or put as much distance as you can between yourself and an opponent. The move actions covered here are ones in which you devote your efforts only to moving during a round. Other move actions are covered in Other Actions (see the next page) and Table 5-2: Other Actions.

MOVE

You can move your speed in a round as a move action. You can then either take another move action or an attack action.

DOUBLE MOVE

You can move up to double your speed in a round as two move actions. It's a "move and a move," thus a double move. For an investigator, this represents moving about six miles per hour.

If you enter an area adjacent to your foe while moving, you must halt your movement there.

RUN

You can run as a full-round action. (You do not get a 5-foot step.) When you run, you can move up to four times your normal speed in a straight line.

Unlike heroes in the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game, a *Call of Cthulhu* investigator does not lose his Dexterity bonus while running. Fleeing is a valuable tactic in this game.

You can run for a number of rounds equal to your Constitution score, but after that,

rounds a short-duration magical effect has been active. Each round, turn the die to the next number until the effect ends.

Concealment Rolls: If you know what your chance to miss is because of your target's concealment, you can roll it along with your attack roll. If the concealment roll indicates a miss, just ignore the attack roll.

Prep Initiative: Have your GM roll the characters' and creatures' initiative checks ahead of time and prepare the order of battle. That way when a battle starts, you can skip the initiative checks and get right to the action.

Miniatures: Use miniatures, coins, or other markers to show the relative positions of the combatants. It's a lot faster to place a miniature where you want your character to be than explaining (and remembering) where your character is relative to everyone else.

TABLE 5-2:
Other Actions

No Action	Attack Actions	Bum's rush (as a charge) Extinguish flames Load a firearm Use touch spell on up to six friends Refocus (no move)
Delay		Escape from a net or similar trap Withdraw from melee
Free Actions		Action Type Varies (Unarmed Attacks)
Speak		Disarm: Grapple: Trip an opponent: † If you have the Two-Weapon Fighting feat, you can draw two light or one-handed weapons in the time it would normally take you to draw one. ‡ These attack forms substitute for a melee attack, not an action. As melee attacks, they can be used once as an attack action, once during a charge, or one or more times in a full attack.
Cease concentration on a spell		
Drop an item		
Drop to the floor		
Draw a weapon (if you're moving that round)		
Move Actions		
Move your speed		
Climb (one-quarter your speed)		
Sheathe or holster a weapon		
Open a door		
Pick up an item		
Retrieve a stored item		
Move a heavy object		
Stand up from prone		
Click on a flashlight		
Draw a weapon (if you're not moving that round)		
	Full-Round Actions	
	Climb (one-half your speed)	
	Use a skill that takes 1 round	
	Coup de grace	

you must succeed at a Constitution check (DC 10) to continue running. You must check again each round in which you continue to run, and the DC of this check increases by 1 for each check you have made. When you fail this check, you must stop running. A character who has run to his limit must rest for 1 minute (10 rounds) before running again. During a rest period, the character can move no faster than a normal move.

A run represents moving about twelve miles per hour for an unencumbered human.

OTHER ACTIONS

For actions not covered below, the GM lets you know how long such an action takes to perform. The variant and special attacks mentioned here are covered in Special Attacks and Damage, page 75.

TOTAL DEFENSE

By choosing "total defense," you can simply defend yourself in a round. Choosing total defense is an attack action. That round, you don't attack or perform any other activity other than moving your speed, but you get a +4 dodge bonus to your Armor Class for 1 round. Your Armor Class improves at the start of this action.

THREATENED AREAS SUMMARY

Any character or creature that isn't flat-footed threatens an area around himself 5 feet in each direction. To engage that character or creature in melee, you must enter the area he threatens. If you enter an opponent's threatened area, you must stop moving—you are engaged in melee combat.

Each round, you cannot move more than 5 feet through an opponent's threatened area. If you can take a 5-foot step (see Move Action, page 65), you can use it to

USE FEAT
Certain feats, such as Rolling Shot, let you take special actions in combat. Others are not actions themselves, but they give you a bonus when attempting something you can already do, such as Power Attack. The individual feat descriptions tell you what you need to know about them.

INJURY AND DEATH

Your hit points measure how hard you are to kill. While horrible alien creatures might have a number of special ways to hurt, maim, or kill you, usually you just take damage and lose hit points. The damage from each successful attack and each fight accumulates, eventually dropping your hit point total to 0 or below. Then you're in trouble. Luckily, you also have a number of ways to regain hit points. If you have a few days to rest, you can recover lost hit points on your own. A few rare spells exist that even restore lost hit points.

LOSS OF HIT POINTS

The most common way your character can get hurt is by taking damage and losing hit points, whether from the crushing tentacles of a chthonian or a gunshot wound. You record your character's hit point total on your character sheet. As your character takes damage, you subtract that damage from your hit points, leaving you with your current hit points. Current hit points go down when you take

step out of that area. Otherwise, if you want to withdraw from a threatened area, you can use a full-round action to move directly away from your opponent up to twice your speed. The Mobility feat allows you to ignore these restrictions on movement.

If you wish to cast a spell from a threatened area, you must first succeed at a Concentration check (DC 20). The Combat Casting feat gives you a +4 bonus to this roll.

damage and go back up when you recover.

What Hit Points Represent: Hit points represent two factors in the game world: the ability to take physical punishment and keep going, and the ability to turn a serious blow into a less serious one (such as turning a fatal blow into a grazing blow or near-miss). A 10th-level character who has taken 5 points of damage is not as badly hurt as a 1st-level character who has taken that much damage. This is partly because the more experienced character is better at rolling with punches, protecting vital areas, and dodging just enough that a blow that would be fatal only wounds him. It's partly because he's just plain tougher.

A 10th-level character who has taken 5 points of damage may be about as physically hurt as a 1st-level character who has taken 1 point of damage. Details at this level, however, don't affect how the dice roll. When picturing a scene, just remember that 5 points of damage means different things to different people.

Damaging Helpless Defenders: Even if you have lots of hit points, a bullet in the brain is a bullet in the brain. When a character can't avoid damage or deflect blows somehow—that is, when he's helpless—he's in trouble (see Helpless Defenders, page 73).

Effects of Hit Point Damage: Damage gives you scars and gets blood on your clothes, but it doesn't slow you down until your current hit points reach 0 or lower.

At 0 hit points, you're disabled.

At from -1 to -9 hit points, you're dying.

At -10 or lower, you're dead.

For more details, keep reading.

DISABLED (0 HIT POINTS)

When your current hit points drop to exactly 0, you're disabled. You're not unconscious, but you're close to it. You can only take one move action or attack action each round. If you perform any strenuous activity, you take 1 point of damage after completing the act. Strenuous activities include running, attacking, casting a spell, or using any ability that requires physical exertion or mental concentration. Unless your activity increased your hit points, you are then at -1 hit points, and you're dying.

Healing that raises you above 0 makes you fully functional again, just as if you had never been reduced to 0 or below.

You can also become disabled when recovering from dying. In this case, you can have fewer than 0 hit points and still be disabled—it's a step up along the road to recovery (see Stable Characters and Recovery, below).

DYING (-1 TO -9 HIT POINTS)

When your character's current hit points drop to below 0 (but more than -10), he's dying. He immediately falls unconscious and can take no actions. At the end of each round (starting with the round in which the character dropped below 0), roll a d10 to see whether he stabilizes—this is known as a "10% roll." On a roll of a 1, he becomes stable. If he doesn't, he loses 1 hit point. If the character's hit points drop to -10 (or below), he's dead.

You can keep a dying character from losing any more hit points and make him stable with a successful Heal check (DC 15).

If any sort of healing cures the dying character of even 1 point of damage, he stops losing hit points and becomes stable.

Healing that raises the dying character's hit points to 0 makes him conscious and disabled. Healing that raises his hit points to 1 or more makes him fully functional again, just as if he had never been reduced to 0 or below.

DEAD (-10 HIT POINTS OR LOWER)

When your character's current hit points drop to -10 (or below), he's dead. A character can also die from failing a massive damage saving throw (see below), taking ability damage, or suffering an ability drain that reduces his Constitution to 0.

STABLE CHARACTERS AND RECOVERY

A stable character who has been tended by someone with appropriate training eventually regains consciousness and recovers hit points naturally. If the character has no one to tend him, however, his life is still in danger, and he may slip away.

Recovering with Help: An hour after a tended, dying character becomes stable, roll a d10. On a roll of a 1, he becomes conscious, at which point he is disabled. (This is the same effect as if he had 0 hit points, but the character still has a negative number of hit points.) If this 10% roll fails, he remains unconscious and has the same chance to revive and become disabled every hour. Even if unconscious, he recovers hit points naturally. He returns to normal when his hit points rise to 1 or higher.

Recovering without Help: A severely wounded character left alone usually dies. He has a small chance, however, of recovering on his own. Even if he seems as though he's pulling through, he can still succumb to his wounds hours or days after taking damage.

A character who stabilizes on his own (by making a 10% roll while dying) but has no one to tend for him still loses hit points, just at a slower rate. He has a 10% chance each hour of becoming conscious. Each time he misses his hourly roll to become conscious, he loses 1 hit point. He does not recover hit points through natural healing.

Even once he becomes conscious and is disabled, an unaided character does not recover hit points naturally. Instead, each day he has a 10% chance to start recovering hit points naturally (starting with that day); otherwise, he loses 1 hit point.

Once an unaided character starts recovering hit points naturally, he is no longer in danger of losing hit points (even if his current hit point total is negative).

HEALING

After taking damage, you can recover hit points through natural healing over the course of several days. In any case, you can't regain hit points beyond your hit point total.

You recover 1 hit point per character level per day of rest. For example, a 5th-level character recovers 5 hit points per day of rest. You may

engage in light, nonstrenuous travel or activity, but any combat or spellcasting prevents you from healing that day.

If you undergo "complete rest" (doing nothing for an entire day), you recover one and one-half times your character level in hit points (round down). A 5th-level character recovers 7 hit points per day of complete rest.

Higher-level characters recover lost hit points faster than lower-level characters because they're tougher, and also because a given number of lost hit points represents a lighter wound for a higher-level character.

Healing Ability Damage: Temporary ability damage returns at the rate of 1 point per day of rest (light activity, no combat or spellcasting) for each damaged ability. "Complete rest" (as defined above) restores 2 points per day for each damaged ability. You can recover ability points and hit points in the same day.

MASSIVE DAMAGE

A threshold exists, called massive damage, at which a wound threatens death no matter how many hit points a character has. If a character sustains 10 points of damage in a single attack, that character must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 15). Failure means that the character dies immediately.

Creatures have a massive damage threshold of 50 points. If that damage is subdual damage, the saving throw determines whether it is immediately knocked unconscious for 2d6 minutes.

MOVEMENT AND POSITION

Few characters in a fight are likely to stand still for long. Smart characters choose to run instead of facing overwhelming odds.

TACTICAL MOVEMENT

Where you can move and how long it takes you to get there are key questions in combat.

HOW FAR CAN YOUR CHARACTER MOVE?

Generally, you can move your speed in a round and still do something, such as firing a gun or opening a door. If you do nothing but move, you can move double your speed. If you flat-out run, you can move quadruple your speed (as long as you move more or less in a straight line). If you do something that requires a full round, such as attacking more than once, you can only take a 5-foot step. Some specific actions don't allow you to move at all. See Action Types (page 65) and Table 5-2: Other Actions to see how far you can move with each action.

Threatened Areas: Any character or opponent who is not flat-footed

"I could not, I decided, risk an emergence into the corridor; where my footsteps would surely be heard, and where the difficulties of entering the desired room would be insuperable. My progress, if it was to be made at all, would have to be through the less solidly built connecting doors of the rooms; the locks and bolts of which I would have to force violently, using my shoulder as a battering-ram whenever they were set against me."

—H.P. Lovecraft,
"The Shadow Over Innsmouth"

tumble through a threatened area or an area occupied by an enemy. (See Tumble, page 37.)

Very Small Creature: A Fine, Diminutive, or Tiny creature can move into or through an occupied area.

Area Occupied by Creature Three Sizes Larger or Smaller:

Any creature can move through an area occupied by a creature three size categories larger than it is. A dog (Small), for example, can run between the legs of an elephant (Huge).

A big creature can move through an area occupied by a creature three size categories smaller than it is. An elephant, for example, can step over a dog.

FLANKING

If you are making a melee attack against a creature, and an ally directly opposite you is threatening the creature, you and your ally flank the creature. You both gain a +2 flanking bonus on your attack rolls. The ally must be on the other side of the defender, so that the defender is directly between you.

GANGING UP

Typically, up to eight opponents can gang up on a single target the same size, provided they have room to maneuver freely. (If you're using miniatures on a square grid, a character in a given square can be threatened by opponents in the eight adjacent squares.) If the defender can fight side by side with allies, back into a corner, fight through a doorway, or otherwise protect himself, attackers can't gang up to this extent.

threatens the area around himself, 5 feet in each direction. (If you're using miniatures on a map with a square grid, each square should represent 5 feet—a character in a given square "threatens" each adjacent square.)

If you enter the threatened area of a foe, you must stop immediately. You cannot move more than 5 feet through a threatened area in a round. To leave a threatened area, you can withdraw as a full-round action, moving up to double your speed directly away from your opponent. Alternatively, if you can take a 5-foot step, you can use it to leave a threatened area.

PASSING THROUGH

Sometimes you can pass through an area occupied by another character or creature.

Friendly Creature: You can move through an area occupied by a friendly character.

Unfriendly Creature

Not an Obstacle: You can also move through an area occupied by an unfriendly character who doesn't present an obstacle, such as one who is dead, unconscious, bound, stunned, or just cowering.

Tumbling: A trained character can attempt to

move through an area occupied by an

enemy. (See Tumble, page 37.)

Very Small Creature: A Fine, Diminutive, or Tiny creature can move into or through an occupied area.

Area Occupied by Creature Three Sizes Larger or Smaller:

Any creature can move through an area occupied by a creature three size categories larger than it is. A dog (Small), for example, can run between the legs of an elephant (Huge).

A big creature can move through an area occupied by a creature three size categories smaller than it is. An elephant, for example, can step over a dog.

In *Call of Cthulhu*, the specific direction a character or creature faces does not matter. Even on a grid, a creature's facing is abstract, not "front, back, left, and right," because combatants are constantly moving and turning in battle. Unless a creature is immobile, it practically doesn't have a front side or a left side—at least not one you can locate on the tabletop.

Natural Reach: Natural reach is how far the creature can reach when it fights. Unlike a reach weapon, a creature with greater than normal natural reach (more than 5 feet) can still strike at creatures adjacent to it. However, the creature still only threatens an area within 5 feet of where it's standing. The creature can reach targets out to the length of its reach, it merely does not threaten all those areas.

The "Tentacle Rule": Once each round, a creature with natural reach can make a free attack on any opponent moving more than 5 feet through an area extending up to the limit of its natural reach. An opponent can avoid all these free attacks with Mobility, or avoid 1 round of these free attacks by making a Tumble check (DC 25).

As a variant rule, a creature with natural reach can also "lie in wait" as a full-round action. It can then use its natural reach as described above, but it can perform this tactic a number of times equal to its Dexterity modifier that round.

Big Creatures: Big creatures (long, Large creatures plus Huge, Gargantuan, and Colossal creatures) take up more space on the battlefield than a Medium-size human does; their face is therefore larger. More combatants can attack them because more combatants can crowd around them. As a rule of thumb, assume that one Small or Medium-size combatant can get to each 5-foot length of the creature, and four more combatants can fit into the "corners" where one side meets another. (This rule is why you can get eight people around a Medium-size creature at once. One fits on each 5-foot face, and one fits on each corner.)

Very Small Creatures: Very small creatures (Fine, Diminutive, and Tiny) have no effective natural reach. They have to enter or be in your area to attack you. You can attack into your own area if you need to, so you can attack them normally. Since they have no natural reach, they do not threaten the area around them. You can move past them without a problem.

Bigger Creatures Attacking Smaller Creatures: Creatures of different size categories can attack a defender in different numbers. For instance, a lloigor occupies a space 10 feet wide; its face is 10 feet. Only four lloigor could surround a Medium-size creature because each lloigor would take up a side or face as well as a corner.

BIG AND LITTLE CREATURES IN COMBAT

Creatures smaller than Small or bigger than Medium-size have special rules relating to position. These rules concern the creatures' "faces," or sides, and their reach.

Face: Face is how wide a target a creature presents in combat. This width determines how many creatures can fight side by side in a 10-foot-wide corridor, and how many opponents can attack a creature at the same time. (When using miniatures on a square grid, face is essentially the border between the square or rectangular space that a creature occupies and the space next to it.)

TABLE 5-3:
Creature Size and Scale

Creature Size	Example Creature	Natural Reach	Face*
Fine	Insect from Shaggai	0	1/2 ft.×1/2 ft.
Diminutive	Toad	0	1 ft.×1 ft.
Tiny	Cat	0	2 1/2 ft.×2 1/2 ft.
Small	Dog	5 ft.	5 ft.×5 ft.
Medium-size	Human	5 ft.	5 ft.×5 ft.
Large (tall)**	Elder Thing	10 ft.	5 ft.×5 ft.
Large (long)**	Horse	5 ft.	5 ft.×10 ft.
Huge (tall)**	Lloigor	15 ft.	10 ft.×10 ft.
Huge (long)**	Hunting Horror	10 ft.	10 ft.×20 ft.
	Leng Spider	10 ft.	15 ft.×15 ft.
Gargantuan (tall)**	Cthugha	20 ft.	20 ft.×20 ft.
Gargantuan (long)**	Shudde M'ell	10 ft.†	20 ft.×40 ft.
	Shoggoth	15 ft.	30 ft.×30 ft.
Colossal (tall)**	Cthulhu	25 ft.	40 ft.×40 ft.
Colossal (long)**	Mordiggian	15 ft.	40 ft.×80 ft.

*Listed width by length.

**Tall creatures are upright. Long creatures are primarily horizontal. Big, long creatures may be in any of several shapes. See the Creatures chapter for details.

†Bite attack.

