HACK100

A STREAMLINED PERCENTILE-BASED
ROLE-PLAYING GAME

Release 0.04
July 2021

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

I've always liked percentile-based role-playing games. The early editions of the popular d100 systems were the staples of my formative adventuring back in the 1980s. In terms of game mechanics, percentile systems provide an unmatched clarity over the likelihood of an action's success or failure. They also tend to be more flexible, avoiding rigid character classes and levels.

However, many traditional d100 systems are also relatively detailed, particularly in their use of skills. The most recent edition of the original percentile-based role-playing game has a character sheet that runs to four pages and features nearly one hundred individual skills. That's fine if you're prepared to invest the time needed to create such detailed characters. My personal preference is for something more streamlined. Hence this ruleset.

Hack100 is a system in which characters can be created in minutes, and the vast majority of in-game actions are covered by around a dozen, rather than dozens of, skills. Its origins lie in a supplement I wrote back in 2011 that transplanted a light d100 mechanic onto the Basic Fantasy Role-Playing Game (basicfantasy.org). I doubt that anyone else ever ran a game using that supplement, but my own playtesting demonstrated the possibilities of running d100 games with greatly reduced skill lists. A decade later, Hack100 builds upon that idea to provide a lightweight, standalone role-playing game.

HANG ON ... WHAT'S A ROLE-PLAYING GAME?

Ah! This isn't the place to answer that question. This book assumes that the reader is already familiar with the concept of role-playing games.

Fortunately, there are plenty of online resources, including examples of play, to fill in any such gaps. Start by searching for "what is a tabletop role-playing game?" (as opposed to a computer role-playing game) and you'll be well on your way.

DICE

This game uses ten-sided dice. These are either rolled individually to generate a number between 1 and 10 (a roll of zero is a 10), or in pairs with one die designated as the "tens" and the other as the "units" to generate a number between 1 and 100. So, for example, if the tens die rolls an 8 and the units die rolls a 2, then the overall result is 82. Zeroes on both dice is a roll of 100. For greater clarity, ten-sided dice are available that label the "tens" die in multiples of 10 (as shown below).

In describing dice rolls, we'll follow the usual conventions so:

- **d10** is shorthand for a ten-sided die.
- **d100** is shorthand for using two ten-sided dice to generate a number between 1 and 100 (as described above).
- **1d10** means roll one ten-sided dice to generate a number between 1 and 10.

- **2d10** means roll two ten-sided dice and add the results together to generate a number between 2 and 20.
- **3d10+4** means roll three ten-sided dice, add the results together, and then add 4 to the result to generate a number between 7 and 34.
- A **d5** can be simulated by rolling a d10 and dividing the result by two, rounding up.

GAME GENRES

Hack100 has been written primarily with fantasy games in mind. This is reflected in the way aspects such as character creation, equipment lists and special powers are presented. However, it would be perfectly possible to use Hack100 to run many other game genres - cosmic horror, science fiction, etc. This is discussed in Chapter 9.

HACK100RPG.COM

For more resources relating to Hack100, including optional rules, character sheets and a blog that provides commentary on the development of the game, visit hack100rpg.com.

CHAPTER 2

CHARACTER CREATION

ABILITIES

In Hack100, the relative strengths and weaknesses of a character are described by ten **Abilities**. These represent common attributes, characteristics, skills and knowledge possessed, to varying degrees, by all adventurers. There are four Abilities relating to a character's physical prowess (Strength, Agility, Stealth and Toughness), four relating to their mental or intellectual capacity (Perception, Reasoning, Influence and Willpower), and two relating to their expertise in combat (Hand-to-Hand, Ranged).

Each of the ten Abilities has an associated percentage value. The higher the percentage, the more likely a character is to succeed when undertaking an activity that is relevant to that Ability. For a starting character, each Ability has a base value of 2d10+20%. However, to reflect individual aptitudes, a further 20% may be added to the value of any single Ability, and 10% to one other. A character's Abilities will increase as they become more experienced.

Each Ability has an associated **Bonus** equal to its "tens" value. For example, if a character's Strength is 32, then their Strength Bonus is 3.

PHYSICAL ABILITIES

Strength is a measure of physical power. It is the relevant Ability when trying to push, pull or lift heavy objects.

