

Codename:  
**Era of the Fallen**

**Quick Start Guide**

**Introduction**

This booklet is your introduction to a new and exciting Fantasy Role Playing Game (FRPG) called “Codename: Era of the Fallen”. It is so new, it doesn’t even have a proper name yet, hence the “Codename” moniker. This booklet will present a very stripped down version of the rules, suitable for those who want to play a short session and get a feel for the game without reading the full manual.

**What is Codename: Era of the Fallen?**

When you play this game, you take on the persona of a highborn elven mage, a surly barbarian warrior, a grizzled old commander, a well traveled adventurer, or another fantasy character of your choosing to have fantastic adventures with your friends. One of you will take on the role of Game Master (GM) to create the fantasy setting the rest of the group will be experiencing, along with creating a whole cast of characters for you to interact with and setting challenges for you to overcome. While you, as a player, roleplay just one character, the GM roleplays every other non player character (NPC) in the game, including allies and enemies.

Codename: Era of the Fallen shares much in common with other FRPGs you may have played. However there are a few important differences. First, this game was designed to keep a focus on the storytelling and roleplaying aspects of gaming. This means deep, powerful characters that evolve and grow over time, and well plotted, complex storylines that feel like they might have come out of a good book. In order to achieve a full immersion in the imaginary world you will create without distractions, this game dispenses with some or all dice rolls. But that doesn’t mean that anything goes or there is no sense of realism.

Quite the contrary, every facet of the game world and game mechanics is examined from an engineering perspective of hard facts to make sure everything is logically consistent. For this reason a full set of dice based rules is presented in the game manual, and briefly summarized in this booklet, to give you an idea of how the mechanics work. In fact, it is not recommended to do away with dice until you have played for some time with dice to get a feel for things. The game creator has put a great deal of time into designing the rules to be an accurate representation of real world mechanics, cause and effect. The combat rules in particular are modeled very closely on real combat, and designed so that

they capture the fast paced, chaotic nature of real life or death combat, full of surprises and reversals of fortune. In our estimation, no other game even comes close.

Another difference from other games is the open-ended, free-wheeling nature of magic. There are more than 500 spells to choose from, comprising a dozen magical families. But you are not limited even by that vast array, for with skill, your wizard can learn to subtly modify spells and customize the effects to suit a particular situation. At more advanced levels you can construct your own magical artifacts and even whole new spells that others may learn and cast. And magic is no frivolous pursuit, even weak magic can kill instantly, both the target and the caster in some cases. And for those who search diligently the hidden corners of the world, lost spells lie waiting to unleash incredible power not seen since the height of the Golden Age.

### **Dice Conventions**

In this booklet, there are some common abbreviations used to describe dice rolls. The format used is  $X \times YD+Z$ .  $X$  stands for the number of dice to be rolled.  $Y$  for the type of dice to be rolled. And  $Z$  for a value to be added after all the dice are totaled. So  $2 \times 20D+10$  means roll 2 twenty sided dice and add 10 to the total for a final score. While  $6D-1$  means roll 1 six sided die and subtract 1 from the result.

### **In a Nutshell**

For experienced RPG gamers, here is a brief summary of the core game mechanics and key differences with other RPGs.

**Character Driven** – You are not limited by a bunch of arbitrary rules based on notions of “game balance” when creating a character. You have creative control to express your character concept without having to rules haggle or sacrifice some elements to gain others.

**Real Wounds** – It is possible to die from a single well placed blow, regardless of how many HP you have. There are no unstoppable tanks, and there is real danger built in to every combat encounter.

**Storytelling Focused** – The emphasis is on telling a really great story without letting arbitrary dice rolls interfere or sabotage that. Game rules may be flexed for the sake of overall game play and narrative flow.

**Choose Your Battles** – Combat is based around a system of “Modifiers” or conditions which either favor you or the opponent. Engaging in combat when conditions are unfavorable, say you are sick or wounded, is very risky. Like real combat, you have to know when to run and fight another day when the odds are more in your favor.

**Power With a Price** – Magic contains incredible power, but such power is neither easy to obtain, nor quick to use. Spellcasting in combat is nearly impossible. You have to either plan ahead, get some distance, or use “on-demand” innate magical powers which are faster but weaker.

**Simple Rules** – the rules are designed to be intuitive and easy to grasp. Most of them are based on “Common Sense”. If you’ve spent a couple decades living, then you probably already have a good grasp on the basics. Like if you want to learn a certain skill, you just track down somebody with that skill and ask them to teach you. No fussing around with skill points and class based limitations.

**Narrative Combat** – Combat is storytelling just like any other scene in game play. The dice rolls (when used) are there simply to create a framework on which the GM layers specific details of what happens.

**Choose Your School** – There are several styles of combat taught in different schools which emphasize certain weapons and Combat Maneuvers. Likewise, magic is dominated by the Orders, or specialty schools that focus on a particular branch of magic. There is nothing forcing you to specialize, but with specialization comes increased effectiveness.

**Brains Not Brawns** – Like real combat, the key to winning is strategy and planning ahead. Outthinking an opponent will more often lead to victory than simply out fighting him.

**Real Magic** – Magic is not just about winning battles. There are lots of prosaic (but lucrative) uses for spells besides combat. Magic is used to create buildings and art, communicate over vast distances, and transport goods, etc. Wizards are well respected and well paid professionals, not crazy old men in funny hats.

**Wide Open** – The game world is mapped and defined just well enough to get a sense of it as a real place populated by real people. But there is plenty of unexplored territory left for you to fill in with your own races and empires and personal history.

### **Creating a Character**

Since this is a game heavily centered around role playing, it is advised to put a great deal of thought into the character you will be playing. All the obvious things: gender, race, class, profession, skills, etc are just the starting point. You are highly encouraged to give your character a deep personality and a rich life history.

If you are playing a single “sample” scenario or quick campaign, this may not be practical. You will probably want to jump right into the action as soon as possible. Even with these constraints, give a few moments to think about the personality of the character you wish to play. Here are some questions you may ask yourself to get the ball rolling:

Is the character more of a social butterfly or a loner?

Is the character more trusting or cynical?

Which is more important to the character: thinking, doing, or feeling?

Is the character more likely to forgive or hold a grudge?

Is the character more the type to help the weak or take advantage of them?

Does the character view others who are different as equals or inferiors?

For quick games, pre-made characters will be available. Look through them and see if anyone strikes your fancy. Then all the work is already done for you.

If you are creating one from scratch, you'll want to consider how old the character should be at the start of the game. Younger characters have less skills, as starting level and skills are dependant on age. So if you are playing a campaign that calls for a seasoned character level 8 to 10, you'll need a character in the late 20's to early 30's.

## **Class**

There are only two game classes. Wizard and Warrior. This is not to stifle your creativity, after all, you can be anything you want. It all really comes down to whether the character has received training in magic. If yes, the character is counted as a wizard, regardless of whether he or she is better at fighting or magic. This is important because you can't learn magic after the age of 8 years. Everyone who doesn't cast magic is considered a warrior, regardless of actual ability to fight. Any race can cast magic.

## **Occupation**

Your character's Occupation is where you can let your creativity show in your character's individuality. Occupation is what your character actually does, such as: Chaos Mage, Crown Prince, Assassin, Mendicant, Herbalist, Baker, Sorcerer, or even just Adventurer, if nothing else fits. You may change your Occupation at any time by simply stopping what you were doing before and doing something new.

## **Magic Users**

Wizards generally come in 3 types: White, Black, and Elven. These correspond to the 3 types of magic of the same name. Practitioners who want to learn more than one type are called Gray Wizards and take some progression penalties for dividing their studies.

Elven Magic - the original form of magic from which the others descended. The spells are more powerful than either White or Black Magic, but contain elements of both. But

as the elves fade out of existence, it is quietly slipping into obscurity, for only elves are permitted to learn it.

White Magic – After a particularly bloody war, the elves stopped teaching other races destructive forms of magic they could use to kill each other. They took out all the harmful spells and White Magic is what remained.

Black Magic – After the split, White and Black Magic took different evolutionary turns, becoming different enough that separate study was required to learn both. Black Magic contains all the forbidden spells which can be turned to wicked ends, mostly spells of an offensive nature.

## **Stats**

Your character stats are called Ability Scores, and represent what your character's capabilities are.

Strength – physical power

Speed – agility and dexterity

Will – mental strength and willpower

Intelligence – ability to learn and reason

Skill – training and experience in either combat or magic

Endurance – physical health.

3ST – Strength, Speed, & Skill Total, also known as the Combat Total.

To determine your PC (Player Character) stats, roll 6 x 20D and drop the 2 lowest scores, recording the rest. Do this twice more and pick which of the 3 sets of rolls you like best. You may not swap a roll from one set with another and you may not subtract points from one score to add to another. Assign the rolls to Strength, Speed, Intelligence, and Will as you see fit. A wizard must have an Intelligence score of at least 15.

Endurance is 2X the Will score. This is the PC's maximum health and it will drop if the character takes Damage. Skill is based on training and level. The PC gets 1 Skill point (either Combat or Magic for wizards) for each year of training and 1 Skill point for each level. Characters with a high Intelligence get bonus Skill points on the order of 1 extra Skill every 5 levels per Intelligence point over the base value. The base value of Intelligence is 10 for warriors and 15 for wizards. So a warrior with 12 Intelligence gets 2 extra Skill points per 5 levels.