COMBAT MODIFIERS

Sometimes you just have to go toe-to-toe in a fight, but you can usually gain some advantage by seeking a better position, either offensively or defensively. This section covers the rules for when you can line up a particularly good attack or are forced to make a disadvantageous one.

TABLE 5-4:
Attack Roll Modifiers

Circumstance	Melee	Ranged
Attacker flanking defender*	+2	—
Attacker on higher ground	+1	+0
Attacker prone	-4	—**
Attacker invisible	+2†	+2†
Defender sitting or kneeling	+2	See Cover
Defender prone	+4	See Cover
Defender cowering or stunned	+2†	+2†
Defender climbing	+2†	+2†
Defender surprised or flat-footed	+0†	+0†
Defender running	+0†	-2†
Defender grappling (attacker not)	+0†	+0††
Defender pinned	+4†	-4†
Defender has cover	— See Cover —	—
Defender concealed or invisible	— See Concealment —	—
Defender helpless (such as when paralyzed, sleeping, or bound)	— See Helpless Defenders —	—

*You flank a defender when you have an ally on the opposite side of the defender threatening him.
**Some primitive weapons, such as bows, can't be used while the attacker is prone, but you can use a firearm while prone.
†The defender loses any Dexterity bonus to Armor Class.
††Roll randomly to see which grappling combatant you strike. That defender loses any Dexterity bonus to Armor Class.

FAVORABLE AND UNFAVORABLE CONDITIONS

Depending on the situation, you may gain bonuses or suffer penalties on your attack roll. Your GM judges what bonuses and penalties apply, using Table 5-4: Attack Roll Modifiers as a guide.

COVER

One of the best defenses available is cover. By taking cover behind a tree, a wall, the side of a car, or the edge of a sarcophagus, you can protect yourself from attacks, especially ranged attacks.

Cover provides a bonus to your Armor Class. The more cover you have, the bigger the bonus.

Cover and Reach Attacks: If you're using a reach weapon (or, more likely, if a creature with natural reach is attacking you), a character standing between you and your target provides cover to your target. Generally, if both of the other creatures are the same size, the one in the back

TABLE 5-5:

Cover

Degree of Cover	Example	Bonus to AC	Bonus to Reflex Saves
One-quarter	A human standing behind a 3-ft. high wall; a character who is targeted by a ranged attack while sitting or kneeling	+2	+1
One-half	Fighting from around a corner or a tree; behind a creature of same size; a character who is targeted by a ranged attack while prone	+4	+2
Three-quarters	Peering around a corner or a tree	+7	+3
Nine-tenths	Standing behind a door that's slightly ajar	+10	+4*
Total	On the other side of a solid wall	—	—

*Half damage if save is failed; no damage if successful.

has one-half cover (+4 Armor Class). If you hit the creature providing cover, it takes no damage because you strike it ineffectually. (See Striking the Cover Instead of a Missed Target for more details.)

Degree of Cover: Cover is assessed in subjective measurements of how much protection it offers you. Your GM determines the value of cover. This measure is not a strict mathematical calculation because you gain more value from covering the parts of your body that are more likely to be struck. If the bottom half of your body is covered (such as behind a 3-foot wall), that only gives you one-quarter cover. If one side or the other of your body is covered, as when you're partly behind a corner, you get one-half cover.

Table 5-5: Cover gives examples of various situations that usually produce certain degrees of cover. These examples might not hold true in exceptional circumstances. For example, a 6-foot wall might provide a 12-foot gug one-half cover in a melee against humans, who have a hard time striking a gug's upper body in melee, but the same wall might grant a gug no cover in melee against a subterranean chthonian.

Cover Armor Class Bonus: Table 5-5: Cover gives the Armor Class bonuses for different degrees of cover. Add the relevant number to your Armor Class. Different cover bonuses to AC do not stack; if more than one condition from Table 5-5 applies, use the largest cover bonus. For example, kneeling gives you a +2 cover bonus to your Armor Class against ranged weapons. Kneeling behind a low wall could change your cover from one-quarter (+2) to three-quarters (+7). You would not get the +2 bonus for kneeling on top of the +7 cover bonus.

Cover Reflex Save Bonus: Table 5-5: Cover lists the bonuses to Reflex save for different degrees of cover. Add this bonus on Reflex saves against attacks that affect an area, such as the goo spewed by a dhole. If you have nine-tenths cover, and a Reflex save would normally reduce damage by half, the damage is negated instead. These bonuses, however, only apply to attacks that originate or spread out from a point on the other side of the cover.

Striking the Cover Instead of a Missed Target: If it ever becomes important to know whether the cover was actually struck by an incoming attack that misses the intended target, the GM should determine if the attack roll would have hit the protected target without cover. If the attack roll falls within a range low enough to miss the target with cover, but high enough to strike the target if there had been no cover, the object used for cover was struck. This can be particularly important to know in cases where a character uses another creature as cover. In such a case, if the cover is struck and the attack roll exceeds the Armor Class of the covering creature, the covering creature takes the damage intended for the target.

make two rolls, or you can just make both rolls at the same time.

When multiple concealment conditions apply to a defender—behind dense foliage in near total darkness, for example—use the one that would produce the highest miss chance. Do not add the miss chances together.

If the covering creature has a Dexterity bonus to Armor Class or a dodge bonus, and this bonus keeps the covering creature from being hit, then the original target is hit instead. The covering creature has dodged out of the way and didn't provide cover after all. A covering creature can choose not to apply his Dexterity bonus or his dodge bonus to Armor Class, if his intent is to try to take the damage in order to keep the covered character from being hit.

CONCEALMENT

Besides cover, another way to avoid attacks is by making it hard for opponents to know where you are. Concealment includes all circumstances where nothing physically blocks a blow or shot, but where something interferes with an attacker's accuracy.

Concealment: Concealment is subjectively measured as to how well concealed the defender is. Examples of what might qualify as concealment of various degrees are given on Table 5-6: Concealment. Concealment always depends on the point of view of the attacker. Total darkness, for example, is meaningless to a creature with darkvision. Moderate darkness doesn't hamper a creature with low-light vision, and near total darkness is only one-half concealment for such a creature (see the Creatures chapter for more detail).

Concealment Miss Chance: Concealment gives the subject of a successful attack a chance that the attacker missed because of the concealment. If the attacker hits, the defender must make a miss chance roll to avoid being struck.

Practically, it doesn't matter who makes the roll or whether it's rolled before or after the attack roll. To save time, you can first make the roll that's most likely to result in a miss, so that you're less likely to have to

TABLE 5-6:
Concealment

Concealment	Example	Miss Chance
One-quarter	Light fog; moderate darkness; light foliage	10%
One-half	Dense fog at 5 ft.	20%
Three-quarters	Dense foliage	30%
Nine-tenths	Near total darkness	40%
Total	Defender invisible; attacker blind; total darkness; dense fog at 10 ft.	and must guess target's location



HELPLESS DEFENDERS

A helpless foe—one who is bound, sleeping, paralyzed, unconscious, comatose, or otherwise at your mercy—is an easy target.

Normal Attack: A melee attack against a helpless character gets a +4 circumstance bonus on the attack roll. A ranged attack does not get this bonus. A helpless defender can't use his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class. In fact, his Dexterity score is treated as if it were 0, and his Dexterity modifier to Armor Class as if it were -5.

Coup de Grace: As a full-round action, you can use a melee weapon to deliver a coup de grace to a helpless foe. You can use a firearm instead, provided you're within 5 feet of the target. You automatically hit and score a critical hit.

If the defender survives the damage, he must still make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + damage dealt) or die.

You can't deliver a coup de grace against a creature that is immune to critical hits, such as a shoggoth.

MAGIC

The ways of spells and magic are for the very brave or the very foolish, particularly in combat situations. These are the most common actions involving the use of magic.

CASTING A SPELL

Casting a spell with a casting time of 1 action is an attack action (regardless of whether the spell is actually an attack). You can move and then cast the spell, or cast the spell and then move.

Casting a spell with a casting time of 1 full round is a full-round action. You can take a 5-foot step before, during, or after casting such a spell, but cannot otherwise move.

You cannot cast a spell from a threatened area—within 5 feet of a foe—unless you "cast on the defensive" (see below). The Magic chapter has more details on casting spells, their effects, saving throws, and so on.

You retain your Dexterity bonus to Armor Class while casting.

Spell Components: To cast a spell with a verbal (V) component, you must speak in a firm voice. If you're gagged, you can't cast such a spell. A spellcaster who has been deafened has a 20% chance to spoil any spell he tries to cast if that spell has a verbal component.

To cast a spell with a somatic (S) component, you must gesture freely with at least one hand. You can't cast a spell of this type while bound, grappled, or with both your hands full or occupied (such as while swimming or clinging to the side of a cliff).

To cast a spell with a material (M) or focus (F) component, you have to have the proper materials, as described by the spell. Unless these materials are elaborate, preparing these materials is a free action.

Concentration: You must concentrate to cast a spell. If you can't concentrate, such as when hundreds of malignant insects are biting off little pieces of your skin, you can't cast a spell. If you start casting a spell, but something interferes with your concentration, such as a Hound of Tindalos leaping out of a wall and seizing you in its teeth, you must make a Concentration check or lose the spell. The check's DC depends on what is threatening your concentration (see the Concentration skill, page 26). If you fail, the spell fizzles with no effect.

Concentrating to Maintain a Spell: Some spells require continued concentration to keep them going. Concentrating to maintain a spell is an attack action; you cannot attack while concentrating on a spell (unless the spell requires a touch attack to discharge; see below). Anything that could break your concentration when casting a spell can keep you from concentrating to maintain a spell. If your concentration breaks, the spell ends.

Casting Time: Many spells have a casting time of 1 action. You can cast one of these spells as an attack action; you cannot attack while casting one of them (unless the spell requires a touch attack; see below). A spell cast in this manner takes effect immediately.

A few spells have a casting time of 1 full round or even longer. A spell that takes 1 full round to cast is a full-round action. It comes into effect just before the beginning of your turn in the round after you began casting the spell. You can then act normally after the spell has been completed. A spell that takes 1 minute to cast comes into effect just before your turn 1 minute later (and for each of those 10 rounds, you are casting a spell as a full-round action).

When you begin a spell that takes a full round or longer to cast, you must continue to concentrate from 1 round to just before your turn in the next round (at least). If you lose concentration after starting the spell and before it is complete, you lose the spell. If you are attacked, you lose your concentration unless you were "casting on the defensive."

Casting on the Defensive: You may attempt to cast a spell while "on the defensive." This means that you're casting the spell while paying attention to threats and avoiding blows in an area threatened by enemies. This requires a Concentration check (DC 20) to pull off. If you succeed, you can cast a spell from a threatened area or complete casting a spell despite taking damage. Failure means that you lose the spell. While casting on the defensive, you must make this check each time you take damage.

Touch Spells in Combat: A few spells have a range of Touch. To use these spells, you cast the spell and then touch the subject, either in the same round or any time later. With the same action you use to cast the spell, you may also touch (or attempt to touch) the target. You may take your move before casting the spell, after touching the target, or between casting the spell and touching the target. You can automatically touch one friend or use the spell on yourself, but to touch an opponent, you must succeed at an attack.

Holding the Charge: If you don't discharge the spell on the round you cast the spell, you can hold the charge indefinitely. You can continue to make touch attacks round after round. You can touch one friend as an attack action or up to six friends as a full-round action. If you touch anything or anyone while holding a charge, even unintentionally, the spell discharges. If you cast another spell, the touch spell dissipates. Alternatively, you may make a normal unarmed attack while holding a charge. If the attack hits, the spell discharges.

Touch Attacks: If the first attempt to touch your target fails, you can try again later (as long as you're holding the charge). Since you need only touch your enemy, you can make a touch attack instead of a regular attack; either way, this takes an attack action.

Touch attacks come in two types: melee touch attacks (for touches made with, say, your hand) and ranged touch attacks. You can score critical hits with either type of attack. Your opponent's Armor Class against a touch attack does not include any armor bonus, shield bonus (if any), or natural armor bonus. His size modifier, Dexterity modifier, and deflection bonus (if any) all apply normally.

USE SPECIAL ABILITY

Using a special ability is usually an action, but whether it is an attack action, a full-round action, or not an action at all is defined by the ability. (See Special Abilities, page 129.)

Spell-Like Abilities: Using a spell-like ability works like casting a spell in that spell-like abilities can be disrupted. If your concentration is broken, the attempt to use the ability fails, but the attempt counts as if you had used the ability. (For example, it counts against your daily limit, if you have one.) The casting time of a spell-like ability is 1 action, making its use an attack action unless the ability description notes otherwise.

Using a Spell-Like Ability on the Defensive: You may attempt to use a spell-like ability on the defensive, just as with a spell. If the Concentration check (DC 20) fails, you can't use the ability, but the attempt counts as if you had used the ability. (For example, it counts against your daily limit, if you have one.)

Supernatural Abilities: Using a supernatural ability is usually an attack action (unless defined otherwise by the ability description). Its use cannot be disrupted and does not require concentration.

Extraordinary Abilities: Using an extraordinary ability is usually not an action because most extraordinary abilities automatically happen in a reactive fashion. Those extraordinary abilities that are actions are usually attack actions that cannot be disrupted and do not require concentration.

SPECIAL INITIATIVE ACTIONS

Usually you act as soon as you can in combat, but sometimes you want to act later, at a better time, or in response to the actions of someone else.

DELAY

By choosing to delay, you take no action and then act normally at whatever initiative count you decide to act. When you delay, you voluntarily reduce your own initiative result for the rest of the combat. When your new, lower initiative count comes up later in the same round, you can act normally. You can specify this new initiative result or just wait until some time later in the round and act then, thus fixing your new initiative count at that point.

Delaying is useful if you need to see what your friends or enemies are doing before you decide what to do. You cannot, however, interrupt anyone's action with a delayed action (as you can with a readied action). The price you pay is lost initiative. You never get back the time you spent waiting to see what's going to happen.

Delaying Limits: A character can only voluntarily lower her initiative to -10 minus her initiative bonus. (For instance, a character with a $+4$ initiative bonus cannot delay later than -14 .) When the initiative count reaches -10 minus a delaying character's initiative bonus, that character must act or forfeit any action that round.

Multiple Characters Delaying: If multiple characters are delaying, the one with the highest initiative bonus (or highest Dexterity, in case of a tie) has the advantage. If two or more delaying characters both want to act on the same initiative count, the one with the highest bonus gets to go first. If two or more characters are trying to delay, the one with the highest initiative bonus gets to go last.

For instance, Marie and a mysterious stranger run across each other in a back alley. Marie's initiative count is 17, higher than the stranger's. She doesn't want to commit to attacking, fleeing, or talking, so she delays, intending to act after the stranger acts. The stranger's initiative count is 12. He stares at her, motionless, and delays as well. The initiative count drops down, and neither character acts. (If there were other characters in the encounter, they would act on their initiative counts.)

Finally, the count reaches -14 , Marie's limit (thanks to her $+4$ initiative bonus), and the stranger still hasn't acted. Marie has to choose, and the stranger (who apparently has a higher initiative bonus) will get to respond. Marie decides to forfeit her action.

"What do you want?" asks Marie, hoping for the best. The patient stranger whispers, "Your skin," draws a straight razor, and slashes at Marie. Combat ensues, but Marie cannot act until her new initiative count next round.

READY

Readying lets you prepare to take an action later, after your turn is over, but before your next one has begun. Readying is an attack action, so you can move as well.

How Readying Works: Claire and her friends are menaced by deep ones. On initiative count 14, Claire specifies that she is going to shoot the first deep one that comes within 25 feet. On 10, Sam moves next to Claire and readies an attack with a sledgehammer so that he can strike any foe that comes into the area he threatens. On 7, the deep ones charge. As soon as the lead deep one is within 25 feet of Claire, she shoots at it, but she misses. Sam swings at the first deep one to reach him, and drops it with a critical hit. Other deep ones, however, can reach him and attack him. From this point on, Claire and Sam act on initiative count 7 (and before the deep ones).

Readying an Action: You can only ready one move action or attack action in a round. To do so, specify the action you will take and the conditions under which you will take it. Then, any time before your next action, you may take the readied action in response to those conditions. The readied action occurs before the action that triggers it. For the rest of the fight, your initiative number is the count on which you took the readied action, and you act immediately ahead of the character whose action triggered your readied action.

Initiative Consequences of Readying: Your initiative result becomes the count on which you took the readied action. If you come to your next action and have not yet performed your readied action, you don't get to take that action (though you can ready the same action again). If you take your readied action in the next round, before your regular turn comes up, your initiative rises to that new point in the order of battle, and you do not get your regular action that round.

REFOCUS

Refocusing is a full-round action during which you cannot move. A character can choose to do nothing for an entire round and refocus his thoughts as he gets his bearings and appraises the situation. The effect is that on the following rounds of the combat, the character moves up in the initiative count and is positioned as though he had rolled a 20 on his initiative check. Other modifiers (such as for Dexterity and for the Improved Initiative feat) also apply to this total when determining the initiative check result.

SPECIAL ATTACKS AND DAMAGE

This section covers subdual damage, unarmed attacks, grappling, explosives, thrown weapons that splash (such as acid), attacking objects (such as trying to destroy a mi-go's alien device or hacking apart a wooden chest), and an assortment of other special attacks.

SUBDUAL DAMAGE

Sometimes you get roughed up or weakened, such as when you're pummeled repeatedly in a fistfight or exhausted after fleeing from Tcho-Tchos through a Cambodian jungle. This sort of stress won't kill you, but it can knock you out or make you faint.

Nonlethal damage is subdual damage. If you take enough subdual damage, you fall unconscious, but you don't die. Subdual damage goes away much faster than standard damage does.

How Subdual Damage Works: While walking through a parking lot, Sam is jumped by two thugs breaking into his car. They exchange blows, and Sam takes 4 points of subdual damage. He has 11 hit points, so 4 points of subdual damage doesn't bother him. He lands a lucky blow for 6 points of subdual damage, enough to stagger one of the thugs, since he only has 6 hit points. His next blow knocks the man unconscious (since the thug's subdual damage exceeds his current hit points). Then Sam takes another 5 points of subdual damage, putting his total at 9.