Agility quantifies physical dexterity. Jumping, balancing, climbing and dodging are all examples of activities covered by Agility.

Stealth describes the ability of a character to go unnoticed. It covers aspects such as moving silently, traversing ground without leaving tracks, hiding, and blending into a crowd.

Toughness characterises inherent physical resilience. A high Toughness means that a character will, for example, be more resistant to poison, disease, harsh environments and prolonged exertion.

MENTAL ABILITIES

Perception represents how observant a character is. This includes finding hidden objects, spotting small details and reading the intentions of others.

Reasoning is an indication of mental dexterity. It is the ability to comprehend complex concepts, solve problems and recall details from memory.

Influence describes the ability to sway the opinions or actions of others. This might be achieved by a variety of methods including charm, reasoned argument, or intimidation.

Willpower characterises mental resilience and tenacity. It is the determination to keep on going when things are tough. Or having sufficient strength of mind to avoid giving in to temptation.

COMBAT ABILITIES

Hand-to-Hand is a combat Ability. It is used to resolve close-range fighting, whether unarmed or with weapons.

The **Ranged** Ability is used to determine the accuracy with which a character can throw or shoot something.

Attribute	Description	Examples of Use
Strength	Brute strength	Lifting, pushing or pulling a heavy object; holding back a crushing trap; arm wrestling
Agility	Physical dexterity	Jumping; balancing; climbing; dodging
Stealth	Ability to pass unnoticed	Moving silently, travelling without leaving tracks; blending into a crowd
Toughness	Physical resilience	Resisting the effects of poison, disease or harsh environments; extended exercise
Perception	Powers of observation	Finding hidden objects; spotting small details; reading the intentions of others
Reasoning	Mental dexterity	Comprehending complex concepts; recalling details from memory; resisting an illusion
Influence	Powers of persuasion	Haggling; intimidating; extracting information; persuading others to do something
Willpower	Mental resilience	Resisting temptation; maintaining morale in combat; overcoming fear
Hand-to-Hand	Close combat skills	Striking and parrying with hand weapons; brawling; martial arts
Ranged	Throwing and shooting skills	Throwing knives; shooting bows; firing guns

Summary of Abilities

SPECIALISMS

In addition to their ten Abilities, which are common to everyone, characters also have a small number of **Specialisms**. These are relatively niche abilities that require a certain amount of innate talent, training, or

expert knowledge. They are what marks someone out from the average person. They need not be supernatural or superpowered (although they might be, depending on the game's setting). They are simply an aspect of the character that differentiates them from the majority of other people in their world.

To keep things flexible, there is no fixed list of Specialisms in Hack100. Rather, they are agreed between the Referee and a player. They might relate to a character's vocation (e.g. medicine, locksmithing, sailing). Or they might derive from some prior teaching or training (e.g. knowledge of a non-native language, herb lore, history). They might even relate to an unusual power or ability (e.g. magic, telekinesis, prophesying). In the same way as Abilities, a character's relative competence in a given Specialism is expressed as a percentile number. New characters begin with one Specialism at a starting percentage of 2d10+30%.

Extraordinary or supernatural Specialisms, such as magic, are known as **"Powers"** and are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

HEALTH

Health is a measure of the general well-being of a character. It decreases with injury or illness. If the game's setting includes magic or similar powers, the draining effect of using such abilities also depletes Health. When a character reaches zero Health, they fall unconscious and are at risk of dying. A character will recover Health with rest over time. There may also be other means of recovering Health such as medical treatment, magic or miracles.

The maximum Health of a character is calculated by summing their Toughness Bonus and Willpower Bonus and multiplying the result by two. For example, a character with a Toughness of 47 and a Willpower of 35 would have a Health of (4+3) x 2 = 14.

BACKGROUND & MOTIVATION

So far, the focus in this chapter has been solely on the numbers that define a character in Hack100. Whilst these are essential from a game mechanics perspective, they are, nevertheless, rather dry. Apart from each character's Specialism, they tell us nothing about their wider background and motivation for adventuring. To address this, a single sentence is written that describes these aspects. For example:

- An apprentice seeking ingredients for their master's work.
- A deserter from the army seeking employment as a mercenary to pay off gambling debts.

