

COMBAT

Savage violence is an unremarkable part of life in the wastelands of the New Earth. Every hunter knows that his next trip into the forest might find him confronting some hideously mutated predator, and every village laborer keeps watch for raiders on the horizon. The denizens of the New Earth know too much about killing to seek combat recklessly, but there are times when there is no path out save one cut by sharp steel.

INITIATIVE

When combat breaks out, every participant rolls 1d8 and adds their Dexterity attribute modifier, if they have one. This is their initiative score, and the sequence of action goes from highest to lowest. In case of ties, the PC wins, and if two PCs tie, the closest player to the GM's right acts first. Initiative is only rolled once, as when everyone has had their turn to act it loops back around to the top. One full turn by all participants is called a *round*, and usually represents five or six seconds of frenzied action.

There are times when PCs or their enemies are surprised and unable to respond effectively. In the case of such ambushes, the defender with the best Wisdom/Perception skill total should roll an opposed check against the average Dexterity/Stealth skill total of the attackers. If the defenders win, they may respond normally. If the attackers succeed, they get a free round of actions before everyone rolls initiative.

There are times when a character may wish to delay his or her action, waiting for a comrade to act or holding ready for some enemy. The character states specifically what they are waiting for, and when the circumstances arrive, they act immediately. If the event never happens, they lose their action for the round in waiting. It's up to the GM to decide what actions can plausibly be held.

COMBAT ACTIONS

Once a character's turn comes up, he or she can perform an action: shoot an enemy, cut a rope, dig a stim out of a backpack, stabilize a downed comrade, or trigger an offensive mutation. Anything that could plausibly be accomplished in five or six seconds can be done as an action.

Some actions are so easy that they can be accomplished at the same time as an attack or other significant deed. Speaking a few words, drawing a readied piece of equipment, activating a defensive mutation or one meant to aid another action, or dropping prone might all qualify as these "free actions".

In addition to whatever action a character takes on his or her turn, they may also move up to 20 meters, or 40 meters if they do nothing but move. This movement cannot be split up; all of it must be taken either before or after the character's action for the round.

MAKING AN ATTACK

Assuming a character has a weapon to hand and a will to murder, they may make an attack as their action for a round. To do so, they roll 1d20 and add their relevant attribute modifier, combat skill, attack bonus, and the target's armor class. If the total is equal or

greater than 20, the attack hits, and the target will be hurt or killed. A roll of natural 1 always misses, and a natural 20 on the die always hits.

Some situations may grant bonuses or penalties to the hit roll. As a rule of thumb, some beneficial circumstance might grant a +2 bonus on the roll, like having a steady sighting rest for a mag rifle, or swinging an axe at a prone opponent. Disadvantages such as trying to swing an axe in a narrow tunnel, shooting a long arm at a character in knife range, or firing at a foe who's half-hidden by the corner of a crumbling building might apply a -2 penalty. Characters who lack even level 0 skill ratings in the type of weapon they wield also suffer a -2 penalty to hit.

If a blow strikes home, the attacker rolls the damage dice for the weapon and adds their relevant attribute modifier. If the attack utilizes the Combat/Unarmed skill, they may also add their skill level to the damage. This wound is then subtracted from the target's hit points. If the victim is reduced to zero hit points, they are either struck dead or are mortally wounded. Without the help of advanced Old Terran medical tech or mutant healing plants, they are doomed to die.

A human character can make only one attack per round, even if they hold multiple weapons or have multiple offensive mutations. Certain mutated beasts or military bots can launch multiple attacks, however, and these savage foes can rend their prey to pieces in mere moments.

MOVEMENT IN COMBAT

Unencumbered human characters may move up to 20 meters during their turn, or 40 meters if they do nothing but move. Climbing up a steep surfaces, swimming, or otherwise navigating rough terrain costs double the distance in movement. Lightly encumbered characters move at 75% of their normal speed, while heavily encumbered characters move at only 50%.

It's difficult to get clear of a swirling melee without catching a spear in the back. Any character who tries to move away from a melee engagement must spend their action evading the enemy before they can move for the round. Characters who simply turn and flee or who attempt to do something else with their action grant all foes within melee range a free immediate attack on them as they turn their attention away.

WEAPON AND ARMOR DAMAGE

Life is hard without spare parts or advanced maintenance tools. If you roll a 1 or 2 on an attack roll, your weapon is damaged, and drops one level in condition as described in the section on equipment wear and repair. The same applies to your armor if a foe hits you with a roll of 19 or 20.

This wear and tear can occur only once per fight for any given piece of equipment.