When Sam turns on the second brawler, the car thief pulls out a switchblade and stabs Sam for 5 points of normal (not subdual) damage. That drops Sam's hit points to 6. Now that Sam's subdual damage (9) is higher than his current hit points (6), he's knocked out. He still has 6 hit points. He's not dying, but he's unconscious. The thug with the switchblade takes off before the cops arrive.

Dealing Subdual Damage: Certain attacks deal subdual damage, such as a normal human's unarmed strikes (including punches and kicks). Other stresses, such as heat or exhaustion, also deal subdual damage. When you take subdual damage, keep a running total of how much you have accumulated. Do not deduct the subdual damage number from your current hit points. It is not real damage. Instead, when your subdual damage equals your current hit points, you're staggered. When it exceeds your current hit points, you fall unconscious. It doesn't matter whether the subdual damage exceeds your current hit points because the subdual damage has gone up or because your current hit points have gone down.

Subdual Damage with a Weapon that Deals Normal Damage: You can use a melee weapon that deals normal damage to deal subdual damage instead, but you suffer a -4 penalty on your attack roll because you have to use the flat of the blade, strike in nonvital areas, or check your swing. You cannot use a ranged weapon to deal subdual damage.

Normal Damage with a Weapon that Deals Subdual Damage: You can use a weapon that deals subdual damage, including an unarmed strike, to deal normal damage instead. However, you suffer a -4 penalty on your attack roll because you have to strike in the most vulnerable areas to cause normal damage.

Staggered and Unconscious: When your subdual damage exactly equals your current hit points, you're staggered. You're so badly weakened that you can only take one move action or attack action each round. You cease being staggered when your hit points exceed your subdual damage again.

When your subdual damage exceeds your current hit points, you fall unconscious. While unconscious, you are helpless (see Helpless Defenders, page 73).

Each full minute that you're unconscious, you have a 10% chance to wake up and be staggered until your hit points exceed your subdual damage again. Nothing bad happens to you if you miss this roll.

Healing Subdual Damage: You heal subdual damage at the rate of 1 hit point per hour per character level. For example, a 7th-level character heals 7 points of subdual damage each hour until all the subdual damage is gone.

If a spell or a magical power cures hit point damage, it also removes an equal amount of subdual damage, if any.

ATTACK AN OBJECT

Sometimes you need to attack or break an object, such as when you want to smash a loathsome statue, strike a foe's weapon, or break open a door.

STRIKING AN OBJECT

Objects are easier to hit than creatures because they usually don't move, but many are tough enough to shrug off some damage from each blow.

How Striking an Object Works: While skulking through the attic of a Viennese auction house, Marie finds an old sea chest. She can't pick the lock, so Sam volunteers to open it "his way." Before Marie can stop him, he chops at it with a wood axe he just found, dealing 10 points of damage. The chest, made of wood, has a hardness of 5, so the chest only takes 5 points of damage. The wood is 1 inch thick, so it originally had 10 hit points. Now it has 5.

The GM makes Listen checks for the security guards downstairs—time is of the essence. Sam has gouged the wood, but not yet broken the chest open. With his second blow, he deals 4 points of damage. That's lower than the chest's hardness, so the chest takes no damage—a glancing blow. His third blow, however, deals 12 points of damage (which means the chest takes 7). The chest breaks open, revealing a stolen statuette! Unbeknownst to the investigators, however, the guards have been running up the stairs for 2 rounds.

Armor Class: Objects are harder or easier to hit depending on several factors.

Inanimate, Immobile Objects: An inanimate, immobile object has a Armor Class of $10 + \text{its Dexterity modifier} (-5 \text{ for no Dexterity}) + \text{its size modifier}$. Immobile objects, such as a chandelier hanging from a ceiling, are easy to hit. With a melee weapon, you get a +4 bonus on your attack roll. If you take a full-round action to line up a shot, you get an automatic hit with a melee weapon or a +5 attack bonus with a ranged weapon. Objects, however, are immune to critical hits.

Held, Carried, or Worn Objects: Objects that are held, carried, or worn by a creature are harder to hit. The object uses the creature's Dexterity modifier (not its own -5) and any deflection bonus to Armor Class the creature or character may have. You don't get any special bonus for attacking the object. If it's in the creature's hand (or tentacle, or whatever), it gets a +5 bonus to Armor Class because the creature can move it quickly out of harm's way. If you want to destroy a creature's weapon, see Striking a Weapon on page 77. If you want to knock it out of his hand, use the Disarm rules on page 78.

Damage to Objects: The amount of damage an object can withstand depends on what it's made out of and how big it is. Weapon damage is

TABLE 5-7:
Size and Armor Class of Objects

Size (Example)	Armor Class Modifier	Size (Example)	Armor Class Modifier
Colossal (broad side of a barn)	-8	Medium-size (barrel)	+0
Gargantuan (narrow side of a barn)	-4	Small (chair)	+1
Huge (wagon)	-2	Tiny (tome)	+2
Large (big door)	-1	Diminutive (bottle)	+4
		Fine (gem)	+8

Vulnerability to Certain Attacks: The GM may rule that certain attacks are especially successful against particular objects. For example, it's easy to light a curtain on fire or rip up a letter.

Hardness: Each object has hardness—a number that represents how well it resists damage. Whenever an object takes damage, subtract its hardness from the damage. Only damage in excess of its hardness is deducted from the object's hit points (see Table 5-8: Substance Hardness and Hit Points; Table 5-11: Object Hardness and Hit Points; and Table 5-9: Weapon Hardness and Hit Points).

Hit Points: An object's hit point total depends on what it is made of and how big it is (see one of the three tables in the last section). When an object's hit points reach 0, it's ruined.

Very large objects have separate hit point totals for different sections. For example, you can smash through a car door without destroying the entire vehicle.

Saving Throws: Nonmagical, unattended items never make saving throws. They are considered to have failed their saving throws. An item attended by a character (being grasped, touched, or worn) receives a saving throw just as if the character herself were making the saving throw.

Artifacts (and other magic items) always get saving throws. An artifact's Fortitude, Reflex, and Will save bonuses are equal to (2 + one-half the level of the creature or character who made it). An attended artifact makes a saving throw, using either the owner's or its own saving throw bonus, whichever is better.

STRIKING A WEAPON

You can use a melee attack with a slashing or bludgeoning weapon to strike a weapon your opponent is holding. The attacking weapon must be no more than one size category smaller than the weapon attacked. You and the defender make opposed attack rolls. If you win, you have landed a solid blow against the defender's weapon. Roll damage and deal it to the weapon (see Striking an Object, above).

Enchanted Weapons: Items like enchanted knives have their own particular strengths. An attacker cannot damage a weapon that has an enhancement bonus (from a spell like *enchant item* or *magic weapon*) unless the attacker's weapon has at least as high an enhancement bonus as the weapon struck. Each +1 of enhancement bonus also adds 1 to the item's hardness and hit points.

BREAKING ITEMS

When you try to break something with sudden force rather than by dealing regular damage, use a Strength check to see if you succeed. The DC depends more on the construction of the item than on the material. For instance, an iron door with a weak lock can be forced open much more easily than it can be hacked down.

If an item has lost half or more of its hit points, the DC to break it drops by 2.

TABLE 5-8:
Substance Hardness and Hit Points

Substance	Hardness	Hit Points
Paper	0	2/inch of thickness
Rope	0	2/inch of thickness
Glass	1	1/inch of thickness
Hard Rubber	2	1/inch of thickness
Plastic	1	2/inch of thickness
Ice	0	3/inch of thickness
Wood	5	10/inch of thickness
Fiberglass	6	10/inch of thickness
Stone	8	15/inch of thickness
Iron	10	30/inch of thickness

TABLE 5-9:
Weapon Hardness and Hit Points

Weapon	Example	Hardness	HP
Tiny blade	Dagger	10	1
Medium-size blade	Saber	10	5
Small hafted weapon	Handaxe	5	2
Medium-size hafted weapon	Shovel	5	5
Handgun	.38	10	5
Rifle/shotgun	.30-06	10	8

TABLE 5-10:
DCs to Break or Burst Items

Strength Check to:	DC	Strength Check to:	DC
Break down simple door	13	Bend iron bars	24
Break down good door	18	Break barred door	25
Break down strong door	23	Burst chain bonds	26
Burst rope bonds	23	Break down iron door	28

TABLE 5-11:
Object Hardness and Hit Points

Object	Hardness	Hit Points	Break DC
Rope (1 inch diam.)	0	2	23
Bottle	1	1	12
Simple wooden door	5	10	13
Wooden pole	5	2	14
Small chest	5	1	17
Good wooden door	5	15	18
Strong wooden door	5	20	23
Car door	6	10	28
Masonry wall (1 ft. thick)	8	90	35
Hewn stone (3 ft. thick)	8	540	50
Chain	10	5	26
Handcuffs	10	10	26
Iron door (2 in. thick)	10	60	28

rolled normally against objects.

Immunities: Inanimate objects are immune to critical hits. Objects are immune to subdual damage.

Ranged Weapon Damage: Objects take half damage from ranged weapons (except for artillery weapons and the like). Divide the damage by 2 before applying the object's hardness.

Energy Attacks: Objects take half damage from acid, fire, and electricity attacks. Divide the damage by 2 before applying the hardness. Cold attacks deal one-quarter damage to objects. Sonic attacks deal full damage to objects.

Ineffective Weapons: The GM may determine that certain weapons just can't deal damage effectively to certain objects. For example, you'll have a hard time chopping down a door by firing a pistol at it or cutting a rope with a club.

BUM'S RUSH

You can attempt a bum's rush as an attack action or a charge. If you succeed, you push an opponent straight back instead of attacking him. You can only bum's rush an opponent who is no more than one size category larger than you, the same size, or smaller.

Initiating a Bum's Rush: First, you move into the defender's space. At this point, the defender immediately gets to make a single attack against you as a free action. This free attack uses the defender's best attack bonus. Next, you and the defender make opposed Strength checks. You each add a +4 bonus for each size category you are above Medium-size or a -4 penalty for each size category you are below Medium-size. You get a +2 charge bonus if you were charging (plus a -2 penalty to your Armor Class). The defender gets a +4 stability bonus if he has more than two legs or is otherwise exceptionally stable.

Bum's Rush Results: If you beat the defender, you push him back 5 feet. If you wish to move with the defender, you can push him back up to a distance of an additional 1 foot for each point by which you exceed the defender's check result. You can't, however, exceed your normal movement limit.

If you fail to beat the defender's Strength check, you move 5 feet straight back to where you were before you moved into his space. If that space is occupied, you fall prone in that space (see Table 5-4: Attack Roll Modifiers).

DISARM

As a melee attack, you may make a disarm attempt. You and the defender make opposed attack rolls with your respective weapons. If the weapons are different sizes, the combatant with the larger weapon gets a bonus on the attack roll of +4 per difference in size category. Human hands are treated as Small weapons; a creature's hands/pincers/claws are usually one size category smaller than the creature. If the defender is using a weapon in two hands, he gets an additional +4 bonus. If you beat the defender, the defender is disarmed. If you attempted the disarm action unarmed, you now have the weapon. Otherwise, it's on the ground at the defender's feet. If you fail, then the defender may immediately react and make an attempt to disarm you with the same sort of opposed melee attack roll.

GRAPPLE

Grappling means wrestling and struggling hand-to-hand. It's tricky to perform, but sometimes you want to pin foes instead of killing them, and sometimes you have little choice in the matter. For monsters, grappling can mean trapping you in a toothy maw or holding you down so it can chew you up.

GRAPPLE CHECKS

Repeatedly in a grapple, you need to make opposed grapple checks

"The call of the clan had been given, and before the foul procession had time even to be frightened a cloud of smothering fur and a phalanx of murderous claws were tidally and tempestuously upon it. The flutes stopped, and there were shrieks in the night. Dying, almost humans screamed, and cats spit and yowled and roared, but the toad-things made never a sound as their stinking green ichor oozed fatally upon that porous earth with the obscene fungi."

—H.P. Lovecraft,
The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath

against an opponent. A grapple check is similar to a melee attack roll. Your attack bonus on a grapple check is:

Base attack bonus + Strength modifier + special size modifier

Special Size Modifier: The special size modifiers for a grapple check are as follows: Colossal +16, Gargantuan +12, Huge +8, Large +4, Medium-size +0, Small -4, Tiny -8, Diminutive -12, Fine -16. Use this number in place of the normal size modifier you use when making an attack roll.

STARTING A GRAPPLE

To start a grapple, you first need to grab and hold your target. Before you determine whether you succeed, the target immediately gets to make a single attack against you as a free action. This free attack uses the target's best attack bonus.

Attempting to start a grapple is the equivalent of making a melee attack. If you get multiple attacks in a round, you can attempt to start a grapple multiple times (at your successively

lower base attack bonuses). When you grapple, you must grab your opponent, hold him, and move into his space.

Grab: Make a melee touch attack to grab the target. If you fail to hit the target, you fail to start the grapple.

Hold: Immediately after succeeding at the grab, make an opposed grapple check. If you succeed, you have started the grapple, and you deal damage to the target as if with an unarmed strike. If you get multiple attacks in a round, you may continue to attempt the hold multiple times after one successful grab.

If you lose, you fail to start the grapple. You automatically lose an attempt to hold if the target is two or more size categories larger than you are (but you can still make an attempt to grab such a target without holding it).

Move In: To maintain the grapple, you must immediately move into your opponent's space. This doesn't require a 5-foot step or a move action, but if you can't physically enter his space, you can't grapple.

Grappling: If you have fulfilled these three conditions, you and your target are grappling.

JOINING A GRAPPLE

If your target is already grappling someone else, then you can use an attack to start a grapple, as above, except that your grab automatically succeeds. You still have to make a successful opposed grapple check to hold your opponent and move in to be part of the grapple.

IF YOU'RE GRAPPLING

When you are grappling (regardless of who started the grapple), you can make an opposed grapple check as a melee attack. (This is a separate melee attack from the one that started the grapple.) If you win, you can use one of the following tactics.

OTHER GRAPPLING OPTIONS

In addition to making opposed grapple checks, you have a few other options while grappling.

Weapons: You can attack with a light weapon while grappling (but not while pinned or pinning), even with a pistol (although at a -4 penalty). You can't attack with two weapons while grappling. You can still attempt unarmed strikes (such as punches or a head butt) if you are not pinned.

Spells: You can attempt to cast a spell while grappling or even while pinned, provided its casting time is no more than 1 action, it has no somatic (S) components, and you have in hand any material components or foci you might need. Any spell that requires precise and careful action, such as drawing a burnable sigil around yourself for the *banishment of Yde Etad*, is impossible to cast while grappling or being pinned. If the spell is one that you can cast while grappling, you have to make a Concentration check (DC 25) or lose the spell.

Wriggle Free: You can make an Escape Artist check (opposed by your opponent's grapple check) to escape a grapple or a pin (so that you're just being grappled). Doing so counts as an attack action; if you escape a grapple, you can also move in the same round.

MULTIPLE GRAPPERS

Several combatants can take part in a single grapple. Up to four combatants can grapple a single opponent in a given round. Creatures that are one size category smaller than you count for half, creatures that are one size category larger than you count double, and creatures two or more size categories larger count quadruple.

GRAPPLING CONSEQUENCES

While you're grappling, your ability to attack others and defend yourself is limited.

No Threatened Area: You don't threaten the area around you while grappling.

No Dexterity Bonus: You lose your Dexterity bonus to Armor Class (if you have one) against opponents you aren't grappling. You can still use it against opponents you are grappling, however.

IF YOU'RE PINNED

When an opponent has pinned you, you are held immobile (but not helpless) for 1 round. You can make an opposed grapple check as a melee attack. If you win, you escape the pin, but you're still grappling.



GRENADELIKE WEAPON ATTACKS

A grenadelike weapon is one that splashes or explodes, dealing damage in an area rather than upon a single target. It has a broad enough effect that it can hurt characters just by landing close to them. Grenadelike weapons include grenades, dynamite, and beakers of acid in a madman's laboratory. Attacks with grenadelike weapons are ranged touch attack rolls. Direct hits deal direct hit damage. (Grenadelike weapon damage is covered on Table 6-12: Explosives, page 113.)

If you miss your target, roll 1d6 to see how many feet away from the target the weapon lands. Add +1 foot for every 10 feet of distance that you threw the weapon. Then roll 1d8 to determine the direction in which the object deviated: 1 means long, 2 means long and to the right, 3 right, 4 short and right, 5 short, 6 short and left, 7 left, 8 long and left.

Once you know where the weapon landed, it deals damage to all creatures within a certain area (see Table 6-12: Explosives, page 113).

FIREARM ATTACKS

All modern firearms have the capability to offer you extra attacks because they can fire more rapidly in a round than archaic weapons (such as bows). Some firearms fire more rapidly than others. As described in the Equipment chapter, all firearms belong to one of three classifications: standard, multifire, or autofire.