Each of the above examples tells us something about that character's background (which may relate to their Specialism), as well as their wider motivation for adventuring. It gives the character context without the need for lengthy biographies and backstories. And it provides the Referee with hooks for future adventures.

EQUIPMENT & ENCUMBRANCE

The final stage of character creation is to decide upon an adventurer's starting equipment. In Hack100, there is no "shopping list" of standard goods for new characters. Rather, it is recommended that the player and the Referee agree upon the equipment a given character might reasonably expect to own based upon the campaign setting and the character's Specialism, background and motivation. Of course, the Referee's decisions in such matters are final.

If there is a preference for introducing a random element to starting equipment, then assume that each new character has the travelling clothes they are wearing, together with 1d10 other items (including any weapons or

armour) and 5d10 units of currency (depending on the setting - silver pieces, crowns, credits or whatever).

In terms of determining how much a character can carry, there is no quantitative encumbrance system in Hack100. Instead, each character must specify, on their character sheet, where each item of their equipment is stored about their person. For example:

- Leather armour (wearing)
- Sword (in scabbard, on belt)
- Backpack (back)
- First aid kit (backpack)

By requiring characters to declare how they are carrying each item of equipment, it immediately makes it obvious as to whether this seems plausible. It also helps with visualising the character.

The Referee has the final say as to whether a character's proposed breakdown of items by carrying location is reasonable. If it's not, they may require the character to forgo some items, or apply penalties to Agility task rolls or movement until a suitable adjustment is made. For example, if a party wants to transport lots of discovered treasure, the Referee might rule that they'll have to free up some space in their backpacks to accommodate it. As described in Chapter 4, armour also carries an Agility penalty.

AN EXAMPLE CHARACTER

As a summary of this chapter, the example character on the next page was created using the following steps:

1. If you already have a character concept in mind, start with their **Background and Motivation**. Here we create Ruri the Roving - "*A*

cartographer documenting uncharted lands". This should provide plenty of opportunities for future plot hooks.

2. For each **Ability** roll 2d10+20%. Then add 20% to any one Ability (for Ruri we decide on Stealth) and 10% to another (Reasoning).

3. Decide upon the character's **Specialism**. For Ruri, we pick "Navigation". This has a starting value of 2d10+30%. Based on Ruri's Background, we might have selected "Cartography", but this would probably have less utility when adventuring.

4. Calculate the character's **Health** by adding together their Toughness **Bonus** (the "tens" value) and their Willpower **Bonus**, and then multiplying the result by two. For Ruri it's (3+3) x 2 = 12

Ruri the Roving - *a cartographer documenting uncharted lands*

ABILITIES							
Strength	28%	**Agility**	26%	**Stealth**	50%	**Toughness**	32%
Perception	33%	**Reasoning**	48%	**Influence**	23%	**Willpower**	32%
		Hand-to-Hand	35%			**Ranged**	38%
SPECIALISMS							
		Navigation	35%				
HEALTH							
		Maximum Health	12			**Current Health**	12

Equipment: Travelling clothes (wearing); walking stick (carried); sling and stones (belt); backpack (back); tent (attached to backpack), bedroll (attached to backpack); tinderbox (backpack); rations - 1 week (backpack); waterskin (backpack); parchment (backpack); pen & ink (backpack)

5. Finally, in consultation with the Referee, decide upon the character's starting **equipment**. With Ruri we use the random equipment option, rolling a 10 on d10. Picking equipment befitting a roving cartographer we choose a walking stick (that will double as an improvised weapon), a sling, a backpack, a tent, a bedroll, a tinderbox, 1 week's rations, a waterskin, some parchment, and a writing set. For each item of equipment, the carrying location is clearly stated on the character sheet. In terms of money, Ruri has 5d10 (16) coins with which to start adventuring.

CHAPTER 3

TASK RESOLUTION

A game of Hack100 consists of two main types of interaction:

- An ongoing dialogue between the Referee and the players. The Referee describes the situation facing the characters. Based on that description, the players state what their characters would like to do. The Referee then decides upon the outcomes of the stated actions.

- Whenever a protagonist's action has a non-negligible chance and consequence of failure, the Referee should call for a Task Roll. A routine activity such as walking up a flight of stairs would not require a **Task Roll**. Running down a flight of stairs whilst pursued by an enemy probably would - there would be a risk of stumbling with the possible consequence of injury. Another consequence of failing a task might be lost time, e.g. repeated failures to pick a lock.

