ANTARES D10+ RPG

CORE SYSTEM

DRAFT

This is a draft version of the Antares D10+ RPG rules and does not contain all the examples or illustrations we would like. Please read this with that in mind!

Ver 0.17 J

A SF Roleplaying Game in the far distant future of the 'Beyond the Gates of Antares' universe

Antares RPG Credits

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Antares D10+ RPG Structural Note

To help with downloading and printing rules, we have split the rules, equipment and character generation into separate, smaller documents. This document contains the core rules for playing the game: the *D10+ RPG* system. The player and character rules are in *Antares RPG: Player's Guide* and the weapons and equipment in the *Antares RPG: Arms & Equipment Guide*. Extensive background detail can be found in the wargame's document *Antares 2: The Universe* (https://antaresnexus.com/rules/), whilst information on mapping your own region of Antares is in the *Mapping Supplemental*, also available on the Nexus (https://antaresnexus.com/2022/05/14/mapping-antares/). All are available to download for free at antaresnexus.com.

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Change Log

These PDFs are version numbered so players can keep up to date with any releases. Version numbering is in the following format:

<Version>.<Iteration> <Variation>

Where: 'Version' is '0' for the playtest rules, '1' for the first release; 'Iteration' is numeric reflecting a major change within that rules release; and 'Variation' is an alphabetic series (A►Z, AA►ZZ, and so on) that reflects any minor changes within that iteration.

0.17J   Quick Ref included; release to Nexus

0.17 First release with skills, tasks and combat in one document.

0.17H May 2023 Includes Vehicle Damage, Index

INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO THE MANY WORLDS OF ANTARES!

This is the *System Guide* for the *Antares D10+ RPG*, an unofficial system for roleplaying in Rick Priestley and Warlord Games' *Beyond the Gates of Antares* setting. The setting was originally designed for narrative wargames between three major civilisations and a number of lesser factions in conflict around a space-time transfer-hub built by the mysterious Gatebuilders, but the background is rich enough to support in-depth roleplaying with players running a number of factions, species and panhuman morphs.

This rulebook contains the *D10+ RPG's* core task resolution system and its rules for action, combat, injury and recovery. It also contains the skill system – tailored for Antares, of course – as well as considerations for running a campaign and scenarios, plus rules for differing environments.

Two other RPG rulebooks, the *Antares D10+ RPG Players' Guide* and the *Antares D10+ RPG Arms & Equipment Guide* provide details on how to create characters and explain how to obtain the important equipment needed for Antarean adventurers to survive.

For details on the people and factions of the universe of Antares and the Gatebuilders, see the Antares Nexus at antaresnexus.com. A great deal more information can be found in the wargames rules reference *Antares 2: Guide to the Universe* and, for the game's moderator (we'll refer to them as a GM), information on mapping your own region of Antares is in the *Mapping Supplemental*, also available on the Nexus (https://antaresnexus.com/2022/05/14/mapping-antares/). All these PDFs are downloadable (is that a word?) for free from the Nexus' main rules page: https://antaresnexus.com/rules/.

The *Guide to the Universe* and the *Antares Nexus* provide details on the major civilisations of the Antares universe, namely:

- the **PanHuman Concord**, which is dominated by machine intelligences and post-humans of several types;
- the **Isorian Senatex**, arguably the most technologically advanced civilisation comprising post-humans and a strange, alien species called the Tsan Ra; and
- the **Vorl Ordo**, the Vorl being an advanced, xenophobic, symbiotic, scorpion-like people.

These civilisations deal with the Freeborn traders, the Boromite builders and miners, the warlike Algoryn, the paranoid machine-people termed the Virai, and others, including the pathetic, genetically-engineered (geneered) species called Ghar who have but one aim: to eradicate all of panhumanity.

What this dispersed, four-guide structure means for the Antares' RPG is that we can avoid repeating key details and focus on what matters in each book. It also allows us to produce and update them relatively easily and cheaply (time and money!) without forcing gamers to reprint everything each time. We can't help but provide a lot of background here in

What is the focus of Antares D10+ RPG?

This ruleset is focused on Antarean panhumans and expects a small group of allied characters to have a good reason to be together. Perhaps the PCs are a front line Concord Strike squad, the characters all being Strike troopers; perhaps the campaign or group of scenarios is based around the crew of a Freeborn trader or survey ship as it seeks out new systems and worlds around Antares; or perhaps the PCs are a small band of mercenary specialists dispatched to a crisis zone, perhaps intending to right a wrong they discover in a hostile universe.

Alternatively, and perhaps with more flexibility, the PCs could just be a group of adventurers being ferried between systems and adventures aboard Freeborn ships or great starliners.

To allow flexibility for GMs and to ease how campaigns are run in such a huge universe, the guides focus more on providing characters for a Freeborn-sponsored exploration group; this allows PCs to work together from a wide variety of backgrounds. This book assumes what almost all players want for their characters: a wide variety of equipment that may be difficult to obtain but which enhances their survivability.

But whatever you choose to do, and however you play your game, there is only one wish: have fun!

> **Design Note:** Throughout the rules we add in design notes to explain what we were thinking in the rules or to suggest options or local variants.
>
> This design note is to explain why the *Antares D10+ RPG* system is the way it is. At its core, it is deliberately gritty in combat and richly broad-spectrum in skills. This is because of the nature of the Antares universe, sometimes referred to as a semi-hard, space opera universe, forged from its inception as a gritty wargame. We found that players of the wargame much preferred the grittier combat rules (perhaps similar to other, mainstream RPGs) and also liked the potential detail, character customisation and flavour of a rich and flexible skills system. **That said, there is nothing wrong in reducing the 'grittiness' and running your own style of game with less detail: it's your game and rules support that style of play as well.**

> **Gameplay:** At other times, we'll add hints and tips on gameplay in similar boxes. For example, despite the intentionally 'gritty' system, you can play the game as detail-focused or as loose as you wish. Antares' games are intended for a narrative approach and the skill system allows players focus on as narrow or as narrative an approach as they wish.

> **Disclaimer:** It is worth noting that this is a **draft** version of the Antares D10+ ruleset, largely playtested as far as much of the equipment goes, but it never fully reached the light of day. As a result, it is unfinished and raw in places. Nonetheless, rather than leave it languishing, we thought it worth releasing for all to enjoy.

answering some critical questions (such as 'what can fabricators fabricate?'), but for how each panhuman morph and faction might react to another, it's the *Guide to the Universe* and the character generation in the *Players' Guide* and its supplements that matters. Of course, we'll include a few relevant hints, but for what it is to be a Boromite or how a Freeborn trader might react, it's the *Guide to the Universe* that matters: all-in-all, GMs and players can bask to their heart's content in the rich background and hundreds of thousands of words of background detail already available.

What Do I Need to Play?

Rather than repeat what has been expressed many times before, we'll assume that you, the reader, understands what a roleplaying game (RPG) actually is and what it involves. We'll also assume you understand the basics of rolling different sided dice (D4, D6, D10, and so on), player characters (PCs) and characteristics and the guiding role of a light-touch, traditional GM in managing campaigns, encounters and NPCs.

That said, all you will need to play is largely the same as any other RPG: writing implements, paper, character sheets, a number of D10, only one each of D3, D4, D5, D6, D8 and D12 for damage resolution, and a scenario to play. A wipe-off sheet and pens (or a computerised playing surface) is useful to plot some details of combat – but is by no means vital as narrative works well – and, if you want, Antares miniatures representing the characters and their opponents (see www.skytrex.com).

Key Terms

Before we go any further, it's worth going over some of the key terms we'll use throughout the rules. Don't worry if you can't quite get what they're referring to straight away as we'll go into a lot more detail later. For now, it just helps to know they exist.

The game difficulty sets just how hard or demanding a scenario or campaign should be for the player characters (PCs). This is reflected in a **target number** (tn), the value a task check (see below) has to reach or exceed. This is normally 11+ for starting and mid-career characters.

Tasks are what a character has to perform to achieve an interim goal such as repairing an engine or shooting an enemy. This is achieved through a **task check**, essentially a roll of a 10-sided dice (D10) plus a number of bonuses. The result is compared against the target number to determine whether the character succeeded or failed at the task.
The task check bonuses are derived from the acting character's characteristics, skills, traits and assists.

A **success** is when a PC or NPC attempts a task and achieves a result equal to or above the target number. The task is carried out successfully.

A **critical success** is when a character not only succeeds at a task but also rolls a 10 on the dice. Critical successes bring special results, typically a one step improvement to the task, but might also allow something special, such as in combat.

A **failure** occurs when the task check's D10 plus bonuses sum to less than the target number (normally to 10 or less). An automatic failure also occurs if the D10 roll is a 1, irrespective of bonuses. The task was not achieved, or tool longer than normal.

Mishaps occur when the task check dice roll is a 1 and the bonuses would result in a failure: something unfortunate happens during the task. A character with task check bonuses totalling +10 or more can fail a target number of 11+, but will not have a mishap.

Characteristics are the natural capabilities and potential of a character that are broadly comparable with those of other species. They are rated from 1 to 10 (higher in special circumstances) and give a bonus or penalty to completing a task depending on the value: a characteristic value of '5' gives no bonus or penalty, for example, whilst one of 8 gives a +2 bonus.

Characteristics grant bonuses to achieving a task using that characteristic and can vary by task – it need not be tied to a specific skill. For example, a character trying to remember the schematics of an advanced propulsion drive might use their Intellect whilst actually fixing that same drive, in a spacesuit would require whole-body Agility.

An injury results in damage to a characteristic, temporarily reducing its effectiveness and characteristic bonus. There are five characteristics:

- **Agility**
- **Endurance**
- **Strength**
- **Intellect**
- **Empathy.**

Measures are the more nebulous attributes of a character, or those geared solely towards game mechanics. Measures can be social position, move distance or how long a character lasts before dying. Measures cannot be used in task checks. The main measures are:

- **Social Position**, reflecting the character's standing in their society;
- **Move**, which is how far a character can travel during a turn;
- **Dying Track**, on which potentially fatal injuries are tracked.

Skills are what a character has learnt during their life or are those innate capabilities built into a machine. Some complex skills, such as Engineering, must be learnt and cannot be performed until a character has acquired a little knowledge behind the skill domain; others, such as Athletics, come with being born or constructed and can be attempted by anyone – typically just not very well until a character has had more practice or training.

Traits are the unique attributes to a species or which a character may acquire through heroic gameplay. Not all characters or species have traits. Traits give special bonuses to task checks or enable a character to do something different, such as glide, fly or brachiate or even, in the case of a NuHu, automatically and seamlessly connect to and interact with a friendly IMTel shard.

Assists are bonuses from task checks that come from other factors such as the IMTel lending a hand, from one character aiding another, or from advanced or special equipment being used. Assists are not always applicable to a task check.

Tasks & Task Resolution

Much roleplaying is concerned about the interaction of the PCs with each other, with non-player characters (NPCs) and with portions of the universe in which they find themselves. When doing so, much of the interaction can be narrative – a character talking to a NPC, or carrying out some routine task. However, from time to time a PC might have to carry out a task. Rather than have every PC be an expert in every single job, role or life-skill (which is very unsatisfying), each PC has a chance of succeeding at that task by using a skill – their ability to achieve a particular task.

So here, **tasks** are what a character performs when they wish to achieve something. This could be almost anything in which they have to do something such as shooting a weapon, repairing a ship's shields, researching an area of Gatebuilder knowledge or climbing a difficult cliff. When a crucial or dangerous task is to be performed, the player states their character is attempting the task (or the GM asks that they do so), the GM determines the difficulty (in practice this is done with the players, but someone has to decide!), and then the character makes a **task check** using a skill plus a few dice modifiers.

The D10+ system uses a 10-sided dice for task resolution, adding or subtracting dice modifiers (DM) from the roll. Every special activity a character attempts (repairing a broken engine, fighting in a melee) should use the task resolution system, though routine activities should not need task checks.

Target Number (tn)

The target number is the value task checks have to meet or exceed in order to be deemed successful and is determined from the difficulty of the game or campaign. Once set, a game's target number never changes.

The most common **target number** (tn) is **11+**. This is what we use in all our examples in the *Antares D10+ RPG*.

An easy game may make its tn 10+ whilst a deliberately difficult campaign may use a tn of 12+.

Task Checks

To resolve a task, a player rolls a D10 for their character and adds the character's characteristic, skill, trait and assist bonuses, and compares the result against the tn. The bonuses to the D10 roll and loosely termed t**ask dice modifiers** (or **task DMs**).

A character's total for a given task check is:

> **D10 + task DMs – difficulty DMs**

and task DMs are typically:

> **characteristic bonus** (if there is one) +
>
> **skill bonus** (almost always) +
>
> **trait bonus** (occasionally) +
>
> **assist bonus(es)** (from things helping the task).

> **Background Boxes**
>
> From time to time we'll have background boxes like these that explain something important about the information or background that influences a line of thought in the rules.

We explain more about these bonuses below.

After comparing the results against the tn (11+), we need to check them against the following. There are also two dice rolls that are important:

- result totals that meet or exceed the tn represent task **success**;
- a result total less than the tn means the task **failed;**
- a roll of a '1' is always an **automatic failure**, but still check what the total would have been, because…
  - if the roll of '1' plus or minus all modifiers means the task check would have failed, a **mishap** occurs (so, normally, a character with accumulated task bonuses of +10 or more will not mishap on a roll of a '1' but will still fail;
- if a roll of a '10' **also** leads to success (tn or more), then a **critical** success is achieved – something special may happen to benefit the character;

> **Gameplay:** Note that rolls of '10' do *not* automatically succeed: what should be impossible – as opposed to improbable – should remain so, though perhaps the task is partially completed, even if a failure.

If there are no appropriate mishaps or critical effects to apply, a critical should increase the degree of success by one level and a mishap should worsen the degree of failure by one level (see *Opposed Checks* and the *Degree of Success Table*).

The various bonuses are given in the following sections, but all are normally on the character sheet.

> *For example, a Shen-Lat PC trying to climb an awkward cliff has made sure that he has excellent equipment, grapples, pitons, and rope. Further, an injured elder is coaching him from the ground over their comm – the elder can see parts of the cliff that the climber cannot see.*
>
> *Climbing falls under the Athletic skill, in which the character has a +2 skill bonus. This GM informs the player that this particular cliff requires more flexibility in movement than sheer strength, so the PC uses his Ag of 7 , which has a +2 characteristic bonus. Shen-Lat also have the trait Brachiator(+3), which gives a +3 trait bonus to activities of this type. Lastly, the elder coaching our PC ends up granting a +2 coaching assist bonus, for a grand total of +9 – pretty good bonus!*
>
> *The awkward climb up the cliff unfortunately gives a -1 difficulty DM (see below).*

Out character rolls a 5, adds their +9 task DMs and then subtracts 1 for the difficulty. This gives them a total of 13, two more than the required target number of 11, so reach the top with little difficulty.

TASK DIFFICULTY

The task difficulty is a measure of the adverse or positive circumstances surrounding the achievement of a specific task in the current game situation, irrespective of the skills of the character attempting the task. It is represented by a **difficulty DM** the player must apply to their character's task check.

For example, a really difficult task such as repairing a ship's shields whilst under fire is really tough (DM -4). Such a task may be difficult for new PCs to achieve, but as they progress, they may increase their skills and so increase their chance of succeeding at the task.

The actual difficulty of a task can be set by the GM or could be negotiated between the players: this depends on the style of play of your own group. If all else fails, though, the GM's decision should be accepted as the GM often knows things in the game that players don't!

Difficulty DMs

Difficulty Description	Dice Modifier
Easy	+2
Simple	+1
Non-Trivial (normal)	+0
Awkward	-1
Hard	-2
Tough	-4
Challenging	-6
Daunting	-8

In general, if the task is relatively routine and the character has all the time in the world, then don't bother rolling and just allow the character to achieve the task in a reasonable amount of time. A task check should only be called for when it is dramatically required or in a tough situation: calling for a swimming skill test when a character is lazing around in a swimming pool slows down play dramatically as well as hindering the players' creativity!

OPPOSED CHECKS

Opposed checks are used instead of task checks when two characters are attempting skills in opposition to one another. An example might be a thief sneaking past a guard, where the thief's Stealth is opposed by the guard's Perception.

In opposed checks, both sides make a task check but instead of comparing the result against a target number, they compare the results against each other. The different in the result indicates the degree of success – as shown on the table below.

Criticals, mishaps, automatic successes and automatic fails are ignored for opposed checks: it is the final results of each check that are compared.

On a draw, it often makes sense to reroll, but sometimes an interesting result arises from both scores being equal.

When groups are making opposed checks, use the stats of the PC with the worst activity-type skill bonus against the passive or sensing group members' best.

We can't give all the different combinations of group active vs passive skill checks, but give an example below so you can work them out for yourself.

We use this approach to avoid mass dice-offs and comparisons. For example, a GM could ask all six PCs to roll their task checks to then compare them against all the opposing groups task checks: what happens, typically, is that the worst result is compared against the best (it doesn't matter if an infiltrator rolls well on their sneak if their fellow Boromite rolls badly on theirs!).

Frankly, it's just quicker to pick the worst vs best.

For example, a PC trying to sneak past a guard makes a Stealth check and gains a 9 – normally a failure, but this is ignored for the opposed check. The guard makes a Perception check and gains a 7.

The results are compared and as the PC has a +2 advantage, they succeed whereas the guard fails: the PC sneaks past the guard, leaving them unaware.

If a group of PCs with Stealth bonuses +2, +3, +4 and +2 are trying to sneak past the guard, then the worst bonus is compared – in this case +2. If that PC's player rolled a 7, the group's total would be a 9.

If there were several guards against them, perhaps with perception bonuses of +2, +3 and +4, then the best bonus is used – in this case +4. If that guard rolled a 3, then the group of guards' total would be +7 – worse than the PCs, so the PCs sneak past.

This replace the more laborious and perhaps more random method where each PC rolls, each guard rolls and all the results are compared.

DEGREES OF SUCCESS/ASSISTS

Degrees of success adds time detail to task checks and provides more flexibility on assists: if not used, just consider a successful assist as adding +1 to a character's task check and time always takes that appropriate for the task.

Even when used, the degree of success need not be applied to all checks and the table results are meant as a guide: a character hurdling difficult obstacles, for example, might still not be able to do so at twice the speed of another (but the GM and player may agree that they may well be able to do so).

Degrees of success are gained for each +3 above or below the target number. So a result of 11-13 is a 1st degree success; 14-16 a 2nd degree, good result; and so on.

GMs may wish to give players something extra for achieving a superb or critical result, perhaps by adding the level of success as damage to a melee roll, for example.

In the *Degree of Success table*, opposite, compare the task check result and dice roll in the left hand column and read across: the values given re those for a tn of 11+ and should be adjusted accordingly for higher difficulties.

A description of the degree of success is given for each result for the GM or players to use when describing their task result.

The **Success Level/Assist Bonus** column not only gives the assist bonus granted to another character by this check (if used for an assist), but can also be used as a bonus or penalty for

Degree of Success Table					
Result vs 11+	Opposed Difference	Description / Degree of Success	Success Level/ Assist Bonus	Task Time	Comments
Natural 1 but result more than 11+ (not opposed)			-1	*As result*	Failure
Natural 1	-1 or less	Mishap	Reduce 1 step	Reduce 1 step	A check result of 10 or less and a rolled '1'. Reduces the degree of success by one level
<=1	-10 or less	Abysmal Failure	-4	Time × 2	An appalling job only made worse by the length of time it took to complete
2–4	-9 to -7	Distinctly Lacking	-3	Time +50%	–
5–7	-6 to -4	Poor Job	-2	Time +20%	–
8–10	-3 to -1	Normal Failure	-1	Time	–
11–13	+0 to +2	Normal Success	+1	Time	–
14–16	+3 to +5	Good Success	+2	Time -10%	–
17–19	+6 to +8	Excellent Job!	+3	Time -25%	–
20+	+9 or more	Superb Success	+4	Time -50%	–
Natural 10	n/a	Automatic Success	–	–	Task automatically succeeds.
Natural 10	+0 or more	Critical Success	Improve 1 step	Improve 1 step	On a '10 and the overall check result is a success, either increase the degree of success by one level or carry out any special results for the task.

anything else the character may be attempting to achieve, such as by how much a shot was missed – it will not always be applicable. Players can quickly see that assist checks can hamper a character of not performed well enough.

Assist bonuses should not be used for combat unless directly applicable to the weapon being used, such as a crew member assisting with aiming a support weapon. Some GMs like adding to a character's weapon damage based on the degree of success, perhaps one less than the success level (so a hit with a Good Success would score +1 damage, for example).

The **Task Time** column shows a multiplier the GM might want to give to the length of time the task took in some situations. This not only gives shorter times for better successes but also shows a recommended increase in time taken before a character realises they have failed at a task.

For all tests, the reduction or increase in time taken should not also be accompanied by a bonus as it can compound success too easily: on the other side of the dice, a character should not be penalised twice!

We have also added in the Natural 1 and Natural 10 results to help players determine how to deal with the degree of success for such automatic failures or successes.

For example, a PC shoots at a space station guard with an advanced mag rifle. With a skill level of +2, a decent agility that gives a characteristic bonus of +1, and advanced sights that give an assist bonus of +1, they have a total task check bonus of +4.

On a die result of 7 or more, the guard is hit (7+4 = 11, the target number) and the PC rolls for damage normally.

A more complex example would be a PC attempting to repair a skimmer's suspension field. If doing so in a workshop, with plenty of time, decent tools and no pressure, the repair would go ahead in a time agreed upon between the players and GM, say two hours, and no task check would be needed.

However, the GM may wish just to work out how long the repair took because of some other, time-dependent activity in the scenario. In such a case, a task check is appropriate but as there is no pressure, should still automatically succeed: the result would merely determine the actual length of time the repair took. At this point, another PC could step in to assist the mechanic (say they provided an assist bonus of +1) and the PC's characteristic and skill bonuses come into play (say a total of +4 from tools, skill and characteristics, for a total of +5).

If the player rolls anything from 3 to 8, for a total between 8 and 13, the time taken would still be two hours ('Time' in the table above). However, on a roll of a 9 and a result of 14, the time would be 10% or 12 minutes less: 1h48m.

In contrast, a roll of a 2 (a result of 7) would still mean the repair was completed as there is no pressure on the PC and they have the time and tools required. However, check up a result of a 7 from the table reveals the time take was 20% more than expected, or 2h24m – that extra half hour perhaps allowing something else to go on in the background without the PCs knowledge.

CHARACTERISTICS & MEASURES

THE SHAPE OF A CHARACTER

Characteristics form the basic 'shape' of any character. They reflect the individual's genetics, phenotype and to some extent their upbringing: what they look like, their raw IQ, their physical build, strength and co-ordination and so on. The basic characteristics needed for roleplaying do not map directly onto Antares stats, but the players of the Antares wargame will quickly recognise the terminology and guess as to its usage.

Starting characteristics are typically between 3 and 9, but can be improved beyond that during play. No characteristic can ever go below zero during play, and a character cannot have a characteristic of zero or less.

The term 'characteristic' is often abbreviated to 'Char'.

There are five characteristics:

- **Agility**, a physical characteristic, shortened to Ag;
- **Endurance**, a physical characteristic, shortened to En;
- **Strength**, a physical characteristic, shortened to St;
- **Intellect**, shortened to In;
- **Empathy**, shortened to Em.

In addition, a character has a few measures. Measures cannot be used in task checks and are all situation specific. The main measures are:

- **Social Position**, shortened to SP;
- **Move**, or Mv;
- **Dying Track**, or DT.

Of course, there are other attributes that define characters such as their height, hair colour, skin and size – most of which is determined largely by their morph.

> Almost all weapons inflict physical damage so are applied directly to Agility, Endurance and Strength and then to the Dying track. We go through damage in more detail but, briefly, as a characteristic takes damage and is reduced so the characteristic bonus is impacted.
> A character who has two physical characteristics at zero is unconscious; a character dies when all three characteristics are zero and a character reaches the end of their dying track.

> **Design Note:** The Antares wargame's Res(ist) stat combines a number of different RPG attributes. In this RPG, Res is replaced by a character's protection and armour as well as the damage taken by their physical characteristics and by their damage track value.

CHARACTERISTICS

A brief summary of the characteristics are as follows. Any characteristic can take damage directly, reducing its current capability and hence characteristic bonus; most combat damage, however, is taken directly to the physical characteristics Ag, En and St.

Agility (Ag)

Agility is A physical characteristic which represents overall co-ordination and motor control. Ag is used for shooting hand-held weapons and for feats of agility and or an acrobatic nature. A character can typically increase Ag through training and augments can take Ag above species maximums.

Some species are more agile than others: for example, Shen-Lat can reach Ag 12 whilst Boromites cannot exceed Ag 8.

Endurance (En)

A physical characteristic. En represents a character's ability to resist illness and assault and to handle shock. It also covers the character's ability to last longer in adverse conditions. Survival checks are often made with En, as are some Athletics checks.

A character can typically increase En through training and above their species maximum through rather dangerous implants.

Strength (St)

A physical characteristic. St is the raw ability to shift items or break objects with sheer force. A character can typically increase St through training and implants, even above their species maximum if they accept the toll such dangerous augments extract on their body.