TABLE 5-12:
Multiple Ranged Attacks

Base Attack Bonus	Standard Weapon	Standard Weapon w/Rapid Shot	Standard Weapon w/Multishot	Standard Weapon w/Both Feats
+0	-6/-6	-8/-8/-8	-4/-4	-6/-6/-6
+1	-5/-5	-7/-7/-7	-3/-3	-5/-5/-5
+2	-4/-4	-6/-6/-6	-2/-2	-4/-4/-4
+3	-3/-3	-5/-5/-5	-1/-1	-3/-3/-3
+4	-2/-2	-4/-4/-4	+0/+0	-2/-2/-2
+5	-1/-1	-3/-3/-3	+1/+1	-1/-1/-1
+6/+1	+0/+0/-5	-2/-2/-2/-7	+2/+2/-3	+0/+0/+0/-5
+7/+2	+1/+1/-4	-1/-1/-1/-6	+3/+3/-2	+1/+1/+1/-4
+8/+3	+2/+2/-3	+0/+0/+0/-5	+4/+4/-1	+2/+2/+2/-3
+9/+4	+3/+3/-2	+1/+1/+1/-4	+5/+5/+0	+3/+3/+3/-2
+10/+5	+4/+4/-1	+2/+2/+2/-3	+6/+6/+1	+4/+4/+4/-1
Base Attack Bonus	Multifire Weapon	Multifire Weapon w/Rapid Shot	Multifire Weapon w/Multishot	Multifire Weapon w/Both Feats
+0	-4/-4	-6/-6/-6	-2/-2	-4/-4/-4
+1	-3/-3	-5/-5/-5	-1/-1	-3/-3/-3
+2	-2/-2	-4/-4/-4	+0/+0	-2/-2/-2
+3	-1/-1	-3/-3/-3	+1/+1	-1/-1/-1
+4	+0/+0	-2/-2/-2	+2/+2	+0/+0/+0
+5	+1/+1	-1/-1/-1	+3/+3	+1/+1/+1
+6/+1	+2/+2/-3	+0/+0/+0/-5	+4/+4/-1	+2/+2/+2/-3
+7/+2	+3/+3/-2	+1/+1/+1/-4	+5/+5/+0	+3/+3/+3/-2
+8/+3	+4/+4/-1	+2/+2/+2/-3	+6/+6/+1	+4/+4/+4/-1
+9/+4	+5/+5/+0	+3/+3/+3/-2	+7/+7/+2	+5/+5/+5/+0
+10/+5	+6/+6/+1	+4/+4/+4/-1	+8/+8/+3	+6/+6/+6/+1
Base Attack Bonus	Autofire Weapon	Autofire Weapon w/Rapid Shot	Autofire Weapon w/Multishot	Autofire Weapon w/Both Feats
+0	-6/-6/-6	-8/-8/-8/-8	-4/-4/-4	-6/-6/-6/-6
+1	-5/-5/-5	-7/-7/-7/-7	-3/-3/-3	-5/-5/-5/-5
+2	-4/-4/-4	-6/-6/-6/-6	-2/-2/-2	-4/-4/-4/-4
+3	-3/-3/-3	-5/-5/-5/-5	-1/-1/-1	-3/-3/-3/-3
+4	-2/-2/-2	-4/-4/-4/-4	+0/+0/+0	-2/-2/-2/-2
+5	-1/-1/-1	-3/-3/-3/-3	+1/+1/+1	-1/-1/-1/-1
+6/+1	+0/+0/+0/-5	-2/-2/-2/-2/-7	+2/+2/+2/-3	+0/+0/+0/+0/-5
+7/+2	+1/+1/+1/-4	-1/-1/-1/-1/-6	+3/+3/+3/-2	+1/+1/+1/+1/-4
+8/+3	+2/+2/+2/-3	+0/+0/+0/+0/-5	+4/+4/+4/-1	+2/+2/+2/+2/-3
+9/+4	+3/+3/+3/-2	+1/+1/+1/+1/-4	+5/+5/+5/+0	+3/+3/+3/+3/-2
+10/+5	+4/+4/+4/-1	+2/+2/+2/+2/-3	+6/+6/+6/+1	+4/+4/+4/+4/-1

AUTOFIRE

You may attempt two extra attacks per round with a weapon that has autofire. The extra attacks are at your highest base attack bonus, but each attack (the extra ones and the normal ones) suffers a -6 penalty. You must use a full attack to use autofire. (A full attack is a full-round action.) The Multishot feat lessens this penalty by 2.

Each autofire attack uses three bullets. Be sure to track your ammo accordingly and reload when necessary.

MULTIFIRE

You may attempt one extra attack per round with a weapon that has the multifire capability. The extra attack is at your highest base attack

extra one and the normal ones) suffers a -6 penalty. You must use a full attack to get the extra attack. (A full attack is a full-round action.) The Multishot feat lessens this penalty by 2.

bonus, but each attack (the extra one and the normal ones) suffers a -4 penalty. You must use a full attack to use multifire. (A full attack is a full-round action.) The Multishot feat lessens this penalty by 2.

STANDARD

You may attempt one extra attack per round with a weapon that has the standard capability. The extra attack is at your highest base attack bonus, but each attack (the

Table 5-12: Multiple Ranged Attacks calculates each attack bonus, with each type of weapon fire, with Rapid Shot, with Multishot, and with both together. Use the character's base attack bonuses, then add other modifiers (such as for Dexterity) to the result.

MULTIPLE RANGED ATTACKS

TRIP

You can try to trip an opponent as a melee attack. You can only trip an opponent who is no more than one size category larger than you, the same size, or smaller.

Making a Trip Attack: Make a melee touch attack. If the attack succeeds, make a Strength check opposed by the defender's Dexterity or Strength check (whichever ability score has the higher modifier).

VARIANT: RELOADING FIREARMS

By default, reloading any firearm to full capacity requires a single full-round action. Players desiring a more realistic way of modeling reload times can use the table below.

Loading Method	Time to Reload
Belt	2 rounds to load a belt and chamber a round
Drum	2 rounds to load a drum and chamber a round
Break-Open	1 round to load up to two cartridges, or 1 round to load all chambers if a speed loader is used
Clip	1 round to load a clip and chamber a round
Magazine	1 round to load a magazine and chamber a round
Side	1 round to load two cartridges
Swing-Out	1 round to load up to two cartridges, or 1 round to load all chambers if a speed loader is used

VARIANT: AUTOFIRE SPRAY

Autofire weapons are capable of truly rapid fire. Standard autofire use is in the form of short, controlled bursts that you can reliably target and control. If you want to just fire away like Chow Yun Fat in *Hard Boiled*, you can use this variant. Firing in this manner is very inaccurate, but if it's your last stand, you might as well go out with guns blazing.

When using autofire spray, you make your normal maximum of autofire attacks as described in the text. You may then continue firing. Each additional attack you take uses three bullets. Unlike a regular autofire attack, you only hit on a natural 20. Such a hit does not qualify as a critical hit, however—just roll normal damage. You may continue making attacks until you run out of ammunition or have fired up to 39 bullets—that's 13 attacks.

VARIANT: FIREARM MALFUNCTIONS

An unmodified attack roll of 1 is an automatic failure, perhaps indicating a wild shot. However, it can also indicate that the weapon or its ammunition has malfunctioned. In this event, a 1d20 roll should be made. If the result is a 1, the ammunition has misfired (it's a dud). If the result is a 2, the weapon has jammed. It takes 1 round to clear a jam or misfire. A followup die roll is required to clear a jam. If you roll a 1, the weapon suffers a serious malfunction or

breaks and cannot be readily repaired in a short amount of time.

Weapons that are in poor condition or are very dirty have a higher chance of jamming. In general, such weapons will jam on a 2 or a 3. Some are more or less reliable. A sample listing is below. This applies only if the weapon is dirty, worn, or otherwise prone to problems.

Weapon Name or Type	Malfunctions on a roll of
Revolving-action arms	*
"Actionless" arms such as double-barrel shotguns	*
Bolt-action arms	2
Colt M1911 and M1911A1 pistol and variants	2
Lahti L/35, Browning High-Power, M35 Radom, Steyr M1911, and Walther P38 pistols	2
Beretta M1951 and Model 92 pistols and Glock 17 pistol (and variants)	2
M1950 pistol (CZ 50) and P08 Luger pistol and variants	2, 3, or 4
AK-47, FN FAL, G3, M1 Garand, M-14, and Galil rifles	2
AR-15 and M-16 rifles (and variants)	2, 3, or 4
Thompson M1928 and M1 submachine guns	2
PPSh-41 submachine gun	2
MP38 and MP40 submachine guns	2, 3, or 4
Lewis machine gun and MG34 machine gun	2, 3, or 4
Bren, MG42, MG3, Browning M1917, M2 Heavy Barrel, and Vickers machine guns	2

* For game purposes, revolvers and "actionless" weapons (such as double-barrel shotguns) cannot jam. Only if they are in absolutely appalling condition might they suffer from a malfunction.

VARIANT: DROPPED FIREARMS

At the Gamemaster's discretion, a dropped firearm with a live round in the chamber may discharge in a random direction. Use a 1d8 roll to determine direction (as in Grenadelike Weapon Attacks, page 80). If there's a target (or targets) within 30 feet in that direction, roll 1d20 and subtract 4; if this number equals or exceeds the Armor Class of the nearest target, he's been hit. After the first time this happens, cautious investigators may learn to holster their sidearms instead of dropping them.

This occurrence should only happen accidentally. Dropping a box of loaded pistols into a shoggoth pit should accomplish nothing except losing the pistols and angering the shoggoth.

A combatant gets a +4 bonus for every size category he is larger than Medium-size or a -4 penalty for every size category he is smaller. The defender gets a +4 stability bonus on his check if he has more than two legs or is otherwise more stable than a normal humanoid. If you win, you trip the defender. If you lose, the defender may immediately react and make a Strength check opposed by your Dexterity or Strength check to try to trip you.

Being Tripped (Prone): A tripped character is prone (see Table 5-4: Attack Roll Modifiers). Standing up from prone is a move action.

Tripping a Mounted Opponent: You may make a trip attack against a mounted opponent. The defender may use his Ride skill in place of his Dexterity or Strength check. If you succeed, you pull the rider from his mount.

UNARMED ATTACKS

Striking for damage with punches, kicks, and head butts is like attacking with a weapon, except for the following:

Unarmed Strike Damage: An unarmed strike from a Medium-size character deals 1d3 points of damage (plus your Strength modifier). All damage is subdual damage. Unarmed strikes count as light weapons (for purposes of two-weapon attack penalties and so on).

Dealing Normal Damage: You can specify that your unarmed strike will deal normal damage before you make your attack roll, but you suffer a -4 penalty on your attack roll because you have to strike a particularly vulnerable spot to deal normal damage.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The GM should consider the following aspects of the game, from strange powers such as invisibility to more mundane—but equally dangerous—dangers such as weather, fire, and drowning.

DAMAGE REDUCTION

While running from a bloodbath in the city sewers, Claire is confronted by a bestial vampire. She lunges at it with a hunting knife, plunging steel into its cold heart. The undead monster grabs the knife, tosses it away, and laughs as the wound instantly heals. Then it hisses its rage and readies its claws.

Some Mythos creatures have the supernatural ability to instantly heal damage from weapons or completely ignore blows altogether as though they were invulnerable.

- A creature with damage reduction has a DR rating. This is the number of hit points the creature ignores from normal attacks. Thus, a creature with a damage reduction of DR 5 struck for 8 points of damage ignores 5 points and takes only 3 points of damage.
- Usually a certain type of weapon—often a magic weapon—can overcome this reduction. For example, a loup-garou's damage reduction is 15/silver, meaning the werewolf

ignores the first 15 points of damage from every normal attack unless the weapon is made of silver.

- Any weapon more powerful than the type given in the note also negates the ability. A weapon with an enhancement bonus is considered more powerful than a weapon made of a special material. Thus, an enchanted knife with a +1 enhancement bonus damages a loup-garou normally, just as a silver blade would.
- Magical attacks and energy attacks (even mundane fire) ignore damage reduction.
- For purposes of harming other creatures with damage reduction, a creature's natural weapons count as weapons of the type that can ignore its own innate damage reduction. The amount of damage reduction is irrelevant. For example, a hunting horror (damage reduction 5/+1) deals full damage to a loup-garou, as if the hunting horror's attack were with a +1 weapon. However, damage reduction from spells, such as *create self ward*, does not confer this ability.
- Sometimes damage reduction is instant healing. A hunting knife slashed across a flying polyp's greasy hide slices it open, but the wound seals as fast as it's made. Sometimes damage reduction represents the creature's tough hide or body, such as the scales of a shantak. In either case, characters can see that conventional attacks don't work.

DISEASE

While hunting the bestial vampire that attacked Claire in the city sewers, Sam is attacked by sewer rats infested with diseased fleas. He survives the encounter, but two days later a fever strikes, and he becomes shaky and tired. The fever lasts a few more days before he can throw it off. Then, gradually, his body recovers. Sam counts himself lucky—some diseases weaken their victims permanently.

When a character is injured by a contaminated attack, touches an item smeared with diseased matter, or consumes disease-tainted food or drink, he must make an immediate Fortitude saving throw. If he succeeds, the disease has no effect—his immune system fought off the infection. If he fails, he takes damage after an incubation period. Once per day afterward he must make a successful Fortitude saving throw to avoid repeated damage. Two successful saving throws in a row indicate that he has fought off the disease and recovers, taking no more damage. (The GM can roll these Fortitude saving throws for a player character so that the player doesn't know whether the disease has taken hold.)

Diseases cause various symptoms and are spread through a number of vectors. Rather than give game stats to every ailment and virus, when the GM determines a character encounters disease, she can choose a result on Table 5-13 below to determine the disease's effects (or roll randomly, if she prefers).

Healing: Use of the Heal skill can help a diseased character. Every time the diseased character makes a saving throw against disease effects, the healer makes a check. The diseased character can use the healer's result in place of his saving throw if the Heal result is higher. The diseased character must be within the healer's care and must spend most of each day resting.

TABLE 5-13:
Random Diseases

Roll	DC	Incubation	Damage
01–20	16	1d3 days	1d4 Str†
21–30	16	1 day	1d6 Wis
31–35	18	1 day	1d6 Con*
36–40	14	1d4 days	1d4 Str
41–60	12	1d3 days	1d3 Dex, 1d3 Con
61–70	12	1 day	1d4 Int
71–75	20	1 day	1d6 Con
76–85	15	1d3 days	1d6 Str
86–90	13	1 day	1d8 Dex
91–00	14	1 day	1d4 Con*

* When damaged, the character must succeed at another saving throw or 1 point of temporary damage is a permanent drain instead.

† Each time the character takes 2 or more points of damage from the disease, he must make another Fortitude save or be permanently blinded.

Characters recover points lost to ability score damage at a rate of 1 per day; this rule applies even while a disease is in progress. That means that a lucky character with a minor disease might be able to withstand it without accumulating any damage.

DC: This gives the DC for the saving throws to prevent infection (if the character has been infected), prevent each instance of repeated damage, and recover from the disease.

Incubation: The time before damage begins.

Damage: The damage the character takes after incubation and each day afterward. Ability score damage is temporary unless otherwise noted.

Infection: The disease's method of delivery—ingested, inhaled, via injury, or contact—should be noted. For example, if an infected character can communicate the disease through breathing, it's an inhaled disease. Keep in mind that some injury diseases may be transmitted by as small an injury as a flea bite and that most inhaled diseases can also be ingested (and vice versa).

INCORPOREALITY

Marie watches in horror as a translucent face passes through the door in front of her. By the time she alerts her companions, it's gone. The investigators keep exploring the haunted mansion when suddenly several ghostly figures fly out of the walls toward them. Sam grabs a chair to fend off the spirit's attack, but an incorporeal hand passes through it and reaches through his kevlar armor. It touches his heart, which grows suddenly cold. For a few deadly seconds, Sam stops breathing. In a panic, Claire drops her useless knife and runs.

Spectres, wraiths, and a few other creatures lack physical bodies. Such creatures are insubstantial and can't be touched by nonmagical matter or energy. Likewise, they cannot manipulate objects or exert physical force on objects. However, incorporeal beings have a tangible presence that sometimes seems like a physical attack against a corporeal creature (such as an ability drain from a Colour Out of Space).

- Incorporeal creatures can only be harmed by other incorporeal creatures, by weapons with an enhancement bonus of +1 or greater (such as a knife with *magic weapon*), or by spells, spell-like effects, or supernatural effects. They are immune to all nonmagical attack forms. They are not burned by normal fires, affected by natural cold, or harmed by mundane acids.

- Even when struck by enchanted weapons or magic, an incorporeal creature has a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. However, Force-effect spells (as defined in the Magic chapter) affect it normally.
- Incorporeal creatures move in any direction (including up or down) at will. They do not need to walk on the ground.
- Incorporeal creatures can pass through solid objects at will, although they cannot see if their eyes are "inside" solid matter.
- The physical attacks of incorporeal creatures ignore material armor.
- Incorporeal creatures pass through and operate in water as easily as air.
- Incorporeal creatures cannot fall down and take damage.
- Corporeal creatures cannot trip or grapple incorporeal creatures.
- Incorporeal creatures have no weight.
- Incorporeal creatures do not leave footprints, have no scent, and make no noise unless they want to do so intentionally.

INVISIBILITY

An invisible star vampire spies on the investigators from a nearby rooftop. As it descends to the ground, Marie suddenly gets a strange feeling. "There's something here," she whispers, and signals for silence as she tries to locate it by ear. Kristof holds his breath for a few seconds, readying his shotgun and waiting for Marie's signal to attack. Before he can react, the invisible creature grabs him from behind. Within seconds, it begins feasting on his blood.

The ability to move about unseen is wonderful, but it's not foolproof. While invisible creatures can't be seen, they can be heard, smelled, or even felt.

- A creature can generally notice the presence of an active invisible creature within 30 feet with a Spot check (DC 20). Characters with the Sensitive feat gain a +2 bonus on this check. The observer gains a hunch that "something's there," but can't see it or target it accurately with an attack. An invisible creature that's holding still is practically impossible to notice (DC 30). An invisible inanimate object—or invisible, unliving creature holding still, or a completely immobile invisible creature—is even harder to notice (DC 40). It's practically impossible (+20 DC) to pinpoint an invisible creature's location with a Spot check. Even if a character succeeds at such a check, the invisible creature still benefits from full concealment (50% miss chance).