The procedure for performing a Task Roll is as follows:

1. Select the Ability or Specialism that is most relevant to the task at hand. This is the base **Target Percentage**.

2. The Referee may then adjust the base Target Percentage by a **Difficulty Modifier** (see below).

3. Roll 1d100. If the roll is less than or equal to the **Modified Target Percentage**, the task is successful. Otherwise, the task fails.

4. A roll of 01-05 is always successful. A roll of 96-00 is always a failure.

5. A roll that is a success and a double is a **Major Success** (e.g. 11, 22) and brings extra benefits. A roll that is a failure and a double (e.g.

99, 00) is a **Major Failure** and there will be additional consequences.

TASK ROLL DIFFICULTY MODIFIERS

Sometimes the Referee may decide that a certain Task Roll is either easier or more difficult than usual. This could be for a variety of reasons including the prevailing local conditions, the specialist nature or complexity of the task, or the fact that someone (or something) is actively trying to disrupt the undertaking.

For example, when an Agility Task Roll is used to determine whether a character successfully climbs a surface, the Referee might rule the Task Difficulty as "Hard" if the surface is particularly smooth or slippery, and modify the Target Percentage accordingly.

Other examples of situations that might make a given task either easier or more difficult include:

- Trying to hit a target that is particularly large (easier) or small (more difficult).
- Trying to hit a target that is behind cover (more difficult).
- Trying to shoot a target that is closer (easier) or further away (more difficult).
- Trying to hit a target that is restrained in some way (easier).
- The advantage or disadvantage of height.
- The prevailing weather conditions or level of light.
- Trying to communicate with someone in their non-native language (more difficult).

- Trying to move something that is particularly light (easier) or heavy (more difficult).
- Trying to perform a specialist task for which the character is not trained (more difficult).

The table below summarises the suggested Difficulty Modifiers, although the Referee is free to amend these as they see fit. However, to avoid unnecessary complexity that slows the game down, it is recommended that relatively small modifications (e.g. +/-5% or +/-10%) are avoided. Difficulty Modifiers are best treated with a broad brush.

Difficulty	Modifier
Trivial	Automatic Success
Easy	+20%
Normal	-
Hard	-20%
Very Hard	-40%

Difficulty Modifiers

Where multiple factors are in play, the Difficulty Modifier represents the net effect of those factors. For example, the Referee may decide that the net effect of trying to shoot a large, but distant, target is a zero modifier.

MAJOR SUCCESSES AND MAJOR FAILURES

A successful roll that is also a double (e.g. 11, 22) is a **Major Success** and the protagonist concerned receives some extra benefit. This might mean that

the task is performed particularly well or quickly, or that it brings some additional (but related) advantage. In combat, this might mean inflicting additional damage or causing an opponent to drop their weapon. Non-combat examples would include a critical Influence roll leading to the target divulging additional important information, or a critical Arcane roll leading to a spell's effects being magnified in terms of its range, duration or power.

Conversely, a failed roll that is also a double (e.g. 99, 00) is a **Major Failure** and something has gone badly wrong. Weapons are dropped, bowstrings are snapped, unintended offence is caused, or tasks generally take longer or are performed more noisily.

For both Major Successes and Major Failures, players should be encouraged to offer suggestions as to the nature of the outcome, but, as always, the Referee's decision on such matters is final.

OPPOSED TASKS

Situations will arise in which there is a need to pit an Ability of a character against an Ability of an adversary. For example:

- A character attempting to sneak past a guard would pit their Stealth Ability against the guard's Perception Ability.
- A character attempting to hold a door shut would test their Strength Ability against the Strength Ability of whoever (or whatever) was trying to open the door.
- A character trying to bribe someone might pit their Influence Ability against the target's Willpower Ability.

Such "contests" are known as **Opposed Tasks**. To resolve an Opposed Task, each competitor performs a Task Roll as usual, but rather than there being a

pass/fail outcome, the two results are compared. A Major Success beats an ordinary success, which beats an ordinary failure, which beats a Major Failure. In the case of a tie, the highest roll wins, thereby favouring the more proficient competitor.

Only the winner of an Opposed Task receives the extra benefits of a Major Success. Similarly, only the loser suffers the penalties of a Major Failure.