Intellect (In)

Intellect is a character's raw mental processing power, flexibility and mental agility and, perhaps, memory – though many Antarean individuals rely on their databases to recall obscure facts.

PCs may well supplement In by using better IMTel connectivity or with (highly illegal and dangerous) synaptic boosters. Normal panhuman maximum In is 10, and that for a NuHu or a strategic machine intelligence 15, and an exceptional Vyess 12.

Empathy (Em)

Em is a measure of emotional intelligence, insight, charisma and an ability to identify with someone that helps in understanding, manipulating and commanding others. This is useful in developing leadership, persuasion, diplomacy or in assisting or coaching others – assists would normally use a character's Em bonus. Medic checks can also use an Em bonus with a conscious patient when enquiring about symptoms.

Empathy can be increased but cannot normally rise beyond 10 for a PC. The sensitive Vyess tend to have a higher Em than others, as do the socially driven Shen-Lat. In contrast, the warlike or rugged Algoryn, Ghar and Gyohn have little sympathy and patience with others and cannot develop Em very far.

MEASURES

Measures are all highly situation specific. Measures are not used in task checks.

Social Position (SP)

This is a complex and sometimes nebulous measure as it is a representation of the character's renown, rank or standing amongst their fellows. This is always dependent on a character's upbringing in an Antarean society and is much reduced outside that society of faction. Its primary use is in roleplaying encounters between members of a faction or those closely allied to the character.

As an example, SP 1 indicates a prisoner or an Ghar Outcast, whilst SP 12 indicates a very important figure. NuHu and elite machine intelligences in the IMTel nations can reach SP 15 within IMTel societies, as can Emperors of large Spill regions; the Ghar Supreme Commander is SP 20 – but only amongst Ghar!

IMTel, Freeborn and Algoryn might pay respect to an SP 10 individual – a general and such – anyone with a SP below that would be unknown. Similarly, a NuHu would be respected at their SP across IMTel, Freeborn, Algoryn and Boromite societies, but might be regarded with concern amongst some Boromite clans.

SP is also used to guide or represent the result of promotions in the Prior Experience character generator system (see the Player's Guide for details).

Move (Mv)

This is the speed at which a character normally travels, represented in inches on the tabletop. Move for a PC normally cannot be raised but might be temporarily or artificially enhanced.

Dying Track (DT)

No NPC has a Dying Track. We assume PCs are tougher than those around them, so this is the number of combat rounds a character can survive when all their characteristics are reduced to zero. It is equal to one third of the total of their physical characteristics, rounded up.

We will have a look at the Damage Track and how it gives dying PCs a chance later, in the chapter on combat.

Characteristic Check

Very occasionally, a situation may arise that is not directly related to a skill. In such a situation, run through the task check process as normal but just add a character's characteristic bonus without a skill. This is called a **characteristic check**.

Gameplay: Normally, situations that don't rely on a skill are best roleplayed, but it's up to the GM and players whether or not to make a check instead.

CHARACTERISTIC BONUSES

The bonus a characteristic grants to a character's D10 roll in a task or characteristic check is as follows:

Characteristic	Bonus
0	Unusable
1	-3
2-3	-2
4	-1
5	+0
6	+1
7-8	+2
9-11	+3
12-14	+4
15+	+5

For example, a NuHu character with an St of 4 and an In of 10 has a -1 characteristic bonus when making task checks relying on strength, but a +3 characteristic bonus when using their intellect to calculate a suitable course for a ship within a rock-strewn system (along with their Astrogation skill bonus).

A zero characteristic cannot be used. This may prevent the use of weapons in combat, many of which require the Ag characteristic for shooting or St for melee.

As can be seen, it is important to use the right characteristic – and perhaps the right PC – to perform a specific task as several may be pertinent to a given situation.

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTIC BLOCK

These characteristics and measures form the core of a character, the main block on a character sheet. This can be seen below, together with the addition of Fate Points, traits and special attributes and augments and the character's armour.

As Ag, En and St most often taken damage, their current value and bonus is laid out so that it can be easily tracked.

CHARACTERISTICS, MEASURES & DAMAGE

Skill Concepts & Languages

In D10+, skills are what you use when attempting Task Checks: the bonus a PC has for a given skill reflects the PCs background, training, knowledge and even muscle memory. When attempting a Task Check, a Skill bonus plus a Characteristic Bonus form the main bonuses to your D10 roll.

All this means the skills a character has shape how they perform in the RPG universe: are they a fighter, a scientist, a diplomat, trader, a miner? A skill can be many things – in fact there are so many skills so many we have to select a subset that's appropriate for Antares and organise them in a way we can use for the important Task Checks whilst leaving the less important checks to players roleplaying interactions.

> **Design note:** In addition to representing basic skills and broad areas of practice, **t**he skill system is designed to reflect the acquisition of specialist areas of knowledge relevant to the game universe, whilst allowing for the development of associated, specialist skills based on an underlying awareness of a domain of knowledge.

Skills, Skillsets and Specialisms

Thee D10+ RPG system uses the concept of a skill hierarchy: a sort of capability tree where increasingly specialised areas of knowledge or activity branch off from a set of core skills. To try and keep this clear, we use three terms to indicate the different aspects of the skill hierarchy:, as follows.

- The term **skill** is used for any trained or learned capability that can be applied to attempt a task and perform a task check. A skill can be **standalone** or can be part of a skill hierarchy, called a **skillset**.
- A **skillset** is a grouping of related capabilities that rely on a common pool of knowledge or training, such as 'Firearms' or 'Engineering'. A skillset is still a skill in its own right and sets the minimum skill bonus for all, simple specialisms within that skillset. The skillset base skills sits at the root of a skill hierarchy and has a number of subordinate skills, or specialisms, dependent on it. When used in task checks the skillset root 's bonus can be used in place of any specialisms within that skillset – even if the character does not have any specific specialisms.
- **Specialisms** are subordinate skills, specific applications of a skillset that cover a discrete areas of knowledge and training within a skillset. A specialism can be seen as a skill within a skillset and are always shown with their parent skillset and a period, such as 'Firearms.Direct' and 'Firearms.Energy' or a specific item of equipment, such as 'Engineering.Drives' .

> **Design Note:** GMs can build their own skills, skillsets, specialisms and skill trees, but we provide a comprehensive skill tree that can provide for almost anything desired in *Antares D10+ RPG.*

> As a character develops more specialised skills in a skill hierarchy (or skill tree), the easier it is to develop those skills as the character is focusing on a subset of a whole area of knowledge. Whilst it is easier to develop a specialist area of knowledge, that learning is of no use when looking at a completely different speciality! Experience has shown that to avoid complications, two levels in a skill tree is more than enough for most circumstances.

Outside of weapon specialisms, each skill is uniquely named, whether standalone, skillset or specialism. Normally, though, standalone skills and skillsets are just shown on their own, such as 'Stealth' (a standalone skill) or 'Engineering' (a skillset) whilst specialisms are normally shown with both the skillset and specialism, as in 'Engineering.Power Plants'.

The level of skill is the skill bonus that applies to task checks. This level always follows the skill, such as 'Engineering+0' or 'Firearms.Energy+3'.

When looking at tasks relying on a root skill in a skillset or at a specialism, we use the lowest, most specialised skill value; only if there is no appropriate specialism is the skillset bonus used.

Skillset Maximum

The level of skill in a skillset cannot exceed the highest bonus of any of its specialisms: it can only be increased when a specialism is increased.

> *Example, a character with* Engineering+3 *and* Engineering.Drives+3 *could not increase their Engineering* **skillset** *bonus until they had increased one of the Engineering* **specialisms** *(in this case .Drives) to +4 or more.*

Simple and Complex Skills

There is also another classification that affects skill use: whether it is **simple** or **complex**. This reflects the basic knowledge that is required before they can be used.

- **Simple** skills can be used from the off and start with a +0 bonus – we assume our PCs are go-getters and have studied as much as they can of the world around them before embarking on their adventures. Athletics is one such skill, as is the standalone Repair skill: these would be shown as 'Athletics+0' and 'Repair+0'.
- **Complex** skills cannot be used until the character has received education or training as they are require detailed insight of a backbone of terminology and concepts to understand. As soon as they have a level of +0 or more, they can be used. A null ranking in a complex skill is shown with an 'X', as in 'Engineering+X' (from 'compleX').

Specialisms can be complex or simple, but most are simple, meaning they can be used as soon as the parent Skillset gets a bonus of +0 or more.

For example, a character acquiring 'Engineering+0' can use any of its Specialisms with a +0 bonus: 'Engineering. Power Plants', 'Engineering.Drives' and 'Engineering. Structure'.

There are a few specialisms that are complex skills in their own right; these complex specialisms cannot be used until the character has received training and gained a bonus in that specialism.

For example, the 'Melee' skillset is a simple skill and all characters can use most of its specialisms, such as Melee. Unarmed or Melee.Primitive.   However, one of its specialisms is 'Melee.Distort Spinner', the D-spinner being an exotic Algoryn weapon.

As the D-spinner is so rare and difficult to use, it is a complex skill: a character cannot use the Melee.Distort Spinner skill until they have received training and have a bonus in its use.

We will go into more detail about skills later.

Simple Specialism and Skillset Bonuses

A special case with a skillset and its specialisms is when a skillset bonus is acquired which is greater than the skill bonus for a subordinate specialism. As soon as the skillset bonus exceeds that of a simple specialism, the specialism's bonus is immediately set to that of the skillset.

In practice, this makes little difference to using the skillset's bonus rather than the specialism's, but makes a great deal of difference when learning new skills.

Design Note: If GMs wish, they can show the difference between a learned skill and a default minimum by surrounding the default with brackets, as in Melee+1, Melee. Unarmed+3 but Melee.Tools(+1).

For example, the Melee skillset has the specialisms Melee. Unarmed, Melee.Primitive and Melee.Tools. An Algoryn, Gye-Tcha, might learn Melee.Unarmed at +4, then Melee at +2. Immediately on doing so, they would implicitly acquire Melee.Primitive(+2) and Melee.Tools(+2) and may wish to annotate their character sheet to show such skills. However, as Melee.Distort Spinner is a complex specialism, their skill in it remains at zero until they can pick up some training – perhaps from an ex-Algoryn Assault Trooper.

Learned Complex Specialisms and Skillsets

In contrast to the above, a complex specialism does not automatically acquire a parent skillset's bonus as it needs to be learnt. However, as soon as even one point of skill bonus is learnt in a complex specialism, then the parent skillset's bonus applies.

For example, if we use Gye-Tcha from the example above, then we know he has a Melee.Distort Spinner at +X as it is a complex skill, despite his Melee+2. However, as soon as he joins the AI Reacver assault units and learns Melee.Distort Spinner+1, the skill is immediately boosted to +2 as he already has the parent skillset bonus Melee+2.

As soon as Gye-Tcha develops his Melee skill to +3 (perhaps by developing Melee.Unarmed to +6 first!), then all his underlying Melee specialisms would also increase to a minimum of +3.

EXAMPLE SKILL HIERARCHY

The diagram below illustrates one of the skill hierarchies, or skillsets. We've used the Melee skill set as it has a number of simple specialisms at +0 and a number of complex specialisms, which start off at +X, or no skill.

ASSIST BONUSES

A particular task may take place in a relatively friendly environment such as a university study, or may take place in a highly hostile environment such as a running battle through the corridors of a damaged ship. In such situations, the environment modifiers the target number, not the task DMs, and multiple such factors can be used for a given check. However, there may be other objects or facilities around on which the character can call and which also count as assist bonuses.

We'll go through each of these types of assist bonuses in a separate sub-section.

Other characters

A character skilled at climbing could help others scale a steep face by pointing out useful holds, warning about dangerous habits, or otherwise provide on-the-spot coaching. A character wishing to help another declares they are **assisting** and the skill they are using, often the same as the PC performing the task. The assisting character uses the same target number but uses their own skill and their **Em** characteristic bonus as if they were making the test themselves and makes a task check.

The assisting character then adds their level of success to the character attempting the skill check – which could end up being negative (so a superb result gives +4, a failure -1)! On the whole, only a single assist bonus can be applied but there are circumstances where multiple assist bonuses are possible, providing they are from completely different sources and approaches.

**Sample skill hierarchy:
the Melee skillset**

Melee+0
(Skillset root)

Melee.Unarmed+0
(Simple specialism)

Melee.Primitive+0
(Simple specialism)

Melee.Tools+0
(Simple specialism)

Melee.Distort Spinner+X
(Complex specialism)

Melee.Martial Art+X
(Complex specialism)
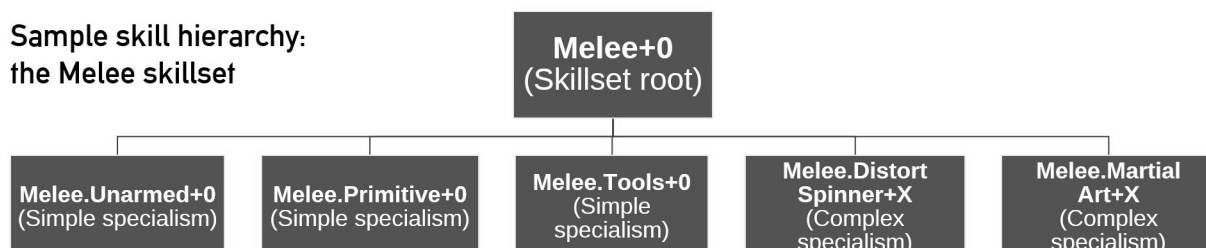
The Shen-Lat climber we used earlier as an example was being coached by an elder in their 'ared on the ground who had Athletics+3 as well as Brachiator(+3) and an Em of 6 (a +1 bonus) for a total of +7. The elder rolled a 7 on their D10, for a total of 14 – 3 above the target number. It was this roll and result that gave a +2 assist bonus to the Shen-Lat climber.

Equipment modifier

Good or poor tools or equipment can give a bonus dependent on the quality of the equipment used: -1 for poor tools, +1 to good tools. Note that some tasks cannot be performed without specialist equipment so an equipment modifier would only come from something really exceptional. Only one equipment modifier can ever apply to a task check.

Knowledgebase modifier

Research or investigative task modifiers are sometimes dependent on the presence of substantial local resources with advanced access – referred to here as knowledgebases.

A substantial local university library knowledgebase can assist with knowledge retrieval or even research skills (In-based tasks), providing an assist bonus of +1 to +3. These knowledgebases may be specialised such that for a specific specialism they may even provide an assist of up to +4, or may provide a local bonus of +2 or +3 for a specialism when the general bonus from that, specific knowledgebase might be only +1.

Only one knowledgebase modifier can ever apply to a task check – and only if the task would surely benefit from such information.

A GM may go into as much details as they wish about the bonuses available to local universities, but in general we recommend Spill and Algoryn universities are +1, IMTel and Freeborn universities +2, and IMTel shard capitol- or admin hub- based IMTel universities at +3.

Example: An advanced Spill technical university might have a knowledgebase giving a general bonus of +0. However, due to the specific subjects taught at the university, it might have a +1 bonus in Engineering and a specific Engineering.Structure assist of +2.

A typical Concord or Isorian university would have a knowledgebase bonus of +2, or +3 at shard capitols.

Design Note: It's worth noting that the Isorian Gatebuilder Institute has a general knowledgebase of +3 but a +4 bonus for Gatebuilder studies (recorded as:
'Knowledgebase(Gatebuilder)+4').

Mind you, investigations over Gatebuilder background and knowledge are notoriously difficult (-4) so the bonus just about evens the score!

Common Language Table		
Language	**Spoken by**	**Details**
PanHuman	**All, bar: Ghar, Retrograde Spill, new Ferals**	
		A language modified by the IMTel from the original Isorian language used by panhumans across the ages. It is flexible, strongly structured and can be extremely precise. A dialect is also spoken by panhumans in the Isorian Senatex and understood by the Tsan Ra, though not spoken by them. As the most widely-spoken language, it is also used as a common language by the Freeborn.
Tsan	**Tsan Ra**	A complex language involving mouth-part clicks, reception and limb posturing and pheremonal transmission. It was developed by the Tsan Ra in Senatex employ and is no doubt distinctly different from the Tsan Kiri language. It is a highly efficient and nuanced language enabling rapid and rich communication between Tsan Ra. All Tsan Ra have Language(Tsan) and Understand(PanHuman), but can only Understand() other languages except those with .
Boromite	**Boromite only (mostly speak)**	
		A highly secretive, nuanced and complex language based on the Boromite vocal folds and ability to make rumbling and clicking sounds as well as the more common voiced, aspirated and consonant sounds that most panhumans can create. Boromites who serve at least one complete term in Boromite society automatically acquire Speak(Boromite), though they may understand a few sigils. Only Guildesses, Overseers, senior leaders, Matriarchs, Rockfathers and members of the Guild of the Under Fallen tend to develop a full understanding and how to read and write the rune-like script of the Boromites.
Algoryn	**All within the Algoryn Prosperate**	
		All Algoryn and all Algoryn Prosperate PCs begin with Language(Algoryn) and, possibly, the language of the non-Algoryn planet in the Prosperate on which they were brought up. Non-Algoryn NPCs within the Prosperate often do not acquire any knowledge of the language.
Ghar	**Ghar**	The majority of Ghar do not speak any other language except Ghar. By orders of the Supreme Commander, Ghar from Commander hatcheries undergo a crash-course in Language(PanHuman) to give them a basic way of interrogating panhumans.
Vardarin	**Freeborn; Traders on all worlds with Freeborn contact**	
		A simple language developed by Freeborn as a means of communicating with those in undeveloped systems. Among themselves, Freeborn are most likely to use PanHuman, switching to Vardarin only for trade. It is a deliberately simple language, and easy to pick up by panhumans. Its drawback is that as a language constructed to enable trade and barter, it can struggle with any abstracts and concepts beyond that focus.

IMTel modifier

The IMTel can provide a bonus to those in its faction for Intellect based tasks checks such as Comms, Sensors, Space Science(Astrophysics), Astrogation and Remotes. This only applies to those IMTel citizens with **MyIMTel implants** or who are **NuHu** (see the *Player's Guide* and *Guide to the Universe* for details on NuHu).

The bonuses are:

- +1 for an IMTel nanosphere such as that on a scout or survey ship or a ship up to about cruiser size and small cities;
- +2 for an IMTel with access to advanced research facilities such as a research ship, a substantial sized orbital or a large city.

Only one IMTel modifier should ever be applied to a task check and only if it is clear such a bonus would be helpful. It cannot be used in conjunction with a knowledgebase bonus.

LANGUAGES AS A SKILL

Note: We must stress this section is optional.

Whether or not the GM should include the language difficulties by Antares travellers is purely down to personal preference. These language rules can be considered optional, though there are some circumstances where secret languages should be allowed.

A character is always able to speak and understand one language – their own – and may be able to speak and understand others. We assume that knowledge of a language also includes the ability to read and write that language (if it has a written component).

Each languages can be seen as discrete, complex skill recorded separately from the rest and are often referred to as 'Language(<language>)' without a skill bonus. If a character can understand a language but not speak it, we just use the term 'Understand(<language>)' and if a character can speak and understand a language but not read nor write it, we use the term 'Speak(<language>)', as in: 'Understand(PanHuman)' or 'Speak(Boromite)'.

Additional Languages

The languages listed are varied enough to give a flavour of Antarean life to the game. However, it is possible to add more variety to the game and have skill bonuses in each Language, – though this can make play slow, at times. Who knows, though: your campaign may want to make a great deal of the different languages in the Antarean universe. If so, some local dialects could be added, such as for the disparate Spill nations and their dependent territories, and often the local the PCs are talking to will provide a skill assist to the PCs talking to them as they try to understand what the 'star dwellers' are saying.

Design Note: Of course, the IMTel languages are never specialised as the IMTel goes to great pains to ensure they are kept in sync with each other. Vardarin may sound different between Spill-based Freeborn, Concord-based Freeborn and Senatex-based Freeborn, but the basic language of trade is carefully nurtured by the Freeborn to be common across the Nexus, and such variations are little more than local accent. Similarly, the Algoryn are fiercely protective of their culture and the Office of the Algoryn Language ensures its consistency and usage across the Prosperate worlds.

Whilst there are millions of languages and dialects, the primary languages are as described in the Common Language table, opposite.

As an example of a complex nation with multiple languages, we're use the old Spill nation of Effmera and its 16 subservient systems. The closest of those systems have been in the nation for about 600 years, so have adopted the Effmeran language for their own. The newest additions still speak their own languages from the 4th, 5th and 6th Ages of Antares, whilst three others are relatively new and are still speaking a strong variant of the Effmeran language.

Skills-wise, this would be:
the Effmeran language;
a number of completely independent, local languages;
three specialisms of Effmeran to represent the dialects:
Language(Effmera.Torotan),
Language(Effmera.Laranasan),
Language(Effmera.Bhentian).
This is, however, a rather extreme example!

TRAITS AND FATE

Traits reflect the innate factors in a character's physiological or psychological make-up, or in their social engineering, that enable them to do something that few other characters or species are capable of emulating, no matter what skills they have. Such traits are typically due to a character's background or genetics, but a character may acquire a trait as a result of something they do in the game.

The vagaries of Luck and Fate can be governed by a simple mechanic that acts in a similar fashion to a trait by adding something new to a character's capabilities.

TRAITS

The skill bonus given by a trait should never be counted when learning new skills and should never be counted towards the skill limits in the Prior Experience mini-game.

When using a trait, a player should state the trait they are using and how it affects their task check: only a single trait can apply, however,

Analysis(+n)

Anyone with the Analysis trait gains the stated bonus on any task requiring active analytical skills, typically science-based skills. However, it might also apply to specific applications of other skills such as Astrogation or some aspects of Engineering – to name just two – could well benefit from an Analysis() bonus.

The panhuman Vyess are specifically geneered as analysts. Whilst their creators, the NuHu, had hoped for more, exceptional and empathic analysts is what they achieved. As a result, all Vyess have Analysis(+2).

Brachiator(+n)

This is the ability to move through a tree-strewn by swinging from branches, vines or lianas. A character with the brachiation trait (such as the Shen-Lat) may move through a wood or jungle at their normal Mv rate. Brachiators also gain a bonus when climbing, the bonus given in brackets.

Contact()

This is not a physical trait but a list of influential individuals or groups upon which the character can call for a favour, or for information, transport, specialist goods or almost anything else that is considered reasonable by both the GM and players. Algoryn have contacts within mochs allied to their own, as well as more junior mochs under the umbrella of their own moch – in which case Contact(Mochs) is stated rather than list them all!

Some events during character creation (chargen) or during play result in a Contact amongst a given faction or in a line of work. These are non-player characters who may end up being invoked during play or which the GM may wish to use as patrons or enemies. In general, events picked up during chargen or play should be given a summary background

Contact with their species, faction and other allegiances such as Guild, Moch or House (vardos) and, if friendly, roughly what information or equipment they may be able to offer characters.

Friendly Contacts are sometimes just referred to as 'Contacts' during character generation. High ranking officials and senior contacts have Soc 10 or more and a suitable grade to go with it; if friendly they may also act as sponsors for the adventurers to a suitable patron or even act as patrons, themselves.

Hostile Contacts are potentially a character's nemesis, causing problems when they are encountered or even acting as the opponent on a mission. These are best used sparingly, but when they are used the character who knows them might have an inkling about their past or background which could identify a weakness.

Exude(<type>)

Some creatures, such as Ghar commanders, emit pheromones that allow them to exert strong control over inferior Ghar, as in 'Exude(Ghar Command)'. Other creatures like Tsan have a language that is accented by the pheromones they produce, as in 'Exude(pheromones)'. Of course, there could be more extreme examples of scent that could be produce!

Fly(Mv {, Ag n, environment}):

This is only given to those who can truly fly and change direction, speed and control their flight, the speed at which they move is given in brackets and, if appropriate, their Ag whilst flying is also shown. If the beast can only fly in a given environment, such as Null-g, then the environment is given.

> *For example, some ancient, space-borne species have such a degenerate musculature that they can only really fly in low- or null-g environments but not in any serious gravity. As a result, their Fly trait is given as 'Fly(+1, Ag 7, Low-G)'. It is assumed that a creatures needs an atmosphere to be able to fly!*

Ghar Weapons(+n)

This is a trait exclusive to Ghar reflecting their genetic memory. It gives them the stated bonus when using any Ghar-built weaponry, both when rolling to hit and when calculating damage from the weapon.

Glide(Mv bonus {, Ag n}{, environment})

Similar to fly, but rather than full control the species is at the mercy of the atmosphere and air currents. The first factor is their move or move bonus when gliding; the second, if stated, their Agility when doing so; and the third, if stated, the environment in which they can glide.

> *For example, Scollbats can glide but whilst doing so have little control over their direction so have a trait as 'Glide(+2, Ag 3).*

Gnarly(+n)

This is given to those creatures who have a tough skin or exoskeletal structure that helps boost their resistance or damage from weapons or accidents. This bonus acts as an increase to a character's Structural armour value (see the GM Guide for details on armour).

Boromites have a Gnarly(+3) bonus, as do species like the Askar.

Leap(+n)

Some creatures, such as Askar, have legs that are especially capable at making jumps whilst others may have natural abilities that enhance a particular activity.

Askar have the trait Leap(+2), giving them a bonus on jumps but not on any other physical activity.

