

# Combat Options

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COMBAT OPTIONS is a set of independant rules modules relating to Fudge combat. Any of these rules can be used separately, or in any combination. Each option is designed to be capable of being used with the Fudge core rules, or any customized version.

## About Combat Options

COMBAT OPTIONS is a set of rule modules for Fudge, a generic role-playing game engine. COMBAT OPTIONS was written by Timothy J. Miller with extensive feedback and inspiration from the community of the fudge-l mailing list.

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## About Fudge

Fudge is a role-playing game written by Steffan O'Sullivan, with extensive input from the USENET community of rec.games.design. The basic rules of Fudge are available on the Internet via anonymous FTP at [oz.plymouth.edu](ftp://oz.plymouth.edu), and in book form from Grey Ghost Press, Inc, P.O. Box 838, Randolph, MA 02368. They may be used with any gaming genre. While an individual work derived from Fudge may specify certain attributes and skills, many more are possible with Fudge. Every Game Master using Fudge is encouraged to add or ignore any character traits. Anyone who wishes to distribute such material for free may do so—merely include this ABOUT FUDGE notice and disclaimer (complete with Fudge copyright notice). If you wish to charge a fee for such material, other than as an article or magazine or other periodical, you must first obtain a royalty-free license from the author of Fudge, Steffan O'Sullivan, P.O. Box 465, Plymouth, NH 03264.

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## Glossary

Some terms are used throughout this document. The following definitions apply to all sections.

**Degree of Success** For unopposed actions, this is the difference between the rolled degree and the difficulty. For opposed actions, the difference between the winner's and the loser's rolled degrees.

## 1 Armor

Armor is usually treated in one of two ways: it either makes one harder to hit, or it absorbs some incoming damage. Our intuition tells us that in reality, both cases are true. Here we present a method of describing armor that captures a portion of both.

### 1.1 Terms

Armor is described by two statistics. The first is ARMOR VALUE, or AV. This is a number that indicates how resistant the armor is to penetration, in an increasing scale.

The second number is COVERAGE VALUE, abbreviated as CV. This number indicates how well a character is protected by his armor. Higher numbers indicate more complete protection.

### 1.2 Using Armor Values

The Armor Value can be thought of as representing the amount of damage that the armor can absorb. This number should be used to reduce the damage done

to the protected player, using whatever damage mechanic the GM determines. For example, using basic Fudge combat, the AV should be used as an armor defensive factor as per Section 4.54.

### 1.3 Using Coverage Values

This number should be thought of as how complete the armor is. If the striker's degree of success is greater than the CV, then that hit can be thought of as striking an unprotected area, or penetrating the armor altogether. When this happens, the amount of damage should be determined as if no armor were present.

For example, a player is wearing an armor with a CV of 2. In a combat round he rolls a Mediocre result and his opponent rolls a Great result. In this case, the degree of success is equal to 3. Since the degree of success is greater than the CV, the damage should be figured as if the player was unprotected.

### 1.4 Example Values

Armor Material	Armor Value
Heavy or hardened leather	1
Heavy padded cloth	1
Ballistic cloth	1
Steel chain with padding	2
Bronze plate with under mail coat	2
Steel plate with under mail coat	3
Heavy ballistic cloth	2
Heavy ballistic cloth with ceramic plates	3

Armor Type	Coverage Value
Vest or Breastplate	1
Shirt	2
Hauberk (long shirt)	3
Partial Suit	4
Full Suit	5

## 2 Shields

Shields are often unsatisfactorily handled in many combat systems. The use of a shield essentially makes a player harder to hit, but not by causing the opponent to miss. Instead, a shieldman actively uses his shield to absorb blows. Here we present a method that models this use.

## 2.1 Requirements

To use a shield, a character must have a Shield skill. This skill indicates both the shieldman's ability to use the shield and his ability to simultaneously wield a single-handed weapon. This skill also reflects the shieldman's ability to use his shield as a weapon for bashing attacks.

## 2.2 Shield Checks

A combat action involving a shieldman should be resolved normally. If a shieldman loses the action, then that player should make an extra roll against his shield skill; this is called a *shield check*. If the result of the shield check is equal to or greater than his opponent's action result, then the hit strikes the shield and not the character.

In practice, a shieldman makes two combat action rolls in a simultaneous combat rounds; one for his weapon, and one for his shield. If his weapon roll loses to his opponent, then the player is only hit if his shield roll loses as well.

A GM may rule that a player may lose his shield check when the he has attempted an action that would make using the shield difficult or impossible. The GM may also apply modifiers to the shield check.

## 2.3 Optional Shield Damage

GMs may want to have a shield's usefulness degrade as it is damaged. In this case, shields should be described with a number of damage points it can absorb. Shields are only damaged when they are successfully used to absorb a blow.

When a shield reaches half its damage points, the GM should apply a -1 modifier to the shield check. When the shield's damage points are exhausted, it cannot be used.

