

Project Swimclass

Dice Pool RPG rules with "learn by doing" ability progression.

To Play you will Need

Paper and pencil for recording Skill ranks and equipment. You will want many D6, at least 8 in each of 4 colors.

Create your Character

Pick 2 skills. You start those skills at rank 2 rather than the default. You have 100GP to buy implements.

Basic Game

Everything is a **Skill**. Whether swing a sword, shooting a bow, or jumping a chasm. The Skill rank tells how many dice you may roll in an attempt using that skill.

A task is given in how many dice (Progress) must roll above a given Difficulty ($N \geq T$). Some tasks (defeating an enemy, climbing a wall ...) may take more than one round to complete. Progress adds each round until successful or you are forced to discontinue. Other tasks (jumping a chasm) are all or nothing.

A natural roll of 1 is a **Critical** if the task did not succeed. First critical is ignored. Additional criticals in a skill roll bring increasingly adverse results, commonly injury to yourself. A critical failure may include hitting yourself with an attack, or tripping over your own feet when running.

Except as defined otherwise Skills start with a rank of 1. Exotic Skills like magic are unavailable except as a starting skill, with sufficient rank in a related Skill (see Synergy), or use of an Artifact. Some advanced skills may not be used or developed until you develop a related skill to a certain point.

A task may be **opposed**, in which case a second roll on behalf of an opposing character defines what dice are needed for success. Each opposition die may oppose a single die of lesser or equal value. A target may choose not to oppose an action. (see also combat).

A **Skill Advances** when you succeed in a task with all Skill dice, and all dice roll ≥ 4 . A Task roll must have a chance of failure to merit skill advancement. A difficulty of 1 is usually taken as an automatic success.

Synergy

If 2 skills have a synergy of Nth degree, when one improves, the other may automatically improve if needed to remain within N skill points. A skill with a default of 0 may benefit from synergy to gain the initial skill point. Synergy is always both ways.

Combat

Combat uses opposed rolls. The Attacker rolls for a chosen attack Skill. These dice may be divided between targets before rolling. Dice not successfully opposed inflict a hit.

The Defender rolls dice for Defense skill or a skill matching or countering the attack. Dice greater than an attack die dodge or deflect a hit.

The roll may be modified by the implement and circumstances. Each class of weapons has its own attack skill.

HP pool before taking damage is the rank of the Defense Skill plus 1. Health is recovered rolling, once per hour of rest, defense Skill difficulty = 6 recovering one HP per success. Don't count critical failures for this. A character reduced to 0 HP is down. <0 HP, a character rolls defense vs damage >0 to stabilize, or takes further damage on critical failure. Critical failures to stabilize exceeding defense means death.

You may, instead of acting, hold a named skill in **reserve** to add to your defense should something happen before your next turn.

For Initiative Roll Agility, highest single die going first, second die resolving ties.

Implements

An **Implement** is any piece of equipment a character has available. It may grant a bonus to a matching skill:

- (N+M), granting a modifier of +M to up to N dice.
- (N-crit), canceling up to N critical failures.
- (N*M), N dice counted as rolling M.
- (ND), N dice in addition to the normal pool. An implement granting this bonus is an **Artifact**, and will allow you to use the skill even if you may not otherwise.

Rank the value of an implement by sum of

- sum of max bonus modifier,
- criticals canceled,
- 6*sum of bonus constants,
- and 24 points for a bonus die.

Implements with more than 20 points value should be very expensive and rare.

Artifacts

When using an **Artifact** use dice of a different color for the bonus. The roll on the artifact bonus dice does not impact skill improvement. An Exception is if you don't already have the skill, then treat the bonus dice as your pool for skill advancement.

Combining Skills

To combine skills, add the skill dice from the combined skills, and subtract 1 for each skill added to the first. Out of combat total skill dice may not more than double the base skill (in the example jumping). In combat, combining N skills this way takes N rounds.

Example, a running jump. If there is sufficient room for a run up to a long jump, the Walk/Run Skill may be added to your Jump skill to cover greater distance.