TABLE 5-14:
Detecting Invisible Creatures

Condition	Listen DC
In combat or speaking	0
Moving at half speed	Move Silently check
Moving at full speed	Move Silently check at -4
Running or charging	Move Silently check at -20
Distance	+1 to DC per 10 feet
Obstacle: door	+5 to DC
Obstacle: stone wall	+15 to DC

- A creature can use hearing to find an invisible creature. A character can make such a Listen check as a free action each round. A Listen check at least equal to the invisible creature's Move Silently check reveals its presence. (A creature with no ranks in Move Silently can use it untrained, making a Dexterity check instead.) A successful Listen check lets a character hear an invisible creature "over there somewhere." Pinpointing the exact location of an invisible creature is practically impossible with a Listen check (+20 to DC).
- A creature can grope about to find an invisible creature. A character can make a touch attack with his hands or a weapon into two adjacent 5-foot areas using a single attack action. If there is an invisible target in the designated area, there's a 50% miss chance on the touch attack. If successful, the groping character deals no damage, but has successfully pinpointed the invisible creature's current location. (If the invisible creature moves, the location is once again unknown.)
- If an invisible creature strikes a character, the character struck knows the location of the creature that struck him (until, of course, the invisible creature moves). The only exception is if the invisible creature has a reach greater than 5 feet. In this case, the struck character knows the general location of the creature, but has not pinpointed its exact location.
- If a character tries to attack an invisible creature whose location he has pinpointed, he attacks normally, but the invisible creature still benefits from full concealment (and thus a 50% miss chance). At the GM's option, a particularly large and slow creature might have a lessened miss chance.
- If a character tries to attack an invisible creature whose location he has not pinpointed, the player should choose the area where he will direct an attack. If the invisible creature is there, conduct the attack normally. If the enemy's not there, the GM should roll the miss chance anyway without letting the player see it, and tell him that he's missed. That way the player doesn't know whether he missed because the enemy's not there or because the GM successfully rolled the miss chance.
- If an invisible character picks up a visible object, the object remains visible. An invisible creature can pick up a small visible item and hide it on its person to render it effectively invisible.
- Invisible creatures still leave tracks, and they can be tracked normally. Footprints in sand, mud, or other soft surfaces can give enemies clues as to the invisible creature's location.
- An invisible creature in the water displaces water, revealing its location. The invisible creature, however, is still hard to see and benefits from one-half concealment (30% miss chance).
- A creature with the scent ability can detect invisible creatures as it would a visible one.
- A character or creature with the Blind-Fight feat has a better chance to hit an invisible target. Roll the miss chance twice; the concealment roll fails only if both rolls indicate a miss. (Alternatively, make one 25% miss roll rather than two 50% miss rolls.)

**TABLE 5-15:
Poisons**

Poison Type	Initial Damage	Secondary Damage
Injury DC 12	0	1d4 Dex
Injury DC 13	1 Con	1d2 Con
Injury DC 13	1d4 Str	1d6 Str
Injury DC 12	0	1d4 Con + 1d3 Wis
Injury DC 24	1d6 Str	1d6 Str
Injury DC 14	1d6 Str	1d6 Str
Injury DC 17	3d6 Con	3d6 Con
Injury DC 14	1 Con	Unconsciousness
Injury DC 15	1d6 Dex	1d6 Dex
Injury DC 17	1 Str*	2d6 Str
Injury DC 12	0	1d6 Str
Injury DC 20	1d6 Con	2d6 Con
Contact DC 16	1 Dex	2d4 Dex
Contact DC 13	0	3d6 Con
Contact DC 26	3d6 Str	0
Contact DC 16	2d12 hp	1d6 Con
Contact DC 16	1d6 Dex	2d6 Dex
Contact DC 13	Paralysis	0
Contact DC 20	3d6 Con	3d6 Con
Ingested DC 15	0	Unconsciousness
Ingested DC 14	1d4 Int	2d6 Int
Ingested DC 11	1 Wis	2d6 Wis + 1d4 Int
Ingested DC 13	1 Con	1d8 Con
Ingested DC 17	2d6 Str	1d6 Str
Ingested DC 18	2d6 Con	1d6 Con + 1d6 Str
Inhaled DC 15	1 Cha	1d6 Cha + 1 Cha*
Inhaled DC 18	1 Con*	3d6 Con
Inhaled DC 15	1d4 Wis	2d6 Wis

POISON

Atlach-Nacha grabs Kristof in its pincers and stings him. The wound burns like fire. Pain spreads through his body, bringing a strange weakness with it. Kristof struggles to free himself from the pincers, but his arms have become weak, and the avatar of the Great Old One stings him again. Soon, it overcomes him. Kristof falls helpless in the obscene being's grasp.

A character must make a Fortitude saving throw when he takes damage from an attack with a poisoned weapon, touches an item smeared with contact poison, consumes poisoned food or drink, or is otherwise poisoned. If he fails, he suffers the poison's initial damage (usually ability damage). Even if he succeeds, he typically faces more damage 1 minute later, which he can also avoid with a Fortitude saving throw.

Poisons are described on Table 5-15: Poisons.

Type: The poison's method of delivery—ingested, inhaled, via an injury, or contact—and the DC needed to save.

Initial Damage: The damage the character takes immediately upon failing his Fortitude saving throw against this type of poison. Ability score damage is temporary unless marked with an asterisk (*), in which case the loss is a permanent drain. Paralysis lasts 2d6 minutes.

Secondary Damage: The amount of damage the character takes 1 minute after exposure as a result of the poisoning, if he fails a second saving throw. Unconsciousness lasts for 1d3 hours. Loss marked with an asterisk is a permanent drain instead of temporary damage.

Perils of Using Poison: A character has a 5% chance to expose himself to a poison whenever he applies it to a weapon or otherwise readies it for use. Additionally, a character that rolls a 1 on an attack roll with a poisoned weapon must make a Reflex saving throw (DC 15) or accidentally poison himself with the weapon.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Characters crossing the burning desert face heatstroke and dehydration. Plunging into the murky depths of the ocean raises the risk of drowning and even decompression. Investigators spend a lot of time in the most dismal, dangerous, and generally unpleasant places imaginable. If the monsters and the cultists don't slaughter them, the environment itself might do them in. This section details hazards the player characters face from the physical world around them.

LANDSLIDES AND AVALANCHES

A landslide or avalanche consists of two distinct areas: the bury zone and the slide zone. Characters directly in the path of a rockfall or avalanche are in the bury zone; characters on the edge of the area are in the slide zone and have a chance of being able to get out of the way.

Characters in the bury zone sustain 8d6 points of damage, or half that amount if they make a successful Reflex saving throw (DC 15). They are subsequently pinned (see below).

Characters in the slide zone sustain 3d6 points of damage, or no damage if they make a successful Reflex saving throw (DC 15). Those who fail their saves are also pinned.

Pinned characters take 1d6 points of subdual damage per minute while pinned. If the character falls unconscious, he must make a Constitution check (DC 15) or take 1d6 points of normal damage each minute thereafter until he's freed or he dies.

WATER DANGERS

Water presents characters with several problems. First, it can block their movement. Second, characters in the water face the danger of drowning or losing gear. Third, a character caught in fast-moving water can be swept away and battered or killed by rapids and waterfalls. Fourth, really deep water deals damage from the great pressure it exerts. Finally, even a short exposure to cold water can be dangerous, killing even the hardiest characters by hypothermia.

Obviously, the skill most commonly used in dealing with water as an obstacle is Swim. Unfortunately, not every character who gets into the water has ranks in this skill; most simply use the skill untrained, making a Strength check instead.

Any character can wade through relatively calm water that isn't over

his head, no check required (hence the importance of fords). Similarly, swimming in calm waters only requires skill checks with a DC of 10. Trained swimmers can just take 10.

By contrast, fast-moving water is much more dangerous. On a successful Swim or Strength check (DC 15), it deals 1d3 points of subdual damage per round (1d6 points of normal damage if flowing over rocks). On a failed check, the character must make another check that round to avoid going under.

Very deep water is not only generally pitch-black, posing a navigational hazard, but also deals water pressure damage: 1d6 points of damage per minute for every 100 feet the character is below the surface. A successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) means the diver takes no damage in that minute.

Very cold water deals 1d6 points of subdual damage from hypothermia per minute of exposure.

STARVATION AND THIRST DANGERS

In normal climates, investigators need at least a gallon of fluids and about a pound of decent food per day to avoid starvation. In very hot climates, characters need two or three times as much water to avoid dehydration.

A character can go without water for one day plus a number of hours equal to his Constitution score. After this, the character must make a Constitution check each hour (DC 10, +1 per each previous check) or sustain 1d6 points of subdual damage.

A character can go without food for 3 days, in growing discomfort. After this, the character must make a Constitution check each day (DC 10, +1 for each previous check) or sustain 1d6 points of subdual damage.

Characters who have taken subdual damage from lack of food or water are fatigued (see the Character Conditions Summary sidebar, page 91). Subdual damage from thirst or starvation cannot be recovered until the character gets food or water, as needed.

HEAT DANGERS

Prolonged exposure to hot temperatures can quickly wear down a character, and heatstroke can be deadly.

Heat deals subdual damage that cannot be recovered until the character cools off (reaches shade, survives until nightfall, gets doused in water, and so on). Once rendered unconscious through the accumulation of subdual damage, the character begins to take normal damage at the same rate.

Characters in very hot conditions (above 90° F) must make Fortitude saving throws (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) or sustain 1d4 points of subdual damage each hour. Characters wearing heavy clothing or armor (such as bullet-proof vests) have a -4 penalty to their saves. A character with the Wilderness Lore skill may receive a bonus on this saving throw and may be able to apply this bonus to other characters as well (see Wilderness Lore, page 37). Characters reduced to unconsciousness begin taking normal damage (1d4 points per hour).

In conditions of extreme heat (above 110° F), characters must make Forti-

THE DROWNING RULE

Any character can hold her breath for a number of rounds equal to twice her Constitution score. After this, the character must make a Constitution check (DC 10) every round in order to continue holding her breath. Each round, the DC increases by 1.

When the character finally fails her Constitution

check, she begins to drown. In the first round, she falls unconscious (0 hp). The following round, she drops to -1 hit points and is dying. In the third round, she drowns.

It is possible to drown in other substances besides water, such as sand, quicksand, fine dust, silos of grain, oceans of blood, and so on.



tude saves once every 10 minutes or sustain 1d4 points of subdual damage. Characters wearing heavy clothing or armor have a -4 penalty on their saving throws. A character with the Wilderness Lore skill may receive a +2 competence bonus on this saving throw and may be able to apply this bonus to other characters as well. Characters reduced to unconsciousness begin taking normal damage (1d4 points per each 10 minute period).

A character who sustains any subdual damage from heat exposure suffers from heatstroke and is fatigued (suffering a -2 penalty to all Strength- and Dexterity-based rolls; see the Character Condition Summary sidebar, page 91). These penalties end when the character recovers the subdual damage she took from the heat.

Abysmal heat (air temperature over 140° F, fire, boiling water, lava) deals normal damage. Breathing air in these temperatures deals 1d6 points of damage per

minute (no save). In addition, characters must make Fortitude saves (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) or sustain 1d4 points of subdual damage every 5 minutes. Those wearing heavy clothing or armor have a -4 penalty to their saves.

Boiling water deals 1d6 points of scalding damage, unless the character is fully immersed, in which case it deals 10d6 points of damage per round of exposure.

COLD DANGERS

Prolonged exposure to cold temperatures and harsh weather can wear down a character who isn't protected against the climate. Hypothermia, frostbite, and exhaustion can quickly kill in bad weather. The best defense against cold and exposure is getting under cover and keeping warm.

Cold and exposure deal subdual damage to the victim. This subdual damage cannot be recovered until the character gets out of the cold and warms up again. Once she is rendered unconscious through the accumulation of subdual damage, the cold and exposure begin to deal normal damage at the same rate.

FIRE!

Characters exposed to burning oil, bonfires, or the attacks of a fire vampire might find their clothes, hair, or equipment on fire.

Characters at risk of catching fire are allowed a Reflex saving throw (DC 15) to avoid this fate. If a character's clothes or hair catch fire, he takes 1d6 points of damage immediately. In each subsequent round, the burning character must make another Reflex saving throw. Failure means he takes another 1d6 points of damage that round. Success means that the fire has gone out. (That

is, once he succeeds at his saving throw, he's no longer on fire.)

A character on fire may automatically extinguish the flames by jumping into enough water to douse himself. If no body of water is at hand, rolling on the ground or smothering the fire permits the character another save with a +4 bonus.

Those unlucky enough to have their clothes or equipment catch fire must make Reflex saving throws for each item (DC 15). Inflammable items that fail sustain the same amount of damage as the character.

Light Wind: A gentle breeze, having little or no game effect.

Moderate Wind: A steady wind with a 50% chance of extinguishing small unprotected flames.

Strong Wind: These gusts automatically extinguish unprotected flames, impose a -2 penalty to ranged attacks, and apply a -2 penalty to Listen checks.

Severe Wind: In addition to automatically extinguishing any unprotected flames, winds of this magnitude cause protected flames (such as those in lanterns) to dance wildly, conferring a 50% chance of extinguishing these lights. Ranged weapon attacks and Listen checks are at a -4 penalty.

Windstorm: Powerful enough to bring down branches, if not whole trees, windstorms automatically extinguish unprotected flames and have a 75% chance of blowing out protected flames (such as those in lanterns).

Ranged weapon attacks are impossible. Listen checks are at a -8 penalty due to the howling of the wind.

Hurricane: All flames are extinguished, and ranged attacks are impossible. Listen checks are impossible—all characters can hear is the roaring of the wind. Hurricanes often fell trees.

Tornado: All flames are extinguished, and all Listen checks and ranged attacks are impossible. Instead of being blown away (see Table 5–16: Wind Effects), characters in close proximity to a tornado who fail their Fortitude saves are sucked toward it. Those who come in contact with the actual funnel cloud are picked up and whirled around for 1d10 rounds, taking 6d6 points of damage per round before being violently expelled (falling damage may then apply). While a tornado's rotational speed can be as great as 300 mph, the funnel itself moves forward at an average of 30 mph. Tornadoes uproot trees, destroy buildings, and generally raise hell.

Blown Away: Creatures on the ground are knocked down and rolled 1d4×10 feet, sustaining 1d4 points of subdual damage per 10 feet. Flying creatures are blown back 2d6×10 feet and sustain 2d6 points of subdual damage due to battering and buffering.

Knocked Down: Creatures are knocked to the ground by the force of the wind. Flying creatures are blown back 1d6×10 feet.

Checked: Creatures are unable to move forward against the force of the wind. Flying creatures are blown back 1d6×5 feet.

Precipitation: Most precipitation comes in the form of rain, but in cold conditions, it can manifest as snow, sleet, or hail. Precipitation of any kind fol-

WEATHER HAZARDS

Aside from heat and cold, the weather itself can present dangers and obstacles to characters.

Winds: Winds can create a stinging spray of sand or dust, fan a large fire, keel over a small boat, and blow gases or vapors away. If powerful enough, they can even knock characters down (see Table 5–16: Wind Effects), interfere with ranged attacks, or impose penalties on some skill checks.

TABLE 5–16:
Wind Effects

Wind Force	Wind Speed	Ranged Attacks	Creature Size*	Wind Effect on Creatures	Fort Save DC
Light	0–10 mph	—	Any	None	—
Moderate	11–20 mph	—	Any	None	—
Strong	21–30 mph	-2	Tiny or smaller Small or larger	Knocked down None	10
Severe	31–50 mph	-4	Tiny Small Medium-size Large or larger	Blown away Knocked down Checked None	15
Windstorm	51–74 mph	Impossible	Small or smaller Medium-size Large or Huge Gargantuan or Colossal	Blown away Knocked down Checked None	18
Hurricane	75–174 mph	Impossible	Medium-size or smaller Large Huge Gargantuan or Colossal	Blown away Knocked down Checked None	20
Tornado	175–300 mph	Impossible	Large or smaller Huge Gargantuan or Colossal	Blown away Knocked down Checked	30

*Flying or airborne creatures are treated as one size class smaller than their actual size, so an airborne Huge shantak is treated as Large for purposes of wind effects.

lowed by a cold snap—in which the temperature dips from above freezing to at least 30° F or below—may produce ice. (See *Ice*, page 89.)

Rain: Rain reduces visibility ranges by half, resulting in a -4 penalty to Spot and Search checks. It has the same effect on flames, ranged weapon attacks, and Listen checks as severe wind (see above).

Snow: While falling, snow reduces visibility as rain (-4 penalty to ranged weapon attacks, Spot checks, and Search checks). Once on the ground, it reduces movement by half. Snow has the same effect on flames as moderate wind (see above).

Sleet: Essentially frozen rain, sleet has the same effect as rain while falling (except that its chance to extinguish protected flames is 75%) and the same effect as snow once on the ground.

Hail: Hail does not reduce visibility, but the sound of falling hail makes Listen checks more difficult (-4 penalty). Sometimes (5% chance) hail can become large enough to deal 1 point of damage (per storm) to anything in the open. Once on the ground, hail has the same effect on movement as snow.

Storms: The combined effects of wind and precipitation (or dust) that accompany all storms reduce visibility ranges by half, imposing a -8 penalty to all Spot, Search, and Listen checks. Storms make ranged weapon attacks impossible.

Storms automatically extinguish unprotected flames. They cause protected flames, such as those in lanterns, to dance wildly, with a 50% chance to extinguish those lights.

See Table 5-16: Wind Effects for possible consequences to creatures caught outside without shelter during such a storm. Storms are divided into the following three types:

Duststorm: These desert storms differ from other storms in that they have no precipitation. Instead, a duststorm blows fine grains of sand that obscure vision, smother unprotected flames, and can even choke protected flames (50% chance). Most duststorms are accompanied by severe winds (see above) and leave behind a deposit of 1d6 inches of sand. However, there is a 10% chance of a greater duststorm accompanied by windstorm-magnitude winds (see above and Table 5-16: Wind Effects). These greater duststorms

deal 1d3 points of subdual damage each round on anyone caught out in the open without shelter. They also pose a choking hazard. (See *The Drowning Rule* sidebar, page 85. A character with a scarf or similar protection across his mouth and nose does not begin to choke until after a number of rounds equal to ten times his Constitution score.) Greater duststorms leave behind 2d3-1 feet of fine sand in their wake.

Snowstorm: In addition to the wind and precipitation common to other storms, snowstorms leave behind 1d6 inches of snow on the ground.

Thunderstorm: In addition to wind and precipitation (usually rain, but sometimes also hail), thunderstorms are accompanied by lightning that can pose a hazard to characters without proper shelter. As a rule of thumb, assume one bolt per minute for a 1-hour period at the center of the storm. Each bolt causes electricity damage equal to 1d10 eight-sided dice. One-in-ten thunderstorms are accompanied by a tornado (see below).