If you are going to start with a mid level character, you'll need this chart of Ability Increases based on level.

Level	Strength@	Speed@	Will	Skill	Proficiency
1	+1			+1	
2	+1			+1	
3		+1		+1	
4	+1			+1	
5			+1	+1	+1
6		+1		+1	
7	+1			+1	
8				+1	
9		+1		+1	
10			+1	+1	+1
11	+1*			+1	
12		+1		+1	
13				+1	
14				+1	
15		+1*	+1#	+1#	+1#

\* = no more increases from this point

# = continues to increase at the same rate indefinitely

@ = only the warrior class gains these abilities

## Races

If you have played any fantasy based RPGs before than you are probably already familiar with the races: Human, Elf, Half Elf, Dwarf, and Halfling. These are the recommended starting races, and each has some unique capabilities, listed below:

### Humans

Strength -1 (Females Only)

Max Stats:

Strength (20)

Speed (20)

### Elves

+5 Will

+3 Intelligence

+3 Speed

-1 Strength (Females Only)

+1 Bow Proficiency

+10 to Magic Resistance

### Half-Elves

+1 Speed

+1 Intelligence

-1 Strength (Females Only)

+2 Will

Max Stats:

Strength (20)

Speed (22)

### Dwarves

Will +5

Toughness +2

Strength +1 (Males Only)

Free Arms & Armor

Max Stats:

Strength (20)

Speed(18)

### Halflings

Strength -2 (-3 for Females)

Speed +1

Will +2

Endurance is 1.5 times Will

Max Stats:

Strength (18)

Speed (21)

As you can see, some races get lots of bonuses to abilities and skills, while others get few or even penalties. Where it says Max Stats: that is the maximum any member of that race can have, either naturally or through points added due to level. Full blooded elves have no maximum.

### Magic

Magic is the art of utilizing key resonances to set up vibrations in the fundamental layers of reality which generate power and create ripple effects on the physical plane. It is an act requiring supreme concentration, as the energies must be channeled within the mind into the desired form. Failure to maintain this level of concentration, either due to a lapse or some external event, inevitably results in a miscast, the outcome of which ranges from spell failure to a spell gone haywire.

It takes a great deal of talent and training to be able to pull it off at all. Training must begin at an early age, while the mind is still pliable. All magic is taught at special universities, which grew out of an earlier guild system, and on which many current traditions and obligations are based. Lifelong bonds are formed between the student and school, enforced by magical oaths and legal contracts. Secrecy is paramount, and the student holds substantial financial obligations as well.

Magic users are well respected, the equals of the knightly class, and tasked with similar responsibilities to general society. Wizards are rarely poor and don't particularly need to raid dungeons for loot. They serve as advisors, couriers, investigators, defenders, legal adjuncts, entertainers, creators of magic items, and many more. Society is highly dependant on their services, which are always in demand.

Magic users may identify each other through the aura that each casts, which is only visible to those attuned to the realms of magic. All wizards, magic items, and magical beings have such an aura, as does anything which has been touched by the forces of magic.

## Spellcasting

Spells may be cast either from a book or from memory, but it takes many years of practice to memorize a spell. So, in most situations spells are cast while reading directly from the spellbook. This obviously presents a considerable challenge when attempting to cast during a combat situation, or in other conditions which make reading difficult, such as a lack of suitable lighting. For this reason, wizards are not likely to have much influence on combat unless well protected by a number of soldiers, preferably a substantial number arranged in a line. Then they have the opportunity to hurl all sorts of magical doom at their enemies.

Spells are organized into 5 regular sets which share many of the basic fundamentals and are roughly equal in power. The amount of time required to cast a spell depends on which set it belongs to.

1st Set	1 x 6D sec.
2nd Set	2 x 6D sec.
3rd Set	3 x 6D sec.
4th Set	4 x 6D sec.
5th Set	5 x 6D sec.

As you can see, more advanced spells take a good deal of time to cast, so being well protected the entire time is rather important. Any spell can be miscast, but the failure rate goes up as other factors such as combat and taking a hit are considered. More experienced wizards are less likely to make such errors.

### Miscast Rate

Level	Normal	Combat	Damage Taken
1	15%	65%	100%
2	10%	60%	100%
3	7%	57%	100%
4	5%	55%	100%
5	3%	53%	100%
6	2%	52%	100%
7	1%	51%	100%
8-99	0%	50%	100%

Casting spells takes a lot out of you, so there is naturally a limit to any wizard's magical endurance. This endurance goes up with time and experience. As a rule, a wizard can cast a number of spells in his current set equal to his level. Lower set spells are counted as fractions:  $\frac{1}{2}$  for the next lower set,  $\frac{1}{3}$  for the set twice removed, and so forth. Magical endurance can be regained through sleep. A full nights rest is sufficient to regain all magical endurance, but in a pinch, some can be recouped in only a few hours.

Spells which involve hurling some magical force at an opponent, a lightning bolt or fireball, for example, are treated as missile combat. See page 10 for more on this.

## **Learning Spells**

Learning spells requires a great deal of practice and study, represented by the Magic Skill ability score. You can't even begin to learn spells until you have 10 Skill. After that, you can learn 1 new spell for every Skill point. When you reach 20 Skill, you can start learning the 2<sup>nd</sup> set of spells. 30 Skill is required for 3<sup>rd</sup> set, and so on. And for every new spell you learn, you may commit one old one to memory. Grey wizards have a harder time of it and must have 15 Skill before they gain the first spell, and 30 before they move on to 2<sup>nd</sup> set. However, they also get 1 new spell per Skill point. It just takes them longer to advance sets because they have so much more material to study.

After some time and practice, a wizard becomes very familiar with her spells. This increased familiarity and comfort leads to the ability to make certain adjustments on the fly. Things like modifying the standard effects slightly, boosting range or power, etc. A specialist wizard, who holds a Proficiency in that particular form of magic has this level of familiarity with all spells belonging to that class of magic. Others gain this familiarity with their older spells after they have advanced to a new spell set.

Over time this increased familiarity becomes so ingrained, it becomes second nature. At this point, the wizard can be said to have mastered the spell and may produce its effects without having make a formal casting out of it. This "on-demand" magic, not constrained by spellbooks and time tables, is called Natural Magic. Specialist wizards can naturally produce the effects of any spell in their chosen class of magic, up to the spell set equivalent to the number of Proficiencies they hold in that form of magic. So, a wizard with 2 Proficiencies in Life Magic, can use produce Life Magic spells naturally, up to 2<sup>nd</sup> set. Non-specialists can naturally produce any spell they know from a set 2 below their current. So, a 3<sup>rd</sup> set wizard has natural magic abilities up to 1<sup>st</sup> set. Natural magic spells take more energy however and are treated as current set spells for magical fatigue purposes.

Using a combination of cast magic and natural magic, greatly enhances a wizard's capacity to adapt to the changing circumstances found on a battlefield. It also helps him to deal with surprises, where there may not be time for a full casting.

## **Specialization**

Besides the other significant benefits from specialization already described, the main reason to become proficient in a particular field of magic is that all your spells in that class become more powerful. And this power grows the more deeply specialized you become. With just 1 Proficiency, your spells are twice as powerful. With 2 they become 3 times as powerful, and so on. With such great benefits to specialization, it is no wonder so many take route. There are specialist schools set up for each of the most popular branches of magic, including:

Alteration - Magic which creates physical changes of many types including size, shape, and composition.

Conjuration - Magic which creates matter.

Elemental - Magic which creates and controls the 3 magical elements: fire, electricity, and ice.

Enchantment - Magic which imbues objects with power.

Illusion - Magic which fools the senses.

Life - Magic which alters and controls the life processes

Magic - Magic which alters and controls other forms of magic.

Mind - Magic which alters or controls the mental functions.

Movement - Magic which creates and controls kinetic forces, i.e. the forces of movement.

Of these, the largest, most influential, and most wealthy are the Order of Enchantment, the Order of Life, and the Order of Movement. They are by far the most practical of the forms of magic, and thus most widespread.

### **Magic Resistance**

Being in tune with the realm of magic, including both magical races and magic users, are capable of resisting its effects, whether or not they can conjure it. This is not easy to do and depends on the strength of the spell. Having a strong Will is key to resisting any form of harmful magic. In a situation where you wish to resist a spell cast on you, simply compare your Will score plus any racial bonus to the power level of the spell, as determined by the score rolled for casting. Whichever is higher wins. Since most spells have rolls of 2 x 20D or higher, it gets very difficult to resist any but the weakest spells unless you have a racial bonus to magic resistance.

### **Spells**

Here is a highly abbreviated list of the most common spells, up to 3<sup>rd</sup> set. You won't really need to know much about magic above 3<sup>rd</sup> set for quick gaming sessions, but if you want more, it can be found in the full Era of the Fallen game manual. Elven Magic is not named specifically, but the elven spells are more or less identical with Black and White Magic combined, only slightly more powerful. A note on spell rolls – where a spell lists more than one identical roll, ie 2 x 20D for duration and 2 x 20D for area of effect, only one roll is made and applied to both.

## **1<sup>st</sup> Set Spells - Black**

Unless otherwise specified, all lasting spells have a duration of 2 x 20D min.

### **Illuminate**

Class: Light

Description: Creates a globe of light a few inches in size, which can illuminate an area roughly 12'. Caster may move globe at will and change intensity of light.