Miner(+n)

Boromite males have the Miner(+1) trait as it is intrinsic to their culture – there are rumours mining skills were built into their genetic memory at their initial creation, but this has never been scientifically confirmed – their genetic code is complex enough as it is! The Miner() trait grants the stated bonus to all Mining checks and, optionally, on any subsequent ore checks, irrespective of the Mining specialism used.

NuHu(<faction>)

The NuHu character is flooded with nanospore from birth and is intimately connected with the nanosphere around them, not needing normal holographic or tactile interfaces to call up images or control devices. The <faction> in brackets indicates that political unit to which they are aligned: Concord, Senatex, Renegade or Freeborn.

Freeborn NuHu are sometimes regarded as Rogue, but are, in reality, strongly attached to their Freeborn house. A Renegade NuHu is one who used to belong to one of the other factions but has now gone their own way and is treated as a hostile agent by all others: such NuHu may have other tricks up their sleeve! Concord and Senatex IMTels are hostile to each other such that a NuHu from one cannot easily survive in a nanosphere of the other.

The benefits of being a NuHu are many and diverse, though we list a few common situations here:

- NuHu are able to control friendly devices in their own nanosphere with just a thought, such as a suspensor field or communication via the nanosphere.
- An IMTel NuHu gains an additional +1 bonus to the normal IMTel assist bonus of +1, so that it becomes +2 when in their own IMTel's nanosphere. Even with a limited IMTel nanosphere, such as that from their μ-nano buddy, then the NuHu can use an IMTel assist bonus, though it is only +1.
- Freeborn and Renegade NuHu also gain an automatic +1 assist for information recall or potential assists from the local nanosphere. Freeborn NuHu can also create a nanosphere isolation barrier between themselves and an unfriendly nanosphere (but not against a saturated hostile nanosphere for very long!).
- When being treated by an ally connected to their shard, the NuHu also receives a +1 bonus on Medic checks performed on them.

- All characters with the NuHu trait gain a +1 bonus to any Nanospore.Control check.
- NuHu can generate their own nanosphere by using a nano-buddy (see Equipment, below).

Regrow

Species such as the Gyohn and Ghar recover from injury much faster than baseline panhumans but tend to scar when doing so. Any species with the Regrow trait can recover from **physical** injuries – even serious injuries –50% quicker than normal but may be subject to scarring.

Rough Fighter(+n)

Rough Fighter() grants the stated bonus to any skills used in Melee to give them an advantage – including damage!

All Krasz receive the Rough Fighter(+2) trait as they are bred to survive and conflict on a highly dangerous world.

Rugged (<environment>+<amount>{, repeated})

Some individuals such as Boromites can survive in vacuum or irradiated environments for a while with minimal effects or even tolerate extreme heat or cold (though Boromites find heat more uncomfortable than cold regimes).

Boromites tend to be Rugged(+3), gaining a significant bonus to survival even in zero-G or vacuum.

A specific environmental effect can be stated, such as radiation for a while, as in 'Rugged(radiation +3)' for Algoryn, the Krasz with their 'Rugged(shock+3)' or some arctic-adapted panhumans with 'Rugged(cold+3)'. These bonuses can only be used on rolls to resist the deleterious effects of such effects or allow the character to last longer before taking En tests to survive the environment or effect.

Ghar have Rugged as they are a peculiar chimera of DNA from both human and multiple creatures – hence their broodmasters (a hatchery supervisor) needing skills in both Biology and Xenobiology! This has given them some remarkable capabilities such as Rugged(radiation +3, disease +6) as well as Regrow.

Sense(<sense type>+n)

The values for sense type are typically : scent, sound, sight, touch, taste, and pheromones of a particular type.

A large part of communication for some creatures such as Tsan Ra is through pheromones whilst others have enhanced hearing or sight. Whilst a Tsan might not know what another creature is saying when it emits a scent of some kind, it can certainly detect the pheromones emitted by another.

Where the sense gives a bonus to a sensory task, the bonus is provided, such as 'Sense(scent+2, sound+2, sight+2)' for a Hükk hunter or 'Sense(sight+3)' for a Hantale. Junior Ghar all have the 'Sense(Ghar)' trait which incorporates pheromones and voice frequencies and may make them almost automatically obey a Ghar more senior to themselves.

Spinal Plugs

These are not a trait but an augment that allows Ghar to control their equipment, vehicles and battlesuits from their control couches.

LUCK AND FATE

There is one, last aspect of a player character (PC) – and only a PC – that we should track, and this is Fate Points. Sometimes things go badly through no fault of their own, and a character could risk becoming killed just because of an unlucky die roll. Fate Points are a way of managing the extremes of luck and fate that a PC may encounter.

Luckily, PCs are special individuals in a universe and often have a knack of coming up with something important at the last moment.

Each scenario should be given a number of Fate points depending on how difficult the scenario is to accomplish. An easy scenario may have just one Fate point, a deadly one three or even four Fate points. Each character receives this number of Fate points to be used in that scenario only.

Fate points do not carry over from one scenario to another. Once spent, the Fate point is used up for the scenario.

Using Fate Points

Fate points are used during play simply by a player stating they are using one of their character's Fate points. A single Fate point can be used to invoke one of the following actions:

- have a character gain access to one of their contacts to provide crucial information or equipment. This should not be misused and the results have to be up to the GM: players shouldn't use it to completely resolve the scenario, for example, but could use it to gain some vital survival equipment for an adventure on an ice-bound world.
- add +4 to a single task check, including combat. This must be stated before the player rolls the dice.
- alter one roll by one degree of success: from mishap to failure, perhaps, or from Normal Failure to Normal Success.
- keep a character alive but unconscious (see the Combat chapter, later). At the point all three of their physical characteristics reach zero, a PC may spend a point of Fate to set one of their characteristics to one and ignore further damage. This leaves them unconscious but prevents any further damage from this attack being carried over to their Dying Track and causing a serious injury: they have been extremely lucky! Of course, this will not stop a subsequent attack from causing more damage and taking them down the Dying track – luckily, most NPCs will avoid shooting a character who is no longer a threat (see the chapter on combat for details).

Design Note: We are aware that Fate Points can be a controversial addition to a set of rules amongst role-focused players. We recommend that GMs discuss with their players at the start of a campaign whether or not they should allow the use of Fate Points to alter the game (so PCs affect the game results and keep their character alive) or just allow the winds of fate to take a PC (which adds a level of danger to an encounter).

SKILLS

Antares is a unique universe and the standard skills in other SF RPG universes do not really apply. This chapter outlines the skills important in Antares – though a GM may create their own – and highlights how they should be used.

> **Gameplay:** At first glance it may seem from this chapter as if there are a lot of skills in use in the *Antares RPG*. However, in practice, each individual character will focus on a few skills and the skill tree system keeps players focused on what is important to their character: they just use the root skills. If it helps, just run through the root skills and skillsets

SKILL USAGE

Simple Skill starting value

Simple skills start off at +0, meaning a character can use them with no real penalty. Such skills are commonplace such as Repair or Athletics.

Complex Skill starting value

Complex skills are given the '+X' (for compleX) rating and **cannot** be used until the character has at least a +0 bonus in the skill. Engineering+X is the best example of a complex skill, but may science skills fall into the same category: who would know how to fix anything on a starship until they had training? Once a base skillset has a bonus of +0, then all the dependent simple Specialisms can also be used at +0.

INCREASING SKILLS

All skills are improved incrementally, from the starting value to +1, then +2 and so on. The starting value could be +X (for complex skills) or +0.

As soon as a Specialism in a complex Skillset acquires a bonus of +1 or greater, the parent Skillset's bonus becomes +0. All the other, simple skills in that Skillset can now be used. In effect, the character knows enough about the subject to make it usable, even if they do not know very much about it.

> *For example, during character creation a character might gain Pilot.Ship+2. Immediately they do so, they also change the +X on the Pilot skill to a +0 bonus to show it can be used for the Shuttle and Personal Specialisms.*
>
> *Later on, they may elect to learn Astrophysics, a Physical Science Specialism. Their skill would increase to Phys Sc.Astrophysics+1 and immediately their Physical Science skill would be +0, allowing it to be used for Phys Sc.Chemistry and Phys Sc.Drones. However, they still could not use the Phys Sc.Gatebuilder skill as it is a complex skill and requires explicit training.*

Skill Origins (Optional)

Occasionally, where a skill was learnt – its origin – may be important. This reflects the fact that a character from a pre-industrial background might struggle to operate a machine or weapon from the nanosphere age.

This is best managed through an 'origin' penalty on a skill check. The most common 'unfamiliar' or 'unknown origin' penalty is Hard (-2). However, for really different technology, such as a human character trying to give first aid to a Vorl, a Tough (-4) penalty is not unreasonable.

Once a character has spent two months or more operating equipment or dealing with individuals from an origin other than that in which they are familiar, they can add the equipment's origin to their skill.

> *For example, a Concord character with the skill* Operations.Comms(Concord)+1 *could develop their origins to* Operations,Comms(Concord, Freeborn)+1 *after two months aboard the Freeborn ship.*

Where an origin is important, it is listed in the initial bonus line in the skill or skillset description, as in the faction and technology origins below. However, use of origins is completely optional and as wide or narrow as the GM and players wish.

A full set of general and specific technology levels can be found in the *Equipment Guide*. Here, we'll just run through two, possible applications of the origin penalty.

Origin: Faction Technology Level

This is a fine-grained approach to technology origins.

A faction technology level (FTL, as opposed to ftl for faster-than-light) simply lists the faction or the FTL code in which the skill was acquired, as in:

> **Initial bonus: +0 (Simple, Ghar)**
>
> or
>
> **Initial bonus: +0 (Simple, DXGE)**

This indicates the skill is simple, so has a +0 starting bonus, but is tied to a particular faction – in this case Ghar Empire (DXGE) – where the skills were acquired.

Possible factions are Ghar, Concord, Isorian, Freeborn, Advanced Spill and so on, and the GM may wish to add their own. A more complete list of faction technology levels can be found in the *Equipment Guide*.

Origin: General Technology Level

A general technology level (GTL) reflects a broad basis for a faction or number of faction's technology. A GTL origin is listed in the same way as a FTL or faction origin, as in:

> **Initial bonus: +X (Complex, IMTel)**
>
> or
>
> **Initial bonus: +X (Complex, N)**

This indicates a complex skill that should take the level of technology in the character's background as an origin - here IMTel or nanosphere (N).

Example general technology levels are:

- **IMTel** which covers all devices for the great IMTel nations. Whilst they use slightly different interfaces, the two great IMTel nations use fundamentally the same underlying technology and approaches. In practice, IMTel is really a specialisation of nanosphere technology, however, so it may make sense in many games to use faction-specific (FTL) codes, instead.
- **Nanosphere** which covers the technology, communication systems and other devices for the advanced nations, including Freeborn, Vorl, Algoryn and Boromites.

> *For example, it could that an Algoryn based campaign has 'Algoryn' as an origin, though the principles are fundamentally the same as Freeborn as well as similar to that used by Boromite (though Boromites might have repaired theirs hundreds of times over the preceding centuries), leading to characters from those two factions being able to use Algoryn technology with little hindrance. Characters from IMTel backgrounds might struggle, however, and suffer the -2 origin penalty.*

- **Digital** which not only covers equipment from Earth's 21st century but also electricity based communications and devices from Earth's mid-20th century. The most frequent factions using such technology are Retrograde Spill.

> **Gameplay:** There is more detail on general and faction technology origins in the *Equipment Guide.* Origins are very much an optional rule and can be as fine- or broad-grained as you wish, and may be mixed.
>
> Key is that a GM should use (or not use) origin penalties as appropriate for the style of game they wish to run: if you wish to ignore origins completely in your game, that's fine!

Which Skill Bonus?

With **standalone** skills and **specialisms**, just use the skill bonus as it stands, whether it is complex or simple.

> *For example, we would use an Athletics+1 bonus when attempting a jump, or an Ops.Sensors+2 bonus when scanning a ship for inhabitants.*

With **skillsets**, the root skillset's bonus may be used when attempting any of the underlying, simple Specialisms for which there is a lesser bonus.

> *For example, a character attempting to repair a failing reactor might have Engineering+1 and Engineering. Drives+2 but no skill bonus in Engineering.Power Plants, other than the basic +0: instead, they would use their Engineering+1 skill bonus.*

Complex specialisms cannot use the root skill as it is the specialism's skill that is important.

> *For example, a character may know Melee+1 but would not be able to use it when handling a Distort Spinner as Melee.D-Spinner it is a complex Specialism: the character's skill rating is still 'Melee.Distort Spinner+X'.*

LEARNING NEW SKILLS

Players can take time out during play to develop new skills, but it can take considerable effort and resources to do so. Learning time for a skill increase is typically in months, even with advanced learning tools available to Antarean societies.

Training assumes time fairly well dedicated to learning with only the occasional, short period of interruption or break.

We suggest the following guidelines:

- **Improving an attribute permanently** takes three months plus one month per point to which the character is increasing their characteristic – if it can be increased.

> *For example, increasing St from 5 to 6 takes 3 months + 6 months = 9 months.*

- **Each step increase in a skillset** root skill takes one **year plus one year** per accumulated target point to develop.

> *For example, developing Engineering from being unskilled (Engineering-X) to Engineering+0 takes a year, improving to Engineering+1 from Engineering+0 takes two years and developing Engineering+1 to Engineering+2 takes four years – 1 + 1 for Engineering+1 and 2 for Engineering+2, and so on.*

- **Each step increase in a simple skill or in a specialism for a simple skillset** (such as Athletics, Presence.Carouse or Firearm.Projectile) takes six months plus six months per accumulated target point. The parent skillset must already be at a +0 bonus or above.
- **Each step increase in a complex skill or a specialism in a complex skillset** takes six months of training and practice plus a year per accumulated target point. The parent skillset must be at a +0 bonus or above.

> Engineering.Drives +1 *takes 18 months to reach, providing the character already has Engineering+0 or higher: 6 months + 1 year for the single specialism bonus in a complex skillset. In contrast,* Firearm.Projectile+1 *takes only a year: 6 months + 6 months for the +1.*
>
> *Similarly,* Athletics+2 *is a simple skill so takes 6 months plus (1+2)×6 months = 2 years to develop.*

Adjusting Training Times

These times can be shortened depending on what is available. Total any of the following if they are available:

A trainer with the relevant skill can act as a lecturer or mentor and make an Assist with the relevant skill. The lecturer must have double the skill to which they intend to teach the student (so a student at Engineering+1 aiming to gain Engineering +2 must find a tutor with Engineering +4). The length of time learning is reduced (or extended!) by the level of success × 10%.

In advanced societies learning or training aids such as access to suitable study material and knowledgebases, neuroassisted learning, somatic and neuronal stimulation, IMTel guided learning and proprioreceptor linkage can also reduce the amount of time taken. IMTel societies have all these and can reduce learning time by another 20-30%, depending on the presence of a dedicated learning facility such as a university; highly advanced societies like the Freeborn can grant a further

20% reduction; and societies like the advanced Spill societies, or the Boromite and Algoryn by 10%. The training would all have to take place within the same institution, the bonus disappearing if the character moves elsewhere.

Short breaks of up to a month add 10% to the time required. Characters can mitigate this by studying whilst travelling aboard suitably equipped ships (a Concord liner, for example) for much of the break.

Long breaks of up to three months must add the time taken on the break as well as 10% to the time required. The 10% can be mitigated as for short breaks.

'In the Field' training takes twice as long as the times stated above as training must be accompanied by practical experience. Such training typically involves a great deal of practical experience, or experience in visiting places or developing contacts.

All skill increases to +5 or more must be carried out 'In the Field' – whatever field is appropriate, which may involve university or research resource – as there is a great deal of practical research and application that must be performed. Commerce is a skill that can only be increased through developing contacts and actually participating in trade.

Breaks longer than three months mean the training has to be abandoned and lost.

The GM could elect to reduce or extend the time taken due to special circumstances, perhaps because physical skills are to be favoured in the campaign, for example, or because some societies may not have suitable study materials available.

WEAPON SKILLSETS

These are split into **Melee, Firearm, Support** and **Gunnery**, reflecting their general usage: hand-to-hand; skirmishes; localised conflict; those useful for field support weapons and artillery; and those skills for use on spaceships.

Melee skills typically require St as a characteristic, though some unarmed skills and lighter unarmed weapons may be able to use Ag. The Firearm skills almost always require Ag to shoot. Manipulated, lighter support weapons like Ghar disruptor cannon require Ag, but most support weapons require In if remote controlled – primitive weapons might even require St to load!

Gunnery is for shipboard weapons and can only use a characteristic when the situation is appropriate, such as acting as Gunnery officer on the bridge of a starship or when a Ghar lays a pattern of quantum gravity explosions to trap an enemy.

Grenade throwing is typically covered under the Athletics skill and could use either Ag (for accuracy) or St (for range) as a characteristic.

Melee Skillset

Initial bonus: +0 (Simple)

Melee skills are largely focused into a single unarmed or close-quarters combat skill or into general areas such as workface tools, for Boromites, or control devices for animal handlers or a few specialist melee weapons.

Simple Melee specialisms are as follows:

- **Melee.Unarmed+0** which not only assumes the use of basic hand-to-hand combat techniques, but also short blades, daggers, micro-grenades, x-slings and similar close-combat weapons in melee.
- **Melee.Primitive+0** covers the use of longer bladed weapons such as shorts and long swords, spears, pikes, axes, mauls and such. It is also used for many primitive, thrown weapons.
- **Melee.Tools+0** which includes all modern tools for mining such as tractor mauls and compactors. The specialism also includes the use of more specialised tool-weapon hybrids used in animal handling such as maglashes, lectro lashes and lances, and other devices specifically meant to control a creature or individual through sensation such as pain. Virai also use this skill for their workaday fusion cutters and terrifying ripclaws and Ghar for their various claw devices.

Complex Melee specialisms are:

- **Melee.Distort Spinner+X**, a unique Algoryn weapon with multiple modes used by their assault troops.
- **Melee.Martial Art+X**, any of a number of specific martial arts that use Ag as a bonus instead of St. The term 'martial Art' could be replaced by the name of the specific art if it is important for game play: it is still a complex skill!

Firearm Skillset

Initial bonus: +0 (Simple)

We use the term 'Firearm' to refer to easily portable longarms and pistols as a group, and not strictly those weapons which use explosive chemical propellants. It should be used when shooting and maintaining the weapon or, at a pinch, knowing enough to construct one (with the right materials).

Simple Firearm specialisms are:

- **Firearm.Projectile+0** for use with mag weapons and similar rail- or gauss weapons, Vorl suspensor-based projectile weapons, and also the more primitive chemical- or gas- propellant short-ranged weapons such as revolvers and Ghar lugger pistols and lugger guns. It is also the skill used by many Ghar battlesuit drivers to operate the various Ghar weapons such as a scourer cannon and gouger gun.
- **Firearm.Energy+0** is for use with plasma-firing or ionisation weapons as well as for energy weapons that operate with a continuous beam such as fusion weapons. It is also used for the strange, Antarean compression weapons which take a moment to cause damage and which have different effects at difference ranges.
- **Firearm.Indirect+0** is used for overhead launched munitions such as that fired by the micro-x or attachments to a mag rifle.

Complex Firearm specialisms are:

- **Firearm.Xantu Duelling Pistol+X** which is a highly tailored pistol built for, and normally only operable by, a single, specific user.
- **Firearm.NuHu Stave+X** which is the short ranged weapon used by NuHu to focus energy-carrying nanospore.
- **Firearm.Phase+X** for the phase rifle, the unique, time-shifting weapon used by enhanced Isorian snipers.

  Skill Limits: Isorian Phase weapons such as the phase rifle also require additional Isorian control implants to be operated.

There are potentially many more such complex specialisms, but the precise skills are given in the equipment chapter.

> *For example, Ysseth has Ag 6 and is armed with a plasma pistol. She shoots at a Spill raider who has just charged through a doorway. Her skill with Firearm.Energy is +1 which, when added to her Ag bonus yields a total of +2. She rolls the dice, getting a 9: adding her +2 to this equals 11, a success: she has hit!*

> **Design Note:** Whilst different in usage and construction, Vorl weapons still fit into the above categories. Players could argue that a period of adjustment is required before Vorl weapons can be used in all their modes: panhumans are not used to combining energy or field strength with their plasma carbines as a Vorl Fire Warrior might be with their own plasma weapons – and vice versa.

Support Skillset

Initial bonus: +X (Complex)

The Support skillset is for light support and heavy battlefield weapons and artillery. The larger weapons typically require the In stat bonus as, despite being controlled by holographic or digital interfaces, the skill level depends on the make of the equipment and proper target selection.

Simple Support specialisms are:

- **Support.Indirect+0** for OH firing weapons such as x-howitzers and mag mortars, as well as the missiles and rockets used by some Spill civilisations but which are too easily shot down by the advanced nations. It is also used for Ghar disruptor bombers and heavy disruptor cannon.
- **Support.Projectile+0**, for non-energy, direct fire weapons such as mag cannon, primitive chemical-propellant weapons and Ghar disruptor and bomber cannon.
- **Support.Energy+0** for plasma weaponry and other energy weapons which require very different training than the other direct-fire artillery. This also includes fractal weapons such as fractal demolitions and breaching cannon (DBC), the Boromite frag borers and compression support weapons.

> **Design Note:** This is the first time we've come across the simple specialisms of a complex skillset. This means that once the skillset is developed to +0 or greater, the underlying, simple specialisms can be used as well – but not before.

Gunnery Skillset

Initial bonus: +X (Complex)

The Gunnery Skillsets are for shipboard or anti-ship weapons and also include their use in area defence, ortillery mode, or as turreted or spinal weapons including their use as bay weapons. In is typically used to handle the gunnery interface.

Simple Gunnery specialisms are:

- **Gunnery.AD+0** is for any area defence turret as the capabilities in such roles, mag, chemical, rail and plasma weapons are largely merged as they operate in a very similar fashion. Repairing such an AD system may allow the use of Gunnery.Direct skills, as well as Gunnery.AD.
- **Gunnery.Direct+0** deals with all direct fire ship mounted weapon systems, whether turret mounted, fixed or spinally mounted. These include Mag, X-, gauss or coil weapons,

plasma, coherent energy, laser or similar technology, and even chemical propellant weapons. It is also the skill used by the Ghar to fire their quantum gravity generators and shipboard scourers.

- **Gunnery.Launched+0** refers to the launching of semi-intelligent missiles (including chaff missiles or nanoswarm missiles), intelligent survey, sensor or battlefield drones (all around 20-30m long), or for launching spikes. It is also used by Ghar for their shipboard disruptor bomb launchers.

NON-COMBAT SKILLS

Astrogation Skill

Initial bonus: +X (Complex)

Astrogation is a strange skill in the universe of Antares as it encompasses the practical problems associated with guiding a ship around obstacles at velocities ranging from simple gravity affects to near-light speed flight and the knowledge and practical awareness of Antarean gates and Antarean travel. Starship navigators have the Astrogation skill.

If your campaign requires such detail, Astrogation can be promoted to a skillset and specialised into discrete regions of Antares, such as **Astrogation.Determinate** or **Astro-gation. Northern Interface**.

Athletics Skill

Initial bonus: +0 (Simple)

Athletics covers a range of full-body, agility- and strength-based physical skills and activities. This consists of a number of activities which are not split into specialisms. The most useful of these activities are:

Tumble, the ability to move through or past objects and items in a space in complex ways: parkour could be considered a version of this in an urban environment. This could be used to avoid an incoming blow or object. Failure, of course, means the impact is taken full on!

Jump or **Leap**, the ability to make longer or higher leaps than normal.

Climb, which, from an onlooker's perspective, is the ability to make complex ascents look easy. Sometimes classed a sport, the vast range of biomes around Antares means the ability to climb into or out of trouble can be the difference of life or death.

Of course, once a transmat is placed at the top of a cliff, most other individuals attempting the climb need not make a climb check at all!

Commerce Skill

Initial bonus: +X (Complex)

This is a key skill in Freeborn society and involves the negotiation and arrange of fair deals and trades, whether in services or goods, who to go to, how to approach them, even how to construct the goods, where sponsors might be found and even what might be considered an insult or affront in regards to trades and mercantile transactions. It also includes knowledge of stocks, shares and trading on worlds which are not post-scarcity.

Commerce is a complex skill primarily due to the sheer amount of knowledge and number of even passing contact required: whilst anyone can trade using a bit of persuasion and

looking for contacts, a skilled Freeborn with the Commerce skill knows or knows how to acquire much of the information without looking too hard.

A panhuman acquiring the Commerce skill at +0 or higher also acquires **Language(Vardarin)**, the common trade language of Antares.

> **Learning Constraints:** Training in Commerce must be done 'In the Field', so takes twice as long as any other skill.
> **Skill Limit:** Commerce cannot be increased beyond +5.

Demolitions Skill
Initial bonus: +X (Complex)

Demolitions doesn't just involve a knowledge of explosives and how to build and use them, but also the other methods of destroying buildings, mining or causing big explosions or focused fractal fracturing. It is commonly found amongst Boromites and military personnel.

Drive Skillset
Initial bonus: +0 (Simple)

Drive is an uncommon civilian skillset on most nanosphere worlds as the majority of vehicles are drone controlled and only military personnel develop the capability. Nonetheless, most vehicles can be driven after a few moments spent working out the controls (the GM may suggest a more extended period of time for a vehicle completely different to a PC's own culture).