Combining Skills in a Round

Two skills may be used inside a single round at half power each, rounded down.

Convergence / Aid Another

Multiple characters may combine skills as in Combining Skills. Skills so combined may be all the same skill, or a combination that reasonably works together. For example, one character may use a Throw skill to assist another in Jumping across a chasm.

Windup

A character may **Windup** for a bigger effect on Skills that may be applied over multiple rounds. Use as combining a skill with itself.

Straining a Skill

In a desperate situation you may roll a skill of rank 2 or higher at double rank once. As consequence of this strain the skill is reduced to a rank.

Pushing a Skill

A skill with difficulty ≤ 3 may be **Pushed**, gaining *N advancement for *N difficulty. For an opposed skill the opposing dice are doubled. Declare before using.

The Skills

General rules:

Difficulty 1 is a skill so easy or common that pretty much anyone with the skill may do it under normal circumstances.

Difficulty 6 for a challenge that while not quite impossible is madness for all but the most skilled.

A task may often be accomplished with more than one Skill. More specialized skills have easier success on an applicable task.

Basic Skills

Basic Melee No threshold to hit. Opposed.

Basic Ranged $\geq (\text{Range}+1)$, Opposed. Fire a bow. Consumes ammunition.

Basic Defense Each die \geq a hit die deflects that hit.

As Game Master's option characters may have different Defense skills and HP pools for different types of combat.

Walk / Run ≥ 1 , 2 squares/round on easy terrain. Automatic success unless pushed.

Swim ≥ 1 , 1 square/round in calm water. (modified for natural swimmer species.)

≥ 6 , 1 square in a heavy storm/waves.

Climb ≥ 1 , 1 square/round on a decent ladder.

≥ 6 , 1 square on a natural vertical cliff.

Jump ≥ 1 cross a gap of 2 feet.

Throw ≥ 1 deliver a small object 3 square, or a heavy object (about your weight) a couple feet.

$\geq (\text{Range}+1)$, Opposed. Throw a small item as an attack.

Synergy 2 to Basic Ranged.

Brawn ≥ 1 Carry 20 lbs. without difficulty. If you are carrying more than this you are encumbered, roll Brawn preceding each movement action.

≥ 1 Lift 30 lbs, or shove with equal force.

Synergy 2 to Throw, 3 to Basic Melee.

Finesse

Pick Lock Default rank 0.

Spot ≥ 1 spot / hear 1 unhidden item.

≥ 6 spot a well hidden item.

May be rolled by gamemaster on player's behalf.

Stealth move silently, hide

Opposed by Spot.

Tracking

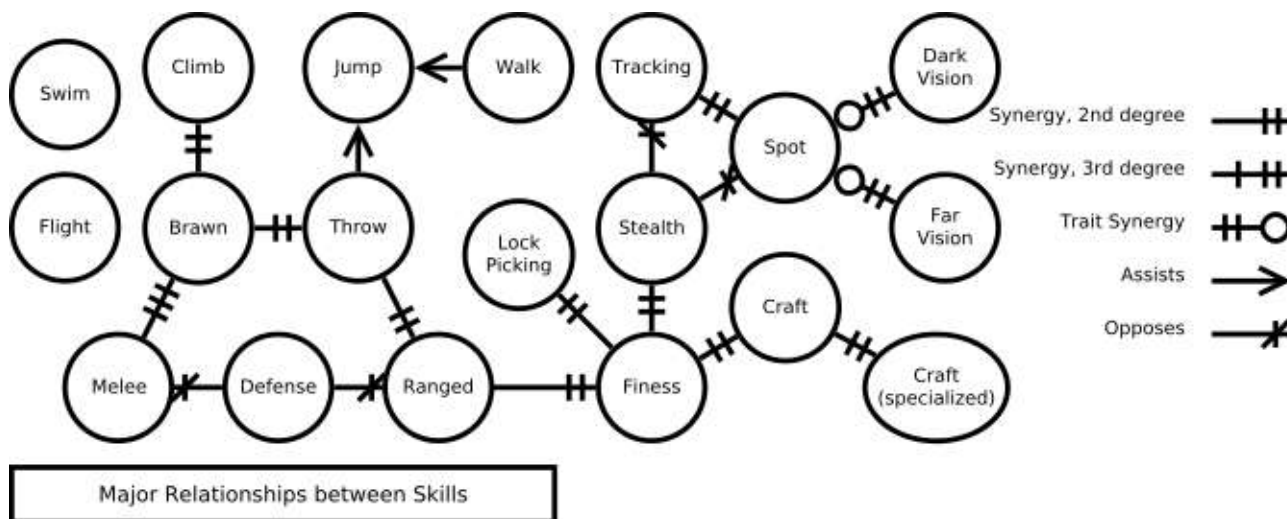
Synergy 2 to Spot.