### **Bolt**

Class: Elemental

Description: Causes a small bolt of lightning to fly out of the caster's hands towards the target for 20D damage and 1/100 chance of death. Electrical discharge will knock target off feet and paralyze for 1 – 2 min. Anyone within 10 ft of bolt will be partially deafened for several minutes.

### **Burn**

Class: Elemental

Description: Causes a small, low-temp ball of fire to fly from the caster's hands towards the target, doing 2 x 6D damage and possibly starting secondary fires.

### **Freeze**

Class: Elemental

Description: Causes a thin film of ice to form over the target, completely encasing and immobilizing the target. The air passages are not covered and target is in no danger.

### **Flight**

Class: Movement

Description: Creates a directional force field under the caster which propels him upwards with a force equal to 10 x 20D lbs. Caster may alter direction and thrust. Weak castings may not be strong enough to get airborne. Do not cast indoors.

### **Pain**

Class: Life

Description: Stimulates the entire nervous system with phantom pain signals, completely debilitating target for several minutes. No physical damage is done, but pain is treated as 12D physical damage for purposes of Shock.

## **Paralyze**

Class: Life

Description: Completely paralyzes target.

## **Disrupt Spell**

Class: Magic

Description: Creates a minor disruption in the magical energy of the target, causing any 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> set spell being cast to be miscast. Has extra short casting time: 4D sec.

## **Animate Object**

Class: Alteration

Description: Causes a small target object to change shape and move under caster's control. Rigid objects become somewhat flexible and may "walk" or attack enemies (slowly). Animated objects have no intelligence or volition and must be directly controlled.

## **Fear**

Class: Mind

Description: Causes target to feel intense debilitating fear of caster and seek to escape. Must roll higher than target Will.

## **Guard**

Class: Enchantment

Description: Enchants a small object (12" max) to give a nasty shock 2 x 4D to the first person, other than caster, to touch it.

## **Choking Gas**

Class: Conjuraction

Description: Causes a burst of highly irritating brownish gas to spray from caster's hand up to 20 ft away. Gas causes severe inflammation and tearing in any affected creature which may be debilitated up to 20 min. Gas dissipates rapidly, within 10 min indoors and 2 outdoors.

## **Invisibility**

Class: Illusion

Description: Surrounds the caster with an illusion of her immediate surroundings, effectively making her invisible. Touching anything will break the illusion.

## **Mirage**

Class: Illusion

Description: Creates an illusion of any medium sized object or creature (10' max), which is static and may not move. The mirage will look real, but will disappear if touched.

## **1<sup>st</sup> Set Spells – White**

Unless otherwise specified, all lasting spells have a duration of 2 x 30D min.

## **Illuminate**

Class: Light

Description: Surrounds the caster with a globe of light extending 10', which illuminates an area 120' in diameter.

## **Warmth**

Class: Light

Description: Surrounds the caster with a globe of warmth for, raising the ambient temperature by 30D degrees (F).

## **Blindness**

Class: Life

Description: Disrupts impulses in optic nerve for target, resulting in temporary blindness.

## **Heal**

Class: Life

Description: Accelerates natural healing process with infusion of Life energy, healing 20D damage. Half of healing is done immediately, and half occurs over next few days. Serious injuries such as organ damage or amputation may not be fully healed. May cause complications if wound not cleaned and treated prior to casting.

## **Sense**

Class: Life

Description: Enhances all of the caster's senses approximately two fold; vision is sharper, night vision clearer, hearing more acute, touch more sensitive, etc.

## **Sleep**

Class: Life

Description: Causes the target to become extremely tired and fall asleep on the spot. It will be impossible to rouse them for more than a few seconds at a time until spell ends.

## **Confuse**

Class: Life

Description: Puts target in a stupor mimicking drunkenness. Combat penalties depend on strength of spell.

## **Field**

Class: Movement

Description: Creates an invisible wall of force which is highly elastic and cannot be “popped” like other barrier spells. Anything trying to move through it will encounter 2 x 30D lbs of resistance, which makes getting through it difficult as well as slow and attacking through it impossible.

## **Move**

Class: Movement

Description: Creates a force field equivalent to 2 x 30D lbs around a small target (max 24”) allowing the caster to move it about.

## **Dome Shield**

Class: Movement

Description: Creates a stationary hemispherical force shield 20’ in diameter around the caster. The dome may support up to 10 x 30D tons of weight without collapsing. It only prevents physical things from passing through, not magic.

## **Float**

Class: Movement

Description: Creates a large cone shaped force field around caster which can be used to push him up or glide down at a moderate to slow rate of speed. The field is capable of carrying 50 x 30D lbs up to a height of 10 x 30D ft.

## **Invisibility**

Class: Alteration

Description: Turns the caster’s body and clothes transparent, though a slight shimmering may be seen.

## **Empathy**

Class: Divination

Description: Allows the caster to sense the emotions and to some extent thoughts and motivations of those nearby (3 x 30D ft). Can detect manipulation or deception.

## **Nullify Spell**

Class: Magic

Description: Creates a weak anti-magic shell around the caster, which will cancel out the next 1<sup>st</sup> set spell cast on or by the caster. The shell itself is destroyed in the process of canceling the incoming spell.

## **Disable Trap**

Class: Magic

Description: Cancels a single magic ward, trap, or guard spell up to 2<sup>nd</sup> Set. It will not dispel the Lock spell, or disable physical traps. Roll 30D for Spell vs. Spell to determine if the spell is cancelled.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Set Spells – Black**

Unless otherwise specified, all lasting spells have a duration of 3 x 20D min.

## **Flash**

Class: Light

Description: Causes a bright flash to emanate from a point of the caster's choosing, temporarily blinding anyone looking in that direction (including the caster if she is not careful). Blindness lasts for 20D min, with full effects suffered by those within 30 ft of the point, half effects at 60 ft, and one quarter effects at 90 ft.

## **Elemental Barrier**

Class: Elemental

Description: Creates a wall of one of the 3 elements approximately 10 ft by 10 ft by 1 ft thick. Any creature attempting to pass through a fire or lightning wall will take 3 x 6D or 20D damage respectively.

## **Ice Fist**

Class: Elemental

Description: Causes a large chunk of ice (10D damage) to be hurled from the caster's hands at a target at high speed, striking with considerable force.

### **Trap Item**

Class: Enchantment

Description: Imbues a small object (24") with the power of a 1st set spell, which will take effect on the next person, other than the caster, to touch the enchanted object. The trap is cast first, then the "payload" spell is cast on the object.

### **Counter Spell**

Class: Magic

Description: Sets up magical vibrations opposing a particular 1st set spell which will cause both to cancel each other out. Roll 3 x 20D for Spell vs. Spell.

### **Pierce Shield**

Class: Magic

Description: Creates a sharply focused magical disruption in a force field, which if of 1<sup>st</sup> set may cause it to burst. Roll 3 x 20D for Spell vs. Spell.

### **Hallucinate**

Class: Mind

Description: Creates vivid dreamlike hallucinations of either an audio or visual nature, which requires the caster's full concentration to maintain continuously.

### **Blade**

Class: Movement

Description: Surrounds the target with hundreds of tiny, invisible, razor sharp attacking blades, covering the body in a multitude of shallow cuts doing 4 x 4D. Even light armor is impervious to the cuts, though exposed portions are vulnerable.

### **Force Bolt**

Class: Movement

Description: Projects a small invisible force field from the caster's hands at high velocity, which for practical purposes may be treated as an iron ball approximately 12" in diameter. The force field will strike with 30 x 20D foot pounds of force doing 20D damage.

### **Animate**

Class: Alteration

Description: A more powerful version of the Animate Object spell. It affects a larger area and gives the animated object more flexibility allowing it to change shape faster and to a greater degree.

## **Disguise**

Class: Alteration

Description: Alters the caster's body to imitate another.

## **Quicksand**

Class: Alteration

Description: Turns ordinary earth into treacherous quicksand. Stone is not affected.

## **Conjure Item**

Class: Conjunction

Description: Creates a small object (4D lbs) out of empty space for a short time. The created item must be simple in shape and composition. No organic material can be created.

## **Hologram**

Class: Illusion

Description: Creates a medium sized illusion (50' max) which is both stable enough not to vanish if touched and mobile so that it can move about under the caster's control.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Set Spells – White**

Unless otherwise specified, all lasting spells have a duration of 3 x 30D min.

## **Provision**

Class: Conjunction

Description: Creates .5 x 4D lbs of either food or water. The food is either hard bread or a protein rich gelatinous substance.

## **Sleeping Mist**

Class: Conjunction

Description: Causes a pinkish mist to fall over a 30D ft area, causing any living creatures that breathe it to fall asleep. Those sleeping may be awakened by pain or noise. Elves are immune. The mist will dissipate quickly but sleep will last unless interrupted.

## **Vision**

Class: Divination

Description: Projects the caster's vision ahead by 5 x 30D ft, potentially allowing him to see beyond intervening obstructions. Vision may not be projected through magical barriers.

## **Ward**

Class: Divination

Description: Alerts the caster if any living thing passes through a 10' x 10' plane.

## **Mistform**

Class: Alteration

Description: Turns the caster and her gear (20 x 30D lbs) into a cloud of mist. The caster will be aware of her immediate environment and can move but that is all.

## **Shapeshift**

Class: Alteration

Description: Changes the caster's body into another mammal. For the first transformation, the caster must be in the presence of the desired animal type. Mass and size are not altered.