Simple Drive specialisms are:

- **Drive.Suspensored+0** which focuses on the heavier suspensored vehicles and transports seen in Isorian or Concord space and also includes the platforms used by Boromites for ore (and personnel) transport. It also enables an individual to ride the lighter one- or two- person skimmers which are sometimes used on the battlefield, such as Concord Interceptors, Isorian Pulse Bikes or even mercenary Dragoon skimmers. Balance is a key aspect of such a driving skill so Ag is often used as a characteristic bonus, but with the heavier skimmers In to anticipate problems is a viable alternative.
- **Drive.Seacraft+0** for boats, rafts, canoes and other water-born vehicles. Whilst this could be split into many different types (sail, engine, skulled, etc), such specialisms are best left as Origins, perhaps, for specific campaigns.

Complex Drive specialisms include:

- **Drive.Primitive+X** used for rare wheeled and tracked devices as well as crawlers. The Handler skillset is used for vehicles pulled by creatures.
- **Drive.Battle Armour+X**, which is reserved for handling one of the unique battlesuits the Ghar produce.

> **Skill Limits:** Even non-Ghar with the **Drive.Battle Armour** skill can't use the suits unless they are small enough to fit within the suit and have the Ghar spinal implants required to interface with the suit's control systems.

Engineering Skillset
Initial bonus: +X (Complex)

Engineering is concerned with the construction, design, maintenance and repair of starship and orbital components. It

> **Design Note:** Experienced roleplayers may wonder why there is no Computers skill.
>
> A specific skill in computing programming is extremely rare in most advanced Antarean societies outside academia, historical societies and research programmes as the machine intelligences do all the programming. The closest society which may have such a skill is the Ghar, and even then they avoid programmable computers preferring hard-wired electronics or similar constructs.

is specialised into .Drives, .Power and .Structural. The skills can also be used on many large vessels, such as combat drones, as many of the technologies sued are the same.

- **Engineering.Drives+0** deals with knowledge of GA (gravitic annihilation) drives as well as suspensor and even basic fusion, ion or chemical propellant thrusters. GA drives power the overwhelming majority foo Antarean ships as it provides superb thrust (measured in tens of G) as well as providing internal gravity to a ship and providing substantial protection from external forces from the drive field the gravitic annihilation nodes project.
- **Engineering.Structural+0** includes basic armour shielding such as hyperlight and reflex as well as the design and assembly of a starcraft and the other, lesser ships one might find aboard a starship. Most Antarean ships use internal suspensor/attractor fields as well as repulsor technology in their construction, making a structural engineer a much-desired expert.
- **Engineering.Power+0** or **Power Plants+0** is concerned with the provision of power to the ships, components and drives of Antarean space. This includes advanced and basic fusion and fission plants, as well as the more advanced nullspace power extractors used in many advanced vessels and even the more primitive ways of generating power through sunlight, wind, water and even through the combustion of materials.

For Engineering, the equipment's **Origins** by faction could be a factor in some campaigns – this is best left for the players and GM to discuss.

Handler Skillset
Initial bonus: Complex (X)

Handler covers the ability to train, ride, breed, care for and perhaps even provide elementary medical assistance for one or more closely-related breeds of animals. More advanced veterinary tasks require someone trained in veterinary science of the broad spectrum of animals they are treating rather than the handler skill – though a handler could keep the animal calm so act as an assist during a complex procedure.

The type of animal is the simple specialism, for example **Handler.Angkriz+0**, the Mhagris' **Handler.Skark+0** or the common Boromite skill **Handler.Lavan+0**.

Life Science Skillset

Initial bonus: +X (Complex)

Life science covers a range of learning associated with living beings. Whilst the number of specialisms could be huge, we focus on the following for Antares:

- **Life Science.Biology+0**, for the study of organic beings as a whole including genetics, but specialising in panhumans and panhuman-related creatures – useful for doctors and medics, as well as for Ghar hatchery masters.
- **Life Science.Cybernetics+0**, for the study of the mix of organic and non-organic life. This is especially useful when dealing with implants or artificial limbs and organs.
- **Life Science.Xenobiology+0** which duplicates the biology skills in some respects when used by veterinarians and dealing with a wide range non-human lifeforms – and for dealing with the peculiar genetics of Ghar.

When talking about skills, 'Science' is often shortened to **Sc,** as in **Life Sc.Cybernetics+2**.

Manipulation Skill

Initial bonus: +0 (Simple)

Manipulation could be termed 'deceptive sleight-of-hand' as it involves the ability to fool onlookers through misleading actions, pick-pocketing and similar skills, but can also cover other hand-, digit-, or fine suspensor-field based acts and on primitive worlds, perhaps even picking a lock. Many of the skills are difficult or impossible on IMTel worlds, however, as the IMTel would flag up lies, deceiving acts and disguise. Ag or In are most often used as characteristic bonuses.

Medic() Skill

Initial bonus: +0 (Simple, Faction Origin)

Medic covers all aspects of healing or caring for a living person and, conceivably, could be used on some animals instead of the **Life Science.Biology** skill. Field medics and nurses might have Medic at +3 to +4, whilst senior nurses and doctors +5 to +7, whilst only the top, most renowned surgeons +8 or more.

Medi-buddies and probes have medic skills and assist bonuses in addition to internal supplies and diagnostic hardware.

The Medic skill should have its faction as a Origin as illustrated in the following, common examples:

- a Concord Medic should suffer a penalty when dealing with Tsan Ra but can treat almost any panhuman;
- Medic(Isorian) allows for the healing of Tsan Ra as well as near baseline panhumans;
- Medic(Boromite) would enable the character to treat lavans as well as Boromites and baseline panhumans;
- the Medic(Vorl) skill would allow the medic to treat Vorl and Askar;
- Medic(Freeborn) should still only be applied to the limited range of species found in the character's house – perhaps a Hükk, perhaps Askar mercenaries, as well as panhumans and a few other, selected alien species that might be found in the campaign.

Mining Skillset

Initial bonus: +X (Complex); +0 (Simple) for Boromites

This skill covers all aspects of mining from prospecting and geology, through taking samples, to actually extracting ore safely with the correct tools and in the most efficient manner, through to handling it properly and packing it up for transportation. On top of that it includes a knowledge of ores and their value and where they might fetch a reasonable price – though the Commerce skill can still be used to determine such worth and certainly comes into play for activity to actually trade such ores.

Boromites acquire the skillset as a **simple** skill and even Virai are programmed with the skillset from initial activation. The Mining specialisms typically vary by Boromite clan, so one clan is likely to focus on Mining.Asteroid whilst another might specialise in deep mines or even on prospecting and mining particular types of rare ore – a GM may wish to allow some overlap between the various mining trades, however.

An interesting application of this skill is in identifying rock types and potential, through to navigating subterranean passages, waterways and tunnels: the knowledge of how they are formed can help guide someone within those passages. Mining is also of use in civil and military engineering projects – how to extract the material safely or how to place it such that it offers the best protection from weapons fire.

The three main specialisms are:

- **Mining.Asteroid+0** covering the extraction of ore from asteroids, including hollowing out asteroids to use as frames for homes.
- **Mining.Deep +0|** covers the best way to extract ore from deep underground and where to site the ore transmats and extraction machinery.
- **Mining.Open +0** is most often found on Spill and Feral worlds to extract ore and material from close to the surface – especially coal.

Nanospore Skillset

Initial bonus: +X (Complex)

Unsurprisingly, the study of nanospore is key in the universe of Antares. All the advanced cultures rely on the existence of a nanosphere, a blanket of nanotech devices around whole worlds that provide communications, power, monitoring and – in IMTel (**I**ntegrated **M**achine in**Tel**ligence) cultures – the means by which the machine intelligences on whole worlds are integrated. Indeed, the IMTel was originally designed by thee Isorians to automatically propagate updates to the machine intelligences and databanks of whole systems across interstellar distances.

The Nanospore skillset could be regarded as the science of nanotech devices and nanosphere. Such nanotech could be artificial, as in the Concord and Vorl nanospheres and that used by the rogue intelligence called Chryseis Shard, perhaps partly artificial as in the bio-silicon nanospore of the Isorians, or that purely biological bionanospore that is the strange technology discovered by Freeborn and Ghar on the planet Shamasai (and which, no doubt, also exists elsewhere, waiting to be found).

There are only two simple specialisms in the nanospore skillset, that of the science as a whole and that including the ability to control it:

- **Nanospore.Nanotech+0**, which deals with a whole range of circuits, artificial intelligence construction, holographic and physical manipulation using a nanosphere and the transmission of data and information, power and sensory data via nanospore as well as how to create and manage suspensor/repulsor fields and even how to create holographic displays and controls for general use by non-NuHu. The Nanotech field also encompasses the use of nanophages – anti-nanospore nanocytes – and infiltration or combat nanospore as well as a wide range of other devices.

- **Nanospore.Control+0**, which is the art of manipulating a nanosphere to perform specific tasks. It is the skill that is natural to a NuHu but which for non-NuHu requires the use a device or machine interface.

   > **Skill Limit:** Non-NuHu cannot increase the **Nanospore. Control** specialism above +4 and, even then, they can only use the skill if they have a suitable interface – which could just be an IMTel speech interface or control console with a suitable nanosphere to hand.

There are a number of **complex** specialisms, each of which has restrictions:

- **Nanospore.IMTel+X**, which deals with the knowledge and integration of IMTel-based nanospheres. Often it is just this specialism and the general nanotech specialism that are known by Concord NuHu, whilst it is seen as part of a war studies curriculum in other nations – apart from the Isorians who tend to study bio-silicon nanotech, as well.

   > **Skill Limit:** Those from non-IMTel factions cannot increase their **Nanospore.IMTel** skill above +4.

- **Nanospore.Biosilicon+X**, which focuses on the curious hybrid technology used by the Isorians.

   > **Skill Limit:** Only Tsan Ra and other Isorians can increase their **Nanospore.Biosilicon** specialism above +4.

- **Nanospore.Bio+X**, which deals with the curious mix of cellular customisation technology and biological-component derived nanospore used by a very few, alien cultures such as the Shamasai Dust.

   > **Skill Limit:** Only those infected with the bionanospore can increase their knowledge of **Nanospore.Bio** above +1, and even then only to a +4 bonus: there is very little known about such technology.

Operations() Skillset

Initial bonus: +X (Complex, Technology Origin)

This is the ability to use a number of control systems to achieve specific tasks. The Origins rule is particularly important for this skillset but can be omitted for simplicity.

Operations is frequently shortened to **Ops**, as in **Ops. Sensors+2.**

Specialisms are as follows:

- **Operations.Comms+0** which covers the use of communications equipment when under duress (a routine call to a friend does not count as a task even requiring a check!)

- **Operations.Sensors+0** the use and interpretation of data gathered from any number of powered devices and remote sensors. It can also include non-powered devices such as telephoto stills. Basic readouts from sensor devices can be obtained unskilled – pictorial mapping data is easy to work out – but the more advanced interpretation of that data and the more advanced functions require a skill check.

- **Operations.Remotes+0** is the use of using controlled drones or programming buddy-drones to complete complex search patterns or non-standard work. Most drone control in IMTel societies is performed by the IMTel or by sophont-level machine intelligences controlling the IMTel, so outside the survey service it is not too common. Its use on orbitals by technicians, however, is commonplace as such technicians seek to make repairs at a safe distance or from the comfort of a habitable control centre.

Physical Science Skillset

Initial bonus: +X (Complex)

This deal with the nature of the universe and matter. Simple Physical Science specialisms for Antares are:

- **Physical Science.Astrophysics+0**, the application of the many laws of physics at all levels to explain the formation, destruction and ongoing existence of all sorts of objects in the universe, including solar systems, stars, planets, galaxies, nebulae, black holes, neutron stars and similar objects as well as more mundane physics. In the Antarean universe it incorporates **planetology** as well as astronomy. A lot of checks in this skill can be difficult however, as the skill has to cover so much to be useful at all!

- **Physical Science.Chemistry+0** which is the study of matter and its interactions at the various scales known to Antareans;

- **Physical Science.Drone+0** which covers all aspects of artificial life construction from the level above nanosphere to probes and buddy drones up to the lengthy survey drones or even drone transport ships. It can overlap with nanospore in the realms of machine intelligence, though does so at the macro-level rather than the more simplistic communication and swarm reasoning from the nanosphere skill.

The **complex specialism** for the Physical Science skillset is:

- **Physical Science.Gatebuilder+X** which involves the study of Gatebuilder technology and science.

   > **Skill Limit:** The **Physical Sc.Gatebuilder** skill level cannot be developed beyond an individual's In characteristic modifier – it is just that difficult to understand!

Pilot Skillset

Initial bonus: +X (Complex)

This is a vital skill concerned with controlling spacecraft. It has three specialisms:

- **Pilot.Shuttles+0** allows for piloting of small spacecraft, drop-ships and even small intra-system cargo vessels;

- **Pilot.Ships+0** allows for the guiding and control of major Antarean starships, powered orbitals or even larger, intra-system transports and defence craft;

- **Pilot.Personal+0** allows for control of rapidly moving drones or, in some backward societies, single- or dual-seater combat craft used to defend larger ships against incoming missile and drone attacks. This is also used when firing the fighter's weapons. Intelligent scout and defence drones will have the **Pilot.Personal** skill programmed into them from activation.

Presence Skillset

Initial bonus: +0 (Simple)

In a universe linked by trade and where communication is key, this is a key skill. It covers communication techniques that are largely dependent on the expressed persona of the character in relation to those being address – including the ability to delude those being addressed.

The most common Specialisms are:

- **Presence.Influence+0**, an immediate-effect skill to influence an individual or small crowd to an opinion or belief – such as convincing them of a lie or a bluff. It can also be used to put others at ease in a social setting. A useful application of Influence might be to relax an informant or source over an evening of entertaining so that information can be gained. For longer-term effects or for wider audiences, **Diplomacy** is needed whilst the **Commerce** skill is needed for trade deals.
- **Presence.Command+0**, the skill used for inspiring, directing and, frankly, leading ones fellows or subordinates – or sometimes superiors! It can be used to inspire others: for example, in combat, a Command check (an action) can increase the initiative of one ally the leader can communicate with.
- **Presence.Diplomacy+0** differs from Influence in that it involves an knowledge of social skills, addressing leaders, and complex negotiations involving multiple factors that can ease and enable the creation of planetary-wide trade deals, peace treaties and such (as opposed to Commerce, which deals with multiple transactions to deal with a trade, or Influence, which typically only deals with a single transaction).

Perception Skill

Initial bonus: +0 (Simple skill)

This is a general purpose skill covering the ability to gather information on possible hazards or targets in a variety of environments. This is often performed alongside Stealth to secretly observe a target whilst attempting to remain undetected. In some campaigns, GMs may wish to make this based on an origin (rather than specialism), focusing the initial skill into particular environments such as .Tundra, .Jungle, .Urban, .Ice, and so on, but allowing a relatively quick transfer into other environments.

Repair() Skill

Initial bonus: +0 (Simple skill, Origin)

Another general purpose skill covering the general manipulation and basic knowledge skills allowing an individual to affect perform maintenance on a device or to make minor fixes to equipment and smaller items of kit or electro-/nano-mechanical items in a faction's arsenal. It does not allow for the maintenance and fixing of major items such as a starship's power plant, but could be used to fix a Ghar crawler's reactor connections or a broken weapon or comm unit.

Repair() should always have a faction stated as the origin as equipment varies considerably depending on the technology on which it is based (even Freeborn nanosphere devices differ from the IMTel-dependent Concord devices).

Social Science Skillset

Initial bonus: +X (Complex)

This deals with the interactions of intelligent life or sophonts and their legacy. Specialisms are:

- **Social Science.Archaeology+0** which includes the study and investigative techniques associated with uncovering physical evidence and sites of previous Antarean civilisations as well as planetary remains and even Gatebuilder artefacts;
- **Social Science.History+0** which covers a history of the past through records, documents and legends. It can be specialised further if the player wishes into economics (the study of which is largely redundant in Antarean life);
- **Social Science.Sophontology+0** which covers the study of the huge range of cultures, societal structures, belief systems, and inter- and intra-species interactions and communications, including those of both organic artificial lifeforms. It can sometimes be associated with anthropology, but on a broader scale. It can also be regarded as having a knowledge of local law, mores and customs, though the GM is encouraged to incur penalties for never-before-encountered societies. IMTel societies have little need of anyone versed in law as the IMTel looks after well-being and interaction in conjunction with machine intelligences and patrol buddies.

Stealth Skill

Initial bonus: +0 (Simple)

Stealth is the ability to remain and move undetected whilst leaving no trace of passage and is often an opposed check when a defender is using their **Ops.Sensors** or **Perception** skill. Given most Antarean armour has built-in motion, IR and UV sensors, the use of Stealth typically has to be coupled with the wearing of a suitable item of armour or stealth suit.

This is rarely specialised but can be to specific environments.

Survival Skillset

Initial bonus: +0 (Simple)

Specialism Initial bonus: +X (Complex)

Survival is the ability to continue living in a hostile environment, including the hostile weather native to that environment. It includes finding shelter and suitable food and water to sustain life for a while, even if that food may be nutrient-deficient in the long term.

Survival has a number of complex specialisms describing discrete environments, such as: **.Arctic, .Wilderness, .Desert, .Jungle, .Coastal, .Asteroid, .Sea** for water worlds and **.Urban** for densely-populated areas.

Survival.Urban is useful in finding materials or food in urban or settled environments, or in environments where the by-products of civilisation may be found.

Survival can also be used to communicate over long distances by basic means using whatever can be found locally. Smoke, reflectors, semaphore or similar communications may have a highly specific meaning in each culture, however.

All characters begin with a +0 bonus in their own, specialised environment, such as **Survival.Jungle+0** for Ferals brought up on a jungle world or **Survival.Urban+0** for many other individuals. Freeborn are born on spaceships so tend to not

have any Survival specialisms and end up with skills in **Zero-G**, instead.

> **Skill Limits:** Survival differs a little from other skills in that the root skill is just a placeholder: a character starts with Survival in their own environment, such as **Survival.Urban+0**, but has no skill bonus in any other skill in the Survival skillset and none in the root skill. The individual Survival specialisms are all complex (X) skills, so cannot be used generally until trained.
>
> **Learning Constraints:** Training in the root Survival skill must comprise significant amounts of in-the-field training and also takes twice as long as any other skill. The specialisms must incorporate field training into any skill improvement (they cannot be improved purely through lab- or school- work).

Tactics Skillset

Initial bonus: +X (Complex)

Tactics covers the planning, co-ordination and skills required to direct troops, space ships or drones for advantage in conflict. It is used directly in the Combat rules to give command advantage in combat.

The main Tactics specialisms are:

- **Tactics.Surface+0** for handling conflict at or near the surface of a planet or asteroid or in littoral environments.
- **Tactics.Space+0** for handling ships in space.

Trade Skillset

Initial bonus: +X (Complex)

The Trade skillset is one of the most useful as it covers a range of skills to do with making a living – a trade. All Trade specialisms are unique, however. Not only does the specialism allow the making of a living or crafting of a reputation through the relevant aspect of work covered by the Trade, but it also includes the use of the tools required following that trade.

No character can have a root trade skill and it is always X.

Trade skillsets include ways of making a living like:

- **Trade.Horticulture**
- **Trade.Farmer**
- **Trade.Fisherman**
- **Trade.Hydroponics**
- or even **Trade.Smith.**

Trade can also include playing a sport professionally with , such as **Trade.Null-ball Player** or a sport with a specialist position used as an Origin as in **Trade.Oblate Player(Blocker)**.

Trade can also include such artistic skills or creative acts as in:

- **Trade.Holography**
- **Trade.Sculpture**
- **Trade.Writing**
- **Trade.Bookmaking** (which includes paper making)

It can be seen that Trade can also include largely oral entertainment, and the GM may allow some cross-over. It can also cover skills that are prized in a culture but which might not be a specific trade in others: amongst Ferals, **.Storytelling** and **.Chanting** is particularly prized, for example, whilst **.Song** and **.Oratory** are valued amongst Freeborn and Boromites. **Trade.Dance** is an occasionally, highly-regarded entertainment specialism, which can be both elegant or highly dynamic – or even resemble a martial art – and is frequently qualified, for example **Trade.Dance(Ancient Ballet)**.

Trade.Musician needs to be qualified with an instrument group, such as vocal, strummed (guitars, etc), woodwind, brass, keyboard, drums or anything more exotic. It is shown as **Trade.Musician(Vocals)** or **Trade.Musician(Drums)** (which is highly respected amongst Boromites, even if it includes the ability to make great music through what others call 'banging rocks together'). Situation penalties might be applied to unusual instruments even if the character knows the general type!

Boromites have a particular instrument called the Boromite Pipes or Borompipes – **Trade.Musician(Borompipes)** – that conform to their mouth shape and are similar to highly complex bagpipes.

As can be seen, despite their rough-and-ready appearance and culture, Boromites have a sophisticated musical and entertainment aspect to their society!

Zero-G Skill

Initial bonus: +X (Complex)

This not only includes some idea of how to operate and move in weightless or low-gravity environments, but also includes the use of spacesuits suitable to the background, but may preclude the use of spacesuits from other cultures. The type of spacesuit could be a complexity penalty to the target number: for example, an Algoryn might struggle with a Ghar spacesuit (even without the size issues), just as a Ghar wouldn't know how to operate an Algoryn shield-base protective environment suit.

COMBAT

This chapter describes the rules governing the various activities the PCs may undertake in Combat. The task check system has already been explained and should be used for role-played task checks throughout the game, and this section covers the application of those to special actions situations that may require modelling or mapping out on the tabletop.

One of the most common issues facing PCs is ground-based or shipboard combat and the corresponding action that goes with such activity. Such danger may not be as a result of their own doing or wishes, but may be forced on them when they investigate something that a hostile opponent wishes kept hidden! Combat is normally played out on a map or tabletop with figures representing each participants as this helps visualise the interactions.

Whilst time is generally nebulous in Antares RPG, combat is played over a series of **rounds** between two or more **forces** who are hostile to at least one other force in the combat. In each round, characters are **activated** once, during which activation they have **two beats** in which they get to take **actions**. Some actions take more than one beat, whilst others take almost no time at all.

The sequence of activation is randomised through the use of coloured (or even black/white/grey) activation dice or chits which are placed into a bag and drawn without looking at their colour. Broadly speaking, the number of dice/chits is one per character involved in the combat. Each force involved in the action has a different coloured set of dice or chits to distinguish them from other forces in the combat.

> **Design Note:** Bolt Action or Antares order dice work well as we suspect many players of the Antares RPG will have them. However, any dice or set of chits will do providing they are all the same size and weight to help with the unseen draw. From now on we'll just refer to them as activation dice.

At the start of each round of combat, all the activation dice are put into the bag, together with a few extra from special circumstances. The dice are then drawn, one by one, and given to the force to which they belong. The commander of the force owning the dice assigns it to the next character in sequence of descending Ag or In (player's choice). When a PC or NPC receives a dice they are activated, perform their actions, and the dice is left beside them or on their character sheet to show they have acted.

Characters may be able to break into an opponent's actions using a Reaction. In some circumstances, they may also be able to delay their action until an opponent or ally makes *their* action. A character who fails to make a reaction has their dice retained until the end of a round, at which point they may act along with any other character who failed their Reaction, the sequence being determined by descending order of Ag/In with no dice draw.

At the end of the round, all the dice are gathered together ready for the next round. Characters on Overwatch, Waiting or Working may elect to retain their dice and continue waiting for a suitable trigger or continue with a long-term task.

DISTANCES, MV AND M

In general, we use models to represent the participants in a combat on a plain surface or map which represents the area in which the combat takes place. We might draw objects (a dry wipe pen and a wipeable surface is good for this!) or place items on the map to represent hiding places, objectives or even terrain. Distances are measured by a flexible tape in order to measure move distances around corners and by a straight ruler to determine ranges.

'Mv' refers to a character's move distance and we use that here. The letter '**m**' is used as a substitute for **metres** but also just represents whatever your own **map units** may be.

The length of each map unit used in the combat depend on your figure size and the map scale. We suggest using cm for 15mm scale figures and inches for 28mm scale figures – such as those available for Antares from Skytrex Miniatures.

> **Design Note:** This approach is not a hard and fast rule. Many RPG map makers produce maps using 1" squares for 25-30mm figures and 1cm or 1.5cm squares for 15mm scale. If you wish to use such maps, then adjust the map units to fit: each 'm' would be one square (watch out for blast radius, though, or character's moving diagonally).
>
> Other gamers like using hexes to even out movement and ranges, and this is fine, too: 1m = 1 hex!

COMBAT PHASE SEQUENCE

A round of combat has four phases, as follows (refer to the diagram opposite for a step-by-step view of the process):

Phase 1. Load up the bag. Put each side's activation dice into a bag.

1.1 Each character involved has one dice. They only receive a dice if they can do something this round: an unconscious or dying character cannot be activated so does not receive a dice and does not take part in the combat (other than to receive medical care).

1.2 Add +1 dice – termed **command** dice – for each Tactics. Surface skill bonus the commander of each force has in **excess** of their opposition. A commander is the character with the highest rank in the chain of command or, for groups with no commander, the character with the greatest Presence.Command skill. The commander must have good comms (this doesn't include shouting but may include a common nanosphere!) to at least 2/3 of the active team members to gain this bonus. If the commander is unconscious or incapacitated, they do not count: choose the next in line.

