Sword & Scoundrel

A Game of Passion, Violence, and General Skullduggery

Fechtbook: EE.01

Sword & Scoundrel:

Experimental Fechtbook EE0.1

Welcome to the first, latest, and likely only version of the ***Sword & Scoundrel*** Essential Edition fechtbook. If you've been with us in the past, you know that we use these kits to test out various aspects of the combat system for bugs and balance testing before integrating them with the main game. The rules presented herein are *feature complete* within the scope of running fights in the EE version of the ***Sword & Scoundrel*** rules.

For Returning Scoundrels

A lot of this will feel new and different. Some of this will feel like a blast from the past. After a half-dozen iterations and experiments, we decided to scrap the wager system and return to the original split-pool mechanics with which the game launched on drivethrurpg, way back when. That is not to say that the contents of this book are identical. We've had several years of design experience and gained hard lessons through obsessive iteration. The rules here presented are the meticulously polished result. Some things you may remember will be missing from this document (certain maneuvers, the weapon and armor codices, and so on). This is intentional. They aren't lost or forgotten and most of them will return in the full version of the game. See *The Essential Edition*, below.

For New Scoundrels

We are more than glad to have you. This is the cleanest version of the rules to date, and the easiest to learn or teach of any we've yet written. Here presented is everything you need to dive in and get to dueling. Just keep in mind that this book is not the full version of the role-playing game. Instead, the fechtbooks are meant to enable a kind of dueling mini-game we've taken to calling ***fechtclub***. The rules presented are the (slightly modified) relevant sections from the main book set up to allow two players to make their fighters and pit them against one another on a roughly even playing field. As such, the fechtbook is only one piece of the machine and does not represent the game as a whole.

The Essential Edition

The final note is that this is the fechtbook specifically to test out the Essential Edition version of the game. It is intended as both a kind of system demo and learning tool, stripped down to its bare minimum moving parts in order to make things easier to pick up and play. After the EE version is complete, it will remain a PWYW edition of the game, to allow new people to try out ***Sword & Scoundrel*** for themselves or with new groups without having to commit to the full book.

If you haven't had a chance yet, feel free to join our discord where you can ask questions, drop feedback, and find someone to duel with.

For an example of combat, feel free to check out this post.

Thanks for your support, scoundrels.

-Brooks

The Die is Cast

All of the mechanics in ***Sword & Scoundrel*** revolve around one or more six-sided dice ("**d6**") of the kind commonly used in board games. Any time you see a reference to dice ("*+1d*" or "*add two dice*") we're talking about these.

Abilities

Your character's ability to influence the world around them is represented by their various **abilities**. These are discussed in far more detail in their relevant sections, but for reference here consist of:

- **Attributes** which represent physical and mental capacities inherent to the character.
- **Skills** which are learned abilities covering a broad swath of functions and specialities.
- **Proficiencies** which are the character's training in various weapons and martial systems.
- **Personas** which cover the character's influence in social conflicts.

The strength and potency of a given ability is represented by the numbers attached to it. These are referenced in two ways.

- The **rank** of the ability is the number listed, usually ranging between 0-10. The higher your rank, the more capable your character is in conflicts based on that ability.
- The **tap value** (or just **tap**, e.g., Brawn Tap) is a modifier that ability can generate that is called on in certain situations throughout the game. This is based on the rank of the ability in question, per the chart.

Rank	Tap
0-4	**0**
5-7	1
8-9	2
10+	3

If a rule allows you to **tap in** something, you may apply the tap value of the thing to the current pool. Some **traits** may also have dice attached to them, but they are not considered abilities. They have their own range (0-3) and do not generate a tap value. If you tap in a trait, you may use its full rank.

Dice Pools

When it's time to use our abilities, we gather up a group of dice called a **pool**. The simplest of these is an **ability pool**, based on the rank of the ability in question. Dramatic conflicts will call on **combined pools**, adding the ranks of two separate abilities specified by the conflict. In some cases, you may be able to gain additional dice from the circumstances of the conflict itself (see *Getting More Dice*, pgXX). The more dice in your pool, the more capable your character is and the stronger your fictional position.

Scamming Dice

You are never required to use your *whole* dice pool. In any given conflict, you can always choose to roll less than your total available dice. This is a form of sandbagging, where a character deliberately underperforms in order to conceal

their actual capability. The goal is usually to either avoid notice or trick an opponent into underestimating you for a later strategic advantage. It's always a risk, but you never know when it might come in handy.

Target Numbers

Once rolled, the dice are judged against a **target number** (**TN**). Each die whose face value is *equal to or greater than* the TN is a **hit** and counts towards the roll's success. Any die that comes up as *less than* the TN is a **miss** and ignored.

> *Against a TN4, a roll of 6, 4, 3, 1 is two hits.*

The majority of rolls are made at your **base TN** (**BTN**). This normally begins at TN4, though it may go up through play as characters become injured, fatigued, or suffer from other conditions (below). Unless otherwise mentioned, all rolls are assumed to be made against your BTN.

Advantage, Disadvantage

Some situations will modify your TN of your pool for a single roll:

- An **advantage** improves your TN, reducing it by 1 (e.g., from TN4 to TN3) for that specific roll.
- A **disadvantage** penalizes your TN, increasing it by 1 (e.g., from TN4 to TN5) for a single roll.

Only one instance of advantage or disadvantage can apply to a given roll. If you would for some reason have both, they cancel out. If you have more of one than the other, assume a single instance of the majority. Regardless of modifiers, TNs can never be reduced below TN3 or raised above TN6.

Fixed Target Numbers

Some rolls are made against a **fixed TN** (**FTN**). These rolls are not affected by changes to your BTN, though they may be subject to advantage or disadvantage if specifically mentioned. If not otherwise stated, assume a fixed TN is FTN4.

Reqs

The absolute difficulty of a given task is represented by its **required hits** or **req** (pronounced *'wreck'* and abbreviated with an ***'r'***). This indicates the number of hits needed for a roll to be considered a success. To succeed on an r3 roll, you need 3 or more hits.

Req	Description...
r1	**Trivial.** Generally not a question of whether you can do it, but of how well. Default req for contests (below).
r2	**Simple**. An easy task requiring little thought, this is usually only worth rolling if the character is untrained in the ability in question or is suffering some hindering condition.
r3	**Routine.** A normal task for someone who does that thing. This is still possible for someone untrained, but requires a bit of luck. Generally rolled only if something significant is on the line or circumstances are stacked against you.

Req	Description...
r4	**Average**. The starting point for most dramatic tasks, requiring concentration even from people who are well-trained in the thing.
r5	**Challenging**. Tricky for most, but still within the domains of masters and the well-prepared.
r6	**Hard**. Even skilled practitioners are not guaranteed success without some careful preparation.
r7	**Overwhelming.**
r8	**Heroic.**
r9	**Desperate.**
r10	**Futile.**

Most rolls at the table will be in the r2-r5 range. Lower than this is usually not worth rolling and higher than that enters the realm of heroic and super heroic. When in doubt, r3 is a good place to start.

Occasionally, you will see something that modifies the req for a given roll. This will be listed as *+1r*, *+2r*, or *-1r*, *-2r* and so on.

Margin of Success and Failure

With the above, we can answer not just "*does this succeed*" but also "*by how much?*" Compare the number of hits rolled against the req for the task. The difference becomes the **margin of success** (**MoS**) or **margin of failure** (**MoF**).

Against an r2, a roll with...

- *3 hits is MoS1*
- *2 hits is MoS0*
- *1 hits fails with MoF1.*

Depending on the context, your MoS or MoF may trigger additional benefits or penalties in addition to whatever stakes were set for the roll. Certain systems will call these out specifically, but a genetic chart follows:

MoS/F	Description...
-3	**Catastrophic.** Something goes terribly wrong.
-1, -2	**Failure**. You fail at your desired goal and introduce a complication for your trouble.
0	**Bare Success**. You get what you wanted, but only barely. At the GM's option, this may be a compromise instead of an outright success.
1-2	**Standard Success**. You accomplish what you were after by a clear margin.
3+	**Extraordinary Success**. You get what you want and then some. Many rolls (particularly in combat) provide a bonus effect at this level.

MoS/F	Description...
5+	**Masterful Success**. Above and beyond expectations. Flawless execution.

Rolling Dice

The above form the basic building blocks. When it's time to put them into action, you'll be making a **check**, **contest,** or **open roll**.

Checks

Checks (e.g., an *Agility check*) are the most basic, made when you are testing yourself against a static obstacle (*climbing a tree*, *forging a sword*.) Checks are simple and straightforward. The rules will specify a req or the GM will assign one based on the difficulty of the task. Compare your hits rolled:

- If you rolled *equal to or greater than* the req, you succeed.
- If you roll *fewer than* the req, you fail.
- If you roll *exactly* the number of hits required (MoS0), it may at the GM's option represent a compromised result or introduce a complication in addition to your success.

Contests

Contests (e.g., a *contest of Speed*) are made against an active opponent or a dynamic obstacle (*arm wrestling*, *swinging a sword at someone*, *fighting a fire.*) Contests do not typically have a req. Instead, they are made against an opposing pool of dice.

Both sides roll their pools and compare the results. The side scoring the most hits succeeds. The difference between the two becomes the winner's MoS. If there is an equal number of hits, it becomes a **tie**, below.

On occasion, you may run into a contest where the difficulty on one side is greater than the other. In this case, you effectively combine a check and contest into a **weighted contest**. The GM will oppose a req on the side with the greater level of challenge. After the dice are rolled, but before the hits are compared, subtract the req from the weighted side's result. The remaining hits are compared to their opponent's pool as normal.

Ties

Ties can be handled in three ways, depending on the scenario and desire of those involved:

- **True tie.** The tie simply remains a tie. The two parties are evenly matched and it's clear that further contests will end in a stalemate. Neither party gets what they want, but no one suffers any kind of complication as a result. ("*Try as you might, neither of you can overcome the other's strength. You both begin to falter, equally matched and exhausted.*")
- **Compromise.** Both parties get some kind of partial result, satisfying neither and both at the same time. ("*You can't quite find a way to sneak past the guard, but you don't get caught either.*")

- **Die of Fate.** If neither of the above seem applicable or even possible, invoke the **die of fate**, below.

If for whatever reason either party is unsatisfied with the result, they can always choose to escalate the conflict, instead.

Open Rolls

Open rolls are a special case where the question is not "*can a thing be done?*" but rather "*what benefit do you gain?*" Open rolls are effectively checks made at r0, with any hits rolled translating directly to MoS. Open rolls are unique in that they technically can't be *failed*, and thus do not provoke a complication. However, if you fail to roll *any* hits, you gain no benefit either.

On occasion you can arrive at an open roll in what would otherwise have been a contest, such as in a dramatic conflict where the opponent has run out of dice to oppose you. Treat this as an open roll as well. If the opponent has no dice to contest you, they've effectively rolled 0 hits. Thus, any hits rolled become MoS and rolling 0 hits is effectively a tie.

The Die of Fate

Sometimes you need an impartial decision at the table. This is most common when there is either some out of character dispute or the GM simply wants to disclaim the responsibility for the decision. In such times we invoke fickle Fortuna and roll the **die of fate** (**DoF**).

There are a handful of ways to read the die of fate, but the mechanism is always the same: a single d6, a single roll. No bonus dice, no modifiers. The most common uses are as follows:

- **The Roll-Off**. When an outcome must favor someone but the actual roll was tied or otherwise unclear, simply assign the parties a value on the d6. If there are two parties, one is 1-3, the other is 4-6. If there are three, 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, and so on.

- **Begging Details**. When a player asks about a detail that has not been established but would be obviously beneficial to their situation ("*are any of those windows unlocked, by chance?*") the GM has two options: the first is to simply go with what would make the most fictional sense. The second is to let the player roll the die of fate. On a 6, Fortuna smiles.

- **Tempting Fate**. That firearm has been rusting on the wall for years, does it misfire? The ice is thawing at an alarming rate, will it support your weight? Any time you want to allow a chance for some unfortunate event that is outside of the PC's personal influence, roll a d6. On a 1, it goes bad.

- Begging details and tempting fate can be combined in many situations. On a 6, things go the player's way. On a 1, they very much *do not*.

The die of fate comes along with two very important rules for its use. The first is that the roll must always be made in the open, where everyone can see. The second is that it can never be used in place of any existing mechanism in the game. It's primarily a source of embellishment, random chance, and (largely OOC) dispute resolution. Wherever possible, solve things with the PC's abilities instead.

Character Creation

Character creation in this document is limited to the fecht-club rules. Characters are made using **10** priority points split between the following categories, each costing a number of points equal to its tier. You must buy at least one tier of each category

Social Class

In the proper game, this represents your general position in society. Here, it mostly represents the resources you have to start with at character creation. You gain the following:

Tier	Social Class and Benefit
5	**Greater Noble.** Any.
4	**Lesser Noble.** r7, r6, r5, r5, r4, r4, r4
3	**High Freeman**. r6, r5, r4, r3, r3, r2, r2
2	**Low Freeman**. r4, r3, r2, r2, r1
1	**Slave/Serf**. r3, r2, r1

For Lesser Noble and below, you have an array of reqs each of which can be spent on a single item of equal or lesser value. For Greater Noble, you may take any armor or weapon presented in this book in any combination or with whatever accessories you prefer. Wealth has its privileges.

Attributes

Attributes represent your broad talents and abilities, a combination of training and genetic disposition. You have a number of points you can spend between your **primary attributes** equal to the priority tier purchased. **Secondary attributes** are not purchased with these points, but rather formed from a combination of primary attributes. For our purposes, the briefest descriptions follow, as relevant specifically to the fechtclub context.

Primary Attributes

Agility (**A**) represents your general mobility. It contributes to your Reflex, which feeds directly into your combat pool, as well as Speed, which determines how many dice you may spend on things like initiative contests.

Brawn (**B**) represents your physical power. Your Brawn Tap adds to both your ability to deal damage and absorb it without injury. Brawn can also be used in place of Reflex when calculating CP for grappling and is called on for to avoid **drop** effects from wounds.

Cunning (**C**) represents your quickness of thought and mental resourcefulness. In the context of a fecht, it is primarily useful in contributing to your Reflex and thus your combat pool.

Will (**W**) represents your mental fortitude and force of will. In the context of fecht, it is used in contest for white/white stalemates and contributes to your Grit.

Secondary Attributes

Grit (**G**) represents your overall health and endurance. It is the average of your Brawn and Will. In the context of fecht, it is rolled to resist **knockout** (**KO**) effects from wound results.

Presence (**P**) represents a combination of your awareness, perception, instinct, and insight. It plays no meaningful part in a fecht environment despite being an otherwise very important attribute in play.

Reflex (**R**) is your overall manual coordination and response time. It is the average of your Agility and Cunning, and is combined with your proficiency rank to form the combat pool. It is also rolled to resist knockdown effects from wound results.

Speed (**S**) is your speed of movement and action. In the context of fecht, it is primarily a cap on your ability to do things like stealing initiative (pgXX).

Tier	Points to spend on attribute ranks
5	23 points to spend, maximum of 10
4	19 points to spend, maximum of rank of 8
3	17 points to spend, maximum of 7
1-2	***N/A*** - The fechtclub format requires a minimum of 3 priority points to be spent on attributes.

No primary attribute can be purchased at less than rank 2, effectively the Brawn of children and the severely infirm. Otherwise normal, functional, but sedentary adults start at 3s. Rank 5 in something is standard for most people who do a thing as a part of their professional life (e.g., the Brawn of a normal soldier)

Proficiencies

Summarized properly in the next chapter (a direct excerpt from the proper book) you gain a number of proficiency points to spend based on your tier.