## **Scale**

Class: Alteration

Description: Proportionally increases or decreases the casters size (but not mass) by 50%.

## **Toughness**

Class: Alteration

Description: Alters the composition of the caster's skin into something tough and scaly, equivalent to leather armor. There is a corresponding reduction in flexibility which reduces Speed by 2.

## **Lock**

Class: Enchantment

Description: Magically locks any mechanism or object, preventing it from being moved or operated without a password. It cannot be cast on previously enchanted objects.

## **Temper Armor**

Class: Enchantment

Description: Temporarily endows a single cuirass sized piece of armor with magical properties for 6D hours, increasing Endurance by 50%, reducing weight by 20%, and increasing the penetration rating by 2.

## **Warning**

Class: Enchantment

Description: Endows an object with the property of glowing blue when orcs are within 100 yds.

## **Cure**

Class: Life

Description: Temporarily supercharges the body's immune system causing any invading organism to be eliminated within a few days.

## **Healing Aura**

Class: Life

Description: Surrounds the target with an aura of life energy, which will act as a slowed Heal spell should injury occur. Damage taken while the spell is in effect will be healed at a rate of 1 Endurance per minute up to a maximum of 30D.

## **Vertigo**

Class: Life

Description: Distorts the sense of balance for all creatures in close proximity to the caster for 3 x 30D minutes, resulting in -10 to all movement rolls and -4 on all combat rolls. Creatures lacking an inner ear are unaffected.

## **Double**

Class: Magic

Description: Creates a localized magical echo which will cause the next spell cast to be cast twice. Only spells of 2<sup>nd</sup> set or lower are affected. Not all spells benefit from being cast twice as both castings run concurrently rather than consecutively.

## **Extend**

Class: Magic

Description: Re-energizes a 2<sup>nd</sup> set spell (or lower) that is already in effect, without having to start over. Duration of the existing spell will be extended by 3 x 30D min, or by re-rolling the original die, whichever is greater.

## **Remove Traps**

Class: Magic

Description: Removes any and all magical traps, wards, and guards up to 2<sup>nd</sup> set on a single object. No Spell vs. Spell roll required.

## **Hold**

Class: Movement

Description: Causes the next creature to enter a 6' target area to be encased in a form fitting force field, which will hold it fast. The head is left free to allow breathing. The spell applies a force of 10 x 30D, which is almost impossible to break free of.

## **One-Way Dome Shield**

Class: Movement

Description: Creates a stationary 30' hemispherical force shield around the caster, which is capable of supporting 15 x 30D tons of weight and only prevents movement in one direction (in).

## **One-Way Field**

Class: Movement

Description: Creates a force field, as the Field spell, but which only prevents motion in one direction. It offers resistance to movement up to 3 x 30D lbs and has a thickness, requiring anyone trying to get through to exert great force over a long time.

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Set Spells – Black**

Unless otherwise specified, all lasting spells have a duration of 4 x 20D min.

## **Blade Barrier**

Class: Movement

Description: Surrounds the caster with a cloud of tiny, invisible, whirling blades at a distance of 4'. Anything which comes within that distance, animate or inanimate, will take 10D damage for every second of full contact, less for partial or incidental contact. Blades are ineffective against most armor.

## **Shockwave**

Class: Movement

Description: Creates a force field around the caster which moves outward; only a few feet, but extremely fast. This creates a pressure wave in the air which continues to move outward in every direction. Those within 10 feet will take 12D damage, within 50 feet will be temporarily deafened and may suffer ruptured eardrums, within 100 feet will be partially deafened.

## **Radiate**

Class: Light

Description: Causes a beam of broad spectrum electromagnetic radiation to emit from the caster's hand. The beam expands in a cone shape and is 2 ft wide at 20 ft distance, 6 ft wide at 40 ft, and 18 ft wide at 80 ft. Those hit by the beam may be blinded and/or suffer burns. The damage drops off rapidly as distance increases: 20D at 20ft, 10D at 40ft, 4D at 80ft.

## **Lightning**

Class: Elemental

Description: Causes a large bolt of lightning to fly from the caster's hands for 40D damage. Full damage is only done to a single target, but anyone within 10 ft. will be thrown to the ground, take 10D damage, and must roll 20D vs. Will or be knocked unconscious. Anyone within 20' will be deafened and stunned for 1 – 2 min.

## **Flame**

Class: Elemental

Description: Causes a jet of medium hot (900\*) fire to rush from the caster's hand up to a distance of 20 ft for a full 5 seconds. Anyone caught in the jet will take 20D damage per second of full contact.

## **Ice**

Class: Elemental

Description: Encases the target in a thick 2' block of ice. The extreme and sudden temperature change will put the target into torpor rapidly, though without doing damage or creating a significant chance of death.

## **Acid Spray**

Class: Conjuration

Description: Causes a jet of highly concentrated acid to spray from the caster's hands for 2 seconds up to a distance of 50 feet. Any creature struck by the stream will take 10D damage per min (roll once), while those within 3 feet will take partial damage from the splash. Wiping the body down thoroughly can reduce damage by half, but only a full water or earth bath will stop all damage accumulation. After 10 minutes the acid is neutralized.

## **Curse Item**

Class: Enchantment

Description: Imbues an object up to 4' in size with the power of a 2nd set spell, which will take effect on the next person, other than the caster, to trigger the curse. Triggers are customizable and may include, touch, proximity, movement, damage, etc, with a password or passtoken to guarantee safety.

## **Phantom**

Class: Illusion

Description: Creates a small (.5 x 20D ft) illusion under the direct control of the caster which is nearly indistinguishable from reality. It encompasses the full sensorium and can be touched and interacted with by observers, but not affect inanimate objects. It may cause damage to any which believe in its reality through the process of auto-suggestion.

## **Miscast**

Class: Magic

Description: Creates a cone of disruption around the target which will disrupt any spells cast by or on the target. 1<sup>st</sup> set spells will have a miscast rate of 100%, while 2<sup>nd</sup> set spells will have a miscast rate of 50%. Magicians experienced with the Distortion Field spell may take extra time (+1) and overcome the distortion to cast normally.

## **Spell Trigger**

Class: Magic

Description: Creates a container for a single 2<sup>nd</sup> set spell which will release the spell when triggered. The trigger is chosen by the caster and may include a certain amount of time passing, a bright light, a loud noise, a word spoken, or something passing through a defined area 10' by 10'.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Set Spells – White**

Unless otherwise specified, all lasting spells have a duration of 4 x 30D min.

#### **Kinesis**

Class: Movement

Description: Creates a caster controlled force field of variable size (max 6') which can be used at will to exert 10 x 30D lbs of force on any object moving it about in an invisible hand.

#### **Trap**

Class: Movement

Description: Creates a nearly indestructible, gas permeable force bubble 10' in diameter around a target which prevents movement in or out. The trap bubble may be treated as a physical object and moved about.

#### **Variable Dome**

Class: Movement

Description: Creates a hemispherical force shield around the caster capable of supporting 30 x 30D tons of weight, which will follow the caster as he moves. The size and nature of the force field are variable and chosen during casting. The maximum size is 40'. The types of force fields available are: reactive, gas permeable, one-way, opaque, or mirrored. Reactive dynamically adjusts force in response to stress so that greater support is received by areas under greater pressure. Gas-permeable allows the passage of air so that large numbers of people may remain the dome for an extended period of time. Opaque blocks radiant energy. Mirrored blocks radiant energy in one direction only (in).

#### **Healing Mist**

Class: Life

Description: Causes an ethereal mist to emanate from the caster, which will reinvigorate and heal all within, up to 10D damage over the full course of the spell, while removing the effects of Fatigue within 30 sec or less.

#### **Mental Disruption**

Class: Life

Description: Disrupts the higher mental functioning of all creatures within 30D ft of the caster, thus preventing magic use, speech, complex motor skills, and decision making.

## **Recover**

Class: Life

Description: Accelerates the natural healing process with an infusion of Life energy to heal 2 x 20D damage. Half of the healing is done immediately, and half occurs over the next few days. Minor conditions not due to injury such as chronic disorders may also be healed, but serious injuries such as organ damage or amputation may not be fully healed.

## **Purify**

Class: Life

Description: Scrubs the blood of any pathogen, poison, or chemical not naturally present, making the caster temporarily immune to poison while removing any currently in the system.

## **Animal Transformation**

Class: Alteration

Description: As the Shapeshift spell but with fewer limitations. The caster may make a full and complete transformation into any type of animal, adjusting size up to 50% as necessary. All the animal's senses, capabilities and instincts will be present. Extended transformations may become permanent.

## **Spirit Form**

Class: Alteration

Description: Changes the caster and all objects carried up to 30 x 30D lbs into an incorporeal state. The caster may see and hear but not interact with physical reality and spell casting is not possible. The caster cannot be seen without the use of the second sight. Taking magic items into the spirit world may have unpredictable results.

## **Distortion Field**

Class: Magic

Description: Creates a cone of disruption surrounding the caster on the Aethyric plane which will prevent spells from being cast on her. Spells which are cast at her will be unaffected. 1<sup>st</sup> set spells are disrupted 100% of the time, while 2<sup>nd</sup> set are disrupted 50% of the time. Casting from within the distortion field takes extra time (+1).

## **Enhance**

Class: Magic

Description: Creates a magic amplification field around the caster, which will increase the power of all cast magic by 2x for 30D min. The field is not cumulative with other enhancers. It will weaken with use, dropping to 1.5 x after 6 3<sup>rd</sup> set spells and 1x after 12.