# 3 Alternate Wound Track

There are almost as many ways to track wounds in Fudge as there are different ways to roll dice. Here is one more, with the benefit that it maps automatically into a Fudge level which can be used as a difficulty for other actions such as healing.

## 3.1 The Wound Track

This wound track is simple. Each Fudge level from Terrible to Legendary is assigned a certain number of wound boxes. Each wound box represents one point of damage. Wound boxes are filled from Terrible up when taking damage, and from Legendary down when recovering. The Fudge level over the rightmost marked wound box is called the character's Wound Level.

The total number of wound boxes and their distribution is determined by the GM, and need not be uniform. The total number of wound boxes should

reflect the number of damage points a player can expect to be hit with in one combat round.

For example, here is a wound track with two boxes per level:

Terrible	Poor	Mediocre	Fair	Good	Great	Superb	Legendary
OO	OO	OO	OO	OO	OO	OO	OO

Here is another wound track with an uneven distribution of boxes:

Terrible	Poor	Mediocre	Fair	Good	Great	Superb	Legendary
OOO	OO	OOO	OO	OOO	OO	O	O

### 3.2 Recovering on the Alternate Wound Track

When a wounded player is treated, the healer should make some sort of skill check, whether it be against the quality of his equipment, his own skill, or his magic abilities. The difficulty of this skill check should be the wound level. The number of wound boxes recovered should be proportional to the degree of success. The GM may rule that a failure may add to the player's injury.

## 4 Damage Checks

Studies of real-world casualties in wartime show that wounds received in combat fall into one of three general categories:

- Insignificant wounds that can need only basic treatment, and are otherwise ignored.
- Delayed-effect casualties, where the combat effectiveness of the soldier is not reduced until after the battle is concluded.
- Wounds that kill outright or otherwise immediately remove a soldier from action.

Normal Fudge damage degrades a character's capabilities during a combat, and therefore is not well suited to this concept. This module provides a quick and intuitive mechanic to model this kind of damage effect.

### 4.1 Damage Capacity

Each character must have an attribute that reflects his ability to absorb damage. This module will refer to this attribute as Damage Capacity, but it will very likely be named something else. GMs may use Health, Body, Constitution, Stamina, or other names.

Damage capacity should default to a level set by the GM. This level will vary depending on the damage system in use.

## 4.2 Wound Level

A player will also need to know his character's Wound Level. The wound level is a trait that increases as the character takes more damage. The GM should provide a mapping between the damage system in use and the Fudge-scaled wound level.

### 4.2.1 Using Standard Fudge Damage

The core Fudge rules allocate damage into 5 explicit categories— Just a Scratch, Hurt, Very Hurt, Incapacitated, Near Death— and one unstated category, Dead.

These levels can map into the Fudge scale as follows.

Damage Type	Fudge Level
Scratch	Mediocre
Hurt	Fair
Very Hurt	Good
Incapacitated	Great
Near Death	Superb
Dead	Legendary

Fair or Good is the recommended default damage capacity level.

### 4.2.2 Using the Alternate Wound Track

Damage checks work very well with the alternate wound track rules module described above. The wound level is read directly from the wound track and used as described below.

The recommended default damage capacity using this method is Mediocre, assuming two wound boxes per wound level. If the distribution is different, the GM should carefully consider a different starting value.

## 4.3 Making Damage Checks

Each time a character is injured, the player must log the damage, determine the new wound level, and make a *damage check*. A damage check is an unopposed roll of the character's damage capacity attribute with the new wound level as the difficulty.

For example, a character with Good damage capacity gets shot, and determined his new wound level as Fair. He then rolls his damage capacity and gets a Fair (-1) result, which would be a success.

### 4.3.1 Succeeding a Damage Check

If the check is successful, the player is able to “shrug off” the injury and continue to fight *without penalty*.

If the character makes a critical success (+4 on 4dF), the GM may grant the player an extra benefit. Some suggestions:

- The player is pumped with adrenaline, and automatically succeeds his next damage check.
- A previous wound turns out to be not as bad as first thought, and the player can reduce his wound level a GM-determined amount.
- The next healing action performed on the player automatically succeeds.

#### **4.3.2 Failing a Damage Check**

On a failed damage check, the character is knocked down and is out of combat for the duration of the engagement. Any negative effects that are the result of damage are now applied. This includes negative action modifiers due to wounds, incapacitation, or death.

If the player rolls a critical failure (-4 on 4dF) on his damage check, the GM may add an extra penalty. Some suggestions:

- The player is in severe shock, and cannot recover during the combat (if that option is being used).
- The player is near death regardless of his wound level.
- A previous wound is in fact worse than originally thought, and the player must take an additional wound.
- The next healing action performed on the player automatically fails.

#### **4.4 Recovery During Combat**

The GM may wish to allow a character that fails his damage check to recover and rejoin the engagement. If the player can succeed a new damage check including any negative wound modifiers that may apply, he may regain his senses and continue to act. Negative modifiers from damage should apply to this player.

It is recommended that the player be out of combat for at least as many rounds as he has damage points before being allowed to attempt to recover.