Tier	Points to spend on proficiency ranks
5	30 points to spend, maximum rank of 12
4	20 points to spend, maximum rank of 9
3	14 points to spend, maximum rank of 8
2	8 points to spend, maximum rank of 8
1	N/A - 0 points, which is pointless for fechtclub.

Proficiencies

Proficiencies sum up your character's martial training. Each represents a given area of ability broadly centered around a specific category of weapon. A given proficiency covers both the weapon on its own and (when applicable) in conjunction with a companion weapon such as a dagger or shield.

At character creation, the maximum rank your character can take in a single proficiency is capped by the Proficiency priority pick chosen. Ranks 1-3 generally represent someone still a student in the proficiency in question. Most amateur thugs and brawlers will hover around rank 4. Trained and professional fighters will usually have 5 or 6 in their chosen proficiencies. A proficiency rank higher than that represents an uncommon talent and a dedication to a chosen form.

Mechanically, the individual proficiencies are lumped into two broad categories: **melee** and **ranged**. These are described in detail below. When your character needs a proficiency they don't have, they can sub in another proficiency within the same category.

Melee Proficiencies

Melee proficiencies cover all the ways you can crunch, punch, stab, jab, slash and otherwise mangle your opponent. Most melee proficiencies are fairly obvious in what they cover. If you're trying to beat someone with something that doesn't seem to fit any particular description, it's probably Brawling.

Brawling

Brawling is the oldest, most primal form of combat. The proficiency governs everything from grappling and unarmed combat, to knives, daggers, and some improvised weapons. Brawling is the most common proficiency learned. Among civilians, fists and daggers are the ubiquitous tools of self-defense. Even professional combatants need to have a solid command of wrestling and dagger fighting to rely on, both as a last line of defense and as a means of overcoming an opponent in heavy armor.

Longswords

As armor became both more rigid and more common, soldiers began to trade in the protection of a shield for the power and leverage of ever-longer blades. The Longswords proficiency governs the use of hand-and-a-half and two-handed swords as a battlefield art. These complex systems share their roots with polearm and staff fighting, utilizing not just the blade of the weapon but also striking with the pommel or quillons and leveraging the length of the weapon to bring an opponent to the ground.

Historically, true two-handed swords were the weapons of elite warriors, serving as bodyguards and shock troops. The combination of the training required and cost of armor necessitated by the inability to carry a shield meant that these were generally only common as battlefield weapons among the professional fighting class.

The more modest hand-and-a-half swords found a broader popularity. Being short enough to still be worn on the hip, they could serve both as a primary battlefield weapon or as a sidearm to soldiers across social classes. In a civilian context, they also became popular weapons of self-defense and a prominent feature within the wider dueling culture.

Mass Weapons

From the earliest hewn branches and jaw-bone clubs, mass weapons have found a place in war. The proficiency covers all manner of weapons whose chief appeal is in being respectably hefty on the business end. It includes both one and two-handed weapons, with or without the use of shields.

As a fighting system, the proficiency tends to be relatively straightforward. Shields provide both an optimal defense as well as a means to create openings for exploitation. Certain weapons, like axes and picks, allow the wielder to take advantage of the weapon's geometry, hooking into an opponent's armor, weapon, or joints to disarm them or bring them to the ground for a finishing blow.

Mass weapons are found in use across all classes of people. Clubs can be fashioned by even the most primitive peoples or the poorest of peasants. Many mass weapons find their origins in converted farm tools, but even purpose-forged weapons can be made cheaply from stout wooden hafts and heads of lower-quality steel. This gives the proficiency a significant popularity among those who either lack the funds or capability to acquire other weapons. That said, mass weapons are no less popular with professional soldiers and armored gentry, as the force these weapons can generate make them extremely effective against armored opponents.

Polearms

Human history was written at the tip of a spear. Sharpened wooden staves and flint-tipped spears were among the first weapons used both in hunting and war. Spearheads of bronze and iron decided the fates of empires, giving birth to an almost infinite variety of battlefield implements. The Polearms proficiency governs all types of long-hafted battlefield weapons, from the humble quarterstaff to the ubiquitous spear, from bills, pikes, and glaives to long axes, halberds, and the knightly pollax. As a secondary consideration, the proficiency also covers the use of shields as a companion weapon to polearms that can be used one-handed, such as certain types of spear.

Most polearms rely on their considerable length as their first line of defense, keeping an opponent at bay. Afterward, they fall back to various forms of staff-fighting, using both ends of the weapon to harass, defend, and create openings in their opponent's defense. Many types of polearms are combination weapons, opening up further options. Axes, hammer-heads, beaks, and back-spikes all give the weapons more options to trap and hook into an opponent with devastating effect.

Polearms are the bread and butter proficiency for soldiers of all stripes. Rank and file troops are commonly equipped with all manner of long polearms for use in formation, depending on both the tactical role being fulfilled and the time period in question. Peasant militias commonly bristled with spears, bills, and other assorted unfriendliness, as the comparatively inexpensive nature of these weapons make them ideal for mass production. Even among professional soldiers and armored gentry, specialized polearms like the pollax or lucerne hammer found a great deal of popularity as a means to combat opposing heavy infantry.

Swords

No weapon has ever been so romanticized as the sword. From battlefields to back-alleys, the sword is the sidearm *par excellence*. The proficiency covers all manner of one-handed swords from short messers, cutlasses, and dussacks to the stalwart knightly arming sword; from the elegant, slender rapier to the wickedly curved saber. The proficiency also covers the use of single-handed swords in conjunction with a companion weapon, such as a dagger, buckler, and shields. Perhaps more so than any other single style, the Swords proficiency can represent a huge variety of fighting systems each tailored towards a different purpose and to take advantage of the physical characteristics of a particular kind of sword.

Swords are common as companion weapons among civilians and professional fighters alike. The ability to be comfortably and conveniently worn grants them a supreme role as backup weapons for all manner of soldier who might otherwise primarily carry a polearm or ranged weapon into combat. This same ease and convenience makes them a formidable tool of self-defense and the go-to weapon in civilian dueling circles.

Armor

From the earliest shirts of hide and bone to gleaming plates of hardened steel, a sturdy harness can be the difference between life and death on the battlefield. Easily the most expensive and valuable investment of a would-be warrior, it is at once protection from the weapons of their enemies and a display of their social status.

Anatomy of Panoply

Armor is mechanically defined by five elements: **coverage**, **armor value**, **armor traits**, **armor penalty**, and **cost.** Each of these is discussed in detail, following:

Coverage

Coverage refers to the parts of the body the armor protects. The total possible armored locations are as follows:

Crown, **Face**, **Neck**, **Ribs**, **Abs**, **Pelvis**, **Upper Arm**, **Forearm**, **Hand**, **Thigh**, **Shin**, and **Foot**.

For limb locations, it is assumed that the cost and penalty of the armor covers both locations of th type (e.g., both shins, both hands).

Armor Value

The ability of an item to defuse and absorb energy from a blow is represented by its **armor value** (**AV**). When you take damage, add your Brawn tap to the AV of the location struck. The result is your **soak** and is subtracted from the damage dealt. If the total damage exceeds your soak, the difference becomes your wound level (pgXX).

Armor Traits

AV is only half the story. **Armor traits** change the way a given piece of armor interacts with the incoming damage. Any given piece may have one or more traits, the effects of which are as follows:

- If an armor has *any* trait, it is considered a **hard target** and converts any cutting damage to blunt.
- **Rigid** (**R**) armors cap blunt damage taken to level 3.
- **Maille** (**M**) armors provide additional protection, doubling their AV against cutting and piercing attacks. Any remaining cutting damage is converted to blunt.
- **Plate** (**P**) armors improve on both of the above. They double theirAV against cutting and piercing attacks and convert any remaining cutting *and* piercing damage to blunt. Blunt damage from any source caps at a level 3 wound.
- **Proofed** (**P+**) armors are specially hardened forms of plate. In addition to the above plate benefits, proofed armors ignore the penetrating effects of firearms or heavy crossbows.

Armor traits are abbreviated to their first letter and written along with their AV. For instance, a maille shirt might be recorded as AV2M, or just 2M. If an armor has more than one property, note both in the AV. Note, however, that certain weapons (particularly those designed to counter armor) may have traits of their own designed to interact with or counter these properties.

NB! While several traits allow you to double your AV against certain kinds of attack, this only ever applies to the armor's AV. It *does not* affect your Brawn Tap.

Soft Targets

If an armor has *no* traits, or a location is *entirely* unarmored (i.e., bare skin, normal clothes) it is considered a **soft target**. Its protective value is limited to the AV, if any. In addition, certain weapons and maneuvers may interact differently with soft targets than they do hard targets.

Armor Penalty

The final element of an armor is its **armor penalty** (**AP**), measuring the burden it places on mobility and flexibility. While historical armor is nowhere near as cumbersome as sometimes depicted, the distributed weight is not negligible. Each set of armor has an AP value that contributes to the character's overall Encumbrance (see pgXX). Typically, heavier and more rigid armors will have greater penalties than lighter and more flexible types. Most armor will have fractional AP listed. Record these as-is for the sake of calculating total penalty from armor, but if the final value ends up as a fraction, round it down to the nearest whole number before applying it to actual dice pools.

Wearing Armor

All that protection isn't without significant drawbacks, even beyond the obvious encumbering effect represented by the AP. Armor of any sort is hot and going to be tiring to wear over an extended period. Any metal armor is difficult to sleep in, and rigid armors will be difficult to sit in with any degree of comfort for any length of time.

Getting into and out of armor is an ordeal on its own. Most single-piece garments are easy enough. You can get into a gambeson, leathers, a maille coat or breastplate on your own inside of a couple minutes. More complicated suits of rigid or plate armor (corselet, demi-lance, full harness) will require at least fifteen or twenty minutes and assistance from a squire or fellow soldier to don.

On the social level, any armor worn in public is going to raise eyebrows. Much as in the real world, walking around in body armor will make people nervous. Regardless of your intent, it sends the message that you are expecting trouble and the strong implication that you will be the one to start it. Unless you are in very specific circumstances (a war camp, a city under siege) or are someone whose job it is to wear armor and in the process of doing said job, you will probably want to leave the armor at home.

Some armors are more discreet than others. Light maille can be concealed from a casual glance beneath other layers of clothing. Thin gambesons and leather doublets can be tailored and embellished to pass off as clothing to the casual glance. In all such cases, the true nature will be obvious to anyone actively paying attention. Thicker and heavier armors will be obvious even to those who aren't.

Layering Armor

Armor is often worn in layers, usually with a foundation garment of leather or quilted linen, followed by flexible mail or reinforced with stiffer protection. While it is usually worn in this order (textile, maille, then rigid plates), one need not wear all three at any given time. When layering armors, the following rules apply:

- The AP from armor stacks, but the AV does not. Only the highest AV for a given location applies.

- Traits like maille and plate which modify the AV of an armor *only* apply to the specific garment to which the trait belongs. If you have a maille shirt over a gambeson, you double the AV of the maille shirt only. AV of the gambeson is unaffected. Use the highest of the two which would apply.
- Traits that cap damage apply at the end of the soak calculation and stack with other traits, even if the AV comes from another source. A 2M maille shirt over a 2R boiled leather cuirass would count as +4 to soak against a cutting attack and convert the remaining damage to blunt, then cap any blunt damage to level 3.

Together, this looks something like:

> *Diego is wearing an AV3 heavy gambeson under an AV2P breastplate. Against any blunt attack to his torso, the heavy gambeson has a higher AV, contributing +3 to his soak. Against a cutting or piercing attack to his torso, the breastplate doubles its AV, counting as AV4. As that is now the higher value, he gains +4 to his soak instead. Regardless of which garment's AV is used, any area covered by the breastplate further gains the benefit of the plate trait in converting the remaining damage to Blunt and capping it to a maximum of a level 3 wound.*

Mind the Gap

Layering is at its most useful when it comes to rigid or plate armor, where mobility requires gaps left inside the major joints. These present vulnerable points that can be exploited by a skilled adversary and are one of the primary ways to overcome an opponent in full harness. In melee, the Thrust maneuver be used to **target the gaps** in one of the following locations:

- The **elbow**, accessible by either the forearm or upper arm locations
- The **armpit**, accessible by either the upper arm or rib locations
- The **groin**, accessible by the pelvis or thigh location
- The **knee**, accessible by the thigh or shin location.

If successful, the attack can bypass the rigid or plate protection on the location in question. You are left with only the benefit of whatever flexible (maille or soft textile) armor you might have been wearing beneath, instead. If you are using the default character sheet, the armor mannequin will have rounded fields in the gap locations where you can record these values separately, if necessary. Unless otherwise specified, assume that if a flexible armor that covers either of the two wound locations associated with a joint, it extends its coverage to the joint as well. A maille habergeon that covers the upper arm but not the forearm will still grant its 2M to a Pinpoint to the elbow.

One Size...

...Tragically, does not fit all. Armor is like any other garment in that it has to be of the correct general size in order for you to wear it. For our purposes, use Brawn as an indicator. If two people are within a rank of each other (Brawn 3 vs 4, Brawn 7 vs 6) they can be assumed to be of the same general size unless a trait or other narrative description explicitly contradicts this.

Plate and Rigid armors have the strictest tolerances. Either of these has a hard time fitting anyone but the specific person for whom it was made. If you are of the same general size of the original wearer, you can at least attempt to rig the suit to fit. Wearing armor in this fashion doubles the AP from any Rigid or Plate pieces until the armor has been taken to a competent smith for refitting (an r2 task, or an r2 cost). If the armor was made for someone of 2 Brawn or more higher or lower than you, it can't be worn at all.

Flexible armors like textiles, leather, or maille are not tailored to such precise tolerances. As long as you are within the same general size of the person for whom it was made, no further penalty is introduced. If the armor was made for someone larger than you, it invokes the same double AP penalty as above until a competent smith or tailor can have it resized. Armor that is too small cannot be worn at all.

Sample Armors

In the full book, we feature a complete armor codex allowing you to customize your sets of armor to your own purpose and specification. For the purpose of this document, we present the following garments to be mixed and matched to your preferences.

Textiles

Underrated in fiction and role-playing games, the gambeson (also called an aketon or padded jack) was arguably the single-most common armor in history. Padded armors of this type were made from layers of thick linen or wool, quilted together as a stiff and surprisingly formidable protective garment. They served admirably both as stand-alone protection and as the foundational garment for other sets of armor.

Soft leather armor is a relative rarity, though in later periods it dues supersede the gambeson in the form of a padded buff coat. In earlier periods, certain leather garments may have also had limited popularity as protection in civilian settings where more obvious forms of armor might draw unwanted attention.

Name	Cost	AP	AV/Coverage
Arming Cap	r1	0	**AV1**: **Crown**
Quilted or Leather Doublet	r1	0	**AV1**: **Neck**, **Ribs**, **Abs**
Gambeson or Leather Jack	r2	0	**AV1**: **Neck**, **Ribs**, **Abs**, **Pelvis**, **Upper Arm**, **Forearm**
Long Gambeson or Buff Coat	r3	0	**AV1**: **Neck**, **Ribs**, **Abs**, **Pelvis**, **Upper Arm**, **Forearm**, **Thigh**
Heavy Gambeson	r2	0.5	**AV2**: **Neck**, **Ribs**, **Abs**, **Pelvis**, **Upper Arm**, **Forearm**, **Thigh**
Heavy Hose	r1	0	**AV1**: **Thigh**, **Shin**
Leather Gloves	r1	0	**AV1**: **Hands**
Leather Boots	r1	0	**AV1**: **Foot**, optionally **Shin**.
Add Jack Chains	+1r	0	**Upper Arms** and **Forearms** gain **Plate**, but only vs. Swings
Add Gussets/Brayettes	+1r	0	Gain **Maille** property to gap locations.