## **Stopspell**

Class: Magic

Description: Creates an anti-magic shell around the caster which will intercept any spells cast on or by the caster of any type up to 3<sup>rd</sup> set. The shell is itself nullified by the first spell it intercepts.

## **Copy**

Class: Conjunction

Description: Creates an exact physical duplicate of any object up to 10D lbs.

## **Sustenance**

Class: Conjunction

Description: creates up to 4D lbs of food or drink of a single type but of nearly any variety: meat, cheese, wine, ale, fruit, vegetables, milk, butter, bread, etc.

## **Proficiencies**

A character may possess two types of skills, Skills and Proficiencies. Everyone has a few things they are better at than most others. These are Skills and are things you just sort of pick up here and there. There are no requirements for these other than some level of exposure to it in the character history. While your character may have any number of skills or fields of knowledge, these cannot be very advanced. Skills are for simple things that don't require in-depth study; e.g. no one spends their entire life learning how to climb rope, yet some people can do it and others can't.

Proficiencies are a character's advanced skill sets. Each one represents years worth of study, experimentation, practice, and fine tuning. Anyone can sing a song, but only one Proficient in Singing can bring tears to your eyes. There are 2 ways to gain Proficiencies. The first is by gaining levels. Whatever the class, the character is assumed to be constantly honing the skills related to it, gaining Experience points by putting those skills into practice on a regular basis. Each level represents a new level of mastery over your area of expertise. For every 5 levels, you may take a class related Proficiency which you have been using on a regular basis. For Warriors this will be a weapon skill, most often your primary weapon, though occasionally a secondary weapon that sees heavy use. For Magic Users this will either be a magic specialization or a general magic Proficiency.

The second way to get a Proficiency is by undergoing some intensive, long term training. 5 years worth of study under someone who is at least one level higher in the Proficiency you are seeking. If you can't find a teacher, it will take 20 years of self study to achieve the same results. In addition there may be other things required: special tools or

facilities, advanced knowledge in related fields, etc. For mature PCs, you may select 1 non-class Proficiency per 5 adult years spent in study.

You may take a Proficiency in any Weapon, Art, Craft, or Magic Class, regardless of the list below.

Weapon Proficiencies grant a bonus of +10 to your 3ST score (per Proficiency level) when using that weapon. Likewise with Shield Fighting and any other combat related Proficiencies. Though you only get the bonus when performing a combat action using the weapon. If you have a Proficiency in Longsword, the bonus doesn't apply when Dodging or performing any other non-longsword related action. In order to take a Weapon Proficiency you must use that weapon extensively. In order to take a Magic Proficiency you will need to know 5 spells of the magic class **per** level of Proficiency to get the Proficiency.

Proficiencies come in 5 levels of advancement:

1	Advanced
2	Expert
3	Master
4	Perfected Master
5	Grand Master

Not all fields of study can be advanced to Grand Master level, and only the first level is described below. Some Proficiencies are synergistic, in that they provide a bonus to other similar fields of study. An example would be related weapons, such as Short Sword and Long Sword. Each synergistic Proficiency provides half its regular bonus to related fields.

### **Proficiency List**

The following is an abbreviated list of common Proficiencies, though many more are detailed in the full game manual.

Acrobatics - This proficiency increases the character's agility, balance, flexibility, and over all co-ordination, resulting in +1 Speed and +3 3ST (General).

Anatomy - This proficiency gives a thorough knowledge of the anatomy of a particular species, giving +10 to critical hit rolls against that species.

Animal Handling - The animal handler is extremely familiar with one particular species of animal and knows everything about its habits and behavior.

Appraisal - One versed in appraisal has an encyclopedic knowledge of various trades and goods and is able to quote recent prices on everything from antiques to xantham gum.

Climbing - This proficiency allows unassisted scaling of uneven vertical surfaces and assisted scaling of sheer vertical surfaces, including those with an angle > 90\*.

Codes - This proficiency gives one knowledge of all types of coded communications, both creation of and breaking coded messages.

Combat Maneuvers - This proficiency allows you to outmaneuver your opponent in melee combat, providing +1 positioning bonus to attack and defense.

Disguises - One skilled in disguises is adept at making people and things appear to be different than they are.

Escape & Evasion - The escape artist is able to slip free from bonds and pick most simple locks, enabling him to escape from most any situation.

Espionage - This proficiency allows you to covertly infiltrate a target group and gather sensitive information through a variety of techniques, and smuggle it back out again.

Forgery - The forger has knowledge of a wide variety of techniques for simple document forgery and counterfeiting.

Herbalism - The herbalist is familiar with the names and properties of all the most widely used plants worldwide, as well as the general part of the world where it comes from

Horsemanship - This proficiency enables one to ride a horse competently over harsh terrain, navigating obstacles and other difficult circumstances. It is a requirement for any form of mounted combat.

Languages - This proficiency allows one to pick up new languages at astonishing speed, less than 2 weeks in some cases.

Leadership – A leader has the ability to organize, motivate, and direct a group to achieve a common goal, and is capable of keeping a small unit, up to 20 persons, together under the most trying circumstances.

Locks - This proficiency gives one detailed knowledge of the inner workings of locks which may be used both to defeat locks and to create them.

Magical Endurance - Through relentless self-training, a mage may teach himself superior magical endurance, increasing the number of spells he may cast by 25% without being in danger of burnout.

Manipulation - The Manipulator uses psychology to con others and can easily make a living off these skills, get sexual favors, free goods & services, etc with very little effort.

Observation – Using body language the observer can pick up the emotions of those around her.

Pain-Resistance – This proficiency enables you to withstand extreme pain without so much as a whimper.

Pyrotechnics - The pyrotechnician has extensive knowledge of various combustible substances, their preparation and potential uses.

Quickdraw – This proficiency allows you to draw and cut in a single combat round with only a slight (-2) penalty for the extra action.

Stealth – Keeping silent and out of sight you may sneak into moderately secure places without disturbance, such as a guarded home or a small enemy camp.

Surgery - The surgeon is capable of performing basic lifesaving techniques with little sanitation and few tools.

Tracking - Observing the tiniest of disturbances in the natural environment, the tracker is able to piece together a story of what happened in that spot, be it: a troop of orcs passing through, two animals fighting over a kill, where a man bedded down, etc.

Traps - This proficiency gives one detailed knowledge of the workings of traps which may be used both to disarm and set them.

Wilderness Survival - The survivalist has a great familiarity with a particular climate/region, and is capable of living unassisted in his specialized climate indefinitely.

## **Combat**

Someone who has never experienced real life and death combat will have a very difficult time understanding how it really works, how fast everything happens, and especially how fast the situation can change from having the upper hand to being down and out. Since most of us have, thankfully, never experienced this, it leads new players to make some very naïve and thoroughly disastrous choices based on movies or what works in other games.

For this reason combat is de-emphasized in this cut down version of the game. If you plan on playing a session lasting a few hours, it wouldn't be much fun to accidentally get killed in the first 30 minutes. However, if you are really interested in how combat works, some basic rules are presented here and you can play a few battles to see how it feels. An experienced GM can run combat with or without dice and the results will be remarkably similar. Try it out and see.

## Combat Total (3ST)

Your character's Combat Total is the sum of his or her Strength, Speed, and Combat Skill ability scores. This represents the character's maximum combat effectiveness potential. However, only rarely will anyone ever achieve their full potential in combat. So this variability is represented by dice. In a combat situation you will roll a number of dice whose sum total equals your Combat Total. So if your Combat Total is 43, you'll roll 2 x 20D and flip a coin (2D), since there are no odd numbered die you just lose that extra point.

Combat is broken up into rounds. Each character chooses an action for that round and either the dice or the GM (if playing diceless) control the outcome. Every time you roll, the result is your effectiveness at performing whatever action you were attempting that round. You will be trying to beat your opponent's score, and whoever has the higher roll "wins" that round, or gets to successfully complete their chosen action, which may either be defensive or offensive. Of course, you are not only competing with the opponent but also the environment, which is where Modifiers come in.

## Modifiers

Modifiers are simply the environmental conditions that affect the combat situation either positively or negatively. They can be things like lighting, the size of your weapon, how much room you have to move around, and where you are in relation to your opponent. Most modifiers have a range of values. So the injury modifier could be -1 if you have a minor injury or -3 if you have a serious injury. Modifiers are also conditional based on what you are doing and represent *only factors which affect that particular action*.

For example, if you are in a really tight spot which would give significant penalties to making a full sword swing, if you make a thrust instead, there is no penalty. Modifiers include everything from your state of mind to the physical environment. Here is a list of the most common:

Miss	0	-1	-2	-3	
Armor/Encumbrance	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5
Off Balance	-2				
Surprise	-2	-4	-6	-8	
Held/Pinned	-2	-4	-6	-8	-10
Stunned	-2				
Drunk	-1	-2	-3		
Stance/Position	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
Short Weapon	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5
Cramped	-1	-2	-4		
Low Light	-1	-2	-6		
Pain	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5
Flanked	-2				
Multiple Opponents	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6
Hesitation	-2				
Fatigue	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5
Injury	-1	-2	-3		

Modifiers are applied not to the total of the dice roll, but to each individual die. So, if you roll 5 x 20D, whatever modifiers in effect will be multiplied by 5. And whenever you roll a natural 20 or a natural 1, critical hit or fumble, certain modifiers will be dropped from that roll. Critical hits drop all negative modifiers, while fumbles drop all positive modifiers, which can really skew the total results. Here's an example:

Tim rolls 3 x 20D and gets: 12 – 6 – 20

The modifiers on that roll are -2 for pain +1 for position and -1 for fatigue

For the first 2 die, the modifiers are -2 (1-1-2 = -2)

But the 20 drops the negatives and has only the +1.