TASK RESOLUTION EXAMPLE

Having strayed into the wrong part of town, Ruri finds herself pursued by two footpads intent on relieving her of her money. The street is crowded. Ruri hopes that by ducking down a shady sidestreet she'll lose her would-be robbers. The Referee calls for Opposed Stealth / Perception Task Rolls - a Stealth Task Roll for Ruri to see if she can lose her pursuers amongst the crowd; a Perception Task Roll for the footpads to see if they can keep Ruri in their sight. Both Task Rolls are ruled to be of "Normal" difficulty, so no modifier is applied.

Ruri's player rolls 66 *against her Stealth of* 50% *- a Major Failure! The Referee rolls* 81 *for the footpads against their Perception of* 40%. *That's an ordinary failure, but enough to beat Ruri's Major Failure.*

Because of the Major Failure, the Referee decides that not only did the two footpads spot Ruri darting into the sidestreet, but that the alleyway turns out to be a dead-end. Ruri is trapped!

Ruri's player asks what's at the end of the alley. The Referee states that it's a seven-foot-high wall. Keen to avoid a fight, Ruri's player decides that she will attempt to scale the wall and jump down the other side. Given that Ruri is considerably shorter than the wall, the Referee calls for a Hard Agility roll. Ruri's Agility is 26%, *so with a* -20% *modifier for the "Hard" difficulty, that leaves Ruri with only a* 6% *chance of success.*

Fortunately, the dice smile on Ruri - a roll of 04 *sees her scale the wall safely and out of the immediate clutches of the footpads.*

The chase continues ...

CHAPTER 4

COMBAT

Combat in Hack100 uses the same task resolution system described in Chapter 3. A **Ranged Task Roll** is used to determine whether an attack with a missile weapon is successful. An **Opposed Hand-to-Hand Task Roll** is used to resolve close-quarters combat.

In addition to these Task Rolls, it is also necessary to introduce:

- A system for deciding the order in which combatants act, i.e. an Initiative system.
- A means of calculating the Damage inflicted by a successful attack, factoring in the effects of different weapon and armour types.

COMBAT SEQUENCE

Combat takes place over a series of rounds in the following sequence:

1. Each combatant rolls for **Initiative** on 1d10 + their Agility Bonus. They act in Initiative order, highest first. Tied Initiatives act simultaneously. A combatant may decide to delay their actions until later in the round.

2. Each round, a combatant may move up to their **Movement** allowance and take one Action.

   Movement is discussed in more detail below.

   An **Action** is something that requires a combatant's full attention. For example, making an attack, using a Specialism, retrieving something from a backpack, or administering first aid.

This Movement and Action may take place in any order. Movement may also be split either side of an Action provided a combatant's total Movement isn't exceeded.

3. Missile attacks are made using a **Ranged Task Roll**. The Referee may apply a **Difficulty Modifier** as dictated by the circumstances.

4. Close-quarters attacks are made using an **Opposed Hand-to-Hand Task Roll**. The defender may oppose using either their Hand-to-Hand Ability (an attempt to parry) or their Agility Ability (an attempt to dodge). Again, the Referee may apply Difficulty Modifiers as appropriate.

5. The **Damage** from a successful attack is calculated as the tens die from the Task Roll plus the net Damage Modifier due to the attacker's weapon and the defender's armour.

Weapon	Damage Modifier
Unarmed	0
Improvised	+1
Sling	+2
Dagger	+2
Bow	+3
1-Handed Weapon	+4
Crossbow	+4
2-Handed Weapon	+6

Weapon Damage Modifiers

Armour	Damage Modifier	Agility Penalty	Movement*
None	0	0	12/8
Leather	-1	-10%	9/6
Chain	-2	-20%	6/4
Plate	-3	-30%	3/2
Shield	-1	-10%	-

*metres per round/grid squares per round

Effects of Armour

6. Any resulting Damage is deducted from the defender's **Health**.

7. When all combatants have acted, a new round starts.

MOVEMENT IN COMBAT

Standard unarmoured characters may move up to 12 metres in each combat round in addition to taking one Action. They may move before their Action, or after their Action, or they may split their Movement either side of their Action. They may also forego their Action and take a second move (i.e. up to a total of 24 metres for a standard unarmoured character).