Craft Difficulty and progress required varies. General crafting of implement's requires $(\text{implement rank})^{2/3}$ materials cost and $(\text{implement rank})^{2/6}$ successes at difficulty 4.

Critical failure means ruin of part of the material used.

You may specialize in a particular material (synergy 1 to general crafting) to craft at 1 less difficulty. Specialized crafting has a prerequisite of general crafting 2. You may also craft a limited use item at 1 less difficulty, and 1/5 cost, said item having a 1/6 chance of falling apart after each use.

Got an action not covered by the above skills? New skills can be added.



Traits

Traits are innate abilities of your kind.

Some work like Skills, except you can not obtain a start in a Trait by synergy. You can advance these traits by synergy.

Dark Vision Enhanced vision/spot (N+1) in low light. Synergy 2 to spot

Far vision (N+1) visual spot for distance. Synergy 2 to spot

Flight Flight Difficulty (2), opposed by wind. You hover. Each additional success makes controlled movement 1 square. On failure/insufficient success, you fall.

Other traits work as a bonus / penalty on a pair of skills, applied to however many ranks you have in those skills. These traits have no cost, but come from your kind. Degree of bonus is set at character creation time. For example an amphibian may have Fins for +2 on Swim -2 on walk.

Fins bonus to Swim, penalty to walk/run.

Magic

Each magic power / spell a character knows is a skill. Combat powers function as a standard combat roll, but may have different success difficulty, and generally a different effect instead of or in addition to the standard hit. Each form of magic on the wheel at right has a synergy 2nd degree to the forms adjacent to it on the wheel.

Any attack by magic may be opposed by magic of the same or opposing type.



Fire

Blaze As an attack Mid range (3 square) (\geq range+1) does 1 hit unless opposed.

Light \geq 1 lights range of one square for each success.

Wind

Mid range vs. targets (walkclimbsituation fitting skill), move target 1 square.

Flight Difficulty (3+target size), opposed by wind or generic defense. target hovers. Each additional success makes controlled movement 1 square. On failure/insufficient success, target falls.

Earth

(3 square range) vs. (walkclimbl...) Shakes an area, knock down target, create rough terrain.

Difficulty(2, soft soil | 6 hard rock) shift 1 square worth of natural Earth.

Water

(3 square range) (\geq 4) Spray of water on target.

Difficulty 3, range touch, breath water for one target / success this round.

Life

(\geq Range+3) heal one damage.

in combat 1/round.

out of combat 1/hour.

does damage to undead.

stabilize a defeated character, vs. damage beyond 0 HP.

Death





Damage As basic melee or ranged.

Stun (\geq range) opposed by Defense or Life. Success stuns target until attacker's next turn.

Raise Undead






Difficulty 4 to raise a corpse to act on your behalf. Undead creatures may act in your place, with rank 1 of Basic Skills (including basic defense), and your rank – 1 of Death magic.