So, the total is:  $(12-2) + (6-2) + (20+1) = 35$

It doesn't mean an automatic hit, but it does help quite a bit. And if his opponent rolled less than 35 his action would be successful. The margin of success, or difference between the two rolls represents just how successful the attack or defense action was. A really high margin may merit unexpected results, such as breaking your or the opponent's weapon.

### **Narrating Combat**

Combat is described as a story unfolding, just like any other scene. You can't just say "I attack him with my sword". You have to state exactly what the starting position of your sword is and exactly the type of cut you want to make. The modifiers in play vary depending on all of these factors. Additionally, each follow up attack depends on where your weapon ended up from the last. It is this attention to detail that makes combat in this game so much more realistic.

Combat will be described in exactly the same way, regardless of whether you are playing with dice or without. The only difference is that, with dice, the dice help the GM decide what happens, whereas without, it is up to the GM alone.

### **Initiative**

Initiative is who gets to choose the first action, usually attacking. Initiative always goes to the character with the highest Speed score. Of course, if he doesn't have his sword out yet, then his first action is to draw his sword and initiative passes to the character with the next highest Speed score. If you attack and your attack is successful, ie it lands, even if it causes no damage, you retain the initiative. If your attack fails, initiative goes to the defender who may now take up the attack. So each character "flows" back and forth from attack to defense depending on how well things are going. If you are outnumbered or outclassed, expect to stay on the defensive.

## **Movement**

A character has the ability to move the equivalent of two full steps (roughly equal to the character's height) in a single round. Any number of smaller movements which collectively take up two full steps may be taken, however, overly complicated actions may be deemed by the GM to have taken up all the character's time and attention leaving him unable to attack or defend that round. Movement in combat is not measured by the actual distance from start to end point, but by the distance the character actually had to travel: such as one step forward and one to the side.

## **Hits & Misses**

Any time you succeed in an attack, you will roll damage, based on the weapon you are using. Some weapon charts are included at the end. This roll represents how solid of a hit it was and the result is applied directly against the opponent's armor or body endurance. Any time you fail in an attack roll, you will incur a miss penalty on your next action (usually defensive) as you have to recover control of your weapon, as it will have swung out far to one side. The heavier your weapon, the higher this miss penalty will be. It goes from -1 (light) to -2 (medium) to -3 (heavy).

## **Healing**

Injuries are healed at a fairly slow rate without treatment. Untreated injuries heal at a rate of 1 Endurance per 10 days. Treated injuries can heal at a rate of 1 Endurance per 7 days. Broken bones will take 3 to 6 months to fully mend. Obviously magic can make all of this near instantaneous.

## **Positioning**

Positioning is where you are in relation to your opponent and where your weapon is in relation to where you want it to be. If you want to strike your opponent, but your opponent is out of reach, or behind you, then you must make additional movements to allow that to happen. Those extra movements take up precious time, which is translated into combat penalties. Likewise, if your opponent is to your left, but your weapon is on your right side, then it has to cross that extra distance to be effective in either an attack or a parry. It is in a **bad position** for the action you have in mind, and the action will be penalized. There are no universally bad positions, only positions that are bad for particular actions.

Likewise if you are in a good position for whatever combat action you have chosen, you will receive a position bonus to that action. Being close to your opponent provides a bonus to attacks, which also works to his advantage when it is his turn to attack. Positional modifiers range from -2 to +2 depending on just how good or bad of a position you are in. Good fighting is always done so that each action naturally flows into the next. This involves planning ahead, like setting up a shot in pool or planning a strategy in chess.

## **Surprise**

Surprise happens pretty often in combat, and not just where sneak attacks and ambushes are concerned. Surprise occurs any time your opponent does something unexpected or unusual: pulling a weapon you didn't see, successfully doing a combat maneuver you've never seen before or didn't think was possible, moving faster than you expected, displaying any ability you weren't counting on, unexpectedly using magic of some kind, or basically anything which catches you unprepared or off guard. When your opponent manages to evade your best attack, you will probably be pretty surprised, even if there was no trickery involved. Normally, any time you get struck, you will be surprised.

Surprise just means you have to mentally and physically readjust to a new and unexpected turn of events. It takes time for the brain to evaluate the new data and come to a conclusion on what to do. It takes time for muscles already in motion to stop and register commands to move in a new way. None of these things take a great deal of time, fractions of a second perhaps, but in that split second you are a sitting duck and it only takes the blink of an eye for an opponent to take the advantage. And if it takes you that extra half second to respond, with attendant -2 penalty, that may be the difference between success and failure.

## **Shock**

Taking a really hard blow, say 5 damage or higher, or taking a lot of small hits, cumulative 10 damage, will cause your body to go into shock. This means it just starts shutting down and within a few moments you won't be able to lift a finger. You might even die from shock. Also, any blow to the head is likely to result in an instant knockout.

## **Armor**

Armor slows you down making you easier to hit, but it also protects you and absorbs a certain percentage of any damage you take. This is the Absorption Percentage. The rest passes through. It may be capable of completely blocking light blows with no damage to the wearer. This is the Damage Blocked rating. Of course, it can only take so much before it fails. This is represented by the Penetration Rating. Armor cannot block or absorb any damage higher than its penetration rating. So if your armor has a penetration rating of 5, and you take a hit worth 8 damage, it will absorb a portion of the first 5 damage and pass on the rest. And each armor type has particular qualities that makes it well suited against certain types of weapons and not suited for others. For example, chainmail will not do much to protect you from blunt weapons.

Shields on the other hand, don't pass on any damage to the wearer. They provide a bonus to any attempts to block incoming attacks (from +3 to +5 depending on size), and also provide a cover bonus against any incoming attacks. This bonus is expressed as a negative modifier against the attacker's roll. In some ways they are more useful than armor is, though large ones will weigh you down just like armor.

## **Ranged Weapons**

In the simplified combat rules for this guide, you won't be rolling versus an opponent for ranged attacks. You just roll a single 20D and compare the result to your Target Number. The Target Number is your Combat Skill plus 10 for each bow Proficiency you have. If the roll is less than your Target Number, then the attack is successful. Of course, modifiers still apply. If the target is far away or moving, penalties will apply. A +1 penalty per 5 yds of distance beyond the Base Range is added to the roll.

## **Fatigue**

Fatigue sets in after a number of rounds of non-stop combat equal to X, where X is the character's Will or Strength, whichever is higher. Every X rounds a -1 penalty to all combat actions AND damage applies. Characters in armor fatigue at a rate of 3/4X, while dwarves fatigue at rate of 2X. If you are starting to get heavily fatigued, you can try to break off combat so you can take a breather.

## **Combat Maneuvers**

Combat Maneuvers are little tricks you can pull during combat, things like throwing a handful of dust into the opponent's eyes or pulling the weapon from his hand. They come in 4 types. Universal, Basic, Advanced, and Expert. You will need to have 5 Combat Skill to learn Basic Maneuvers, 10 for Advanced Manures, and 15 for Expert Maneuvers. Universal Maneuvers have no requirements and are natural for anyone, trained or untrained. This is, of course, a highly simplified version for this guide. Here is an abbreviated list.

### Universal Defensive Maneuvers

#### **Dodge**

Modifier on use: -2

Description: Evading a weapon strike by either: weaving around it, stepping aside, leaping over it, or ducking under it. Dodge is distinct from Retreat, and may not increase the distance between Attacker and Defender, though you may close some distance. (and it may be profitable for you to do so) When Dodging, Defender must specify the exact motion to be made. If the type of Dodge is not appropriate to the type or direction of attack, an automatic failure at -10 is taken. (as will often be the case for dodging feints)

## **Partial Retreat**

Modifier on use: +2

Description: Evading a weapon strike by taking a step back (or whichever direction is away from the attacker). Partial Retreat may be combined with any other type of movement or maneuver and still retain its bonus modifier. In fact it's probably a good idea to do something other than **just** take a step back, like Dodge for example. The only real difference between any form of Retreat and Dodge is that Retreat increases the distance between Attacker and Defender, which is why it has a bonus to execution. The extra distant buys you some time to get out of the way. Note: When combining Retreat and Dodge, there are no attack bonuses on success.

## **Full Retreat**

Modifier on use: +4

Description: Evading an incoming attack by moving as far out of range as possible, generally by leaping or running backwards. Retreat may be combined with other movements or defensive maneuvers if the Retreat alone is not going to carry you out of danger. If the Retreat has successfully taken you out of your opponent's striking distance, the combat is considered broken and stances may be assumed or other actions taken (like Flight). Success does not give the initiative.

## Universal Offensive Maneuvers

### **Power Strike**

Modifier on use: -1 or -2

Description: pulling back or winding up your weapon to give extra power to your strike. This is a very basic concept that everyone understands; if you rear back that extra little bit before striking, it adds a little oomph. The extra distance your weapon must travel gives the defender some extra time to evade however, hence the negative modifier. How much of a negative modifier is applied depends on how far you pull back; the further you pull back, the greater the damage bonus. -1 modifier to hit gives +1 to damage, while -2 to hit gives +2 damage.