If playing with floor plans, which typically consist of 5' x 5' (1.5 m x 1.5 m) square grids, a Movement of 12 metres equates to 8 squares.

Movement is reduced by any armour a character is wearing as indicated in Table 4. Armour also provides a negative Difficulty Modifier to any Agility Task Rolls whilst worn.

Referees should feel free to modify Movement rates accordingly. Some creatures may be naturally faster or slower. Terrain may also affect Movement, e.g. wading through water, climbing steep stairs, clambering over a wall, or traversing a crowded room.

ENGAGING AND DISENGAGING FROM HAND-TO-HAND-COMBAT

As soon as one combatant makes a Hand-to-Hand Task Roll against an opponent, the two are said to be "Engaged" in combat. Once Engaged, there are three main ways in which a combatant can Disengage:

1. By subduing their opponent, e.g. knocking them over, rendering them unconscious, or killing them.

2. By performing a tactical withdrawal. The combatant that is disengaging may move up to half of their Movement allowance directly away from their opponent(s). This counts as both their Movement AND their Action for the round. The disengaging combatant may still oppose any attacks upon them during that round by attempting to parry or dodge.

3. By running away - the combatant simply turns and flees at up to twice their Movement allowance directly away from their opponent(s), foregoing any Action that round. Each Engaged opponent gets an Easy (+20%) free attack that the disengaging combatant may NOT oppose.

MAJOR SUCCESSES AND MAJOR FAILURES IN COMBAT

As discussed in Chapter 3, in Hack100 there are no pre-defined benefits or penalties attached to Major Successes and Major Failures. The Referee,

with input from the players, is free to decide, on a case-by-case basis, the additional consequences of Major Successes and Major Failures as befitting the narrative of the game. However, because combat is likely to be a relatively frequent source of Major Successes and Major Failures, some suggested outcomes are offered in the table overleaf. However, there are many more possibilities depending upon the exact situation within a game. For example, if a character is standing on a table whilst fighting and rolls a Major Failure, then perhaps the table collapses from underneath them.

Remember, only the winner of an Opposed Task receives the extra benefits of a Major Success. Similarly, only the loser suffers the penalties of a Major Failure.

In general, the intention is that whilst Major Successes and Major Failures should tip the balance of a fight in favour of one combatant or the other, they shouldn't necessarily be decisive in determining the eventual outcome of an encounter.

Example Major Successes as an Attacker	
Mighty blow!	In close-quarters combat, the attacker adds their Strength Bonus to the calculated Damage.
Precise shot!	A missile attack adds the shooter's/thrower's Ranged Bonus to the calculated Damage.
Finds the gap!	The defender's armour is ignored when calculating Damage.
Knocked down!	The defender is pushed to the ground.
Disarmed!	The defender's weapon or shield is dislodged from their hand.
Example Major Successes as a Defender	
Disarmed!	The attacker's weapon is parried from their hand.
Driven back!	The attacker is pushed back, disengaging them from combat.
Counterattack!	The defender's parry inflicts Damage upon their attacker, calculated in the normal way.
Sidestep!	The dodging defender wrongfoots the attacker creating an opening. The defender's next attack has an Easy (+20%) Difficulty Modifier.
Example Major Failures as an Attacker	
Dropped!	The attacker drops their weapon.
Breaks!	The attacker's weapon breaks.
Lost!	The attacker's thrown weapon misses and is permanently lost.
Ouch!	The attacker inadvertently injures themselves, with Damage calculated in the normal way.
Example Major Failures as a Defender	
Dropped!	The defender drops their weapon or shield.
Breaks!	The defender's weapon or shield breaks.
Trips	The defender trips and falls whilst attempting to dodge.

Example Major Successes and Major Failures in Combat

CHAPTER 5

HEALTH

As discussed in Chapter 2, **Health** is a measure of the general well-being of a character. In Hack100, there are two main ways in which a character can lose Health:

- From physical damage, e.g. through combat, falling, or some other mishap.
- Through the draining effects of using an unusual, "supernatural", Specialism, e.g. magic, psionics, or shapeshifting. Such Specialisms are referred to as "**Powers**".

Powers are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. For now, it is enough to know that the loss and recovery of Health from using such Powers works in the same way as it does for physical damage.