Maille

Maille is a "cloth" of interwoven rings, fashioned into a protective garment. While not as protective as later plate, it was effective against most weapons and easy to repair and maintain. Maille remained the dominant battlefield armor for more than a millennium, surpassed only when plate armors became sophisticated enough to encase most of the body. Even then, maille continued to find use in the form of gussets and undershirts worn to protect the gaps found in rigid armor.

Contrary to popular belief, maille was not especially light or cheap in comparison to plate. While it placed fewer demands on a smith's skill and metallurgical ability, the sheer man-hours that went into producing a garment kept the price relatively high.

Name	Cost	AP	AV/Coverage
Coif	r2	0.25	**AV2M**: **Crown**, **Neck**
Bishop's Mantle	r3	0.25	**AV2M**: **Neck**, **Ribs**, **Upper Arm**
Byrnie	r3	0.25	**AV2M**: **Ribs**, **Abs**
Haubergeon	r4	0.5	**AV2M**: **Ribs**, **Abs**, **Upper Arm**, **Pelvis**
Hauberk	r5	0.75	**AV2M**: **Ribs**, **Abs**, **Pelvis**, **Forearm**, **Thigh**
Heavy Hauberk	r6	1	**AV3M**: **Ribs**, **Abs**. **AV2M**: **Pelvis**, **Forearm**, **Thigh**
Chausses	r3	0.5	**AV2M**: **Thigh**, **Shin**, **Foot**
Mufflers	r2	0	**AV2M**: **Hand**

Plate

Plate covers a broad swath of stiff armors, from thick cuts of boiled leather, to lamellars of wood and bone, to full encasements of gleaming steel. Early armors were limited by metallurgical capability, limiting their construction to smaller overlapping plates which were laced or riveted onto a backing material. As the technology improved, individual pieces could be made larger and take on more complex shapes until entire regions could be covered in a single sturdy plate. Even at the height of plate, armor quality still varied. Lower-class soldiers occasionally made use of brigandines or wore "munitions plate," mass produced to lower standards. The finest plate was out of reach to all but the wealthiest of nobles.

Plate is rarely worn without a buff coat or arming jack beneath. At the Half Harness coverage and above, you can assume that a suit of plate comes with a basic textile garment (AV1, covers as Gambeson) for free. Purchasing a Full Harness will additionally include basic leggings (AV1). These garments are provided as-is. If you want to customize or add options to them, you need to generate them separately from the plate at their normal cost.

The below costs and AVs assume brigandine or munitions plate.

- For boiled leather or organic lamellar, reduce cost by -1R and convert the AV2P to AV2R.
- For hardened steel, increase cost by +1r and AV to 3P.
- For Proofed Plate, increase the cost by an *additional* +1r, and change the Crown, Ribs and Abs AVs to 3P+.

Name	Cost	AP	AV/Coverage
Open Helm	r3	0.25	**AV2P**: **Crown**
Closed Helm	r4	1	**AV2P**: **Crown**, **Face**
Sallet/Visored Helm	r4	0.25 or *1.25	**AV2P**: **Crown**, and when visor down* **Face**
Cuirass	r4	0.5	**AV2P**: **Ribs**, **Abs**

Name	Cost	AP	AV/Coverage
Pikeman's Harness	r4	0.75	**AV2P**: **Ribs**, **Abs**, **Pelvis**
Half Harness	r5	1	**AV2P**: **Ribs**, **Abs**, **Upper arm** and *either* **Forearm** *OR* **Pelvis**
Corselet	r5	1.25	**AV2P**: **Ribs**, **Abs**, **Pelvis**, **Upper arm** and *either* **Forearm** *OR* **Thigh**
Demilance/Three-Quarter	r6	1.5	**AV2P**: **Ribs**, **Abs**, **Pelvis**, **Upper Arm**, **Forearm**, **Thigh**
Full Harness	r7	2	**AV2P**: **Ribs**, **Abs**, **Pelvis**, **Upper Arm**, **Forearm**, **Thigh**, **Shin**, **Foot**
Any Other Single Location	r3	0.25	**AV2P**

Weapons

Every culture has its heroes and archetypes. More than just instruments of war, weapons are symbols that reflect something about their wielder. History and legends are replete with swords given a mythical character, treated as the weapons of heroes and nobility. The scepter, whether in the form of a mace or baton, is the symbol of leadership and royalty. The axe is an icon of strength and ferocity, the heraldic emblem of service and military duty. In the right light, even a humble staff can be seen as a symbol of wisdom and sagacity.

In the realm of fiction, a character's chosen weapons are a statement about the character themselves. As an audience, we look very differently at the character with a knightly arming sword hanging from their belt than the one with a crude axe tucked through it. A viciously curved knife suggests different things about a character than an intricately carved walking stick. Even on a utilitarian level, the kind of weapon a character carries says something about the sort of conflicts they anticipate, and thus the way they like to fight and the kind of life they lead. Every choice you make says something about your character. The stuff they carry is another way in which we tell their story.

Melee Weapon Properties

Every completed weapon will have a profile containing its relevant statistics. For melee weapons, these are the **damage rating** (**DR**), **class**, **reach**, **cost**, **load**, and **weapon traits**.

Damage Rating

Melee weapons have their **damage rating** (**DR**) listed in three figures separated by two slashes (e.g., *1c/0p*).

- The first figure is always the weapon's **edge**. This is the default profile used for all **swing** based attacks.
- The second figure is the **point** or tip. This is the profile used for all **thrust** based attacks.

Each figure is listed as a number and a letter. The number represents the base damage of the weapon. The letter indicates whether the damage is of the **cutting** (**c**), **piercing** (**p**), or **blunt** (**b**) type. The damage type determines both what kind of wound the weapon will produce and how it will interact with armor. Multiple figures separated by a comma (2c, 1b/0p) indicate that the weapon has multiple heads, such as a polearm. You may choose which head you are using when making your attack. An "x" indicates that no attack of that type is possible.

When a character lands an attack that **deals damage**, they add their Brawn tap value to the appropriate DR to determine the **damage** inflicted. This is often further improved by the roll's MoS.

> *Jaff has a rapier with a DR of (0c/2p) and a Brawn of 5. He lands a Thrust on his opponent, with MoS1. He takes 2p for the weapon's Thrust profile and then adds in +1 for his Brawn tap and +1 for his MoS. This gives him a total damage of 4p. His opponent can now subtract their soak to determine the final wound level.*

Class

The weapon's class is a shorthand for its grip, weight, and the resulting leverage. These fall along two axes:

Grip is about handedness, **one-handed** or **two-handed**. If only one option is listed, the weapon can only be used from that grip. Some weapons will offer multiple grips, separated by a slash (e.g., *1h/2h*), allowing you to choose which grip you prefer and freely switch between them. Switching from a one-handed to two-handed grip improves all of the weapon's damage ratings by +1. Weapons that can only be used two-handed will have this improvement baked into their profile.

Weight is about the overall heft and balance of the weapon, relative to its grip class. Most will be considered average, no further marking or modification required. Others will be designated as either light or heavy.

- **Light** weapons are quick and nimble, consequently reducing the cost of Feint and Counter by 1AC.
- **Heavy** weapons have a harder time quickly recovering or performing sudden changes in direction, suffering a +1AC penalty to Feint, Deflect, and Counter.

Either penalty applies only while in that grip. A weapon capable of multiple grips can easily be "heavy" while one-handed, but perform without penalty while two-handed.

Wide weapons trump either consideration, denoting the kind of wide staff-grip you can take on a larger hafted weapon. These allow for the maximum leverage and control you can have over a weapon.

Taken together, this forms a class scale from the least to most weight and leverage:

1. **One-Handed, Light (1hl):** This is generally knives, daggers and other light bladed weapons.
2. **One-Handed (1h):** Bucklers, Shields, and most other one-handed blades.
3. **One-handed, Heavy** (**1hh**): Battleaxes, cavalry sabers, and the one-handed grip of some normally two-handed weapons.
4. **Two-Handed (2h):** Anything held in a close two-handed grip, such as a longsword.
5. **Two-handed, Heavy** (**2hh**): Heavier two-handed, close-gripped weapons, such as a greatsword.
6. **Two-handed, Wide (2hw):** Anything held in a wide two-handed grip, such as a staff or polearm.

When weapons clash, the weapon with more weight and leverage generally has the upper hand. This is discussed further under *Melee* (pgXX) but is included here by way of explanation.

Reach

A weapon's length can be very important in a fight. Facing down a man with a spear is no easy task if all you have is a knife. Likewise, once the knife-man is on top of you, it's awfully hard to bring that spear to bear.

Every weapon has a **reach** characteristic listed in its profile, representing a combination of the weapon's overall length and how far it can project its striking force from the wielder. These break down into six categories:

Reach	Bladed	Hafted
Hand (H). Fists, daggers, grappling. Anything around 1' or less in reach.	**1**	**n/a**
Short (S). Hatchets, short swords, long knives. Anything around 2' or less in reach.	**2**	**1-2**
Medium (M). Arming swords, battleaxes, and other (typically) one-handed weapons. Anything around three feet in total length. Largest size hafted weapon that can be worn as a sidearm.	**3**	**2-3**

Reach	Bladed	Hafted
Long (L). Long sidearms and short battlefield weapons. Longswords, greatswords, rapiers, smaller pollaxes. Anything in the 4' category. Largest bladed weapon that can be worn as a sidearm.	**4**	**3-4**
Very Long (VL). True greatswords, shorter spears, most battlefield weapons geared towards individual combat. Anything in the 5-6' range, often built to the height of the wielder. Anything of this size or larger is typically carried, rather than worn.	**5**	**4-5**
Extreme (Ext). Long spears, halberds, lances, and other lengthy polearms. Anything in the 8-12 foot in total reach. Weapons of this size are typically meant for formation fighting and crowd control rather than individual duels.	**n/a**	**5-6**

Listed on the sheet, each weapon will contain both its overall reach and the **distance** at which it can be used without penalty. This distance is based on a combination of the reach of the weapon and its type (bladed or hafted). The combination of the two will read as *Medium (3)*, or just *M3*.

It may be noted here that hafted weapons have a bit more flexibility in this than bladed weapons, their preferred distance expressed as a range. They may operate at either indicated distance without penalty.

Load

Load is a combination of a weapon's weight and size and contributes to your *Encumbrance* in the same way as armor. This is covered in more detail in the relevant section (pgXX), but for here it is enough to know that the greater the weapon's load the more difficult it is to wear. Note that load is mostly about *wearing* an item - its appropriate straps, hooks, scabbards and sheaths such that you draw the weapon from your person in combat. Weapons with an *'x'* under load are too large to be worn on your person, at least in such a way that they can be drawn in combat. Anything that you can't or are not wearing does not count towards your load, and thus does not count against your Encumbrance.

Cost

The end **cost** of an item is calculated by the most expensive of the options you've chosen. If your weapon only uses the options from Cheap, then you pay the Cheap price. If you take one option from Fine, you pay the Fine price. Certain individual choices will modify the cost further. If something reads *Cost+1*, then this is +1r over the price set by the quality. Multiple instances of +Cost stack. Likewise, the same logic applies to *Cost-1*.

If you decide to use the weapon ornamentation options (see *But This One is Mine*), use the higher of either this cost or the req listed by the ornament rules. They do not stack in any way.

Weapon Traits

Weapon traits are the final way in which a weapon's performance is modified. The full version of the game will feature a significantly expanded list of traits. The Essential Edition version of the traits are as follows:

Basket Hilt: A steel cage around the hand. In melee, grants a free favoring die to the arms. If the hand location is struck, the blow glances harmlessly off. Shots with firearms pass clean through as normal, however. Basket hilts are incompatible

with gauntlets, but count as knuckle dusters for making unarmed strikes. Unfortunately, a basket hilt makes drawing a weapon more difficult in a pinch, imposing a disadvantage on the positioning roll to draw.

Complex Guard: A knuckle bow or similar compound hilt. If the hand is struck in combat, the blow glances harmlessly off. Shots from firearms pass clean through. Complex guards are incompatible with gauntlets, but count as knuckle dusters for making unarmed strikes.

Crushing: A dense striking surface. Swing attacks ignore the Rigid and Plate qualities when dealing with armor.

Curved: A convex blade that aids in slicing actions. Gains +1DR on Swings vs soft targets. Further, a curved blade is easier to draw in a pinch, gaining an advantage on the positioning roll to draw.

Flexible: Weapon has a flexible component, such as a rope or chain. Ignores opponent's favoring dice, but cannot be used for any thrust-based attack or weapon-based defense.

Halfsword: When using the Longsword proficiency weapon has an alternate grip available, placing one hand forward on the blade to treat the sword as a short spear. While in this grip, the weapon loses the benefit of minimum impact, but counts as 2hw for the purposes of defense. It retains its original class for the purposes of offensive maneuvers. Switching into and out of halfsword costs 1AC.

Maille Piercing: Weapon features a narrow, reinforced tip intended to counter maille. The weapon ignores the maille quality when thrusting into armor.

Pick: A reinforced beak meant to counter armor. Piercing from Swing attacks from this weapon ignore the double-AV modifier from maille and plate armors. Against plate, damage still converts to blunt but it ignores the damage cap of Rigid and Plate armors.

Thrown: Weapon is balanced with throwing in mind. It suffers no penalty when used as a ranged weapon or with the Point Blank maneuver.

Sample Melee Weapons

In the full book, we feature a complete weapon codex allowing you to build and customize weapons to your heart's desire. For the purpose of this document, we present the following common specimens for use in playtests and dueling.

Daggers	DR	Reach	Class	Load	Cost	Notes
Baselard	0c/0p	H(1)	1hl	0.1	r3	
Bullock Dagger/Dirk	-1c/0p	H(1)	1hl	0.1	r2	
Knife	-2c/-1p	H(1)	1hl	0.1	r1	
Main Gauche	-1c/0p	H(1)	1hl	0.1	r3	Complex Guard
Rondell	-1p/0p	H(1)	1hl	0.1	r3	Maille Piercing
Stiletto	x/1p	H(1)	1hl	0.1	r3	

Swords	DR	Reach	Class	Load	Cost	Notes
Arming Sword	1c/1p	M(3)	1h	0.3	r3	
Hanger/Messer	1c/0p	S(2)	1h	0.2	r2	
Rapier	0c/2p	L(4)	1h	0.4	r4	Complex Guard
Saber	1c/0p	M(3)	1h	0.3	r3	Curved
Smallsword	-2b/2p	M(3)	1hl	0.2	r4	Complex Guard

Longswords	DR†	Reach	Class	Load	Cost	Notes
Bastard Swords	2c/2p	M(3)	1h/2h	0.4	r3	Halfsword
In halfsword	1c/2p	S(1-2)	*2hw			Halfsword
Estoc	-0c/3p	L(4)	1hh/2h	0.4	r4	Halfsword, Maille Piercing.
In halfsword	-1c/3p	M(2-3)	*2hw			Halfsword, Maille Piercing.
Kriegsmesser	2c/1p	L(4)	1hh/2h	0.4	r3	Halfsword. Curved
In halfsword	1c/1p	M(2-3)	*2hw			Halfsword. Curved
Longsword	2c/2p	L(4)	1hh/2h	0.5	r3	Halfsword
In halfsword	1c/2p	M(2-3)	*2hw			Halfsword
Zweihander	3c/1p	VL(5)	2hh	x	r4	Halfsword
In halfsword	2c/1p	L(3-4)	*2hw			Halfsword

†Damage listed is for 2h use. Weapons capable of one-handed use reduce DRs by 1/1 when doing so.