### **Lunging Attack**

Modifier on use: -2 (for Defender)

Description: you leap towards or lunge at your opponent, simultaneously making a strike (usually a thrust) and catching them by surprise. There is nothing really fancy or special about this maneuver. You are simply utilizing the element of surprise to catch your opponent off-guard when they thought they were out of reach. However, if you miss your strike, you will be off balance in addition to any other penalties. This move is best used when the defender is Retreating and you want to catch them before they can break combat.

## **Charge**

Modifier on use: +1

Description: rushing in madly to make an attack. A very dangerous attack, only effective on untrained or timid opponents, which relies on speed and surprise to overwhelm the opponent so they cannot mount an effective defense. In most cases your opponent will be surprised by a charge, giving an extra bonus to the attacker. But if the attack fails the attacker cannot easily stop, so either he crashes into the defender, or if dodged, runs right past, exposing himself briefly to a flank or rear attack.

## **Jab**

Modifier on use: -4

Description: a short, weak thrusting attack with no commitment or follow-through. A Jab only does half damage, but has the advantage of not losing the initiative on a failure, so it can be used over and over. Since a Jab involves no step or only a very small step, it is impossible to actually land the attack unless some part of your opponent is within arm's reach.

## **Flurry of Blows**

Modifier on use: -2

Description: making several strikes in quick succession, but paying little mind to if or where they land. The idea behind this is that as long as you keep pressing the attack, keeping your opponent on guard, they won't have a chance to counter attack and eventually one of the blows will land. Flurry of Blows has the benefit of not losing the initiative unless a strike is missed badly (-6 margin of failure).

## Basic Defensive Maneuvers

### **Parry**

Modifier on use: depends on weapon

Description: Redirecting an attack by meeting it halfway and guiding or pushing it away from you. Parrying may be done with any weapon, or in combination with other maneuvers. Any type of strike will have a corresponding parry, and it is important to choose which you will be using, though it is possible to fudge it with similar ones (strikes which come from the same quarter). The easiest strike to parry is the thrust (+1 bonus to Parry). However, trying to parry a feint may instead open you up to the follow up attack.

## **Block**

Modifier on use: variable

Description: Interposing an object between your body and an incoming strike; the object used to block may be a shield, a weapon, or anything at all really, though using something not designed for combat will carry a heavy penalty. It is even possible to block with part of one's body, such as an arm, though this is not recommended. A successful block will fully halt the weapon's momentum and provide an opportunity for a counter strike.

## Basic Offensive Maneuvers

### **Beat**

Modifier on use: Variable

Description: Swatting or slapping the opponent's weapon aside with your own. A Beat is a short, forceful strike, which if successful, will knock the opponent's weapon aside and provide an opening for further attack. The modifier on use will depend on the relative weight of both weapons, with a + or - 1 for each class of weight difference. Thus, if your weapon is one class lighter (Medium vs. Heavy) then there will be a -1 penalty, whereas if it is 2 classes heavier there will be a +2 bonus. If the attacker wields 2 handed that adds +1, while if the defender wields two handed it gives -1. If the Beat fails, it is considered a miss, with attendant penalties and loss of initiative.

### **Push & Release**

Modifier on use: 0

Description: Tricking the opponent into engaging in pushing contest, then suddenly disengaging and dropping into an immediate attack. Like Beat, this maneuver revolves around controlling the centerline and diverting the opponent's sword to create an opening. The general idea is to cross swords with the enemy during a stand off and start pushing to one side. His natural response will be to push back. As soon as he does so, you pull up to disengage, causing his sword to be pushed aside slightly, at which point you come back down with a chop to the hands.

## **Called Shot**

Modifier on use: -1 or -2

Description: Focusing the attack on a precise point of vulnerability. The penalty applied to the attack depends on the precision the strike requires. If the point of attack is a 2" gap between your opponent's helmet and shoulder armor and you wield a blade only a ¼" wide, then only a -1 penalty would apply. If the target is the joint between two interlocking plates of armor with barely a ½" gap, then the higher -2 penalty would apply. The size of the weapon being used to attack should also be taken into consideration, along with the relative mobility of the target. The hands are able to move very rapidly and thus generally get a -2 penalty as a target. Large, slow weapons will get an additional -1 penalty, while small, fast weapons may get a +1 bonus. Less than +6 margin of success means that the blow landed but not where intended.

## **Grab**

Modifier on use: -1 or -2

Description: Taking hold of the opponent's clothing, body, or weapon to reduce his mobility and ability to mount an effective defense against the next attack. Getting a firm grip on someone in the heat of combat, especially when they are armed, is a fairly difficult task, hence the negative modifier. This is further modified by whether the point you are trying to grab has an easy purchase and how mobile it is. Difficult targets, such as the hands, get the higher -2 modifier, while easier targets get the lower -1. If the opponent has something very easy to grab, such as a protruding piece of armor, there may be no penalty at all. The target should be within arm's reach, otherwise an additional -1 penalty applies.

## **Distract**

Modifier on use: 0

Description: Tossing or placing something in the face of the enemy to temporarily distract him and allow you to change position and/or attack, catching the opponent by surprise. The object to be thrown must be in the hand already, otherwise a penalty of at least -2 is incurred and the initiative is lost. If the distraction is successful you will be able to move approximately one step in any direction without losing initiative and gain a surprise bonus on the next attack.

## Advanced Defensive Maneuvers

### **Parry to Trap**

Modifier on use: depends on weapon

Description: A more advanced form of Parry, which allows you to seize your opponent's weapon and manipulate it. This requires that you are using a weapon with a special bent crossguard. The trick is to parry the strike so that the attacker's blade is caught between your blade and the crossguard. The parrying weapon is then twisted sharply to pinch the opponent's blade tightly between them, preventing its withdrawal. Depending on the Strength of both combatants and the point of the blade on which the trap is made, the defender may now move the attacker's weapon about as if holding it in his hand. The best place to perform a trap is the foible, providing maximum leverage, and allowing even a weak defender to push his opponent's weapon about with great ease. A margin of success less than +6 means the parry was executed but not the trap.

## Advanced Offensive Maneuvers

### **Aggravate Damage**

Description: Driving a weapon further into the body after it has come to a stop, to do greater damage. This maneuver requires a solid hit, not one that grazed or bounced, but one that dug into flesh. Rather than pulling back to make another strike, you simply push it in further, sliding the blade along its length, or if thrusting, turn the blade and pull it out. This adds +2 to damage and can make a crippling wound into a deadly one, finishing the fight that much faster. The amount of time it takes is negligible, and there are no penalties, as the recipient will not be in a position to retaliate.

### **Shout**

Description: Shouting at the opponent prior to an attack to confuse and surprise him. Combat requires an intense focus and single minded concentration. Any break in that concentration can lead to hesitation and vulnerability. Shout is intended to break the opponent's concentration, throw him off at the moment just before you strike, resulting in a surprise penalty for the actual strike. It is much more complex than simply yelling at the top of your lungs however. A correctly executed Shout is short, abrupt, and loud. Also it must be delivered with proper timing, just before you launch the strike, not during the strike, and not too far before, as the effects are short lived.

## **Spook**

Description: Making an aggressive movement to trick the opponent into moving early, so you can make a real attack and catch them by surprise. This is basically imitating the signs of an attack, which may include any of the following: facial expression, stomping the ground, "cocking" your weapon, a short step forward, yelling, etc. If the opponent is successfully tricked, they will start to move in defense, giving away the defense they had planned. As soon as they start to move, you make a real attack different from the one you were pretending to make, forcing them to change tactics and incur a surprise penalty.

## **Wrap-Strike**

Modifier on use: -1

Description: Swinging a flexible weapon so that the middle makes contact with the enemy rather than the end, which multiplies the angular momentum of the end, and causes it to wrap around the enemy, striking his rear with great force. The general idea is that since the weapon is flexible, it can be used to strike parts of the opponent's body which are not accessible in a straight line from your current position. The end always carries the force of the strike, and it can be directed to wrap around the opponent and strike him in unexpected or unprotected areas. The rapid increase in velocity of the end, means it will gain a +2 to damage when it strikes.

## **Grapple to Throw**

Modifier on use: +1

Description: Manipulating the body of the opponent into a position where you can throw them to the ground. The type of throw (reverse hip throw, shoulder throw, etc) should be detailed along with the means of getting the opponent into a position where such a throw is possible. You must start from a Grab or a -2 penalty applies. You must have a +6 margin of success to get the throw. Once thrown, the opponent will be winded and/or stunned for a round or two and may also take damage depending on the type of throw and the surface they land on.

## **Grapple to Break**

Modifier on use: -1

Description: Manipulating the opponent's body into a locked or stress position where you can apply breaking force to one or more bones. A Break is always made at a joint and the joint must be held immobile while breaking force is applied. The joint to be attacked, the manner of holding it, and the means of getting it into position should be described. Armor may interfere with this maneuver, though most types of armor should offer enough freedom of motion to allow for a Break. As with other Grapples, a starting position from a Grab is assumed and penalties will apply if this is not the case. You must have a +6 margin of success to get the break. Breaking any bone entails great pain, though more severe breaks and larger bones have greater consequences. Breaking a small bone (e.g. finger) does 2 damage, while breaking a limb does 5 damage.