ZERO AND NEGATIVE HEALTH

When a character's Health reaches zero, they fall unconscious. When their Health reaches a negative value equal to their Toughness Bonus plus their Willpower Bonus, they die.

RECOVERING HEALTH

Characters recover Health naturally at a rate of 2 Health per day, 4 if resting fully.

Health may also be replenished through the use of a relevant Specialism, such as medicine, magic, or divine assistance. It is left to the Referee to determine the effectiveness of such interventions depending upon the

flavour of their game. A "heroic" game will generally be more generous than a "gritty" game when it comes to Health recovery.

As a guide, it is suggested that "everyday" skills such as first aid should be limited to one application per character per day, with each successful application restoring 1-5 Health (in addition to any natural recovery). This will require a successful Task Roll. A Major Success automatically recovers 5 Health, whilst a Major Failure actually causes 2 points of further damage, negating any natural recovery.

The effectiveness of a restorative Power should be proportional to the Health invested in it by the applicant. For example, each point of Health committed by the Specialist might restore 2 Health to the beneficiary. A Specialist cannot heal themselves in this way.

When a character's maximum Health goes up due to an increase in their Toughness or Willpower Ability, these additional points are added to their current Health total.

CHAPTER 6

POWERS

A **Power** is any form of extraordinary or supernatural Specialism. It might be the ability to cast spells or perform miracles. However, it could also encompass a wide range of other special abilities - shapeshifting, psionics, berserking, prophesying, etc. As with all Specialisms, Powers are Abilities that differentiate an individual from the vast majority. Unlike Specialisms, Powers go beyond rational everyday understanding.

HOW POWERS WORK

The underlying consequence of using Powers is that they are mentally and/or physically draining. As such, whenever a character uses a Power there is an associated Health cost. The more significant the Power, the higher the Health cost. Therefore, characters with Powers must manage their use carefully. Do the benefits of using a Power in a given situation outweigh the detrimental effects on the character's Health?

In Hack100, there are no predefined lists of Powers. Instead, a flexible approach is adopted based on an open-ended collaboration between the players and the Referee. The exact effects of a Power, in terms of its effect, intensity and duration, along with the associated Health cost, are agreed upon between the player and the Referee at the point of use, with the Referee always having the final say. The procedure for using a Power is as follows:

1. The character describes the desired effect of using the Power.

2. Taking into account the nature of the effect, as well as its intended intensity and duration, the Referee rules on the associated Health cost.

3. The Referee may also impose a Difficulty Modifier for the upcoming Task Roll if the desired effect seems particularly challenging in comparison to the scope of the associated Power. Similarly, a player might agree to accept a higher Difficulty Modifier in return, for example, for a lower Health cost.

4. Steps 1-3 are repeated until the player and the Referee reach a negotiated agreement on the balance between the effect of the Power, the corresponding Health cost and any Difficulty Modifier. This isn't intended to be a prolonged bargaining exercise. Rather it is the Referee and the player reaching an agreement on the use of the Power. The Referee ultimately makes the final ruling.

5. The character makes a Task Roll against the relevant Power.

6. If the Task Roll is successful, the Power takes effect. Otherwise, nothing happens.

7. The Health cost applies only AFTER the effects of the Power have expired. This implies, therefore, that all Powers must have a fixed duration (which might be instantaneous).

8. A Major Success means that the Power only costs 1 Health. A Major Failure means that the Power consumes the full Health cost, but nothing happens.

It is recommended that the Referee keeps a record of negotiated Power uses. This will save time when the Power is used in a similar way again. It also provides a benchmark or precedent for future Power usage.

EXAMPLE: SPELLCASTING

A common application of Powers in fantasy games will be the casting of spells. With regards to the specific wording of a given spell caster's Power, it

is recommended that very broad definitions (e.g. "Magic") are avoided in favour of narrower areas of focus (e.g. "Fire Magic", "Illusionism", "Necromancy", etc.). This will help to keep the range of a given spell caster's ability within well-defined boundaries, and also ensure that their magic use has a distinctive flavour.

Below are some examples of typical magical effects. For each, suggestions are provided as to how they might be handled in Hack100, particularly concerning their Difficulty and Health cost. All, of course, require a successful Task Roll against the relevant Power.

