

COMPLEAT COMBAT

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COMPLEAT COMBAT is an objective combat system for Fudge designed to function equally well in fantasy or science-fiction settings, or even mixed settings. COMPLEAT COMBAT is designed to be as fast and easy to run as possible, while retaining the ability to be either cinematic or “realistic,” all without sacrificing the flexibility that is characteristic of Fudge.

As always, a GM should feel free to modify, add, or delete any rules that don't appeal to her. True to Fudge, nearly nothing is canon.¹

About Compleat Combat

COMPLEAT COMBAT is a module of rules for Fudge, a generic role-playing game engine. COMPLEAT COMBAT was written by Timothy J. Miller with extensive feedback and inspiration from the community of the fudge-l mailing list. The author would like to thank in particular Andrew Martin (for providing the original conversion of 3G³ into Fudge), Jennifer Brinn (for her Deryni rules which inspired how armor was handled), and Rohan Light (for play testing). Many grateful thanks to everyone who contributed. These rules would not exist without their criticism and input.

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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

¹As in the core rules, feminine pronouns will be used to refer to the GM, masculine pronouns will denote players.

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About 3G³

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3G³ is a universal gun and melee weapon design system. It is an invaluable aid to GMs wishing to have a fairly realistic and more importantly *self-consistent* description of weapons of any type. Although 3G³ is not required to use these rules, if you don’t already have a copy I highly recommend it or its companion volume, More Guns! I hope that’s enough credit where credit is due, Greg.

1 Terms, Definitions and Concepts

1.1 Attributes

All characters should have a DAMAGE CAPACITY attribute. This attribute represents the character’s ability to withstand injury. The GM may call this

attribute Health, Stamina, Constitution, Body, or something else; but whatever it is called, it is a mandatory attribute. This attribute will be referred to as damage capacity in these rules, but players and GMs should always bear in mind that it may be named otherwise.

The default damage capacity for COMPLEAT COMBAT is MEDIOCRE. GMs wishing a more cinematic game can use FAIR as a default.

1.2 Weapons

All weapons must have at least two basic statistics that describe them for game purposes. The first is WOUNDS (W), a number that rates the weapon's penetrative characteristics. Wounds can be assigned by the GM, or can be calculated from $3G^3$ Damage Values by dividing by ten and rounding to the nearest whole number. Example wounds for some weapon types are given in the table below.

The second basic statistic is the MINIMUM STRENGTH trait. This is a Fudge attribute level indicating the strength that a character must have to effectively wield the weapon. Example minimum strengths for various weapon types are also given in the table below.

Weapon	Typical Wounds	Minimum Strength
Dagger	1W	POOR
Short sword	2W	MEDIOCRE
Long sword	2W	FAIR
Greatsword	3W	GOOD
Short bow	1W	MEDIOCRE
Long bow	2W	GOOD
Crossbow	2W	FAIR
Heavy crossbow	3W	GOOD
Light Pistol	1W	POOR
Pistol	2W	POOR
Light Rifle / Carbine	4W	MEDIOCRE
Rifle	5W	MEDIOCRE
Heavy Rifle	6W	MEDIOCRE
Light Machine Gun	7W	FAIR
Heavy Machine Gun	10W	GREAT
Light Cannon	18W	LEGENDARY

Ranged weapons must have a third attribute called RANGE CLASS (RC). The range class of a weapon defines the maximum effective range. Range classes are used unmodified from $3G^3$. As a rough guide, the table below gives range classes and maximum ranges for some common type of weapons.

Weapon Type	Range Class	Maximum Range
Snub Pistol / Thrown weapons	1	30 m
Pistol / Short Bow / Crossbow	2	100 m
Carbine / Long bow	3	300 m
Rifle	4	1000 m
Heavy Machine Gun	5	3000 m
Medium Cannon	6	10 km
Heavy Cannon	7	30 km
Super-heavy Cannon	8	100 km

Weapons may have other statistics such as size, weight, bulk, etc., but these are not used for the purposes of these rules.