## **Simultaneous Attack**

Modifier on use: 0

Description: Using both weapons to attack at once, striking from different directions simultaneously. It is important that both attacks come from different directions, or are aimed for different targets, or the defender will be able to easily defend against both with a single defense, without penalty. Most commonly the left hand is used to attack from the left and the right hand attacks from the right. When used properly, the defender takes a -2 to defense, just as if facing multiple attackers, due to the division of focus. The attacker has whatever penalties apply for wielding two weapons. The attacker rolls twice this round, once for each attack, while the defender only gets one defense roll (even if also dual wielding). Any attack rolls which are higher than the defense roll are successful, with damage rolled separately for each success. The exception is if the defender chooses Full Retreat, in which case both attacks are dealt with simultaneously, without resulting in a division of the defender's focus. In this case the attacker gets one roll and the defender takes no penalty.

## Expert Defensive Maneuvers

### **Parry to Break**

Modifier on use: depends on weapon

Description: A hard parry intended to break the enemy's weapon. Unlike a regular parry which deflects the strike or guides it away, this maneuver is more like a strike, hard and fast and delivered in a way that puts a great deal of stress on the target weapon. This must be done with a heavy weapon of some kind in order to be effective, and blunt weapons with most of the weight on one end (hammer, mace, etc) are best for this. The opponent's weapon must be struck in a weak or vulnerable area: the flat for swords or the shaft for pole mounted weapons. A margin of success of less than +11 means the parry executed but not the break.

## **Simultaneous Block-Strike**

Modifier on use: -2 (+ shield bonus)

Description: Moving to block an incoming blow with one hand, while attacking with the other. You must have either 2 weapons, or a shield and a weapon to do this.

Functionally, there is no difference between this and the separate movements involved in blocking and then countering. It is just trying to do them both at the same time that makes it tricky. Dividing your attention results in the -2 modifier, just as if you were facing 2 opponents. A margin of success less than +6 means the block succeeded but not the strike.

## Expert Offensive Maneuvers

### **Feint**

Modifier on use: 0

Description: Making a strike from one quarter to draw your opponent's defense out, then changing the direction of the strike to land in a different area and evade the defense. The Feint is declared after the defender has chosen an action, but before dice are rolled. The defender may now choose a new defense, but at a penalty if the original defense was a Block or a Parry. The starting direction of the Feint and the ending direction can be no more than 90 degrees apart. For example: if feinting an overhead chop, one may alter the direction as far as a horizontal slash, but no further. Attempting to do otherwise gives the opponent enough time to recover and make a new defense without penalty. The only exception to this is when dual wielding and Feinting with one weapon while attacking with the other. Speed is very important with a Feint, and Heavy weapons receive a -1 penalty, while Extremely Heavy weapons receive a -2 penalty.

### **Grapple to Choke**

Modifier on use: -1

Description: Manipulating an opponent's body into a position where you can place a choke hold on them and choke them into submission or unconsciousness. The specific type of choke hold to be applied should be detailed (e.g. sleeper hold, one handed choke, etc), along with the means of applying it and what, if any, grappling is to be done. If you are not behind the target and have them in a Grab an additional -2 penalty applies. You must have a margin of success +6 or greater to get the choke. Once the choke is in place, the opponent now receives a -2 penalty to all actions, including attempts to attack the choker. Each round the choke remains in place, that penalty increments by 1 as the victim starts to suffer from reduced oxygen and blood flow to the brain. Also, starting on the 2nd round and every round thereafter the choke is in place, the victim must make a Will roll (as Shock) to avoid passing out.

## Grapple to Pin

Modifier on use: 0

Description: Taking control of the opponent's body and manipulating it into a position of extremely limited mobility from which they cannot easily escape. The specific type of grapple should be described, along with the body part to be attacked, and the desired position the enemy should end up in. In most cases this is done by simply grabbing the opponent and forcing them into an awkward position, such as bent over backwards, or on their belly, from which there is little escape or chance of retaliation. If you do not start from a Grab, there is a -2 penalty. The pin requires a +6 margin of success.

## Common Amor Stats

Type	Damage Blocked			Penetration Rating			Damage Absorbed			Cost
	Piercing	Slashing	Blunt	Piercing	Slashing	Blunt	Piercing	Slashing	Blunt	
Cloth	0	0	0	2	2	5	50%	50%	50%	1s
Leather	0	0	0	3	4	4	75%	75%	50%	10s
Studded	0	0	0	2	3	6	50%	75%	25%	20s
Ring Mail	0	2	0	3	5	6	50%	75%	25%	40s
Chain Mail	0	2	0	4	6	8	25%	50%	0%	10g
Scale Mail	1	2	1	7	8	9	50%	80%	25%	20g
Brigandine	1	2	1	7	8	10	60%	75%	35%	30g
Lamellar	1	2	1	7	8	10	60%	80%	25%	40g
Plate Mail	2	3	2	8	9	12	75%	75%	50%	80g
Full Plate	3	3	3	12	13	15	75%	75%	50%	200g

## Common Weapon Tables

Type	Weight	Length	Damage			Armor Piercing			Modifiers		
			Slashing	Thrusting	Blunt	Slashing	Thrusting		Parry	Block	Cost
Dagger	Light	4"	4D	4D+1	-	-	-	-1	-2	3s	
Parrying Dagger	Light	8"	4D	4D+1	-	-	-	+1	-2	9s	
Shortsword	Light	20"	6D	8D	-	-	-	0	-1	1g	
Short Axe	Medium	22"	6D+1	4D+1	-	-1	-	-1	-1	1g	
Light Pick	Medium	24"	-	6D	-	-	-2	-1	-1	8s	
Longsword	Medium	36"	8D	8D+1	-	-	-	+1	0	2g	
Bastard Sword	Medium	38"	8D+1	10D	-	-	-	+2	+1	5g	
Greatsword	Heavy	55"	10D	10D	-	-	-1	+2	+2	9g	
Broadsword	Medium	33"	8D+1	8D+1	-	-	-	+2	+1	7g	
Battle Axe	Heavy	36"	8D+2	6D+1	-	-1	-2	0	+2	3g	
Scimitar	Medium	33"	8D+1	6D-1	-	-	-	+1	0	2g	
Rapier	Light	40"	4D	10D	-	-	-	+2	+1	7g	
Saber	Medium	30"	8D+1	8D	-	-	-	+2	0	9g	
Spiked Club	Medium	28"	-	6D+2	-	-	-1	0	0	3s	
Mace	Medium	24"	-	-	6D+1	-	-	-1	-1	1g	
Quarterstaff	Medium	60"	-	-	8D+1	-	-	+2	+1	1s	
War Hammer	Heavy	24"	-	6D+1	8D	-	-1	0	0	1g	
Battle Hammer	Heavy	35"	-	8D	8D+1	-	-2	0	+1	3g	
Light Flail	Light	28"	-	-	6D+1	-	-	-1	-1	8s	
Heavy Flail	Medium	48"	-	-	8D+1	-	-	0	0	1g	
Spear	Heavy	8'	8D	10D+1	8D+1	-	-	+2	+1	3s	
Pike	Heavy	12'	-	10D+1	-	-	-	+1	+1	5s	
Halberd	Heavy	7'	10D+2	10D	-	-1	-2	0	+1	2g	
Lance	Heavy	12'	-	10D	-	-	-2	0	-2	6g	

## Shields

Type	Cover Bonus	Block Bonus	Weight Penalty	Cost
Buckler	-1	+3	0	
Small Wooden Shield	-2	+4	0	1s
Small Metal Shield	-2	+4	-1	5s
Large Metal Shield	-4	+5	-2	18s

## Common Ranged Weapons

Type	Length	Damage	Base Range	Effective Range	Cost
Short Bow	2'	8D	30 yds	150 yds	1g
Long Bow	4'	10D	30 yds	300 yds	2g
Light Crossbow	2'	8D	30 yds	150 yds	3g
Heavy Crossbow	2'	10D	30 yds	300 yds	5g
Sling	-	6D	30 yds	100 yds	1c
War Sling	-	8D	30 yds	80 yds	2c
Dart	6"	4D	10 yds	20 yds	5c
Throwing Knife	6"	4D+1	10 yds	25 yds	4s
Throwing Axe	10"	4D	10 yds	30 yds	1s
Throwing Spear	24"	6D	10 yds	35 yds	1s

## Common Equipment

Type	Cost	Type	Cost
Horse Tack (Full)	1g	Hourglass	7s
Backpack	8c	Spyglass	15g
Rope (50')	1s	Lute	8s
Tent (Small)	1s	Sturdy Chest (Wooden)	7s
Camp Axe	1s	Hunting Snare	1s
Camp Saw	2s	Fishing Tackle	1s
Flint & Steel	6c	Lockpick Set	1g
Tinderbox	5c	Ladder	1s
Lantern	1s	First Aid Kit	2s
Candle	1c	Hard Rations (Bread)	1c
Traveling Clothes	2s	Dried Meat Rations	8c
Riding Clothes (Leather)	5s	Cooking Pot	2s
Fine Clothes	15s	Shovel (Wooden)	5c
Knapsack	5s	Razor & Shaving Mirror	6s
Whetstone w/Oil	7c	Torch	1c
Parchment	2s	Water Bladder	3c
Ink w/Pen	4c	Riding Horse	8g
Trade Tools	6s	Pack Horse	3g
Flask (Metal)	3s	Mule	1g

All prices are in terms of generic copper (c), silver (s), and gold (g) pieces.