Powerful Storms: Very high winds and torrential precipitation reduce visibility to zero, making Spot, Search, and Listen checks impossible. Unprotected flames are automatically extinguished, and even protected flames have a 75% chance of being doused. Creatures caught in the area can make a Fortitude saving throw

VARIANT: OPPORTUNITY ATTACKS

The standard rules for *Call of Cthulhu* assume that combatants are actively avoiding attacks. A player doesn't have to declare anything special for his character to defend himself. Sometimes, however, a combatant in a melee lets his guard down, and he's not on the defensive as usual. In these cases, combatants near him can take advantage of his lapse in defense to attack him for free. These free attacks are called attacks of opportunity (also known as "opportunity attacks" or "op attacks").

Threatened Areas: Each combatant threatens a 5-foot area around himself (the area into which he can make melee attacks). If you're within 5 feet of an opponent, you're in his threatened area, and some of your actions might provoke opportunity attacks. Likewise, any opponent within 5 feet of you is in your threatened area. A flat-footed character doesn't threaten the area around him.

Provoking an Opportunity Attack: Three types of actions can provoke opportunity attacks while you're in a threatened area: moving more than 5 feet, taking an action that distracts you from defending yourself, and certain unarmed attacks.

Moving within a Threatened Area: When you enter a threatened area, you must immediately stop moving; if you don't, you provoke an opportunity attack. However, if you start your movement within a threatened area, you can move up to 5 feet without provoking one.

Taking an Action that Distracts You: Some actions themselves provoke opportunity attacks because they require you to divert attention from the fight at hand. Common examples include casting a spell and holstering (or sheathing) a weapon. Firing a gun does not incur an opportunity

attack. For more detail, see Table 8-4 in the *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Player's Handbook*.

Unarmed Attacks: Certain unarmed attacks draw opportunity attacks. If you attempt to disarm, grapple, trip, or bum's rush your opponent, he can respond with an opportunity attack. Touch attacks and regular unarmed strikes don't provoke op attacks.

Casting on the Defensive: You can cast a spell from a threatened area without drawing an opportunity attack by making a Concentration check (DC 15). If the check fails, the spell and the action are lost, and the subject threatening you can make an opportunity attack.

Withdrawing from Combat: You can withdraw from combat with an opponent by leaving his threatened area. You can do this either by moving 5 feet (perhaps with your 5-foot step) or by withdrawing as a full-round action. If you take this second option, you can move up to double your speed.

Making an Opportunity Attack: An opportunity attack is a single melee attack, and you can only make one per round. You do not have to make an opportunity attack if you don't want to do so. If you make an opportunity attack, you do so at your normal attack bonus—even if you have already attacked that round.

Feats: At the Gamemaster's discretion, you may also want to add the following feats from the *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Player's Handbook* for use with this variant: Combat Reflexes, Improved Trip, Improved Bull Rush (which becomes "Improved Bum's Rush"), and Improved Unarmed Strike. Additionally, you may want to use the D&D version of Mobility.

Creatures within 5 feet have one-half concealment (attacks by or against them have a 20% miss chance).

Flash Floods: Runoff from heavy rains forces creatures in the path of a flash flood to make Fortitude saves (DC 15). Large or smaller creatures that fail the save are swept away by the rushing water, taking 1d6 points of subdual damage per round (1d3 points on a successful Swim check). Huge creatures that fail are knocked down and face potential drowning (see The Drowning Rule sidebar, page 85). Gargantuan and Colossal creatures also make this Fortitude save, but they only drown if the waters rise above their heads.

(DC 20) or face the effects described below. Powerful storms are divided into the following four types:

Windstorm: While accompanied by little or no precipitation, windstorms can cause considerable damage simply through the force of their wind. See Table 5-16: Wind Effects and the description on page 87.

Blizzard: The combination of high winds, heavy snow (typically 1d3 feet), and bitter cold (see Cold Dangers, page 86) make blizzards deadly to all who are unprepared for them.

Hurricane: In addition to very high winds and heavy rain, hurricanes are accompanied by flash floods (see below). Most investigative activity is impossible under such conditions.

Tornado: One in ten thunderstorms are accompanied by a tornado.

Fog: Whether it consists of low-lying clouds or mist rising from the ground, fog obscures all sight beyond 5 feet.

OTHER DANGERS

Use the following guidelines for other dangers a character can face.

ACID

Corrosive acids deal 1d6 points of damage per round of exposure except in the case of total immersion (such as submersion in a vat of acid). Total immersion deals 10d6 points of damage per round. An attack with acid, whether from a hurled vial or a creature's spittle (such as the goo spewed from a dhole), counts as a round of exposure.

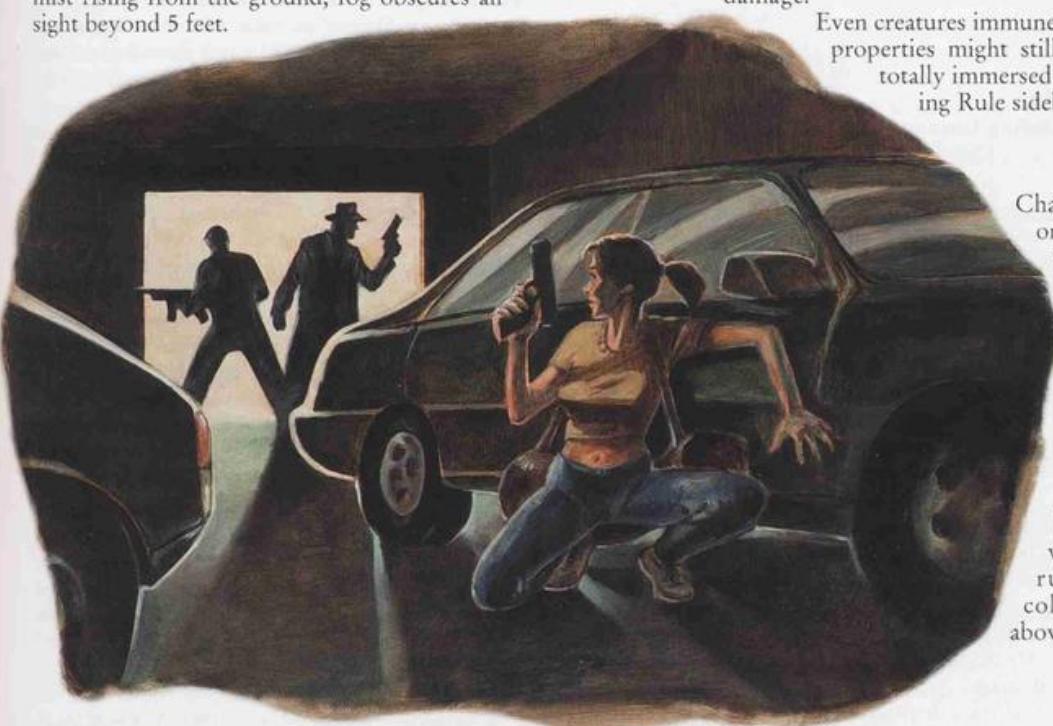
The fumes from most acids are also inhalant poisons. Characters close enough to inhale them must make a Fortitude save (DC 13) or take 1 point of temporary Constitution damage.

All such characters must also attempt a second save 1 minute later or take another 1d4 points of temporary Constitution damage.

Even creatures immune to acid's caustic properties might still drown in it if totally immersed (see the Drowning Rule sidebar, page 85).

ICE

Characters walking on ice must make Balance checks (DC 15) to avoid slipping and falling. Over long distances, a character must make a check each minute. Characters in prolonged contact with ice may run the risk of cold damage (see above).



VARIANT: DESPERATE SITUATIONS

From time to time, characters may be in immediate peril because they all lack a specific trained-only skill. For example, if the only pilot on a plummeting zeppelin has just fallen overboard, and none of the investigators in the cockpit have the Pilot skill, everyone may die.

With this variant rule, if the characters are in a desperate situation, the Gamemaster may allow an untrained attempt at what would normally be a trained-only skill; in this case, someone could make a simple Dexterity check to attempt a crash landing. The DC for such desperate tasks should be set at whatever the Gamemaster thinks appropriate, remembering that what's Very Easy (DC 0) for a

trained pilot should be at least Tough (DC 15) or Challenging (DC 20) to an untrained amateur (see Table 2-2: Difficulty Class Examples, page 19).

Even with this variant, the Gamemaster may rule that some trained-only skills really are impossible for amateurs, however well motivated. For example, the Gamemaster in the previous example could decide that none of the investigators can figure out the controls. Sometimes this is essential to the plot; for instance, the GM might be encouraging the desperate players to look for some other way out of their dilemma, such as trying that *summon byakhee* spell they have just learned.

LACK OF AIR/HIGH ALTITUDE

Characters in conditions of low oxygen, such as on top of a mountain, must roll a Fortitude saving throw each hour (DC 15, +1 for each previous check), taking 1d6 points of subdual damage each time they fail.

A character who sustains any subdual damage from lack of oxygen is automatically fatigued (see the Character Condition Summary sidebar, page 91). These penalties end when the character recovers the subdual damage he took from low oxygen.

Altitude Sickness: Long-term oxygen deprivation due to high altitude affects mental and physical ability scores. Each 6-hour period a character spends over 20,000 feet, he must make a Fortitude save or take 1 point of temporary damage to all ability scores.

SMOKE

Characters breathing heavy smoke must make Fortitude saving throws (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) each round or spend that round choking and coughing. Characters who choke for 2 consecutive rounds take 1d6 points of subdual damage.

Smoke obscures vision, giving one-half concealment (20% miss chance) to characters within it.

FALLING OBJECTS

Just as characters take damage when they fall more than 10 feet, they take damage when hit by falling objects. Objects that fall onto characters deal damage based on their weight and the distance they have fallen.

**TABLE 5-17:
Damage from
Falling Objects**

Object Weight	Falling Distance
200–101 lb.	20 ft.
100–51 lb.	30 ft.
50–31 lb.	40 ft.
30–11 lb.	50 ft.
10–6 lb.	60 ft.
5–1 lb.	70 ft.

(to a maximum of 20d6 points of damage).

Objects smaller than 200 pounds also deal damage when dropped, but they must fall farther to deal the same damage. Use Table 5-17: Damage from Falling Objects to see how far an object of a given weight must drop to deal 1d6 points of damage.

Example: A dirigible drops a 400-pound crate overboard. The crate deals 2d6 points of damage to anything it strikes by virtue of its weight alone. If the ship were 100 feet in the air at the time, the falling crate would deal an additional 9d6 points of damage, for a total of 11d6 points of damage.

For each additional increment an object falls, it deals an additional 1d6 points of damage. For example, since a 30-pound

object weighs 10 times as much as a 1-pound object, it deals 10 times as much damage. For each 10-foot increment it falls beyond the first 20 feet, it deals an additional 1d6 points of damage.

metal sphere must fall 50 feet to deal damage (1d6 points of damage), such a sphere that fell 150 feet would deal 3d6 points of damage. Objects weighing less than 1 pound do not deal damage to those they land upon, no matter how far they have fallen.

WEATHER

Player characters have a tendency to ignore the weather, but sometimes it can play an important role in an adventure. Rain can wash away tracks, while a thunderstorm can force the characters to seek shelter. If you need this level of detail, roll once per day on Table 5-18: Random Weather to determine the weather for that day.

Calm: Wind speeds are light (0 to 10 mph).

Cold: Between 0° and 40° Fahrenheit during the day, 10–20 degrees colder at night.

Cold Snap: Lowers temperature by -10° F.

Downpour: Treat as rain (see Precipitation, below) but conceals as fog. Creates flash floods (see Weather Hazards, page 87). A downpour lasts 2d4 hours.

Heat Wave: Raises temperature by +10° F.

Hot: Between 85°–110° Fahrenheit during the day, 10–20 degrees colder at night.

Moderate: Between 40°–60° Fahrenheit during the day, 10–20 degrees colder at night.

Powerful Storm: (*Windstorm/Blizzard/Hurricane/Tornado*): Wind speeds are over 50 mph (see Table 5-16: Wind Effects). In addition, blizzards are accompanied by heavy snow (1–3 feet), and hurricanes are accompanied by downpours (see above). Windstorms last 1d6 hours. Blizzards last 1d3 days. Hurricanes can last up to a week, but their major impact on characters will come in a 24- to 48-hour period when the center of the storm moves through their area. Tornadoes are very short-lived (1d6×10 minutes), typically forming as part of a thunderstorm system (see Storm, below, and Weather Hazards, page 87).

Precipitation: Roll d% to determine whether the precipitation is fog (01–30), rain/snow (31–90), or sleet/hail (91–00). Snow and sleet occur only when the temperature is 30° Fahrenheit or below. Most precipitation lasts 2d4 hours. By contrast, hail lasts only 1d20 minutes but usually accompanies 1d4 hours of rain. See Weather Hazards, page 87.

Storm: (*Duststorm/Snowstorm/Thunderstorm*): Wind speeds are severe (30 to 50 mph) and visibility cut by half—see Weather Hazards, page 87. Storms last 2d4–1 hours.

SUFFOCATION

Characters in conditions where there is no air at all can hold their breath for 2 rounds per point of Constitution. After this, each character must make a Constitution check (DC 10) to continue holding her breath. The save must be repeated each round (with a +1 to the DC for each previous success).

When the character finally fails her Constitution check, she begins to suffocate. In the first round, she falls unconscious (0 hp). The following round, she

drops to -1 hit points and is dying. In the third round, she suffocates.

Slow Suffocation: A character can breathe easily for 6 hours in a 10-foot-by-10-foot-by-10-foot sealed area. After that time, the character takes 1d6 points of subdual damage every 15 minutes. Each additional character, or every significant fire source, reduces this time by half. Thus, two people can last for 3 hours, after which they each take 1d6 points per 15 minutes. If there's a fire nearby, the good air runs out in only 2 hours.

TABLE 5-18:
Random Weather

d%	Weather	Cold Climate	Temperate Climate*	Desert
01-70	Normal weather	Cold, calm	Normal for season**	Hot, calm
71-80	Abnormal weather cold snap (31-100)	Heat wave (01-30) or cold snap (51-100)	Heat wave (01-50) or	Hot, windy
81-90	Inclement weather (snow)	Precipitation (normal for season)	Precipitation	Hot, windy
91-99	Storm	Snowstorm	Thunderstorm, snowstorm†	Duststorm
100	Powerful storm hurricane, tornado	Blizzard	Windstorm, blizzard††,	
		Downpour		

*Temperate includes forest, hills, marsh, mountains, plains, and warm aquatic.

**Winter is cold, summer is warm, spring and autumn are moderate. Warm or marshy regions are always slightly warmer in winter.

†Only in wintertime; otherwise, treat as thunderstorm (01-75) or windstorm (76-00).

††Only in wintertime; otherwise, treat as hurricane (01-50) or tornado (51-00)

Warm: Between 60°-85° Fahrenheit during the day, 10-20 degrees colder at night.

Windy: Wind speeds are moderate to strong (10-30 mph) (See Weather Hazards, page 87.)

CHARACTER CONDITION SUMMARY

If more than one of these conditions affects a character, apply them all. If certain effects can't combine, apply the most severe effect.

Blinded: The character cannot see at all, and thus everything has full concealment to him. He has a 50% chance to miss in combat, loses his positive Dexterity bonus to Armor Class (if any), and grants a +2 bonus on attack rolls to enemies that attack him, just as if all his enemies were invisible. He moves at half speed and suffers a -4 penalty on most Strength- and Dexterity-based skills. He cannot make Spot checks or perform any other activity (such as reading) that requires vision.

Cowering: The character is frozen in fear, loses his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class (if any), and can take no actions. Foes gain a +2 bonus to hit cowering characters.

Deafened: A deafened character cannot hear, suffers a -4 penalty to initiative checks, and has a 20% chance of spell failure when casting spells with verbal components. He cannot make Listen checks.

Disabled: You can only take one move action or attack action each round. If you perform any strenuous activity (see Disabled, page 69), you take 1 point of damage.

Entangled: An entangled character suffers a -2 penalty to attack rolls and a -4 penalty to effective Dexterity. If the bonds are anchored to an immobile object, the entangled character cannot move. Otherwise, he can move at half speed, but can't run or charge. An entangled character who attempts to cast a spell must make a Concentration check (DC 15) or lose the spell.

Exhausted: Characters who are exhausted move at half normal speed and suffer an effective penalty of -6 to Strength and Dexterity. A fatigued character becomes exhausted by doing something else that would normally cause fatigue. After 1 hour of "complete rest" (see Healing, page 69), exhausted characters become fatigued.

Fatigued: Characters who are fatigued cannot run or charge and suffer an effective penalty of -2 to Strength and Dexterity. A fatigued character becomes exhausted by doing something else that would normally cause fatigue. After 8 hours of "complete rest," fatigued characters are no longer fatigued.

Flat-Footed: A character who has not yet acted during a combat is flat-footed, not yet reacting normally to the situation. A flat-footed character loses his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class (if any).

Grappled: The character is engaged in wrestling or some

other form of hand-to-hand struggle with one or more attackers. A grappled character cannot move, cast a spell, fire a ranged weapon, or undertake any action more complicated than making a barehanded attack, attacking with a Tiny or Small weapon (such as a knife), or attempting to break free from the opponent. In addition, grappled characters do not threaten any area and lose any Dexterity bonuses to Armor Class against opponents they aren't grappling.

Helpless: Bound, sleeping, paralyzed, or unconscious characters are helpless. Enemies can make advantageous attacks against helpless characters, or even deliver a usually lethal coup de grace. A melee attack against a helpless character is at a +4 bonus on the attack roll (equivalent to attacking a prone target). A ranged attack gets no special bonus. A helpless defender can't use any Dexterity bonus to Armor Class. In fact, his Dexterity score is treated as if it were 0 and his Dexterity modifier to Armor Class were -5.

Incapacitated: Characters who are incapacitated are treated as helpless.

Nauseated: Nauseated characters are unable to attack, cast spells, concentrate on spells, or do anything else requiring attention. The only action such a character can take is a single move action per turn.