1.3 Armor

Armors have two statistics which reflect the major ways in which armor affects combat.

The first is **ARMOR VALUE (AV)**, which is a number given in wounds that represents the armor's penetration resistance.

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

It should be noted that not all armor materials are equally resistant to all types of damage. For example, ballistic cloth (commonly known by the commercial name KevlarTM) is not very effective against cutting or piercing attacks with sharpened blades. In this case, light ballistic cloth should be treated as normal clothing, and heavy ballistic cloth as padded cloth armor. Conversely, the steel used in plate armors affords very little protection against firearms, and should be treated as having an AV of one or less in this case. Other armor materials have similar discrepancies; the GM should always rely on her best judgment when using armor values in combat.

The second is **COVERAGE VALUE (CV)**. Coverage value represents the total area that a particular armor covers. A sample guide to different CVs is given below.

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

1.3.1 Shields

Shields are a bit problematic in many systems. Shields are primarily used to absorb incoming blows directly. This has the effect of making the target harder to hit.

Unopposed actions in Fudge must beat a difficulty to succeed. In opposed actions, one rolled result must be higher than the other's in order to succeed. However, in combat actions that are resolved using opposed rolls, a player must *also* surpass a minimum difficulty level in order to succeed. Melee combat has a default minimum success difficulty of Poor, whereas ranged combat has a difficulty based on range and weapon characteristics (see Section 1.6).

For example, if two fighters engage in combat and their action roll results are Terrible and Terrible-1, then neither hits the other since the winner has not surpassed the minimum difficulty. In COMPLETE COMBAT, a shield increases the minimum difficulty required to hit the target. Shield modifiers vary by size and sample numbers are given in the table below.

Shields also have minimum strength requirements, similar to weapon minimum strength requirements. If the character doesn't have enough strength to meet this requirement, then he cannot use that shield in combat.²

Shield Size	Difficulty	Minimum Strength
Buckler	+1	Poor
Round	+2	Mediocre
Kite	+3	Good
Tower	+4	Legendary

Finally, a good enough strike should either cleave the shield or otherwise render it useless. A possible suggestion is to break the shield on critical hits (i.e., a roll of +4 on 4dF). When to apply this is left to the GM's best judgment.

1.4 Strength and Strength Scale

If a character's strength is less than the minimum strength for a weapon or shield, then the character cannot use it. Strength scale is used to modify strength for this purpose.

²Note that the minimum strength for tower shields renders them too unwieldy except for the most heroic of characters. Historically tower shields, which stood taller than the height of a man, were primarily used as portable fortifications. This requirement emulates this use.

For example, a greatsword might have a minimum strength requirement of Good. A Scale 0 Fair Strength character cannot use this weapon, but a Scale 0 Good Strength (or a Scale 1 Fair Strength) character could.

Optionally for melee weapons only, the GM may allow a +1 wound bonus for a character with a strength two levels or more than the minimum strength required. To continue the example, if the above greatsword was rated as 2 wounds, a player with Superb or better strength would inflict 3 wounds with it.

Alternatively, the GM may add the character's strength and strength scale to the weapon damage. However, it is strongly recommended in this case that the base melee weapon damage be *reduced* so that the resulting weapon damage is not overpowering. For example, using the greatsword above and a Superb strength character, the total would be five wounds— which makes that sword in that player's hands as damaging as a modern assault rifle. This may not be appropriate for all campaigns, so if the GM instead defines a greatsword as 0W + Strength, then the total damage would be back to 3W, which may be more reasonable. GMs using this method are cautioned to be careful.

As another option, the GM may allow a character to wield a weapon even though he has less than the required minimum strength. In this case, the GM may reduce the damage the weapon inflicts (for melee weapons only), or the GM may increase the minimum difficulty to hit, or both. For example, a character with Poor Strength attempts to fire an M60 LMG from a braced position, which has a minimum strength of Mediocre in this case (see Section 3.4.5). The GM rules that the character isn't strong enough to counter the weapon recoil, so the base difficulty to hit is increased by one level (i.e., a Good difficulty shot becomes a Great difficulty shot).