Mass Weapons	DR†	Reach	Class	Load	Cost	Notes
Club/Cudgel	0b/0b	M(2-3)	1h/2h	0.3	r1	
Flail	1b/x	M(2-3)	1hh/2h	0.4	r3	Crushing, Flexible
Fokosh/Shepherd's Axe	1c,0p/0b	M(2-3)	1h/2h	0.3	r3	Pick, Thrown
Hand-Axe/Hatchet	1c/0b	S(1-2)	1h	0.2	r2	Thrown
Horseman's Axe	2c,0p/0p	M(3-4)	1hh/2h	0.5	r4	Crushing, Pick, Maille Piercing

Mass Weapons	DR†	Reach	Class	Load	Cost	Notes
Mace	1b/0b	S(1-2)	1h	0.2	r2	Crushing
Warhammer	1b, 0p/0p	S(1-2)	1h	0.3	r4	Crushing, Pick

†Damage listed is for 1h use. Weapons capable of two-handed use improve DRs by +1/+1 while doing so.

Polearms	DR†	Reach	Class	Load	Cost	Notes
Crow's Beak	2b, 1p/1p	VL(4-5)	2hw	x	r4	Crushing, Maille Piercing, Pick
Goedendag	2b/0p	VL(4-5)	2hw	x	r3	Crushing, Maille Piercing
Halberd	2c, 1p/2p	Ext (5-6)	2hw	x	r4	Pick
Long Axe	2c, 1c	VL(4-5)	2hw	x	r3	
Pollax	2c, 2p/2p	VL(4-5)	2hw	x		Maille Piercing, Pick
Quarterstaff	1b/1b	VL(4-5)	1hh/2hw	x	r1	
Spear, Short	1c/2p	VL(4-5)	1hh/2hw	x	r2	Thrown
Spear, Long	1c/2p	Ext (5-6)	1hh/2hw	x	r2	Thrown

†Damage listed is for 2h use. Weapons capable of one-handed use reduce DRs by 1/1 when doing so.

Other Weapons	DR†	Reach	Class	Load	Cost	Notes
Pommel/Queue, 1h	0b/0p	1	*	x	n/a	
Pommel/Queue, 2h	1b/1b	1	*	x	n/a	
Unarmed Strike	0b/0b	1	1hl	x	n/a	Damage Scales at ½ MoS
Gauntlet/ Duster	0b/0b	1	1h	x	n/a	

**As per the weapon used*

Shields	DR	Reach	Class	Load	Cost	Notes
Buckler	0b/0b	H(1)	1h	0.25	r2	Covers Arm+1
Heater Shield	0b/0b	H(1)	1hh	0.5	r2	Covers Arm+2
Rodela	1b/0b	H(1)	1hh	0.5	r3	Steel. Covers Arm+2
Inexplicable Scutum	0b/0b	H(1)	1hh	1	r3	Covers Arm+3

Encumbrance

Many games try to keep meticulous track of a character's inventory and equipment. This isn't one of them. Most of the time, you won't need these rules. **Encumbrance** only comes into play when you have a character wearing a small armory on their person or the campaign is as such that your characters are routinely lugging around a lot of gear. For our purposes, the burden of equipment is abstracted into **armor penalty**, **load**, and **bulk**.

Armor penalty is a property of armor and discussed in that chapter. Each piece of armor will have an accompanying AP, intended to be added together. Record the total, even if it is not a whole number.

Load is a property of weaponry, specifically shields and sidearms your character wears on their person. Add the total load of all armament worn to arrive at the total. ***NB!*** This is specifically about items worn, not items carried. Things that are not meant to be worn (Spears, Zweihanders) do not count towards your Load, nor does anything you happen to pick up in the middle of a scene or a fight (a dead man's sword off the ground.) You only worry about the things your character wears as part of their kit. Likewise, Load does not change due to drawing or dropping weapons mid-fight.

Knife in the Teeth

"But my guy is a pirate, he always has the knife in his teeth so it doesn't count as load, right?" Yes, by RAW, things that you carry but do not wear do not count as load, but also: *don't*. The rule is written as it is such that we can take into account the arms your character is carting around without having to recalculate your combat pool every time someone draws a weapon, drops a weapon, picks something up or gets disarmed. If you need an in-character explanation, assume it's due to the belts, sheaths, scabbards and so on involved. Don't be a turd.

Bulk represents everything else your character is wearing. Rather than calculating the total of every individual item, it's treated as a sliding scale. Each category represents a more encumbering load than the last, with its own description and penalty. Use the most severe penalty that might apply, per your best judgment.

Bulk	Description
0	**Unencumbered.** Normal clothing and jewelry, a small coin purse or belt pouch.
1	**Lightly Encumbered.** Heavy winter clothing or a heavy wool cloak. A satchel or small backpack, assume roughly the same capacity as a modern messenger bag or similar.
3	**Heavily Encumbered.** A large backpack worth of supplies or several bags worn on the person. Assume the capacity of a framed hiking backpack with bedroll and similar.
6	**Overburdened**. Multiple large bags, a full camping set strapped to the back along with pans, etc.

Add together the total of your AP, Load, and Bulk to arrive at your Encumbrance. This number is applied as a penalty to any movement-based checks or contests, and is subtracted directly from your melee combat pool. If Encumbrance is anything other than a whole number, round down to the nearest whole number before applying the penalty.

Melee Combat

In the court of last resort, violence is king. When two or more fighters engage each other in melee, they begin a **bout**. This is a scene-within-a-scene that focuses on the blow-by-blow action. Bouts have their own time structure, the core unit of which is called the **play**. Each play, the opponents come together in a series of violent clashes before falling away again, seeking another opening. Each play is further broken down into three phrases: an **opening** followed by two **tempos**.

At the beginning of each play, the combatants build their **combat pool** (**CP**) that will be spent in contest with their opponent, declaring attacks, defenses, or performing other actions. After the second tempo concludes, we circle back to the opening. The dice **refresh** and start again. Choosing when and how to allocate your dice is a big part of your success or failure in the bout, making combat as much about your skill as a player as your character's abilities.

Melee combat as presented here is a dramatic conflict system. It allows for more player skill and tactical decision making, but does require a bit more investment from the players involved. It is best used for important moments of individual conflict. If it all seems too much at first, see *Simplifying Melee* at the end of the chapter.

The Play

Each play takes a variable amount of time, sometimes as short as a couple seconds, sometimes as long as twenty or thirty as the combatants circle one another, waiting for their moment.

The Opening Phase

The opening phase is a preamble, a brief pause where either fighter sizes the other up and looks for their opening. Mechanically, this is where a lot of the between-plays tallying and strategic choices take place. At the beginning of the play…

Both sides **Gather Dice/Refresh**.

- Your base **combat pool** (**CP**) is made from a combination of your Reflex and the current proficiency in use. If you have one or more passions firing, you can add these dice now.
- Your current proficiency is based on your **primary weapon**, the weapon in your dominant hand. If you have an off-hand weapon as well, see *Duel Wielding*, pgXX. Once chosen, your proficiency (and combat pool) sticks with you for the entire play. It can only be changed during the **refresh** at the start of the next opening. This is true even if you are disarmed or switch weapons.
- In some circumstances, you may suffer a penalty to your dice pool at this stage. If you have any trait that would work against your physical coordination (for instance, *2d Peg-Legged*), those are removed from your CP in turn.

Both sides **Declare Favoring**

- You may spend a single die from your combat pool to **favor** a wound wheel, preventing your opponent from targeting it or its wound locations directly with a maneuver. If you're using a physical player sheet or battlemat, you can signify this by placing that die to cover the wheel favored.

- Shields grant favoring to a number of wheels based on their size. Shield favoring is free and does not cost dice from your CP. It stacks with the optional die spent, above. The only limitation is that *all* favoring must cover a contiguous area, as indicated by common sense or the grey lines on the wound wheel chart.
- At the beginning of each play, you are assumed to be favoring the same locations (and, if necessary, spending the same die) unless you specify otherwise.

Determine Initiative

- In each tempo someone has the **initiative**. Someone acts, someone reacts. The character who has initiative is considered to be the **aggressor** and declares an attack. Their opponent becomes the **defender** and reacts, usually declaring a defensive maneuver.
- In the first play of the bout, initiative usually goes to whomever made the first move in the fiction. If both parties squared up and it isn't obvious who should go first, see *Initiative*, pgXX.
- Once the fight begins in earnest, initiative is determined by the outcome of each tempo.

The Tempos

The remainder of the play is divided between the first and second tempo, with the combatants' remaining dice split between the two. The first tempo is a kind of opening gambit: If you spend too many dice here, you risk over-extending yourself and giving your opponent an upper-hand in the second tempo. If you spend too few dice, you risk losing control or taking a blow outright. A major element of player skill is learning how and when to spend your dice.

The Aggressor...

- **Declares an offensive maneuver** from the list. Every attack or defense is represented by a specific **maneuver** (such as Thrust or Deflect.) As the aggressor, you may choose any offensive maneuver you have access to based on your weapon and proficiency. If you are using multiple weapons or a weapon with multiple heads (e.g., a pollax) be sure to declare which weapon or part of the weapon your maneuver is using.
- **Declares a target** for their maneuver, if necessary. This is usually one of the wound wheels: **head**, **arms**, **chest**, **belly**, **thigh**, and **shin**. Certain maneuvers may instead target an opponent's weapon, or require no specific target at all.
- **Declares their activation cost**, if any. **Activation costs** (**AC**) are dice paid to represent either the inherent difficulty of the maneuver chosen, penalties applied to it, or in some cases a gamble made to improve the effects if your maneuver is successful. These dic are discarded immediately and *are not* rolled with the maneuver itself. *NB!* Activation costs from penalties ***do not*** count towards improvements to a maneuver effect.
- **Declares how many dice** they will allocate to this attack. These dice are also spent from your combat pool and will be what you roll against your opponent to determine if your attack lands.
- Together, this will sound something like "*I Thrust at her head for five dice*" Feel free to embellish as desired: "*I step into the blow, throwing seven dice into a vicious AC2 Swing to his belly.*"

The Defender...

- **Declares a defensive maneuver** from the list. This may be any defensive maneuver they have access to based on their weapon and proficiency. If you have multiple weapons, you may need to declare which weapon is being used in the defense.
- **Declares their activation cost**, if any, for the maneuver chosen. As above, ACs from penalties ***do not*** count towards any improvement to a maneuver effect.

- **Declares how many dice** from your pool you will allocate to your defense. These dice will be rolled against the attacker's allocated dice to determine who succeeds.
- Together, this will sound something like "*I'm going to Counter for four dice, AC2*"

Both sides roll their dice in contest.

- **If the aggressor wins**, they gain the benefit of their maneuver per its description. They retain initiative and can attack again in the next tempo.
- **If the defender wins**, they avoid the blow and gain the benefit of their maneuver. They may take the initiative and become the aggressor in the next tempo, if applicable.
- **If it's a tie**, the aggressor gains no benefit from their maneuver but they retain the initiative in the next tempo. The defender avoids the blow, but gains no further benefit from their maneuver.

After any maneuver effects (pg XX) are resolved, we go into the **second tempo**. The pattern repeats just as before with whatever CP either party has left. If either party enters a tempo with 0CP remaining, their opponent automatically takes initiative and becomes the aggressor. If both parties enter a tempo with no dice remaining, skip it and move immediately to the next refresh.

Refresh

After the second tempo is resolved, the play ends. If both combatants are still conscious and neither chooses to yield, we begin from a new play at the opening phase. The pools **refresh**, and the cycle begins again. Both parties gain the full value of their current proficiency (potentially changed, since the first opening phase or last refresh) to be spent across the next play. Keep in mind that some maneuver effects (particularly **impact** (pgXX) may carry over. If applicable, they will subtract their remaining value from your pool at refresh, leaving you to start the play with less than your full dice pool.

Positioning Rolls

Positioning rolls represent any action you might want to take that isn't covered by a maneuver, from utility tasks like drawing a weapon to movement and environmental actions like overturning a table, climbing up on a ledge, or trying to maintain your footing on a dangerous surface. In practice, positioning comes in two flavors: **positioning for effect** and the **hazard roll**.

Positioning for Effect

Positioning for effect is the most basic form of positioning, primarily used to interact with your equipment or environment. This can be anything you can think of trying within the confines of your fictional environment, but as an example:

- Getting to your feet from a prone position
- Drawing a sheathed weapon or retrieving a lost weapon
- Pressing your opponent back into a corner or hazardous terrain
- Hopping up on a ledge to claim the higher ground
- Flipping over a table to put an obstacle between yourself and your opponent
- Swinging on a chandelier or similar swashbuckling antics

Positioning for effect takes place inside of a tempo. You declare your intent and the allocated dice at the same time as your maneuver. The GM will assign a difficulty to the task based on its complexity. Most of the time this will be an open roll at r0, though attempting more complex tasks or *multiple* tasks (e.g., getting up from prone and drawing a weapon in the same roll) may impose an increased req.

> *Jaff is dueling his rival, Diego, alongside a small but quickly-flowing stream. He knows that if he can force his opponent into the stream, it will put him on bad footing. He declares a 4d Thrust to Diego's face, along with a 3d positioning roll. His intention is to press the opponent back into the stream. The GM declares this an r0 task.*

To declare a positioning roll is to invite opposition. The opposing party may challenge your positioning, spending dice from their CP to do so. This may be done even if they have already allocated dice during this tempo. The positioning roll becomes a contest in addition to whatever req may have been required by the task itself.

> *Diego is in a bad way. It will be hard enough to avoid the thrust, but if he loses too much ground they may find himself slipping in the creek. He declares a 5d Deflect with their own sword and puts 2d into a positioning roll to challenge Jaff's own. He is running out of dice and just hoping for the best.*

Positioning rolls are resolved separately from any maneuvers declared during this tempo, in an order based on their declaration.

- **Positioning rolls declared by the aggressor** are resolved *before* the maneuvers.
- **Positioning rolls declared by the defender** are resolved *after* the maneuvers, and *only* if they beat or tie the aggressor on the maneuver contest itself. If the aggressor won outright, their positioning roll automatically fails and any dice allocated are lost. This loss takes place *before* impact is calculated, if any.

If the positioning character beats or ties their req, they accomplish their intent. If the roll was contested, ties go to the positioning character over the challenger. The mechanical effects of a successful positioning roll depend on context. Often, this will be a task your character needs to perform, such as getting to their feet or retrieving a weapon. In other cases, you might be trying to get some kind of edge over your opponent. This may be putting yourself in a better position (Gaining better footing, higher ground) or trying to force them into a worse position (our friend and the stream). The GM has a lot of leeway in this, but you're free to propose options of your own. Example mechanical effects include:

- Force the opponent into cramped terrain or draw them out into open terrain
- Grant an advantage to the victor, impose a disadvantage on the opponent, or both
- Inflict impact on the opponent, usually based on MoS
- Force a roll to avoid knockdown, knockout, a dropped item or similar effect

This list is by no means exhaustive. The GM has full discretion here, based on the description and intent. That said, a positioning roll generally shouldn't cause damage directly and can never be used to replicate an existing maneuver.