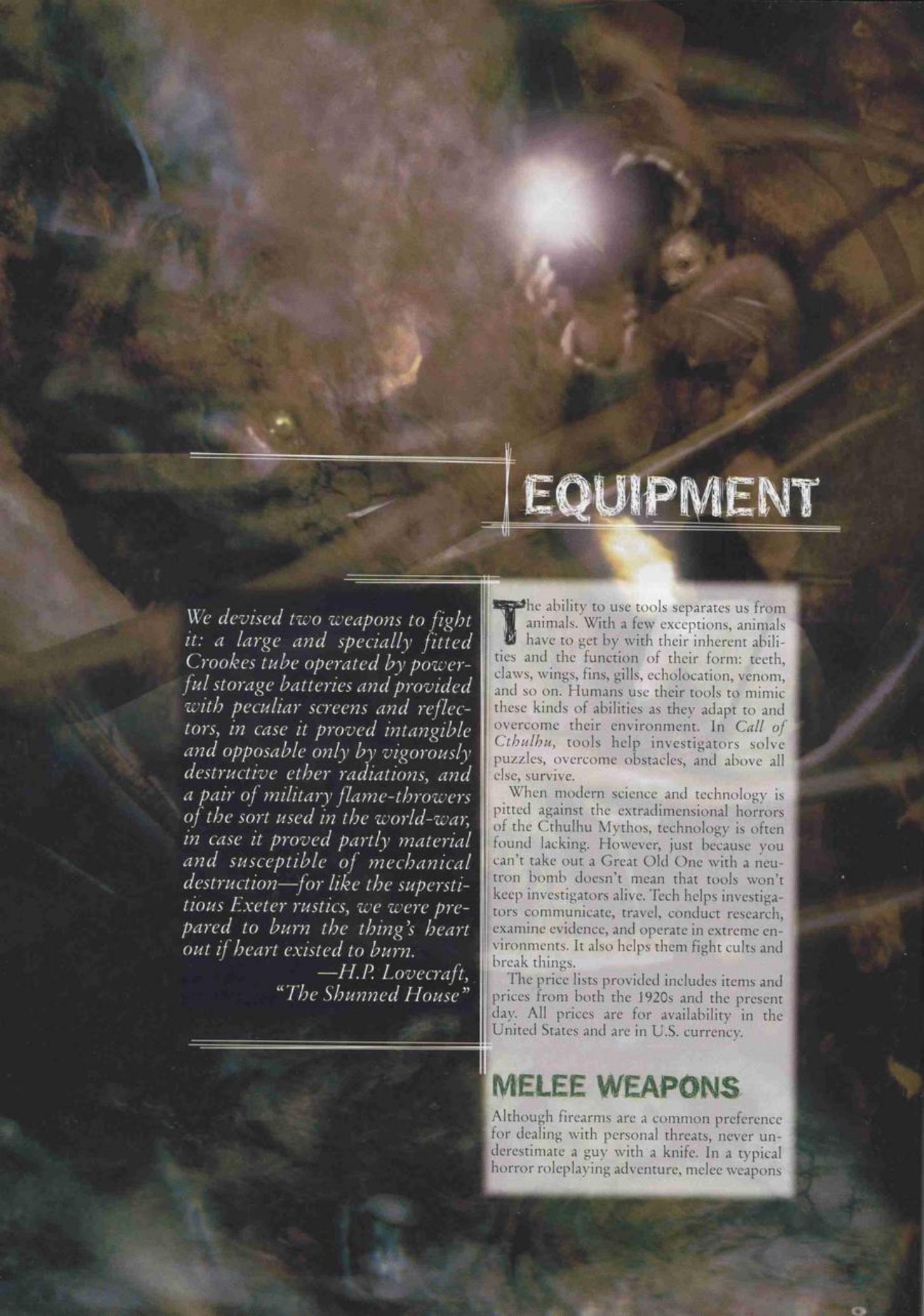
Paralyzed: A paralyzed character stands rigid and helpless, unable to move or act physically. He has effective Strength and Dexterity scores of 0 but may take purely mental actions.

Prone: The character is on the ground. He suffers a -4 penalty on melee attack rolls, but can use firearms without penalty. Opponents receive +4 bonuses on melee attack against him but -4 penalties on ranged attacks. Standing up from prone is a move action.

Staggered: The character has subdual damage equal to current hit points. Staggered characters can only take one move action or attack action each round. You cease being staggered when your hit points exceed your subdual damage.

Stunned: A stunned creature can take no actions and loses any Dexterity bonus to his AC. Each attacker gains a +2 bonus on attack rolls against the stunned creature. In addition, stunned characters immediately drop anything they are holding.

Unconscious: Knocked out and helpless (see above). Unconsciousness can result from having current hit points between -1 and -9, or from subdual damage in excess of current hit points.



EQUIPMENT

We devised two weapons to fight it: a large and specially fitted Crookes tube operated by powerful storage batteries and provided with peculiar screens and reflectors, in case it proved intangible and opposable only by vigorously destructive ether radiations, and a pair of military flame-throwers of the sort used in the world-war, in case it proved partly material and susceptible of mechanical destruction—for like the superstitious Exeter rustics, we were prepared to burn the thing's heart out if heart existed to burn.

—H.P. Lovecraft,
“*The Shunned House*”

The ability to use tools separates us from animals. With a few exceptions, animals have to get by with their inherent abilities and the function of their form: teeth, claws, wings, fins, gills, echolocation, venom, and so on. Humans use their tools to mimic these kinds of abilities as they adapt to and overcome their environment. In *Call of Cthulhu*, tools help investigators solve puzzles, overcome obstacles, and above all else, survive.

When modern science and technology is pitted against the extradimensional horrors of the Cthulhu Mythos, technology is often found lacking. However, just because you can't take out a Great Old One with a neutron bomb doesn't mean that tools won't keep investigators alive. Tech helps investigators communicate, travel, conduct research, examine evidence, and operate in extreme environments. It also helps them fight cults and break things.

The price lists provided includes items and prices from both the 1920s and the present day. All prices are for availability in the United States and are in U.S. currency.

MELEE WEAPONS

Although firearms are a common preference for dealing with personal threats, never underestimate a guy with a knife. In a typical horror roleplaying adventure, melee weapons

attack roll. For instance, a commando knife (range increment 10 feet) can be thrown at a target less than 10 feet away at no penalty, but would suffer a -2 penalty against a target 12 feet away, and a -6 penalty against a target 30 feet away. Thrown weapons, including throwing knives and grenades, have a maximum range of five range increments.

Improvised Thrown Weapons: Sometimes more unusual objects get thrown during the course of an adventure, such as a book, a vase, a stone idol, the dead investigator hanging limp in a gug's claws, or whatever else comes readily to hand. Because these objects are not designed for throwing, they are unwieldy. Characters who use improvised thrown weapons suffer a -4 penalty on their attack rolls (just as they would for any other weapon they were not proficient with). The range increment of an improvised weapon is 10 feet. Its size and damage it deals must be adjudicated by the GM.

Weight: This gives the weapon's weight in pounds.

Type: Melee weapons are classified according to the three types of damage they deal: bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing. Some monsters may be partially or wholly immune to attacks with certain types of weapons. If a weapon is of two types, a creature would have to be immune to both types of damage to ignore damage dealt by that weapon.

WEAPON QUALITIES

The following important factors are listed for melee weapons:

Tiny, Small, Medium-size, and Large Weapons: The size of a weapon compared to your size determines whether the weapon is light, one-handed, two-handed, or too large to use. Investigators are Medium-size, but Mythos monsters wielding weapons come in all shapes and sizes.

Light: If the weapon's size category is smaller than you are (such as a human using a cleaver), then the weapon is light. You can use a light weapon in one hand; you get no special bonus when using it two-handed. Light weapons are easier to use in your off hand, and you can use them while grappling. For human investigators, unarmed strikes are always considered light.

One-Handed: If the weapon's size category is the same as yours (such as a human using a machete), then the weapon is one-handed. You can use a one-handed melee weapon two-handed so that you can apply one and one-half times your Strength bonus to damage. (This rule doesn't apply to Strength penalties, just Strength bonuses). This type of weapon can be thrown one-handed; you add your Strength bonus to damage if you do so.

Two-Handed: If the weapon's size category is one step larger than your own (such as a human using a fire axe), then the weapon is two-handed. To use a two-handed melee weapon effectively you must use both hands. When you deal damage with it, you add one and one-half times your Strength bonus to damage (as long as it's a bonus, not a penalty).

Too Large to Use: If the weapon's size category is two or more steps larger than your own (such as a particularly clever rat-thing trying to pick up a crowbar), it's too large to use. Some objects are just too big or unwieldy to be used as improvised weapons.

Weapon Proficiency: A character without the Weapon Proficiency (melee weapons) feat suffers a -4 penalty to all attacks with melee weapons.

Damage: The Damage column indicates the damage you deal with a weapon when you score a hit.

Critical: The entry in this column notes the chance for a critical hit, the extra damage the weapon does on a critical hit, or both. When you score a critical hit, roll the damage with all modifiers either two times or three times (as indicated by its critical multiplier) and add all the rolls together.

$\times 2$: Roll damage twice on a critical hit.

$\times 3$: Roll damage three times on a critical hit.

$19-20/\times 2$: The weapon scores a threat (a possible critical hit) on a natural 19 or 20 (instead of just on a 20). You roll damage twice on a critical hit.

$18-20/\times 2$: The weapon scores a threat on a natural 18, 19, or 20 (instead of just on a 20). You roll damage twice on a critical hit.

Unless noted otherwise, a weapon's threat range is 20 (it only scores a possible critical hit when a natural 20 is rolled on 1d20).

Range Increment: Any weapon with a range increment can be used as a ranged weapon. A ranged attack at less than this increment is not penalized for range. However, each full range increment adds a cumulative -2 penalty to the

FIREARMS

Most investigators don't get killed because their weapons fail them. Instead, they die horribly because they try to use their weapons for nearly impossible tasks—such as killing Mythos creatures. Theoretically, the game rules allow mundane weapons to kill deadly Mythos monsters such as chthonians, but that's only likely if the critter stands up in broad daylight under optimum conditions and lets the investigators open up with a fusillade of heavy weapons fire. Most Mythos critters, even relatively fragile ones such as human cultists or deep ones, won't be so obliging as to give the investigators a clear shot.

Weapons, no matter how destructive, are unlikely to solve all the investigators' Mythos problems. Considering the legal ramifications of using firearms, weapons can get the surviving investigators locked up by the local authorities. If they're not careful, the investigators become indistinguishable from bloodthirsty cultists. At that point, the law fails to distinguish between the two groups.

When guns are drawn, characters die. Nonetheless, their presence does occasionally save the lives of characters in horror roleplaying games. Fantasy games have spells and magic items, while science-fiction games have laser guns and cyber-enhanced body parts. Investigators in *Call of Cthulhu* have guns. While intelligence and cleverness are an investigator's best friends, sometimes a troubled hero is comforted by the security of a trusty shotgun.

If firearms don't play a large role in your campaign, or if a given player just doesn't care that much about picking one out, you'll only need the game mechanics from Table 6-3: Generic Firearms (page 95). Those wanting more information should proceed to the Expanded Firearms Rules, page 95.

TABLE 6-1:
Melee Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
Tiny Weapons					
Brass knuckles	1d3	x2	—	0.5 lb.	Bludgeoning
Knife, steak	1d3	x2	—	0.5 lb.	Piercing
Razor, straight	1d3	x2	—	0.5 lb.	Slashing
Stiletto/Switchblade	1d3	19–20/x2	—	0.75 lb.	Piercing
Knife, commando	1d4	19–20/x2	10	1 lb.	Piercing
Knife, hunting	1d4	19–20/x2	10	2.5 lb.	Piercing
Knife, combat	1d4	19–20/x2	10	2.5 lb.	Slashing
Small Weapons					
Sap	1d6 subdual	x2	—	3 lb.	Bludgeoning
Pocketknife or scalpel	1d3	x2	—	0.5 lb.	Piercing
Cleaver	1d4	19–20/x2	5	1 lb.	Piercing
Butcher knife	1d4	19–20/x2	5	1 lb.	Piercing
Folding shovel or entrenching tool	1d4	x2	—	2.5 lb.	Bludgeoning and slashing
Gun butt, pistol	1d4	x2	5	2 lb.	Bludgeoning
Knife, kukri	1d4	18–20/x2	10	3 lb.	Slashing
Hatchet or tomahawk	1d6	x3	10	3.5 lb.	Slashing
Nunchaku*	1d6	x2	—	2 lb.	Bludgeoning
Medium-Size Weapons					
Croquet mallet	1d4	x2	—	2.5 lb.	Bludgeoning
Nightstick or billy club	1d4	x2	—	1.5 lb.	Bludgeoning
Fencing foil	1d4	18–20/x2	—	2.5 lb.	Piercing
Bayonet, hand-held	1d4	19–20/x2	—	2.5 lb.	Piercing
Crowbar, tire iron, or fireplace poker	1d6	x2	—	3 lb.	Bludgeoning
Pick or pickaxe	1d6	x4	—	6 lb.	Piercing
Machete	1d6	19–20/x2	—	2.5 lb.	Slashing
Rapier	1d6	18–20/x2	—	3 lb.	Piercing
Saber, cavalry	1d6	18–20/x2	—	3 lb.	Slashing
Large Weapons					
Bat, baseball or cricket	1d6	x2	—	3 lb.	Bludgeoning
Bayonet, fixed to rifle	1d6	19–20/x2	—	11.5 lb.	Piercing and slashing
Gun butt, rifle or shotgun	1d6	x2	—	9 lb.	Bludgeoning
Shovel or spade	1d6	x2	—	4 lb.	Bludgeoning
Axe, wood or fire	1d8	x3	—	6 lb.	Slashing

* Requires Martial Arts feat to use.

TABLE 6-2:
Melee Weapon Prices

Weapon	1920s	2000s
Pocket knife	\$0.79	\$16.95
Swiss army knife	\$1.98	\$39.95
Rapier	\$12.50	\$79.00
Fencing foil	\$6.00	\$149.99
Saber	\$30.00	\$200.00
Bayonet	\$3.75	\$99.99
Combat knife	\$3.48	\$36.88
Commando knife	\$4.25	\$19.99
Kukri knife	\$6.00	\$24.95
Stiletto	\$2.00	\$24.99
Machete w/scabbard	\$1.00	\$13.95
Brass knuckles	\$1.00	\$6.95
Billy club/police club	\$0.85	\$19.95
Nunchaku*	—	\$19.95

* Requires Martial Arts feat to use.

MODERN ARMOR

Armor is not commonly available to Mythos investigators until fairly modern eras (after the 1960s). To be honest, manufacturers didn't design modern armor to protect against deep one claws or chthonian tentacles. For purposes of simplicity and game balance, Table 6-4: Generic Armor describes four levels of protection for paranoid investigators.

ARMOR CHECK PENALTY

An investigator wearing armor suffers an armor check penalty to the following skills: Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Move Silently, Jump, and Tumble.

In addition, the investigator suffers the same armor check penalty to attack rolls.

BULLET RESISTANT VESTS

Bullet resistant vests that can be concealed under clothing come in a variety of grades. Some are made of

simple ballistic cloth and are designed to stop handgun rounds of .38 Special and 9×19mm caliber and less. This vest covers the front and back of the torso and some may cover the sides. The armor bonus is +4.

High velocity rifle rounds (including the .22 long rifle round), larger caliber handguns (such as the .357 Magnum), arrows, and knives tend to punch through this type of vest by working through the cloth's weave. Against these kinds of attacks, this vest is of only limited protection; reduce the armor bonus to +1.

Reinforced vests are also available. These are much like the standard type above but include bullet resistant Kevlar plates in the front and back. These plates are designed to withstand hits from rifles of 7.62×51mm or less. The armor bonus is +5; against larger caliber weapons, this limited protection is only +1.

Bullet resistant vests provide only a +1 armor bonus against a creature's claw attacks.

FLAK ARMOR

Modern military flak vests are designed to protect the entire torso from grenade and shell fragments and bullets of up to 7.62×51mm caliber. Vests in good condition should be able to withstand direct bullet hits and protect the wearer from significant harm. Due to their thick-

TABLE 6-3:
Generic Firearms

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Capacity	Range Increment	Rate of Fire
Handgun (9mm)	1d10	×3	9	20 ft.	Multifire
Rifle (.30-06 bolt-action)	2d10	×3	4	200 ft.	Standard
Shotgun (12-gauge pump-action)	3d6/2d6/1d6*	×3	5	50 ft.	Standard
Submachine Gun (9×19mm selective fire)	1d10	×3	30	25 ft.	Autofire

All firearms on this table do piercing damage.

*Damage is by range increment. Shotguns do no damage beyond the third increment

TABLE 6-4:
Generic Armor

Armor	2000s Cost	Armor Bonus	Armor Check Penalty
Bullet resistant vest	\$299.95	+4	-1
Reinforced vest	\$439.95	+5	-2
Flak vest	\$2,000.00	+6	-3
Flak armor (body armor)	\$4,000.00	+7	-4

ness and weight, they are not easily concealed and are worn over clothing. The armor bonus to Armor Class is +6. Even heavier and offering more coverage, flak armor, also known as body armor, provides a +7 armor bonus to Armor Class.

EXPANDED FIREARMS RULES

Table 6-3: Generic Firearms presents a few weapons characters in *Call of Cthulhu* can use right away. Some players, however, prefer additional detail about their gear. If you want more elaborate statistics for your character's firearm, a history for every gun, or just a wider array of options, then this section is for you. Make sure you check with your Gamemaster before choosing anything exotic—she'll decide whether your investigator needs to "check his guns at the door."

While the role of firearms in this game is a question each group answers in different ways, this information should be useful to anyone running a d20-based campaign in modern-day Earth—even without the Cthulhu Mythos.

SPECIFIC FIREARMS

The arms described in the tables that follow are divided into four categories: pistols, rifles (including automatic rifles, shotguns, and submachine guns). Within each table, weapons are listed in chronological order by year. The tables provide a sampling of weapons commonly available in the 20th century.

MODEL/DESIGNATION

This is the name or designation of the weapon. It often includes the name of the manufacturer. The letter "M" appears in many weapon names/designations and almost always stands for "model." For example, the Winchester M1897 shotgun is also known as the Winchester Model 1897 shotgun.

CALIBER(S)

This is the caliber of ammunition the weapon uses. Many weapons of the same model are available in different calibers. However, with a very few exceptions, a specimen chambered for one caliber cannot use ammunition of a different caliber.