GMs with a slightly twisted bent may optionally allow a weapon wielded by strong characters to break on critical failures.

1.5 Wound Level and the Wound Level Track

On the character sheet, there should be space to track the character's current WOUND LEVEL. The Wound Level is equal to Terrible-1 plus the number of wounds the character has received.

A possible wound level track might look like this:

Terrible	Poor	Mediocre	Fair	Good	Great	Superb
O	O	O	O	O	O	O

For each wound the player receives, he marks the leftmost unmarked box. For example, after taking 1 wound, the wound level track looks like this:

Terrible	Poor	Mediocre	Fair	Good	Great	Superb
X	O	O	O	O	O	O

We say that this character has a Terrible wound level. After two more wounds, it looks like this:

Terrible	Poor	Mediocre	Fair	Good	Great	Superb
X	X	X	O	O	O	O

And now we say that the character has a Mediocre wound level.

Recovered wounds are removed from right to left.

1.6 Difficulty Levels

For melee combat, the base difficulty is Poor. Even a successful opposed action with a less than Poor result will miss. This may be modified by the presence of a shield (See Section 1.3.1). The GM may modify this difficulty for any condition she sees fit.

For unopposed ranged combat, find the difficulty on the following table, based on the range class. All ranges are in meters.

Difficulty	Range Class (meters)							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+
Mediocre	3	10	30	100	300	1,000	3,000	10,000
Fair	6	20	60	200	600	2,000	6,000	20,000
Good	9	30	90	300	900	3,000	9,000	30,000
Great	12	40	120	400	1,200	4,000	12,000	40,000
Superb	15	50	150	500	1,500	5,000	15,000	50,000
Legendary	18	60	180	600	1,800	6,000	18,000	60,000
Legendary+1	21	70	210	700	2,100	7,000	21,000	70,000
Legendary+2	24	80	240	800	2,400	8,000	24,000	80,000
Legendary+3	27	90	270	900	2,700	9,000	27,000	90,000
Legendary+4	30	100	300	1,000	3,000	10,000	30,000	100,000

The range for difficulty Legendary+4 is the absolute maximum range for a weapon in that range class.

These difficulties are for hitting unaware human-sized targets under average lighting and moderately stressful conditions. Perfect range conditions (relaxed and well-lit with a braced weapon position) reduces the difficulty by two steps. Special sights should drop the difficulty by one or more additional steps. Unusually large or small target size should also modify the difficulty appropriately.

Notably accurate or inaccurate weapons should also have difficulty modifiers. The Inherent Accuracy (IA) value from 3G³ can be used as a guide; note that an IA of 0-3 is normal and should result in no modifier.

If the target wishes, it may use an appropriate skill to evade the shot at the expense of foregoing other actions. In this case the shooter must beat the range-based difficulty *and* the target's evasion skill roll. If the target dodges in this way then he forfeits any other action.

1.7 Degree of Success

Every action has a DEGREE OF SUCCESS, which is the difference between the rolled degree and some other level.

In unopposed action rolls, the degree of success is equal to the difference between the rolled degree and the difficulty. For example, if a player tries to shoot a target with a difficulty of Fair and gets a Good result, then his degree of success is +1 because $+1(\textit{Good}) - 0(\textit{Fair}) = +1$.

In opposed action rolls, the degree of success is equal to the difference between the winner's rolled degree and the loser's rolled degree. By way of example, if two warriors engage in combat and roll Poor and Fair, the warrior rolling Fair wins the round and his degree of success is +2 because $0(\textit{Fair}) - -2(\textit{Poor}) = +2$.