> *Jaff rolls his positioning dice against Diego's own. Jaff rolls 2 hits to Diego's 1, beating the challenge. The GM declares that Jaff has harassed his opponent back into the creek. At the beginning of each play hereafter, Diego will have to make a hazard roll to maintain his footing. Failure means that he will have slipped into the water and fallen prone. This will continue until such a time as Diego makes a successful positioning roll of his own to get out.*

The Hazard Roll

Not all fights have the luxury of firm footing on solid ground. Whether a narrow beam, slippery ice, or a cliff's crumbling edge, the environment itself can be a threat. In these situations, the GM can call for a **hazard roll**, with a req based on the treachery of the terrain.

Req	Description...
r1	**Unsteady.** Wet surface, lots of loose debris, standing on a steadily moving surface (cart moving forward).
r2	**Precarious.** Slippery, smooth surface (ice, glass), an unsteadily moving surface (a rocking ship's deck), or a relatively narrow surface (foot bridge).
r3	**Treacherous..** Wet ice, a ship's deck during a storm, a rope bridge in the wind, a narrow beam, or any surface where putting your foot in the wrong place may result in stepping through a rotten board or a hole in the floor.

Hazard rolls are called for by the GM, rather than the players. They take place at the end of the opening, before the first tempo. As with positioning for effect, players allocate dice from their CP to spend on the roll. Unlike the above, hazard rolls are not normally contested by other combatants.

On a success, you avoid the hazard. Failure can have any number of effects, based on the nature and severity of the hazard. All of them are bad. Most commonly:

- Character is placed at a disadvantage for the rest of the play
- Character falls prone, remaining at a disadvantage until a successful positioning roll to regain their footing
- Character slams against some object, suffering MoF impact
- Character slips and loses hold of their weapon, dropping it
- Character suffers some kind of narrative consequence.

Reach and Distance

A weapon's length can be very important in a fight. Facing down a man with a spear is no easy task if all you have is a knife. Likewise, once the knife-man is on top of you, it's awfully hard to bring that spear to bear. Once a fight begins, we track the **distance** between the two combatants involved on a scale of 1-6. This can be done with a d6, or marked on your sheet. Whenever you perform a weapon-based maneuver (including unarmed attacks) compare the weapon's reach to the current distance, which will yield one of three results:

- **Out of Measure**. You are too far from your opponent for the weapon in question and must pay an AC penalty on any offensive maneuvers with that weapon that target their person.
- **In Measure**. You are at the optimal distance for your weapon. No modifiers.
- **Infighting**. You are inside the reach of the weapon in question, too close to effectively maneuver. You suffer an AC penalty to *both* offensive and defensive maneuvers with that weapon.

If the difference between the current distance and your reach is one step (1 vs 2, 4 vs 3) the penalty is AC1. If it is two or more steps (2 vs 4, 1 vs 6) AC2. ***NB!*** Any unarmed attack (including Grab) is considered to have a reach of 1. Any movement-based defense (Dodge, Disengage) ignores reach entirely.

At the beginning of a fight, the default distance is set to be in measure for the longest reach of the longest weapon present. E.g., if one combatant has an S(2) sword and the other a VL(4-5) polearm, then the bout begins at a distance of 5. If the fight began due to an ambush or sucker punch, set the distance per the fiction.

After the fight begins, distance is changed through successful maneuvers. Landing a blow with a weapon gives you the option to set the new distance to the reach of that weapon. Some maneuvers will allow you to modify the distance in other ways, either letting you **close the distance**, getting closer, or **fall back**, getting further away.

Bladed	Hafted	Description...
1	**n/a**	**Hand (H).** Fists, daggers, grappling. Anything around 1' or less in reach.
2	**1-2**	**Short (S).** Hatchets, short swords, long knives. Anything around 2' or less in reach.
3	**2-3**	**Medium (M).** Arming swords, battleaxes, and other (typically) one-handed weapons. Anything around three feet in total length. Largest size hafted weapon that can be worn as a sidearm.
4	**3-4**	**Long (L).** Long sidearms and short battlefield weapons. Longswords, greatswords, rapiers, smaller pollaxes. Anything in the 4' category. Largest bladed weapon that can be worn as a sidearm.
5	**4-5**	**Very Long (VL).** True greatswords, shorter spears, most battlefield weapons geared towards individual combat. Anything in the 5-6' range, often built to the height of the wielder. Anything of this size or larger is typically carried, rather than worn.
n/a	**5-6**	**Extreme (Ext).** Long spears, halberds, lances, and other lengthy polearms. Anything in the 7-12 foot in total reach. Weapons of this size are typically meant for formation fighting and crowd control rather than individual duels.

The furthest distance worth measuring is the longest reach of any of the weapons involved. You can freely close the distance up to the reach of the longest weapon involved. Should the longest weapon be disarmed, then the fighters can freely close to the reach of the next longest weapon.

Circumstance	Furthest Distance
Grapple	**1**
Cramped Terrain	**2**
Restricted Terrain	**4**
Open	**6**

Diego has been ambushed by an opponent wielding a rapier (Long, 4) and dagger (Hand 1). He manages to draw his dussack in turn (Short 2). By default the distance is set to 4, which doesn't look good for Diego. After several tempos, Diego manages to relieve his opponent of his weapon, sending it clattering to the ground. The distance was previously 4, but without the rapier to worry about, the reaches are now 1 vs 2. Distance is set to 2 automatically, as Diego can freely close in.

Finally, the longest distance possible in a fight may be modified by the surrounding environment and circumstances. The chart, right, shows the furthest distance possible based on the terrain and circumstances. Anything with a reach further than 2 greater (e.g., using a reach 3 weapon in a grapple) is restricted to strikes from the pommel or queue.

Maneuvers

The core actions of melee are packaged as **maneuvers**, each representing a different narrative action with its own mechanical effects. Each maneuver is listed in the following manner: *Swing | Off | AC0-3 | Swing Wheel*

This title bar contains a fair bit of information, prevented in this order:

- **Name:** the maneuver's name, in this case *Swing.*
- **Type**: whether the maneuver is **offensive** (**Off**) or **defensive** (**Def**).
- **Activation Cost (AC):** Value is the *dice paid* to use this maneuver. These dice are not rolled with the maneuver itself. .
- **Target**: whether the maneuver targets a **swing wheel**, **thrust wheel**, or something else. Defensive maneuvers generally do not have a target.

On occasion, a maneuver's title bar may have other key words at the end to indicate other special properties they possess (e.g., Restraining.)

Maneuver Effects

Each maneuver will grant some kind of benefit on success. If the description doesn't go into detail, it's one of the following common effects:

Deal Damage

If a maneuver **deals damage**...

1. **Determine wound location**. If the location is a wheel, roll a d6 and compare it to the wheel in question. Swing-based attacks use the outside entries. If it was a thrust-based attack, use the inside.
2. **Calculate Damage**. For a melee or thrown weapon, add your Brawn tap+Relevant Weapon Profile. Many maneuvers will allow you to add your MoS as well. The resulting total is the **damage** dealt.
3. **Calculate Soak**. The defender adds their Brawn tap and the armor value (AV) of any armor on that location. This is their **soak**.
4. **Subtract soak from damage.** If the remaining number is positive, this is the **wound level** inflicted by the attack. **Inflict Impact**, below.

Traits possessed by the opponent's armor may modify these results, both altering the amount of soak offered in defense and potentially placing a cap on the resulting wound level.

Inflict Impact

Certain maneuvers and *all* wounds **inflict impact**. **Impact** is a penalty that immediately discards an indicated number of dice from your pool based on its rating. These dice are discarded first from any dice already allocated to this tempo, but not yet rolled (e.g., from an attack yet to be resolved). If there is impact remaining, it carries over to penalize your remaining combat pool for this play. If there is *still* impact remaining, it is subtracted from your new combat pool in the following refresh.

If a character arrives in a tempo with 0CP remaining, their opponent automatically takes initiative, if they didn't already have it. They resolve the maneuver as an unopposed contest. If both characters arrive at a tempo with 0CP, skip that tempo and go straight to the next refresh.

Some attacks deal a **minimum impact**, indicating a blow that hits hard enough to be felt even through armor. When a blow lands on a *core location* (crown, face, neck, ribs, abs, pelvis) it deals impact as listed in the maneuver, even if no wound is dealt. If you do inflict a wound, you gain either the wound's impact *or* the minimum impact listed. They do not stack in any way.

Knock Prone

The character is knocked on their backside. Getting knocked **prone** has two mechanical effects:

1. It interrupts any attack you have yet to make in this tempo as though the opponent's attack had been restraining (below.)
2. It imposes a disadvantage on any offensive or defensive maneuver declared. If the maneuver would *normally* be made at a disadvantage, it can't be tried at all.

Once knocked prone, you remain prone until you either make a successful positioning roll to regain your footing (normally an open check at r0) or there is a pause in the bout, during which either party can be assumed to get to their feet. If the fight continues, using the dueling rules to reestablish initiative.

Restraining

Restraining maneuvers interrupt any offensive maneuver from your opponent yet to be executed in this tempo. On a success, the restraining maneuver cancels the attack in question. Any dice allocated thereto are discarded. If they *also* suffer impact from your maneuver, that impact is subtracted *after* the opponent's allocated dice are discarded.

It is worth noting that for restraining to have any effect, your maneuver must land first and be resolved first *before* your opponent's attack is resolved. If your opponent has the initiative, successfully steals the initiative, your attacks land simultaneously, or you tie or fail on the attack roll itself, restraining has no effect.

Restraining attacks are thus at their most useful in situations where both you and your opponent are attempting an offensive maneuver (a red/red, following dueling initiative), or in situations where you need to discourage the defender from launching an attack of their own.

Disarmed, Disabled

These are two very related concepts, both involving maneuvers that either target the weapon or weapon arm.

- **Disabling** means that you have temporarily lost control of the weapon or weapon arm. You may not use it as a part of your maneuvers or positioning for an amount of time specified by the disabling maneuver. This is usually listed as "in this and the following tempo." If a limb is disabled due to injury, the effect lasts until the wound heals.
- **Disarming** knocks the opponent's weapon from their hands. Unless otherwise specified by the maneuver or targeted weapon description, it clatters to the floor. It cannot be used until retrieved, requiring either an r1 positioning roll to retrieve from the ground or a pause in the bout.

Being disabled or disarmed counts as restraining in the tempo during which it was applied, but only against attacks yet to be resolved while using the targeted weapon or limb. E.g., disarming someone's sword would count as restraining, but only if they were making an attack with that sword. Disarming their sword would not prevent a declared attack from the dagger in their other hand.

Bonus Attack

Certain maneuvers will grant you a **bonus attack**. If the primary maneuver was successful, you can declare a secondary offensive maneuver against your opponent. Because this maneuver is resolved during the same tempo, no additional defense is mounted against it. It's resolved as an open roll at r0.

The primary maneuver will determine both your available maneuvers for the bonus attack, as well as the number of dice with which it will be made. You may not add bonus dice to this attack after the fact, even if you have dice remaining in your combat pool. Secondary maneuvers with activation costs must be paid for out of the dice allocated by the primary maneuver.

> *Andrev finds himself in a tavern brawl when things take a turn for the messy. His opponent has drawn a dagger, but Andrev really wants to end this without blood. Gaining the initiative, Andrev declares a 6d Grab against his opponent. His opponent in turn attempts to knock aside the gab with an unarmed Parry for 5d.*
>
> *The dice gods smile: 5 hits to 2, Andrev gaining MoS3. This gives Andrev 3d to spend on a bonus attack. He pays AC1 from the 3d to declare a Throw, leaving 2d remaining for the roll itself.*
>
> *The dice gods smile again: 1 hit. The Throw is a success. It only inflicts 1 impact on his opponent, but the knifeman is now knocked prone and forced into a grapple, where Andrev's 8 Brawn can come into play...*

Bonus attacks are best performed with two weapons, or with a weapon and shield. If the bonus attack is performed with the same weapon as the granting maneuver, the bonus attack is performed at a disadvantage. Exceptions are made for maneuvers that use the secondary surfaces of a weapon, such as striking with the pommel or queue.

Offensive Maneuvers

Swing | Off | AC0-3 | Swing Wheel

The most basic attack, swinging at an arc toward your opponent. Declare a target wheel and roll vs. BTN. On a success, **deal damage** per your weapon's swing profile, increased by MoS. Against a core location, deal **minimum impact** equal to the weapon's swing profile.

Swing is AC0 by default, but up to three dice can be spent to improve the outcome of an attack. On a success, damage and minimum impact increase by +1 for each die spent. AC spent on penalties (for instance, being Out of Measure) do not contribute to this improvement.

Thrust | Off | AC0-3 | Thrust Wheel

Stick'em with the pointy end. Declare a target wheel and roll vs. BTN. On a success, **deal damage** per your weapon's thrust profile, increased by MoS. Thrusts telegraph less than a Swing and many fencers swear they are quicker to land. Ties with defensive maneuvers break in favor of the Thrust, counting as an MoS0 success.

Thrust is AC0 by default. For every point of AC spent, you can choose to adjust the final wound wheel roll by up to +/-2. At AC3, you can **target the gaps**, directing your blow into one of the major joints in your opponent's armor (armpit, elbow, groin, knee). If successful, you ignore the AV and trait benefits of any rigid or plate armor. Depending on the location, the target may still benefit from any flexible armor (maille, gambeson) worn beneath. For the final wound location, use one of the two adjacent locations (e.g., armpit is upper arm or ribs). Targeting the gaps can be performed with any bladed weapon, but hafted weapons require an Awl-tip to perform. AC spent on penalties (for instance, being Out of Measure) do not contribute to these improvements.

Disarm | Off | AC1 | Weapon

Apply leverage against an opponent's weapon in an attempt to wrench it from their grasp. Declare the target weapon and roll vs. BTN. Take an advantage if you're grappling, or as part of a Grab. Take a disadvantage if you're using a weapon of a lower class. On a success, **inflict impact** equal to MoS. In addition, the opponent's weapon is **disabled** in this and the following tempo. On an MoS3+, the weapon is **disarmed**. If you have a free hand, you can take it as part of the same action. Because Disarm targets the opponent's weapon, not their person, it suffers no penalty for being **out of measure**.

Feint | Off | AC1* | Other

Attempt to deceive your opponent, changing direction mid-attack. Declare as another offensive maneuver, along with target location and die allocation. After your opponent declares their defense and dice allocation, shout "*Feint!*" And pay an AC cost from your remaining combat pool.

- Weapons used 1HL begin at AC0.
- Weapons used 1H, 2H, 2HW begin at AC1
- Weapons used 1HH, 2HH begin at AC2.
- Each time Feint is used in the same scene against the same opponent, this cost goes up by +1AC.

You must now either switch your attack type (Swing to Thrust, Thrust to Swing), target wheel (Head to Chest), or both. The new target wheel can be any save for your previous target, including one previously unavailable due to favoring. In addition, you may increase the number of dice allocated to your maneuver by one die for every two dice spent from your remaining pool. E.g., increasing your attack by two dice would cost four dice in total.

Any AC spent on the original maneuver carries forward to the new maneuver, either paid as AC on that maneuver or refunded to the attack pool they're for. Resolve Feint as per the new maneuver.

Grab | Off | AC0 | Other

Grab an opponent by their limb, clothes, or even hair. Roll vs. BTN. On a success, your MoS becomes a dice pool for an immediate **bonus attack**. This attack can be any maneuver that would be allowed by Grappling (below), and follows those rules. If the bonus attack is also a success, you can choose to either release your opponent or initiate a grapple. On a failure, no grapple occurs.