For example, Commander Ysseth has Tactics. Surface+4. The NPC commander only has Tactics. Surface+2, so Ysseth adds two more activation dice to the bag whilst the NPC force adds none.

1.3 Add +1 dice if 2/3 of the group or more are part of an IMTel shard and have good comms to the rest of the participating team members (ignore the unconscious!). This is also a **command** die and is sometimes called an IMTel die.

Every member of a Concord exploration team would have MyIMTel implants, giving them excellent connectivity, irrespective of any other comms or armour. As a result, they add another activation dice to the bag, for a total of +3 activation dice over normal.

Gameplay: Command and IMTel dice are just like any other order dice so, after all dice have been drawn an allocated, they may be left in the bag: their advantage is that a commander adds activation dice and increases the chance of their own force acting when they want.

Phase 2. Draw and Activate. Draw the dice from the bag one by one and give it to the commander of the force to which it belongs.

If there are still unused **command** dice in the bag (that is, more dice than there are unactivated members of the force), the commander may elect to discard this dice: put it to one side and draw another.

2.1 Otherwise, the commander allocates the dice to the next character in sequence who does not already have an activation dice: the sequence is determined by descending order of Ag or In, whichever the player decides for their PC (it can be different for each, giving an advantage to NuHu and to agile individuals). If PCs have the same Ag/In, then the players decide the recipient; if NPCs, randomly determine the recipient.

For example, Gratusch, Taron and Ysseth are hiding behind some crates waiting for enemy to appear from behind a door. The enemy NPC appears and starts shooting Gratusch. Gratusch and Ysseth's players state their PC is attempting to React – Gratusch because he is being shot at, Ysseth because she is only 2m away. An activation dice is pulled for them both and placed beside the characters.

Gratusch has mediocre In and Ag 6, whilst Ysseth has Ag7, so Ysseth's Reaction is dealt with first.

2.2 The character's player then declares the actions their character is about to make. A character can be put into OVERWATCH, WAITING or WORKING status and forego an immediate activation.

2.3 In response to the declared Action, another character may wish to React by spending their Simple Action for this round. A Reaction is triggered by specific events and is an interrupt to the normal flow of activity (see *Reactions*, below) but involves a Reaction Test.

A character on OVERWATCH automatically Reacts (see *Overwatch* and *Waiting*, below). Characters who fail to React become BAULKED and put their dice to one side.

The Action Process in combat, step by step

1. Load up the bag with activation dice/chits
- Each force has a different coloured dice!
1.1 1 per conscious PC/NPC
1.2 +1 (command) per Tactics.Surface skill bonus over that of opponent's commander
- Must have good command!
1.3 +1 (command) if 2/3 or more are IMTel

2. Draw dice/chits, allocate and activate
- If any command dice left, can put aside
2.1 Give to next PC/NPC in sequence
- **Sequence** of allocation/activity = descending order of Ag/In (player's choice) – so highest first
2.2 Activated PC declares action(s)
2.3 Reactors declare Reaction to actions, if any
- Check / act in sequence (see 2.1)
- Automatic reaction if on OVERWATCH, WAITING, BRAWL…
- …otherwise, expend a 0-beat action and make a task check on: their own Athletics, or their own Perception, or their commander's Presence. Command
  - **Success** = React
  - **Fail** = off-balance and set to BAULKED
2.4 Complete active PC/NPC action – 2 beats+
- Simple activity = 0 beats
- Basic activity (Aim, Shoot, Move) = 1 beat
- Complex activity (Charge, Sprint) = 2 beats

3. Activate Baulked PCs/NPCs
- Activate in sequence (see 2.1)
- Free, 0-beat action is already spent
As 2.1 and 2.4, but are BAULKED, and off-balance:
- All activities to be performed at -2 penalty
- All Mv reduced by 1 (e.g. Mv5→Mv4)

4. End Phase (book-keeping)
4.1 Check results of long-term Medic activities such as Stabilise
4.2 Check results of other long-term activities
4.3 Dying PCs move 1 step down Dying Track
4.4 Phase Armour: -1 In if phased out; +1 In if recovering and phased in
4.5 Check for dead/incapacitated
4.6 Check for Break/Victory; if none…
4.7 …gather up all activation chits/dice
- If on OVERWATCH or working on a long-term activity or if on WAITING, may retain dice at cost of next round's free, 0-beat action.
…and start again!

2.3 Make the successful Reactions, if any.
2.4 Complete any remaining actions for the character.

Phase 3. Activate BAULKED. Once all characters who can have had a chance to activate or react, remove the remaining dice from the bag (if any) and characters who baulked are now activated.

Baulked characters take their turn in descending order of Ag or In, which characteristic being decided by the owning player (so a sequence could be NuHu with In 9, then a nimble Shen-Lat with Ag 8, then a panhuman with In 6).

There can be **no** Reactions in this phase (no one has a 0-step action remaining), and the Simple Action has already used to attempt the baulked reaction has already been used. Otherwise the sequence is as for 2.1 except that all activities in this phase have a -2 baulked penalty and the character is off-balance. All

base Mv for baulked characters is reduced by 1 (so Mv 5 becomes Mv 4).

Phase 4. End. This is primarily a bookkeeping phase.

4.1 Determine the results of the Medic checks on characters being stabilised (see Stabilise the Dying, on p. , below).

4.2 Check to see if other long-term activities have completed and the success of that check (similar to 4.1).

4.3 Dying PCs move one step along their Dying Track (see *Dead or Dying*, below).

4.4 **Isorian Phasing.** Decrease the In of phased-out individuals by one, or increase an phased-in character's In by one.

4.5 Check for any dead participants.

4.6 Check if one side or another finally breaks or has won…

4.7 …otherwise, gather up all the dice: a character may elect to remain on Overwatch, Waiting or Working, in which case they retain their activation dice ready for the next round.

STATES

A state shows broadly what a character is doing after being allocated a dice. Action dice are useful as they can quickly show a character's current state. States are:

Active. The character his, or has been activated, with a normal set of actions.

Overwatch. The character is waiting for one of a number of triggering events to occur before performing an action. After being activated, the character's state becomes Active.

Baulked. The character failed a Reaction Test and is waiting for the Baulked Phase to act. After being activated, the character's state becomes Active.

Waiting. The character is waiting for a specific event to occur before performing an action. After being activated, the character's state becomes Active.

Working. The character is performing a long-term activity (one that spans several rounds).

Brawl. The character is involved in a brawl with one or more opponents.

Unconscious. The character can do nothing (check *Dying*). This tends to not need an action die.

ACTIONS IN COMBAT

Each activation, characters have two beats to spend on actions, plus a free, zero-beat action.

Actions cost zero, one or two beats, depending on whether they are simple (Free), basic (1 beat – a single-beat action) or complex (2 beats). Further, some actions can take advantage of an earlier action *this activation*. Actions which set up another, such as Aim, and assist bonuses do not count if carried over a round end.

Whilst some actions result in an activity that can be relatively clearly defined, other actions cannot help but be more nebulous. The final decision on the type of activity that comprises a simple, basic or complex activity rests with the GM, though sometimes some discussion can help a great deal.

PCs should be encouraged to advantage of natural cover and to co-ordinate their actions. A GM should also allow creativity: the list appears comprehensive, but we deliberately leave the actions fairly loose so a player can invent their own actions.

The words **adjacent** and **contact** are used to refer to any move or action that puts a character within 1m – next to – enemy (adjacent) or friends (contact).

The actions and their beat costs available to characters in combat are described in the following sections.

Basic (single beat) Actions

Unless stated otherwise, each of these can only be performed once per activation (Move and Shoot, Aim and Shoot, or Aim and Transmit, and so on).

Basic Activity	A relatively minor action that still times a measurable amount to time to perform. Examples are to draw a pistol or unsling a weapon, load or reload a hand-held weapon, open a door, activate a compressor or tractor maul, stand up, straighten up (from being off-balance – see below), hunker down behind whatever cover is available, **brace** your character (see below) in order to gain more accuracy, throw a grenade or similar action.
Shoot	Fire a hand-carried ranged weapon, normally against an enemy. Typically uses a Firearm task check.
Melee	Attack an adjacent opponent using a hand-to-hand combat skill, such as Melee. Unarmed. Can also be used against an adjacent object to cause damage, typically using Melee.Tools.
Move	If upright, move 1Mv in any direction but not adjacent to enemy. A PC/NPC can also crawl at ¼ their normal speed and still be considered **prone** (see below). Movement across uneven terrain in combat might require an Athletics check; across difficult terrain an Ag-based Athletics check with a penalty DM.
Transmit	Use a communications device to send analyser data, distant co-ordinates and location or similar: an Ops based task check may well be required.
Assist	A Task Check to grant an assist bonus to a subsequent Basic Activity: the bonus is equal to the Assist Bonus from the result. An recommended option to speed play is to just grant a +1 bonus without making a task check.
Aim	Line up your weapon on an opponent to gain a bonus when shooting. Aim is often followed by Shoot. To Aim a support weapon, the character has to first aim, then lock in the target co-ordinates with a Transmit.
Simple Action	Carry out a Simple Action (see below) using a Basic Action to do so.

Complex (Two Beat) Actions

Complex Activity	Perform an involved task such as placing an explosive device, laying a few grenades as mines, analysing a device using a scanner, making a thorough Task Check, reloading a support weapon, or shutting down a complex device. This is also used when making a Working long-term activity.

Fire Support Weapon

Using a Support skill to fire a heavy or support weapon or using the Gunnery skill to fire a shipboard weapon. Firing a support weapon can take an assist bonus from a prior Aim and Transmit by another crew member.

Stabilise	Perform a **Medic** check to stop an contacted character from Dying. This automatically includes taking out and applying the necessary first aid kit.
Revive	Perform a **Medic** check to bring round an contacted character from being unconscious. This includes taking out and applying the necessary first aid kit.

Complex Assist

Make an assist check for a subsequent Complex Activity.

Sprint	The character moves 1Mv to 3Mv in any direction but not adjacent to any enemy. Sprints across difficult terrain should increase a terrain's difficulty modifier by one or even two levels.
Withdraw	is a special case of Sprint used in combat to break off from an opponent. It may invoke a melee interrupt.
Engage	This combines the **Move** and a **Melee** activities to allow a character to initiate contact. It cannot be used to break off from an adjacent enemy to move adjacent to another.
Charge	If not adjacent to an enemy, move between 3m and 2Mv in as direct a line as possible adjacent to an enemy and make a single Melee attack against that enemy, gaining a Charge bonus when doing so. A charge and its target must be declared to allow the opponent to react and the 3m to 2Mv must be able to contact the enemy. The opponent normally Reacts and may move away.
Countercharge	This is a **Charge Reaction** made by the target of a Charge. It must be against the charging PC/NPC but is otherwise the same as a Charge.
Dodge	Move up to 1Mv distant and duck, weave and dodge incoming fire, giving enemy a penalty to their shooting. At the player's option, their PC can make an Athletics check instead, the assist bonus being the **negative DM** to the check result (so a failure may make it easier for opponents to target the stumbling character). This can be used to break off from contact but cannot be used to move adjacent to another enemy.

Intense Assault

This is a Melee action against an adjacent opponent that combines a Pressure and a Melee action into one. The Pressure is resolved first and if the characters are still in contact, a Melee action is then resolved.

Simple Actions (0 beats)

Whilst these activities do not cost any beats, only one can be performed per activation. However, one or two beats (Basic Actions) can be exchanged for Simple Activities.

The actions shown are merely examples of frequently used Simple Actions: your GM may permit many more.

Simple Activity	Any of a number of actions that take almost no time, including switching mode on a multi-mode weapon.
Phase Out/In	**(If wearing Isorian phase armour)** Activates the phasing function of their phase armour moving them slightly of phase, making them more difficult to hit. The stress immediately inflicts 1 point of In damage and also 1 In damage during each End phase the character is phased out. A character phasing In returns to reality. Phasing damage is recovered at 1 In per round the Phase Armour is inactive.

Reassign Buddy

Reassign a buddy drone to, or take control of a buddy from, someone else in the team. The buddy must not yet have been activated and moves and acts when the new controller is activated (which may be this activation).

Quick Draw	If a weapon is in a purpose-made, easily-accessible sheath or holster, such as that which comes with a Xantu Duelling Pistol, then a draw or holster is a Simple Action rather than a Basic Action.
Dive/Drop	Typically used when dashing to cover (Sprinting) away from incoming fire. A dive or drop puts the character **prone**, up to ½Mv away in any direction.

Attempt a Reaction

If not yet allocated an activation dice, a character may attempt to React. This leaves a character with only two beats this round.

Enter OVERWATCH/WAITING/WORKING

The character goes into the relevant state: OVERWATCH, WAITING or WORKING (turn the dice to the correct side). The character's activation is suspended until the task is complete (WORKING), or the WAITING condition is met, or the OVERWATCH is triggered by an event. See OVERWATCH and WAITING for details.

Drop an item	The character drops something onto the ground or releases control.

We will go into more detail on these in the following sections.

Assists

Broadly speaking, a character's assist check in support of an activity takes as long as the activity they are assisting and must be completed in an activation prior to that activity and in the same round.

To make an assist, the **assisting** character states who they are assisting and the **assisted** character (even if it is a self-assist such as for an Aim) must be able to perform the activity when the assistance has completed. The WAITING state is used for a character waiting for another to carry out an assist.

When activated, the assisted character may either:

- take the result of the assist and attempt the assisted action **this round**; or
- wait another round and do something else this round.

If an assisted character acts this round, they must take the effects of the assist even if negative.

In combat, assist bonuses do not last beyond the End Phase.

> *For example, Gratusch is unconscious. Taron, the team's first aider, is already next to Gratusch and mentions they will be attempting to revive him (see Revive, below). Ysseth, the PCs commander, is only a couple of metres away and declares they are assisting Taron. Taron's dice is allocated first, so he elects to enter the Waiting state; Ysseth is allocated next and she makes her Medic assist check, drawing on information from the team's IMTel, Gratusch's suit monitors and a bonus from the Taron's medi-buddy. She succeeds and gains +2 bonus. Taron immediately Reacts and makes her own Medic check on Gratusch, hopefully reviving him.*

Tasks that take multiple turns need an assisting character to make their assist check at the start of the activity. Some tasks might require the assisting character to stay with the character performing the task. Such time consuming activities are typically best roleplayed, or for the players and GM to agree the task will take a specified number of round during which the PCs are unable to take part: when they start on the activity, assign them their dice and retain it from round to round until the activity is complete.

Bonuses from spotter buddies, medi-probes, medi-buddies or similar equipment are automatic and made as the character performs the activity they support.

Off-Balance

An Off-Balance character suffers a -2 penalty to all subsequent physical actions and reaction tests, including Pressure, until they stabilise themselves with a basic activity. They may also surrender **hand-to-hand advantage** to their opponent (see below, Hand-to-hand).

Off-balance characters cannot act as 'flanking' opponents for the benefits of the +2 situational modifier.

It can help to put a marker beside an off-balance character.

Braced

This is the complete opposite of being off-balance but is only achieved with a conscious basic activity. A **braced** individual has purposefully place their weapon in a position that allows for the most accurate shooting – such as lying on the floor with the weapon resting on a solid object.

Support weapons come with stands which make them braced, or are mounted on drones or vehicles with suitable mounts to make them braced. A shooter firing an unbraced Support weapon suffers a DM of -3.

A standing, **braced** person not resting against a solid support is ready for a charge and a subsequent pressure, so may add +2 to their dice roll when countering the pressure attempt – if one comes. They may also nullify their opponent's advantage. As this only takes a Simple Action, it can be useful when used in a reaction.

REACTIONS

A Reaction is an activation that breaks into the normal sequence of dice-draw and assignment. When an opponent is activated and declares their activity this turn, a character may attempt a reaction to interrupt that activity, but at the cost of a Simple Action.

A Reaction is not classed as an activation for the purposes of triggering other reactions or activations. This means it cannot trigger another Reaction. The process for resolving actions in a Reaction are otherwise the same as any normal activation.

Reactions can only be made if a character:

- has not yet received an activation dice, and a Reaction Trigger is about to be performed (see Reaction Triggers); or
- is on OVERWATCH and a Reaction Trigger is about to be performed; or
- is WAITING and the action on which they are WAITING is about to be , or has just been, performed – this is useful for assists.

We'll deal with these in sequence, below.

Reaction Triggers

Actions that a character can consider as standard triggers for them to make a Reaction are when:

- An adjacent enemy moves away, fires a ranged weapon, attempts a medic check or performs another action that can

Reactions, step by step

1. Check Reaction to trigger

OVERWATCH: **automatic response to a Reaction Trigger**
WAITING: **Automatic reaction to previously stated trigger**
Otherwise: **Make a Reaction Test**

2. Reaction Tests: Initiative or Command Task Check

Initiative
- Perception or Athletics +/- Ag/In

Command
- Use commander's Presence.Command +/- own Ag/In.

DMs:
- -2 if off-balance
- -5 if reacting to unseen enemy

Reaction Test Result
- **Success:** make desired Reaction
- **Failure:** BAULKED; off-balance.

3. Possible Reactions:

Adjacent Enemy making a H2H attack:
- Brawl (automatic)

Adjacent Enemy moving away/is distracted:
- Intense Assault (automatic) against moving enemy

Charge declared reactions
- Dash to Safety: Sprint away >=1Mv
- Dive for Cover: Dive + Crawl move
- Countercharge: meet half way→Melee/ Pressure

Shot at by enemy
- Dash to Safety   Sprint away >=1Mv
- Dive for Cover   Dive + Crawl move

Enemy activates or moves into LoF/LoS to front and character is on OVERWATCH or WAITING:
- Shoot   Shoot + Basic action

be considered distracting from a focus on hand-to-hand combat (see *Contact Reactions*);

- An enemy declares a charge against them (see *Charge Reactions*);
- An enemy shoots at them (see *Shooting Reactions*);
- They are attacked in hand-to-hand combat (an *automatic* reaction, see below);

Non-standard triggers depend on the state of the responder and are:

- For characters on OVERWATCH, a target has appeared or been activated in their line or fire (LoF) and line of sight (LoS) – see *Ambush* and *Shooting*, below;
- For WAITING characters, the event which they stated as a trigger begins.

Multiple character may react to the same triggering action. Where this is the case, all Reactions to the same event are resolved in activation sequence.

If the actions in a Reaction cannot be performed, then the reaction cannot take place: the character has wasted their Reaction.

Automatic Reactions

In particular circumstances, characters may be able to make an automatic reaction in response to a trigger: they react without having to undergo the Reaction Process. The situations are when on OVERWATCH, or when WAITING, or if **reacting to a hand-to-hand attack**.

If the sequence of automatic reactions is important, the highest Ag or In (player's choice) goes first down to the lowest. In the rare occasions there is a draw, the character who goes first is that with the highest total of In and Ag or, if equal, roll a D10!

Overwatch

In addition to any trigger specific to OVERWATCH, a character on OVERWATCH may automatically react to any standard Reaction trigger.

Waiting

A character on WAITING automatically reacts to their stated trigger. Such characters may **not** react to a Reaction Trigger other than the event they specified.

Reacting to a Brawl

Characters who are actively engaged by an enemy with a hand-to-hand combat action automatically React with a hand-to-hand response– they have no choice but to defend themselves! The exception to this is that a defender engaged in an ongoing brawl against two or more opponents may choose to not react to the first or any of the combat actions made against them.

A character being charged can attempt a Reaction Test to charge or flee; if they baulk, they will still automatically React with a hand-to-hand response when contacted.

REACTION PROCESS

Each reacting character declares their Reaction, takes one of their own dice from the bag and places it beside their model – they have received an activation dice – or turns their dice from OVERWATCH or WAITING to Active.

Characters who do not make an automatic reaction, must make a Reaction Test. On success, they typically interrupt the active character's action with their own.

> *For example, earlier in the fight Gratusch and Ysseth are hiding behind some crates waiting for enemy to appear from behind a door. The enemy NPC appears and starts shooting at Gratusch. Gratusch can React because he is being shot at, but Ysseth has to wait. An activation dice is taken from the bag for him and placed beside.*
>
> *Gratusch has a mediocre In 5 but a better Ag 6 so chooses his Ag for his reaction, adding it to his Perception or Athletics. The result of his check is 11 – just enough to succeed, so he successfully reacts.*

Reaction Test

A reaction test can be made in one of two ways, either on a character's own initiative with an **Initiative Test** or in response to a commander's shouted order to do so – a **Command Test**.

An off-balance character (see below) attempting to React suffers a DM of -2 on their Reaction Test.

Initiative Test

The character attempting a Reaction must make an Ag- or In-based **Perception** or **Athletics** check without any coaching assists, but including any IMTel assist bonus. There is a **DM of -5** to this test if they are attempting to react to a previously unseen or unsensed enemy (that is, they are surprised).

Command Test

A character in good communication with their **commander** may use the **commander's Presence.Command** skill bonus providing the commander is aware of the triggering action. The reacting PC/NPC uses with their own Ag- or In- bonus on this check.

'Aware' may include the sensors from a combat shard such as those on a Concord trooper's armour.

There is a **DM of -5 to** this test if the character is attempting to react to an enemy who was previously unseen or unsensed by their commander.

Reaction Test Results

Reaction tests either succeed or fail:

- **On success**, the reacting PC/NPC carries out their Reaction;
- **on failure,** the reacting PC/NPC has BAULKED and also becomes **off-balance** (see *Off-Balance*, below): put their activation dice to one side (or turn it to BAULKED and leave it beside the character). The PC/NPC cannot receive another activation dice this round and must wait until the *Baulked* phase or engaged in a brawl to be activated.

The Reaction Trigger determines the possible actions in a successful Reaction, but it is important to note that a testing character has already used a zero-beat, Simple Action to make a Reaction.

Shooting Reactions

A character Reacting to being shot at can make one of the following actions:

- **Dash to Safety** with a **Sprint** action: the Sprint must take the Reactor further away by at least 1Mv or out of line-of-fire (LoF) of the shooter; or
- **Dive for Cover:** perform a **Dive** and a subsequent **Move**, such as Dive-ing behind a crate or to the floor.

The shooter triggering the reaction can still shoot at the target after it has reacted but suffers any penalties the target's new situation puts them in, such as the target being prone or further away. The active shooter cannot change target once their initial target(s) has reacted.

Charge Reactions

If **charged**, the following are possible reactions:

- **Dash to Safety** with a Sprint action: the Sprint must take the Reactor out of charge reach of the charging character.
- **Dive for Cover** with a **Dive** and a subsequent **Move** providing the reaction takes the reacting character out of reach of the charge.
- **Countercharge** a charging character.

Dash to Safety or Dive for Cover are resolved before the charger moves. The charger must move at least half the distance towards the reactor's initial position and may then either change direction and complete the rest of their move to follow their target or may pull up short and end their activation. A charger unable to reach their target may move only part-way towards their target.

For a Countercharge, the subsequent hand-to-hand combat takes place according to the Hand-to-Hand rules and a Brawl, below.

Contact Reactions

A Contact Reaction is triggered by an adjacent enemy making a move away from them or that enemy making a Shoot action with a range weapon. Possible reactions to such triggers are:

- **Intense Assault** against the triggering enemy.

Just to be clear, the intense assault is carried out *before* the enemy character moves away or shoots and the enemy is not engaged in a brawl, so cannot fight back (but defends themselves, as normal).

OVERWATCH/WAITING

When a player is allocated an activation dice, they may place their character on OVERWATCH or WAITING by expending a Simple Action. The dice is placed on their character sheet or beside the model and their activation is suspended. They then automatically react to a trigger as stated above.

At the end of a round, a PC/NPC on OVERWATCH or WAITING need not return their activation dice, but can remain on their current state and react to a suitable trigger next round, as normal. To do so, they expends their Simple Action from that new round to do so.

Ambush

A character on OVERWATCH may make a **Shoot** action or an **Aim and Shoot** against an enemy activating or moving across their LoS and LoF. They choose where in the visible move they may shoot and resolve the shooting as interrupting the target's move. This may be followed by a subsequent single action.

> **Gameplay:** The implication of this is that a character on OVERWATCH may be able to Shoot a character charging or moving into Melee with them. Further, their second action could be a Melee action with the weapon they shot with or with natural weapons (fists, kicks, bites and so on). This is simply because the character on OVERWATCH is ready and prepared for such combat!

Waiting on an Event

When a character enters a WAITING state, they must state a specific, single event to which they react: this is their WAITING event trigger. This event could be as simple as 'until someone walks out that door' or more general, such as to challenge anyone approaching an encampment. In both cases, the trigger must be simple and not contain any concatenating words such as 'or'. The GM may decide the character needs a task check to spot the event, typically a Perception check.

When the triggering event occurs, the character reacts, whether or not they wish to do anything.

> **Gameplay:** Whilst the condition for WAITING makes it less flexible than OVERWATCH, the fact that a non-combat condition can be stated makes it extremely useful – just in the right situation! Indeed, it is used by intelligent or agile characters to assist those who act slower down the activation sequence than themselves.