1.8 Critical Results

Any roll of +4 or -4 on the dice is called a CRITICAL RESULT. A roll of -4 is called a CRITICAL FAILURE, and a roll of +4 is called a CRITICAL SUCCESS.

2 Actual Combat

A combat round is a short space of time (perhaps π seconds) in which those involved in a combat attempt to inflict pain and suffering upon each other. It is used as a convenient mechanism to resolve actions in a logical order during combat.

One possible general outline of a combat round is as follows. A GM should modify this or create her own to suit her style of gaming.

1. Define combatants.
Identify all involved in a combat and divide them into units.
2. Declare actions.
Each player states his intent for the round.
3. Resolve actions.
Roll the dice and determine who got hurt.
4. Calculate and apply damage.
Determine how hard each was hit and record it.
5. Roll damage checks if needed.
After all results have been applied, any combatant that was injured should make his damage check (See Section 2.5, below) and apply the result.

2.1 Define Combatants

Every combat has two or more combatants. Typically, this means a player character and one or more opposing NPC characters or monsters. These are the entities that will engage in some sort of fight during this round.

Combatants are divided into multiple distinct units, each engaged amongst themselves. These units can overlap, however, as in the following example.

Three PC fighters and one PC magician are ambushed by a company four of bandits. Two of the PC fighters each find themselves locked in combat with a bandit, and the third faces two. The PC magician has faded into the background to work his spells. In this case, we have four units of combatants; two units of one PC and one bandit each, one unit with the PC and two bandits, and the fourth unit consisting of the magician and whomever he is targeting with his magic (which could be any of the PCs, the bandits, or any combination of them both).

2.2 Declare Actions

At the beginning of each round every PC should declare what he will attempt to do. Declarations may take any form, from “I smite him soundly about the head and shoulders with my trusty sword Judgment!” to “I flee in terror, leaving behind everything I was carrying in hopes that I can get enough of a head start to escape.”

Actions may take longer than one round to complete; a prime example of this is the use of magic. Any multi-round action must be declared in the first round, and need not be redeclared in subsequent rounds unless it has changed.

2.3 Combat Resolution

Combat actions can be resolved either simultaneously or in alternating fashion, as described in Section 4.22 and Section 4.23 of the Fudge rules.

Simultaneous actions are treated as if they all happened in the same space of time. As a result, ordering is not important, and the GM may resolve each combatant’s actions in whatever order takes her fancy. Combat rounds in this method are typically shorter.

Alternating actions require the GM to determine in what order each combatant’s actions should be resolved, and then resolve each in order from first to last. The GM should be aware that this style of play often leads to cascade effects—the results of one action leads to an instantaneous situation change that prompts another combatant to change his action, which prompts a further change by another combatant, and so on. Also, this style will usually require longer combat rounds, and slower game play.

It is recommended that the simultaneous method be used whenever possible, with combat rounds being as short as possible. Where ordering of actions becomes important, assign the actions that take place last to the next round

(in other words, invoke the multi-round action rule). This method is significantly simpler than true alternating combat rounds and will keep the game play moving along.

In either case, after the action roll is finished, the DEGREE OF SUCCESS should be noted.

2.3.1 Critical Action Results

The GM should determine what kind of modifier a player should be given for a critical result. These bonuses and penalties should in some way relate to combat actions. Some examples of critical success results:

- The target automatically fails his damage check (Section 2.5, below).
- Double the wounds inflicted.
- Ignore the target's armor when applying the result.
- Give the player another action this round.

As with critical successes, it is up to the GM what a critical failure means in a given situation. Some examples of critical failures are:

- The weapon breaks or malfunctions.
- The player damages himself.
- The player takes double damage, if the other combatant successfully strikes the player.
- The player loses his next action.

Other results than these are possible. The GM is encouraged to use her best judgment and her twisted imagination.

2.4 Calculate and Apply Damage

After actions are resolved, the consequences of the actions should be applied to the appropriate parties. This includes damage, spell effects, weather, acts of God, etc.