Point Blank | AC0 | Thrust Wheel

Discharge a firearm or throw a weapon at an opponent in combat. Declare a target wheel and roll vs. Base TN. On a success, **deal damage** per the weapon's most favorable profile. Thrown weapons gain an additional +1DR, but suffer disadvantage on their roll if they lack the **thrown** trait. Point Blank suffers no penalty for being **out of measure**. Thrown weapons cannot be used at all while infighting.

Defensive Maneuvers

Deflect | Def | AC0*

Knock aside an incoming attack with your weapon, forearm, or shield. Roll vs. BTN. Take an advantage if you're using a medium or large shield. Take a disadvantage if you're opposing a Swing or Disarm from a heavier weapon class. On a success, you avoid the blow and may take the initiative. AC0 by default. Weapons used 1HH or 2HH are AC1 instead.

Counter | Def | AC2*

Turn a blow in such a way as to use your opponent's momentum against them. Roll vs BTN. Take a disadvantage if you're opposing a Swing or Disarm from a heavier weapon class. On a success, you avoid the blow and may take the

initiative. In addition, you gain your *opponent's* hits as bonus dice to be used in the following tempo. You may also choose to **close the distance** a number of steps equal to your MoS. AC2 by default. Weapons used 1HL or 2HL are AC1 instead; 1HH or 2HH are AC3.

Dodge | Def | AC0/*2

Avoid a blow by moving out of its path. Roll vs. BTN. Take an advantage if the blow is targeting a limb location. On a success, you avoid the blow and may take initiative. Additionally, you may **fall back** a number of steps equal to your MoS. Taking the initiative is optional. If you choose to do so, your next maneuver is made at a +2AC penalty.

Disengage | Def | AC0

Break away from the fight. Roll vs. BTN. On a success, you avoid the blow and put enough space between you and your opponent to create a pause in the bout. Reestablish initiative via Dueling, or begin a chase. Disengage cannot be used during the first play of the bout, or after declaring an offensive position in the previous tempo.

Grappling

Grappling is a condition initiated by a successful Grab maneuver, modifying the melee rules as follows:

- While in a grapple, your combat pool is based on Brawling and either Brawn or Reflex, whichever is higher. Further, encumbrance from armor does not count against your combat pool.
- You gain access to all of the grappling maneuvers, but may only use Swing, Thrust, and Disarm from the default list. Firearms may still Point Blank, but no weapon can be thrown. *All* maneuvers in a grapple count as **restraining**.
- All grappling takes place at distance 1. Anything with a reach of 2 can be used to attack, but counts as infighting. Anything reach 3+ is limited to strikes from the haft or pommel.
- Favoring is ignored during a grapple.

A grapple continues until either both sides stand down, someone succeeds in a Throw and chooses *not* to go down with it, or someone succeeds at a Break.

Offensive Maneuvers

Bite | Off | AC0 | Specific Location

Bite into an opponent's exposed flesh. Specify a *wound location* rather than a wheel. If both combatants are humanoid and standing, this must be on the upper wheel locations (Head, Arms, Chest). Roll vs. BTN. On a success, **deal damage** per the relevant bite profile. For humans, this is 0c by default and caps at a level 4 wound. If the target is clothed, this becomes -1b and caps at level 2. Any AV negates human bite damage entirely.) Damage improves by MoS.

Gouge | Off | AC2 | Eyes

Grab an opponent's head and press your thumbs into their eyes. Roll vs. BTN. On success, **inflict impact** equal to 2x MoS. MoS3+ puts out one of the target's eyes. MoS5+ either puts out both eyes or pushes into their brain (attacker's choice), inflicting instant messy death. Closed helms almost universally prevent this.

Hold | Off | AC0-3 | Limb

Use pain-locks or submission holds on one opponent. Declare a target limb and roll vs. BTN. On success, limb is disabled until the Hold is broken. In addition, **inflict impact** equal to MoS. On an MoS3+, inflict TN5 stress as well. On an

MoS5+, this becomes TN6 and the target becomes **pinned**. They are helpless and immoble, ready to be bound or dispatched as circumstances allow.

Hold can instead target the neck and become a **strangle**. Strange does not disable a limb, but on an MoS5+ the target loses consciousness. If you continue, they suffocate. If you use a garrote, take an advantage on strangle roll *after* the first successful one. Rigid neck protection prevents a strangle

Hold (and strangle) are AC0 by default. Each AC spent on the maneuver counts as additional MoS if the maneuver itself is successful. For example: spending AC2 on a roll resulting in MoS1 counts as an MoS3 result.

Snap | Off | AC1 | Joint

Hyperextend one of your opponent's limbs to inflict pain or damage. Declare a target joint (Neck, fingers, elbow) and roll vs BTN. On a success, **deal damage** with a profile of 0b, improved by MoS. Opponent's soak is limited to their Brawn Tap, receiving no benefits from armor. When assigning the wound, use the nearest location that makes sense (e.g. treat knee as Thigh or Shin)

Throw | Off | AC1 | Limb

Throw your opponent over your hip or shoulder. Roll vs. BTN. On a success, the target is thrown in a direction of your choosing and **knocked prone**. In addition, inflict impact equal to MoS. Choose: go down with the opponent, continuing the grapple on the ground. You do not count as prone. Or, you may use the throw to end the grapple. Fight continues with normal melee rules at a distance of your choosing.

Defensive Maneuvers

Resist | Def | AC0

Push, pull, or contort yourself to fend off an attack. Roll vs. BTN. On a success, you resist the attack and take the initiative.

Break | Def | AC2

Disentangle yourself from your opponent, breaking the grapple and putting some distance between you. Roll vs. BTN. On a success, you fend off the oncoming attack and gain the initiative. Either party may stand up, if prone. Distance resets to the furthest applicable of the weapons involved.

Reverse | Def | AC2

Twist, pull, or otherwise move with your opponent to turn their momentum against them. Roll vs. BTN. On a success, you resist the attack and take the initiative. In addition, you gain the *opponent's hits* rolled as bonus dice towards your attack in the next tempo. If you were previously prone, you roll with them and switch positions. They are prone, you are not.

Initiative

Most of the time, starting initiative will be based on how the fight began. In nearly all scenarios, it will correspond to one of the following:

Charge!

You draw a weapon and attempt to close the distance with your opponent. This is the default assumption when someone initiates melee, granting the initiative to the charging character by default. Charge assumes the opponent can see you coming and has time to draw a weapon. The starting distance for the bout is the longest weapon in play.

Surprise!

Sucker Punch: you suddenly and abruptly attack someone, such as throwing a punch in the middle of a debate. You take the initiative automatically and the fight begins at the preferred distance for your weapon. If they did not already have a weapon drawn when you initiated the attack, they begin the bout unarmed. ***NB!*** If you have to draw a weapon in front of them first, the element of surprise is probably lost.

Ambush: you get the drop on your opponent, sneaking up on them or attacking from an unseen position. In addition to the benefits of sucker punch, the opponent loses half their combat pool from surprise for the first play of the bout. Assuming they survive, they will gain their full CP as normal at refresh. Ambush requires that your target was unaware of your presence, not just unsuspecting of an attack.

Dueling

Square off with your opponent, weapon drawn and circling. Distance begins at the longest reach of weapons present. Each player secretly selects either a red or white die, token, or card. Red indicates that your character will attack, white indicates that you will defend. Reveal your choices simultaneously. Assuming one party chose either, red takes the initiative.

If both parties throw white, then they continue circling each other. Wait a moment (dramatic banter!) and then repeat the above. If it is a white/white again, roll a contest of Will between the characters involved. The victor decides who will make the first move and places a disadvantage on their opponent for the first tempo, representing lost composure. If both characters throw red, things get messy. Resolve as per *Initiative Contests*, below

Initiative Contests

Wait until your opponent moves to strike and then beat them to the punch. Both parties create an **initiative pool**, allocating dice from their CP up to a maximum equal to their Speed attribute.

In the case of a red/red, the combatant with the lower Reflex score must go first, declaring the dice to be spent in their initiative pool and then the normal declarations for their attack (maneuver, target, dice allocated). If there is a tie for Reflex score, then the character with the lower Proficiency score must go first. If this is also a tie, DoF it. Afterward, their opponent makes their declarations in turn.

When stealing initiative, the original aggressor makes their normal attack declarations. The defender then announces their intent to steal initiative, declaring their initiative pool and attack declarations. The original attacker may now declare any dice from their remaining combat pool they would like to allocate to the initiative pool. ***NB!*** You may only try to steal initiative during the first tempo of a play.

After the declarations have been made, the initiative pools are modified as follows and then rolled in contest:

- If you were the original aggressor, take +1d.

- If your weapon is longer than the opponents, take +1d.
- If you are declaring a Thrust, +1d.

If there is a winner, their attack is resolved first and unopposed. Treat as an open roll at r0. If this maneuver is a success, resolve per the maneuver. If the resulting wound or maneuver inflicts impact, deduct this first from the opponent's allocated dice. If the opponent is still standing and has dice remaining, they may now resolve their maneuver.

If there is a tie, the attacks land simultaneously. Roll the maneuvers in either order, but the resulting effects are applied only *after* both maneuvers have been resolved.

If both parties are still standing, initiative goes to whomever won the initiative contest. In case of a tie, DoF it.

Positioning in Initiative Contests

If one or both parties wants to attempt positioning at the same time as the initiative contest, it works mostly the same way as normal. Both parties declare their positioning intent and dice allocation alongside their maneuvers. The initiative contest is resolved first, before anything else. If there is a winner, their positioning roll is resolved first, then their maneuver. Their opponent's positioning roll fails automatically, as though they were a defender failing their defense. Dice allocated are lost before any impact is calculated. On a tie, either side resolves any positioning simultaneously, then resolves their maneuver simultaneously.

Melee Minutiae

Drawing, Dropping Weapons

Drawing a readied weapon in combat is an r1 roll to position for effect, with modifiers based on its length.. Reach 1 weapons take an advantage. Reach 2-3 weapons are an unmodified roll. Reach 4+ weapons are at a disadvantage. Reach 5+ weapons are usually carried, rather than worn. If somehow contrived, they are an r2 positioning roll instead, suffering a disadvantage.

Meanwhile, a basket hilt makes drawing the weapon more difficult, imposing a disadvantage. Curved weapons are easier to draw in a pinch, giving them an advantage. These stack with the modifiers for length, making a curved reach 3 weapon draw at an advantage, or a basket-hilted reach 2 weapon draw at a disadvantage.

NB! Drawing a weapon cannot be opposed by your opponent like a normal positioning roll. The only way to prevent the opponent from trying to draw a readied weapon from their person is to disable the arm in question, via injury or grapple.

Retrieving a dropped weapon, or one in the environment (on the floor, hanging on the wall, etc) acts like a normal positioning roll. It's an r1 task regardless of size, but it may be contested like any other positioning for effect. Dropping a weapon in combat is a free action, requiring no roll.

In either case, nothing prevents an aggressor from trying to draw or recover a weapon and use it in the same tempo. *However*, if for any reason you fail to draw the weapon, the maneuver you declared for it fails automatically. All dice allocated to it are instantly discarded.

Duel Wielding

Many characters will have two hands. Some will wish to occupy them both. When dual wielding, the longer weapon goes in your dominant hand. This is your **primary weapon**. The off-hand weapon is your **secondary weapon**.

- If your secondary weapon is a one-handed firearm or a shield of any size, the primary weapon determines your combat pool.
- If your secondary weapon is of Hand or Short reach and is equal to or shorter in reach than your primary weapon, use your primary weapon to determine your combat pool. You may do this even if your secondary weapon would use some other proficiency.
- If your secondary weapon is of Medium reach or longer, you take a -2CP penalty. If the secondary weapon is *also* of a different proficiency than the primary (a battle axe in one hand, a sword in the other) then use the lesser of the two proficiencies to determine your CP. This is in addition to the -2CP penalty.

While one-handed weapons may lack the punch of their two-handed counterparts, they do open up some options in combat. Shields grant favoring dice and provide some cover against ranged attacks. Weapons held in the off-hand grant allow you to be effective at multiple distances and can help defend against multiple opponents simultaneously. Even an empty hand is useful for things like positioning, grabbing and initiating a grapple.

Multiple Opponents

Fighting against multiple opponents is no easy task. When multiple opponents try to engage a single combatant, the rules treat them as teams: the **loner** and the **group**.

At the beginning of each play, after the opening but before the first tempo, all parties involved allocate some quantity of dice from their CP to an **opportunity pool**. Each member of the group declares their dice first, each allocating to their separate, individual pool. When all group allocations are declared, the loner allocates their own dice in turn.

Afterward, all parties roll their opportunity dice. Compare the loner's result to each group member's *individual* pool result. They do not stack in any way.

If the loner wins, they have successfully positioned themselves in a way to outmaneuver their opposition. They take the initiative and engage in single combat with the group member who rolled the most hits. If there is a tie for most hits, the loner may choose which of the tied opponents to face. On an MoS3+, the Loner can choose any opponent they prefer.

If loner ties one or more group members, they fight a single tied opponent of their choosing, but their opponent takes the initiative.

If the loner loses, each member of the group that beat the loner's roll is able to keep up with the loner's footwork and finds an opening to attack. They become the aggressors and enter the first tempo. Each aggressor declares their attacks as normal. The defender need only declare a single defense and die allocation, which suffers an additional +1AC penalty for each opponent they are fighting (e.g., 2 opponents becomes +2AC). If you are attempting a weapon defense (Deflect, Counter) but are facing more opponents than you have weapons, you suffer a disadvantage on top of this.

If the loner succeeds in their defense and takes initiative, they may single out an opponent of their choosing from the first tempo to fight one-on-one in the second tempo with whatever CP they have remaining. If not, the engaged group members may issue a second set of attacks.

After refresh, the cycle begins again with a new opportunity pool. If at any point one of the opponents is killed, yields or disengages, begin a new play repeating the above. If the group is whittled down to a single member, use the normal melee rules.

Pulling Punches

Not every fight is to the death. Sometimes you'll want to limit the amount of hurt you put on an opponent, but that restraint comes at a cost. Declare your attack as normal, but announce that you're **pulling the punch** and pay a +2AC penalty. On a success, resolve as per the maneuver in question, but you may reduce the final damage level to your preference. Alternatively, you can hold the blow a hair from connecting (for instance, against the opponent's throat). If they fail to yield, you may inflict the damage as though the blow was not pulled.

Standing Down

Sometimes it's better to let the opponent make the first move. Any time you would have the initiative, you can choose to **stand down** and let the initiative pass to your opponent. They are now the aggressor and the bout continues. If they *also* stand down, you create a pause in the bout. Re-establish initiative via the Dueling rules, or consider the fight over. Note that you *cannot* stand down immediately after throwing red for dueling initiative. If you throw red, you are committed to the attack for at least that first tempo.

Unarmed Combat

Unarmed combat is resolved using the same maneuver set as any other weapon: Swing, Thrust, Deflect, and so on. However, these have a few limitations. When using a damage-dealing maneuver, unarmed strikes have a weapon profile of **0b/0b, Hand (1), 1HL**, and damage scaling is restricted to ½ MoS, rather than full MoS. Further, while both combatants are standing, the wound wheels available to target are restricted by the body part striking.

- Hands/arms/elbows can target any wheel but the Shins
- Kicks can target any of the lower wheels (Belly, Shins, Thighs)
- Headbutts target the Head wheel.

If either combatant is prone, or in the case of a grapple, use common sense to determine wheels available. Unarmed strikes that land on metal armor **deal damage** equal to 0b+MoS damage back to the attacker, using the striking location as the wound location.

Wearing metal armor or brass knuckles does not improve damage, but does change the weapon class to 1H and allows MoS to scale normally. It also negates any reflected damage for striking armor.