In almost every case, caliber refers to the diameter of the bullet that is fired down the barrel. This is typically measured in either fractions of inches or in millimeters. For example, a very common and popular handgun cartridge is the .45 ACP round; the ".45" means that the bullet is .45 inches (almost half an inch) in diameter at its widest point. Another example is the 7.62×54mm rifle cartridge, the standard Russian and Soviet rifle round of both world wars; "7.62" means that the bullet is 7.62 millimeters across at its widest point. A caliber that is measured in millimeters also often includes a follow-up number that refers to the overall cartridge length. In the previous example involving the 7.62×54mm round, the "54" refers to the total length of the cartridge in millimeters.

Shotgun caliber is measured differently. Using the archaic measurement of gauge, this is a description of the weapon's bore size: the lower the gauge, the larger the caliber. In other words, a 12-gauge shotgun fires a greater mass of pellets than one that's 20-gauge. Shotgun barrels lack rifling and are designed to fire various numbers and sizes of pellets. They may also fire individual slugs that are capable of doing considerable damage.

The .357 Magnum and .44 Magnum caliber revolvers are special in one important respect. Most .357 Magnum revolvers can safely load and shoot both .357 Magnum rounds and .38 Special rounds. Similarly, most .44 Magnum revolvers can safely load and fire both .44 Magnum rounds and .44 Special rounds.

A weapon's caliber affects many important elements in its performance. This includes but is not limited to range, accuracy, reliability, and damage. A poorly designed cartridge might, for instance, make an otherwise decent weapon prone to jams.

ACTION

This describes the mechanism that the weapon uses to chamber and fire a cartridge. The type of action greatly affects the weapon's rate of fire, reliability, and ease of maintenance.

Automatic: When the trigger is pulled, the weapon fires a stream of bullets until the shooter releases the trigger, the weapon malfunctions, or the weapon runs out of ammunition. Machine guns are, by definition, fully automatic, though many are also selective fire (see below).

Bolt: Bolt-action arms first appeared in the latter half of the 19th century. Reliable and easy to maintain, they were the standard military long arm

design for most countries in both world wars and remain popular as sniper and sporting arms. A bolt-action rifle requires the shooter to manipulate the bolt in order to eject any spent casing that is in the chamber. The same maneuver also either moves a fresh cartridge from the magazine into the chamber or opens the breach so the shooter can manually reload. In most designs, this means the shooter (1) lifts the bolt handle up, (2) pulls the bolt to the rear to eject the casing, (3) pushes the bolt forward to chamber a new round, and (4) pushes the bolt handle back down to lock the bolt in place.

Lever: Lever-action arms require the shooter to manipulate a lever or handle that is typically mounted on the underside of the weapon. By working the lever, any spent cartridge casing in the chamber is ejected and a fresh round is maneuvered from the magazine into the chamber. Lever-action weapons made their debut in the 1860s and are often associated with the taming of the American West. They remained popular sporting arms throughout the 20th century.

Pump: Also known as slide-action, pump-action weapons are most commonly associated with sporting and riot shotguns. A wide range of pump-action rifles, particularly light .22 caliber target and "varmint rifles," have also been manufactured. The design first appeared in the late 19th century. By pulling back and pushing forward the slide in one smooth motion, the action ejects any spent cartridge casing and loads a new round from the magazine.

Revolving: First appearing in the mid-19th century, revolving-action weapons are typically associated with handguns ("revolvers") that first appeared in the 1840s. Though both revolving rifles and shotguns have been manufactured, the design proved far more successful with handguns. Repeating weapons (arms that can fire multiple times without reloading) appeared in various forms prior to the 1840s, but it was Samuel Colt's revolver design that proved to be the first noteworthy, reliable, mass-produced repeating weapon. Revolvers were common in military use until around World War I. They remained a popular law enforcement and civilian weapon throughout the 20th century and continued to see at least limited military use in some areas for the entire 20th century.

Revolving arms come in two basic sub-types. Single-action revolvers require the shooter to cock the hammer in order to turn the cylinder and expose a fresh cartridge for firing. Double-action revolvers can be fired like single-action revolvers. However, by simply pulling the trigger, the mechanism automatically turns the cylinder and fires a shot. The trigger pull is heavy when the weapon has not first been cocked and this tends to diminish its accuracy. A less common variant is the hammerless double-action revolver. This version cannot be manually cocked so the trigger pull is always heavy. Though this might be viewed as a disadvantage from the standpoint of accuracy, it also means that the revolver is less susceptible to an accidental discharge.

In the Action column of firearms tables, "rev/S" refers to a single-action revolving weapon. The term "rev/D" refers to a double-action revolving weapon.

Selective: Selective fire weapons, such as most submachine guns, are those that have a selector switch. The switch typically has three settings. One functions as a safety. A second permits it to fire as a semiautomatic weapon. The third permits it to fire on fully automatic.

Military assault rifles are, by definition, selective fire. Many machine guns and submachine guns are selective fire as well. Selective fire small arms began to enter widespread use in the closing years of World War II and are now the standard infantry arm for virtually every army in the world.

Semi: Semiautomatic firearms are designs that use either recoil forces or gas pressure to automatically move the bolt within the weapon in order to load and fire. They discharge one round for each pull of the trigger. The mechanism is fairly complex when compared to earlier designs. It wasn't until shortly before World War II that truly reliable semiautomatic designs appeared. They have proved popular in both military and sporting use. Semiautomatic arms are neither machine guns nor assault rifles.

For semiautomatic pistols, there are two basic sub-types. Single-action designs are those that require the weapon to first have a round chambered and the hammer to be cocked before it will fire.

Once it discharges its first round, the weapon cocks itself for the follow-up shots. Double-action designs are those that do not have to be cocked to fire. Once a round is chambered, the weapon will cock itself as the trigger is pulled. The trigger pull for this first shot will be heavy (as with a single-action revolver). The weapon self-cocks with each subsequent shot. Of course, the shooter can manually cock a double-action pistol so that its first shot is smooth and accurate.

In the Action column of the handgun table, "semi/S" refers to a single-action semiautomatic pistol while "semi/D" refers to a double-action semiautomatic pistol. Semiautomatic rifles and shotguns are almost always single-action.

CAP (CAPACITY)

This is the number of cartridges the weapon normally holds. Some models are available with different magazine sizes.

LOADING

This is the way in which the weapon is loaded. Several common options follow.

Belt: Designed for use with machine guns, an ammunition belt is made of metal or fabric links that hold cartridges. As the belt is fed through the weapon, the rounds are fired. The spent casings are ejected and the belt exits the opposite side of the weapon. Some metal link belts are designed to remain intact as they exit the weapon. Others are "disintegrating link belts" that eject the individual links from the weapon. Unlike fabric belts, metal link belts of any type are reusable. Because belts contain large quantities of ammunition, they are ideal for use with fully automatic weapons.

Break: Break-open designs have the barrel mounted on a hinge. By pressing a small catch or lever, the weapon can be "broken open" to expose the barrel(s) or cylinder. In most modern designs, cartridge casings are automatically ejected when this occurs. The weapon may then be quickly reloaded. Most single- and double-barrel shotguns use this loading method. It is also common in revolvers, particularly older (19th century) Smith & Wesson and Webley models. Some break-open revolver designs have speed-loaders available for them that permit the entire cylinder to be reloaded at once.

RANGE

This is the weapon's range increment. Any attack at less than this distance is not penalized for range, so a handgun (range increment 20 feet) can be fired at enemies up to 19 feet away with no penalty. However, each full range increment causes a cumulative -2 penalty to the attack roll; the same handgun, fired at someone 40 feet away, would suffer a -4 penalty.

RATE

This is the weapon's rate of fire. In this version of *Call of Cthulhu*, every firearm is classified as either standard, multifire, or autofire. Rate of fire governs how many attacks you can make each round with a firearm and what penalties or bonuses apply (see Firearm Attacks, page 80).

COUNTRY

This is the country where the weapon was first manufactured. Many firearms are manufactured in numerous countries, sometimes illegally or without proper licensing.

YEAR

This is the year in which the weapon was first manufactured. Military arms are typically unavailable to civilians in any meaningful number in the first years of their manufacture. This is particularly the case for weapons that are introduced during times of war. In later years, most military weapons become available on the legitimate civilian market in quantity when they are declared obsolete. The exceptions to this are selective fire and automatic weapons, which are illegal in most countries. Of course, the black market in almost any country might have most any type of weapon available, sometimes at astonishingly low prices. In the 1990s in some parts of Africa, for example, fully automatic AK-47 assault rifles could be acquired for a mere seventy dollars or so. The reason lies in the flood of arms sent into Africa by the Soviet bloc during the Cold War. This does not mean that such arms are reasonably available to investigators, nor that the weapon purchased will be in good condition. It can be very dangerous dealing with the black market, especially in a foreign country whose culture, language, and laws are unfamiliar to those seeking weapons.

NOTES

Some weapons include lettered footnotes (a, b, c, and so on) that refer to additional information located at the bottom of that table.

HIGHLIGHTED FIREARMS

The arms described here are expanded descriptions of some of those found on Table 6-5: Specific Firearms. In particular, these are weapons of historical or criminal importance or the kinds of firearms commonly seen in movies and history documentaries. They are divided into four categories: pistols, rifles, shotguns, and submachine guns. Within these categories, they are given in chronological order.

Clip: Also known as "charger" and "stripper clip," a clip is a small piece of metal used to hold cartridges. Typically, a small spring in the clip provides sufficient pressure to prevent rounds from simply falling out. Clips are commonly used in bolt-action military rifles and carbines but have also been used in some semiautomatic pistols, and even lever-action and semiautomatic rifles.

In most cases, using a clip involves simply inserting it into the breach and pushing the rounds with the thumb from the clip into the weapon's internal magazine. The clip is then tossed aside or is knocked away when the breach is closed. In a few cases, the clip must be physically inserted into the weapon and is required to remain in it for it to work. The best known example is the M1 Garand rifle of World War II.

The term "clip" is often erroneously used to describe a detachable box magazine (see "Mag" below). Clip-loaded weapons that do not require the clip to be in the weapon can usually be loaded manually like side-loaded weapons (see below). In the firearms tables, the only weapons that require clips to be used with them are the M1 Garand, the Colt M1917 revolver, and the Smith & Wesson M1917 revolver. All three are described in detail separate from this section.

Drum: A drum is simply an enlarged magazine that holds as little as a few dozen or as much as one hundred or more cartridges (fifty to seventy-five are typical sizes). Drums are usually heavy and cumbersome and most tend to rattle when they are moved around. Drums are usually used with submachine guns and light machine guns. One of the best known weapons that uses a drum is the Thompson submachine gun (or "tommy gun").

Mag: This refers to the detachable box magazine. Made of metal or plastic, a magazine contains a spring that pushes its cartridges into the weapon as the action works. First introduced in the late 19th century, magazines are commonly used in military, law enforcement, and sporting firearms of virtually every type. Magazines can be of small capacity (five rounds or so), but are more typically found in sizes ranging from ten to thirty rounds or more. Military issue magazines are rarely seen in capacities much exceeding forty rounds. In the 1980s and 1990s, some larger capacity magazines became available for civilian use. Their sizes sometimes rivals drums. More of a technical curiosity, these outsize magazines gained a reputation for being unreliable and prone to jam.

Side: Side-loading weapons are those designed to have rounds loaded through a receiver or side-gate or into the breach. Cartridges are loaded by hand, one by one. This is a slow process. Though many military arms used this method in the 19th century, it was obsolete by the 20th century. Many civilian arms continue to use this method. Notably, pump-action shotguns are commonly side-loading, being loaded through a receiver on the underside of the weapon.

Swing: Swing-out designs involve revolvers only. By pressing a catch or button on the revolver, the cylinder can be made to swing on a hinge away from the weapon's frame. The rounds in the cylinder can then be manually ejected by pushing an ejector rod, permitting the cylinder to be reloaded. Many swing-out revolvers, particularly those postdating World War II, are designed to allow the use of a speed-loader that can reload the entire cylinder in one efficient maneuver.

TABLE 6-5:
Specific Firearms

Pistols	Caliber	Damage	Crit	Action	Capacity	Loading	Range	Rate	Country (Year)
Remington Double Derringer ^a	.41 RF Short	1d8	x3	n/a	2	break	5	Multifire	USA (1866)
Colt Single Action Army Revolver ^a	.45 Colt Long, .40 or .41 Colt	2d8 1d10	x3	rev/S	6	side	20	Standard	USA (1873)
Colt M1877 "Lightning" Revolver ^a	.38 Colt	1d10	x3	rev/D	6	side	20	Multifire	USA (1877)
Colt M1877 "Thunderer" Revolver ^a	.41 Colt	1d10	x3	rev/D	6	side	20	Multifire	USA (1877)
Webley Mark I Revolver ^a	.455 Webley	2d8	x3	rev/S, or rev/D	6	break	20	Standard	UK (1887)
Mauser M1896 "Broomhandle" ^{a c}	7.62×25mm, 9×19mm	1d10	x3	semi/S	10	mag or clip	20	Multifire	Germany (1896)
P08 Luger Pistol ^{b c}	9×19mm	1d10	x3	semi/S	8	mag	20	Multifire	Germany (1908)
Colt M1911 Pistol ^a	.45 ACP	2d8	x3	semi/S	7	mag	20	Multifire	USA (1911)
Colt M1917 Revolver ^a	.45 ACP	2d8	x3	rev/D	6	clip or side	20	Multifire	USA (1917)
Smith & Wesson M1917 Revolver ^a	.45 ACP	2d8	x3	rev/D	6	clip or side	20	Multifire	USA (1917)
Astra M1921 ^b	9×23mm, 9mm Steyr, 9×19mm (and others)	1d10	x3	semi/S	8	mag	20	Multifire	Spain (1921)
Walther PPK ^a	.32 ACP .380 ACP	1d8 1d10	x3	semi/D	7	mag	20	Multifire	Germany (1931)
Browning GP35 High-Power Pistol ^{a c}	9×19mm	1d10	x3	semi/S	13	mag	20	Multifire	Belgium (1935)
Walther P38 Pistol ^a	9×19mm	1d10	x3	semi/D	8	mag	20	Multifire	Germany (1938)
Colt Python Revolver ^b	.357 Magnum	2d6	x3	rev/D	6	swing	20	Multifire	USA (1955)
Ruger Blackhawk Revolver ^b	.357 Magnum, .44 Magnum, or .45 Colt Long	2d6 2d8 2d8	x3	rev/S	6	side	20	Standard	USA (1955)
Heckler & Koch P9 Pistol ^b	9×19mm	1d10	x3	semi/S	9	mag	20	Multifire	Germany (1970)
SIG-Sauer P225 ^a	9×19mm	1d10	x3	semi/D	8	mag	20	Multifire	Switzerland (1985)
Beretta M92 ^a	9×19mm	1d10	x3	semi/D	15	mag	20	Multifire	Italy (1976)
Ruger Redhawk Revolver	.44 Magnum	2d8	x3	rev/D	6	side	20	Multifire	USA (1979)
IMI Desert Eagle Pistol ^a	.357 Magnum .41 Mag. .44 Mag. or .50 AE	2d6 2d6 2d8 2d10	x3	semi/S	9 (.357) 8 (.41) 7 (.44) 7 (.50)	mag	20	Multifire	Israel (1982)
Glock Model 17 ^b	9×19mm	1d10	x3	semi/D	17	mag	20	Multifire	USA (1983)
Colt Delta Elite ^a	10mm Auto	1d10	x3	semi/S	8	mag	20	Multifire	USA (1987)

^a This design has an exposed hammer.

^b This is a hammerless design.

^c Some variants of this weapon could accommodate a detachable shoulder stock.

Rifles	Caliber	Damage	Crit	Action	Capacity	Loading	Range	Rate	Country (Year)
Mosin-Nagant M1891 Rifle	7.62×54mm	2d10	x3	bolt	5	clip	200	Standard	Russia (1891)
Mannlicher-Carcano M1891 Carbine ^a	6.5×52.5mm	2d8	x3	bolt	6	clip	175	Standard	Italy (1891)
Winchester M1894 Sporting Rifle	.32-40, .25-35 .30-30, .38-55	2d6 2d10	x3	lever	4 or 8	side	200	Standard	USA (1894)
Lee-Enfield Mark I Rifle ^a	.303 British	2d10	x3	bolt	6	mag	175	Standard	UK (1896)
Mauser M1898 Rifle ^a	7.92×57mm	2d10	x3	bolt	5	clip	200	Standard	Germany (1898)
Springfield M1903 ^a	7.92×57mm	2d10	x3	bolt	5	clip	175	Standard	USA (1903)
Lee-Enfield Mark III ^a	.303 British	2d10	x3	bolt	10	mag	200	Standard	UK (1907)
M1 Garand Rifle ^a	.30-06	2d10	x3	semi	8	clip	200	Multifire	USA (1936)
Springfield M1903A4 Sniper Rifle	.30-06	2d10	x3	bolt	5	clip	200	Standard	USA (1942)
Lee-Enfield No. 5 Mark I	.303 British	2d10	x3	bolt	10	mag	175	Standard	UK (1944)
Jungle Carbine ^{a b}									
Ruger Mini-14 Rifle	5.56×45 mm	2d6	x3	semi	5, 10, 20 or 30	mag	200	Multifire	USA (1973)
M21 Sniper Rifle ^b	7.62×51mm	2d10	x3	semi	20	mag	200	Multifire	USA (1975)
Barett Light Fifty M82A1 ^{b c}	12.7×99mm	2d12	x4	semi	11	mag	200	Multifire	USA (1983)
FR-F2 Sniper Rifle ^{b c}	7.62×51mm	2d10	x3	bolt	10	mag	200	Standard	France (1984)
Ruger M77 Mark II Police Rifle ^c	7.62×51mm or 5.56×45mm	2d10 2d6	x3	bolt	4	side	200	Standard	USA (1989)

^a Most or all specimens of this weapon could accommodate a detachable bayonet.

^b A flash suppressor is a standard accessory on most or all examples of this weapon.

^c Some or all specimens are equipped with a bipod.

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