Once the action has been resolved, the amount of damage must be determined. If the degree of success is less than or equal to the armor's coverage value, then the hit has struck the armor. Damage is then equal to the wounds less the armor value.

If the degree of success is greater than the armor's coverage value, then the hit has either penetrated the armor or has found a chink in the armor. In this case, damage is equal to the weapon's wounds.

For example, if Alice is shooting a 9mm Parabellum (2W) at Bob who is wearing his light ballistic vest (AV1, CV1), and she hits him with a degree of success of 1, Bob takes only 1 wound since the round strikes his vest.

However, if on the next shot Alice hits him again with a degree of success of 3, Bob takes the full 2 wounds since Alice has managed to hit him where the armor isn't.

The player that was hit marks a number of boxes on his wound level track equal to the number of wounds received. The Fudge trait level equal to the last marked box is his new wound level.

2.5 Wound Effects and Damage Checks

Real-world experience shows that most combat wounds have one of three results:

1. The wound is superficial, and has no lasting effect.
2. The wound has no effect in combat, but must be treated afterward.
3. The wound immediately kills or incapacitates.

Upon losing a combat round and receiving a wound, the player must make a Damage Check. A damage check is an unopposed action roll of damage capacity versus a difficulty set by the character's wound level. Mass Scale is added as a modifier to this roll.

If the player succeeds the damage check, he may continue to function.

If the player fails the damage check, he is knocked down and unable to act for the remainder of combat. See Section 2.6 for the effects of damage after a knockdown.

The GM may allow players to recover their senses after a failed damage check during combat. In this case, the character should be unconscious for a number of rounds equal to the total number of wounds he has received before being allowed to recover. After this time has passed, the player should make a successful damage check to resume acting.

2.5.1 Critical Damage Check Results

Again, the GM should determine the outcome of any critical results. These critical results should in some way be related to wounds and recovery. Some critical success results could be:

- 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 erase one wound box.
- The next healing action performed on the player automatically succeeds.

Some critical failures could be as follows:

- 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.

As before, the GM should use her own best judgment as to what kind of effects to assign to critical damage check results.

2.6 Death

A character with a wound level higher than his damage capacity is INCAPACITATED, and will eventually die without treatment. A character with a wound level three or more levels greater than his damage capacity is NEAR DEATH, and will die without immediate heroic efforts. A character with a wound level five or more levels greater than his damage capacity is DEAD. A character with a wound level seven or more levels greater than his damage capacity will need more than one casket.

Wound Level	Effect
Damage Capacity + 1	Incapacitated
Damage Capacity + 3	Near Death
Damage Capacity + 5	Dead
Damage Capacity + 7	So dead it's not funny.

Only after a combat is over or when a character is knocked down through a failed damage check is a player affected by these results. Recovery during combat should not be possible for any character with a GOOD or greater wound level without some form of treatment.

2.7 Recovery and After-combat Effects

Characters recover from wounds with time and treatment. The wound level should be used as the difficulty for any treatment actions. The wound level should also be used as a rough guide to how long it will take to recover.

Every action a player attempts before he is fully recovered from his wounds should suffer a penalty. Every two wounds a character carries should equate to a -1 penalty to all his action rolls. A GM is free to rule that a character's wounds will prevent him from attempting something altogether; for example, a character with a broken arm isn't going free-climbing a rock face any time soon.

3 Options and Examples

Many opportunities exist for a GM to tweak these rules as she desires. Some examples are given below.

3.1 Gritty Realism

COMPLEAT COMBAT offers a fairly “realistic” (whatever that means) mode of play as designed. GMs wishing a more gritty, deadly game should consider the following options.

- Make damage checks more deadly. Failed damage checks could represent severe shock trauma. Players that fail their damage check cannot recover and will likely die without immediate medical aid.
- Disallow recovery after a failed damage check.
- Reduce the effectiveness of armor.
- Add an additional type of damage, STUN. Stun represents non-fatal knockout damage. With stun, add a STUN CHECK. This check works similar to a damage check, but a failure indicates only a loss of consciousness instead of deadly systemic shock.