Unarmed defenses are trickier. If your current distance is 1, it can be assumed you're trying to block your opponent at the wrist or forearm with your own. If the current distance is 2+, a successful Deflect or Counter **deals damage** to the *defender* as though they had taken an MoS0 Swing to the forearm.

Simplifying Melee

The melee system presented here assumes a lot of player skill and investment. It requires you to learn the system and apply your own strategic thinking on how and when to use the choices available to you. That said, not everyone will be that interested in using the whole system, nor will every fight merit going through the whole thing, especially when you're first learning the game. To this, we offer two options:

Simple Melee

When you're first learning the game, or when you want to just gloss over a melee engagement as incidental, treat it as a proficiency contest. Start by clarifying the intent out of character: Are you trying to overpower someone to grab something or get past them? Are you trying to lay a beatdown on someone to send a message? Or are you trying to kill someone outright? Ask the same question of the opponent.

Treat the actual roll as a contest between the proficiencies of the two characters involved. Either side can tap in their Reflex mod to the pool. If one side is significantly better armed, armored, or has some other substantial edge over their opponent, they take an advantage. If they have multiple such edges over their opponent, or the disparity is great enough, apply a disadvantage to the opponent as well.

Winning is based on the scope of intent. If the winner was trying to overpower someone or simply give them a good beating, then the losing party takes some level 1-3 wounds. On an MoS3+, you can bump these to level 4. The winner may also take their MoS as momentum into a future, related social conflict against that person (or their people) if such was the intent. Regardless, use common sense when assigning the wounds: e.g., you can't deliver a level 4 cut through someone's plate armor.

If the winner had lethal intent, this is handled asymmetrically depending on whether the loser was a PC or NPC. If an NPC loses, they are dead. Flat out. If one or more PCs is on the losing side, each takes d3 wounds to locations determined randomly on the wound wheels. For each location, calculate the actual damage to determine its level based on the victor's attributes and weapon profile. The minimum result is a level 3 wound. *NB!* Even if the wound would have not incapacitated the character, the fight is lost regardless. They've been fenced into a corner, disarmed, knocked out, or otherwise had it made clear that they are outmatched and are now at their opponent's mercy.

Learning Melee

When you're first trying to learn the full system, the best bet is to do it in phases. First strip it down to its basics. Use the basic rules from the play, but limit positioning rolls to things like getting up from prone or drawing a weapon. Limit maneuvers to Swing, Thrust, and Feint for offense and Deflect, Dodge, and Counter on defense. Completely ignore reach and grappling, for the time being. This will be more than enough to get you experimenting with the system.

The best way to learn is through doing. Once your group has a broad grasp of the game and is interested in the full melee system, we've found the best practice is to just take an evening and give everyone disposable characters. Spend an hour or two with some snacks and fight it out gladiator style, playing with the various options. Once everyone's gotten the hang of managing the dice pool and using the basic maneuvers above, you can introduce the next bit. Add in some more maneuvers, then reach, then get around to grappling for a bit.

The good news is that once you've gone through the process a few times, it becomes far more intuitive than when read from a page. Fights can play out very quickly and with satisfying results. Of further benefit, once you have a solid handle on melee, those same concepts and player skills will lend themselves well to other dramatic systems like social conflict.

Wounds

Bloody conflict is a major theme in ***Sword & Scoundrel***, but the consequences are not to be taken lightly. When a character takes damage the result is a **wound**, a combination of both mechanical condition and narrative information based on the severity inflicted and location suffered. The result is often graphic, painful, and debilitating.

Wound Wheels and Location

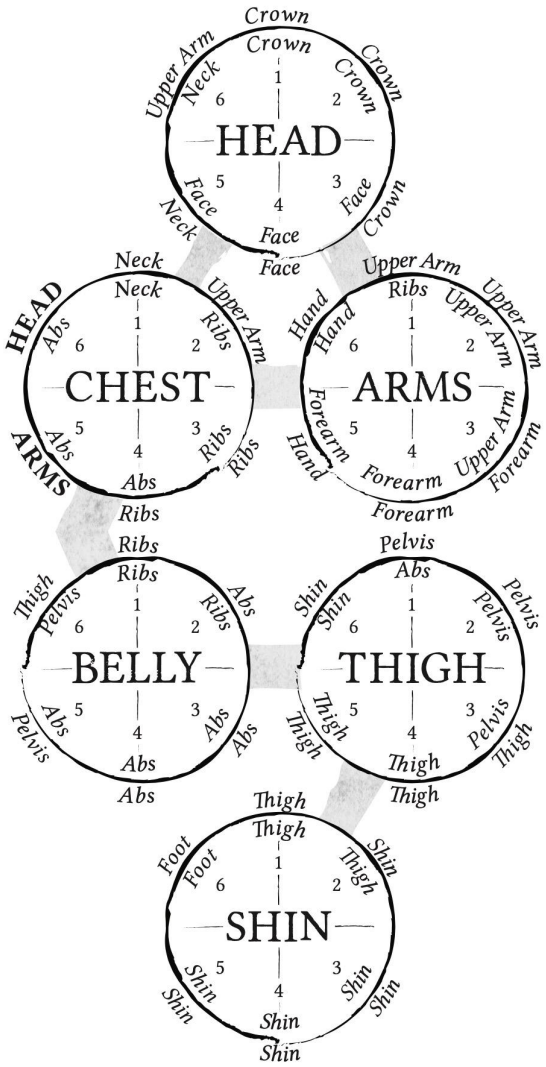
Whenever an attack would deal damage to a character, it is applied to a specific **wound location**. This specificity is important both because it determines whether any armor worn may protect the spot and because each wound location has a specific track for each damage type to determine the effects the potential wound may have.

When a damage-dealing attack does not address a wound location directly, it will instead ask you to target a **wound wheel**. Each wheel is named for a general area of the body and is used to determine the final location where the attack will land. Each wheel has two sets of results listed, referred to as the inside and outside wheels.

- The **outside wheels** are used for Swing-based attacks, or any time the character might suffer damage from falling or being thrown into something.
- The **inside wheels** are used for Thrust-based or ranged attacks.

The chart (right) shows the wound wheels normally available to target. A smaller copy is also placed on each character sheet for reference.

If the attack is successful, roll a d6 and compare it to the wheel in question. The top result is always 1, with the remainder going clockwise around the wheel. If you ever need a completely random wound location, you can perform the process twice, the first d6 roll determining the wound wheel itself (again starting with 1 as the top location, in this case, head, and moving clockwise from there) and then the second determining the final wound location.



Wound Levels

Once you know where the blow has landed, you have to determine how badly you've been hurt. Damage from most sources is reduced by your **soak**, which is discussed elsewhere but here is worth mentioning as the combination of your Brawn tap and the armor value on that location. This may be further modified by the armor traits involved. If there is any damage leftover, it becomes a **wound level**, expressed in severity from 1-5.

Level 1 wounds generally represent minor nicks and bruises. These are generally not worth mentioning after their initial sting. They are sufficiently unremarkable, in fact, that it is not worth the time to record them.

Level 2 wounds sting and leave a mark but fade fairly quickly. These can generally be patched up on the spot or take care of themselves within a week.

Level 3 wounds are not life-threatening but they are often decisive enough to tip the balance of a fight. They are significant, but they will generally heal on their own and can be taken care of fairly quickly with proper treatment.

Level 4 wounds are broken bones and gouged flesh severe enough that they nearly always spell the end of a fight. This sort of damage will leave you crippled for some time. These injuries generally require a skilled surgeon to mend or risk becoming a permanent disability.

Level 5 wounds will put you down, severing limbs or killing a character outright. The best case scenario here is that you will be permanently mangled in some way. A skilled surgeon is often needed for the character to survive at all.

The Wound Tables

The specifics of each wound location are given in a series of tables, broken down by location and type. Each description contains information for the **impact**, **TN shift**, **fortune cookie**, and **effects**.

Impact & TN Shifts

Impact is the number of dice immediately lost from your combat pool due from the injury. This is discussed in significantly more detail under *Maneuver Effects* (pgXX). **TN shifts** represent more lingering debilitation from your wounds, kicking in at certain wound levels. Taking a TN shift from a wound changes your base TN to the new TN of the wound. As always, regardless of how many wounds you might take, only ever use the *worst* of those TNs for your current base TN.

The Fortune Cookie

In some ways, the star of the show: the **fortune cookie** is a box of text that gives the wound its narrative weight, wrapping abstract numbers back into the fiction and reminding us exactly how much it sucks to get stabbed. In some cases, the cookie will feature parenthetical numbers in the description, inviting you to roll a d6 to generate the final result.

Effects

The final category are the effects the wound may have beyond the TN shift and impact figures. Anything that features an asterisk only applies if its number is rolled in the fortune cookie description. The current effects are as follows:

1d, **2d**, **3d** indicate that the wound causes a **permanent injury** of the severity indicated. When prefaced with an S/ it indicates that the injury can be prevented with a successful surgery.

Blood Loss (**BL**) is exactly what it sounds like, rated from 1-3. As it is a thing chiefly dealt with *after* the fight, we will leave the rules aside for the purpose of this document.

C is for **contamination**. The nature or placement of the wound is more difficult to heal and significantly more likely to take infection. All recovery rolls (pgXX) are made at a disadvantage.

Drop refers to a blow that can force an item out of your hand. If there is a number present (e.g., Drop2) the number is the req for a Brawn check you must make at the current TN (including any shift from the wound just suffered). On a failure, your character is **disarmed** (pgXX). If *no* number is present (E.g., *just* Drop) then the weapon is dropped automatically.

Disabled refers to a blow that outright incapacitates the limb. In addition to the information listed under *Maneuver Effects* (pgXX) the limb in question is effectively useless until seen to by a skilled surgeon. In addition, anything held in that arm is dropped (above) and the limb cannot hold the weapon or anything else until the disabled condition is removed.

Instant Death is exactly what it sounds like. Do not pass go, do not collect two hundred dollars. Your character is instantly slain by the blow taken. The lights leave their eyes. The blow counts as **restraining** (pgXX) if it matters.

Knockdown (**KD**) refers to a blow that can potentially knock you off your feet. If there is a number present (e.g., KD2) the number is the req for a Reflex check you must make at the current TN (including any shift from the wound just suffered). On a failure, your character is **knocked prone** (pgXX). If *no* number is present (E.g., *just* KD) then the character is knocked prone, no roll required. Further, the character is unable to regain their footing until the wound has been seen to.

Knockout (**KO**) refers to a blow that can potentially render you unconscious. If there is a number present (e.g., KO2) the number is the req for a Grit check you must make at the current TN (including any shift from the wound just suffered). On a failure, the fight is over and your character is out cold. They remain so for the duration of the scene, or d6 hours if not revived. If *no* number is present (E.g., *just* KO) then the character is knocked unconscious, no roll required.

Mortal refers to a wound that is not instantly fatal (see Instant Death) but is irrecoverable, unsustainable damage. You can keep fighting as long as you can stay conscious, but barring miraculous intervention your character will be dead by the end of this scene.

Suffocation refers to a wound affecting the lungs or windpipe that prevents the character from breathing, speaking, or calling out for help. Unless they receive immediate first aid, they will asphyxiate. Suffocation does not count as restraining, but the fight is over after that tempo. Animal instinct compels the afflicted character to spend their last moments clawing for air that will not come.

Core Wounds

Crown

	Lvl	TN	Imp	Fortune Cookie	Effect
C	**1**	4	2	*A graze, but nothing serious. Some blood in the hair.*	
	2	4	3	*Small cut, hair thick with blood. Itches like hell.*	**BL1**
	3	5	4	*Flap of loose scalp (1-2), or deeper cut with skull intact (3-6). Dizziness and bleeding.*	**BL1, KO1**
	4	6	5	*Cracked skull. A lot of blood. Severe concussion (1-2) brain damage* (3-4), or ear trauma* (5-6)*	**BL2, KO2, 1d, C**
	5	6	6	*The skull cracks like an egg, blood spurting high in the air.*	**Instant Death.**
P	**1**	4	1	*Some torn skin, a little blood.*	
	2	4	2	*Grazed temple or scalp. Surprising amount of blood.*	**BL1**
	3	5	3	*Long graze along the skull. Serious bleeding.*	**BL1, KO1**
	4	5	4	*Skull is pierced. Brain damaged*	**BL2, 2d, C. KO**
	5	6	4	*The brain is pierced. Body goes limp and collapses.*	**Instant Death.**
B	**1**	4	2	*Glancing blow.*	
	2	4	3	*Solid blow, causing momentary dizziness..*	
	3	4	4	*Mild concussion. Ears ringing, bad headache and dizziness. Some blood in the hair.*	**KO2**
	4	5	5	*Cracked skull. Severe concussion (1-4), brain damage (4-5)*, or ear trauma (6)*. Wound starts bleeding immediately.*	**BL1, KO3, *1d**
	5	5	6	*The skull shatters like a ripe melon.*	**Instant Death.**

Face

	Lvl	TN	Imp	Fortune Cookie	Effect
C	**1**	4	2	*Small cut on cheek (1-2), temple (3-4), or jaw (5-6), some blood.*	
	2	4	3	*Handsome scar* on cheek (1), brow (2), temple (3), forehead (4), jaw (5), or mouth (6)*	**0d**
	3	5	4	*Ugly scar* on forehead (1), nose (2), jaw (3), or cheek (4), cut to the teeth, or partial loss of an ear (5-6)*	**BL1, KO1, 0d***
	4	6	5	*Face mangled. Shattered jaw (1-2) or cheekbone (3). Loss of an eye**(4), whole ear**(5), or part of the nose* (6)*	**BL2, KO2, *1d, **2d**
	5	6	6	*Cerebellum destroyed in a fountain of blood.*	**Instant Death.**
P	**1**	4	1	*A graze, but nothing serious.*	
	2	4	2	*Grazed cheek (1-2), temple (3-4), or jaw (5-6). Surprising amount of blood.*	**BL1**
	3	5	3	*Scarring slice on cheekbone (1), temple (2), jaw (3), Lip (4), or ear (5). Pierced cheek with tongue laceration (6)*	**BL1, KO1**
	4	5	4	*Face pierced, but misses the brain. It's bad. Hideous scar* on jaw (1), cheek (2), Cheek'n'ear (3) or forehead (4). Eye damaged (5) or lost**(6).*	**BL1, KO2. *1d or **2d**

	Lvl	TN	Imp	Fortune Cookie	Effect
	5	6	4	*Head pierced through the eye (1), cheek (2-3), temple (4), nose (5), or mouth (6). Body goes limp and collapses.*	**Instant Death.**
	1	4	2	*Slight bump. Won't even leave a shiner.*	
	2	4	3	*Solid blow. Will leave a shiner (1-2), split a lip (3-4) or cause a nosebleed (5-6).*	
B	**3**	4	4	*Blunt eye trauma (1), which can swell shut (2), broken nose (3-4), dislocated jaw (5) or split lip with lost teeth (6).*	**KO1**
	4	5	5	*Face mangled. Shattered jaw (1-2), cheekbone (3-4), eye damaged (5), or lost*(6)*	**BL1, KO2, *1d**
	5	5	6	*Face caves in from massive blow.*	**Instant Death.**