CHARGE

The Charge action is an attempt to gain an advantage in a subsequent hand-to-hand engagement through size, speed and ferocity. When used, the player/GM must state the target of the Charge as soon as they activate their character. The charge must be started at least 3m away from its target and cannot be used if the target is more than 2Mv away.

A Charge cannot be declared if the character is in contact with an enemy at the start of their activation.

The target may declare a Charge Reaction (see above).

A successful charger gains a +2 situation bonus to their immediately subsequent Hand-to-Hand Melee or Pressure check.

Countercharge

On a successful Countercharge Reaction, position the charger and the charged at a point half way between them. The characters both gain the charge bonus to their subsequent Melee or Pressure check.

Moving into Contact

Enemies may not voluntarily move adjacent to each other unless seeking hand-to-hand combat and making an Action or reaction that includes a Melee or Pressure.

It may happen that two characters involuntarily end up in contact: treat any subsequent hand-to-hand combat or move away as if both were already in hand-to-hand combat.

SHOOTING

To shoot at a target a character needs a weapon that has **line of fire** to a **visible** target that is within the weapon's range. They also need **line of sight** to that target, or line of sight from a spotter buddy or scout probe who is spotting or patch sighting for overhead fire. Blind, or co-ordinate-driven, fire is a possibility for overhead weapons but normally needs a spotter with line of sight the target co-ordinates.

Before we explain the key terms, we need to look at how weapons are represented in *Antares D10+ RPG*.

Weapon Stat Line

If we look at the sample weapon stat lines in the table across, we can see that all weapons have a name, some might have a **mode**, then all have a number of shots, a **strike value** (SV – the damage a hit inflicts), a minimum **Ag** and minimum **St** needed to use the weapon, range bands showing the distances at which a weapon may be used, and, finally, any **special** attributes the weapon may have.

There are some variations on this, but we will explain them briefly, below. For more detailed explanation, refer to the *Equipment Guide*.

Mode and shots

All weapons have a number of shots, normally one. This is not a direct count of the number of rounds a ranged weapon fire down-range, but a measure of the number of useful shots it can put out. In hand-to-hand, it is a measure of how many potential multiples of damage the weapon may inflict.

A weapon that has multiple shots shoots either in Rapid Fire (RF) mode, in which many shots are counted per pull of the trigger, and at an accuracy penalty, or in Single Shot (SS) mode, in which only one or a very tightly coupled stream of projectiles are fired.

> *For example, a mag rifle's stat line shows only a single shot. However, depending on the technology used in the mag rifle, that shot may be a short stream of lighter-weight projectiles intended to penetrate armour and subsequently cause damage, or may be a single, heavy slug that ends up being as effective when it hits.*

Other modes are available, but when a weapon has multiple shots it can always be used in single shot mode for greater accuracy. Switching between modes is a trivial action, merely requiring the shooter to declare which mode they are using: if no mode is stated, then the first mode in a list is used, or RF for multi-shot weapons. It might be useful to note that primitive, ranged weapons relying on the user's physical capabilities use the Melee.Primitive specialism.

SV (Strike Value)

Each weapon also inflicts damage, the amount of damage measured by its Strike Value (SV), typically a number of dice and a fixed addition. When the weapon hits, the dice indicated are rolled and summed together with the fixed amount which then impacts the target: the target's armour may absorb some or all of this SV, the remainder going through to inflict physical characteristic damage on the target. Whilst on most weapons this is constant at any range range, weapons such as the Virai's fusion weapons and the advanced compression weapons have an SV that varies by range.

As well as SV and direct damage, some weapons may have special effects – such as Ghar disruptor shells which may cause acute radiation exposure.

Ag and St

These are the minimum **current** characteristic score for Ag and St needed to use the weapon (remember, damage is taken to characteristics). If the shooter does not have the minimum characteristic, then the weapon cannot be used in that mode – or if only one mode, at all!

A ranged weapon on a stand or securely braced on an object may be used by someone with a minimum St of 1.

> **Design Note:** Minimum Ag and St need not be used. However, they do ensure that small or weak creatures do not lug around enormous weapons!

Ranges

All ranged weapons have five ranges shown: Point Blank (PB), where the weapon probably does the most damage but may struggle to be wielded, depending on its bulkiness; Effective (Effv), at which range they typically provide the most impact and are the most accurate; Long (Lng), at which range they are still useful; and Extreme (Ext), at which range accuracy begins to drop off and, for some, even damage can deteriorate. Finally, each weapon has a maximum range (Max), beyond which it is ineffective.

> **Design Note:** The ranges used in *Antares RPG* are longer than might be expected by players of the tabletop wargame, but are still shorter than reality: if more 'real' ranges are required, as a rule of thumb, multiply all ranges bar point blank (PB) by 4.

Special

This is where a weapons other qualities are listed, such as ignoring particular types of cover, whether it can stun targets.

Advanced weapons also connect to a team's combat shard, its bearer's armoured suit or other targeting assists such as spotter buddies. Primitive weapons – those given the 'Primitive' attribute – do not have such interconnect.

Example Weapon stats

It's worth breaking down the stat line for each of the sample weapons.

In the example weapons, below:

The **Mag Rifle** has 1 shot with 1D10+6 SV damage. It has a maximum range of 100m, but suffers greatly at that range in that it has a -5 penalty to its user's accuracy. It is easy to use (Ag 1) but requires some strength to heft (St 4).

Example Ranged Weapon Definitions

Weapon	Mode	Shots	SV	Ag	St	PB	Effv	Long	Extr	Max	Special
						----- Range -----					
Mag Rifle		1	1D10+6	1	4	5/-1	20/+0	40/-1	80/-3	400/-5	–
Mag Carbine	RF	2	1D10	2	3	5/+1	20/+0	30/-2	50/-4	100/-6	–
	SS	1	1D10+3	1	3	5/+0	20/+0	30/-1	50/-3	100/-6	–
Compression Carbine		1	*Var*	3	2	5/+0	30/+0	50/-1	70/-3	200/-5	Ignore Soft Cover
Variable SV:						*3D10+5*	*3D10*	*2D10*	*1D10+5*	*1D10*	
Ghar Lugger Gun	RF	2	1D8	2	1	5/+1	20/+0	30/-3	50/-5	70/-6	No Shard
	SS	1	1D10	1	1	5/+0	20/+0	30/-2	50/-4	80/-6	No Shard

The **Mag Carbine** is a multi-shot weapon (Shots 2) but has different effects in RF and SS mode, primarily due to multiple slivers still being fired in SS mode but at a single target. It needs a little more balance to use in RF mode (Ag 2), but is otherwise easier to wield than a mag rifle (St 3).

The **Compression Carbine** entry takes two lines as it has a strike value that varies by range; the carbine also has a special attribute, Ignore Soft Cover, which simply means the target cannot receive any protection from soft cover.

Finally, the **Ghar Lugger Gun** is a simple, relatively primitive, automatic projectile weapon which cannot shoot at ranges above 100m. The Lugger Gun cannot connect to a user's combat shard (No Shard).

Each weapon is normal presented in a block that indicates the appropriate skill to be used when firing such weapons, such as Firearm.Projectile or Firearm.Energy.

Cover and Concealment

Visibility is a measure of how much of the target can be seen. The target of a shot must be visible to the shooter or to a spotter providing patch sighted co-ordinates to the shooter.

Visibility can be highly variable: a target hunkered down and deep into crater, for example, is more difficult to spot and target than one standing or on the edge of that crater. Given it is target-biased, a target is visible if they are shooting at their attackers, or are not completely blocked from the view of their attackers by intervening objects such as solid rocks, cargo crates, doors, walls and similar, solid objects.

Intervening terrain can obscure or diminish visibility. A target which is within or behind a bush, say, and difficult to see is **obscured**. Indeed, the deeper a target is into obscuring terrain, the less visible they are.

Obscured targets inflict a situational penalty DM on a shooter's ranged weapon test.

Targets can also be obscured if they are shooting from behind objects that would also afford a degree of cover (see below) or that would otherwise prevent them being visible to the shooter.

Intervening terrain not only blocks or obscures visibility, but may also give the target of a shot some protection: this is called **cover** and is dealt with in detail later. There are two types of cover: **hard cover**, such as rocks that would otherwise block visibility completely, as well, and **soft cover** that typically not only obscures but offers a degree of protection to the target by taking away some of the impact of the incoming shot, perhaps through having solid branches or strong stems that obscure the target.

Broadly speaking, soft cover hampers the chance of a shot hitting a target and offers minimal protection, whilst hard cover offers a degree of protection as well as obscuring a target. A target shooting, spotting, peeking over the top of or about to perform any of those actions from behind hard cover is visible, though obscured by the cover. A target hunkered down or completely hidden behind hard cover is not visible, so cannot be targeted.

The shooting penalties are:

- **Each 4m of obscuring terrain** penalises the shooter with a **-1** DM to shooting;
- Being behind **hard cover** gives a **-4** DM – providing the target is partially visible, of course!

A target shooting from behind up to 2m of cover ignores visibility penalties from that cover unless they are shooting through it or have created an easy line of sight through it (perhaps due to being a sniper): the visibility offered by cover can go both ways!

Line of Sight (LoS)

Line of Sight is a straight path between the shooter or spotter's visual sense and the target: this must not be obstructed by intervening terrain that blocks visibility. The variations of LoS in an RPG are endless, so we have to rely on stating that what is reasonably visible in LOS can be targeted or spotted.

LoS is blocked by solid objects, but only if the target did not move and did not make an attack.

A character can make a Perception check to determine where a potential target is hiding, and can then transmit those coordinates to the rest of their team, but this does not automatically grant LoS if the target is not visible, perhaps hunkered down behind a piece of solid terrain or hard cover.

LoS penalties apply even when shooting overhead and apply from the spotter – whether living or drone – providing the spotting.

Line of Fire (LoF)

Line of fire is a path the projectile or energy takes from the shooting weapon directly to the target. In order to shoot, a weapon must have LoF to its target – this is assessed from the weapon, whether hand-carried or heavier.

For direct fire weapons, LoF is a level path between the shooter and the target. LoF for an overhead weapon is high, extremely so for x-launcher's, mortars or x-howitzers, and this should be taken into account when operating in enclosed spaces.

Some weapons are offset from the shooter's LoS so need both LoS and LoF to their target.

Arc of Fire

A weapon which has an Arc of Fire (Arc) can only fire into the areas specified from where the bearer is facing. There are four arcs, each 90°: Front (F, or default) which is 45° either side of directly forward; Left (L) and Right (R) which are 45° either side of directly to the left (or right) of the bearer (typically a side-affixed weapon), and finally Aft (A) or rear, which is directly behind the direction the wielder is facing.

Whilst a character can freely turn to face an attacker or target, sometimes they are surprised and cannot do so or are trapped in facing a given direction.

Overhead shots

Overhead shots suffer a penalty DM to the shooting task check but are otherwise worked out as normal. The results are slightly different:

- **Critical:** On a critical, **one** target within the effected area (or the target if just one) suffers critical hit damage (**maximum damage** or **weak spot** – see below) whilst the others are affected as if they received a normal hit;
- **Success/Hit:** work out the number of individuals/targets affected and roll damage once for all (or one each – players' preference, but once you use a method, stick to it!);

- **Mishap:** a mishap means a misfire, or the shot was a dud or went way out of the combat;
- **Fail/Miss:** otherwise a miss misses by a number of metres equal to the difference between the final total and the target number **plus 1m per range band shot at** (PB=+1m, Effv=+2m, Long=+3m, and so on)**.** This misses by the direction the D10 was pointing (looking at it from the top down as if it was an arrowhead).

> *For example, a shooter firing x-sling at Effv range has a final task check of 9, 2 less than the 11 required. Their shot goes off target 2+2 = 4m. If they were shooting*

> **Gameplay:** Some players like rerolling the task check D10 to determine the direction of the miss, or like rolling a specific 'redirect dice' available for some games. How you do it is up you, just so long as it is a random direction!

Clusters

A group of individuals who are all within 1m of each other and who are all within LoF of a weapon shooting in RF mode can be targeted as if they are a single target – a cluster. There are no bonuses or modifiers as the benefits (a larger group) are largely outweighed by the penalties (gaps in the group).

The hits achieved are divided equally by the shooter amongst all those in the cluster.

Sphere/Blast

Weapons or ordnance which generate an area effect have the Blast or Sphere attribute (regard them as synonymous). This is accompanied by a declaration of the diameter of a circle based around the centre of the target, as in the most common:

<div align="center">Sphere 3</div>

This indicates the effect of the weapon is a 3m diameter circle – effectively, the target's 1m area and 1m all around it. Only the target point or person need have LoF from the weapon.

Sphere/blast weapons hit each potential target within the area of the effect the same way: it is easier to roll the damage once and apply it equally to all within the area though detailed players may like to roll it separately for each target hit.

It is worth noting that many blast effects come from overhead shots, so there is a chance of the Sphere not hitting the intended target!

Ranged Attack

Shooting at a target is a task check like any other, but using an appropriate weapon skill. Most hand carried ranged weapons need require an Ag bonus when shooting whilst support weapons require an In bonus – though more primitive support weapons may require St or En, depending on how bulky and heavy they are.

Ranged Attack DMs

The PC/NPC making the action applies the DMs in the Ranged/Shooting Attack DMs table (bottom right(to their task check.

Shooter has Sink Mass

Sink Mass is generated by Reflex armour as a way of soaking up or shrugging off damage: the sink mass accumulates at a rate of -1/damaging hit until de-activated. Sink mass may also affect Ag and St.

For full details refer to the Armour section.

Target is Prone

Lying on the floor is not much of an advantage if the shooter is too close – indeed, it may even be a disadvantage! A target on the floor and lying prone normally presents a smaller target if more than 5m away, so is more difficult to hit.

Target is Moving

A fast target moving across a shot is more difficult to hit than a relatively stationary target. Care should be taken with this as

Ranged/Shooting Attack DMs		
Modifier Type	**DM**	**Reason**
Skill	+n	Character's skill with the weapon being used
Characteristic	-n/+n	Current Characteristic Bonus (typically from Ag but possibly In)
Weapon	+n	Weapon-targeting bonus/assist
	+/-n	GTL differences between shooter and target
	-4	Shooting overhead (will deviate on a miss)
	-1	Weapon in RF mode
	-3	Unbraced or unmounted support weapon
Cover/Concealment	-1	LoS of shooting through each 4m or part of obscuring terrain or Blur
	-4	Target behind Hard Cover or is only partially visible
	-3/-5	Energy/Projectiles shooting through or into an area of Arc munitions
Size	-2	Tiny target (buddy, probe or similar)
	-1	Small target (Ghar)
	+1	Larger target (Tsan Ra, Ghar battlesuit, D1/D2 drone, personal skimmers)
	+2	Big target (vehicle)
	+4	Huge target (Broodmother, large skimmer)
Shooter Situation	+2	Braced, hand-held weapon
	-2	Shooter is Off Balance/Unbalanced
	+/-	Technology level difference (see *Equipment Guide* +2 to -2)
Shooter's Sink Mass	-1/point	
		-1 per point of sink mass on the shooter (see Armour)
Target Situation	-2	Target moved 10m+ last movement OR turn
	-2 or more	Target is dodging or charging – doubled for awkward weapons
	-1	Target is prone and more than 5m away

a target running almost directly towards or away from the shooter negates such a penalty.

Dodge and Awkward Weapons

Large, battlefield support weapons that require the Support skill are a little unwieldy. Against targets within 10m, dodge penalties are doubled when firing support weapons.

Hit/Miss

Check the result of the shooting Task Check.

On a **critical hit**, the shooter may either choose to inflict **maximum damage** or to hit a **weak spot**. See *Damage*, below.

On **success**, the target or target point was hit. See *Damage*, below.

On a **mishap**, the weapon failed to fire or the shot was so off target that it had no effect. Sometimes a weapon misfires, as well.

On a **direct fire failure**, the shot missed the target or target point.

On a f**ailure for overhead shots**, **blast** or **sphere** weapons, the centre of a failed shot diverges from the target point or person in a random direction and by:

> **absolute failure value × weapon modifier.**

The weapon modifiers are 4m for hand-held weapons, 8m for support weapons and 15m for shipboard gunnery. To determine the direction, it can be useful to roll a D10 and follow a line parallel to that indicated by the point of the upward-facing number.

> *For example, an Algoryn x-launcher fires at a distant squad of Virai constructors and misses on a result of an 8 (a -1 failure). X-launchers are OH weapons, so the shot goes off-target by -1m×8 = 8m, likely missing the squad completely.*

The majority of weapons inflict physical damage which is applied to the target's physical characteristics. Some weapons may also – or instead – inflict stun damage that affects the target's In. Some very rare weapons inflict Em damage.

Physical Damage

For normal hits, roll the damage stated on the weapon description's Strike Value entry. Armour and cover may reduce the effects of the hit.

> **Design Note:** Armour is in the *Equipment Guide*, but for now it's worth knowing that armour has intrinsic protection and an armour field bonus. Intrinsic protection is that offered by the underlying shell, such as a bulletproof vest or a suit of plate armour; the armour field bonus is the *extra* protection offered by a suit's hyperlight or reflex field generators that soak up the energy of hits.

Maximum Damage

Calculate the normal maximum damage the weapon can inflict on the target and reduce that by the target's armour and cover SV as normal. If a weapon inflicts multiple types of damage, the shooter has to decide which of the types inflicts maximum damage, the other being rolled for as normal.

Weak Spot

Hits on a weak spot inflict **half** the weapon's maximum SV damage (round up), bypasses the target's shell armour and

armour field SV, but not cover SV, intrinsic armour, nor any protection from the personal trait 'Gnarly'.

If a weapon inflicts multiple types of damage, the shooter has to decide to which of the damage types the weak spot benefit applies, the other being rolled for as normal.

> *For example, Algoryn AI Optimate Trooper Taren Macronat shoots at a Ghar Outcast charging towards him and rolls a 10. After working out all his DMs, he hits – so also scores a critical. His plasma carbine normally inflicts 2D10+2 damage but as he scored a critical, he automatically does the maximum damage of 22 SV. One suspects the Outcast is not going to survive.*
>
> *If Taren shot at a Senatex trooper, 22 SV damage is barely likely to penetrate their phase armour. Instead, Taren would elect to bypass the Senatex trooper's armour by finding a weak spot. Half damage from the is 11 SV, which would be applied directly to the trooper's physical characteristics – possibly enough to make them unconscious.*

Applying Damage

After calculating the weapon damage, subtract the target's applicable armour and cover bonuses to determine the actual damage applied to the individual's physical characteristics.

Refer to the *Damage & Injury* section for details.

> *The Outcast who was shot by Taren is wearing little more than scraps of leather picked up from around the battlefield – a total of 3SV. This is subtracted from Taren's 22SV to give 19SV spread across the Ghar's physical characteristics of Ag 6, St 3, En 4 (13). The 19SV is way more than this total so the GM doesn't even bother allocating the damage but just states the Outcast is dead.*

HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT

Hand-to-hand combat occurs when one character performs a Melee or Intense Assault action on an enemy they are adjacent to – 'adjacent' meaning to be within 1m. The character initiating the combat this round is the attacker and their target the defender.

Normally, a defender will have reacted (see above) and the pair are in a **brawl** where both characters fight each other in hand-to-hand. Occasionally, a defender is caught flat-footed and has already acted this round, in which case the attack is a special case and is **unguarded**. Often, a brawl expands to have multiple opponents.

Whether undefended or not, all attacks in hand-to-hand are **opposed** skill vs skill or skill vs characteristic checks.

This means each character rolls once for each Melee attack they make and once for each additional defensive roll they make when unguarded. When opponents make a Melee attack against each other, then both use their Melee skill (or appropriate).

A hand-to-hand attack normally consists of a Melee attack with a weapon. Alternatives are: Pressure, Pulling Punches, Holds and Disarming an opponent – see *Other Types of Attack*, below, for the special circumstances surrounding each type of special attack.

The sequence of Actions and reactions in a multi-participant Brawl can become quite involved, so don't be afraid to step through it slowly!

Finishing Blows

An attack against an unconscious or helpless character is a finishing blow and is not an opposed check: a critical hit is automatic and either maximum damage from the weapon should be applied or a weak spot can be identified. Most often, it is useful to turn off the defender's armour fields before calculating a finishing blow.

Unguarded Attacks

When a defender is unable to use their Melee skill against an incoming attack but is aware and active, they can still try to avoid being hit. Unfortunately, their attack has gained an advantage by catching them unawares, so have the jump on the defender.

This is an **unguarded** attack and defence.

Such a situation occurs often in a Brawl against multiple opponents or when a character has already been activated this round. The skills used are:

- The attacker in such situations makes a **Melee** check, as normal.
- The unguarded defender makes an Ag or In **characteristic** check to oppose the attacker's Melee check. Hand-to-hand modifiers are applied to this check other than those directly relating to Melee skill or weapon use.

Hand-to-hand bonuses from relevant traits, such as a Krasz' Rough Fighter(+2), can be used by the attacker (as normal) and the defender.

Where a defender is contacted by successive attackers, all of whom did not start this round in contact, the defender fights the first combat with their normal Reaction and then makes unguarded defensive checks against each subsequent attack.

For example, Gratusch the Krasz is charged by three Ghar Outcasts in succession. Against the first he makes a Melee skill check against their Melee skill check, gaining a total of 10 against their total of 8 and knocking out the Outcast. He then moves back against a wall as the second beat in his reaction.

When the second Ghar charges, the Outcast makes a Melee skill check it is opposed by Gratusch's Ag: this uses all the normal bonuses, including Gratusch's Rough Fighter(+2) trait, but cannot add Gratusch's Melee skill. Once again, Gratusch's total of 12 is higher than the Outcast's total of 11 but as he has already acted the attack merely misses – Gratusch moved out of the way.

The third Ghar charges and gets a flanking bonus as his ally is next to Gratusch. This time, Gratusch is not so lucky and only gains a total of 6 whilst the Ghar rolls a 7 – the Ghar strikes with their maglash and applies the damage against Gratusch.

Brawl

A brawl is an combat between a pair of combatants, both of whom are making a Melee attack against the other. Participants in a Brawl are activated as normal and may react as normal.

Where there are more than two participants in a brawl, characters may only use their Melee skill or special attacks when they are activated, whether as a result of an activation dice pull or through a Reaction. **All other checks are unguarded defenses.**

There is a special case of compulsory or automatic Reactions: a defender contacted by multiple attackers, may choose to **not** React to any hand-to-hand combat action made against them. They make unguarded defence rolls as normal but run the risk of dying early in the combat!

For example, Gratusch charges an enemy who fails to react and run away. Though the enemy Baulked, they still automatically react to Gratusch as soon as he contacts them: both become participants in a Brawl.

Both Gratusch and his enemy make their hand-to-hand Melee checks. A key factor, however, is that Gratusch has multiple causes of advantage having charged and facing and off-balance opponent so the results of his attack, if successful, are assessed first.

Melee Weapon Stat Line

Melee weapons have largely the same stats as ranged weapons, but the 'Shots' becomes 'Number of attacks' (**Att**) and the ranges are reduced to one. The term **reach** is stated for weapons that can engage enemies at a longer distance than normal, and the term **contact** for weapons which are only useful close-in.

Weapons which have both ranged and hand-to-hand capabilities have the two entries placed on different lines and have their hand-to-hand stats prefixed by **H2H**. For primitive weapons, the default is H2H if no mode is stated.

Refer to the example weapon box (previous page).

Here, the necessary simplifications are shown in the difference between the **javelin** – a short, light, pointed weapon primarily meant for throwing – and the definition of a **spear**, which is slightly heavier and primarily meant for hand-to-hand. The

Example Hand-to-Hand Weapon Definitions

Weapon	Mode	Shots /Atks	SV	Ag	St	PB	Effv	Long	Extr	Max	Special; Skill
Spear	H2H	1	1D5+1	1	2	Reach	–	–	–	–	+St; Melee.Primitive
	Thrown	1	1D5	1	2	5/+1	10/+0	20/-4	30/-6	–	Min Rg 3; +St; Melee.Primitive
Long Spear		1	1D5+2	1	3	Reach	–	–	–	–	+St; Melee.Primitive
Javelin	Thrown	1	1D5	2	1	2-5/+0	10/+0	20/-2	30/-4	40/-6	Min Rg 2; +St; Melee.Primitive
	H2H	1	1D5	2	1	Contact	–	–	–	–	+St; Melee.Primitive
Fist		1	1D4	1	1	Contact	–	–	–	–	±St; Melee.Unarmed
Shock Lance	RF	2	1D10+2	3	5	5/+1	20/+0	30/-1	40/-4	60/-6	Min Rg 3; Firearm.Energy
	SS	1	2D10+5	3	4	5/-1	20/+0	40/-1	60/-3	100/-5	Min Rg 3; Firearm.Energy
	H2H	1	2D10+5	3	3	Reach	–	–	–	–	+St; Melee.Tools

javelin can be thrown but can only be used effectively in H2H at close range (contact). It is possible to throw the spear – and some weight advantage at close range – but the longer range of the javelin and the spear's SV and reach advantage in H2H are lost.

The *Equipment Guide* has more detail, but it's worth explaining a few special attributes, here:

Min Rg specifies the minimum range at which the weapon can be used. This is partially to cope with arm swing and step, but is also to remind players of the ranges at which they are engaging: swinging back an arm to throw a javelin leaves you open for a blow!

+St indicates that the character's current St bonus should be added to the weapon damage if positive.