3.2 Cinematic Play

COMPLEAT COMBAT can be played in a cinematic genre with only minor modifications. The GM should consider the following ideas, or use her own.

- Increase the effectiveness of armor for the PCs.
- Assume that inconsequential NPCs always fail their damage checks. This emulates the one-hit-and-he’s-down mode of combat that typifies movie fights. Major villains should be treated as a PC is treated.
- Give all the PCs a damage capacity bonus, or raise all their damage capacities by one level. This allows for your heroic PCs to eat small wounds for lunch and keep operating.
- Increasing the granularity of the Fudge scale by adding one or more interspersed levels. This will effectively allow any given combatant one or more free wounds. This has effects on things other than combat, and should be used with caution.
- Roll fewer dF. If the PCs roll fewer dice when making damage checks— for example, rolling 2dF instead of the normal 4dF, then the players have no chance of failing the check until they have reached a threshold number of wounds. These initial wounds become effective “freebies.”

3.3 Example Melee Weapons

The following are some example melee weapons, taken from descriptions in More Guns!, ©Copyright 1993 by BTRC. They are merely a representative sampling, and is not a complete list. GMs should feel free to modify this list.

3.3.1 Swords and Knives

Weapon Name	Wounds	Minimum Strength
Dagger	1W	Terrible
Short sword	1W	Poor
Longsword	2W	Fair
Greatsword	2W	Good

3.3.2 Clubs, Maces and Hammers

Weapon Name	Wounds	Minimum Strength
Spiked Mace	2W	Fair
War Hammer	1W	Fair
Large War Hammer	2W	Good
Mace	1W	Fair

3.4 Example Ranged Weapons

Some of these weapons were cribbed from statistics presented in More Guns!, ©Copyright 1993 by BTRC. They are presented here to offer examples of weapons that could be used with COMPLEAT COMBAT. This list is not exhaustive, and GMs should feel free to play with or not as they see fit.

3.4.1 Bows and Crossbows

Weapon Name	Wounds	Range Class	Minimum Strength
Short bow, 50lb pull	1W	2	Mediocre
Long bow, 80lb pull	2W	3	Good
Light crossbow, wooden	2W	2	Poor
Heavy crossbow, metal	3W	2	Poor

3.4.2 Pistols

Weapon Name	Wounds	Range Class	Minimum Strength
.357 Magnum	2W	1	Poor
M1911 .45 Automatic	1W	2	Poor
9mm Beretta 92F	2W	2	Poor
Desert Eagle 50	3W	2	Mediocre

3.4.3 Rifles

Weapon Name	Wounds	Range Class	Minimum Strength
Winchester .30-30	4W	4	Mediocre
M16A3	5W	4	Mediocre
Kalishnikov AK-47	4W	4	Mediocre
Kentucky Long Rifle	3W	3	Fair
.30cal BAR	6W	4	Fair

3.4.4 Submachine Guns

Weapon Name	Wounds	Range Class	Minimum Strength
Thompson 'Tommy'	2W	2	Mediocre
M3 'Grease Gun'	2W	2	Mediocre
Uzi 9mm	2W	3	Mediocre
Sten	2W	2	Mediocre

3.4.5 Machine Guns

Machine guns are typically mounted or fired from braced position, but sufficiently Rambo-esque characters may be able to fire them hand-held. As a result, two minimum strength attributes are given; the first is the minimum required for mounted or braced firing. The second is the level required for hand-held firing.

Weapon Name	Wounds	Range Class	Minimum Strength
M60 LMG	6W	4	Mediocre / Good
M2 Browning 12.7mm	11W	5	Mediocre / Superb
.30 Browning	6W	5	Mediocre / Great
.45/70 Gatling	4W	3	Mediocre / Superb