Neck

	Lvl	TN	Imp	Fortune Cookie	Effect
	1	4	2	*Just a scratch.*	
	2	4	3	*A close shave, a trickle of blood.*	
C	**3**	5	4	*Lacerates throat. Eerie sucking noise, difficult to breathe.*	**BL2**
	4	6	5	*Jugular vein (1-2), the carotid artery (3-4), or throat cut (5-6). Lots of blood.*	**BL3**
	5	6	6	*Total or near-total decapitation in a fountain of blood.*	**Instant Death.**
	1	4	1	*Just a sting.*	
	2	4	2	*Deflected by collarbone. Some blood.*	
	3	5	3	*Pierced above the collarbone, missing major blood vessels.*	**BL1**
P	**4**	5	4	*Throat is pierced, damaging the windpipe. Esophagus (1-3) or vocal cord (4) injury. Or causes suffocation* (5-6)*	**BL2, *Suffocation**
	5	6	4	*Neck is pierced, severely damaging the carotid artery (1-3) or jugular vein (4-5). Or pierced throat, causing suffocation(6). Lots of blood.*	**BL3, *Suffocation**
	1	4	2	*A blow barely felt.*	
	2	4	3	*Solid blow leaves neck stiff and sore.*	
B	**3**	4	4	*Something cracks. Hard and painful to breathe, but no danger of suffocation*	
	4	5	5	*Damaged windpipe. Esophagus (1-3) or vocal cord (4) injury. Or causes suffocation* (5-6).*	***Suffocation**
	5	5	6	*Head tilts in an unnatural angle. Neck snapped.*	**Instant Death.**

Ribs

	Lvl	TN	Imp	Fortune Cookie	Effect
	1	4	2	*Minor slash. Some torn skin.*	
	2	4	3	*Nasty cut scrapes on the ribs, but does little damage.*	
C	**3**	5	4	*Deep gash with enough force to fracture ribs and knock the wind out of you.*	**KD1**
	4	6	5	*Cut goes deep, breaking ribs. Internal and external bleeding.*	**BL2, KO2**
	5	6	6	*Weapon lodges in chest. Lots of blood.*	**Instant Death.**

	Lvl	TN	Imp	Fortune Cookie	Effect
P	**1**	4	1	*Blow grazes skin and muscle, but is deflected by bone.*	
	2	4	2	*Long, shallow wound along the ribs.*	
	3	5	3	*Pierces rib cage, but misses organs.*	**BL1**
	4	5	4	*Punctured lung leads to stabbing pain, shortness of breath, and eerie sucking sound with bubbles in the blood.*	**BL2, KO2, C**
	5	6	4	*Pierced heart (1-3) or clean through chest (4-6)*	**Instant Death.**
B	**1**	4	2	*Thump.*	
	2	4	3	*Solid blow, minor bruising.*	
	3	4	4	*Knocks the wind out of you. Bad bruising. Taking deep breaths will be painful for a while.*	**KD1**
	4	5	5	*Fractured ribs (1-3), or broken collarbone (4-6). Chest swells up and will be painful to breathe.*	**KO2**
	5	5	6	*Several broken ribs and internal bleeding. Punctured lung (1-2), bruised heart (3-4), or flail chest (5-6)*	**BL1, KO2**

Abs

	Lvl	TN	Imp	Fortune Cookie	Effect
C	**1**	4	2	*A red slash.*	
	2	4	3	*Painful, bleeding cut that looks worse than it is.*	
	3	5	4	*Deep cut that bleeds hard. No organ damage.*	**BL1**
	4	6	5	*Nasty cut with a lot of blood. Some internal damage: aorta (1), diaphragm (2), intestines (3), liver (4), spleen (5), stomach (6)*	**BL2, KD1, C**
	5	6	6	*Total disembowelment, entrails everywhere. Legs buckle and the blood just. Keeps. Coming.*	**BL3, KD3, Mortal**
P	**1**	4	1	*Lacerates skin without puncturing it.*	
	2	4	2	*Pierces skin and surface fat, passing straight through.*	
	3	5	3	*Pierces body without puncturing any major organs. Painful and bleeds hard.*	**BL1**
	4	5	4	*Bad puncture with a lot of blood. Some internal damage: aorta (1), diaphragm (2), intestines (3), liver (4), spleen (5), stomach (6)*	**BL2, KO2, C**
	5	6	4	*Punctured level (1-2), massive organ damage (3-4) or hopeless internal bleeding (5-6)*	**BL3, KO2, Mortal**
B	**1**	4	2	*Bump.*	
	2	4	3	*Blow to the guts forces you to bend over.*	
	3	4	4	*Knocks the wind out of you. Bad bruising, concussed organs.*	**KD2, KO1 (or vomit)**
	4	5	5	*Ruptured internal organs (pancreas 1-3, stomach 4-6) and internal bleeding.*	**BL1, KD.**
	5	5	6	*Severe internal organ damage (liver 1-3, spleen 4-6), heavy internal bleeding.*	**BL2, KD, KO3**

Pelvis

	Lvl	TN	Imp	Fortune Cookie	Effect
C	**1**	4	2	*Glancing blow to the hip*	
	2	4	3	*Surface wound. Painful, but nothing serious.*	
	3	5	4	*A deep gash in the fleshy parts.*	**KD1**
	4	6	5	*Fractured pelvis (1-2) or hipbone (3-5). Bone fragments. Or say goodbye to reproduction*(6)*	**BL2, KO2, *1d**
	5	6	6	*Split from seam to naval. Massive amount of blood.*	**BL3, KO3, KD. Mortal**
P	**1**	4	1	*Grazed.*	
	2	4	2	*Shallow puncture(1-3) or pierces fat layer (4-6)*	
	3	5	3	*Penetrates muscle on upper hip (1-2), low belly (3-4) or buttocks (5-6), but misses major organs.*	**KD1**
	4	5	4	*Deep into the pelvis, clean exit. Stable fracture(1-3) or minor damage to bladder (4), diaphragm (5), or prostate/uterus (6).*	**BL1, KD2, C**
	5	6	4	*Pelvis pierced. Messy. Unstable fracture(1-3) or major damage to bladder (4), diaphragm(5), or prostate/uterus(6).*	**BL2, KD3, C**
B	**1**	4	2	*Thump.*	
	2	4	3	*Solid blow leaves a bruise to hip (1-4) or lower (5-6)**	***KD1**
	3	4	4	*Bad bruising and abdominal pains (1-3) or damaged lower organs (4-6)**	**KD1, *KD3**
	4	5	5	*Fractured pelvis (1-2) or hipbone (3-5). Bone fragments. Or say goodbye to reproduction*(6)*	**KD3, *1d, C**
	5	5	6	*Shattered pelvis. Character will never walk again.*	**BL3. KD, 3d, C**

Limb Wounds

Upper Arm

	Lvl	TN	Imp	Fortune Cookie	Effect
C	**1**	4	1	*Shaves off some skin.*	
	2	4	2	*Long gash by the elbow (1-2), upper arm (3-4), or shoulder (5-6)*	
	3	4	3	*Deeper flesh wound on the outer arm (1-4) or inner arm (5-6).*	**BL1, Drop1**
	4	5	3	*Blade bites through the muscle into the bone. Outer arm (1-4) or shoulder (5-6).*	**BL2, Drop2, S/2d**
	5	5	4	*Arm severed above the elbow(1-4) or at the shoulder (5-6). Shower of blood.*	**BL3, 3d**
P	**1**	4	1	*Stings like a famished horse fly.*	
	2	4	2	*Outer (1-4) or inner (5-6) bicep laceration.*	
	3	4	3	*Deeper flesh wound on the outer arm (1-4) or inner arm (5-6)*	**Drop1**
	4	5	3	*Passes through the arm, chipping the bone.*	**BL1, Drop2**
	5	5	4	*Goes clean through the arm, tearing the flesh. Major blood vessel cut.*	**BL2, Drop2**

	Lvl	TN	Imp	Fortune Cookie	Effect
B	**1**	4	1	*Thump.*	
	2	4	2	*Will leave a nice bruise.*	
	3	4	3	*Swollen bruise (1-3) or minor fracture (4-6). Makes the hand hard to use.*	**Drop1**
	4	5	3	*Fractured humerus (1-3) or major swelling (4-6).*	**Disabled.**
	5	5	4	*Open humerus fracture. Arm disabled, useless, numb.*	**Disabled. S/1d, C**

Forearm

	Lvl	TN	Imp	Fortune Cookie	Effect
C	**1**	4	1	*Light slash along the forearm. Some blood.*	
	2	4	2	*Long but shallow gash. Bleeds a lot.*	**Drop1**
	3	4	3	*Nasty cut damages ulnar nerve. Fingers numb for a while.*	**Drop3**
	4	5	3	*Arm broken with a lot of blood(1-4) or severed tendons disable some fingers(5-6)**	**BL1, Disabled, *1d**
	5	5	4	*Forearm completely mangled (1-3)* or cut off above the wrist***	**BL2, *S/2d, **3d, Disabled**
P	**1**	4	1	*Glancing blow leaves a scratch.*	
	2	4	2	*Glancing blow leaves a cut.*	**Drop1**
	3	4	3	*Punctures skin and hits bone sending pain running through whole arm.*	**Drop3**
	4	5	3	*Passes through the arm, missing bone. Lots of blood.*	**BL1, Drop.**
	5	5	4	*Passes through the arm, spurting blood. Major vessel cut (1-2), radius (3-4) or ulna bone (5-6) fractured.*	**BL2, Drop.**
B	**1**	4	1	*Bump.*	
	2	4	2	*Arm knocked aside, some bruising.*	**Drop1**
	3	4	3	*Brutal blow knocks arm aside. Sudden movements are painful. Roll for item drop.*	**Drop3**
	4	5	3	*Radius (1-3) or ulna bone (4-6) fractured with blinding pain.*	**Disabled.**
	5	5	4	*Open compound fracture with severed blood vessels.*	**BL2, Disabled, C.**

Hand

	Lvl	TN	Imp	Fortune Cookie	Effect
C	**1**	4	1	*Grazed hand.*	**Drop1**
	2	4	2	*Small cut, but hand flinches from the pain.*	**Drop2**
	3	4	3	*Deep, bleeding cut on the hand (1-3) or fingers (4-6).*	**Drop3**
	4	5	3	*Roll a d6 to determine finger lost, on a 6, roll twice.*	**BL1, Drop. 1d**
	5	5	4	*Hand completely mangled* (1-3) or cut off above the wrist(4-6).*	**BL2, 2d. *Disabled.**
P	**1**	4	1	*Stings, but nothing serious.*	**Drop1**

	Lvl	TN	Imp	Fortune Cookie	Effect
	2	4	2	*Minor puncture of hand or fingers.*	**Drop2**
	3	4	3	*Deep puncture, hitting bone. Hand (1-3) or fingers (4-6).*	**Drop3**
	4	5	3	*Hand pierced, lots of blood.*	**BL1, Drop.**
	5	5	4	*Hand pierced. Roll a 2d6. On a match, finger is lost*. Matching 6 punctures wrist.***	**BL2, Drop. *1d or **Disabled**
	1	4	1	*Blow connects to the hand.*	**Drop1**
	2	4	2	*Hand knocked aside, some bruising.*	**Drop2**
B	**3**	4	3	*Fingers smashed. Roll a d6 to determine finger. On a 6, hand/palm is fractured.*	**Drop3**
	4	5	3	*Hand or wrist mangled, small bones broken.*	**Disabled.**
	5	5	4	*Small bones of hand completely crushed.*	**Disabled, S/2d**

Thigh

	Lvl	TN	Imp	Fortune Cookie	Effect
	1	4	1	*Surface graze.*	
	2	4	2	*Shallow slash across the thigh.*	
C	**3**	4	3	*Cut penetrates muscle tissue but doesn't reach bone.*	**BL1, KD1**
	4	5	3	*Blade bites deep. Femur chipped (1-2), tendons torn causing a limp* (3-4) or femoral nerves damaged (5-6)**	**BL2, KD2, *S/1d**
	5	5	4	*Weapon cleaves into femur, bone broken, blood everywhere. Surgery needed to save the leg.*	**BL3, KD, S/3d**
	1	4	1	*Just a scratch.*	
	2	4	2	*Surface layer pierced. Some blood.*	
P	**3**	4	3	*Thigh muscles penetrated almost to the bone*	**BL1**
	4	5	3	*Thigh completely pierced. Leg can only support weight for short periods.*	**BL1, KD1**
	5	5	4	*Inner thigh pierced, femoral artery cut. Massive amount of blood.*	**BL3, KD2**
	1	4	1	*Bump.*	
	2	4	2	*Solid blow. Will leave a bruise.*	
B	**3**	4	3	*Minor fracture in the femur. Putting weight on the leg is painful. Swelling*	**KD1**
	4	5	3	*Broken femur, bad swelling. Cannot sustain weight.*	**KD**
	5	5	4	*Open femur fracture, sharpened bone showing through flesh.*	**BL1, KD, C, S/2d**

Shin

	Lvl	TN	Imp	Fortune Cookie	Effect
	1	4	1	*Funny bone effect.*	
C	**2**	4	2	*Shallow wound across the shin, but blow compromises balance*	**KD1**
	3	4	3	*Deep cut that glances off the bone, drawing blood and compromising balance.*	**KD2**

	Lvl	TN	Imp	Fortune Cookie	Effect
P	**4**	5	3	*Bone fractured (1-3) or broken (4-6) with significant bleeding.*	**BL1, KD**
	5	5	4	*Severed at the knee (1-2) or mid-shin (3-6). Massive bleeding.*	**BL2, KD, 3d**
	1	4	1	*Hurts, but no real blood.*	
	2	4	2	*Bounces off the bone, some blood.*	**KD1**
	3	4	3	*Shallow puncture or surface wound. Chipped bone, minor ligament damage.*	**KD2**
	4	5	3	*Shin completely pierced: bone damage (1-4), tendon injury (5), or femoral nerve damage (6)**	**BL1, KD3, *S/1d**
	5	5	4	*Shin completely pierced: bone damage (1-4), tendon injury (5), or femoral nerve damage (6)**	**BL2, KD, *2d**
B	**1**	4	1	*Bump.*	
	2	4	2	*An eye-watering thump.*	
	3	4	3	*Minor fracture in the shin. Putting weight on the leg is painful. Significant swelling.*	**KD1**
	4	5	3	*Closed shin bone fracture. Putting weight on the leg is impossible.*	**KD**
	5	5	4	*Shin bends into an unnatural shape, sharp bone fragments protruding through flesh.*	**BL1, KD, C. S/2d**

Foot

	Lvl	TN	Imp	Fortune Cookie	Effect
C	**1**	4	1	*Close one.*	
	2	4	2	*Minor cut, but balance is compromised.*	**KD1**
	3	4	3	*Hits bone, but without cutting through.*	**KD2**
	4	5	3	*One or more toes lost (roll 1d6. On a 6, roll twice!), causing a limp.*	**BL1, KD3. 1d**
	5	5	4	*Foot destroyed(1-4) or cut off (5-6). Lots of blood.*	**BL2, KD, 3d.**
P	**1**	4	1	*Just a graze.*	
	2	4	2	*Minor puncture, but balance is compromised.*	**KD1**
	3	4	3	*Deep puncture, hitting bone. Minor fracturing*	**KD2**
	4	5	3	*Foot pierced, lots of blood.*	**BL1, KD2**
	5	5	4	*Foot pierced. Roll 2d6. Matching result means toe lost.* Double 6 severs tendons, causing limp.***	**BL2, KD, *1d/**2d**
B	**1**	4	1	*Ow!*	
	2	4	2	*An eye-watering crunch.*	**KD1**
	3	4	3	*Minor foot (1-3) or toe (4-6) fractures. Putting weight on the leg is painful. Some swelling.*	**KD1**
	4	5	3	*Some toes smashed*	**KD2**
	5	5	4	*Foot completely smashed, bones shattered. Movement permanently hindered.*	**BL1, KD, C. S/1d-2d**