±St (such as on the **fist**'s entry) means the attacker's current St bonus should be added whether positive or negative, reflecting the weakened blows of an injured character.

×2St is used on some specialist weapons to indicate that twice the wielders St bonus should be added to the damage, if positive.

The Boromite, lavan handler's **shock lance** is shown as an advanced, complex weapon that requires two skills to use well: **Melee.Tools** (in H2H) and **Ranged.Energy**. Its main issue is that at longer ranges it is much less accurate than its comparable weapon, the plasma carbine, but that is because it is meant to be used to control locomites and the larger lavamites.

Reach

Some weapons have the reach special attribute. This means they can engage an opponent at a further distance than normal and either make them struggle to engage or stands a chance of striking the enemy first.

Rather than go into many levels of detail – a long weapon has to used differently close-in than further away – we either state a weapon has reach and gains a +2 Melee DM in the first round of combat, or does not have reach.

A character who is off-balanced, held or prone cannot take advantage of a weapon's reach.

Flanking

When an attack makes a hand-to-hand attack against an enemy, each additional friendly character adjacent to an enemy who is being attacked can count as 'flanking' that enemy providing:

- are capable of making a hand-to-hand attack against the enemy they flank;
- are not off-balance (they must be stable).

An attacker gains +2 on their Melee actions for each friendly character flanking the target of their attack.

Other Types of Attack

Whilst most attacks in Hand-to-hand are Melee attacks, there are additional options available: Pressure, Pulling Punches, Holds and Disarming an opponent.

Pressure

Pressure can be a special Melee action or can be combined with a melee action in an Intense Assault action. It is an attempt to destabilise an opponent and perhaps push them back. It cannot be performed by a character who is off-balance – they must steady themselves, first – and cannot be performed against a target on the ground or who is prone.

A pressure is resolved using an opposed **Athletics** check with Str as the characteristic bonus but with the normal hand-to-hand DMs. Weapon and IMTel bonuses do not apply!

The loser of an opposed Pressure check is knocked back by their failure penalty (1-4m) in a direct directly opposite the winning character and also becomes **off-balance**. On a draw, both characters are off-balance, but neither move.

The winner of a Pressure may follow up a knocked back opponent and remain in contact (within 1m), providing they have the movement to do so and even if this results in a 2m slight extension to any move they made this turn. There is no requirement to do so and if contact is broken, then no subsequent hand-to-hand can take place.

A character knocked back into another or into a solid object stops as soon as they make contact.

> *For example, a Boromite with Str 6 (a +1 bonus) and Athletics+2 attempts to pressure a Ghar Outcast with St 3 and Athletics +1. The Boromite rolls a 4 which gives him a total of 7 (4+1+2); the Ghar rolls a 6 which gives it a total of 5 (6-2+1). The Boromite wins and pushes back the Ghar 1m (an opposed win of 1).*

Hand-to-Hand Attack DMs

Modifier Type	DM	Reason
Skill	+n	Character's skill with the weapon being used, or Athletics if using Pressure
Characteristic	-n/+n	Current Characteristic Bonus (typically from St, but possibly In for NuHu Staves or Ag for lighter weapons such as those in the Melee.Unarmed category)
Weapon Reach	+2	Using a Reach weapon in first round of combat.
Size	-2	Tiny target (buddy, probe or similar)
	-1	Small target (Ghar or smaller)
	+1	Larger target (Tsan Ra, Ghar battlesuit, D1 drone, personal skimmers)
	+2	Big target (vehicle)
	+4	Huge target (Broodmother, big skimmer)
Attacker (dice roller's) Situation		
	+2	Charged into combat this round
	-2	Attacker is Off Balance (Pressure not allowed)
Attacker's Sink Mass	-1/point	
		-1 per point of sink mass on the attacker (see *Armour*)
Defender (Opponent's) Situation		
	+2	Opponent is prone or is on the ground or is in a significantly lower position than the attacker (Pressure not allowed vs Prone targets)
	+2	For each active ally flanking the opponent, whether attacking or not.
	+4/+6	Opponent is unaware/is immobilised and unable to fight back or avoid the blow
Defender's cover	-2	Target is behind Hard Cover.

Pulling Punches

If using the Melee.Unarmed skill or a bludgeoning weapon (as opposed to stabbing, energy or cutting weapon), the damage (SV) on a hit can be reduced.

Before the blow, the attacker states they are pulling their blow and states by how much the SV of the hit should be reduced. This value is applied before any doubling due to maximum damage.

> *For example, Gratusch charges an already-injured Ghar Outcast. As he wants to take a prisoner, his player declares Gratusch is pulling his blow at -2 SV. He is using his fists – so Melee.Unarmed – and successfully hits.*
>
> *A Fist is 1d4 damage but Gratusch's St bonus is +3 and he gains +2 from Rough Fighter. The player rolls a 2, giving the final damage as SV 2 (dice) +5, (St, Rough Fighter) -2 (pulled) = 5. The Ghar is knocked unconscious, but is not dead!*

Hold Attack

This is an attempt to immobilise an opponent so that they cannot move from their current spot. In order to hold, a character must declare they are attempting a hold when stating their action, have at least one hand free and must hit with a **Melee.Unarmed**, **Athletics** or **Melee.Martial Art** attack.

A **hold** cannot benefit from Reach.

A hit with a hold attack using **Melee.Unarmed** or **Melee.Martial Art** also inflicts damage as normal, though the attack may be pulled (see Pulling Punches, above).

A **held** opponent cannot move away without making an opposed Melee.Unarmed, Melee.Martial Art or Athletics check first.

Place Attack

The attacker makes an **Athletics**, **Melee.Unarmed** or **Melee.Martial Art** check, opposed as normal, and places an item on the defender.

A **place** attack cannot benefit from Reach.

> **Gameplay:** A Place attack could be used to plant a plasma grenade on a target in a Melee.Unarmed attack providing the attacker had a plasma grenade in their hands.
>
> Most Antarean plasma grenades are auto-adhesive and explode within a finite area of just under 1m but with incredible heat: this makes them able to be used in combat without risk to the attacker. The same cannot be said for some other types of grenade.

Disarm Attack

Instead of inflicting hand-to-hand damage on an opponent, a character may attempt to disarm their opponent by attacking their weapon. To do so, they must attempt an Athletics, Melee.Unarmed or Melee.Martial Art attack opposed by the defender as normal.

On success, the attack does no damage but the opponent loses their weapon: if the attacker has a hand free, they can claim it is in their free hand, otherwise, the weapon is knocked 1d3m away on the floor in a random direction.

Hand-to-hand Attacks

A hand-to-hand attack is an opposed Skill Check using an appropriate Melee weapon skill. Most melee weapons require an St bonus, but some may do well with Ag – especially a martial art.

The PC/NPCs involved apply the DMs in the Hand-to-hand Attack DMs table to their task check dice roll and compare the results. In the Hand-to-hand bonuses table 'Attacker' refers to the character rolling the dice, whether or not they can actually attack, such as defending against multiple enemies.

Charge bonus

This only applies if the attacker made a charge action.

Target is Prone

Lying on the floor is not much of an advantage or at a lower level than the attacker is a significant disadvantage and can make a target easier to hit.

Cover

Cover protection works both ways, so a character receiving protection from intervening cover must also suffer the same attack penalty when striking an opponent the other side of that same cover!

Hand-to-hand Hit/Miss

Compare the results:

- **Critical:** If an **active** or **reacting** player wins the opposed check with a critical, then the enemy or object may be struck with either **maximum damage** or at a **weak spot**, as for shooting;
- **Success:** If an active or **reacting** player wins the opposed check, then the enemy or object was with normal damage;
- **Mishap:** If an active or reacting player misses with a mishap, they not only failed to hit but become **off-balance;** a grenade used in hand-to-hand is dropped and lands 1m away in a random direction;
- **Failure:** otherwise, no damage is caused.

No damage is caused if an inactive character wins the opposed check – they successfully defended the attack but were not ready to fight back.

> Plasma grenades, solar charges and implosion grenades do not go off when dropped, but if activated may cause damage to whoever is in the area or nearby (solar charges and implosion grenades have a blast diameter of 3m).

Hand-to-hand Damage

Damage from hand-to-hand attacks is the same as for ranged weapon fire, including a potential for weak spots and maximum damage.

TARGETING VEHICLES

> **WARNING: VERY DRAFT…**
> **Design Note:** Please be aware that, more than the RPG as a whole, this section has NOT been properly playtested. As a result, it may not stand rigorous play. It is offered here as a first-cut system for applying damage to vehicles.
> **WARNING: VERY DRAFT…**

Here, the term 'vehicles' covers a range of solid transports and stationary devices that are, fundamentally, equipment. A Ghar battlesuit or scutter is classed as a 'vehicle' just as much as a personal, one-person skimmer such as a Freeborn Skyraider or a Boromite's hauler.

Large creatures (termed 'behemoths' in the wargame) follow the rules for living creatures, though they often have substantial hide armour and significant stats; for an example, see the juvenile broodmother in the *Players' Guide*.

DP Zones

Whilst most items of equipment have a single damage point (DP) value, vehicles have theirs split into three zones, such as '15:12:10'. These three zones cause different damage affects when they drop to zero – much like a character suffers different effects when a characteristic drops to zero.

When all three are a zero, a vehicle is completely disabled.

Damage is absorbed by a vehicles armour fields, shell and structural armour just as any other target; the vehicle may also suffer sink mass pins when its reflex field is hit – though its reflex armour is significantly tougher than that carried by infantry. Any damage that penetrates its armour is applied to one of its DP zones in the same way damage is applied to creatures. The difference is that each zone has a damage table associated with it.

> *For example, if our theoretical vehicle with DP 15:12:10 suffers 23 SV damage after its shields, shell armour and structural protection were penetrated, it could take its first 15 against the first DP threshold (reducing it to 0:12:10) before applying the remaining 8, in total, to another – perhaps the third, reducing it to 0:12:2.*

Each DP zone is associated with a different type of damag: mobility, firepower and functionality. The three zones are always listed in the sequence:

<mobility>:<weapons>:<internals>

> *Our theoretical vehicle with DP 15:12:10 has 15 DP in its mobility zone, 12DP in its firepower zone, and 10DP in its internal DP zone. With such weak protection for its passengers and internal functionality, the vehicle is most likely a fast-moving combat drone.*

As soon as a zone reaches 0DP, the vehicle must immediately roll on the damage table associated with that zone. Furthermore, every time the vehicle takes damage to *any* other zone, it must also roll *again* on the zeroed zones damage table. In this way, damage gradually accumulates before the vehicle becomes completely incapacitated.

A vehicle's Ag, St and En are unaffected by SV damage taken, but are affected by the DP zone damage tables (a vehicle's En is largely ignored, anyway).

Vehicle Destruction

When its DP zones are all at zero, record the excess damage in a single total. When this accumulated total equals the total of all its DP zones, then it is completely destroyed – whether disintegrated, blown up or completely annihilated.

Note that each time it receives excess damage, damage table rolls will need to be made for **all** the vehicles's DP zones on each hit as all will be reduced to zero.

Zone Damage Tables

Each time a vehicle must roll damage, roll a D10 and consult the table relevant to the zone that is at 0 DP or below. If rolling for multiple zones, just roll the once and use the result for each table.

Results accumulate, so if a -2 Ag result is rolled a second time, the Ag is reduced by a total of 4 (Ag - 4).

Results stated as being 'Repairable' can be repaired on the battlefield over four rounds (a continuous action), often by the vehicle itself attempting the Repair with its own nanospore but otherwise by a mechanic doing so. If a Repairable result is rolled again, before it is repaired, the battlefield repair task check suffers an accumulative -4 penalty and takes +4 rounds to repair. These Repair checks can be substituted for by Nanospore.Nanotech or Nanospore.Control checks on suitable advanced vehicles (GTL N1 or higher).

All vehicles of N2+ have the ability to repair themselves with their own nanospore whilst still fighting and moving. The damage SV sustained to the DP zones cannot be repaired on the battlefield, however, and requires an hours work per 2×DP damage taken (which can be shortened or lengthened by a task check result).

Example Vehicle	TL	¢CEU/BP	HL	Sink	Field	Shell	Bonuses/Restrictions/Notes
Ghar Battlesuit	DXGE	NA	–	–	5	12	Structural 20; DP15:15:20; Spinal control; Mv 4 @ Ag-2; St 15; Ag bonus for shooting = +0; St bonus for H2H attacks = +5
Transport	N1+	Spec	–	15	–	15	Structural 20; DP 15:15:15; Mv 12 @ Ag+0; suspensor height = 4m; 8 passengers/crew; compactor (as compactor buddy)
C3T7-pattern	N3	Spec	15	20	–	20	Structural 30; DP 20:20:25; Mv 10 @ Ag+0; suspensor height = 6m; 10 passengers/crew; compactor (as compactor buddy)
Personal Skimmer	N1+	Spec	– (+8 boost)	–	–	8	Structural 8; DP 10:10:8; Mv15-18 @ Ag+1; suspensor height = 3m; 1 crew; weapons as faction (Concord/Isorian have +8 hyperlight boost rather than Sink mass)

Not Repairable merely refers to an immediate, battlefield repair. Such repairs take two hours, at least, in a suitable repair shop for each degree of damage taken and may require replacement parts.

Damage to shield generators is taken the same way as damage to characteristics or DP zones: the SV loss of a shield must be applied to a shield in its entirety if it can, and not spread across many.

Mobility Zone Damage Table

The mobility zone damage table affects speed, agility, suspensor height and steering.

D10	Mobility Zone Damage
1-2	-2 Mv. Repairable.
3	-2 Ag. Not Repairable.
4	Suspensor/ground clearance reduced by 33% (1/3) of original clearance. Not Repairable.
5	Motive power supply is damaged. Repairable.
6	Steering damage: the vehicle can only go forwards or backwards from its current facing. Repairable.
7	Drive generator damaged. Repairable.
8-9	1st time this result is rolled, the vehicle cannot Sprint and is beyond battlefield repair; 2nd time the vehicle can no longer Run; 3rd time the vehicle is immobilised but can turn in place. Not Repairable.
10	Drive shield generator offline: a shield is weakened by -8 SV. Not Repairable.

Weapon Zone Damage Table

The weapon zone damage table affects weapon accuracy and weapon function, as well as items close to such areas. Items such as subverter matrices are also classed as weapons.

D10	Weapon Zone Damage
1	Targeting sensors critically damaged: -2 to all shooting checks. Not Repairable.
2-3	Primary weapon is disabled. Repairable.
4	Primary weapon is completely destroyed. Not Repairable.
5-6	A secondary weapon is disabled. Repairable.
7	Secondary weapon is disabled. Not Repairable.
8	Turret (if any) is damaged and will not rotate. Repairable. Reroll if not turret.
9	Compactor destroyed: items within are violently ejected in all directions (and may strike those nearby). If no compactor, smoke or similar defences or armament is destroyed. Not Repairable.
10	Communications damaged. Vehicle cannot act on Commander's order and cannot signal others. Repairable.

Internal Zone Damage Table

The internal zone damage table affects connectivity, internal processors, passengers, power and shield generators.Each time a vehicle must roll weapon damage, roll a D10 and consult the following. Results accumulate, as above.

Vehicle-Related Actions

Vehicles themselves can make many of the same basic actions as individuals but can only do those appropriate to their equipment. Most such actionscan be broken down into normal actions: opening a hatch (unless the vehicle does it for you); a move to dismount or step out and down to the ground; and a move action to recompact a personal skimmer into a compactor buddy.

A Ghar battlesuit has a plasma or battle claw, though, so can charge into combat and make combat reactions; a Concord C3T7 transport skimmer could only pressure someone to push them backwards or knock them down – see below – but could otherwise *not* engage in hand-to-hand.

Driving

Whilst movement over difficult terrain should be governed by the various Drive skills, a vehicle's Ag bonus or penalty should be used as a modifier (an assist, if you like) to such checks rather than the driver's Ag bonus. This is listed as a bonus after a vehicle's move (as in Mv 10@Ag+0).

The terrain mods should be applied by the GM but to skimmers most rough terrain is ignored (it's why they are so popular); however, avoiding obstacles whilst moving at high speeds is a different matter entirely, increasing the difficulty by one rating for each (say) 4m moved.

Combat

A vehicle's St should be used as an bonus to **attacks** with the vehicle, typically pressures or straightforward collisions. This can be seen as as a continuum: 1D8 SV per St bonus (+1 = 1D8, +2 = 2D8, and so on, with 0 being 1D6, -1=1D4, -2 1D3 and minus 3 being 1D2). The speed of the vehicle can also be used as a damage modifier, such as +1D8 per 4m of movement before the collision. Few vehicles can actively defend against melee attacks so attacks against them are Unguarded attacks (including Place).

Many vehicles have a stated Ag bonus for shooting: this is to be used instead of the gunner's Ag, though the gunner can still use their own skill bonus. A vehicle may also have a stated St bonus for combat (such as +5 for Ghar Battlesuits) and may also have a specific St if equipped with suitable appendages (such as 15 for Ghar Battlesuits).

D10	Internal Zone Damage
1	Sensor processing malfunction: reduce GTL equivalent by 1 step (which may impose an additional -2 DM on many fires). Repairable.
2-3	Power plant hit. Vehicle loses one normal action this round. Repairable.
4-5	Shield generator hit: reduce effectiveness of one generator by -12 SV. Repairable.
6-8	Contents damaged: 25% of occupants and/or transported cargo are hit, each taking damage equal to the total damage applied to DP zones this hit. Spread the hits evenly across goods and living creatures.
9	Machine intelligence incapacitated. Repairable (nanospore repairs are autonomous so can do so without control from the MI). Vehicle cannot function until MI is repaired unless it has manual controls (all Algoryn pattern vehicles have manual controls which can be taken over by a crew).
10	Vehicle controls destroyed. No function can operate. Repairable.

DAMAGE AND INJURY

Most weapons in *Antares RPG* inflict physical damage in the form of a **strike value**, or SV, that reduces the physical characteristics of creatures and drones, and the damage points of objects and vehicles. The incoming SV is normally reduced by any armour surrounding the target or which a character is wearing, depending on the effectiveness of the hit.

There are a few unusual weapons or effects that cause damage to another characteristic, such as Em or In, though such damage is typically temporary and discussed in the entry for the weapon; such damage normally has no effect on an object.

> **Design Note:** A major factor that players need to consider is that the advanced weapons in the Antarean universe are deadly: without the complex and advanced armour, they can easily cause substantial injury to a character. As a result, participation in combat needs to be considered very carefully!

REDUCTION OF DAMAGE SV

The SV damage inflicted by a weapon hit is reduced by the armour carried or surrounding the target or intrinsic to its structure. The *Equipment Guide* has full details of armour types and what happens to the armour when taking damage.

As a summary, however, for use in this chapter, armour can be thought of as being in layers, with each layer soaking up damage before the remainder penetrates to the layer beneath. This sequence is important as the deleterious effects of armour fields are only triggered when the armour absorbs damage.

When all armour has been penetrated, the target then takes remaining SV as a reduction to its Damage Points (if an object or vehicle) or to its physical characteristics (if a normal, living creature).

There are three types of armour: an armour **field**, which is technologically generated armour such as reflex or hyperlight; **shell**, which is physical armour from simple leather padding to complex, coated cerametal; and **structural**, which is the armour due an object or individual because of thick hide or exoskeleton, or even that natural resistance provided by the physical make-up of an object. Structural armour is often referred to as 'intrinsic' on the character sheet blocks, here.

The sequence of damage absorption is a step-by-step process:

i)   **cover** first reduces the incoming damage; then…

ii) **armour fields** soak up the incoming energy, firstly with hyperlight and then with reflex armour – reflex sink-mass pins potentially being added to the target which may slow them down – and then with more primitive armour fields; then…

iii) the actual armour s**hell** absorbs more SV; then…

iv) **structural**, intrinsic or natural defences absorb SV damage; and finally…

v)   any remaining damage is applied to the object's damage points or individual's physical characteristics, causing injury.

This can be seen in the diagram, below left.

Structural protection always applies, even with attacks that hit a **weak spot**, as this is innate to the target or object being damaged; this is why it is often referred to as intrinsic armour.

> **Gameplay:** In practice, combat tends not to take too long and the players tend to keep careful track of their armour reduction, sink-mass and damage quite carefully, simply because Antarean weapons are so destructive!

Cover SV Bonus

A target behind **soft cover** gains a +2SV cover bonus if protected by particularly soft articles such as branches, up to +4 bonus to cover SV if behind solid furniture.

Hard cover gives a: +5 or +6 bonus for thick, dense wood or similar density thick, hard plastic; +8 SV for everyday walls; +10SV for rocks or solid walls; and +16SV if GTL N1+ mono-layer, reinforced fortifications.

Hits Against a Target in Cover

When an individual behind cover is hit by a shot that penetrates the cover, both they and cover they are sheltering behind it take damage. Only close misses would otherwise hit and damage the cover.

Sequence of Damage (SV) Reduction

Damage applied and absorbed in sequence 1-5 and in sub-sequences 2.1 to 2.3

1. SV of Cover absorbs SV
- On **mishap**, nothing happens to cover or target
- On a **miss**, **cover** takes damage from BREACHING weapons (only)
- On a **hit**, cover takes damage as well as target

2. Armour Field absorbs SV
2.1 Hyperlight
- Flare seen; no sink-mass pin
2.2 Reflex
- May be multiple layers
- Sink-mass pin applied per layer of Reflex hit
2.3 Primitive field

3. Shell absorbs SV
- Physical suit, jacket, armour plating, etc

4. Structural/Intrinsic always absorbs SV
- Gnarly hide, dermal armour, build material, etc
- Absorbs SV even on a penetrating or 'Weak Spot' hit

5. Targets takes remaining SV as damage
Creature/PC/NPC: to physical characteristics
Object/Vehicle: to damage points (may have DP zones in lieu of characteristics)

Returning to the example in the shooting section, above, if Taren's Outcast opponent had dived behind some rocks then they would gain a hard cover bonus of 10SV. When added to their 3SV leather, for a total of 13, this would reduce the effect of Taron's stunning shot to 12SV.

The GM spreads this across the Ghar's En and St (7), with the remaining 5 points to the Ghar's Ag. The Ghar is knocked unconscious by the shot, and is injured, but has only a single point of Ag keeping it alive!

The rock also takes 12SV damage, which may be enough to destroy it.

Breaching: Misses against Cover

Weapons which have the Breaching special attribute that miss (not mishap) a target sheltering behind cover hit the cover instead. The cover takes damage and may, eventually, be destroyed.

NON-PHYSICAL DAMAGE

In general, non-physical damage is dealt with in special rules for each weapon: refer to the *Equipment Guide* for details.

Stun

Weapons that inflict **stun** damage have a time associated with the hit as well as a recovery modifier: this is the normal length of time a character is unconscious before coming round. If the player wishes, they can alter this by making an Endurance check adding the recovery modifier of the stun weapon: the task time associated with the check result alters the length of time the character is unconscious.

An appropriate Rugged(shock) bonus can be an assist to this En check, such as the Boromites generalised Rugged(+3) or the Krasz' Rugged(shock+3). A Revival implant also provides a bonus.

For example, Ysseth (En 6) is hit by a bolt from a police stun gun –a Stun 5/+3 weapon. Her character makes an En check and only rolls a 4, for a total of 8 (4+1 En +3 Stun): "Time", so makes no difference. She wakes in 5 minutes.

Gratusch is also hit but has En 7 (+2) and Revival implant (+1), and rolls a 10, for

INJURY: GENERAL

Physical damage such as that inflicted by a normal weapon is taken directly to a physical characteristic during combat. This is a temporary reduction (unless the character dies!) so reduces that characteristics **current** bonus.

Points of physical damage must be applied completely to one physical characteristic before being applied to any other, with excess damage being carried over to the next characteristic. Damage which can only affect In or Em can only be applied to those characteristics and any excess after reducing Em or In to 0 is wasted.

The following are key points, terms or thresholds when taking damage.

Injured

A character with a characteristic reduced to 0 is **injured** and cannot use that characteristic nor the Sprint or Charge actions until it is increased to at least 1. The damaged characteristics

can have quite an impact on combat Ag- or St-based checks. Some weapons or effects inflict damage to an individual's In or even Em, affecting In-based skills such as Astrogation or Engineering or Em-based checks such as most of those using Presence.

Unconscious

Any character reduced to 0 in **two** physical characteristics is unconscious and falls to the floor, prone. If they have not been allocated a dice, pull it from the bag, otherwise put it aside or otherwise mark the character as being down and unconscious (the Antares order dice has a 'Down' which can be useful). A Revive check can be used to

Dead or Dying

Once all a three physical characteristics are at zero, a PC is **dying**: apply any further or leftover damage to their Dying Track (but see *Luck & Fate*, above).

Unless **stabilised**, the PC must lose 1 additional point per round until they reach the end of their Dying Track, at which point they are dead. A successful Medic check performed on the PC before then will stabilise them, bringing one characteristic back to one and setting the Dying Track back to zero (see *Stabilise*, below).

NPC Death

NPCs do not have a Dying Track, so are dead when all their physical characteristics are at zero.

Seriously Injured

A PC that has to apply any damage to their Dying Track has suffered a **serious injury**. A seriously injured PC must immediately check the *Serious Injury* section (p.48) to determine how badly they are hurt – which may be important after the end of the combat (as a reminder, a Dying Track is 1/3, rounded up, of the PCs combined physical characteristics).