- Create a magical light equivalent to a torch or lantern. Easy (+20%) Difficulty. Costs 1 Health per hour.

- Magically move an object. Easy (+20%) Difficulty. Costs 1 Health per kg per minute.

- Magically increase a weapon's damage or armour's protection. Normal Difficulty. Costs 2 Health per additional point of damage/protection. Lasts for one encounter.

- Restore Health to someone else. Normal Difficulty. Costs 1 Health per 2 points of Health restored. Instantaneous. A caster cannot heal themselves in this way.

- Perform a magical attack (e.g. fireball, lightning bolt). Normal Difficulty. Costs 1 Health per point of Damage (ignores the target's armour). Instantaneous.

- Magically influence someone to do something. Normal Difficulty. Opposed Task Roll: caster's Power vs target's Willpower. Cost 2 Health. Each additional 2 Health provides a +10% Difficulty Modifier to the caster's Task Roll. Lasts for one encounter.

All of the above are just illustrative examples. Players and Referees should negotiate their own spell effects and their associated costs as they occur in

the game. In general, effects that don't permanently physically alter the world should be easier to perform and should have a lower Health cost.

Overall, the Difficulty and Health cost should be proportional to the effect whilst remaining consistent with the Referee's approach to magic within their campaign. High fantasy settings in which magic is commonplace should be more generous when it comes to Health costs than low fantasy worlds where magic is rare.

Optionally, the Referee might decide that there are additional requirements for successful spell casting - wands, staves, spell books, ingredients, the ability to voice or gesticulate, etc. The presence or absence of such factors would probably affect the Difficulty Modifier of the associated Task Roll.

A similar approach can be taken with other abilities that manipulate the world around a character - miracles bestowed by deities, psionics, etc.

EXAMPLE: TRANSFORMATIVE POWERS

Another example of the use of Powers would be for effects that temporarily transform a character. Examples might include shapeshifting, lycanthropy or berserking. Such abilities may or may not be within the full control of a character. Again, the exact effects of such transformative Powers should be agreed upon between the Referee and the players, but here are some illustrative examples.

SHAPESHIFTING

The character can transform voluntarily into another creature, often an animal such as a bear, a wolf, or an eagle. In doing so, they retain their intellectual capacity and awareness but swap their physical capabilities for those of the creature. As a result, some of their Abilities undergo a temporary adjustment. For example ...

Bear:

- Strength increases by 20%.
- Toughness increases by 20%. Health increases accordingly (although any existing Damage is retained - the transformation shouldn't heal in any way).
- Influence through non-verbal communication only.
- Hand-to-Hand becomes a claw or bite attack with a +5 Damage Modifier.
- No Ranged attack.
- No armour.

Wolf:

- A heightened sense of smell - Perception increases by 20%.
- Stealth increases by 20%.
- Influence through non-verbal communication only.
- Movement speed increases to 15 metres per round.
- Hand-to-Hand becomes a bite attack with a +3 Damage Modifier.
- No Ranged attack.
- No armour.

It is suggested that the Task Roll to perform the shapeshift should be of Normal Difficulty and that the transformation should last a maximum of 1 hour and cost 8 Health (upon reverting to the character's normal form). No further attempt to shapeshift may be made that day. Of course, the Referee is free to adjust these parameters as befitting their game world.

Lycanthropy would work similarly, except it would be beyond the control of the character. The transformation at each full moon would be unavoidable.

BERSERKING

Berserking works similarly to shapeshifting except that the transformation may not be under the full control of the character. Usually, the transformation is triggered in some way - perhaps by the character becoming injured or angry. The effect is usually to increase the character's physical characteristics, often quite dramatically:

- Strength increases by 20%.
- Toughness increases by 40%. Health increases accordingly (although, again, any existing Damage is retained).
- Strength Bonus is added to Hand-to-Hand Damage.

The Referee should decide how easy or difficult it is for the berserking state to be triggered and recovered from. For example, it might be triggered by a failed Willpower roll upon receiving Damage for the first time in any given combat. Similarly, a successful Will Power roll may be needed to stop berserking - this may be attempted once per round. A berserking character will start to attack their own side once all the enemies in a fight have been dealt with!

The Health cost of Berserking is 10% of a Character's total Health per round of combat. The usual rules regarding zero and negative Health apply.