Some common implements

Implement	Bonus	Cost	Weight, lb
Great Sword	3+2 to hit, 3+1 defense	25GP	10
Common Bow	+4 to hit, Ranged attack	5GP	5
Masterpiece Bow	+6 to 3 hits, Ranged attack	45GP	7
Arrow 	ammo	1SP	0.2
Knife 	2 to hit, melee or thrown	5GP	1
Quarterstaff	2 to defense	1GP	3
Medium Shield 	2+3 to defense	20GP	15
Rope	Use to Craft for bonus to assorted skills	1SP/10ft.	0.2/10ft
Piton	+2 to climb or holding to a solid surface.	5GP	1
Hammer 	+3 to inserting Piton, or other similar operation	20GP	2

Sample Artifacts

Artifacts are rare, and generally available only from a quest. Price listed is typical sale price.

Flawless crystal of the Ancients 	+1D to Earth magic	90GP	1
Bottomless Amphora 	+1D to Water magic, endless supply of clean water, 1cup/round.	120GP	2
Amulet of Life 	+1D to Life magic, light for 1 square	100GP	0.5
Stave of Hermes 	+1D to Wind	90GP	4
Eternal Torch	+1D to Fire magic	90GP	2
Skull of a Litch 	+1D to Death magic	90GP	1

Definitions

Range (of attack) distance in squares.

Square an area 5 ft(1.5m) square, or the distance across that area.

Sample Rounds

An orc swings a club at Harro (Melee 2, +2 weapon bonus) rolls 2d6 (5,1), adds 2 to the highest die to get (7,1)

Harro parries with his great sword (Melee 3 +1 defense) rolls 3d6 (5,4,3) adds 1 to highest die for (6,4,3)

7 attack roll is higher than any defense, gets through.

6 defense blocks 1 attack.

The club slips past the sword to hit Harro for one damage.

Harro strikes back (Melee 3 +2) rolls 3d6 (5,2,1) netting (7,2,1)

Orc rolls (Defense 3) 3d6 (6,2,1),

7 attack beats any defense. 6 and 2 defense block 2 and 1 attack. Orc is hit for 1 damage in return.

An angry wind spirit blows at Cephas (Wind magic 3) rolls 3d6 (5,4,1)

Cephas raises a Earth barrier (Earth magic 4, opposing Wind) rolls 4d6 (5,5,2,2) in time to block the wind.

Aerolis the archer takes aim at his target, a rampaging beast (Ranged 3, +4 common bow) rolls 3d6 (5,4,4), netting (9,4,4).

At one square separation from his target he need only roll 2s to be on target.

The beast attempts to dodge (Defense 3) rolls 3d6 (2,2,2), but is too slow and is hit for 3 damage. In addition, Aerolis is so greatly successful he gains a rank in his skill.

The beast runs (Walk 2, pushing *3 for speed) rolls 2d6 (6,5) and streaks through the street to place 6 squares behind it.

Aerolis again takes aim, rolls 4d6 (6,3,3,2), nets (10,3,3,2). With 7 squares separating him from his target only the 10 has a chance to hit.

The beast again attempts to dodge, rolls defense (5,3,2), but is again hit. Only one damage, but that is enough to drop the beast.

Character Sheet

Basic Defense	❶❷❸❹❺❻❼❽❾❿	Name			
❶❷❸❹❺❻❼❽❾❿ ❶	Wounds	Describe yourself			
Basic Melee	❶❷❸❹❺❻❼❽❾❿				
Basic Ranged	❶❷❸❹❺❻❼❽❾❿				
Throw	❶❷❸❹❺❻❼❽❾❿				
Brawn	❶❷❸❹❺❻❼❽❾❿				
Walk / Run	❶❷❸❹❺❻❼❽❾❿				
Swim	❶❷❸❹❺❻❼❽❾❿				
Climb	❶❷❸❹❺❻❼❽❾❿				
Jump	❶❷❸❹❺❻❼❽❾❿				
Craft	❶❷❸❹❺❻❼❽❾❿				
Spot	❶❷❸❹❺❻❼❽❾❿				
Stealth	❶❷❸❹❺❻❼❽❾❿				
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❶❷❸❹❺❻❼❽❾❿	Life ♀				
Air	❶❷❸❹❺❻❼❽❾❿				
Fire	❶❷❸❹❺❻❼❽❾❿				
Death	❶❷❸❹❺❻❼❽❾❿				
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