A PC with a serious injury cannot be given any aid or Medic checks except to stabilise them until the serious injury is dealt with in hospital.

Gameplay: It is strongly recommended that PCs spend a Fate Point, if they can, as soon as they would take damage to their Dying Track to avoid taking a serious injury.

Intellect Damage

A character whose In is reduced to 0 is catatonic and cannot perform any actions.

Empathy Damage

In the rare event that a character's **Em** is reduced to zero, they must obey orders given to them by someone in authority and not only lose all social skills but cannot communicate effectively.

Extended Injury Example:

In this worked example, we'll use a Concord soldier, Commander Ysseth, whose base physical stats are Ag 7, En 6 and St 5. In this example, we'll ignore sink-mass pins as Ysseth takes several, but these are secondary to the injury process.

We start by present Ysseth's normal stats and character sheet, then show how this is affected by each subsequent hit.

Ysseth is hit by a (weak spot) fist inflicting three points of

damage. She elects to take the damage to her Ag, reducing it to 4, so her Ag bonus is temporarily reduced from +2 to -1. This means her character sheet would then be as follows.

Ysseth is then hit by a plasma bolt which, after all armour reduction, gives a further 12 points of damage: she applies 5 to her St to take it to 0, then 4 of the remaining 7 to her current Ag – in which she has only 4 points at present. As damage must be applied in 'chunks' and not distributed across stats, her Ag must take as much of the damage as possible, so is taken down to zero, leaving 3 points to allocate elsewhere. Her player has to allocate these to En as Ag and St are already at zero!

Now two characteristics are at zero, Ysseth is also unconscious. Her activation dice is pulled from the bag (but not the command dice she added at the start of this round). Ysseth's character sheet is now as follows:

At the end of the round, Ysseth's activation dice is removed from play and not replaced into the bag. Even though she is the commander, she is incapacitated so now does not add any extra command dice to her force – catastrophe!

Next round, the disaster worsens. Whilst on the ground, her cowardly opponent takes another shot, this time inflicting 6 points of damage (after armour). The remaining three points are taken off her En – all she has left! – leaving 3 to carry over.

With all three physical characteristics at zero, she would be dead if she were a NPC! As a PC, however, the remaining 3 damage are applied to her dying track, as shown below.

As Ysseth has taken Dying Track damage, she also has to immediately roll on the injury table with a DM of -3.

At the end of this round, before she manages to receive any

medical attention, a further point is crossed off Ysseth's dying track: she had better receive medical assistance – and fast!

Of course, Ysseth's player could have used a Fate Point to leave one of her En, St or Ag on 1 and be unconscious rather than take any more damage onto the dying track and becoming 'Seriously Injured'.

NPC GROUPS AND DAMAGE

Whilst all the above creates a rich and dangerous damage schema for PCs, it can be difficult to track each set of damage on NPCs as well as the reduction in capability. Instead, we recommend the following.

- For NPCs, total up their average physical characteristics and assign it as Damage Points, as you would objects (see the Arms & Equipment Guide). Record this with the NPC as "DP 15".
- Optionally, multiply the total DP by 2/3, rounding to the nearest whole number. Add this to the stats as "Injured" or "Inj", as in "DP15/Inj 10" – when injured the NPC cannot use a Sprint or Charge. Sometimes it is much easier to ignore this step for large groups, as well.
- Multiply the total DP by 1/3, rounding to the nearest whole number. Add this to the end of the stats as "Unconscious" or "Unc", as in "DP 15/Inj 10/DP 5" or, if ignoring Injuries, just "DP15/Unc 4".
- Then add a DP total in the GM notes for each NPC and track damage to each. Deductions to attacks or effects for such NPCs due to Ag, St or En changes are ignored.

For example, a group of three Ghar Outcasts might be AG 6 ST 3 EN 4 IN 4 SP 4 DP 13/9/4. The next entry on the NPC group would just be as simple as:

1: 13	*2:13*	*3:13*

The GM can just track damage to each, knowing when each goes unconscious and therefore out of action.

Gameplay: It's up to the GM how they present the stats for each individual and whether or not they want to use Injuries and choose to go straight from functioning to Unconscious. It can be a much quicker combat to go from functioning to unconscious – and we encourage this in larger combats!

WOUNDS, RECOVERY AND MEDIC CHECKS

The recipient of a Medic check is termed 'the patient' and the character performing the check is the 'first aider' or 'medic'.

A Medic task check is used to: **stabilise** a character from dying; to **revive** a character to help them to their feet or bring them round when unconscious; to administer **First Aid** immediately after combat; and to help with **long-term recovery** outside combat.

Full recovery can take some time but is vastly aided by healthcare and IMTel bonuses, as well as Medic checks.

As a character recovers points to a characteristic, whether naturally or through medical care, they recover their characteristic bonus in line with their characteristic value.

Medic checks can benefit from coaching assists, from good quality first aid kits, from medi-buddies and medi-probes, and from IMTel bonuses – as always providing the patient and the Medic are in the same IMTel. An assisting character must be within 3m of the patient but medi-buddies and medi-probes can be 5m away due to their sensors and scanning equipment.

Normally, a character makes a Medic check on a nearby character but it can be performed by an conscious individual on themselves. A Medic check performed by a character on themselves is a Tough check (-4) – so assists and extra time are recommended.

Stabilise the Dying

A PC who has no physical characteristics left is dying and loses a point on their Dying Track each round. To stop a PC dying, they must be stabilised. To do so takes **1d5 rounds** and requires a successful Medic task check. Determine the number of rounds first, and at the end of the round:

- **on success**, the PC restores their En to 1 and resets their Dying track to zero;
- **on failure**, the PC keeps dying, as normal.

A stabilised character is unconscious and still seriously wounded: they may not receive Revive or First Aid at the end of combat – they remain seriously wounded. A stabilised character who receives more damage must be stabilised again.

> *For example, after Taron runs to Ysseth (she ends up on DT-4 by the time he reaches her), Taron makes a Medic check using his MyIMTel implant, his medi-kit and medi-buddy to attempt to stabilise her. He succeeds, so Ysseth's En is set to 1 and all the accumulated Dying Track damage is removed. Her activation dice (and those she brings to the party) are left to one side as she is not an active participant.*

Revive

A revive check is a Medic skill task check to bring a character round from being unconscious, but not dying. The character must be unconscious – two characteristics down to zero and the other at one or more.

- **on success**, the unconscious character has one of their zero characteristics raised to one, bringing them round, and could then take part in the combat from the following round (typically first getting up from being prone);
- **on failure**, the PC remains unconscious.

> *For example, Gratusch is also unconscious with Ag and St of 0 and an En of 4. The round after stabilising Ysseth, Taron turns to Gratusch and tries to bring him round with a revive check. He already has a great deal of support from his equipment, as well as Gratusch's Revival augment, so succeeds with little problem. Gratusch's player chooses to set his Ag to 1 and the start of the next round has his own dice put back in the bag and can also act as a commander in place of Ysseth – though it is likely he cannot move very far.*

First Aid

In general, First Aid is the administering of emergency medical assistance immediately after damage occurs. Here, it is a specific type of Medic check given immediately – that is, starting within 10 rounds – after the completion of combat. This time limit means that medics may have to prioritise the recipients of their attention and have the injured brought to them so they do not have to waste time moving to their patients.

First Aid is a Medic check on an **injured** character with all the bonuses listed above. It takes five rounds to properly administer. On success, each of the patients damaged characteristics are increased by one. This means a character will have at least 1 point in all three characteristics – enough to function, at least, if only poorly.

A character can only receive First Aid **once** before having to enter Assisted Recovery or Unaided Recovery.

> *For example, after combat has finished, Taron can do nothing more for Ysseth – she is unconscious, but stable.*
> *After Ysseth, the medic turns his attention to Gratusch and applies First Aid, binding his wounds and ensuring the correct analgesia and antibiotics are administered. Gratusch had an Ag of 1, and En of 4 and a St of 0. After Taron's excellent care, Gratusch gains one point to each of these, ending up with Ag 2, En 5 and St 1. He can certainly function, but will be limping around for a bit.*

Long-Term Care

A character's recovery from injury (any points missing from any characteristic) depends on their level of activity and the care they receive. They remain in recovery until they have fully recovered their characteristics to their normal level.

Medical debt and bills do not apply to Antarean space, though Freeborn will have the expectation of a one or more favours to be performed at their request. Many factions in Antares have the capabilities to allow for the recovery from amazing injuries. If a character is killed, their Mindstate can be loaded into a clone in IMTel societies, or even into an artificial body or a drone – a potentially more risky task.

Characters who have been seriously injured must follow the *Serious Injury* thread (p.48) before undergoing *Long-Term Care*.

For the sake of convenience, a standard month is considered to be 4 standard weeks long, each of 7 days. In practice, many societies using the panhuman standard calendar insert 2 or 3-day holiday breaks between every month.

Every day or part of a day a character is active during their recovery not only delays recovery by a full day but resets the time recovered for the next characteristic gain to zero. If there

is a risk that the character may not complete their recovery, it is useful to state point-by-point the characteristic that was recovered as soon as recovery was effected.

Regrow Trait

Characters with the Regrow trait recover characteristics in half the long-term care time stated.

> *For example, on the seventh day of recovery in a hovel on Tolek, an injured Freeborn is attacked. They already have recovered one point of Ag from their first four days in Unaided Recovery, but are half-way through recovering another point (two full days completed). The attack wipes out the two days partial recovery and also prevents any continued recovery until the eighth day starts, but the point of Ag has already been recovered – probably useful if he had to use his plasma pistol to fight off an attack.*

Assisted Recovery

Assisted recovery – hospital care – for an injured character is 1×characteristic point per day. This assumes the character is in a good quality medical facility (a Freeborn Trader ship, for example, but not a liner) staffed by trained personnel with suitable equipment, medication, medi-drones and other medical equipment and databases to support their recovery.

Characters undergoing Assisted Recovery cannot make Task Checks or perform any other activity, even learning, though they can read up on current events or carry out light, background research.

Dedicated Care

A character who is receiving care that qualifies for Assisted Recovery may go a step further. Advanced hospitals with excellent knowledgebases, constant monitoring equipment and dedicated carers can reduce the time to recover a characteristic point by 25% or an extra characteristic point recovered every three days.

'Dedicated carers' refers to a lead carer assisted by either a dedicated nurse or medi-drone for every three patients: both the lead carer and nurse must have Medic+4 or greater.

> *For example, in the med-bay of their command cruiser, Taron decides to give Gratusch and Ysseth special attention rather than rely on the normal care. He already has the teams' medi-buddy to assist him in place of a nurse. Taron is only attending two characters, has Medic+4 and is in the hospital aboard the squadron's lead cruiser, so has everything he needs. Gratusch needs to recover 14 characteristic points (Ag 2, En 5 and St 1 from Ag 6, En 7, St 9), doing so in 10.5 days rather than 14.*
>
> *Ysseth is more seriously injured, and we'll look at her recovery later.*

Unaided recovery

An injured character who is not receiving care takes 4× (four times) as long to recover, or 1 point of recovery every four days providing they are taking it easy and resting. Characters with the Regrow trait recover in half this time. A dedicated carer (see above) with Medic+6 or more and a medi-buddy or nurse, at least, can reduce this to three days per characteristic point recovered.

SERIOUS INJURY

A seriously injured character is not only injured, but has also taken another wound that may complicate their recovery. AS soon as a character receives a serious injury, they must roll on the **Serious Injury** table.

Any results and recovery times given on the table take effect before the character can receive Long Term Care (see above).

Deterioration

Each day a seriously injured character fails to receive the care required for their serious injury must take one point of damage directly to their characteristics or, if all are at zero, to their Dying Track. This deterioration may be avoided for that day by a successful stabilise Medic task check.

Characters may be placed in stasis pods to prevent deterioration whilst they are being transported to a hospital – even survey ships have a few stasis pods.

Determining Serious Injury

In the **Serious Injury Table,** the environment shown in the 'Recovery time in…' columns are those in which the character is receiving medical care for their serious injury and does not involve any characteristic increase.

If recovering in a nanosphere civilisation's medical facility (see the *Equipment Guide* and N2+ facilities) with suitable equipment, use the 'Advanced' column – most larger starships have such facilities, but normally the injured are taken to specialist orbitals or planetside facilities. If recovering in any other institution, use the 'Lesser' column. If a character ends up suffering multiple serious injuries, roll for each but each can be served concurrently (for example, regrowing several limbs as well as ears at the same time).

A separate line is given in the table for those with the Regrow trait where their healing is different to those with lesser care.

The recovery times given may be affected by a particularly good Medic check made against the character by the principle doctor, nurse or surgeon caring for the character. It is worth bearing in mind that this might also **increase** the time required on a poor check result.

After undergoing the care for their **serious injury**, a character must also recover their characteristics: see *Long-Term Care*. Characters who take any break from serious injury recovery times have their recovery 'frozen', are still seriously injured and must complete the rest of their recovery at a later date.

Treatment for Specialist Species

Boromites, Ghar and other extreme morphs, aliens or species receiving care in a facility that does not have a suitable specialist always use the 'Lesser' column and results.

> *For example, a specialist for a Boromite patient could be a medi-drone with a Medic(Boromite) Origin assisting a lead medic.*

> Freeborn and IMTel medical ships and facilities can cope with all panhuman species – even Ghar – whilst Freeborn medical facilities on cruisers or homeships can cope with all the well-known species on Antares, panhuman or alien, though they cannot grant any IMTel assists.

Serious Injury Table

D10	Area of Injury	Recovery time in… GTL N2+	GTL N1-	Injury and characteristic loss after recovery
1	Brain	–	–	The injuries are too severe and the body cannot recover (refer to Stemsnap or Mindstate Backup, in the *Equipment Guide* and *Players' Guide*, if applicable).
		(6 months)	–	A character in an IMTel institution may be offered a Mindstate Backup, but can otherwise be kept alive but unconscious almost indefinitely. The six months is the time required to clone the character's body.
		–	N/A	Unfortunately, a less advanced institution cannot cope with these injuries and the character is likely to die unless transferred to a more advanced institution.
2-3	Limb	–	–	A limb is severely damaged, requiring replacement or regrowth.
		2 months	–	Those receiving attention in an advanced, nanosphere civilisation suffer a single, permanent characteristic loss and either have a regrown limb or a replacement, artificial limb (which can be visibly artificial or coated with realistic synthskin).
		1 month	2 months	Characters with the Regrow trait recover completely but with scars or visibly altered limbs and skin.
		–	4 months	Other individuals in lesser institutions lose 1 point from two of their characteristics and receive a visibly artificial limb.
4	Sensory	–	–	One sense (sight, sound, smell) is damaged beyond repair.
		2 months	–	The sense is replaced with an artificial substitute – which may be an augment – or is regrown.
		1 month	1 month	Characters with the Regrow trait regrow the lost sense within a month, but have scars.
		–	1 month	The sense is lost, the time here being to heal the damage around the lost sense. The sense could be restored at an IMTel or advanced Freeborn institution.
5-6	Internal	–	–	A major internal organ (other than brain) took severe damage and no longer functions:
		6 weeks	–	The organ is regrown or replaced with an artificial substitute with nothing to show.
		1 month	6 weeks	**Regrow Trait:** Characters with the Regrow trait regrow the lost organ but need hospital care to support the functioning of the lost organ. Scars will develop over the wound.
		–	3 months	A point is permanently lost from one physical characteristic whilst an artificial or replacement organ is implanted. Scars cannot help but remain.
7+	Lucky Escape			After a brief stay, the character avoids permanent injury. Players may wish to have signs of the injury such as a misshapen finger, replaced or regrown skin or grafts, or scars that show they had a lucky escape. IMTel hospitals cover up such cosmetic damage, however, as potentially being socially harmful except for morphs for whom it is socially beneficial, such as Krasz or Gyohn.
		3 days	1 week	The time shown is that required in intensive and supervised care before moving onto normal recovery for an injury. Characters with Regrow need only spend three days recovering from Serious Injury.

Serious Injury Table DMs

When rolling on the Serious Injury table, a PC receives a dice modifier depending on the situation at the time of rolling the dice when receiving the serious injury.

Serious Injury DM	Condition causing DM
-1	for each point the PC has accumulated on their Dying Track;
+1	from any medi-probes or medi-buddies within 5m (maximum +1, not one per drone);
+1	of eligible to an IMTel assist and a medi-buddy or medi-probe is within 5m (maximum +1);
+n	any DM from personal traits or augments such as Revival (which gives a +1 DM).

For example, Ysseth had -3 on her Dying Track from the shot that gave her a serious injury, giving her a -3 DM. Taron's medi-buddy is within 5m, so she gains a +1 DM. She also gains +1 due to being in the Concord IMTel and having a medi-buddy nearby. This gives her a DM of -3+1+1 = -1: she rolls a 6 and subtracts 1 to give 5: an internal injury.

Ysseth's player decides that her lungs were damaged from the intense heat of the plasma fire. The result of 5 means Ysseth must spend 6 weeks in the C3's intensive and supervised care ward whilst her lungs are regrown, and then move on to Long-Term Care to recover her lost characteristics.

ANTARES D10+ QUICK REFERENCE

The Action Process in combat, step by step

1. Load up the bag with activation dice/chits
1.1 1 per conscious PC/NPC
1.2 +1 (command) per Tactics.Surface over opponent's
1.3 +1 (command) if 2/3 or more are IMTel

2. Draw dice/chits, allocate and activate
- If any command dice left, can put aside

2.1 Give to next PC/NPC in sequence
- **Sequence** of allocation/activity = descending order of Ag/In (player's choice) – so highest first

2.2 Activated PC declares action(s)

2.3 Reactors declare Reaction to actions, if any
- Check / act in sequence (see 2.1)
- Automatic reaction if on OVERWATCH, WAITING, BRAWL…
- …otherwise, expend a 0-beat action for task check on: Athletics, Perception, or their commander's Presence. Command
  - **Success** = React
  - **Fail** = off-balance and set to BAULKED

2.4 Complete active PC/NPC action – 2 beats+
- Simple activity = 0 beats
- Basic activity (Aim, Shoot, Move) = 1 beat
- Complex activity (Charge, Sprint) = 2 beats

3. Activate Baulked PCs/NPCs
- Activate in sequence (see 2.1)
- Free, 0-beat action is already spent

As 2.1 and 2.4, but are BAULKED, and off-balance:
- All activities to be performed at -2 penalty
- All Mv reduced by 1 (e.g. Mv5→Mv4)

4. End Phase (book-keeping)
4.1 Check results of long-term Medic activities such as Stabilise
4.2 Check results of other long-term activities
4.3 Dying PCs move 1 step down Dying Track
4.4 Phase Armour: -1 In if phased out; +1 In if recovering and phased in
4.5 Check for dead/incapacitated
4.6 Check for Break/Victory; if none…
4.7 …gather up all activation chits/dice
- If on OVERWATCH or on long-term activity or WAITING, may retain dice at cost of next round's free, 0-beat action.

…and start again!

Reactions, step by step

1. Check Reaction to trigger
OVERWATCH: automatic response to Reaction and OVERWATCH triggers
WAITING: Automatic response to previously stated trigger
Otherwise: Make Reaction Test

2. Reaction Tests: Initiative or Command Task Check
Initiative
- Perception or Athletics +/- Ag/In

Command
- Use commander's Presence.Command +/- own Ag/In.

DMs:
- -2 if off-balance
- -5 if reacting to unseen enemy

Reaction Test Result
- **Success:** make desired Reaction
- **Failure:** BAULKED; off-balance.

3. Possible Reactions:
Adjacent Enemy making a H2H attack:
- Brawl (automatic)

Adjacent Enemy moving away/is distracted:
- Intense Assault (automatic) against moving enemy

Charge declared reactions
- Dash to Safety: Sprint away >=1Mv
- Dive for Cover: Dive + Crawl move
- Countercharge: meet half way→Melee/Pressure

Shot at by enemy
- Dash to Safety   Sprint away >=1Mv
- Dive for Cover   Dive + Crawl move

Enemy activates or moves into LoF/LoS to front and character is on OVERWATCH or WAITING:
- Shoot   Shoot + Basic action

Degree of Success Table

Result vs 11+	Opposed Difference	Description / Degree of Success	Success Level/ Assist Bonus	Task Time	Comments
Natural 1 but result more than 11+ (not opposed)			-1	As result	Failure
Natural 1	-1 or less	Mishap	Reduce 1 step	Reduce 1 step	Reduce degree of success by one level
<=1	-10 or less	Abysmal Failure	-4	Time × 2	–
2–4	-9 to -7	Distinctly Lacking	-3	Time +50%	–
5–7	-6 to -4	Poor Job	-2	Time +20%	–
8–10	-3 to -1	Normal Failure	-1	Time	–
11–13	+0 to +2	Normal Success	+1	Time	–
14–16	+3 to +5	Good Success	+2	Time -10%	–
17–19	+6 to +8	Excellent Job!	+3	Time -25%	–
20+	+9 or more	Superb Success	+4	Time -50%	–
Natural 10	n/a	Automatic Success	–	–	Task automatically succeeds.
Natural 10	+0 or more	Critical Success	Improve 1 step	Improve 1 step	On success, increase the degree of success by one level or carry out any special results for the task.

Ranged/Shooting Attack DMs

Modifier Type	DM	Reason
Skill	+n	Character's skill with the weapon being used
Characteristic	-n/+n	Current Characteristic Bonus (typically from Ag but possibly In)
Weapon	+n	Weapon-targeting bonus/assist
	+/-n	GTL differences between shooter and target
	-4	Shooting overhead (will deviate on a miss)
	-1	Weapon in RF mode
	-3	Unbraced or unmounted support weapon
Cover	-1	LoS of shooting through each 4m or part of Soft Cover
	-4	Target behind Hard Cover or is only partially visible
	-3/-5	Energy/Projectiles shooting through or into an area of Arc munitions
Size	-2	Tiny target (buddy, probe or similar)
	-1	Small target (Ghar)
	+1	Larger target (Tsan Ra, Ghar battlesuit, D1/D2 drone, personal skimmers)
	+2	Big target (vehicle)
	+4	Huge target (Broodmother, large skimmer)
Shooter Situation	+2	Braced, hand-held weapon
	-2	Shooter is Off Balance/Unbalanced
	+/-	Tech level difference (+2 to -2)
Shooter's Sink Mass -1/point		
		-1 per point of sink mass on the shooter (see Armour)
Target Situation	-2	Target moved 10m+ last movement OR turn
	-2 or more	Target is dodging or charging – doubled for awkward weapons
	-1	Target is prone and more than 5m away

Hand-to-Hand Attack DMs

Modifier Type	DM	Reason
Skill	+n	Character's skill with the weapon being used, or Athletics if using Pressure
Characteristic	-n/+n	Current Characteristic Bonus (typically from St, but possibly In for NuHu Staves or Ag for lighter weapons such as those in the Melee.Unarmed category)
Weapon Reach	+2	Using a Reach weapon in first round of combat.
Size	-2	Tiny target (buddy, probe or similar)
	-1	Small target (Ghar or smaller)
	+1	Larger target (Tsan Ra, Ghar battlesuit, D1 drone, personal skimmers)
	+2	Big target (vehicle)
	+4	Huge target (Broodmother, big skimmer)
Attacker (dice roller's) Situation	+2	Charged into combat this round
	-2	Attacker is Off Balance (Pressure not allowed)
Attacker's Sink Mass -1/point		
		-1 per point of sink mass on the attacker (see Armour)
Defender (Opponent's) Situation	+2	Opponent is prone or is on the ground or is in a significantly lower position than the attacker (Pressure not allowed vs Prone targets)
	+2	For each active ally flanking the opponent, whether attacking or not.
	+4/+6	Opponent is unaware/is immobilised and unable to fight back or avoid the blow
Defender's cover	-2	Target is behind Hard Cover.

Sequence of Damage (SV) Reduction

Damage applied and absorbed in sequence 1-5 and in sub-sequences 2.1 to 2.3

1. SV of Cover absorbs SV
- On **mishap**, nothing happens to cover or target
- On a **miss**, **cover** takes damage from Breaching weapons (only)
- On a **hit**, cover takes damage as well as target

2. Armour Field absorbs SV
2.1 Hyperlight
- Flare seen; no sink-mass pin

2.2 Reflex
- May be multiple layers
- Sink-mass pin applied per layer of Reflex hit

2.3 Primitive field

3. Shell absorbs SV
- Physical suit, jacket, armour plating, etc

4. Structural/Intrinsic always absorbs SV
- Gnarly hide, dermal armour, build material, etc
- Absorbs SV even on a penetrating or 'Weak Spot' hit

5. Targets takes remaining SV as damage
Creature/PC/NPC: to physical characteristics
Object/Vehicle: to damage points (may have DP zones in lieu of characteristics)

Task Difficulty DMs Description	Dice Modifier
Easy	+2
Simple	+1
Non-Trivial (normal)	+0
Awkward	-1
Hard	-2
Tough	-4
Challenging	-6
Daunting	-8

Characteristic Bonuses Characteristic	Bonus
0	Unusable
1	-3
2-3	-2
4	-1
5	+0
6	+1
7-8	+2
9-11	+3
12-14	+4
15+	+5

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